



2005 • 2006

HLC/NCA ACCREDITATION

# PCPerspective

higher learning commission/north central association  
accreditation at phoenix college

April 2004

Volume One, Issue One

## HLC Chairs

Marian Tadano  
Brent Jameson

## Criterion Chairs

Mission and Integrity  
Denny Sheehan

Preparing for the Future  
Darrell Carnahan

Student Learning and  
Effective Teaching  
Mike Mitchell

Acquisition, Discovery, and  
Application of Knowledge  
Karen Christen

Engagement and Service  
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A Maricopa Community College



Linda Garcia, Dr. Corina Gardea and Karen Christen at the Accreditation Kickoff.

## The Journey Begins

by President Corina Gardea

Phoenix College has begun preparations for a ritual familiar to those of us in higher education known as institutional accreditation. This newsletter will serve to introduce you to the leaders of PC's self-study and to provide you with important information.

Arizona is located in the region governed by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which was founded in 1895. The commission recently revised its mission statement to read, "Serving the common good

by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning." In addition, the commission's work is guided by the core values of quality, integrity, innovation, diversity, inclusiveness, service, collaboration and learning, with each receiving equal weight and importance.

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*Journey, continued*

To pursue continued accreditation status Phoenix College will participate in the five-step evaluation process known as the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ).

1. We will complete a self-study process conducted over a two-year period and prepare a report of our findings in accordance with commission guidelines.

We began this process in 2003 by identifying the co-chairs, criterion team leaders, and steering committee. Our report will be completed during Fall 2005.

2. The commission will send a team of peer evaluators to conduct a comprehensive visit and write a report containing the team's recommendations.

This visit has already been scheduled for April 10-12, 2006.

3. The report prepared by the visiting team will be reviewed by a Readers Panel/Committee at the commission.

4. A twenty-six-member Institutional Actions Council (IAC) will review institutional evaluations and make accrediting decisions.

5. The commission's board of trustees will validate the work of the IAC or Review Committee. This finalizes the action taken by the IAC.

### Why must institutions undergo this process?

- Accreditation serves the purpose of providing assurance to the public, specifically prospective students, that a college or university has met stringent requirements and that it has shown commitment to continue to meet them.
- Accreditation provides a framework through which the college conducts a comprehensive review of its vision, mission, values and strategic priorities.
- Accreditation infuses new information as a means of enhancing student learning, a learning culture and desired outcomes.
- Accreditation affirms what is right about the college as it strives to meet the needs of its community.

Phoenix College has an excellent team of self-study leaders in place. This team has been working diligently to gain the knowledge needed and to create the framework for a successful self-study process. This will be an invigorating and enlightening experience and I encourage each of you to play a role in this very important academic ritual.

### Coordinators' Column

By Marian Tadano and Brent Jameson

Phoenix College embarked on its self-study process in March 2003 with the selection by the administration and Faculty Senate President of the self-study coordinators, criterion chairs, and the steering committee. Most of these individuals attended the NCA Annual Meetings in Chicago in April of 2003 and again in

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Jennifer Rouse, Denny Sheehan, Mike Hubbs, Pat Bursell, Michelle Undiano at the Kickoff.



*Coordinators' Column, continued*

March of 2004 in order to better understand the new criteria and the changing emphases by the Higher Learning Commission.

Committees have been formed by the criterion chairs with an emphasis on broad participation by employee groups, as well as some community members and students. These committees have met regularly during this academic year and have begun to identify and evaluate data that will assist them in determining our institutional effectiveness.

In an effort to keep the college community aware of progress in the self-study and to encourage greater involvement in the process, the coordinators have made presentations at the four all-college meetings in September and November 2003 and in January and April 2004.

Additionally, the coordinators and criterion chairs hosted an Kickoff ice cream social for the entire campus community on April 20, 2004 displaying the self-study mission and goals and presentations on each of the five criteria. Participants received information and answered questions on the self-study, winning prizes displaying the self-study logo. The hosts engaged the participants in informal discussions on the criteria and their core components.

Approximately 200 people attended the Kickoff.



*Queta Chavez (center) passes out self-study mementos to attendees at the Kickoff event.*

We are very fortunate to have good administrative support for our self-study process, and we intend to continue to build on this year's success and involve even more of our PC community in the future.

## Ice cream, prizes and information for all!

By: Dr. Marian Gibney

Do you know how often a college has to undergo self-study? Do you know what year PC had its last major self-study and accreditation? Can you name the five criteria that the HLC/NCA looks at when studying an institution? Do you know what HLC stands for? If you attended the HLC/NCA open house at Phoenix College on April 20, 2004, you know the answers to these questions, and many more.

Ice cream and self-study were the buzz words of the day as the HLC/NCA planning committee held an open house to introduce the main activities for the upcoming 2006 HLC/NCA accreditation.

Modeled after a conference poster session, the format allowed faculty, staff, and students to visit different topic areas. The criterion chairs offered information about what their committees were doing, and were available to answer questions.

The informal atmosphere allowed for an exchange of information in pleasant surroundings. Attendees could focus on a single interest area or visit at each of the tables. In addition, visitors were asked for their comments on various aspects of the self-study and the campus.

As they arrived, visitors selected a favorite ice cream treat and received a FAQ sheet with information about accreditation. Exhibits were interactive and encouraged good conversation among the visitors. One popular exhibit was the "What is unique about PC?" table. The whole area became covered with "sticky stars" as people contributed their ideas and comments. The "test your knowledge" area was far and away the most popular exhibit.

After viewing the exhibits, and studying the FAQ sheet, visitors were able to show off their knowledge by answering a random question. Prizes were awarded to those who answered correctly. Those answering easy questions could win a pen or tote bag. Star students who answered the most difficult questions won a folding camp chair.

More than 200 faculty, staff, and students visited the open house during a two-hour period. The planning committee received many comments that this format was very informative and much better than a "meeting," and that people felt that they knew much more about the process after visiting the open house.

## 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 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**

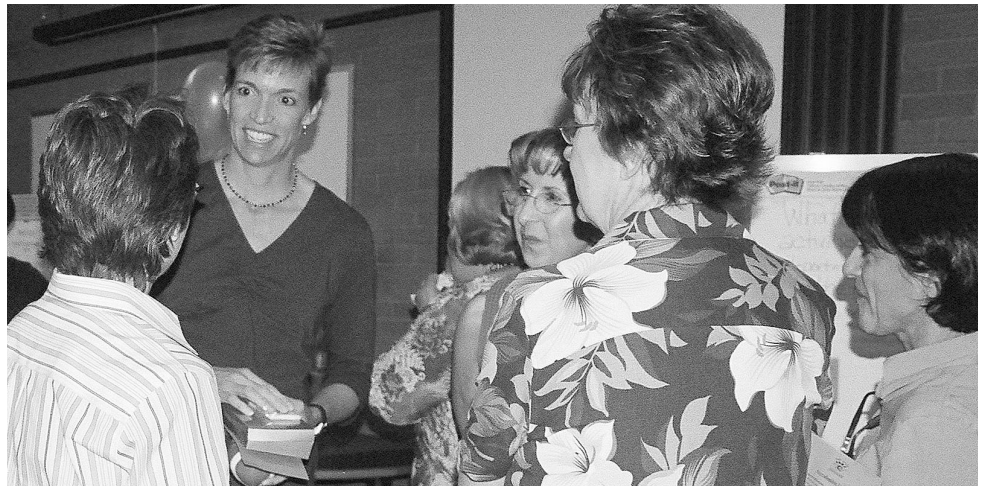
Demonstrate responses to concerns from the last self-study.

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.



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