

PLANNING SUMMARY

Standard I - Plans of Action

The process for the mission statement's regular review and revision has recently been codified through the College participatory governance apparatus. It only remains for the College, through its participatory governance bodies, to monitor community needs as they relate to the mission statement, and then to make the appropriate changes as necessary.

Mesa College communicates its mission internally and externally. The overall effectiveness of its mission is determined by a participatory planning process that includes College-wide student services, instructional and facilities master planning committees. The success of the Proposition S campaign is an example of how the College's effective planning provided needed data for the Proposition S campaign. Currently, there are various planning groups dedicated to specific aspects of the facilities master plan. Many of these committees are comprised of school or department faculty, who utilize academic program reviews and discipline requirements to prioritize and plan the functionality of their respective buildings and how these buildings will fit into the overall campus plan. In addition to academic needs, the facilities master planning will also include the needs of students and the community. For example, parking has remained a persistent concern of the community. Therefore, construction of a parking facility will maximize parking spaces and ensure a safe traffic flow once the College begins its building projects. Additionally, the facilities master plan committee has compiled a list of sixteen construction projects, representing an array of various student needs. Among these are a new or remodeled facilities for tutoring, testing, financial aid, accounting, and admissions. All of these new or remodeled facilities have clear and long-term impacts on those things most clearly germane to the mission statement – access, retention, and success.

The College will develop and implement more extensive retention programs on campus. The number of learning communities will expand beyond the freshman experience, as we work to address the challenges of enrollment logistics and the processes for faculty to create learning communities are streamlined. The longitudinal student success data will provide justification for long-term institutional and fiscal commitments to the College's effective student retention programs. In order to better facilitate the mission statement's charge, a closer working relationship between student services and instructional programs would contribute to a strengthening of the retention programs currently in existence.

The development of student learning outcomes will remain a focus for the College. The first draft of student learning outcomes for the Associate degree was reviewed and revised, incorporating feedback from faculty and staff. The final version of these outcomes was presented to the Academic Senate, Academic Affairs Committee, and President's Cabinet and approved in spring 2004. A main goal pertaining to student learning outcomes is their eventual incorporation into the Mission Statement, which will continue to serve as the benchmark for planning at Mesa College.

Faculty will continue to play an important role in determining appropriate measures of assessment for their courses and disciplines in order to ensure that these indicators of student learning are valid. Dialogue among the different College constituents through

various flex activities, Fourth Friday presentations, and other group events will further explore various outcome measures. In addition to current outcome measures (such as grades, certificate and degree attainment, transfer rates, and subsequent occupational success), the schools, disciplines, and/or departments may develop additional assessment measures. It is important to note there may be variation among disciplines in the operational definitions of these outcomes, and as a result, there may also be variation in assessment measures from discipline to discipline.

Pilot assessment projects should be scheduled to provide data and feedback pertaining to successful student learning both at the College level and the discipline level. There will also be an increased focus on certain input measures, such as the replacement of numerous unfilled contract faculty and staff positions, to aid in the rebuilding of some departments and allow for expansion of other departments. This focus on hiring full-time contract personnel will increase the number of individuals available to address the large task of assessment development and implementation. Furthermore, the need for research-based outcomes data at the local level remains at the forefront. The Research Committee will continue to address research issues pertaining to student learning outcomes (such as the planned pilot assessment projects) and communicate these needs to the District Planning and Research Office, most often through the liaison member(s) of the Research Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and Academic and Student Services Program Review Committees.

It should be noted that, although a renewed relationship with District Institutional Research and Planning has been noted in this document previously, this relationship could yet bear further strengthening. With the current scrutiny on student learning outcomes demanding quantitative and measurable results, it would benefit the College in the long term to retain a full-time researcher. This would allow the nuances and vagaries of planning, academic program review, and revision of the mission statement to have an on-demand resource capable of meeting these demands. The office of Instructional Services and Economic Development is currently set up in such a way that a dedicated researcher could easily be accommodated.

The College has identified two areas to address within the scope of this standard and recommends:

1. integrating Student Services and Instructional programs to strengthen access, outreach, retention and publicity;
2. expanding the development and the incorporation of institutional research in all facets of institutional planning.

Standard IIA – Plans of Action

Mesa College students have indicated in the ClassTalk surveys that over 70% consider the College to have an excellent or good reputation. While this is very encouraging, such a positive image and reputation does not necessarily mean that students are achieving their goals. More detailed studies at program and College levels are needed to determine conclusively that student are indeed achieving their educational and/or career objectives.

Program and curriculum decisions should be based more on statistically significant, verifiable evidence, and less on best estimates and anecdotal reports of student needs. In fall 2003, the quantitative assessment data available were judged to be relatively inconclusive. While some useful research data about student success outcomes exist at the institutional and District levels, more focused, targeted information needs to be available for each program on a yearly basis. For each academic program review, a member of the Research Committee and a District researcher meets with the discipline faculty and dean to discuss the quantitative data, puts it into context, and develops some specific research questions that might assist the academic program review process.

There are many areas where the College needs to make a stronger connection with the community. Its outward involvement would be enhanced by seeking new community and business relationships. By both academic and applied disciplines increasing their collaboration with community organizations, urgent community problems could be addressed and greater responsiveness to the region's workforce development needs would occur. A present example of such a partnership is the College's involvement in the building of a new high school on its campus. Another are the many community advisory committees that assist the Allied Health programs and other vocational disciplines.

Six Student Learning Outcomes were devised by the Mesa Research Committee in spring 2003. These SLOs were subsequently shared with the College-wide community early in fall 2003. However, they have not been finalized or adopted by the Academic Senate as of now. SLOs should be adopted by the entire College and a gradual implementation should follow.

The pilot Student Learning Outcomes project in 2003-2004 focuses on developing selected program SLOs in parallel with the six proposed Associate degree SLOs; measuring how well students achieve the program's stated student learning outcomes; and assessing the results of the pilot project for future cycles. A process and timeline for 2003-2004 describes the plan of action for input from the College community, review by and recommendation to the various governance bodies, followed by the development of rubrics and assessment methods for the SLOs, identification of pilot programs, and evaluation of results from these pilots with feedback provided. At the conclusion of this cycle, recommendations will be made for the next cycle. In order to determine student needs and learning outcomes, the College makes use of District-sponsored surveys that provide an overview perspective and has elected to cease the use of the existing College survey system with the intent of developing an improved process for use in the future. Through the work of the College's Research Committee, a new software system has been purchased that will allow the faculty to develop more appropriate surveys. In conjunction with the effort to develop SLOs, a pilot program has been organized through the auspices of this committee in which five College programs will utilize the new system as a component of developing an improved process at the College to gain relevant transfer, graduation, and employer information. Some faculty members have expressed reservation about the initiatives surrounding Student Learning Outcomes, fearing undue usurpation of their academic freedom. The District and College need to ensure that these concerns are addressed and that processes are created that not only preserve faculty academic freedom, but allow faculty to "own" the process for implementing Student Learning Outcome measurement and monitoring in their courses. Instructor training (Flex) sessions and classes will be expanded to enhance faculty awareness and

understanding of general education, student learning outcomes and skills required to incorporate them into individual courses.

The General Education Task Force considered broad general education issues, and evaluated how well District general education criteria satisfy UC and CSU general education criteria, especially for our major transfer institutions such as SDSU and UCSD. Collaboration will be increased between individual programs with large transfer student populations and equivalent CSU, UC, and private institution departments to maximize student opportunities to take lower division courses at the College before transferring to the four-year institution. The College's outreach efforts with its surrounding community including business partnerships, workforce development, K-12 and university partnerships, and community organizations will be increased.

A large proportion of Mesa students are transfer students, targeting primarily the CSU, UC and private institutions in San Diego County. The College Articulation Officer works closely with these and other four-year institutions to ensure that articulation agreements are established and maintained for the College's various programs.

The College has identified two areas to address within the scope of this standard and recommends:

3. implementing Student Learning Outcomes based upon continued faculty consultation and participation.
4. piloting a new methodology for the quantitative assessment of student learning outcomes and making available an improved data base.

Standard IIB - Plans of Action

The various Student Service departments have initiated an excellent pattern of dialogue and cooperation among themselves, student groups and areas of instruction. The College recommends the continuation of that dialogue and the development of assessment tools for student learning outcomes within all Student Service areas. The College has made impressive progress in the first year and will continue to have dialogue and develop the activities and outcomes for each program area. The next year we will expand our programs to include Student Affairs, Disabled Students Programs and Services, and Admissions & Records and Financial Aid. Student learning outcomes have been incorporated into the Student Services Program Review and self study process. The College will continue to monitor and track the three pilot SLO programs (PG 65, Puente, and Mesa Academy).

The self study/ program review process is underway currently for Student Services. Evaluation of the process will be conducted by each Student Services Program Review Validation committee. Assessment of the process will take place on an annual basis and implementation of complete recommendations will take place after the last year of the 3-year cycle. At this point, the committee will meet to discuss recommendations and will fine-tune the document and process in order to most effectively meet the needs of the program and students served by this division within the College. Once again, the document will be presented to all key areas within the governance structure at the College.

In an effort to continually upgrade assessment options the College recommends the District Institutional Research and Planning Office develop further research or conduct more frequent point of service surveys to demonstrate whether or not the improved procedures have resulted in more effective services. The College also recommends that each Student Service office included in the survey participate in the development of the survey instrument implemented. Additional assessment data is needed in order to determine student needs and reactions to services offered. The surveys previously conducted by the District were highly informative, but because of infrequency, there is a lack of a comparison component. Also, as new programs and practices are developed and adopted, new studies are needed to assess effectiveness, and to develop future programs in response to student needs. Previous surveys have not necessarily suited the needs or addressed fully the considerations specific to each office, making staff input a desirable addition to the survey development process.

The College also recommends that the District develop a Student Satisfaction Survey that includes questions sensitive to each Student Service department. Due to its brevity, the current survey does not give enough in-depth feedback required for all offices to develop changes and improvements based on specific student feedback. For example the single question regarding student registration reads as follows: “The ClassTalk registration process is easy to use”. To be fully effective, it is suggested separate questions addressing both phone (ClassTalk) and on-line (Reg-e) registration, hours of operation, ease of use, and accuracy of financial aid information available be included. The survey question addressing Financial Aid is “Overall, I am satisfied with financial aid services.” It is not clear from this question whether the amount of federal aid money received, or services offered by the staff is being addressed. This lack of specificity produces ambiguous survey results while more specific questions would help the various student service offices target real problems.

The Mesa College website has made tremendous strides in providing information to students on-line. In an effort to be more comprehensive and to provide consistent information to all on-line students, the College recommends that the Financial Aid Bulletin be posted on-line for increased student access to policies and application procedures. Although all of the information included in the Financial Aid Bulletin is available in various locations on-line, it will be more accessible to students in a single location. It will also allow on-line students to access information in a format consistent with students on campus. The usage of the on-line Financial Aid Bulletin will be tracked by the web tracking system currently in use.

Another area that should be addressed on-line concerns student rights and responsibilities, Conduct and Due Process and Policy 3100. This information is now housed in various locations and College publications. These locations can be consolidated and the information made more easily accessible to students via direct links. The College might also look into the possibility of reintroducing the Student Handbook.

The College has identified two areas that need to be addressed and recommends:

5. establishing a periodic administration of point-of-service surveys that include questions pertaining to specific student service programs and activities using input from these constituents.

6. on-line posting so that critical information for students is more readily available. Examples include the Financial Aid Bulletin, student rights and responsibilities including Conduct and Due Process, Policy 3100 and other important information contained within the current printed Student Handbook.

Standard IIC – Plans of Action

Tutoring programs are currently dispersed throughout the College and lack central coordination. This has created student confusion, and resulted in unnecessary duplication and inefficient use of resources.

Use of videocassettes in the San Diego/Imperial Counties Community College Learning Resources Cooperative's shared video collection has decreased over the last three years. Since each community college library contributes money to the San Diego County Office of Education to maintain and administer this collaborative service, the College will determine whether faculty use of this service justifies the cost of membership – and if not, investigate other options to more efficiently use this funding for faculty access to videocassettes and DVDs.

Once College-wide Associate degree SLOs are adopted, assessment methods for the LRC and its programs and services will be created. As these have to be measurable, assessment tools (e.g. faculty and student feedback forms) will also be created, tested, and implemented. The LRC is looking at a formal method of evaluating its materials and services and regularly surveying its users. This would incorporate the library, AV, and CIL and be in addition to any evaluation tools used by the College and District. The use of evaluation instruments and formal surveys in the campus labs and tutoring services will also be explored.

The College has identified one area to address within the scope of this standard and recommends:

7. consolidating all tutoring programs under one administrator in the new Academic Skills Center to be constructed with Proposition S funds.

Standard IIIA – Plans of Action

Presently, the College full-time to part-time faculty ratio is out of alignment with the standard of 75% contract faculty to 25% adjunct faculty established in the Community College Reform Act (AB1725). Due to recent budgetary constraints, full-time faculty who have retired have not been replaced in many departments. There is a long-term strategic plan to replace these positions. This will continue to be addressed until all positions have been filled.

Because of recent hiring freezes and budget reductions, many areas of the campus have fewer classified positions than are optimal to provide an appropriate level of service. Additionally, the College is hampered in its ability to expand services, even when it is clear that to do so is desirable. As an example, the recent LRC academic program review notes that many students have requested that the LRC be open additional hours, especially on weekday evenings. There are no LRC personnel in public areas on the

second and third floors of the building. There is a need to have a librarian (or experienced library technician) on the third floor to help students locate materials and answer basic questions. There is also a need for more classified staff to provide basic library circulation services to students, faculty and staff. All these issues would require additional budget and staff.

The College should also reexamine its organization and administrative workload to better address its administrative and supervisory staffing needs, and be able to better serve its programs and students.

Although most ethnic categories are well represented among employees at Mesa College, they are not in total alignment with the diversity within the San Diego community. It is recommended that this should be taken into consideration when hiring takes place.

Some of the College's classified staff expressed concern that they are not given time to utilize the various staff development programs offered by the LRC and the District. Due to the lack of guidelines to allow classified staff time to attend staff development programs, many of them are unable to attend.

The College has identified two areas to address within the scope of this standard and recommends:

8. developing and implementing a strategic plan to hire faculty and staff under the current budget constraints with attention to diverse backgrounds and to conform with academic program review recommendations.
9. identifying options that would permit classified staff to attend relevant, job-related staff development activities.

Standard IIIB – Plans of Action

The recently completed Humanities building identifies basic classroom standards including furniture, design and technology. This building outlines standards for contract faculty offices (size, furniture, etc). Problems in this building have been identified and corrected since its opening in fall 2003. Therefore, prior to the design of new buildings under Proposition S, a systematic review and evaluation of these standards should be carried out to ensure appropriate design of new structures.

In addition, the new College buildings have experienced some problems with temperature regulation. For example, the LRC and Facilities Services have worked hard to correct the many heating and air conditioning problems in the LRC, but there are still some areas in the building where the temperature is not adequately regulated particularly in the circulation and acquisitions/receiving areas. The College is also exploring ways to further mitigate these problems, which are inherent in the design of the building. Since there is not a full time officer assigned to the LRC building, much of the monitoring of the building is done by the LRC staff.

Some Mesa employees believe that SLO needs are central to the planning and design of new facilities. As such, a method to address SLO needs and assess how new building plans will integrate those concerns should be addressed.

Although the passage of Proposition S will supply funds for many of the new structures needed by the College, not all the new structures included in the College's comprehensive Master plan were funded. Therefore plans needed to be developed to determine how these structures can be completed.

The College has identified one area to address within the scope of this standard and recommends:

10. ensuring that as facilities are planned and constructed, they will support student learning outcomes.

Standard IIIC – Plans of Action

Mesa College has made tremendous progress in incorporating technology into the curriculum and across administrative functions in the past five years. Core academic functions such as admissions, registration, grading, and curriculum development are now automated. The passage of Proposition S provides the opportunity to incorporate state-of-the-art technology into new facilities from the ground up. Key to the success of the College's technology program is the establishment of a coordinated process for communicating, evaluating, standardizing, and implementing technology needs and requirements. The Strategic Plan for Technology, which is currently being completed by the Mesa Information Technology Committee, will provide a cohesive framework for this process.

Many faculty now provide students with enhanced and more accessible course content in the form of online syllabi, appropriate web links, course readings, and convenient email communication. With technology training offered at several District venues, the College will encourage faculty to offer more web-based course content to their students. Not only would faculty web pages improve student learning, but the College would also realize cost savings from reduced reprographic services. While the World Wide Web puts global awareness a click away, faculty can put it into perspective. Critical thinking as a learning outcome is more pronounced as students are exposed to thousands of online resources and faculty have the opportunity to guide them systematically through evaluation strategies.

The College has identified one area to address within the scope of this standard and recommends:

11. implementing the Strategic Plan for Technology to improve the process for evaluating, standardizing, clarifying, and communicating technology improvements.

Standard IIID – Plans of Action

Because of California's current budget crisis, Mesa College's financial planning strategy will continue to be challenged by reduced revenues/resources from the state. As a result of this crisis many positions at the College have been left vacant. In addition, with the

passing of Proposition S, though monies will be available to construct many new buildings, Proposition S does not provide funds to staff and maintain these new structures. It also should be noted that not all the new buildings included in the College Master plan will be funded by Proposition S.

No plans of action are identified at this time.

Standard IVA – Plans of Action

The College is in the process of a change in leadership as well a major expansion of the infrastructure. The current governance processes have been effective in developing plans of action for the securing of funds, strategic planning, and establishing short and long-term goals. Critical elements in the decision-making processes have been the President's Cabinet, the Chairs Council, The Deans' Council, Academic and Classified Senate representation, and the filtering down of communication via the leadership cabinets (deans and chairs), Associated Students, curriculum meetings, Academic Affairs and other informal communication channels. The College is facing concerns about the on-going need to include students in all phases of the governance structure in order to ensure that the lines of communication are open and feedback available to realize student success.

The College has identified two areas to address within the scope of this standard and recommends:

12. that the District adopt appropriate staffing ratios for supervisors, department chairs, and managers to support the nature of the colleges and their individual missions.
13. increasing student involvement in participatory governance through publicizing their role.

Standard IVB.1 – Plans of Action

In accordance with accreditation protocols, the Board of Trustees was apprised of the current standards for the self study. Interviews of key administrators including Trustees are very valuable instruments to assess their points of view that relate to all three sections of the self study: description, appraisal and plans of action. A special Board meeting held October 4, 2003 provided a wealth of information for Mesa's self study. The question and answer session and the discussions that followed demonstrated mutual concerns to be resolved. Objectives towards a District vision were suggested by the Board members, including a comprehensive District plan and the mechanics for the synthesis of that plan. These included a Trustee Advisory Council, enhanced dialogue with faculty representatives, establishment of evaluation tools and how best to use those data. All of the plans of action below are derived directly from this interview and are congruent with Mesa College's mission and vision.

The College has identified two areas to address within the scope of this standard and recommends that the Board of Trustees:

14. develop a comprehensive, integrated, strategic master plan for the San Diego Community College District.

15. implement the recently adopted code of ethics and a self-evaluation tool and use this tool on a regular basis to assess its performance.

Standard IVB.2 – Plans of Action

Since the last Mesa College accreditation review, there have been several changes in leadership and expansions in planning. A new Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Student Services and two new Associate Deans have been hired. The Academic Senate leadership has changed and the President has been actively recruiting Senate leadership, faculty, administrators, Classified Senate members, staff and students to participate in the Community College Leadership Development Initiative (CCLDI). Leadership opportunities are announced in Cabinet and the information is made available to the College leadership.

The President's Cabinet is the central representative governance structure of the College from which all decision-making emanates. There is a broad range of governance structures on the campus within the Academic and Classified Senates organizational structures as well as Cabinet sub-committees. The President chairs the Cabinet with members of the representative participatory governance groups participating.

Over the past six-years, the Cabinet has effectively planned and reviewed curriculum balance recommendations, hiring priorities for faculty, student led initiatives, strategic budget planning, transfer plans, proposed College foot-print, the awards of the Speech and Debate team, expanded Honors Program, the acquisition of the Muir parking and an array of educational, cultural and social program that make the College a comprehensive learning environment for Students. With all of the success and future planning that is imminent, on-going dialogue will continue to be critical along with prioritization of projects that will eventually serve the growing demands of future students at the College. As a result, the College will use participatory governance groups to continue reviewing and planning for the "Future Mesa College."

No plans of action are identified at this time.

Standard IVB.3 – Plans of Action

There are many participatory governance communities in the District. Some function to a high degree and others may need enhanced participation from those with vested interest. Committees, their membership and participation are the foundation of this process. By and large, Mesa's governance proceeds very well indeed with appropriate membership and motivated participation. District committees such as those that are concerned with curriculum are models for governance. Others may enjoy a modicum of refreshment to encourage greater participation and delegation for the sharing of responsibilities.

It is well understood that the charge of many District committees is advisory in nature and that final responsibility for action rests with the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees. This is codified in policy and is irrevocable. Solutions to the most difficult problems, perhaps those of finance, personnel and structural change, should be synthesized from a pool of those with vested interest. Mesa College sees a great opportunity to utilize the District Executive Council as a committee where problems and

concerns of this magnitude may be openly discussed and resolved. For this to occur there needs to be a reaffirmation of this committee's charge and a solicitation for members with the courage, commitment and leadership to invest in the job. The solidification of such a committee should prove to be an indispensable link with all other participatory bodies and begin to address other issues identified in Mesa's Plans of Action.

The College has identified two areas to address within the scope of this standard and recommends that:

16. the District Executive Council be reorganized as an effective participatory governance body to encourage enhanced participation of its membership and reaffirm its responsibilities for the discussion, debate and resolution of District-wide matters.
17. the District Budget and Development Committee continues to be called upon during both routine and emergency fiscal times. Additionally, any reorganization of the District services or personnel will be through participatory governance with a plan that includes improved allocation of resources showing a direct correlation to student success.