

We Pride Ourselves

- *MCC is consistently reaching out to the community to encourage a diverse student body.*
- *MCC's articulation agreements with other higher education and secondary institutions and related enrollment increases demonstrate its commitment to fulfilling its mission and purposes.*
- *The visibility of MCC's diversity efforts in organized cultural events and staff development are examples of MCC's exemplary commitment to valuing differences.*

We Challenge Ourselves

- *To strengthen the coordination of marketing and program promotion processes within the college.*
- *To continue establishing board policies and procedures memorandums and related practices that support the integrity of the institution.*

Chapter 12 Criterion 5–Integrity

Introduction

Metropolitan Community College (MCC) consistently strives for integrity in its operations and relationships. It devotes much time and energy to developing and maintaining relationships that exemplify honesty. In fulfillment of Criterion 5, this chapter reviews examples of the college's writings and actions, along with its community partnerships, that demonstrate MCC's integrity.

Integrity in Writing

MCC takes special care in assuring that all published documents and policies capture MCC's commitment to institutional integrity.

Board Policies and Procedures Memorandums

As a postsecondary institution, MCC is committed to guaranteeing that formal policies are in place to guide ethical approaches in all of its dealings. Policies exist for areas such as ethics, diversity, appeal processes, safety, and affirmative action. The college has developed a comprehensive set of policies, along with procedures memorandums, addressing ethical actions. For more information regarding board policies and ethical approaches, refer to the Resource Room.

External Marketing Materials

MCC's external marketing materials increase public awareness of the college and promote college offerings and services. Advertising materials primarily target the MCC four-county service area. Occasionally they extend outside the service area for distance education classes, specific requests to advertise beyond the area, and other special circumstances.

The Marketing and Public Relations (MPR) department conducts basic public relations activities. MCC's outreach communications promote the college's academic programs, enhance the college's image, provide the public with general knowledge about the college, and encourage college enrollment. A function of MPR is to collaborate with the Enrollment Management department in developing and updating these outreach materials so that the most current and accurate information is disseminated.

MCC offers a variety of outreach materials, both general and program specific. However, program areas are becoming increasingly involved in creating their own outreach communications to promote their offerings. Consequently, MPR seeks to ensure accuracy and tracking of all promotional materials published by the college. Examples of MCC marketing publications are available in the Resource Room.

Contracts and Bidding Process

MCC practices full disclosure in its dealings with members of the institution and its publics. It has oversight processes in place for monitoring any contractual arrangements and a formal system to monitor contractual agreements. Its policies and practices are consistent with MCC's mission related to equity of treatment, nondiscrimination, and affirmative action. According to the most current board policies, purchases and procedures are adhered to in the following manner.

Table 12.1 Purchasing and Bid Processes

| Amount | Procedure |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| \$5,000 or less | Unrestricted, open market purchases, except for sole source items |
| \$5,001–9,999 | Purchases made by a competitive, informal bidding process |
| \$10,000–24,999 | Purchases made by a competitive formal sealed bid process |
| \$25,000 or more | Bid invitation published in a legal newspaper circulated within MCC's four-county area |

MCC takes extra effort to encourage quoting and bidding by potential vendors owned and operated by women or minorities. If quality and price are comparable, preference for purchase contracts is given to businesses within the four-county service area.

Publications for Students

MCC's student publications articulate the college's commitment to integrity with students. The **student handbook** provides information on student services, financial aid, college guidelines and policies, and important dates to remember. The handbook is designed to be "easy to read" and is divided by specific topics covering student needs.

MCC's **financial aid brochure** is provided to prospective and current students with an interest in such assistance. The Financial Aid department reviews the brochure annually and submits changes to MPR so that an updated version is available by early summer. All consumer information required by regulation is also covered in the financial aid section of the college catalog.

The **college catalog** provides students with a comprehensive list of course offerings and descriptions, degree and program requirements, student services, and other information. The catalog is updated yearly to guarantee that information is timely. All information is edited by a wide variety of constituencies to ensure accuracy. The college catalog is also available to students online.

Preceding each quarter, a printed **course schedule** is mailed to all households in the four-county service area. Students also have easy access to the schedule on campus. Prior to publication, the schedule is rigorously reviewed for accuracy.

On the first day of classes, all faculty provide students with a course **syllabus** that contains important institutional dates; instructor information; the course description, objectives, prerequisites, and required materials; instructor and student responsibilities; assessment and instructional methods; and assignment schedule. Most full-time faculty also maintain Web-based information addressing course and instructor expectations that can be accessed through MCC's Web site (<http://commhum.mccneb.edu/faculty.htm>).

MCC's **Internet Web site** (<http://www.mccneb.edu/>) contains information such as academic departments, online services, alternative learning solutions, class schedules, continuing education, and other services for students. The ITS staff and responsible departments design, maintain, and update the site to ensure that accurate and timely information is available to current and prospective students. All full-time faculty and some adjunct faculty have Web pages with varying levels of content.

The **Special Support Services brochure** contains information on how students may obtain services, how Special Support Services operates, and the timelines for receiving such services. The brochure provides prospective students with a listing of the college's and students' rights and responsibilities regarding the provision of accommodations. Samples of publications for students are available in the Resource Room.

Grading Policies and Practices

MCC maintains integrity in its grading policies and practices. Grading policies are documented in the college catalog, the student handbook, and the new faculty orientation materials. They include the grading system, instructions for grade appeal, graduation requirements, and standards of academic progress. For more information, refer to the 2001-02 MCC college catalog, pages 34-35, available in the Resource Room.

At the end of each quarter, grades are submitted to the Central Records office and mailed to the students' homes. Permanent student academic records are archived in hard copy and microfilm, readily available for transcript requests. By the end of spring 2002, more than 500 full- and part-time faculty submitted grades online. Beginning with the fall quarter 2002, all grades will be submitted online.

MCC's grading practices are documented in its policies and demonstrated in its evaluation of students' course work and any needed interventions. The development of each student is monitored every quarter to encourage satisfactory progress, primarily by grade point average.

When students are unable to maintain satisfactory progress, MCC intervenes to assist them in making changes to increase the likelihood of success. For example, students who are suspended or placed on probation based on grades are sent a letter informing them of their status and that they must make an appointment with an advisor or counselor before registering for the next term. Staff then provides the students with career guidance, based on their patterns of enrollment, grades, and selection of academic program. Some students who are placed on academic probation may have extenuating circumstances prohibiting academic success, and MCC may not be able to offer the interventions necessary.

Other postsecondary institutions as evidenced in the increase of articulation agreements the last few years, which is addressed later in this chapter, accept MCC's grading policies.

WIN-AHEAD Program

MCC's Special Support Services office participates in a partnership with other area postsecondary institutions known as WIN-AHEAD (Western Iowa Nebraska Associations on Higher Education and Disability). The group meets regularly to discuss common issues regarding students with disabilities and service delivery. For example, students are often unaware or misinformed about the laws, regulations, and personal responsibilities when accessing accommodations within a postsecondary setting. Representatives from these institutions, including MCC, present information to clarify such issues across the region to groups of high school students, parents, counselors, and administrators.

Postsecondary Articulation Agreements

MCC's partnerships with other learning institutions through its articulation agreements exemplify its commitment to learning and integrity in its practices. The institution's articulation agreements with postsecondary institutions help create seamless learning experiences. It is successful in providing extended quality educational opportunities by participating in these instructive partnerships with other organizations.

Postsecondary Articulation Agreement Categories

MCC has 90 articulation agreements with 19 four-year higher education institutions in Nebraska and the surrounding states. MCC has the following four types of agreements with these institutions. A list of participating institutions is available in the Resource Room.

- The **Associate to Bachelors (A-to-B) agreement** allows students to complete an associate degree at MCC prior to transferring to a four-year institution. Students who complete an A-to-B agreement earn the maximum number of transferable courses.
- The **General Studies/Education Transfer Guide agreement** outlines MCC courses that satisfy general education requirements of four-year institutions.
- **Program Guide agreements** list courses that satisfy admission requirements for health programs at higher education institutions.
- **Course-by-Course Guides** list MCC courses and their equivalency at specific higher education institutions.

Postsecondary Articulation Expansion

Before 1999, MCC had articulation agreements with the University of Nebraska-Omaha and a few with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. However, many agreements were initiated, but a small number were regularly updated. Since then, the number of MCC's articulation agreements has increased significantly.

The infrastructure support has also expanded. An articulation coordinator position to manage the agreements was created in 2000. Information is shared consistently with deans, faculty, registrars, and admissions staff on both sides of each agreement. The agreements are thoroughly reviewed and updated each year to reflect the changing needs of each institution. Additional information is available in the Resource Room.

Postsecondary Articulation Communication

The Articulation office pursues numerous avenues to inform MCC students of transfer options. The articulation coordinator meets on a scheduled and as-needed basis with representatives from area higher learning institutions to articulate transfer requirements between schools.

MCC staff and faculty learn about student transfer opportunities in a variety of ways. MCC personnel involved in advising students and high school counselors are trained in articulation agreements and requirements. This training helps to ensure that students receive correct information to make sound decisions in their best interests.

Despite efforts to inform students, not all are aware of the opportunities afforded them through articulation agreements. MCC continues to enhance its communication addressing articulation options for students. Additional information is available on MCC's Web site at <http://www.mccneb.edu/articulation/public.htm>.

Secondary Articulation Agreements

The following secondary articulation agreements exemplify MCC's commitment to integrity in serving the needs of high school students.

Secondary Dual Credit Agreements

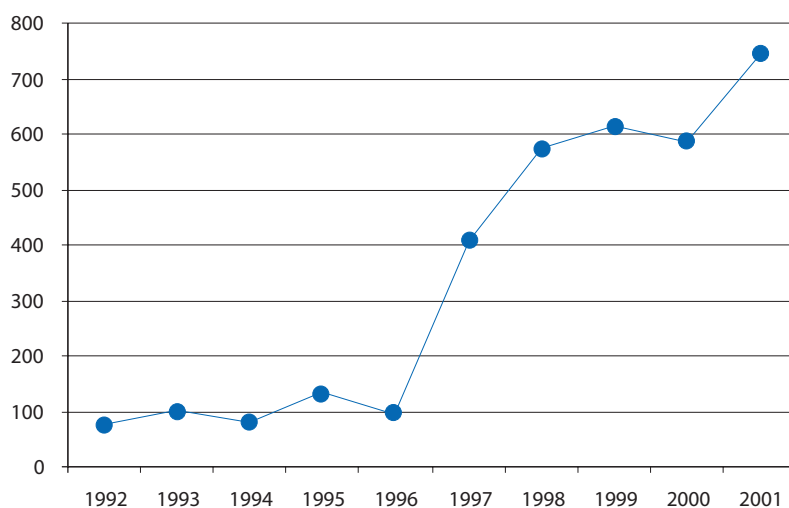
MCC conducts dual credit agreements with integrity by following formal procedures with written contracts and annual reviews. The purpose of MCC's dual credit program is to enhance the general employability skills of students and to provide dual credit in the advanced placement/standing of the postsecondary phase of the program.

Dual credit opportunities offer MCC courses to high school students at their local high school, at a MCC site, or at another off-campus site. All aspects of these courses, including instructors, course content, and student entrance skills, meet the same qualifications and requirements as all other MCC courses. After successfully completing dual credit courses, students receive transcript grades and earn MCC college credits. They then are able to apply these earned credits toward MCC graduation requirements or transfer them to other postsecondary institutions.

Several factors have influenced a significant increase in student participation. MCC's increased focus on building relationships with area high schools, a heightened community awareness of MCC offerings, and MCC's focus on quality instructors have all contributed to this participation increase.

The majority of the dual credit enrollment increase in 2001 can be attributed to the development of the Technical Academy. Nearly 50 juniors and seniors from more than 10 high schools participated in the Academy, which consisted of six vocational-technical programs. The Academy was established to provide high school students with a dual credit opportunity in technical programs not offered in their local high schools and to make better use of MCC lab space in the afternoons. Technical Academy students also receive employability skills training and participate in internships to gain additional exposure in these technical career fields.

Figure 12.2 Dual Credit Enrollment History



MCC has dual credit agreements with 15 school districts and/or high schools in the four-county area. Materials on MCC's dual credit program are available in the Resource Room and on MCC's Internet Web site (<http://www.mccneb.edu/academics/highschool.asp>).

Tech Prep

MCC's Tech Prep is a career preparation course of study that reflects current and future labor market demands by blending academic and vocational-technical competencies into its curricula. The program, a partnership between MCC, secondary schools, business and industry, community leaders, parents, and students, promotes seamless educational pathways.

In collaboration with 28 high schools in 19 of the 20 school districts within the four-county area, Tech Prep offers articulated deferred college credit courses taught by secondary personnel at the high schools. Courses are usually career-focused, entry-level, and technical in nature. Students receive college credit for earned credit when they enroll at MCC.

Of the public high school students within MCC's four-county region, 99.4% have access to Tech Prep services—31,041 students in grades 9-12. During 1999-2001, 312 educators and 1,047 students participated in individual Tech Prep activities, while another 54,000 students benefited through instructional materials and supplies made possible through Tech Prep. Very few students, however, have actually articulated course work to MCC through the Tech Prep agreements. Communicating the value of Tech Prep articulations to students remains a challenge. More information on MCC's Tech Prep can be found on its Web site (<http://www.mccneb.edu/techprep/default.htm>) and in the Resource Room.

Secondary Education Programs

Upward Bound Program

Upward Bound is a U.S. Department of Education TRIO program designed to serve 70 low income, first generation potential college students over a four-year period. The students are selected from two metropolitan high schools, Benson and South. Students participating in Upward Bound receive:

- Counseling and advising;
- Tutoring;
- Supplemental instruction;
- Cultural activities, workshops, tours, and trips;
- Part-time job assistance;
- Bimonthly Saturday activities;
- A six-week summer enrichment program;
- Financial assistance;
- Internships; and
- Career planning.

Opportunities/Jobs/Careers

Developed in 1990 as a partnership of schools, businesses, and community agencies, Opportunities/Jobs/Careers (OJC) is designed to enhance the relevance of school through career development opportunities for students. The OJC mission—“building partnerships between businesses and education to support career development of tomorrow's workforce”—reflects these goals.

OJC is dedicated to creating a community-wide effort that supports the career transitions of all K-12 and postsecondary students. OJC has built a strong partnership structure that promotes community-level problem solving as well as student-level activities.

OJC collaborates with hundreds of area employers, state and local employment services, local chambers of commerce, local labor unions and training programs, and other educational institutions.

OJC directs these partnerships to create a comprehensive community-wide approach to workforce development. This approach includes overarching systems change efforts as well as programmatic efforts. OJC has been instrumental in introducing sustainable programs

and concepts into the community such as the career academy model, mentoring programs, and other school-to-career projects.

Some of OJC's current initiatives include:

- **Omaha Career Network**, bringing area career development providers together through a Virtual Career Center and physical one-stop career centers. OJC also provides direct services to high school seniors and out-of-school youth through the Education for Employment and Talent Pool programs;
- **Urban and Rural Opportunities Grant (U/ROG)**, offering systemic and programmatic school-to-career support to the south Omaha community;
- **X files Initiatives**, bringing businesses together with schools to enhance student motivation and achievement, including career portfolios and OpportunityLink, a Web-based clearinghouse to connect students with businesses for real-world experiences;
- **Fremont School to Career Partnership**, providing career transition and development support to students and businesses in the Fremont community; and
- **ProPal Plus**, a long-term mentoring program for at-risk youth.

OJC is funded through state and federal grants and private foundations. It is responsible for providing regular programmatic and financial reports to funding agents such as the State of Nebraska, the Omaha Community Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Labor.

The OJC board of 25 businesses and education partners meets at least three times per year. Four OJC subcommittees (partnerships, marketing, membership, and special projects) meet on a regular basis. The board, a diverse group of representatives from the community, business, and schools, is committed to ensuring that OJC is staying on target and serving stakeholders. OJC publicizes its partnerships through school and community networks and through direct communications such as banners, Web sites, newsletters, flyers, and posters. Additional materials addressing OJC are located in the Resource Room.

MCC's well developed secondary articulation agreements and programs, such as Tech Prep and OJC, place the college in a good position to facilitate activity between secondary and postsecondary education and businesses. Because of the wide array of educational services and programs provided to current and prospective MCC students, sometimes these efforts are not always clearly understood by the larger college community. The college recognizes a need to improve coordination among the different MCC areas involved with K-12 outreach, to present a more unified front to the community, and to ensure that efforts and services are not duplicated. Documentation on OJC is available in the Resource Room.

Facilities Partnerships

MCC exhibits integrity in its participation in community projects as evidenced in the Sarpy Center/LaVista Public Library, the South Omaha Library project, the Fremont Center Partnership, and the Bellevue Lifelong Learning Center.

The **Sarpy Center/LaVista Public Library** project is the first collaboration of its kind in Nebraska between two public agencies in constructing a multiple-purpose building to serve the needs of the community.

MCC and the City of LaVista began collaborating on a joint building project in 1993 to provide additional space for MCC's growing enrollment in the area and LaVista's need for an expanded library. To avoid the cost of constructing separate buildings, MCC and LaVista pooled resources to build a \$9.1 million educational center/public library. MCC paid \$5.2 million of the project through tuition, fees, and state and local tax revenue. LaVista paid \$3.9 million of the project through the city's keno revenues and without the use of tax dollars. The facility officially opened in January 2000. The Sarpy Center/LaVista Public Library represents a new vision of the way governments can maintain their services to area residents and still save taxpayer money.

The **South Omaha Library** project is a proposal to collaborate with the City of Omaha in constructing a common library for residents and MCC students on the south Omaha campus. The project is still in the developmental stage.

The **Fremont Center** project will help the college expand its ability to service the Fremont area. MCC has had an educational facility in Fremont since 1987, which serves Dodge County. The space is leased in a commercial strip mall on the east edge of the city. The college recognizes that it will be necessary to establish a permanent presence in Dodge County for the future and that a more permanent facility would provide this necessary presence and opportunities to expand MCC's curricula for area residents.

In partnership with the City of Fremont and Fremont Public Schools, MCC purchased 10 acres of property in 2001 for a future educational facility. MCC anticipates building a facility that will serve as a regional educational facility with the presence of Nebraska Workforce Development and other community services in addition to traditional academic offerings. The college is in a position to expand its services to Dodge County residents and to incorporate this expansion into its long-range master facility plan currently underway.

The **Bellevue Lifelong Learning** project is a potential partnership with the Bellevue Public School District. MCC has purchased an option on 3.9 acres within a larger development, which will offer multiple community services. The City of Bellevue is the third largest city in the state and continues to grow. MCC currently has a presence on the Offutt Air Force Base, and a new but modest facility would provide an opportunity to continue serving active military students and their families. In addition, a new facility would allow MCC to expand some of its traditional academic offerings. The property is strategically located by a main thoroughfare, which could offer tremendous regional appeal to prospective students.

Continuing Education Off-Campus Locations

MCC collaborates with high schools, hospitals, public agencies, businesses, community centers and entities such as the YMCA, the Henry Doorly Zoo, and various restaurants for facility use. These collaborative agreements are essential to the successful operation of continuing education classes. Refer to the Resource Room for a complete list of off-campus locations.

Integrity in Action

MCC has recently taken formal steps to ensure that decisions are reached through ethical practices.

Advisory Committee on Ethics and Conduct of the Board

In May 2001, the Board of Governors approved a resolution to create an Advisory Committee on Ethics and Conduct of the Board. The duties of the committee are to:

- Promote civility among board members;
- Assist in the mediation of differences among board members;
- Review allegations of possible unethical conduct by a board member or members; and
- Provide recommendation for appropriate remedial measures to be taken by the board in situations where the committee has determined unethical conduct by a board member or members.

Two board policies addressing the Ethics Committee were passed in May 2001. The policies address past complications in board relations. However, subsequent improvements in board relations have occurred since the resolution was approved and adopted. For example, the board has participated in several retreats, which have helped in strengthening their relationships.

Whistleblower Policy and College Ombudsperson

The whistleblower policy, passed in December 2000, encourages employees to disclose information addressing possible violations of law and fiscal waste or mismanagement and prohibits reprisals for disclosures. In conjunction with this policy, a college ombudsperson position was established to analyze problems of law, administration, and public safety. The college ombudsperson position, filled in March 2001, is an independent contractor appointed by the Board of Governors and serves as a check and balance in the college's grievance system. The purpose of the position and procedures is to ensure that the college operates in accordance with the law and without fraud, fiscal waste, or financial mismanagement. If this procedure is valued, then conscientious service of employees should be encouraged and disclosures of improprieties may be made without reprisal.

The ombudsperson reviews a filed written allegation of wrongdoing by an employee and completes a preliminary investigation within 30 working days of the filing. If evidence supports the allegation of wrongdoing, a formal investigation may be conducted. At the end of the investigation, the employee who filed the allegation receives a written notification of the findings. Additional information is available in the Resource Room.

MCC and Diversity

MCC provides numerous venues in which diversity is explored, celebrated, and addressed. Special attempts have been made to integrate and value diversity throughout the



institution since 1992. An emphasis on students and student programs, policies and procedures, employees, and facilities are just some of the venues utilized. The table on the following page lists areas where concerted efforts have been made to address various aspects of diversity.

MCC approaches diversity from a number of perspectives. Not only is race, ethnicity, age, and gender diversity addressed but also divergent thinking, disability challenges, and learning modalities are included in the college's programs and policies for all.

By providing an array of services such as the Single Parent/Homemaker program, the AIM for Success program, and the campus learning centers to support student success, MCC's diverse population is increasing. These support services have led to an increase in under-represented groups. For example, in the fall 2001, MCC's student minority population was 21.4% of the total student population, compared to 18% in 1997. During the same time, the total credit student population consistently held to around 25,500 per year. While the total student population appears to have been steady over the last four years, the minority student population has increased 18.9%. The following are two examples of MCC's approaches to

diversity:

Diversity and Equity Officer

In a position created March 2002, the diversity and equity officer coordinates efforts to advance MCC's commitment to social equity and multiculturalism. The diversity and equity officer has a number of responsibilities to help ensure the college's commitment.

Diversity Steering Panel

The Diversity Steering Panel (DSP), established in 1992, was created to fulfill one of the college strategic goals at that time, "Increase the commitment to valuing diversity and developing a global perspective." DSP was part of the college's overall action plan to meet that goal. Its purpose was to provide the vision of the college's direction and energies in bringing about a more diverse and tolerant workforce and student population.

Since its inception, the DSP has evolved from a vision-directed panel to overseeing diversity-related projects such as input into professional development offerings of diversity-related workshops. DSP is also a resource that assists employees and students in bringing diversity-related issues to the CAC Steering Panel.

Creation of the booklet, *Understanding Diversity: A Study Guide for Individual Reflections, Commitment, and Action*; providing input to the college calendar and Martin Luther King, Jr.

holiday activities; and the formation of study guides for discussion about diversity and valuing diversity at MCC are a few of DSP's accomplishments since 1992. However, the DSP remains challenged to address the complex issues related to diversity in a coordinated and systematic manner.

Diversity and Employee Perceptions

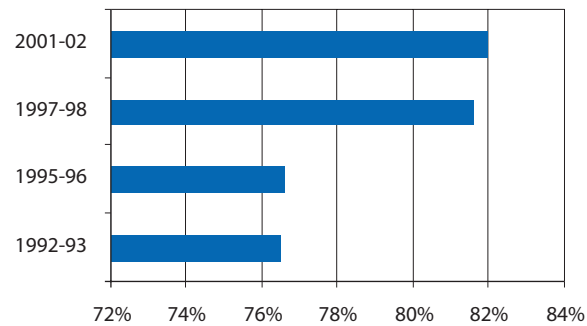
Throughout the last four employee climate studies, employee perceptions of the college's actions toward cultural diversity have improved. The percentage of employees who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement, "Cultural diversity at Metro is valued," increased from 77% in the 1992-93 survey to 82% in the 2001-02 survey.

Table 12.3 Diversity Efforts at MCC

| Community Partnerships | Policies and Procedures | Student Services | Student Programs | Employees | Facilities |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC) | Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) | Special Needs Student Retention | English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) | Employee Assistance Program (EAP) | ADA Classrooms Buildings/Grounds |
| Program Advisory Committees | Affirmative Action | Mentoring Disadvantaged Students | Adult Basic Education (ABE) | Wellness Women and Minorities | Site Management Signage |
| Minority Contracts | Title VII | Single Parent/Homemaker | General Education Diploma (GED) | Age | |
| Little Priest Tribal College (LPTC) | Board policies | Tutorial/Learning Centers | International Curriculum | Physically Challenged | |
| Opportunities/Jobs/Careers (OJC) | Procedures Memorandums | Assessment and Advising | Sudanese Community | Professional Development | |
| Cultural Events | | Recruitment | Upward Bound | Diversity Steering Panel | |
| Adopt-a-School | | Career Network Centers | OCN | College Action Committees (CAC) | |
| Workforce Development | | Telephone Registration | Dual Credit | Councils | |
| Local Schools and Public Facilities | | | Tech Prep | | |
| | | | Global Education | | |
| | | | Developmental Education (Title III) | | |
| | | | AIM for Success | | |
| | | | Pathways | | |
| | | | Noncredit/Continuing Education | | |
| | | | Alternative Learning Solutions (ALS) | | |

This increase indicates that more employees think the college demonstrates its valuing of cultural diversity.

Figure 12.4 Valued Cultural Diversity



Conclusion

MCC makes concerted efforts in its internal and external communications and actions to achieve integrity. The college's publications, its secondary and postsecondary articulation agreements, and its potential site partnerships within surrounding communities are demonstrations of these efforts.

As a community college, MCC strives to be community focused. It reaches out within the community to provide exemplary programs and services to prospective and current MCC students. However, along with striving to serve the community with integrity, the college is challenged as the organization is becoming more complex. As with any growing organization, the responsibilities of communicating in ethical ways and of creating an organizational structure with policies and procedures that provide direction, not dictation, remain an ongoing priority.