In the United States, schools and colleges seek accreditation from non-governmental bodies voluntarily. There are two types of accreditation: institutional and specialized. Institutional accreditation is provided by regional and national associations. Mohave Community College is accredited by a regional accrediting body called the North Central Association-Higher Learning Commission. There are six regional associations named after the region in which they serve. An institutional accrediting agency evaluates an organization as a whole unit in terms of its mission and the accrediting agencies standards or criteria.

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) was founded in 1895 to improve the relations between high schools and colleges and facilitate alignment of educational objectives. NCA is made up of two independent corporations, the Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). CASI accredits schools offering education at the k-12 levels, as well as non-degree granting postsecondary schools. HLC accredits degree granting postsecondary institutions.

The Commission provides two programs for maintaining accredited status: the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). Mohave Community College utilizes the PEAQ program.

PEAQ employs a five-step comprehensive evaluation process to determine continued accredited status.

1. The institution engages in a self-study process for approximately two years and prepares a report of its findings in accordance with Commission expectations.
2. The Commission sends an evaluation team of Consultant-Evaluators to conduct a comprehensive visit for continued accreditation and to write a report containing the team’s recommendations.
3. The documents relating to the comprehensive visit are reviewed by a readers panel or a review committee.
4. A decision-making body takes action on the reader’s panel recommendations.
5. In certain situations, the Board of Trustees takes the final action.
MOHAVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the 19-state North Central Association of Colleges and Schools based in Chicago, Illinois. Mohave Community College was reaccredited last in 2003. Under the current, PEAQ process, every ten years the college must successfully complete the process of reaccreditation in order to maintain its standing with the association.

AN OVERVIEW OF ACCREDITATION

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is the result of a positive external review by an authorized agency such as The Higher Learning Commission (HLC): A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Accreditation assures the public that a college, university, school, or program can do its job. While many academic agencies accredit particular programs of study (nursing, business, physical therapy assistant, etc.), The Higher Learning Commission and other regional accrediting agencies are responsible for assuring that colleges and universities meet certain standards in terms of their missions, operations, and activities in teaching and student learning, discovery and promotion of knowledge, and service. Unaccredited schools are not eligible for many kinds of federal support.

What is the purpose of accreditation?

The purpose of accreditation is to provide public assurance of educational quality and institutional integrity.

Who accredits institutions of higher education?

Six regional associations are responsible for the accreditation of colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning: North Central, Middle States, New England, Northwest, Southern and Western Associations. Mohave Community College is accredited by the North Central Association-Higher Learning Commission.

What is the value of institutional accreditation?

For members of the community and especially prospective students of Mohave Community College, institutional accreditation provided by the North Central Association-Higher Learning Commission means that the accredited institution has been found to meet the Commission's requirements and criteria and has the mechanisms in place to sustain institutional quality. Reaching this conclusion requires that an institution open itself to external examination conducted by qualified peer reviewers using accepted criteria. For the accredited institution, the process of accreditation provides an opportunity for critical self-analysis leading to improvement in quality and for consultation and advice from persons from other institutions. Thus accreditation provides public certification of acceptable institutional quality and an opportunity and incentive for institutional self-improvement.
**Is there a difference between regional accreditation and state licensure?**

Yes. While many states have established regulations that must be met before an institution can operate, in most states such regulations represent a minimum basis for protection of students. State authorization should not be confused with institutional or specialized accreditation. An institution may have state authorization to operate, but it may not necessarily be accredited by an institutional or specialized accrediting association. In fact, an institution must have the appropriate authorization by a state to operate before it can seek a status with the Commission.

**Can the Commission recommend a college to a student?**

No, selection of a college to attend is a decision that must be made individually. There are so many different types of institutions (small, large, single-program, multiple-program, urban, rural, public, private, etc.) that matching the student's interests and abilities to the characteristics of a college requires detailed information about the student. Information about colleges may be found in various books and directories (available in many libraries), and students are advised to consult with counselors or advisors in secondary schools. The admissions officers of colleges are often able to provide assistance, although they will have the most knowledge of the institution they represent. The public information available from the Commission is limited to that describing the institution's status with the Commission.

**Is institutional accreditation the same as program accreditation?**

No, institutional accreditation speaks to the overall quality of the institution without making judgments about specific programs. Institutional accreditation is accreditation of the whole institution, including all programs and sites. The accreditation of individual programs, such as those preparing students to practice a profession, is different from institutional accreditation and is carried out by "specialized" or "program" accrediting bodies that apply specific standards for curriculum and course content. The Higher Learning Commission does not maintain lists of programs offered by its accredited institutions.

**Does accreditation guarantee that credits and degrees can be transferred to another institution?**

No. Transferability of credits and degrees is a matter determined by the institution receiving the credits. Transferability depends on several factors: the institution at which credits or degrees were earned; how well the credits offered for transfer mesh with the curriculum offered by the institution to which the student wishes to transfer; and how well the student did in the courses. Accreditation speaks only to the first of these factors and, therefore, cannot by itself guarantee transfer of credits; however, many institutions choose to accept transfer credits only from accredited institutions so that transfer of credits from an unaccredited institution may be excluded. Some institutions have specific agreements with other institutions guaranteeing transfer of credits, but students should be skeptical of any institution that makes unqualified assertions that its credits will transfer to all other institutions. Anyone planning to transfer credits should consult the receiving institution about the transfer at the earliest opportunity before taking the courses for transfer, if possible.
Who evaluates the Commission?

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) is a United States organization of degree-granting colleges and universities. It identifies its purpose as providing national advocacy for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation in order to certify the quality of higher education accrediting organizations, including regional, faith-based, private career, and programmatic accrediting organizations.

The organization has approximately 3,000 academic institutions as members, and currently recognizes approximately 60 accrediting organizations. It maintains an International Directory which "contains contact information about 467 quality assurance bodies, accreditation bodies and Ministries of Education in 175 countries. The quality assurance and accreditation bodies have been authorized to operate by their respective governments either as agencies of the government or as private (nongovernmental) organizations."

The U.S. Secretary of Education maintains a list of accrediting bodies determined by the Secretary to be "reliable authorities as to the quality of training offered by educational institutions and programs." The Secretary's list serves as a basis of eligibility for participation in federally-funded programs, including student financial aid. To appear on the list an accrediting body must demonstrate its compliance with a series of criteria established by the Secretary. Reconsideration of status on the list is conducted approximately every four years.

How does the PEAQ accreditation process work?

The Higher Learning Commission of The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools provides two programs for maintaining accredited status: the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). Mohave Community College is reviewed as part of PEAQ, which employs a five-step comprehensive evaluation process to determine continued accredited status.

1. The organization engages in a self-study process for approximately two years and prepares a report of its findings in accordance with Commission expectations.

2. The Commission sends an evaluation team of Consultant-Evaluators to conduct a comprehensive visit for continued accreditation and to write a report containing the team’s recommendations.

3. The report of the evaluation team and other documents relating to the comprehensive visit are reviewed by a Readers Panel or, in some situations, a Review Committee of the HLC.

4. The Institutional Actions Council (IAC) takes action on the Readers Panel’s recommendation.

5. If a Review Committee reviewed the visit, the Review Committee takes action.

The Board of Trustees validates the work of IAC or a Review Committee, finalizing the action. Evaluations for initial and continued candidacy and initial accreditation follow the processes outlined above.
What does the HLC look for when it accredits colleges and universities?

In 2005, the HLC adopted a new set of criteria for evaluation:

• Criterion One: Mission and Integrity
• Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future
• Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching
• Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge
• Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

HLC expects that MCC has evaluated examples of evidence to support each criterion and its components. In addition, the Consultant-Evaluators also expect to see evidence that the organization values the four themes of orientation, as follows: future-oriented, learning-focused, connected, and distinctive.

When will the HLC re-accreditation visit take place?

Mohave Community College last went through the re-accreditation process in 2003. Our next site visit will occur in the fall of 2012.

How is the college preparing for the re-accreditation visit in 2012?

MCC has formed a Steering Committee and Criteria-based subcommittees to evaluate evidence, make sense of that evidence in light of each criterion and the cross-cutting themes, and will help to prepare the college for the 2012 visit.

What will the team do during the visit?

The visiting peer review team will receive the complete MCC Self-Study Report six weeks prior to the visit and will have access to documents via the web site. During the visit, they seek to validate the content of the report in terms of the identified strengths, as well as concerns that need attention or issues that may confront us in the future. Team members will have meetings with key individuals and groups from across the college and will hold open meetings.

Will any findings be reported?

The HLC team addresses the Criteria and Core Components for accreditation. The team notes the Components that have been met, any that have not been met and any qualifications or concerns regarding them. In addition, the team provides advice to the college about issues that might be of concern and ways in which MCC might seek to approach or address those issues in the Advancement section. A report of the visit is sent to the college president a month to six weeks after the visit.

Where can I get more information on accreditation?

What are the HLC Criteria?

I. 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.

II. 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.

III. Student Learning and Effective Teaching

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

IV. 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.

V. Engagement and Service

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

What are the four themes of orientation?

I. The Future-Oriented Organization
   ➢ Engages in planning
   ➢ Is driven by the mission
   ➢ Understands social and economic change
   ➢ Focuses on the futures of constituents
   ➢ Integrates new technology

II. The Learning-Focus Organization
   ➢ Assesses student learning
   ➢ Supports learning
   ➢ Supports scholarship
   ➢ Creates the capacity for lifelong learning
   ➢ Strengthens organizational learning

III. The Connected Organization
➢ Serves the common good
➢ Serves constituents
➢ Creates a culture of service
➢ Collaborates
➢ Engages in healthy internal communication

IV. The Distinctive Organization
➢ Has an unambiguous mission
➢ Appreciates diversity
➢ Is accountable
➢ Is self-reflective
➢ Is committed to improvement
Self-study: Committee Roles

June 2011

Leadership Team and Steering Committee

The Mohave Community College Self-Study will be conducted under the leadership of the Steering Committee and a Leadership Team. The Leadership Team and the Steering Committee are chaired by the Self-Study Coordinator, Tracy Gift, along with two co-chairs, John Kitts and Michael Rourke.

Roles of the Self-Study Coordinator/Chairperson and of the Co-Chairs include:

- Leading and coordinating the overall Self-Study.
- Acquainting faculty, staff and students with the Self-Study process.
- Preparation of Self-Study documents and reports.
- Attending HLC meetings.
- Planning site visit, making arrangement for the HLC Team, coordinating the functions and activities during the Site-Visit.

The Steering Committee has the primary task of implementing the Self-Study Plan. Included in the tasks of the Self-Study Plan are ensuring that MCC is compliant with HLC requirements and providing assurance that MCC meets the Criteria for Accreditation and the core components, as well as providing assurance that MCC values the four themes of orientation. This committee also guarantees that there is a high level of visibility and awareness of the accreditation process.

Criterion Subcommittees

The Criterion Subcommittees examine the extent to which MCC satisfies each criterion and assist in collecting and examining data to identify institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The Criterion Subcommittees are as follows:

- Criterion I- Mission and Integrity
- Criterion II- Preparing for the future
- Criterion III-Student Learning and Effective Teaching
- Criterion IV-Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge
- Criterion V- Engagement and Service

Resource Room Subcommittee

The MCC Resource Room Subcommittee will gather, organize, catalog, and display supporting data and examples of evidence electronically.
Hospitality Subcommittee

The MCC Hospitality Subcommittee will coordinate hospitality efforts during events, focus group sessions, meetings, and the comprehensive site visit as requested. During the site visit, the Hospitality Subcommittee will focus on the needs of the Peer Review Team.

Focus Group Sessions Subcommittee

Focus Group Sessions Subcommittee designs, implements, and assesses yearly focus group sessions. The sessions are designed to elicit primary qualitative data to explain the extent to which MCC satisfies the criteria and exhibits the themes of orientation.

Survey Subcommittee

The MCC Survey Subcommittee will design and implement surveys for the purpose of data collection and analysis to support the Accreditation Self-Study of 2010-2012. The surveys will provide primary quantitative data to explain the extent to which MCC satisfies the criteria and exhibits the themes of orientation as recommended by the HLC.

Technology Support Subcommittee

The Technology Support Subcommittee provides technological support to the MCC Self-Study Coordinator, accreditation Steering Committee, and the subcommittees throughout the process of the self-study. The subcommittee is responsible for providing, maintaining, and assisting with hardware, peripherals, software, and networking as needed for the successful completion of the process.

Website Subcommittee

The MCC Website Subcommittee works with the MCC Self-Study Coordinator, Steering Committee, and accreditation subcommittees to create and maintain a website for the self-study process. This subcommittee will work with the Resource Room Subcommittee to build a virtual resource room for use by MCC’s stakeholders and by HLC representatives.

Facilities Subcommittee

The MCC Facilities Subcommittee coordinates facility use during events, focus group sessions, meetings, and the comprehensive site visit.
Self-study: Roles of Individuals

July 2011

Responsibility of all college employees (You)

Your main responsibility is understanding accreditation and its relevance to educational quality is extremely important for all college employees. Criterion Teams are responsible for gathering and assembling evidence. Please assist this effort if you are asked for information and documents.

President (Mike Kearns)

A vital role for the college president is to set the tone for a positive attitude about what the accreditation process can do for an institution and its future. (Presidential Guidelines Series, 2007) The President is also involved in the selection of the Leadership Team and the Steering Committee. Dr. Kearns confers with the Leadership Team/Steering Committee regarding the work plan for the self-study process, including the number and make-up of committees, meeting agendas, and timelines. The President also helps the leadership group formulate the desired outcomes of the self-study to assure the report is a useful document for institutional improvement.

Self-Study Coordinator/Steering Committee Chairperson and Co-chairs (Tracy Gift, John Kitts & Mike Rourke)

Roles of the Self-Study Coordinator/Chairperson and of the Co-Chairs include:
1. Leading and coordinating the overall Self-Study process;
2. Acquainting faculty, staff and students with the Self-Study process;
3. Preparing documents and reports as required by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools;
4. Attending meetings of the HLC;
5. Informing the MCC community of changes that occur in the practices, procedures, and structure of HLC;
6. Developing plans for the Site-Visit and making arrangements for the HLC Team of Consultant Evaluators; and
7. Coordinating functions and activities during the Site-Visit.

Criterion Committee Chairs (to include the Co-chair):

(Carolyn Hamblin, Shawn Bristle, Ana Masterson, Rosie LeFebvre, Steve Sorden, Dave White)

It is the responsibility of the chairpersons to lead and coordinate the subcommittee in the collection and examination of documents that clearly demonstrate that College policies, procedures, etc. support criterion and sub-components.

The subcommittee will:
1. Keep proceedings of all meetings and place copies of those proceedings and supporting documents in the resource room;
2. Provide recommendations on the types of data and evidence;
3. Assist in collecting data;
4. Provide the data collected in a timely fashion;
5. Place copies of the data in the electronic resource room;
6. Analyze data to evaluate the extent to which MCC satisfied the criterion to which they were assigned;
7. Analyze data to evaluate the extent to which MCC exhibits the themes of orientation;
8. Examine the data to identify institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges;
9. Recommend strategies for improving areas of concern;
10. Draft and submit the chapter of the self-study report related to the criterion;
11. Review and provide recommendations on other criteria subcommittee draft documents;
12. Review and provide recommendations on the self-study report.
13. Assess the accomplishment of the goals of this subcommittee; and
14. Provide such assessment to the Director of Assessment.

**Governing Board**

*(Julie Bare, Kathy Hodel, Travis Lingenfelter, Judy Selberg, Vance Miller)*

Governing boards, working in collaboration with institutional leadership, are obligated to ensure mission achievement and institutional fiscal integrity as part of their fundamental fiduciary responsibility. Accordingly, understanding accreditation and its relevance to educational quality is extremely important. Governing boards need to be appropriately engaged in the accreditation process, respecting the leadership of the chief executive officer, the chief academic officer, and the faculty; acknowledging the importance of accreditation to serving students; and understanding that board engagement, awareness, and follow-up are fundamental to their fiduciary responsibilities.

**Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) (Danette Bristle)**

The Accreditation Liaison Officer is to be a second line of communication about Commission policies, practices, and other matters related to accreditation. The chief executive officer of the institution appoints the ALO.

The Higher Learning Commission has identified the following responsibilities for the ALO:

1. Serving as a primary recipient of Commission communications regarding the institution’s accreditation, in addition to the chief executive officer.
2. Disseminating information and answers questions about Commission policies and procedures for all audiences within the institution.
3. Staying current with Commission policies and procedures.
4. Providing oversight and direction for the institution’s Data Update Coordinator to ensure the currency, accuracy, and timeliness of information submitted to the Commission as part of the Annual Institutional Data Update (AIDU).
5. Providing oversight and direction for the timely submission of substantive change requests and reports required by Commission policy.
6. Facilitating responses to Commission inquiries, including complaints referred by the Commission staff to the chief executive officer.
7. Maintaining the institution’s file of official documents and reports related to the institution’s relationship with the Commission. Such files are often kept in the president’s office.
8. Providing comments to the Commission as requested in its consideration of proposed policies, procedures, and issues affecting the accreditation relationship.
9. Ensuring that any changes in basic institutional information are reported to the Commission.
10. Ensuring that the institution meets its financial obligations to the Commission through the timely payment of dues and fees.

**Chief Financial Officer (CFO) (Lynn Cundiff)**

The CFO is responsible for assuring that financial information in the Annual Information Data Update is accurate and completed in a timely manner.
Accreditation News

August 2011

Accreditation and You

Mohave Community College has maintained accreditation through the North Central Association-Higher Learning Commission for the past 30 years. The Higher Learning Commission articulates accreditation standards to ensure quality. In order to reaffirm an accredited status, the College engages in a self-appraisal, an on-site visit by a peer review team, a review of a self-study report, and a decision on the accredited status by the Commission over a period of a few years. Currently, several staff and faculty members are working on the self-study part of the process of reaffirmation of accreditation.

Through a process of self-study, the College reflects on its mission, goals, and values. During a self-study college personnel and stakeholders strive to demonstrate a commitment to the mission through the assembly of a library of documents that provide evidence of actions supporting the mission statements of MCC. For example MCC’s Strategic Plan maps the college’s plans for the future with our mission, goals, and values. We also engage in identification of areas in need of improvement and develop plans to support ongoing quality initiatives.

One of the many challenges in conducting a successful self-study is to engage all employees in the process. Several activities have been executed to engage employees and provide valuable information about the self-study process and about projects and initiatives at MCC. In April the College conducted an HLC Summit Event that involved more than 80 people. The purpose of this particular event was to allow those working on the self-study to ask participants for information to fill in gaps in our self-study materials. Future summit events will be organized to share self-study findings with college employees and solicit feedback regarding continuous improvement.

Each campus leadership team member receives monthly materials to share with the campus constituents with the purpose of sharing information about the reaffirmation of accreditation purpose and process. You receive the same materials via email at the beginning of the month. It is important that employees and students understand and play a part in the self-study process to ensure an honest and high quality report and assist in the development of the institution, as well as to prepare all for the site visit that will occur in the fall of 2012. The visiting evaluation team members will question random individuals to ensure that all employees were part of the process.

Your mission: To learn as much as possible about the College and its mission and about accreditation purposes and processes, and then to share your knowledge and enthusiasm with those around you. Have a conversation about MCC’s mission documents, what they mean to you and those that we serve.

“The mission of Mohave Community College is to be a learning-centered college, serving all constituencies, inspiring excellence through innovative learning methodologies and empowering students to succeed.”
The Criteria for Accreditation

The Criteria for Accreditation are organized under five major headings. Each Criterion has three elements: Criterion Statement, Core Components, and Examples of Evidence. The Criteria Statements define necessary attributes of an institution accredited by the Commission. An institution must be judged to have met each of the Criteria to merit accreditation. An institution addresses each Core Component as it presents reasonable and representative evidence of meeting a Criterion. The Examples of Evidence illustrate the types of evidence an institution might present in addressing a Core Component.

The Higher Learning Commission provides general explanations of each of the Criteria with examples of how the criteria may be interpreted in different organizational environments. In addition explanations of each Criterion, Core Components provide further breadth and depth to the area of inquiry.

The Criteria for Accreditation are as follows:

- **Criterion One: Mission and Integrity**
  - Criterion Statement: 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.

- **Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future**
  - Criterion Statement: 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.

- **Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching**
  - Criterion Statement: The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

- **Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge**
  - Criterion Statement: 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.

- **Criterion Five: Engagement and Service**
  - Criterion Statement: As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Please view the Commission’s website at [www.ncahlc.org](http://www.ncahlc.org) for more information.

Cross-cutting Themes

The criteria established by the Higher Learning Commission are clearly distinctive, yet are holistic and integrated. Several overarching and fundamental themes are evident in the criteria. The Commission

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requires organizations seeking accreditation to demonstrate the interrelatedness of the Criteria using the themes of orientation.

The Higher Learning Commission demonstrates that it values the four themes of orientation with the expectation of inclusion in each institutional self-study report.

The Four Themes of Orientation are as follows:

1. The Future-Oriented Organization
   a. Engages in planning
   b. Is driven by the mission
   c. Understands social and economic change
   d. Focuses on the futures of constituents
   e. Integrates new technology

2. The Learning-Focused Organization
   1. Assesses student learning
   2. Supports learning
   3. Supports scholarship
   4. Creates the capacity for lifelong learning
   5. Strengthens organizational learning

3. The Connected Organization
   a. Serves the common good
   b. Creates a culture of service
   c. Collaborates
   d. Engages in healthy internal communication

4. The Distinctive Organization
   a. Has an unambiguous mission
   b. Appreciates diversity
   c. Is accountable
   d. Is self-reflective
   e. Is committed to improvement.

Beginning next month, we will explore each theme in order to better understand how the HLC Criteria and the Four Themes of Orientation are integrated and how the College demonstrates its commitment to both.

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MCC: The Future-Oriented Organization

The Future-Oriented Organization theme outlines the expectation that the College engages in planning, is driven by the mission, understands social and economic change, focuses on the future of constituents, and integrates new technology across each of the five criteria. Those engaged in the self-study seek to demonstrate that this expectation has been met through existing documentation and results of actions. The following paragraph briefly outlines the College’s efforts in long-term planning.

Mohave Community College plans for the future. A strategic plan called Mohave 2000 was developed to usher the College into the Twenty-first Century and beyond. The planning document that followed Mohave 2000 was titled the Mohave Strategic Master Plan 2002-2009. In the fall of 2008, Mohave Community College was engaged in the development of the MCC Strategic Plan (through June 30, 2013). College personnel, students, community members, and a consultant worked together to establish a framework for long and short term priorities and to position MCC for success and a basis for continuous improvement in serving the needs of the community with a learning-centered organization. College faculty and staff are held accountable to the MCC Strategic Plan through monthly tracking and the expectation of continued gains. This information is establishes that the College is a Future-Oriented Organization. The College will also use this documentation to establish that it meets Criterion Two Core Components. Documentation providing evidence of college-wide, division, and department long-term planning is gathered in a resource room for review by the HLC review/site visit team.

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MCC: The Learning-Focused Organization

The Higher Learning Commission demonstrates that it values the four themes of orientation to the future by including the themes in the evaluations of colleges and universities. Last month you were introduced to the first theme, Engages in Planning. The Learning-Focused Organization is the second theme.

There are five Higher Learning Commission expectations of a learning-focused organization. The expectations state that the institution:

1. Assesses student learning
2. Supports learning
3. Supports scholarship
4. Creates the capacity for lifelong learning
5. Strengthens organizational learning.

The learning-focused organization “must know what it intends its students to learn and whether that learning has actually been achieved.” (The Higher Learning Commission, 2003)

HLC Criterion Three addresses student learning. The first core component of Criterion Three embeds assessment into accreditation standards.

Currently, MCC is part of the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning. The Academy is designed to help institutions develop a culture and increase commitment to assessing and improving student learning. Participants in the Academy develop and assessment project that helps to generate evidence for accreditation evaluations. The Mohave team has to address the general education core outcomes in a Writing Across the Curriculum project.

The College must also demonstrate that it supports learning. We do this by creating learning environments that are supportive of multiple learning styles, use technology to enhance learning experiences, and provide services and facilities that support student learning, such as the tutoring centers on each campus.

Supporting scholarship is another requirement of institutions of higher education. Scholarship, defined by Ernest L. Boyer author of Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate (1990), is the means of organizing and transmitting knowledge. Scholarship may involve pure and applied research, as in the case of many university faculty members. Or scholarship can involve integrating the importance of understanding effective teaching through the study of andragogy and pedagogy.

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A learning-focused organization is concerned with connecting educational outcomes to the lives of students outside of the learning institution. The college can demonstrate this through supporting internships, mentoring programs, leadership opportunities, and service organizations with a focus on “making a connection between the life of the mind and the life of work.”

The college must also strengthen its capacity to learn. A few years ago Dr. Kearns introduced the concept of the learning-centered organization. With that initiative attention drawn to the desire for all involved in the organization to grow and learn. Employees are now encouraged to become involved in the learning process and engage in effective organizational learning.

In closing being learning-focused is the foundation to enriching the lives of our students, community members, and college employees.


MCC: The Connected Organization & the Distinctive Organization

The Higher Learning Commission demonstrates that it values the four themes of orientation to the future by including the themes in the evaluations of colleges and universities. Last semester you were introduced to the first and second themes, the Future-Oriented Organization and the Learning-Oriented Organization. The Connected Organization and the Distinctive Organization are the third and fourth themes.

The focus of the connected organization is the demonstration of an understanding that the organization exists to serve the greater society and addresses the connections between it and the broader society. A connected organization creates a culture of service.

Mohave Community College demonstrates that it serves the constituents of the area by engaging in a number of activities to solicit input from community, city, and county organizations regarding workforce training needs and economic development in the county. The College has also held events such as the Education Summit and the Allied Health Summit to gather information regarding the needs of agencies that serve the community. One result of the Allied Health Summit was the pursuit of a radiologic technology program.

The Distinctive Organization is an organization that not only has a mission but has statements of vision, values, and goals. It also is an organization that appreciates diversity and is committed to self-reflection and continuous improvement. Mohave Community College embraces this theme whole-heartedly in this author’s opinion. Not only do we have a clearly stated mission, but our vision, values, and goal statements are evident in our daily operations. The people that work at Mohave Community College are truly committed to realizing the vision and living the values.

Evidence of our commitment to our value statements is the Dreamographer Corp initiative, and the individuals who were recognized by their colleagues for their demonstration of the values. The MCC vision of being the community center of educational, cultural, and civic activities is demonstrated through the college presenting and hosting events such as art shows, concerts, political debates, and holiday festivals every year.

The mission of Mohave Community College is to be a learning-centered college, serving all constituencies, inspiring excellence through innovative learning methodologies and empowering students to succeed.
The mission of Mohave Community College is to be a learning-centered college, serving all constituencies, inspiring excellence through innovative learning methodologies and empowering students to succeed.
MCC: Criterion One

The Higher Learning Commission is an organization that evaluates and accredits degree-granting institutions of higher education. The Commission is guided by core values that include quality, integrity, innovation, diversity, inclusiveness, service, collaboration, and learning. In order to maintain accreditation, institutions are required to engage in one of two evaluation processes provided by the Commission. MCC uses the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) to engage in the process for determining continued accreditation status. The PEAQ process includes five steps: 1) the self-study process with a final report; 2) comprehensive evaluation conducted by a team that comes to the institution; 3) supporting documents relating to the comprehensive visit are reviewed by a Reader’s Panel; 4) a HLC decision-making body takes action on the Reader’s Panel recommendations; and 5) the HLC Board of Trustees takes final action.

During the self-study process, the College is required to demonstrate that they have met each of five criteria established by the Commission to merit accreditation. Over the next few weeks the Accreditation News series will introduce each of the five criteria and give examples of how MCC meets the expectations.

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

Mohave Community College’s mission documents were developed through a lengthy process involving representatives from internal and external constituencies. Eighty-one representatives participated in focus groups, surveys, and conversations that resulted in the formation of a multi-year strategic plan and the current MCC mission, vision, goals, and values statements. The mission statements and the strategic plan can be found by clicking the About tab on MCC’s homepage ([www.mohave.edu](http://www.mohave.edu)) and then clicking Strategic Plan.

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Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

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During the self-study process, the College is required to demonstrate that they have met each of five criteria established by the Commission to merit accreditation. This week Criterion Two is highlighted.

Criterion Two: 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.

MCC has documented processes in place to strategically position the college to best meet the demands of its changing environment. The students and communities served by MCC benefit from a strategic plan founded not only upon broad based internal and external constituent input but which also supports internal accountability for attainment. Economic realities are presented to the Governing Board and public through an innovative and easily understood “economic dashboard” that guides decision making. The institutional budget process addresses uncertainty by planning for multiple possible contingencies. Ever-changing technology needs are addressed through the technology portion of the strategic plan and by an IT Advisory Committee with multiple inputs.

New academic programs are developed at MCC after significant analysis using sophisticated data gathering tools. Advisory groups involving community-based input help determine directions in vocational programs. Curriculum development and the production or curricular documents occurs using collaborative processes, and the college connects to the broader world through the participation of faculty members in state-level activities and through attention to the learning needs of staff and faculty. Membership and participation in local and regional economic development organizations also help assure strong connections to area needs. Internal decision making is enhanced by a clearly defined organizational structure and through committees that solicit input from varied internal constituencies.

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Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

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During the self-study process, the College is required to demonstrate that they have met each of five criteria established by the Commission to merit accreditation. This week Criterion Three is highlighted.

Mohave Community College provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

In the past decade Mohave Community College staff and faculty have worked to develop the tools to evaluate direct measurements of student learning for academic programs and the efficacy of instruction.

In 2004 MCC faculty and instructional staff initiated a movement to transform course outlines into documents that include learning outcomes defining course expectations for skills, competencies, attitudes, and habits student scholars are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education. Clearly stated student learning outcomes for course and programs make effective assessment possible. As a result, MCC is able to offer consistency in courses across the college and has been successful in increasing the number of courses that articulate to the state public colleges and universities.

Student learning outcomes at the programmatic level are defined by program directors and faculty in the College’s career and technical education programs. Most of the career and technical programs offer terminal degrees meaning students exiting the program are work ready, therefore the program outcomes reflect the expectations of employees entering the profession.

Degree pathways that lead to transfer have a more general focus. The Associates of Arts, Associates of Business, and Associates of Science degrees are all designed to fulfill the requirements of the first two years of a baccalaureate degree, most specifically the general education requirements of a four year degree. General Education program outcome statements are embedded within the courses offered as Arizona General Education Core courses. MCC’s philosophy of General Education is found in the catalog (http://catalog.mohave.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=37&returnto=search#Academic_Expectations) or in the Assessment of Student Learning Guide for Faculty.

With the essentials in place, MCC has made progress in the collection of data regarding student learning outcomes. A comprehensive, institutional assessment plan has been developed and is
in the implementation phase. Programmatic and course level assessment processes are ongoing.

In 2011 MCC join the Higher Learning Commission Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning. The MCC Academy team has developed a project that will re-evaluate MCC’s Writing Across the Curriculum criteria for general education.
Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

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During the self-study process, the College is required to demonstrate that they have met each of five criteria established by the Commission to merit accreditation. This week Criterion Four is highlighted.

Mohave Community College 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.

Promoting a life of learning is the bedrock to the MCC mission. Item #1 of the Value Statements gives emphasis to this by stating that MCC “acknowledge[s] the importance of continuous learning to ensure the best possible future for everyone.”

In 2008 President Kearns initiated a campaign to transform the College into a learning-centered organization. In a learning-centered school, faculty, staff, and students work to achieve successful learning. Developing a successful learning community requires collaboration, effective communication, critical thinking, reciprocal respect, a passion for learning especially among faculty, high expectations of both students and employees who all have responsibility for learning. In a learning-centered organization all groups have a need for learning opportunities outside of the classroom setting in both intellectual and social situations in order to keep the organization dynamic.

Evidence of our commitment to being a learning-centered college can be found in the MCC Strategic Plan, the Faculty Association Constitution, the Professional Training and Development Plan, and HR’s plans for ongoing training and development for staff. The College community also benefits from events such as All Staff Day, the LATTE event, Leadership Academy, and Annual Training Week.

MCC recognizes that all employees of the college work hard and contribute to our commitment to creating successful learning opportunities for all.
Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

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

MCC Mission Statement: The mission of Mohave Community College is to be a learning-centered college, serving all constituencies, inspiring excellence through innovative learning methodologies and empowering students to succeed.

Vision Statement: The mission of Mohave Community College is to be a learning-centered college, serving all constituencies, inspiring excellence through innovative learning methodologies and empowering students to succeed.

At the heart of our mission and vision is a commitment to meet the diverse needs of the communities in which we serve. Over the past 42 years Mohave Community College has developed community partnerships to endorse its mission and the promote lifelong learning.

College employees maintain formal and informal relationships with people and organizations in the communities such as the area schools, universities and colleges, and county and city government organizations. MCC has formal partnerships with area high schools for dual and concurrent enrollment. The College also maintains close ties with the state universities and community colleges by participating in the Academic Program Articulation Committee (APASC), coordinating body of Arizona’s statewide articulation and transfer system, and its subcommittees to ensure that MCC students can transfer with ease and limited loss of credit. Career and Technical programs benefit from the expertise of Advisory Committees. Committee members from the area provide valuable input into program offerings.

College staff members serve in local service and non-profit organizations including but not limited to Rotary, Kiwanis, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and other civic organizations, such as community organization raising money for a dog park or community stage.

MCC recognizes that community connection and engagement starts with the College’s most valuable asset…the MCC family. MCC employees are connected to the communities in which they reside and are engage in activities that take MCC to the community and bring the community to the College.

If you are a fan of the Accreditation News Series, write a quick memo to Tracy Gift (tgift@mohave.edu), Self-Study Coordinator, and let her know. Respondents will receive a prize.