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A Maricopa Community College

President's Column by Dr. Anna Solley

I would like to recognize the efforts of so many at PC who are working hard on our self-study. These efforts began in the spring of 2003 with the selection of coordinators and criterion chairs. Each criterion committee is led by a faculty member who has given countless hours of effective leadership and direction. Each committee is made up of faculty, administrators, staff, and some students and community members. This diversity is extremely important to the self-evaluation process.

I have been involved in the self-study process at other campuses and I serve as an HLC/NCA Consultant-Evaluator. This background is helpful in giving direction and focus to this process. I am convinced that a successful self-study requires the involvement of the entire campus community. When the Consultant-Evaluators visit, they will not limit their conversations to the coordinators, criterion chairs, and administrators. They will want to visit with faculty, staff, students, and community members. It is therefore important for all of us to be aware of our strengths and opportunities for improvement.



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

To increase our campus awareness and share preliminary findings of the self-study we will hold an all-employee meeting on April 20th from 2-3 p.m. and an additional meeting for all adjunct faculty on April 21st from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Both meetings will be in the Bulpitt Auditorium. At those meetings you will have an opportunity to give your input and suggestions on the information shared. I encourage your attendance at one of these meetings. I also encourage your involvement in this important process.

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Inquiring Minds Want to Know...Why Me?

Casandra Kakar, Vice President of Academic Affairs

With all this talk about the HLC/NCA Self-Study, you may be asking yourself; why me? Why do I need to become familiar with the Self-Study process? First, let's review why the college needs accreditation.

Accreditation:

- ensures the quality and integrity of PC's programs and services.
- allows students to transfer credits to other accredited colleges and universities.
- enables students to obtain financial aid and veterans' services.
- allows the college to participate in projects funded by federal grants.
- ensures that the college can recruit and retain quality faculty and staff.

Why should you familiarize yourself with this process?

We Need Your Help. It is not too late to join a Criterion Committee. In addition, everyone on the campus will be called upon to assist with the collection of evidence that supports the findings of our Criterion Committees. Concept papers and drafts will also be available for your review in the next few months. Analysis and input from you will be very important.

Your Understanding is Vital. A sampling of Students, Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, MAT, PSA, M&O and Community Partners will be interviewed by peer reviewers representing the accrediting agency during our on-site visit in April 2006. It is essential that all stakeholders be familiar with the Phoenix College Self-Study in order to answer questions effectively.

Support Communication. The sharing and exchange of your knowledge with co-workers, students and community members is a key element to the success of the study. Please attend the All-Employee Meeting on April 20th, from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. or the Adjunct Faculty Meeting on April 21st, from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. for an update report and concept paper presentation. It is a must see. This will allow you to determine the top one or two Criteria that affect your area. Please use department meetings to discuss the HLC/NCA Self-Study. You might consider inviting the Criterion Chair or Committee Members to make a presentation to your group and have a Q&A session. Remember to inform Phoenix College students at any opportunity.

The Study Drives PC's Future. The actions taken by Phoenix College following the Self-Study will affect all dimensions of our college in the future, including curriculum development, student services, budget decisions, academic assessments and community partnerships, to name a few. The 2006 accreditation is a perfect training experience for our future criterion chairs, members and writing team for the 2016 Self-Study.

The importance of accreditation, the evaluation visit, and how each will affect students, employees and the future of the college has been summarized above and is quite a motivation to familiarize yourself and to participate in the process. If you need more convincing, please consider another great benefit, which is the opportunity to interact with truly talented and dedicated Co-Chairs of the Study, Criterion Chairs & Writers, Committee Members and students and fellow PC associates.



Editor, Patricia Zaccardo and Lead Writer, Nancy Matte

Self-Study Mission and Goals

MISSION:

In support of its primary purpose - student learning - Phoenix College will use this self-study to prepare for continuing accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, to evaluate strengths and opportunities for improvement in accordance with the college mission statement, and use it as a guiding document for continuing educational and institutional improvement.

GOALS:

Accreditation

Achieve a ten-year accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.
Engage all college constituencies in the self-study and publicize the results.

Evaluation

Demonstrate responses to concerns from the last self-study.

Provide evidence that practices and processes are aligned with the college vision, mission, and goals.

Improvement

Evaluate the viability of college practices and processes.

Utilize outcomes of the self-study as a guide to improvement.

Leadership

Provide learning opportunities for faculty leaders in preparation for accreditation efforts beyond 2006.

Faculty Practices Support Teaching and Learning by Marian Gibney

At the end of fall 2004, a survey of faculty practices was administered to all residential faculty at PC. Important requirements for the self-study are that the faculty are using teaching and learning practices that reflect the goals of the college as well as the goals of their department. Classroom practices and expectations must be clearly communicated with students; and course activities must be aligned with the college practices. A total of 266 faculty responded to the survey, 91 residential, 148 adjunct, 10 OYO or OSO, and 6 49%ers. The table below indicates that 95% of PC faculty have stated learning objectives and an attendance policy; 98% use a written syllabus; and 97% use a stated grading policy. Clear and consistent communication of expectations is essential to student achievement.

Percent of faculty who include each of these factors in their classes:

- 95% Stated learning objectives
- 98% Written syllabus

- 79% Student code of conduct
- 66% Plagiarism policy
- 71% Cheating/academic dishonesty policy
- 97% Stated grading policy
- 46% Reference to student complaint policy
- 95% Attendance policy

Student outcomes assessment is another critical part of quality instruction. The survey showed that 89% of the faculty assessed critical thinking and course competencies in their classes; 81% assessed writing, and 68%, oral communication. The table below lists the percentage of faculty who stated that they assess the various areas in their classes. The student outcomes assessment committees offer assistance to faculty members who want to include assessments of general education competencies in their classes.

- 83% Writing
- 46% Numeracy
- 86% Critical thinking
- 73% Information literacy
- 70% Oral presentation
- 55% Course competencies
- 49% Social responsibility



Dr. Anna Solley



Ann Roselle



Mike Mitchell



Nancy Matte



Brent Jameson



Marian Gibney



Casandra Kakar

Minnesota Workshop by Brent Jameson

Several members of the Self-Study Steering Committee attended a workshop on the new criteria of the Higher Learning Commission of NCA on January 31st. Dr. Solley, Casandra Kakar, Brent Jameson, Marian Gibney, Nancy Matte, Ann Roselle, and Mike Mitchell all participated in discussions and instruction given by Karen Solomon, NCA Staff Liaison, as well as other presenters.

The emphasis was on evaluating an institution's efforts to assess and improve student learning. Participants received a document entitled, "Fundamental Questions for Conversations on Student Learning." Those fundamental questions are:

- 1 How are your stated student learning outcomes appropriate to your mission, programs, and degrees?

2. What evidence do you have that students achieve your stated learning outcomes?
3. In what ways do you analyze and use evidence of student learning?
4. How do you ensure shared responsibility for assessment of student learning?
5. How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your assessment of student learning efforts?

These fundamental questions and the conversations they prompt are intended to support a strategy of inquiry into student learning. We look forward to engaging the PC faculty in discussions on assessment of student learning and the improvement of educational quality.

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