# 2010 -2011

**Mohave Community College** 

Office of the Dean of Student Services

### STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

This report intends to provide an overview of ongoing initiatives that lay the foundation for future improvements in student access, retention, completion, and transfer, at MCC. This report includes information on strategic planning at MCC, program review, Title III grant activities, Learning Assistance Centers (LACs), Financial aid and Advising, the MCC Early Alert program, articulation agreements and partnerships, activities in preparation for the upcoming Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation visit, and MCC management training,. Each of these areas plays an integral part in student success at MCC, and in the overall objective of marked improvement in student outcomes.

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#### Introduction

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#### **Complete to Compete**

Many experts agree that the number of college educated and trained Americans will need to expand significantly in the coming years in order for the country to remain competitive in the global economy and maintain a vibrant democratic society. Furthermore, it has become clear that there is a direct correlation between learning and earning: it is becoming more and more difficult for an individual to earn a livable wage without some form of postsecondary education.

According to the Arizona Department of Commerce, by 2014, almost 80% of all jobs in Arizona will require some postsecondary education or training beyond high school; the state's most educated workers will be leaving the workforce and within the next ten years and roughly 167,000 jobs in Arizona requiring a Bachelor's degree will become vacant due to "Baby Boomer" retirements. Postsecondary Education Opportunity speculates that even though the college-age population is skyrocketing, the state's college-going rate is not.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Arizona Department of Commerce, Research Administration

Significant disparities in educational attainment persist. It is predicted that less than a decade from now, over half of Arizona's high school graduates will be from racial and ethnic groups that historically have had relatively low educational attainment rates. In order for our citizens and region to prosper MCC understands that it must find ways to ramp up college access and completion without sacrificing educational quality. Moreover, with public financing strained to the breaking point we must do so in ways that are affordable to taxpayers, students and families in our service area.

Mohave Community College continues efforts to position itself to make vast improvements in the area of student success and completion. The focus of this report on student success describes how MCC is meeting compliance guidelines outlined in the National Governors Association's—Complete to Compete: Common College Completion initiative.

The table below shows the outcome metrics that quantify the completion of an academic program and the successful transfer to a baccalaureate campus and, progress metrics that measure student progress from semester-to semester or year-to year. These metrics are used to track student progression in a way that allows early intervention and support to increase the likelihood of success and transfer.

Vision Statement	U. S. Data	Arizona	MCC 10/11	MCC 11/12 to date
College-Going Rate	70%	45%		
2. FTSE CC Enrollment		135,789	3,953	3,975
College-Level Course     Success rate		69%	74%	81.30%
Developmental Course     Success Rate		62%	60%	67.80%
5. Success After Developmental Math Rate		20%	13%	11.20%
6. Success After Developmental English/Reading Rate		37%	14%	18.40%
7. Fall-to-Fall Retention Data	52%	49%	46%	44%
8. In-State University Transfers		11,425	617	TBD
9. Transfer Rate	25%	26%	14.10%	26.30%
10. Degrees and Certificates Awarded Annually		30,520	939	939
11. Graduation Rate	37%	20%	28%	26.30%
12. %Learners Achieving a Successful CC Outcome		61%	51%	51%
13. % of Occupational Program Completers either Employed with a livable Wage or Enrolled in Further Education		52%	70%	70%
14. % of Adults who have a Bachelor's Degree	28%	26%	12.10%	

A comprehensive yearly report (Appendix One) of data pertaining to enrollment management, student demographics, and student success may be of relevance in developing strategies and assessing progress for enabling student success.

#### Access

#### **Financial Aid and Access to Higher Education**

For the low income college student financial aid is critical to college access and success, but finding out about it at the right time and taking full advantage of it can be particularly challenging. Grants, scholarships and student loans can go a long way towards covering college costs, and provide people in rural areas with adequate financial aid to attend and complete college.

MCC has presented and facilitated financial aid workshops on campus, in the high schools and at other locations in its service area. For a number of years the college has participated in Arizona College Goal Sunday: a statewide initiative that provides financial aid information and help from financial aid professionals and other qualified volunteers to students and families seeking college financial aid. The objective is to assist students and parents in completing and filing the FAFSA early in the application period when the greatest amount of financial aid is available. Students and families can get help by attending the annual in-person event (held in January or February) at each of the southern campuses. Financial aid and financial literacy information has also become an important part of new student orientation and in the student success course curriculum.

#### Mohave County School Districts – Dual Enrollment

#### **Dual Enrollment**

Although there are many initiatives and programs designed to facilitate the transition to college and increase students' chances, Dual Enrollment has grown dramatically and

encourages and allows high school students to take college courses to earn college credit while still in high school. Dual enrollment through a credit-based transition-to- college programs not only allows high school students to earn college credit but also prepares them for the academic rigors of college. Traditionally used to accelerate the progress of high-achieving college-bound, it has recently become a way to facilitate college access and success for middle-and even lower-performing students.

The College has established Dual Enrollment IGAs with seven local school districts. The agreements with Kingman Unified School District # 20, Colorado River Unified School District # 2, Lake Havasu Unified School District # 1, Colorado City Unified School District # 14, Littlefield Unified School District #9, Telesis Preparatory Academy, and Mohave Accelerated Schools serve approximately 500 dual enrollment students each semester, and provide students with over 10,000 credit hours of course work each year, allowing them to get a head start on their college career.

Dual enrollment gives high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to work towards a degree or certificate earning up to 30 college credits while attending high school classes. Each of the campuses holds orientation sessions for students and parents. A team of MCC advising and academic staff are on hand to answer questions and information about the dual enrollment program and degree and career pathways (Appendix Two). MCC admissions counselors maintain close relationships with dual enrollment students throughout their dual enrollment period. Recruitment efforts to enroll these students are ongoing with staff providing information about financial aid and enrollment after graduation. Each high school student interested in dual enrollment must take the assessment to ensure they are ready to take

college level classes. The results of COMPASS assessment testing of sophomores and juniors provide more realistic information to students about the skills that they will need to succeed.

MCC staff also provides advice and guidance to the high school students who took the assessment test but did not meet the requirements for college level classes.

#### Retention

#### **Early Alert - Early Intervention**

The influence of college faculty on student retention can be dramatic. Faculty usually has more frequent and continuous contact with students than any other institutional representative. Faculty influence can be even more dramatic for commuter and part-time students who may have little or no time for out-of-class interactions with other college personnel. The fact remains that faculty can heavily influence and structure students' out-of-class activities with respect to the college (e.g., reading assignments, library research, and utilization of campus resources) and thereby influence their contact with other institutional representatives and support personnel.

Early and continuing intervention can mean the difference between a successful student and one who might give up. Early alert is a program designed to identify, as early as possible in the semester, students who are at risk of not succeeding. Instructors look for known signs, such as non-attendance, lack of focus, late assignments, poor quiz results, and erratic behavior, to set the process in motion. Once an instructor identifies any of the many early signs of a student at risk, the instructor flags the student by assigning an EA1 grade through the ExWeb system. This action notifies the student services department to initiate the early

intervention process. Intervention can range from a simple phone call to intentional advising and/or referral to internal or external support services.

MCC has many resources available for students to help them improve performance. The college provides supplemental instruction, tutoring, math, reading, and writing labs, faculty one-on-one time, advising, and counseling services. Each service is available upon the request of any student in need. The college updates and posts on the website a comprehensive listing of external support services (Appendix Three). This guide was created to provide resources to assist students who may be at risk of not succeeding because of factors beyond academics. Although the Early alert – Early intervention program is designed to identify at risk students and proactively initiate all support services, these services are available to all MCC students as a part of the college's overarching student success initiative.

#### **Learning Assistance Centers**

Learning Assistance Centers (LACs) continue to play a pivotal role in providing students with the necessary support resources to achieve academic success. LACs generally provide tutoring, supplemental instruction, math labs, reading labs, and writing labs, along with software and textbook resources for students outside of classroom time and laptop computers for student use in the center. The four LACs, (one on each of the four MCC campuses) are the result of the Title III grant and MCC's focus on student success.

Title III's student success initiatives include monitoring performance in basic skills and implementing learning communities. Two instructors on two different campuses have teamed up to pilot the learning community concept for high-risk students. Plans are underway to begin implementation of study groups and group tutorial services at all centers.

#### **Completion Rates for Basic Skills Courses**

One of the objectives of the Title III grant is to increase the success of high-risk students in basic skills courses by providing support resources such as tutoring. This report presents the completion rates for students enrolled in TRE/TRM basic skills classes. The 2007 and 2008 academic years show baseline numbers for the program.

The table below compares completion rates of students enrolled in TRE, (transitional English) and TRM (transitional math) who received tutoring with those who did not.

The students in TRE who received tutoring had higher completion rates than those students who did not. Completion rates for students in TRM who received tutoring were slightly lower than those students who did not receive tutoring.

Overall Completion Rate	TRE Completion Rate	TRM Completion Rate
43.34%	51.52%	36.99%
55.42%	57.59%	54.85%
57.81%	62.24%	56.79%
58.84%	75.00%	55.71%
54.15%	58.69%	53.02%
54.05%	76.47%	51.51%
	Completion Rate  43.34% 55.42% 57.81% 58.84% 54.15%	Completion Rate         Completion Rate           43.34%         51.52%           55.42%         57.59%           57.81%         62.24%           58.84%         75.00%           54.15%         58.69%

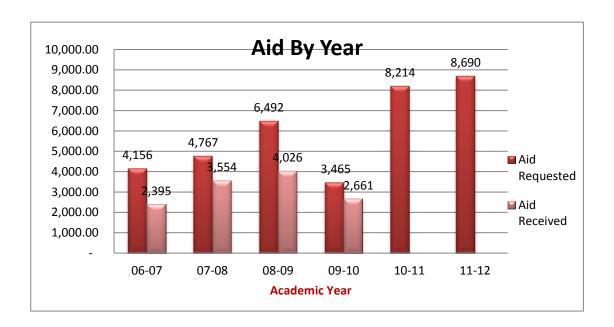
A comprehensive report on Transitional Courses Enrollment, Retention and Graduation is in Appendix Four.

#### **Financial Aid and Student Success**

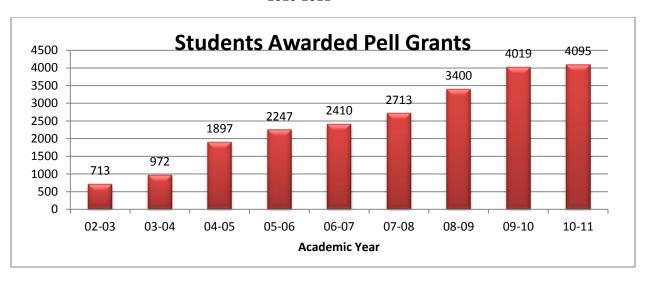
It is well known that there is a direct relationship between financial aid and student success.

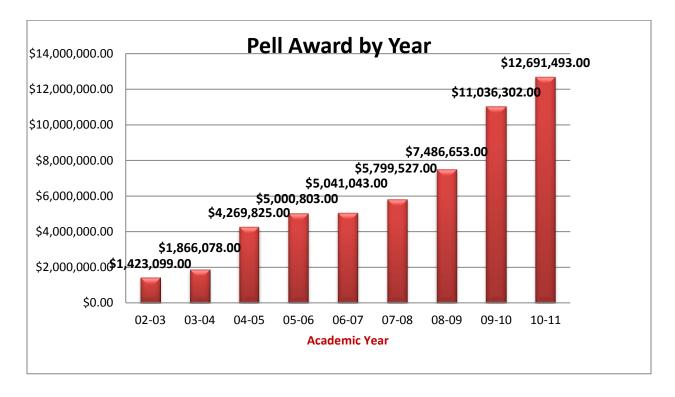
Researchers have discovered that grants and scholarships have a significant impact on student persistence especially among low-income first generation college students.

The financial aid program at MCC continues to grow with 8690 students applying for financial aid by April of 2011. This represents an increase of 476 applicants over the year-end total for 2009 - 2010.

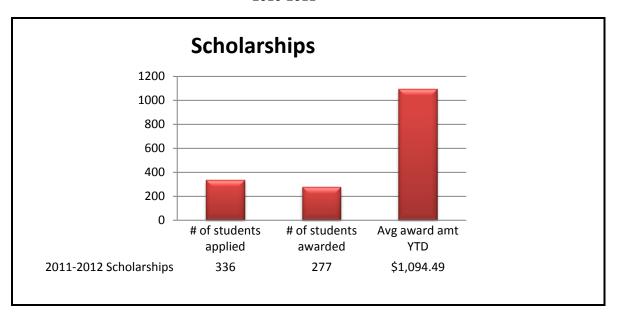


To date students have been paid nearly \$25 million in financial aid funds and that figure is expected to reach \$26 million at year's end. Pell Grants have continued to be the most important foundation to MCC student's financial aid portfolio as evidenced by the following charts.





Scholarships also play an important part in student success providing extra incentives for retention and completion.



Approximately 30-40% of new students receive financial aid (FA), while 50-60% of returning students receive aid. As the disbursement of financial aid continues to grow at MCC, staff emphasis on Financial Aid and financial literacy to help students understand the impact of over-borrowing has become increasingly acute.

Standards of satisfactory academic progress are designed to help students understand that they are equal partners with the college, the government and/or the scholarship donor in their success. Satisfactory academic progress (SAP) is measured quantitatively and qualitatively to ensure academic progress in terms of grade point average and completion of courses. The Financial Aid Department calculates satisfactory academic progress at the end of each semester to confirm student's continued eligibility to receive aid. If a student fails to make qualitative or quantitative progress, financial aid is put on hold until an appeal is granted. The appeal process changed this year in that students who do not accomplish a satisfactory academic performance must now meet with an academic advisor who will determine,

through mathematical calculation, the students' probability of success in the chosen program of study.

If an appeal is granted, the student is allowed to enroll for the next semester with FA, but the student must show satisfactory progress. If a student appeal is denied, the student is no longer eligible for FA, but may attend at a reduced load, by paying for their classes without federal funding. The reduction in load is designed to help the student succeed. Between December 2010 and June, 2011 –1642 students were suspended, 621 appealed and of that number, 411 appeals were granted. MCC is monitoring their progress and their success.

Financial aid employees, as well as staff across the college are putting major emphasis on advising students regarding the proper load size and its relationship to academic success. Financial Aid videos have been produced with the assistance of the student services and admissions staff and are available via the MCC website. MCC's comprehensive student success strategies support the fact that there must be a culture change. The Financial Aid office is no longer seen as the only office that can have the greatest impact on helping borrowers avoid delinquency and default. This is now a college-wide effort.

#### **Academic Advising**

Advising students is an area of high impact for students and staff, and it plays a pivotal role in the success and retention of students. Academic advising is an extension of quality teaching. What we value in students' learning–critical thinking and communication skills, research and analytical skills–can all be put into practice through academic advising. Just as

the most effective classes are those in which the students are actively engaged, the best advising assumes both student and advisor share responsibility for the process.

MCC is always striving for improvements in this area, and this year is no different. Many recommendations were made to improve advising during the student services strategic planning sessions ranging from expanding the number of advisors to developing a program of "intentional advising". Intentional advising assigns each campus professional advisor to two or three remedial classes. The advisor visits the class two or more times per semester to provide information on support and other services at the college. These recommendations and others are currently under review.

#### **Project Achievement**

It is widely held in higher education that failure rates are higher for students who take online courses. With this information and improved student outcomes in mind, MCC has developed Project Achievement. Project Achievement targets student groups taking online classes who may be at-risk of failing to complete their educational goals. The target groups include students who are also enrolled in transitional courses, students on financial aid appeal, students in certain programs and students who are the first generation in their family to attend college.

The project embraces an array of specifically-catered services and interventions such as tutoring, advising, orientations and workshops that focus on the groups needs and connects them with MCC staff who provide a personal contact and touch to their world at MCC.

Consistent and meaningful relationships with designated staff members are key to the success

of this program. It begins with a mandatory hour-long orientation conducted by an advisor (before or immediately after open registration) where participants will meet each other, the advisor, tutor and any other essential parties to go over the specifics of the program and expectations.

Group advising is the next step and one advisor is designated as the point of contact for all of the participants' advising needs. The designated advisor schedules group advising times to check in with all participants and to provide direction. At this time, the advisor listens to group concerns about courses, etc. and follow-ups with appropriate additional services and ideas as necessary.

Tutoring is an integral part of this program. All participants are introduced to and set-up with one specific tutor to guide and assist the entire group, again, at designated times. The tutor is selected not only based on academic skill and knowledge, but also on personal skills and how they relate to students. If students in the project receive an Early Alert, the process is the same with faculty members submitting an EA1 through jics.mohave.edu. However, another report developed in Jenzabar is for the designated advisors to run that pulls all EA1s for students in the project and appears on a different list.

After the advisor receives the Early Alert, a follow-up with the student is made to provide additional resources and services as needed based on the cause for their distress. Instructors are also involved and are kept apprised of students that are part of the project and to include. At least two presentations or webinars throughout the semester are mandatory for all project participants. Subjects or guests vary depending on the group and the determined needs.

Included are stress management, career exploration, student leaders, motivational speakers and more.

A wrap-up week is chosen toward the end of semester, after finals, for students to defuse and receive further direction, again, depending on needs and goals of students and the intent of MCC. MCC will continue to monitor student outcomes in DE and on-ground to ensure the integrity of course delivery in all modalities, and to ensure improvements in student outcomes.

#### **Graduation and Transfer**

#### Articulation

Over the past year, MCC, ASU, and NAU have actively pursued partnership programs to increase opportunities for MCC students to achieve a baccalaureate degree. As a result, several new innovative pathways have been created and others are under development.

	Arizona State University	Criminal Justice &	Transfer	ASU In-State	
		Criminology – BS; Admission		Tuition: Tuition	
		Psychology – BS & BA;	Guarantee	Commitment	
		Business – BA;	(TAG): 2+2	Program (max 5%	
		Elementary Education -		increase for tuition	
		BAE		cohort)	
Γ	Arizona State University	Criminal Justice &	Augmented	Reduced tuition	
		Criminology – BS;	On-Line	rate based upon	
		Business and	Program: 2+2	PELL Grant	
		Communication - BA		funding level.	
Γ	Arizona State University	Interdisciplinary Studies -	Augmented	Reduced tuition	
		BIS	On-Line	rate based upon	
			Program: 75-	PELL Grant level	
			45		
Γ	Northern Arizona	Interdisciplinary Studies –	90-30 Transfer	Arizona In-State	
	University	BSIS & BAIS	Program: Dual	Tuition	
			Admission		

Northern Arizona	Numerous Degrees – BS &	MCC2NAU:	Arizona In-State
University	BA	Dual	Tuition; Merit
		Admission	Scholarships
			available for up to
			\$ 2000/yr
Northern Arizona	Administration of Justice,	90-30 Transfer	Reduced Tuition
University	Emergency Services	Program: Dual	for Extended
	Management, Technology	Admission	Campus Students
	Management – BA or BS		
Northern Arizona	RN to BSN Program	Up to 90 credit	
University		hours	
Northern Arizona	Bachelor of Applied	75 hours of	
University	Science	community college	
		credit.	

#### **University and College Articulation Agreements**

In the 2010-2011 academic year, MCC signed or updated agreements with Capella University, Chamberlain College of Nursing, Saint Joseph's College of Maine, Western International University, and Colorado Technical University. The college currently works closely with 19 college and university partners to provide baccalaureate pathways to our students. A complete list of transfer partners are listed on page 32 of the current catalog.

#### **Transfer Rates to Arizona Universities**

Students intending to transfer to another institution should meet with an academic counselor to learn about the resources available and to facilitate transfer of MCC credits to the university. Among these resources are transfer guides developed by each university for their majors, the Course Equivalency Guide, which is used to determine transferability of MCC courses, and AZTransfer which is an online evaluation tool for transfer students. The number of MCC students who transfer to Arizona colleges and universities has steadily increased and initiatives that are underway to encourage degree completion at MCC first and then transfer to the university.

AY 2009-10	ASU	NAU	UA	Total
12 or More Transfer Hours	139	362	116	617
Less than 12 Transfer Hours	59	83	38	180
Total	198	445	154	797

#### **Strategic Planning for Student Success**

In 2009 MCC embarked on a strategic planning exercise that resulted in the MCC Strategic Plan 2010 – 2013 which was approved by the governing board in January of 2010. The plan's open action items are regularly tracked, reviewed, updated and shared with the board, management and other employees.

This comprehensive plan is a culmination of many of hours of dedicated work by over 100 individuals consisting of students, faculty, staff, community stakeholders, and administrators. The overarching theme of the strategic plan is the creation and sustainability of a learningcentered college environment that places learning at the core of all we do. The entire construct has the single laser-focus of creating a learning-centered college, where students and MCC employees are provided the necessary resources to ensure student success and completion. Consistent with the college strategic plan, in November, 2010 the concept of strategic enrollment management was introduced to the management team and again in July, 2011 at the college's annual management training meetings to provide a framework for the formation of a strategic enrollment management (SEM) team charged with developing and implementing a comprehensive approach to integrating College programs, practices, policies, and planning related to achieving the optimal recruitment, retention, and graduation of students. The SEM team will begin its work in the Fall of 2011 (Appendix Five). Consistent with this initiative, the student services offices, the disability services office, the admissions and recruitment office and the financial aid office have begun development of departmental strategic plans to assure that their processes and procedures remain relevant and responsive

to the needs of the college community and contribute to the college's stability and growth.

These departments are in the process of self-examination that will lead to defining objectives for a 12-month period and designing strategies to meet them.

#### **Accreditation and MCC Self-Study**

As a member of the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools, MCC is required to maintain its accreditation status through site visits and evaluations. MCC is due for its next site visit in the Fall 2012 – Spring 2013 evaluation cycle and is in the process of preparing objective evidence for the visit.

On April 1, 2011 several staff and faculty attended an HLC summit at the Bullhead City campus to assist criterion groups in the investigation and information gathering process of self-study. The summit gave criterion groups an opportunity to meet face-to-face to develop their teams, discuss the approach to the self-study investigation and to share ideas regarding examples of evidence. Non-criterion groups also attended the summit.

Prior to this summit criterion groups were asked to determine evidence gaps and questions for campus and college-wide groups regarding documentation in support of the relevant core components. The campus and college groups examined the Overview of Accreditation to become familiar with the criteria and the core components attached. They were then asked to envision ways that they, through their daily activities, could document evidence.

To increase understanding of the HLC process a communication piece was developed that outlines the committee structure and defines the roles of each (Appendix Six).

#### **Program Review**

The primary goal of program review is to continuously improve service to students and student success. As a learning-centered college, everyone at MCC is continuously learning and working to develop innovative methodologies that empower students to succeed.

One aspect of this learning is to carefully study the current state of each academic program, measure how successful the program's students are, and set goals and objectives to guide program improvement efforts.

Program review is based on peer review and self-assessment. As part of the process, each academic department was given statistical data (Appendix Seven) to guide and inform improvement efforts. Program review has become the foundation upon which programs develop a rationale to advocate for their needs in achieving educational excellence. Program review reports are used to adjust the MCC Strategic Plan and recommend adjustments to facilities, equipment, faculty, staff, and budget plans.

#### **MCC Management Training**

In July 2011, MCC held its annual management training sessions. This event focused on how enrollment management, student completion and generational management impact overall student success and outcomes. The primary objective of the training was to bring the MCC management team into full alignment and integration with these initiatives.

While the three major initiatives are tightly integrated with many overlapping aspects, each can be viewed as a standalone project. MCC's view is that the three are integrally woven in the fabric of student success, and in turn must be absolutely clear in each manager's mind to ensure the success of our students.

During training, many recommendations were made, and documented, on how to use generational information to improve services to internal and external customers and how to improve operations that will positively impact student outcomes and the student experience at MCC.

#### **Partnerships**

#### **Community Conversations**

One of the main goals of the college is to build partnerships within the local and state community to ensure student and community success. Over the past year the college has been active in successfully building strong partnerships with the county, state universities, local school districts, public safety entities, and our rural communities. These relationships are critical to the ongoing success of the institution. Mohave Community College, in its commitment to student-learning, has developed a Community Conversations Project to engage the community and implement actions in support of student success. Planning for the conversations began in the Spring of 2011 and will be hosted by the Lake Havasu City Campus in November.

These conversations will be carefully constructed problem-solving dialogues that bring diverse stakeholders together to discuss an important and pressing issue. The Community Conversations project will provide education, government and community leaders the

opportunity to engage a broad cross section of the community in productive, actionoriented deliberation (Appendix Eight).

The dialogue for the conversations will focus on three approaches that the college and community could take in order to help students achieve their goals and be more successful in college: (1) making sure students are able to do college-level work, (2) helping students deal with the pressures in their lives and, (3) ensuring a rigorous and engaging academic experience.

#### Mohave County One-Stop Center

With funding assistance from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), MCC and the County expanded our partnership through several initiatives involving students from the age of 14 to senior citizen. The county placed 15 youth workers at MCC through the COYOTE work program, the College trained approximately 200 students for new careers in a joint program dubbed "Fast Track" and MCC continues to plan for energy careers training through a grant received by the County. The College has provided meeting and testing

#### **Conclusions**

Over the past 12 months, MCC has made a concerted effort to improve student success across the college, but much work is still needed to reach satisfactory levels of retention and completion. Given the early stages of the life cycle for some of the initiatives and recent changes to existing programs, their success will not be known for some time, but MCC is collecting baseline data for later cohort statistical analysis.

This report, along with the comprehensive yearly data report that accompanies it, set the stage for MCC to take a leadership role in ensuring continuous improvements in student success and outcomes. The two provide supporting evidence of MCC's continued commitment to improve college completion rates, attainment and overall productivity in a new era of fiscal constraints coupled with unprecedented demand for higher education.

As documented in the report, there are many student success initiatives under way at MCC, and many left to implement. MCC is poised and ready to do whatever it takes to ensure long term improvements in student outcomes.

#### **Appendices – Distributed to Governing Board Members in CD Format**

Appendix One - Enrollment Management Data Report

Appendix Two- Degree Pathways

Appendix Three- MCC Community Resource Guide

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