

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

**Muskegon Community College
Muskegon, MI**

October 25-27, 2010

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit to Muskegon Community College (MCC) was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation.

B. Organizational Context

For more than eight decades, the College has served its diverse communities and has become a tradition in the lives of the people it serves. Multiple generations have sent their children to Muskegon Community College to begin the journey through higher education. As a post-secondary institution, MCC offers both baccalaureate transfer associate degree programs and associate of applied science and certificate programs in career and technical fields of study. Students enrolled in transfer programs of study may complete the first two years of a baccalaureate degree in majors within various liberal arts and sciences disciplines. Students may complete associate of applied science degrees and certificates in a variety of technical areas.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

The district is characterized by high unemployment rates and low educational attainment levels. The majority of MCC's students are in-district residents (Muskegon County). Approximately 30% of students come from the counties which lie along the Muskegon County borders. These students pay a higher tuition rate than the Muskegon County residents and this limits the College's outreach beyond its traditional service district.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

None

E. Distance Education Reviewed

Examination of the course schedule, MCC catalog and interviews with both the IT Director and the Vice President for Academic Affairs all clearly indicate that Muskegon Community College has not implemented degree or certificate programs with more than 50% distance components. At this point in its history, MCC has only 8% of its course bank online, does not use ITV, and uses only a few hybrid models; none of these distance deliveries, even taken together, constitutes distance delivery under the current definition.

F. Interactions with Constituencies

- Dr. Dale Nesbary, President
- Joe Doyle, Vice President of Administration
- Teresa Sturru, Vice President of Academic Affairs
- Janie Brooks, Vice President of Student Services
- HLC Self-Study Steering Committee
- Thomas O'Brien, Director of Business and Industry Center
- Trynette Lottie-Harps, Dean of Continuing Education and Program Outreach
- Tina Dee, Director of Community Relations
- Anne Meilof, Director of Institutional Research/Development
- Bruce Wierda, Director of Financial Aid
- Academic Department Chairpersons (10 attended)
- Admissions Staff
- Sally Birkam, Director of Student Life and Community Outreach

- Jean Roberts, Director of Records and Registration
- Community Members
- Staff – Clerical, Custodial, APS (57 attended)
- Michael Alstrom, Chief Information Officer
- Success Center Faculty (3 attended)
- Assessment Committee (10 attended)
- Physical Plant/Maintenance Staff (4 attended)
- Counseling Faculty
- Financial Aid Staff
- Upward Bound Staff
- Faculty (37 attended)
- Human Resources Staff
- Business Office Staff
- Rosemary Zink, Director of Finance
- Martin McDermott, Director of Athletics
- Faculty, Staff and Students (24 attended)
- Students (17 attended)
- Faculty (14 attended)
- Dorothy Lester, Board Chair
- Board of Trustees (6 attended)
- Dean of Instruction and Assessment
- Coordinator of the Lift Institute
- College Futurist
- Instructional Designer

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

- Academic Master Plan (AMP) Priorities; 2008-09, 2007-08
- Academic Master Plan (AMP) Progress Report, August 2008
- Academic Program/Course Forms: Opportunity Proposal Outline, New Course Proposal, Course Revision, Course Syllabus Format
- Accreditation Letters; Nursing, Respiratory Therapy
- Achieving the Dream (AtD) Designation Information; 5-12-10 Press Release, Field Guide
- Advertising Portfolio
- Advisory Committees – Academic Departments:
 - Computer Information Systems
 - Criminal Justice
 - Marketing/Management
 - Office Systems Education
 - Education
 - Nursing
 - Respiratory Therapy
 - Automotive Technology
 - Computer Aided Design
 - Graphic Design
 - Machining Materials
 - Electricity/Electronics
 - Welding
- AIDU Reports 2009

- Art and Graphic Design Club
 - Assessment Committee: 2004-2010 Meeting Agendas, Minutes, Subcommittee Minutes (Information Literacy, Student Tracking System)
- Assessment Progress Report (Prepared for the HLC, March 2004)
- Assessment Updates (General Education), 1991-2002
- Barnes and Noble College Bookstores, Inc. Contract
- Biology Club
- Black Student Alliance (BSA)
- Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
- Board of Trustees Orientation Materials
- Board of Trustees Policy Manual (Rev. 10/01/2008)
- Board of Trustees' Self Evaluation 2008
- Budgets:
 - 2010-2011
 - 2009-2010
 - 2008-2009
 - 2007-2008
 - 2006-2007
- *Campus Connections* Employee Newsletter: Various printed samples, 2007-2010
- Campus Master Plan 2000 (Also referred to as *Facilities Plan*)
- CCbenefits Study: *The Economic Contribution of Muskegon Community College*, June 27, 2006
- Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), now LIFT Institute: Library/Resource List
- Christian Fellowship
- Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs):
 - Winter 2010
 - Winter 2009
 - Fall 2008
 - Winter 2008
- Computing and Technology Club
- Creative Dining Services, Inc. Contract
- Discipline Review Guidelines
- Discipline Reviews (Liberal Arts):
 - College Success Center Writing ('04)
 - College Success Center Reading ('06)
 - Communications ('06)
 - English Composition ('05)
 - English Literature ('10)
 - French ('07)
 - Geography ('03)
 - German ('06)
 - Life Science ('04)
 - Math 035-036 ('08)
 - Math 040-050 ('04)
 - Philosophy ('05)
 - Political Science ('09)
 - Spanish ('05)
 - Visual Arts ('10)

- Distance Education Course Forms: Online Course Proposal, Distance Education Rubric
- Employee Assistance Programs/Wellness Activities: Tobacco-free information
- Employment Contract: Administrative/Professional/Support Staff, August 2009
- Employment Contract: Educational Support Staff 2007-2010
- Employment Contract: Faculty Association 2009-2012
- Employment Handbook: Adjunct Faculty Handbook – Pay Rates, Revised August 16, 2006
- English Department Assessment Documents
- Enrollment Management Plan 2008-2011
- Enrollment Management Plan Update 2008-2011 (September 15, 2009)
- Facilities Audit (October 2, 2006)
- Faculty Survey Reports, January 2009: Results for full-time and adjunct faculty; Information Literacy Survey Results
- Ferris State University (SCHE)
- Financial Statements:
 - YE 6/30/09
 - YE 6/30/08
 - YE 6/30/07
 - YE 6/30/06
 - YE 6/30/05
- FIT Presentation by Jean Roberts
- Gay Straight Alliance
- Geo Club
- German Exchange Program (2008, 2009, 2010 Information); Table #10
- GolfScape, Inc. Contract
- Grand Valley State University (SCHE)
- Hendrik Meijer Library Reference Survey Results, Fall 2009
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Hispanic Student Organization (HSO)
- Honors Program Guidelines; <http://www.muskegoncc.edu/pages/2251.asp>
- Information Technology Council Minutes
- Information Technology Strategic Plan 2007-2010
- Information Technology Strategic Plan Refresh (February 23, 2009)
- Information Technology Tactical Plan 2007-2010
- Institute for Healing Racism; <http://www.muskegoncc.edu/pages 2875.asp>
- International Affairs Organization
- International Club
- James L. Stevenson Center for Higher Education
- Kasey Hartz Natural Area
- Lakeshore Business & Industrial Service Center (10/08)
- Literacy Magazine (*River Voices* – magazine rack)
- Love in Action; <http://www.muskegoncc.edu/pages 2910.asp>
- MAPP – Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (aka *Academic Profile*): 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006
- MCC Campus Republicans
- MCC Catalogs
- MCC Mission and Vision Statement

- MCC Organizational Chart
- MCC Staff Development; 2009-10 List from Conference and Catering, Math Workshops, Faculty Sabbatical List 2001-2009, Sabbatical Report-A. Wible
- Motorsports Club
- NCA Institutional Self-Study Report 1990
- NCA Institutional Self-Study Report 2000
- NCA Institutional Self-Study Team Response 2001
- Nursing Department Self-Study, 11/11/2008
- Purposes of General Education
- Reaccreditation Steering Committee: Timeline, Handouts, Minutes
- Report of a Visit to MCC (by NCA) October 23-25, 2000
- *River Voices* – Student literary and art magazine
- Soccer Club
- Sociology Club
- Special Services for Special Populations
- Strategic Plan 2006-2011
- Strategic Plan 2002-2006
- Student Evaluation – CHEM 100, Summer 2008
- Student Government Association (SGA)
- Student Handbook and Planner: MCC 2010-2011, 2009-2010
- Student Newspaper (*Bay Window* – magazine rack)
- Student Nurses Club
- SUNGARD Collegis, Inc. Contract
- Taste of Tomorrow; <http://www.muskegoncc.edu/paes1111.asp>
- TRiO Upward Bound Program/MCC; <http://www.muskegoncc.edu/pages/2016.asp>
- Verification of the Identity of Students in Distance Education
- Western Michigan University (SCHE)
- Women's Soccer Club
- Muskegon Area Intermediate School District Land Contract
- Standard & Poors General Obligation Bond Upgrade
- Creative Dining Services
- Budget Projections Worksheet
- Internal Controls Documentation FY 2010
- Standard & Poors e-mail to Rosemary Zing
- Pages from Budget Detail, FY 2011
- Three Year Budget Projections
- Nursing Student Handbook
- Counseling Satisfaction Survey Instrument
- Library Information Center – September Monthly Report
- IT Policy/Procedures
- Student complaints and disciplinary Actions
- Safety and Security Logs
- Safety and Security Incident Reports
- Safety and Security Injury Reports

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. **Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process**

MCC organized its comprehensive self-study in alignment with the Higher Learning Commission's five criteria for accreditation. The self-study addressed all of the core components under each criterion, provided descriptions of evidence in support of the fulfillment of each component. In the self-study, MCC examined processes and functions for the College and provided sufficient information and references to source data to enable the team to adequately prepare strategic inquiries in advance of the visit.

B. **Integrity of the Self-Study Report**

In organizing the administrators, faculty, and staff for the self-study experience, MCC sought the widest possible involvement. A large number of the members of each employee group served on committees, collected data, wrote drafts of sections, and responded to the requests for review and comments as the drafts were edited into a final document. During the visit, interviews conducted by the team confirmed that the self-study document represents fairly the work of the committees, and speaks collectively for the College. The self-study is inclusive of assessment and evaluation, as well as in-depth analysis. More evidence could have been presented of what the College is doing to respond to the challenges presented in the self-study.

C. **Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges**

The team reviewed all the evidence and materials provided by the College in regards to the challenges identified in 2000, as well as, interviewed the current College administration, faculty, and staff. The College has given considerable attention to the issues identified by the 2000 visit team, practically concerning assessment of student learning, but much work remains to be done to bring the College to a level of assessment emblematic of the expectations of the Commission. These issues are fully discussed in Criterion Three under both 3.2 and 3.3. In addition, the various concerns and suggestions made by the 2000 Team dealing with planning and general education are also of continuing concern. These concerns are addressed in 2.2, 3.2 and 3.3.

D. **Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment**

The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

A. **Notification of Credits, Program Length, and Tuition**

The institution has documented that it has credit hour assignments and degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education and that tuition is consistent across degree programs.

B. **Student Complaints**

The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints for the three years prior to the visit.

C. **Transfer Policies**

The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.

D. Verification of Student Identity

The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the Identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education.

E. Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities

The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program. The team has reviewed these materials and has found no cause for concern regarding the institution's administration or oversight of its Title IV responsibilities.

a) **General Program Requirements:** The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.

b) **Financial Responsibility Requirements:** The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.

c) **Default Rates, Campus Crime Information and Related Disclosure of Consumer Information, Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies:** The institution has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.

F. Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities

The institution has presented evidence on the required Contractual Relationships: The institution has presented evidence of its contracts with non-accredited third party providers of 25-50% of the academic content of any degree or certificate programs.

G. Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.

H. Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Boards

The institution has documented that it discloses its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- a) MCC has one clear mission statement that is prominently contained in the College Catalog, displayed on campus, presented in various other College publications and the website. Their mission statement is consistent with the purview of the College and the charge given by the Community and State for the institution.
- b) The College's mission statement clearly addresses student's diverse academic needs and varied learning goals, as well as the educational needs of external constituencies at large. Meetings with community representatives documented the value of the College's mission and the role of the graduates in their enterprises.
- c) An interview with the Muskegon Community College IT Director indicated that the institution has partially rolled out "Red Flag" procedures; the institution will complete the full institutional use of the procedures within the next six months. MCC's quick response to the new requirement of "Red Flag" procedures indicates that the institution is responsive to concerns about integrity of financial and student data and will rapidly implement processes to protect data integrity.
- d) As determined by meetings with internal groups, MCC's mission is well understood by the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students, and that the College is achieving them. Meetings with students provided evidence that they understand the mission and value the role of the faculty and staff in their educational life.
- e) Conversations with community representatives documented that MCC's dealings with its community partners are conducted in an honest and collaborative manner, which supports both the learning on the part of the students and the outcomes to the community.
- f) The College's Board of Trustees provided substantial evidence that the College is highly engaged in the communities of Muskegon County and the greater region and that the overall mission of community engagement is exemplified by MCC.
- g) The College's administration has demonstrated integrity of the highest level in its dealings with all of the institution's constituencies as evidenced by the many interviews conducted by the team with individuals from the region.
- h) IT has implemented cyber security and procedures protecting data integrity through Data Center Entry Controls, Computer Lab Security guidelines, Network Access and E-mail Usage Policies.

- i) The *MCC Internal Controls Fiscal Year 2009-2010* demonstrates fiscal responsibility and integrity in financial resource management through documented internal control procedures. Further evident of this fiscal responsibility and integrity is the unqualified audit opinions received in fiscal years 2008 and 2009.
- j) The natural learning environment which comprises the 11 acre campus is exceptionally beautiful and provides the students, faculty, staff, and community with an amazing setting to learn and live.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- a) The Board of Trustees is encouraged to continue in their development of a refined governance model focused on policy management as well as an annual Board evaluation process similar to the one used in 2008 (1d).

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion met; No Commission follow-up recommended

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- a) *MCC's Capture the Moment: 2010-2015 Strategic Plan* clearly identifies the President and the Cabinet will oversee the implementation of the strategic plan. The *Board of Trustee Policy Manual* clearly identifies the charge for strategic planning has been given to the President. The plan also contains the vision and mission statement for the College. The vision statement is succinct and understandable to all audiences. The mission statement is congruent with the vision statement.
- b) The *Information Technology Strategic Plan 2007-2010* and *Information Technology Strategic Plan Refresh 2009* demonstrates that processes are in place which has allowed

the department of Information Technology to implement an effective strategic planning process that is based upon key data and other inputs, includes participation of all employee groups, is updated as necessary, and influences the priorities that are included in the development of the annual Information Technology budget. Not only does it contain long range goals for the future, there is an appropriate link to an annual tactical plan, which is also linked to the Information Technology departmental budget plan.

- c) In reviewing the *Campus Master Plan 2000*, the plan is well developed with reasonable expectations as well as aspirations. Over the past 10 years this plan has been realized to a reasonable extent.
- d) The College has used utilized various financial resources including 2003 bond funds to build the Hendrik Meijer Library/Information Technology Center.
- e) The College has invested in the development and support of a robust technological infrastructure that effectively supports key institutional functions, services and programs, including a new ERP system, Colleague by Datatel. The Colleague student services modules are admissions, records and registration, financial aid, curriculum management, and e-commerce. The Colleague finance modules are payroll, accounts payable, purchasing and general ledger. Human Resources and WebAdvisor have also been implemented. WebAdvisor supports transcripts, grade reporting, pay advices and other functions. Blackboard, the College's online education software, has been upgraded to allow integration to Colleague. The College has also invested in a reliable and secure broadband institutional network, a comprehensive desktop infrastructure, re-imaged all computer labs on campus and upgraded computers, and a range of applications and electronic resources.
- f) The College has recently invested in physical plant with the addition of the Student One Stop, which is a very functional and yet bright new innovative design to help students with all of their administrative needs. Counseling, Registration, Financial Aid, Enrollment Services, Student Life and Student Orientation are all in close proximity to one another to create a much more student friendly, less stressful, student services environment.
- g) The College has implemented a new payment plan in Colleague to help collect funds from students who have need to defer payments. This has decreased the number of students who are dropped for non-payment, thus increasing the revenue collected by the College. The plan benefits the College and the student at no cost to the student; no interest is charged.
- h) The College has made improvements to the HVAC system as well as energy efficient lighting which has provided for reduced energy costs for the College.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational

attention.

- a) From a review of the Strategic Plan 2002-2006, Strategic Plan 2006-2011 and Capture the Moment: 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, these plans included participation of all employee groups and have been updated. It is not evident that processes are in place which has allowed the College to implement a strategic planning process that is based upon key data and other input and influences the priorities that are included in the development of the annual budget. It would benefit the College to identify measurable long-range goals in the Strategic Plan that are then linked to an Annual Tactical Plan that is used to inform the budgeting process linking directly to budget priorities. (2a)
 - b) In meetings conducted with groups of MCC employees and Human Resources staff, it became apparent that a number of HR processes and protocols are either nonexistent or not followed. These include performance review and appraisal assessments, search and hiring procedures, faculty qualification documentation, adherence to contracts and labor laws. In remediating these procedural deficiencies the College will promote a more conducive working learning environment and avoid potential litigation. (2b)
 - c) The College's Institutional Research function, while recently being formalized, requires refinement of scope and direction. There needs to be a complete analysis of the College's research and data needs to fulfill its aspirations of becoming a data-driven, decision-making institution. This development will reinforce the aspirations for assessment of student learning data, budget development, retention tracking for *Achieving the Dream*, and many more benefits. (2c)
- 3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**
None
- 4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**
None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion met; No Commission follow-up recommended

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- a) The full- and part-time faculty are fully credentialed and qualified as verified by a review of personnel files and teaching assignments. They are supported in the robust learning centered environment by extensive professional development activities and funding.
- b) Campus policy prescribes, and current organizational practices ensure that faculty determine the content of the College's curriculum. The team observed that faculty also have both the responsibility and autonomy to determine instructional strategies, including online course development.
- c) The most recent College-wide survey of full-time faculty (2009) revealed high levels of commitment to professional development. For example, 75% of MCC faculty maintain memberships in professional organizations. 81% reported attending an off-campus conference, workshop, or seminar in the past year, and 94% reported attending training or workshops that helped to support improved pedagogies.
- d) MCC has demonstrated openness to innovation through program development and equipment purchases. For example, the College has invested in digital equipment to support its television production studio. In response to cultural and economic trends, the College created programs focused on environmental sustainability, including: bio-fuels, solar, and wind energy technology. The College also supports a faculty-directed Ethics Institute. The institute hosts an annual series of forums intended to promote discussions of issues such as: medical, business, and environmental ethics.
- e) MCC ensures access to educational resources. In January of 2006, the College opened its Hendrik Meijer Library/Information Center. The facility includes space for a 60,000 volume collection of books and bound periodicals. On campus, and through its website, the library also provides access to more than 17,000 full-text journals, newspapers, and magazines. The facility contains space for a 70 station computer lab, along with quiet reading spaces and classrooms designed for library instruction.
- f) The College makes use of its natural setting for educational purposes. For instance, biology courses utilize the Kasey Hartz Natural Area, adjacent to the College, for laboratory projects such as plant identification. In addition, students use the section of Four Mile Creek that runs through campus to conduct experiments on water quality.
- g) Through the development of a one-stop student service network, MCC has both streamlined and maximized the effectiveness of its admissions, advising, and financial aid processes. Staff report improved work conditions in the one-stop environment, and student surveys indicate satisfaction with services.
- h) The College supports staff and faculty in the use of technology. For example, counseling staff make extensive use of the institution's Colleague student data base, and the College's admission staff developed a thorough online student orientation. Faculty and staff also report high levels of satisfaction with the technological support offered by SunGuard, the institution's contracted provider of information technology services.
- i) Through its James L. Stevenson Center for Higher Education, MCC maintains active partnerships with Ferris State University, Western Michigan University, and Grand Valley

State University. The well-appointed 93,500 square foot center provides a bounty of opportunities for residents of the region to pursue baccalaureate and graduate degrees.

- j) The MCC College Success Center provides tutoring and instruction in reading, writing and reading for students who have scored below the required entrance level for their program. Flexible options, including small classes (20 students), shortened (7.5 weeks) and specific math modules, individual instruction and testing services are provided focusing on skills and needs of students.
- k) The College has enhanced their ability to track students and graduates who transfer to other Colleges since they have joined the National Student Clearinghouse. The information gathered on former MCC students will allow them to report transfer data and student success at subsequent Colleges and universities.
- l) The College is currently offering approximately 100 sections of courses online. Before courses are released, a review board made up of faculty members and the Instructional Design Coordinator evaluates the course to ascertain if the required guidelines are met in an effort to ensure quality offerings. The students provide input regarding the course half-way through the semester. The course is also evaluated after the semester by the review board.
- m) The *Nursing Program Student Handbook* provides information that students could use to determine expected learning competencies, clinical competencies, and other critical information on key areas of the program. The Nursing program utilizes a national exam to ascertain student learning upon completion of the program and maintains third party accreditation.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

- a) Occupational and Technical programs complete a state and federally mandated process every five years (Self-Study Evaluation of Occupational Programs or SSEOP). This SSEOP report lists the program's performance on Perkins IV indicators as well as information compiled from surveys given to students, faculty and advisory committee members. An analysis of performance results and survey information provide the faculty and staff with helpful suggestions for ensuring program and course currency and performance results of technical skills assessments. The program faculty and staff create an Action Plan as part of this process which includes items related to curriculum, instruction, student learning and facilities. There is, however, no information as to how these plans are implemented by the programs, or how the student learning data are collected, analyzed and used in the other four years of the process. There is also no information on the assessment of the General Education Outcomes in this document or any supporting documents provided. As this is a required process for programs, the College could maximize its efforts in assessment by expanding the use of these activities to track student learning each year and document improvements or actions that were implemented. This could also better inform planning and budgeting processes for the programs and the disciplines (3a).

- b) The College's Self-study report indicated that the goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program. However, upon review of the documents in the resource room, the catalog and the College website, it was determined that this information was not readily available with a few exceptions (Nursing, Computer Networking) or not complete (some business programs had some outcomes). These "graduation competencies" provide students and the public with information that can guide career planning and also establish a basis for assessing expected learning outcomes of programs. By developing and publishing these outcomes, the College will provide a focus for improved understanding of the learning and assessment processes that will be incorporated in its programs (3a).

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up

MCC submitted a Progress Report on Assessment to the HLC in 2004 which was accepted by the Commission. The Plan laid out the College's five levels of assessment for: classroom, course, discipline, general education and program learning. In discussions with the Assessment Committee, department chairs, faculty members, and administrators as well a review of documents provided in the Resource Room, it is apparent that there has been some movement toward embracing and enacting a culture of assessment. The report of the classroom assessment use, The Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs), available in the resources room, document the tools used by teachers, the results and the number of instructors who have utilized these tools. In the 2010 report, there were 44 full- and part-time instructors who submitted reports.

The two Discipline Review Reports from 2010 and from 2009 provide qualitative analyses and anecdotal information about the curriculum, facilities, class size, course completion, student survey results (providing indirect measures of student learning) and feedback from external professional.

The information and documents also demonstrate, however, that a deeper understanding of the purpose of assessment and the knowledge of the difference between "inputs" and "results" are not widely held. The information analyzed also indicates that assessment efforts and activities are not implemented or documented consistently in a manner that could inform the College about student learning. As an example, the College had implemented the MAPP test for five years; this process, however, was dropped after 2006 and the results from the tests were not utilized.

With the implementation of the Student Survey in courses, the College is relying quite heavily the use of an indirect measure of student learning for the General Education outcomes. Although the College had planned to conduct pre- and post-tests on the outcome related to critical reading/thinking, that has not occurred.

In 2000, the HLC Evaluation Team made the following comment: "It is the team's expectation that before the next comprehensive evaluation, the College faculty will agree on an overriding set of general education or basic core competencies which

should be acquired by every educated person.” In the current visit, by reviewing the College catalog, self-study report, printed documents provided in the Resource Room as well as in numerous meetings held with faculty and staff it was determined that MCC has maintained two separate general education purpose statements, two sets of goals for general education and two lists of general education learning outcomes – one set for transfer-oriented programs and one set for applied associate degrees.

The College’s use of dual purpose statements, multiple lists of goals, and differing learning outcomes undermine the purpose and intent of general education for higher learning institutions. The College’s inconsistency in the expectation of the general education core between the AA/AS and AAS degrees is not the intent of the Commission’s priorities on general education. The Higher Learning Commission’s position suggests that institutions may differ with respect to the objectives that they find central to general education. However, the Commission also insists that faculty take time to determine a single set of skills and attitudes that every educated person should possess.

Vocational competencies differ and change periodically. The abilities and modes of inquiry that mark an educated person, however, are consistent and enduring. Despite the diverse nature and intent of various degree programs, every student is entitled to the centrality of learning a College can provide in the way of a general education that is meant to enrich lives, enhance citizenship, and serve as a foundation for long-term career attainment.

All evidence concerning assessment of student learning and the centrality of general education taken together, lead to the recommendation that the College needs to address these critical areas and follow up with the Commission on the results (3a).

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criteria met; Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

a) MCC demonstrates commitment to professional development opportunities. For

example, the College provides space on campus for a faculty development center. The Learning, Innovation, Futuring, Technology (L.I.F.T.) Center is staffed with two full-time employees and two faculty members afforded 20% release time. The Center offers a regular schedule of seminars designed to train faculty on the use of course presentation software and online learning platforms. The Center also hosts regular lunch-time meetings on topics that relate to effective teaching. Recent subjects include: the design of lectures, the evaluation of online courses, and planning for the future in higher education.

- b) A review of the College's course syllabi confirmed that faculty consistently state learning outcomes and course objectives. In addition, a syllabus for each course is available for students and the public to review on MCC's Internet website.
- c) In displays of students' artwork throughout the campus, the College provides a public acknowledgement of the value of creativity and supports students' freedom of expression.
- d) To enhance students' lifelong learning and support diversity, the College promotes membership and participation in numerous clubs and organizations.
- e) The College provides ongoing enrichment activities for the students and the public, including creative and performing arts, concerts and speakers.
- f) The displays in the campus hallways support and encourage global awareness and an appreciation of diversity.
- g) Student groups participate in many service activities, including the Criminal Justice students assisting with hurricane relief.
- h) Organizations and departments encourage students' travel and participation in travel abroad for language and cultural learning.
- i) The College supports many student athletes in a variety of sports with both financial and physical facilities that provide excellence.
- j) MCC offers an Honors option for students in which they sign up for an additional credit of coursework in conjunction with a class. Upon completion of the course with a grade of B or better, students are reimbursed for the tuition for the one extra credit and they receive the credit to be applied toward their degree.
- k) MCC offers an Honors option for students in which they sign up for an additional credit of coursework in conjunction with a class. Upon completion of the course with a grade of B or better, students are reimbursed for the tuition for the one extra credit and they receive the credit to be applied toward their degree.
- l) The MCC Upward Bound Program just completed its 3rd year, graduating its first class. The graduating high school class consisted of 26 students and all students have initiated their College experience at a variety of 2 and 4-year experiences.

- m) The career and technical program areas effectively utilize advisory committees to assist and guide instruction, courses, and student outcomes.
- n) MCC actively engages in connecting students and employers in the region through the well-designed career resource and employment resource centers in the office of student life.

Recommendation of the Team

- 2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**
None
- 3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**
None
- 4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**
None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion met; No Commission follow-up recommended

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

- a) MCC's connections with the business community are strong and vibrant, as evidenced by comments made by a host of community leaders. Programs have been designed to support corporate training, basic adult education, dislocated worker programming, special training for youth, and general community education. These programs are integrated into the core work of the College. The greater community sees MCC as the heart of economic development, lifelong learning, and incumbent worker training.
- b) The College's facilities are used extensively by community organizations and the College's partners as evidenced by conversations with business leaders, the self-study report and the College's annual reports. Such use appropriately encourages connecting directly to the community's citizens as a means of both service and student recruitment.
- c) The external community values MCC as the heart of the community and as the *gem*

of Muskegon County. Community members and employees alike proclaim heartfelt thanks to the College's leaders for the College's leadership within the community and for its positive impact upon the lives of the College's employees and their families.

- d) The College makes extensive use of its on-campus television station for the betterment of the community. For example, the station broadcasts community and College activities, including: sports events, musical performances, and human interest stories.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

None

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

None

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

None

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion met; No Commission follow-up recommended

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

A. Affiliation Status

NO CHANGE

B. Nature of Organization

1. Legal status

NO CHANGE

2. Degrees awarded

NO CHANGE

C. Conditions of Affiliation

1. Stipulation on affiliation status

NO CHANGE

2. Approval of degree sites

NO CHANGE

3. Approval of distance education degree

NO CHANGE

4. Reports required

Progress Report

None Recommended

Monitoring Report

The team is recommending that the College submit a Monitoring Report by December 31, 2013, to address issues regarding general education and student learning assessment. This report will include:

1. A consistent general education core and outcomes that are expected of all graduates of the College as well as a process for evaluating the attainment of these outcomes.
2. A set of expected learning outcomes for each program (graduate competencies) and the associated methods and tools identified to evaluate these.
3. A College-wide protocol of the assessment practices that indicate specific timelines, documentation processes, links to planning and improvement processes in the College and persons responsible for each activity.
4. The leadership responsibilities related to the assessment activities identified, including those of: VP of Academic Affairs, the Assessment Committee, Institutional Research, and faculty development.

Upon Commission review of this report, the Commission may require a Focused Visit within one year of the required submission to address any unresolved concerns associated with the institution's response.

Contingency Report

None Recommended

5. Other visits scheduled

None Recommended

6. Organization change request

Not requested

D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

Not Applicable

E. Summary of Commission Review

Next Comprehensive visit recommended for academic year 2020-2021.

Rationale for recommendation:

This recommendation is based on the team's judgment after the comprehensive visit to the College where dozens of interviews and on-site reviews provided the evidence that MCC meets the five criteria set forth for accreditation and continues to exceed the Minimum Expectations of Accreditation.. The Self-Study, as well, provided strong evidence that MCC meets the criteria.

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

Advancement Section

TO

**Muskegon Community College
Muskegon, MI**

October 25-27, 2010

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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ADVANCEMENT SECTION

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

For more than eight decades, the College has served its diverse communities and has become a tradition in the lives of the people it serves. Multiple generations have sent their children to Muskegon Community College to begin the journey through higher education. As a post-secondary institution, MCC offers both baccalaureate transfer associate degree programs and associate of applied science and certificate programs in career and technical fields of study. Students enrolled in transfer programs of study may complete the first two years of a baccalaureate degree in majors within various liberal arts and sciences disciplines. Students may complete associate of applied science degrees and certificates in a variety of technical areas.

The district is characterized by high unemployment rates and low educational attainment levels. The majority of MCC's students are in-district residents (Muskegon County). Approximately 30% of students come from the counties which lie along the Muskegon County borders. These students pay a higher tuition rate than the Muskegon County residents and this limits the College's outreach beyond its traditional service district.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

A. Strategic Planning

From a review of the last three strategic plans, *Strategic Plan 2002-2006*, *Strategic Plan 2006-2011* and *Capture the Moment: 2010-2015 Strategic Plan*, it is apparent that the College is lacking in expertise in this area and could benefit from training or research in strategic planning prior to finalizing the next strategic plan in order to more adequately address strategic issues and develop deliberate strategies for achieving their mission. www.sonoma.edu/aa/planning/strategic_planning_primer.pdf. A Strategic Planning Primer for Higher Education is one possible resource. Setting strategic goals are the milestones over a long term period, usually 5 or more years, the campus aims to achieve that evolve from strategic issues. These goals are more meaningful if they are specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic, and time/cost bound. Action plans to define how to reach the desired goal is also an important part of strategic planning. MCC would also benefit from developing an Annual Plan, which is a tactical plan to determine what specific actions will be used during the current budget cycle to achieve specific goals or portion of specific goals in the Strategic Plan. Literally linking the Strategic Plan item number to the Annual Plan number is very helpful. MCC would also benefit from deliberately associating the budget

development process directly to the Annual Plan, again linking the Annual Plan item numbers to the budget line items where appropriate. With time, people in the College routinely make their decisions within the framework of the organization's strategic plan and mission. Strategic planning becomes an organizational norm, deeply embedded within the organization's decision-making process and participants learn to think strategically as a part of their regular daily activities (Lerner, 1999)

B. Human Resources

After review of documents in the resource room and interviews with the very new Executive Director of Human Resources and staff, it became apparent that the institution lacks some very basic policies and procedures in the area of Human Resources. MCC is unionized at three levels through the institution: faculty, custodial and staff. Various policies and procedures are available in the union contracts for those three groups of MCC employees. However, an institution-wide document of policies and procedures is not generally available. Further, the institution lacks policies and procedures on such critical matters as HIPPA and whistle-blower protection. While negotiations of union contracts have proceeded smoothly over the last decade, it would be in the best interests of the institution to generate and make available to all employees a comprehensive policy and procedure manual to avoid future problems and potential, expensive litigation.

Team interviews with employees throughout the College resulted in reports that staff, faculty and administrative performance evaluations are not regularly conducted; some individuals reported that they had never received an evaluation. Others noted that, while they had personnel evaluations, the timing of evaluation was unpredictable and often resulted from a problem identified by the supervisor. It is in the best interests of both employees and the College that a procedure is implemented that identifies the specific timing of evaluations, the accepted formats and the evaluation process itself. Supervisory staff will require in-depth training in effectively conducting meaningful employee evaluations as well. Employees need to know when they are performing well, what corrections are required in their performance and benchmarks for improved performance. Implementation of a personnel evaluation and proper tracking to see that the procedure is followed builds employee morale and prevents repeated incidents of grievances and due process claims and ultimately minimizes possible areas of litigation.

Interviews with MCC staff indicate that the lack of hiring diversity is an additional concern in the Human Resources area. Michigan passed anti-affirmative action legislation in 2006, clearly making practices to increase diversity at the institution illegal. Nevertheless, diversity in faculty and

employees should remain a concern for the HR Department of the College. The demographics of MCC report a considerable diversity in the population the College serves. The institution reports almost no diversity in faculty. Numerous studies strongly indicate that a diverse student population is best served in learning by a diverse faculty and staff, one that reflects, to a large degree, the demographics of the service area.

Developing a *grow your own* process with faculty is essential to success in expanding the number of minority of faculty. Identifying current students and graduates and friends of the College that are interested in teaching and then providing opportunities to be connected to the College throughout their continued education are essential.

The search procedure for the hiring of new employees is one that is critical to the success and integrity of the institution. At this time, the MCC search procedure is vague and inconclusive. A recruiting and hiring orientation/training program could be of assistance. That should include a briefing of selection committee members on legal issues, interviewing and selection processes in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. In the hiring process it is wise for hiring teams to identify acceptable candidates that are unranked.

C. Institutional Research – Data-Driven Decision Making

Both prior to the Team Visit and during it, it was evident to the team that lack of data to guide decision making processes is a significant concern. Interviews with administrators, staff and faculty all indicated that lack of meaningful data made decision making difficult. Data in the self study were insufficient as were data available in the team resource room. Examples of a lack of trustworthy data include a database of adjunct and full-time faculty credentials and clear data on the status of dual enrollment students at the institutions. The goal to have quality data for decision making purposes must become an institutional priority if future growth and quality assessments are to be realized.

Muskegon Community College, in reaching this goal, will need to develop a culture of evidence. This is more than the presentation of data which may support a particular decision or plan of action. It involves regular monitoring of key variables or indicators and the longitudinal analysis of trends in these indicators. Data trends are what guide the institution from overreacting to drastic, but short term, changes. The development of a culture of evidence requires widespread acceptance and involvement of all staff of the College and at all levels. In developing this culture of evidence, the institution may find it helpful to consult resources such as the Association for Institutional

research (www.airweb.org).

Developing and implementing a culture of evidence will require several steps on the part of the institution:

- Defining the College mission outcomes (here the above-mentioned *Constellation Survey* and *Vital Focus Process* can be extremely useful)
- Definition of key data elements to measure outcomes; this requires careful and considerable forethought.
- Decisions on connecting data on the Assessment of Student Learning to other measures of student success (requires careful consideration as assessment remains the purview of the faculty)
- Patience as the institution develops the requisite number of years of data collection to permit reasonable trend analyses.
- Methods of communicating, in effective and understandable ways, the data and impacts throughout the College
- Methods of communicating key indicator data to external stakeholders

The institution is cautioned in the effort to produce meaningful institutional data:

- Be very reasonable in the data indicators the institution selects to use and be open to reviewing the effectiveness of these periodically. The institution cannot measure everything; select data indicators that have real value to the College.
- Assign responsibility for the integrity of the database and its inquiry language to a specific position or function. This will result in data and reports that are consistent over time.
- Institutional data is integral to the planning functions of the institution. Many institutions do not provide sufficient professional staff to this essential function of the College.

The recommendation to focus institutional attention on the Institutional Research/Effectiveness of MCC is a major initiative and will undoubtedly require additional resources. Nevertheless, moving the College quickly on this goal will provide a vastly better framework for planning, budgeting and responding to external environmental changes. Without addressing the goal of vastly improving the longitudinal data situation of MCC, the College may find itself beleaguered in a data-driven environment.

D. Board of Trustees

Information resulting from interviews with MCC President, Chair of the Trustees and the Trustees as an entity suggests that the Board of Trustees is considering the need for change in its governance policies and procedures. Additionally, review of the *Trustee Policy Manual* and the *Trustee Orientation Manual* indicate that the Board's reflection on governance change is timely. The Trustees spoke of ongoing discussions within the Board regarding governance policy but had not yet reached conclusions regarding change. Further, both the Trustees and the President and staff of the institution spoke of periods of micromanagement of the institution on the part of the Board. While the current Board and President may have moved beyond the period of micromanagement, it would be wise to memorialize new Board policy to assist in preventing such actions in the future.

The Board of Trustees may wish to consider a thorough review of its own policies and those of other institutions with different governance models to consider. In the times ahead of the College, the Board will need to be very clear on its roles and responsibilities toward the institution and be able, in some instances, to act quickly and at the appropriate level of involvement. As the MCC Board of Trustees is aware, the Association of Community College Trustees provides a wealth of assistance in governance and self-assessment.

In addition to reviewing Board Policy and Orientation, the Trustees may wish to reinstitute the Board Self-Assessment, conducted once in 2008.

The institution over which the Board of Trustees governs is facing a rapidly changing external environment. The institution itself is experiencing rapid change as a response to both the external environment and the vision of a new president. The board and President, in concert, may wish to engage the Higher Learning commission's stellar process of *Constellation Survey and Vital Focus* conversations. The HLC *Constellation/Vital Focus Program* can be a needed opportunity to engage the Board and the institution in meaningful, consensus-building and forward-moving discussions. The program lays the foundation of the new vision of the Board and president for the institution.

As a part of a comprehensive plan for the Board, communication should be addressed. A communication plan would assist in developing a working understanding of the roles and responsibilities among the various levels, and providing a means of collaboration and support.

E. Assessment of Student Learning

Muskegon Community College has been addressing the Assessment of Student Learning in a number of ways over the last ten years. In the Progress Report submitted to the HLC in 2004, the College proposed to conduct the

MAPP test of general education as well as assess learning at five levels. The intent of assessing learning at multiple levels is laudable – learning does indeed occur at multiple levels and instances. In the classroom, ongoing assessment if learning provides feedback to the instructor about the success of lessons; CATs are a tool to give anonymous and fast information about student understanding. MCC also instituted Discipline Reviews that are to be completed every four years. The reviews were helpful to those faculty groups who conducted them, providing a venue for curriculum evaluation, analysis of student feedback, external input from professionals regarding the program and offerings and an analysis of course completion data. The reviews, however, did not include information or data on student learning outcomes (results). Both of these tolls, however, are valuable for instructors and for program/discipline currency and should be continued.

The program evaluation process (SSEOP) does provide data on completion and identifies programmatic needs; it does not, however, include ongoing (yearly) student learning assessment for the programs. Because this is a current process and expectation, it would behoove the College to maximize its efforts to enhance the tools used for more specific learning information and to use the process to focus more on learning outcomes and improvements. By utilizing the action report and tracking learning outcomes each year, this document and the associated changes would become more of a tactical plan than one that is done just for Perkins reports.

It is possible that the Assessment Committee will determine that a more integrated assessment plan be implemented that links career program, transfer, and general education outcomes, thus providing data for improvement for all areas. Essential to this, or any model, is a plan to clearly communicate and publish the new and enhance procedures, provide ongoing support and training and also create an evaluation plan to determine the effectiveness of the assessment activities and levels of involvement.

The assessment of general education often proves to be more complicated and requires colleges to examine their learning expectations and the processes. One method of assessing that acknowledges a college's current curriculum is the Divisional Portfolio that was developed by Jeffrey Seybert for Johnson County Community College (1987). This approach directly analyzes the specific learning outcomes offered for General Education by the Liberal Arts courses. Each department would identify the outcomes it teaches and match that to how it is best measured. Benefits to this approach include that it is:

- Faculty-identified artifacts, based on curriculum expectations;
- Use of authentic assessment situations (actual tests, projects, papers,

- labs);
- Faculty-developed indicators;
- Validation of evaluation;
- Linking course-level learning competencies to General Education, and AA/AAS outcomes;
- Database of student information is utilized and available.

The Chart below is an example of how to begin this process using the MCC General Abilities.

General abilities of an educated person	MCC Courses that address this ability (perhaps begin with those most taken)	Tool used to assess this ability (tests, projects, papers, labs, capstone projects)
To acquire knowledge using a variety of methods and sources, and to use this knowledge in his or her life		
To cooperate and collaborate with others in identifying, analyzing, and formulating solutions to problems and in taking action on them.		
To synthesize and interrelate ideas and concepts from various areas of knowledge.		
To understand the ethical and moral dimensions of one’s own values, their basic assumptions and limitations, and to respond reflectively and appropriately to the value systems of others.		
To read materials with an understanding of the author’s purpose, assumptions and techniques, and respond to ideas critically.		
To reason logically and analyze objectively, with a sense of openness to new ideas.		

After the outcomes are matched to courses, and the tools used to measure these are identified, the process involves creating rubrics which to analyze student work. With this done, the next step is to devise a system for the use of the assessment results. That is, how will these analyses be linked to improving student learning? How will these changes be integrated into current processes and practices? From there, the process must be established that identifies how the artifacts will be collected, the

students who will analyze them, and how this will be documented. This procedure should be piloted with a small sampling and then expanded in subsequent years.

Across the country, colleges have been focusing on outcomes assessment for many years. There are numerous “best practices” published in periodical and trade books that are readily available. Some suggestions are:

- *Assessing General Education Programs*, written by Mary J. Allen and published by Anker Publishing (San Francisco) in 2006. This book provides a number of suggestions that could be helpful in developing an assessment process for the Liberal Arts and Sciences Transfer Degree.
- *Assessing for Learning – Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution*, written by Peggy Maki and published by the American Association for Higher Education in Sterling, Virginia in 2004. This text provides a thorough overview of the assessment of learning, numerous examples and an extensive bibliography for further reading.
- *How Do They Know We Know – Evaluating Adult Learning*, published by Jossey-Bass, 1998. Written by Jane Vella, Paula Berardinelli and Jim Burrow. Besides providing an easy to follow assessment primer, there are three fine examples of evaluating learning in existing programs that would give teachers a model and lead to further analysis. A glossary is also included.
- *A Teacher’s Guide to Performance-Based Learning and Assessment*, published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in 1996. This book guides faculty through the analysis of developing performance-based tasks.
- *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing and Improving Assessment in Higher Education*, published by Jossey-Bass, 1999, written by Catherine Palomba.
- *Student Learning: A Central Focus for Institutions of Higher Education*, published in March of 2002 by Alverno College Institute in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, offers contributions from over twenty-five colleges on assessment practices.
- *The Journal of Applied Research in the Community College* published a special Outcomes Assessment issue in the Spring of 2002 (Volume 9, #2).

F. General Education

Resources regarding General Education

Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP)

Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) is a national initiative that champions the importance of a twenty-first-century liberal education—for individual students and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality. Through LEAP, hundreds of campuses and several state

systems are making far-reaching educational changes to help all their students—whatever their chosen field of study—achieve a set of essential learning outcomes fostered through liberal education. In numerous LEAP projects and activities, AAC&U partners with campuses, state systems, and K-12 educational leaders as they make these essential learning outcomes a framework for educational excellence, assessment of learning, and new alignments between school and college.

Launched in 2005, LEAP challenges the traditional practice of providing liberal education to some students and narrow training to others. LEAP engages the public with core questions about what really matters in college; connects employers and educational leaders as they make the case for the importance of liberal education in the global economy and in our diverse democracy; and helps all students achieve the essential learning outcomes. Through LEAP, AAC&U calls on the United States to *make excellence inclusive* so that all students receive the best and most powerful preparation for work, life, and citizenship.

LEAP promotes:

- Essential Learning Outcomes—as a guiding vision and national benchmarks for college learning and liberal education in the 21st century
- High-Impact Educational Practices—that help students achieve essential learning outcomes
- Authentic Assessments—probing whether students can apply their learning to complex problems and real-world challenges

http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/Global_Century_final.pdf

General Education Assessment for Improvement of Student Academic Achievement: Guidance for Academic Departments and Committees (2001). James and Karen Nichols. New York: Agathon Press.

G. Student Orientation

MCC has taken a series of steps toward improving and expanding its new student orientation program. In the spirit of continuing the good work they have already accomplished, the College's faculty and staff might take advantage of the materials made available by the National Resource Center for the First Year Experience: <http://www.sc.edu/fye/>. The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience has as its mission to support and advance efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education. The Center achieves this mission by providing

opportunities for the exchange of practical, theory-based information and ideas through the convening of conferences, teleconferences, institutes, and workshops.

H. Instructional Innovation

The College has demonstrated its commitment to instructional innovation through programs such as its on-campus Ethics Institute. To help further inform future efforts in this area, the College's faculty could take advantage of Florida State University's Institute on Student Values: <http://studentvalues.fsu.edu/>. The Institute hosts workshops, publishes papers, and sponsors events intended to shed light on the role of higher education in the formation of values and character development.

In order to help fund future Ethics Institute projects, the MCC faculty might also consider applying for funds through offers made available by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). In particular, the NEH's Enduring Questions Program is a likely source of revenue to fund MCC's ongoing work in the area of ethics education: <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/enduringquestions.html>.

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

Muskegon Community College has one of the most beautiful campus settings in the US. The College has made noble efforts to preserve this natural setting by managing the environment via green, non-invasive methods such as not mowing most natural areas and providing nature trails for student instructional use and general public appreciation. In addition, the College's facilities are amazingly well designed, beautiful, and well maintained. The College's commitment to the fine arts is laudable as is evidenced by the in-house art gallery and extensive arts displays throughout the campus.

The College's University Center which hosts three Michigan public universities in-house with significant benefit to the many students served. The Muskegon region is not blessed with a four year institution so this Center provides the local students great benefit as they matriculate from MCC.

*Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS*

INSTITUTION and STATE: Muskegon Community College, MI

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW (from ESS): This visit will include addressing the low Financial CFI scores including causes, implications, and plan to increase these scores.

DATES OF REVIEW: 10/25/10 - 10/27/10

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

DEGREES AWARDED: A

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: None.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: None

APPROVAL OF NEW ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS: Prior Commission approval required.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: New Commission policy on institutional change became effective July 1, 2010. Some aspects of the change processes affecting distance delivered courses and programs are still being finalized. This entry will be updated in early 2011 to reflect current policy. In the meantime, see the Commission's Web site for information on seeking approval of distance education courses and programs.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No change

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Monitoring report due December 31, 2013 on general education and student learning assessment

OTHER VISITS SCHEDULED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: None

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2000 - 2001

YEAR FOR NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2010 - 2011

Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: 2020 - 2021

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: Muskegon Community College, MI

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation _____ No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

	Program Distribution	Recommended Change (+ or -)
Programs leading to Undergraduate		
Associate	41	
Bachelors	0	
Programs leading to Graduate		
Masters	0	
Specialist	0	
First Professional		
Doctoral	0	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State: Campuses: Additional Locations: Course Locations:	Present Activity: None None 9	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Out-of-State: Campuses: Additional Locations: Course Locations:	Present Wording: None None None	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Out-of-USA: Campuses: Additional Locations: Course Locations:	Present Wording: None None None	Recommended Change: (+ or -)

Distance Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

None

Recommended Change:
(+ or -)

Correspondence Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

None