

We Pride Ourselves

- *MCC has mature planning and operations processes to continue as a successful organization through periods of transition.*
- *MCC's strategic initiatives are more visible to the college community and have served to generate a new excitement about the future.*
- *MCC's financial stability gives the college numerous development options for the future.*

We Pride Ourselves

- *To address the challenges identified through the self-study process.*
- *To implement the institutional effectiveness process and facilitate a culture of evidence.*

Chapter 11

Criterion 4—Organizational Stability and Planning

Introduction

Previous chapters exhibit how Metropolitan Community College (MCC) is manifesting its mission and purposes. Chapter 11 addresses Criterion 4 and MCC's sustainability of its mission and purposes. This quality is exemplified in MCC's leadership and institutional stability, its institutional improvement, and its ability to build on outcomes assessment. The chapter also addresses how the self-study process is leading the institution to becoming an improved and more effective organization.

Leadership Stability

Board of Governors Leadership

During the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 academic years, conflict arose among some of the incumbent members of the Board of Governors and with the former college president. This turmoil, at times, threatened the board's ability to function successfully. While board business continued to be conducted, the environment created distrust and strain among board members, staff, and administration.

Since January 2001, the board has established a strong cohesiveness in working together and with the new president. The board has demonstrated a good, stable environment in internal board relations and in the relationships between board members and the new college president. A board that is a mix of incumbents and new members brings a high level of energy and excitement about MCC's future. However, an orientation process for new members could enhance their effectiveness. As a group, the board members are becoming more cohesive. Mutual respect is exhibited even in the face of disagreements.

Board members have participated in a number of board development activities focused on role clarification with the new president in the past year. However, the board needs to continue to clarify its role as a policy-focused body.

President

In July 2001, the Board of Governors appointed Jerry Moskus, Ph.D., as the college's third president. Before coming to MCC, Dr. Moskus served as president of Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon, since 1990. He follows Dr. J. Richard Gilliland, who held the position since 1981.

Executive Team Leadership

During the 10 years from 1992 through 2001, the administrative organization of the college evolved in an attempt to match available and potential staff members with the needs of the various college stakeholders. Throughout these changes, the Executive Team membership gradually expanded to provide a more inclusive representation of college areas.

From 1992 to 1993, the president's cabinet consisted of an executive assistant (responsible for Human Resources, the MCC Foundation, Enrollment Management, Planning and Development, and Instructional Resources Technology), a vice president of Community and Economic Development (responsible for Marketing and Public Relations), a vice president of Educational Services (responsible for the academic divisions), and a vice president of Finance and Administrative Services (responsible for the physical plant, Finance and Accounting, Purchasing, Computer Services, and Financial Aid and Veterans' Affairs).

In 1998, a provost position was created, which was changed to executive vice president in 2001. Most major areas of the college report to this position.

Currently, the president's Executive Team is composed of the executive vice president, the vice president of Educational Services, the vice president of Student and Instructional Services, the executive dean of Campus and Student Services, the dean of Planning and Institutional Advancement, the executive college business officer, the dean of Continuing Education, the diversity and equity officer, the director of Public Relations, and the College Action Committee chair.

Additional opportunities allowed the college to maintain its operational successes, which is a testimony to MCC's employees. Additionally, under the current leadership of the president and the executive vice president, the Executive Team organization has stabilized. Under this enhanced leadership structure, the college is in a strengthened position to better address constituent needs. Refer to the Resource Room for a historical perspective of MCC's organizational and administrative structure.

Educational Services Leadership

The Educational Services area went through a transformation in 1999. Prior to September 1998, the Educational Services organizational structure consisted of the vice president of

Educational Affairs and nine division chairs. In summer 1998, the vice president of Educational Affairs resigned. This resulted in a reorganization of the academic area, which was announced in May 1999.

The position of vice president of Educational Affairs was replaced with the dean of Educational Services position. In addition, four associate dean positions were created, and the nine division chair positions were eliminated. These positions were later changed to vice president of Educational Services and academic deans. Five project coordinator positions also were created, assigned to each dean to assist in the daily operations and management of their program areas. A fifth project coordinator reports to the vice president of Educational Services to facilitate special areawide projects; a sixth project coordinator position was created in January 2001 and assigned to the Communications and Industrial Technology dean addressing vocational trades. The dean of Educational Services title was elevated to vice president of Educational Services in September 2001, and the four associate dean titles were elevated to dean in May 2002.

Student Services Leadership

During the 1992 NCA site visit, the Student Services structure was much dispersed compared to what it is today. The director of Enrollment Management reported to the executive assistant to the president and the director of Financial Aid and Veteran Services reported to the vice president of Finance and Administrative Services. A position entitled division chairperson of Counseling and Academic Advising reported to the vice president of Educational Services. Between 1992 and 1995, no one administrator was responsible for coordinating the enrollment management function of student services, financial aid, counseling, and academic advising.

The dean of Student Services position was created in 1995, which brought about a more cohesive approach to serving student needs. The Student Services dean reported to the executive assistant to the president, with the director of Financial Aid and Veteran Services and the director of Enrollment Management reporting to the new dean. Three positions of Campus Student Service directors, assigned to each of the three campuses and reporting to the dean of Student Services, replaced the position of division chair of Counseling and Academic Advising. The campus directors' responsibilities were the campus student services staff, including counselors and academic advisors.

In 1996, the dean of Student Services and the Student Services division began reporting to the vice president of Student and Instructional Services. However, in 1999 the Student Services division began reporting to the newly created provost position. Also in 1999, the Campus Services directors' responsibilities expanded to campus management responsibilities for all permanent delivery sites and the newly created career services coordinators. To better reflect the responsibilities, the dean of Student Services' title was elevated to executive dean of Campus and Student Services in May 2002.

Currently, other administrative positions reporting to the executive dean are the director of TRIO programs, the coordinator of the Offutt Education Center, the director of the Sarpy Center, and the coordinator of Tech Prep.

Since the last self-study, the various Student Services departments have been consolidated into the Student Services division of the college. Under this consolidation, Student Services is now responsible for providing a multitude of student services to new, current, and returning students. Since the creation of the dean of Student Services position in 1995, the college now has a division that works collaboratively to coordinate and provide needed services for MCC students.

Student and Instructional Services Leadership

In 1993, the Office of Instructional Services and the associate vice president position, which reported to the president, were created to manage the newly established division. Included in the office were the Continuing Education, Instructional Resources Technology, and International and Intercultural Education departments. The Office of Instructional Services became the Office of Student and Instructional Services (SIS) in 1996, with the elevation of the title of associate vice president to vice president. The Student Services division was also added to SIS in 1996.

In 2001, the vice president of SIS began reporting to the executive vice president. The departments currently reporting to the Office of Student and Instructional Services include Continuing Education, Nebraska Corrections Education Connection, Management Information Systems, Information Technology Services, Technology Enhanced Learning, Library Services, and International and Intercultural Education.

Although the structure of Student and Instructional Services has changed numerous times over the years, the SIS structure and composition of departments within the division has remained unchanged for the last three years.

Finance and Administrative Leadership

In 1992, the vice president of Finance and Administrative Services was responsible for Physical Plant, Finance and Accounting, Purchasing, Computer Services, and Financial Aid and Veterans Services. Over the last 10 years, Computer Services and Financial Aid/Veteran Services were reassigned to other areas. The responsibilities of the Human Resources department were assigned to the area in 1999.

Physical Plant was changed to Facilities Management. Finance and Accounting was renamed Financial Management, and the budget management duties were separated out to the newly created position of coordinator of budget and projects.

Purchasing was changed to Administrative Management, a more inclusive title indicating the wide array of responsibilities covered, including purchasing, accounts payable, risk management, central stores, and public safety.

The dean of Finance and Administrative Management has led the area since 1996. The title was changed in 2002 to the executive college business officer to better reflect the duties of the position. The director of Administrative Management, director of Facilities Management, director of Financial Management, director of Human Resources, and the coordinator of budget and projects all report to the executive college business officer.

Planning and Institutional Advancement Leadership

From 1992 to 1995, the Office of College Planning and Development was under the leadership of a director, reporting to the assistant to the president. The College Planning and Development division consisted of Research and Analytical Studies, Grants Development and Management, the MCC Foundation, and Personnel Development.

In 2002, a new dean was announced and the department's title changed to Planning and Institutional Advancement (PIA). PIA is currently comprised of Institutional Research, Personnel Development, Grants Development and Management, the Workforce Development Institute™, MCC Foundation, and Planning.

Institutional Stability

Financial

MCC maintains its financial stability through resourceful management of three primary funding sources: property tax, state appropriations, and tuition, which collectively account for approximately 97 percent of its total revenue.

Property tax and state appropriations work in conjunction with each other. The college has the ability to set the property tax rate, dependent upon its income from state appropriations. The state sets an unofficial ratio of state appropriations, property tax, and tuition, along with other income, at a 40-40-20 ratio respectively.

In the past, if state appropriations furnished more than 40 percent, it would lower the property tax rate. The combined state appropriations and property tax have accounted for 74 percent of the college's total income. The combined rate has been lower than the projected 80 percent because the college generated more than 20 percent through investments and tuition.

Over the past several years through prudent fiscal management, the college has been able to generate significant cash reserves. Reserves have earned reasonable interest for the college and have provided needed cash when receipts from property tax lag due to an increase in rates and during the delay in July and August before the state appropriations payments begin in September. The reserves have provided a source of stability during the current economic downturn.

Future Predictions on Revenue Stability and Changes

Although the State of Nebraska has had years of solid financial resource growth, the state is currently experiencing a significant revenue shortfall from earlier forecasts. This has caused all governmental bodies in Nebraska to reassess their spending priorities and be concerned about future economic conditions. The actual percentage of revenue shortfall has yet to be determined, but the conservative nature of Nebraska should allow the state to avoid the severe deficits that some other states have experienced. The governor has called the Unicameral Legislature back into session in late July 2002 to further address the revenue problems.

MCC is able to hold and maintain a healthy cash reserve balance to assist during economic downturns and unexpected occurrences.

Future legislative support for community colleges appears to be strong, based on recent legislation passed over the past few years and only mild revenue reductions during the most recent legislative session while addressing revenue shortfalls. MCC’s four-county service area has approximately 34% of the valuation of the entire state and tends to have the greatest property valuation increases of all the Nebraska community colleges.

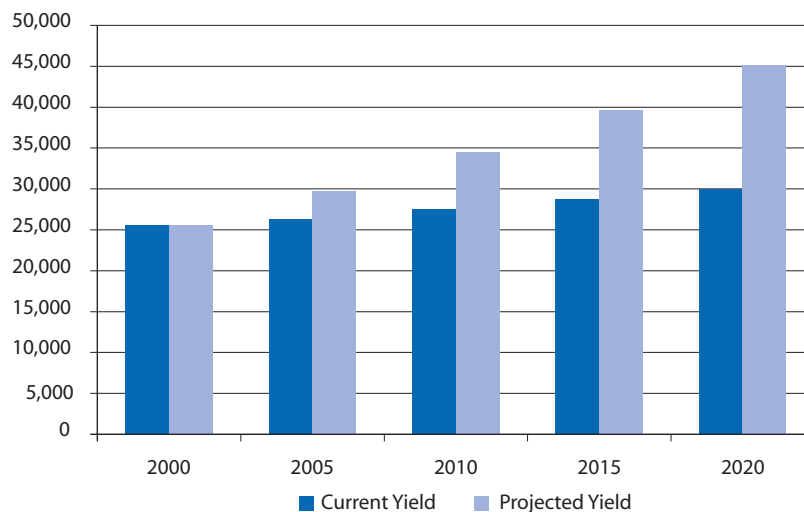
Currently, MCC has the lowest general fund tax rate and may grow revenue consistent with enrollment growth without a significant tax rate change due to the progressive state aid formula and valuation increases.

Student Enrollment Projections

Since the last master facilities plan was completed, MCC has continued to experience enrollment growth, although not at the same rate as the mid-1990s. Overall, total annual unduplicated headcount enrollment has increased by 15% between 1996 and 2001 with an increase of 4.38% in credit and a decrease of 4.67% in noncredit. Over 37,500 individuals were served in credit and noncredit classes during the 2000-2001 academic year.

Annual unduplicated headcount data are important to evaluate and project needs and requirements for services. In contrast, credit hour and FTE data are important measures for identifying future space requirements.

Figure 11.1 Projected Market Yield–Unduplicated Annual Credit Headcount



Projected Enrollment Yields

MCC’s market yield of the four-county service area is 1.8% for the fall quarter. Annually, it is 4%. Projections include a constant market yield as well as a more aggressive market yield for consideration.

Projected Continuing Education Enrollment Yields

Using a similar grid in estimating credit enrollment projections through the year 2020, the Continuing Education noncredit division shows a conservative estimated yield of 2.21% based on an unduplicated headcount of 14,185 for the 2000-2001 fiscal year. There is also a more aggressive market yield pattern identified through the year 2020.

Assumptions for Maintaining Current Yields

- The college has an excellent program base that has potential for expansion.
- A large-scale capital construction program will increase the MCC's capacity for further serving existing markets and attracting new populations.
- There will be a continued relationship with the University of Nebraska-Omaha whereby an increasing number of prospective students are being advised to begin their education at MCC.
- Following national trends, the tuition value of MCC is gaining increasing attention to high school graduates, and the college is becoming more of a college of choice.
- MCC has the capacity to continue developing technology-based solutions for services and maintain a personal touch to the student experience.
- All things remaining constant, enrollment yield is expected to remain stable or increase.
- While there will be efficiencies of scale, technology-based solutions for services, and budgetary restrictions, it is anticipated the employee growth will be consistent with credit enrollment (unduplicated headcount) growth.

Possibilities for Increasing Current Yields

- New program potential in the health careers and occupational programs, in general, a continued strengthening of technical programs and a continued increase in transfer-oriented students all provide potential for reaching new markets and increasing market yield.
- Alternative delivery, and online delivery in particular, has great potential at MCC. Unlike most other institutions, MCC does not charge additional tuition for online courses making it a very viable option for students.
- Customized training contracts have increased dramatically in recent years with no signs of declining.

Unknowns

- Information technology industry, locally and nationally;
- Potential partnerships and strategic alliances that are yet undeveloped;
- Future industries that may relocate or develop in the Omaha area; and

- Increasing noncredit offerings utilizing college facilities. (A shift in this philosophy might increase the community exposure of college programs and services, potentially influencing a greater number of noncredit students enrolling in credit programs.)

MCC Planning Process

MCC has had an institutional planning process in place since the early 1980's. The process occurred every three years, moving to a two-year cycle in more recent years. Typically, each cycle began with a large-scale planning event involving selected representatives from business and industry, community agencies, other educational institutions (K-14), college faculty and staff, and students. Participants met in various theme-based groups to review current practices and to explore possible new directions for the college over the next 2-3 year period. Participants were provided a wide variety of resource documents such as institutional data, program descriptions, and general college information.

Following the planning events, a summary/plan that included college goals and priority actions was produced, disseminated college-wide, and used as a guide for priorities in college areas. At the conclusion of each planning cycle, a summary report of accomplishments was generated.

The institutional planning process has continued to move towards becoming less cumbersome and more meaningful to the institution. Beginning in 1999, a planning task force was formed and charged with revising the institutional planning process. The group was comprised of members from Educational Services, Planning and Institutional Advancement, Finance and Administrative Management, Provost's Office, Student and Instructional Services, Workforce Development, Student Services, and Facilities Management areas.

During the transitional period between college presidents, the goals of the group were to:

- Assess current planning practices and to explore ways to simplify and streamline the process;
- Make it more inclusive of all segments of the college community; and
- Provide for definable and measurable outcomes.

Because of the planning task force's work, a revised planning process was launched in the fall 2000. Thirty-two representatives from the college, including employees, students, administrators, faculty, and board members, reviewed the current mission statement, purposes, and the seven 1999-2001 strategic goals. Because of the review, the seven strategic goals were consolidated, revised, and renamed strategic initiatives. The Leadership Council then edited the mission statement and the five strategic initiatives, which were subsequently approved by the Executive Team.

Given the revised mission statement and the five strategic initiatives, 11 college areas, led by trained facilitators from each area, created area action plans that supported at least one strategic initiative. The 11 areas used creative ways to include employees in the process of identifying priority area action plans. The planning task force reviewed proposed area

action plans, and then forwarded them to the Executive Team for final approval and publication.

The 2001-2003 strategic initiatives were incorporated into the 2001-2002 budget guidelines distributed to all employees. As each area developed budget requests for the next fiscal year, items linked to area action plans were considered for priority funding. The college community was represented in some phase of the 2001-03 planning process. Since the budgeting process considered area action plans in the decision-making, every employee had the opportunity to take an active interest and participate.

Throughout 2001-03, quarterly updates of each area plan are submitted to the Executive Team for review. The quarterly updates are posted on the college's Intranet. In addition, throughout the 2001-02 academic year area action plans have been a focus at every administrative staff meeting.

As defined in the 2001-03 process, the Executive Team reviewed area action plans at the beginning of the 2002-03 budget cycle to determine relevancy and if any adjustments were needed. It was determined that no changes were needed at this time. A review of the process will begin as part of the continuous planning cycle beginning in the fall 2003.

The revised institutional planning process was designed to be continuous and highly visible as it guides the institution. With the introduction of a simplified, streamlined process, college priorities were more easily communicated, employees were more involved, and the outcomes were more defined and manageable.

One of MCC's goals is to continue improving its planning systems. The rapid growth of student enrollment and expansion of facilities over the last 15 years has forced major changes; however, many old systems have not caught up with the current environment. For example, the current budgeting process has not directly integrated outcomes assessment in setting priorities. The college recognizes that these outdated systems need to be addressed in the planning and budgeting processes.

Additionally, one ongoing aspect of MCC's planning process was environmental scanning. From 1995 to 2000, the purpose of environmental scanning was to allow faculty and staff to identify trends that could potentially affect the college. Scanning summaries from two college-wide sessions per year were published internally identifying potential priority trends.

More recently, environmental scanning session attendance has decreased, and minimal substantive information has been generated. In addition, the results have not been formally integrated into the future decision-making processes of the college.

During the 2001-2002 academic year, alternative strategies of a more informal nature were used. Currently, the college is reviewing its scanning process and possible alternatives.

Educational Services Area Action Plan

The Educational Services area action plan is a key component in the planning process and an exemplary example of area planning at the college. (Refer to the booklet, *Educational*

Services: a Framework for Academic Planning, in the Resource Room.) It is comprised of 17 separate learning initiatives. These priorities represent the outcomes of departmental meetings held during winter quarter 2001 and facilitated by the vice president of Educational Services, deans of each area, the director of Facilities Management, and the coordinator of Facilities Management Planning. The department meetings gave faculty and administrative staff an opportunity to create a future planning model that would address the five learning initiatives earlier identified by the faculty as strategic directions for the Educational Services area:

- Mission-driven;
- Curriculum-focused;
- Learner-centered;
- Partnership rich; and
- Inclusive culture.

Draft documents from each of the department planning meetings were prepared and forwarded to faculty for review and modification before incorporated into the Educational Services area plan. The 17 learning initiatives are not only guidelines for the Educational Services budget planning, but also priority action steps for each department during 2001-2003. The vice president of Educational Services and academic deans periodically review progress throughout the year toward these goals identified in the action plans. Some accomplishments that have resulted from this process include development of the Technical Academy for high school students, refinement of course scheduling, major advancement in the outcomes assessment program, redevelopment of the Weekend College, and a New Faculty Institute. The division sees great potential now that the revised planning systems are in place.

With facilities staff attending each meeting, faculty provided input on facility needs for immediate items as well as possibilities and ideas to be incorporated into the master facility planning process.

During the beginning of 2002, the vice president of Educational Services and academic deans met with faculty to review each departmental action plan as a review of accomplishments to date and possible modification needs. In place of facilities staff, the executive dean of Campus and Student Services also attended each meeting to discuss student services issues with faculty members.

Faculty members have been supportive of the Educational Services planning process. For the first time the planning process in Educational Services has engaged all faculty in focusing on planning as it directly relates to their own programs and institutional areas.

Institutional Effectiveness

In December 2000, an Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Committee consisting of faculty, Student Services, Financial and Administrative Services, Institutional Research, and Planning and Institutional Advancement representatives was formed to design MCC's institutional effectiveness process.

The committee's purpose was to create a system that defines, measures, and reports institutional effectiveness information for use in planning and budgeting. The committee's first institutional effectiveness report was published in February 2002, along with an executive summary.

The most significant result of this process was the acknowledgment of gaps in data collection systems. Although the data is generally available, the specific collection of meaningful data lacks a systematic approach.

To align more closely the IE process with budgeting and planning, the IE report will be published annually in November. In addition, monthly reports of key IE area of focus will be presented to the Board of Governors beginning in the fall 2002. See the Resource Room for all supporting evidence.

A standing Institutional Effectiveness Committee to sustain the effectiveness process was established in April 2002. The standing committee's charge is to continue the development of the original committee's focus. This committee will provide MCC ongoing capacity to examine systems and processes and the need for modifications within the institution.

Building on Outcomes Assessment

As part of MCC's institutional effectiveness process, in its initial phase, outcomes assessment results have been identified as the major indicator of student learning. These results, along with other data from yearly educational program reviews, will drive improvements and modifications in Educational Services.

The Outcome Assessment Committee and its accomplishments, as mentioned in Chapter 10, Criterion 3—Outcomes Assessment, are viable demonstrations of the college's commitment to sustaining assessment. Faculty-driven, the committee's purpose is to review all program outcomes and to provide assistance for improvement where needed; to develop a system of support for all faculty in sustaining assessment; and to assure that the assessment implementation is successful.

Improvement through the Self-Study Process

MCC's self-study has improved the institution throughout the process and will make it a more effective institution in years to follow. Because of the two-year self-study process, the institution made some system changes. Much dialogue occurred among employees, and possibilities for improvement were discussed in committees as evidence was gathered. Some recommended changes were made because of those discussions and evidence. For example, based on some of the self-study committees' findings, addressing the improvement of tracking data at the department/division levels has begun. Additionally, the Executive Team closely reviewed the self-study findings and are developing strategies and creating institutional actions plans to address each identified challenge.

Drafts of the self-study report were electronically available on the Intranet throughout the process. To assure accuracy, parts of the draft were distributed to a variety of stakeholders who made recommendations for improvement.

After the report was final, an executive summary was distributed to all employees. Additional specific lists of strengths and challenges not included in the final report will be forwarded to appropriate divisions and departments for consideration. In addition, the Executive Team will create institutional goals based on the self-study's major findings.

During the academic year preceding the site visit, all employees were required to participate in a professional development session designed to examine the challenges of the college over the last 10 years. As part of the session, drafts of each criterion's list of strengths and challenges were shared. Discussion of those lists was encouraged, and employees were asked for feedback. Employee awareness of the self-study process and the report findings were enhanced because of this session.

As part of MCC's institutional effectiveness (IE) process, one of the future measurements identified to be incorporated into the IE process and support the indicator, "The institution is operationally effective," is the formal feedback from the self-study. In the coming year following the site visit, the IE Committee will address recommendations made by the Higher Learning Commission.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates how MCC continues to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness through leadership and institutional stability, institutional improvement, and the systems in place to build on assessment. Even though the college has gone through major leadership and organizational changes since the last self-study, daily operations have continued to develop and students have continued to learn.

MCC is in a strong position to move forward into the future. As the college grows, the infrastructure currently in place will help maintain the college's previous success.

MCC has the fiscal strength to continue offering exceptional learning experiences for students. Additionally, the self-study has been an impetus for organizational improvement.