



2005 • 2006
HLC/NCA ACCREDITATION

PCPerspective

higher learning commission/north central association
accreditation at phoenix college

April 2005

Volume Two, Issue Four

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COLLEGE**

A Maricopa Community College

KAREN SOLOMON VISIT

By Brent Jameson

At the invitation of the HLC/NCA Steering Committee, Dr. Karen Solomon, Assistant Director for Accreditation Services of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, came to PC on a consultation visit March 24, 2005. Dr. Solomon spent the entire day meeting with various campus groups. She met with the President and Vice Presidents, then the self-study co-chairs, followed by the Steering Committee, the faculty senate, and the Assessment Committee.

Dr. Solomon examined our progress on the self-study and gave valuable advice on the new criteria. These new criteria form the basic structure of the self-study report, which will be submitted to the Commission in the fall of this year. The peer-review team will be on our campus April 10-12, 2006, and they will be conducting interviews and reading documents to verify the information in our self-study report.

Dr. Solomon liked the broad involvement of PC employees and the use and structure of our self-study committees and indicated that our processes and efforts to examine our effectiveness as an institution were valid and on track. We certainly hoped that these ef-



Executive Group with Karen Solomon: Left - Brent Jameson, Marian Gibney, Karen Solomon, Casandra Kakar, Dr. Anna Solley.

forts were taking us in

the right direction. Because so many people across the campus had already done so much work, it was good to receive this validation from Dr. Solomon.

In her efforts to help us focus our remaining efforts, Dr. Solomon encouraged us to concentrate on future plans of our campus and to determine if we can sustain our positive direction for students, employees, and the community. She said that the self-study should be a *living document*, one that should help guide our strategic planning for the future.

One phrase that she repeated several times in her discussions was "so what?" She said that the peer reviewers will look carefully at our report and the data that we collect and ask this question, in order to help us understand that we must evaluate all of this information in the context of how we will use it to better serve our students and meet the mission of the college.



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Reflections on HLC/NCA Annual Meeting 2005

Sixteen members of the PC Steering Committee, led by Acting President Dr. Anna Solley, attended the HLC/NCA Annual Meeting April 9-12, 2005 in Chicago. In addition to many sessions during the conference, this group attended an all-day self-study workshop intended to assist the Committee in using the remaining months to focus self-study efforts and to better prepare for the visit of the peer review team in April 2006. Committee members also participated in many informal discussions with colleagues from other institutions in the North Central Association, which were very helpful.



Following are reflections made by some of the PC Committee members at the conference:




"The HLC/NCA Conference proved to be a great learning experience for me. I participated in training for Consultant Evaluators, applied the new criteria to a case study, reviewed other college self-studies, and participated in several sessions. In addition, I enjoyed the opportunity to network with our PC Self-Study Team. Given our Teams' leadership, talent, and dedication, I am confident that our Self-Study will be informative and evaluative and will serve as a strategic plan for future directions at PC."


Anna Solley



"Focus on the future."
--Casandra Kakar




"Having clarifying dialogue about each criterion would be invaluable. Then our job of selecting key examples of evidence without duplication could be easier."
--Judy Boschult




"Those preparing the self-evaluation report work much like an artist striving to breathe life into a story on canvas. Focus on one point or another in the portrait may cause other areas to blur or fade into the background. Conversely, well-placed highlights can enrich or light up the landscape."
--Sharon Halford




"Adult learners have more conversations about academic work with fellow students, family, co-workers and others than traditional students."
--Linn Dowd




"The self-study process in which PC is engaged reminds me that the only life, personal or institutional, that is sustainable and worth living is an examined one."
--Loman Clark




"Tell your story in the simplest terms possible."
--Brent Jameson




"Developmental students (those taking courses below 100 level) are prevalent at PC. Research presented at the HLC/NCA conference showed the importance of reading skills in student success. Only 30% of students taking remedial reading courses completed a degree or certificate, whereas 57% of students taking math and English courses were successful in these ways. These data show the importance of campus-wide services to promote and encourage good reading skills for all students."
--Karen Christen




"We are not alone...our struggles are common to other institutions, our conflicts with criteria are common, our accomplishments at this stage are common. Our understanding is constructing as much as reflecting the meaning of the new criteria."
--Mike Mitchell




"We must have a campus dialogue about the distinctiveness of PC. Not only do we want the campus community to know the mission of the college, but we should be able to articulate how we are distinctive. All colleges are colleges of education. How is PC distinctive?"
--Denny Sheehan



"Communication at PC is very important—from one colleague to another, one student to another, department to department, student to faculty to administration (and vice versa!). We need more avenues of communication in all directions to bring what is under the surface to the table, out in the open. How can we do that? How can we make those communication processes ongoing?"
--Patricia Zacardo



"PC has many strengths including talented and dedicated employees, students, and constituents which can be focused to achieve ten years of accreditation and then to use the self-study results to plan for the future and make PC even better."
--Nancy Matte



"What I've learned is that the success of our effort is based on three things:
1) ownership,
2) consistency, and
3) communication."
--Wilbert Nelson

Communicating our progress. . .

By Marian Gibney

As part of a continuing effort to communicate the processes of the self-study to all of the Phoenix College constituencies, Brent Jameson and Marian Gibney have made two presentations in the past few weeks. The first, on March 22nd was to faculty who are participating in the New Faculty Orientation. These are the newest members of the PC faculty. In the presentation and subsequent question and answer session, faculty learned about accreditation in general and the PC process in particular.

On April 4th a similar presentation was made for the Education and Partnership Commission. The commission represents many of PC's community partners. It is critical for PC to have ongoing communication and engagement with its larger community.

In both presentations, the criteria for self-study were presented and the timeline was discussed. The self-study has been on-going since 2003, and the final report is due in early Spring of 2006. Your PC self-study teams have been working very hard, and at this point, many of the chapters are already close to draft format and others are not far behind. On April 20th and 21st there will be two campus wide meetings where all employees can learn about the progress of the self-study as well as give their thoughts on the PC Mission and Vision. Be sure to attend one of these meetings (there will be goodies). To learn even more about this process, please visit the self-study website, <http://www.pc.maricopa.edu/NCA/>, where you will see a great deal of information about the college and the self-study.

SELF - STUDY CRITERIA

Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

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

Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

The organization's allocations 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.

Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

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

Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

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

Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

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

Employees

HLC Self Study invites you

**Come tell us
what you think...
about PC's Vision and Mission**

Adjuncts

ALL-EMPLOYEE MEETING

**Wednesday, April 20, 2005
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

ADJUNCT MEETING

**Thursday, April 21
5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.**

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