

We Pride Ourselves

- *MCC provides employees meaningful communication opportunities.*
- *MCC recognizes that governance is an evolutionary process.*

We Challenge Ourselves

- *To analyze strategically the institution’s organizational structure including enhancements to the college’s governance system.*
- *To continue to review, analyze, revise, and improve communication systems.*

Chapter 4 Criterion 2–Governance

Introduction

This chapter illustrates Metropolitan Community College’s administrative and organizational structure in relation to Criterion 2. It addresses the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, MCC’s Board of Governors, the college procedures memorandums, its organizational structure, the Executive Team, shared governance, and communication with employees and students.

State Governance

Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

MCC operates under the authority of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE), which governs all Nebraska public postsecondary institutions. The Nebraska Legislature established the state’s first CCPE in March 1976, giving it limited responsibilities. In 1990, the legislature established a new CCPE with responsibility for comprehensive statewide planning of postsecondary education. These responsibilities became effective January 1992. CCPE, which is comprised of 11 commissioners appointed to six-year terms by the governor with legislative approval, has three statutory purposes:

- It establishes and revises, as needed, an ongoing statewide plan for postsecondary institutions;
- It reviews, monitors, and approves or disapproves new and existing instructional programs and proposed capital construction projects of public institutions; and
- It reviews budget requests of governing boards and recommends modifications to insure the best use of available resources among Nebraska’s public postsecondary institutions.

Compared to similar coordinating agencies in other states, the Nebraska CCPE focuses more on monitoring than controlling. As a result, MCC and other postsecondary institutions in the state have a fair amount of local control. Additional resources regarding the CCPE are available in the Resource Room.

Institutional Governance

Board of Governors

In 1974, the state of Nebraska passed Legislative Bill 344 to create six Nebraska community college areas and establish a statewide, independent system of local governance. With this legislation, a local Board of Governors for the MCC area was established. MCC's Board of Governors (BOG) operates under the duties, powers, and responsibilities set forth in Nebraska statutes. In addition to state statutes, the college operates under a detailed set of board policies and procedures memorandums.

MCC's Board of Governors is composed of 11 community-elected members representing the five districts within the four-county area. Each district, approximately equal in population, elects two board members to serve a four-year term. Voters also elect one member-at-large. District boundaries change every 10 years after new census data become available.

The current board is composed of relatively new members with diverse backgrounds. It consists of nine men and two women. One member is Hispanic and another is Black. Six were elected or appointed (due to resignations) during 2000. Two have served four years or less. See Appendix III for more information on individual board members.

Additionally, since 2001, two college constituent groups elect ex officio members to seats created by the board. Students annually elect a student representative for a one-year term. Full-time faculty elect a faculty representative for a two-year term each even-numbered year. These ex officio memberships expand board representation and increase communication with students and faculty.

Board of Governors meetings are traditionally held the fourth Tuesday of each month, although the board has the prerogative to establish alternative meeting times. The agenda, prepared by the college president's office and approved by the board chair, is forwarded five to six days preceding each meeting to all board members and appropriate administrative personnel. A comprehensive packet of related information prepared by the college president and approved by the board chair is included.

Since board meetings are public and subject to open meeting laws, a public notice of the meeting with location, time, and the location of the meeting agenda is published in the *Omaha World-Herald*, a local newspaper serving MCC's four-county service area, prior to each meeting. The same procedures are followed when special meetings are called.

Four board committees meet as needed preceding each regular board meeting: Budget and Finance, Building and Sites, Curriculum and Instruction, and Personnel. See Appendix IV for additional information on committee functions.

As a public institution established by state law, MCC is bound and accountable to follow all laws governing public institutions. Therefore, current board policies require mandatory compliance with state laws and regulations. One result of these requirements is a healthy openness with the public and with MCC employees at board meetings. All board meetings are videotaped and aired on a local cable channel following each meeting. In addition, the college's legal counsel is present at every board meeting.

Board Policies and Procedures Memorandums

The MCC Board of Governors has developed a set of board policies that are reviewed and revised periodically by board members and college staff. The last comprehensive review occurred in 2000. These policies, found in the *Board Policy Book*, are developed in conjunction with advice from legal counsel. Policies address the legal structure of the board, the organization of the college, external relations, curriculum and instruction, student services, professional personnel, regular classified personnel, fiscal affairs, and college property. Policies can be developed and revised according to Board Policy 12317, *Policy Revision and Suspension*.

The college also has formalized procedures memorandums (PMs) used to implement board policies at the operational level. The college has formalized PMs to support board policies and to systematize human resource issues and college operations. All procedures memorandums are available online and accessible to employees and the public through the college's Web page (<http://www.mccneb.edu/procedures/default.htm>). Currently, 61 memorandums are on file. By using board policies and procedures memorandums, the college can assure that a system is in place for all staff to operate from the same standards, systems, and processes when making decisions.

Administration and Organizational Structure

The college president leads the administration of the college. The Board of Governors delegates authority to the president as the college's chief executive officer (CEO). As CEO, the president is responsible for executing all policies determined by the board.

The executive vice president reports directly to the president and assists in addressing issues and developing and implementing policies and procedures as well as assisting employees with the college's day-to-day operations. The director of Public Relations and the diversity and equity officer also report to the president. Two vice presidents report to the executive vice president: the vice president of Educational Services and the vice president of Student and Instructional Services. Additionally, the executive dean of Campus and Student Services, the executive college business officer, the dean of Planning and Institutional Advancement, and the director of Opportunities/Jobs/ Careers report to the executive vice president. The dean of Continuing Education reports to the vice president of Student and Instructional Services. See Appendix V.

Executive Team

The Executive Team is part of the main decision-making body of the college. Its purpose is to advise the president on college issues and initiate actions on college policies and

programs. (See the Resource Room for additional information on Executive Team members.) For example, one of its functions is to prepare agenda items for monthly board meetings, with the president and board chair approving the final agenda. The Executive Team, which meets weekly, consists of the following:

- President;
- Executive Vice President;
- Vice President of Student and Instructional Services;
- Vice President of Educational Services;
- Executive College Business Officer;
- Executive Dean of Campus and Student Services;
- Dean of Planning and Institutional Advancement;
- Dean of Continuing Education;
- Director of Public Relations;
- Diversity and Equity Officer;
- Assistant to the President; and
- Chair of the College Action Committees.

Decision-Making Processes

MCC's Decision-Making Framework

MCC's decision-making process directly and indirectly incorporates MCC's mission and purposes, strategic initiatives, and area action plans. The Executive Team and president encourage and support the following process in reaching decisions at MCC: review facts, consider options, analyze outcomes in relation to the institution's purposes, take into account possible institutional impacts of each outcome, make a decision, implement the decision, then measure and evaluate the outcome. This institutional decision-making framework demonstrates the college's commitment to a fact-driven approach. The framework provides flexibility to meet situational needs and has the capability to move rapidly and be responsive to the needs of learners.

Institutional decisions may be reached through a variety of formal and informal means. The Executive Team may reach decisions alone or assign a college committee or task force to make recommendations. Final institutional decisions are determined or supported at the presidential and/or Executive Team levels.

MCC utilizes a consultative style when including the input of internal constituents from all levels. For example, college committees, task forces, and advisory groups may initiate or may be invited by the Executive Team to review an idea. These groups may follow a similar decision-making framework before making recommendations to the Executive Team, which usually makes or supports final decisions. Executive Team minutes are posted after each meeting on its Intranet Web site (<http://metroweb.mccneb.edu/et/default.htm>).

Informally, an employee or group of employees may develop a proposal and enlist an Executive Team member as an advocate. The advocate then approaches the Executive Team with the proposal, which may or may not be passed to a committee or task force or considered at the Executive Team level.

Employee Perceptions: Decision-making Processes

As indicated by the last four climate surveys, less than half of MCC employees who responded “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that shared decision-making at Metro is valued. Approximately 47% “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that employees responsible for implementing decisions participate in the decision-making processes. Over the last 10 years, some employees may have felt that committee recommendations were not considered because it appeared that college action had not been taken or that communication follow-up was lacking when decisions had been made.

The college has begun to address this issue. For example, during 2001-02, six councils and CAC committees were charged with making recommendations addressing major institutional changes such as employee involvement and continuous improvement. The recommendations were submitted to the Executive Team in May 2002, with outcomes reviewed and shared college-wide. (The charter recommendations are located in the Resource Room.) The institution plans to take additional steps during 2002-03 to enhance MCC’s decision-making process by redesigning its shared governance system.

Figure 4.1 Valued Shared Decision-making

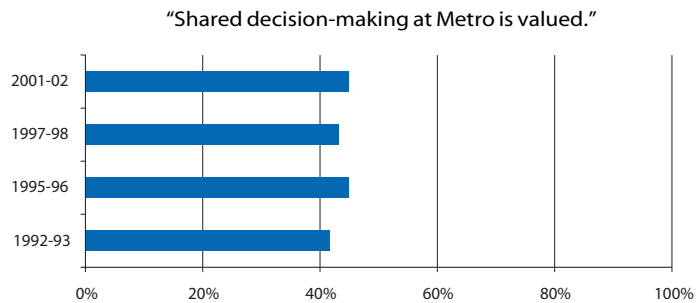


Figure 4.2 Employee Participation in the Decision-making Process



Shared Governance

MCC's governance process contains a variety of mechanisms for internal input such as the College Action Committees (which address current college issues), the College Councils (which focus on future issues for the college), the Educational Services Leadership Group (which addresses academic issues), and the Diversity Steering Panel (which addresses diversity college-wide and is further explained in Chapter 12: Criterion 5–Integrity). This system of shared governance provides an avenue for internal communication and a structure for teamwork. It continues to evolve. The college is currently reviewing the College Action Committees and the College Councils in anticipation of implementing an alternative shared governance structure within the next two years. Refer to the Resource Room for a list and description of additional committees and task forces.

College Action Committees

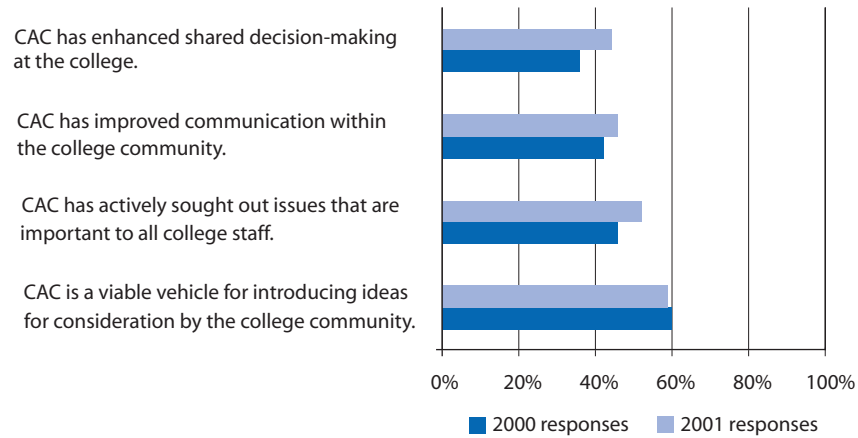
The College Action Committees (CAC) originated in 1991, replacing the College Advisory System (CAS). CAC was designed to address current issues, serve as a vehicle for internal communication, and to make recommendations to the Executive Committee. Today, CAC provides opportunities for employees and students to participate in the college's decision-making processes and to influence college goals and directions. All college constituencies, including faculty, are represented in CAC. CAC, in turn, is represented on the Executive Team, demonstrating MCC's commitment to shared governance.

CAC is comprised of a Steering Panel and four standing committees: Business and Human Resources, College and Community Relations, Student Services, and Teaching and Curriculum. The purposes, responsibilities, and composition of the Steering Panel and committees are defined in the CAC handbook, which is available in the Resource Room.

CAC consists of volunteers inclusive of all employee groups. The composition of each committee is clearly articulated to ensure that CAC maintains a diverse membership. Committees meet monthly to discuss and provide input on significant or timely issues and proposals affecting the college. Since CAC is a recommending body only, the final decisions on issues addressed by CAC are made at the executive or operational levels. Syllabus uniformity, student technology fees, smoking policy, dean's list, and electronic forms are a few of CAC recommendations that have been implemented over the past 10 years. Refer to the Resource Room for more information on the CAC.

Each spring CAC surveys MCC employees to determine CAC's effectiveness the preceding year. Figure 4.3 presents the last two years of survey results. Four statements and the number of employees who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" to each statement are included. The results show that over half of employees who responded to the 2000 and 2001 surveys think that the CAC is a viable vehicle for introducing new ideas. However, CAC's ability to enhance shared decision-making is not as an effective channel as perceived by some.

More than 70% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the 2001 climate survey statement, "My supervisor does a good job of sharing issues I raise with appropriate staff in the college." Results indicate that staff consider supervisors a more viable avenue than CAC in shared decision-making.

Figure 4.3 CAC Survey Results

College Councils

MCC has four college councils: Educational and Community Services, Information Technology, Leadership, and Resource Development. The councils, developed in 1993, play an integral part in the institution's shared governance structure. All employees are invited to serve on the councils. Employee participation is closely monitored to ensure that different segments of the college are represented. Each council consists of 16-19 members. Two co-chairs lead each council, and council members rotate every two years.

The councils focus on the institution's future and direction. Their philosophy is to strengthen teamwork among all organizational divisions and departments and to enhance employee involvement in creating opportunities, problem-solving, and decision-making processes. The councils assist in establishing priorities for the college and are vision-oriented in working toward future challenges and opportunities. The councils also focus on addressing future issues that are broadly based and involve individual areas of the college beyond distinct departments. For example, the Leadership Council spearheads the college's environmental scanning process.

Accomplishments during the 2000-2001 academic year included:

- Facilitated 10 sessions of communication roundtables for professional development;
- Addressed various future information technology issues;
- Edited MCC's mission statement and strategic initiatives; and
- Assisted in the framework for improvement of MCC's long-term professional development model.

The councils have struggled occasionally with making substantial contributions to the college's decision-making process. For example, although the councils have made progress over the years, operationalizing their charge as the visioning body of the college has consistently remained a challenge for some council members. More information on college councils is available in the Resource Room.

Restructuring Shared Governance

During 2000-2001, one of the CAC committees, College and Community Relations (CCR), was charged with investigating CAC and council effectiveness in MCC's shared governance structure. In April 2002, the CCR Committee recommended that the CAC and councils be abolished and replaced with a new governance system to be developed in 2002-03. The recommendation was influenced by the following committee conclusions:

- An apparent lack of employee understanding exists of the shared governance process and who is responsible for what;
- The purposes and functions of the CAC and council systems are confusing to some employees;
- Processes can be slow and participants lack readiness to address issues; and
- The current systems do not ensure qualified leadership or accountability.

The Executive Team accepted the recommendation with the amendment that CAC and the councils continue to operate with modifications throughout 2002-03. During the 2002-03 academic year, an appointed task force will analyze a number of alternative structures and make a final recommendation by March 2003.

Educational Services Leadership Group

Educational Services established 17 academic departments in December 2000. Each department has a faculty department representative who is part of the Educational Services Leadership Group (ESLG). The ESLG is the first coordinated effort to bring faculty and instructional administrators together into a single group. Additional members include the four deans and four project coordinators. The vice president of Educational Services facilitates the monthly meetings.

In its first year, the ESLG initiated an overhaul of the class scheduling process, transformed the program review process, and developed a mini-grant process to fund creative program promotion ideas of faculty. As the ESLG develops, its meetings are becoming more focused and the dialogue more active as members realize the group's role and potential.

Communication with Students

MCC has experienced a continuous challenge in effectively communicating to its diverse student population. The nature of commuter students, the number of students attending classes at MCC throughout the metropolitan area as opposed to one or two sites, the absence of a student newspaper, and the high percentage of part-time students add to the complexity of successful communication. Some efforts such as quarterly mailings to students have been minimally successful at best. The nature of the college challenges faculty and staff to find new and better ways to providing students with information when and where they need it.

Student Services is developing a plan to improve communication with students by providing a comprehensive system to reach enrolled students through various communication channels. The plan’s goal is to evaluate and improve existing communication tools and to create new ones. To this end, in the fall 2001 Student Services’ newly hired communication specialist interviewed six student focus groups to discover how students felt about current efforts and their preferences for future communication. Upon analysis of the data, implementation strategies were developed.



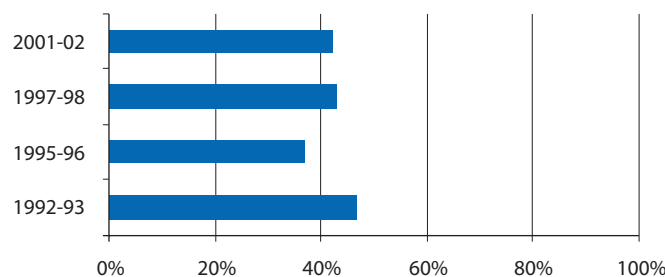
A pilot project was conducted at the South Omaha campus featuring a television monitor in the student commons displaying a Powerpoint-type presentation of upcoming events and pertinent student information. As a class project, a social science group researched the effectiveness of this avenue. Class findings showed that most students found the television display informative, however, students indicated that a larger television monitor in a more prominent location would improve its effectiveness.

Communication with Employees

MCC’s communication with employees is a continuous effort. The avenues for participation and communication are varied and numerous, giving all levels of employees the opportunities to add valued input on most college decisions. The administration has provided multiple avenues for dissemination of information and communication. Although much information is available, such as *Inside Story* (the electronic employee newsletter) and the Intranet Web site, many typical communication challenges remain.

In the last four employee climate surveys, less than 50% of staff “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement, “Communication at Metro is effective.” As a result, MCC has implemented or improved a number of communication avenues.

Figure 4.4 Employee Perceptions of Communication Effectiveness



Communication Avenues

Most MCC communication with employees occurs at the departmental levels; however, several annual college-wide events involve all employees. Every employee must attend the

All-College Assembly each fall to hear the president's state-of-the-college address outlining strategies and goals for the upcoming academic year. All employees attend the Spring Celebration of Education to honor outstanding faculty and staff. During new employee orientation, all recent employees are provided information to develop an understanding and appreciation of the college culture.

Two Educational Services Day events are held annually, one in August and the other in March. At these all-day events, faculty connect on important issues and meet adjunct faculty. About 60 adjunct faculty attended in August 1999, and more than 170 adjunct faculty attended in August 2001.

A number of additional institutional avenues have been implemented college-wide to enhance communication: communication roundtables (opportunities for employees to discuss issues and offer recommendations concerning institutional communication to appropriate personnel); discussions at professional development sessions; and professional development course offerings. In addition, internal publications, electronic messaging and folders, and the Intranet Web site facilitate communication within the institution.

Written Publications and Electronic Communication

Some MCC written publications are routinely distributed to all employees as another means of communication. For example, members of the community and all college employees receive the quarterly publication, *Metrogram*, which covers institutional issues, college programs and services, and personnel profiles, as well as the annual report, which highlights institutional achievements and presents the college's financial statement.

Full-time and adjunct faculty receive *The Learning Connection*, which provides quarterly updates on educational services and other institutional topics. They also receive the annual *Faculty Information Guide* which describes college policies, programs, and services.

Since 1992, MCC has developed new and enhanced means of communication. Among the electronic communication tools are:

- Voice mail;
- E-mail;
- Instant messaging;
- Distribution of information to staff through various aliases;
- Faxing;
- Audio seminars;
- Advising via desktop video conferencing with the University of Nebraska-Omaha;
- Student e-mail;
- Intranet with multiple department sites and electronic forms;

- Intranet “public folders”;
- Improved telephone integration;
- Shared network folders; and
- Off-campus e-mail access.

MCC’s Intranet system contains a wealth of sources and information about every facet of the college (<http://metroweb.mccneb.edu>). A bulletin board-type section on MCC’s Intranet front page highlights topics of employee interest and time-sensitive information. Links to major areas within the college are also posted.

The college recognizes that increased efforts are still needed to improve communication throughout the institution. Much work lies ahead, as evidenced by the results of the last four employee climate surveys. The college will continue to provide support for technology and electronic communication. Through various processes such as the budget process and computer use advisory groups, innovations and new tools will be researched, analyzed, and implemented.

Educational Services and Communication

In prior years, an ongoing faculty concern was effective communication within Educational Services. Some faculty perceived a disconnection with the decision-making and communication of decisions to faculty members. Since 1999, the division has taken significant steps in addressing those concerns.

The Educational Services team has reviewed, analyzed, and questioned systems previously in place. When necessary, new systems and processes have been developed and implemented. As a consequence, the team has worked toward a commonality and consistency that formerly may have been lacking in the previous structure.

Communication has greatly improved in the area of Educational Services. The vice president and academic deans hold weekly staff meetings. Project coordinators also meet with the deans as well as among themselves. Various means are used to communicate with full-time and adjunct faculty, including:

- *The Learning Connection*, a quarterly newsletter for full-time and adjunct faculty, is produced by the Educational Service office;
- The Educational Services’ Intranet is a comprehensive Web site with electronic information pertaining to the area;
- The “Learning Corner” column in *Inside Story*, the bi-weekly institutional electronic newsletter, periodically updates the college community on Educational Services changes and happenings;
- The creation of department representatives in the organizational structure provide strengthened communication between faculty and the offices of the deans and the vice president of Educational Services;

- E-mail aliases for full-time and adjunct faculty allow for rapid communication; and
- Educational Services sends periodic update e-mails to all Educational Services faculty and staff and the Executive Team.

These communication efforts have contributed to a general feeling that full-time and adjunct faculty are considered integral parts of Educational Services and the college.

Conclusion

This chapter presents MCC's governance structure in partial fulfillment of Criterion 2. The Board of Governors, the administration, and employees play significant roles in moving the college forward.

MCC's shared governance system is evolving. The college recognizes that the current shared governance structure may not be as effective as it was when first implemented in the early 1990s and is currently pursuing other approaches.

Developing and enhancing avenues to promote and improve communication with students and within the college is an ongoing challenge. In the past few years, the college has implemented strategies to address this challenge and recognizes the area as an ongoing priority.