



# PCPerspective

higher learning commission/north central association  
accreditation at phoenix college

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HLC/NCA ACCREDITATION

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Mission and Integrity  
Denny Sheehan

Preparing for the Future  
Ann Roselle

Student Learning and  
Effective Teaching  
Mike Mitchell

Acquisition, Discovery, and  
Application of Knowledge  
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PHOENIX  
COLLEGE

A Maricopa Community College



Criterion Chairs: Denny Sheehan, Ann Roselle, Mike Mitchell, Karen Christen and Queta Chavez.

## Accreditation at PC

Colleges and universities have the opportunity to apply to a nongovernmental accrediting body for re-accreditation every ten years by examining institutional effectiveness through a rigorous self-study. Phoenix College's accreditation comes through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools. This self-study process is divided into five criteria, each one chaired by a faculty with committee members from the campus employee groups with some representation from students and the community. The core components of the criteria form the basis of the data-

gathering and evaluation that have been taking place in each committee for over a year at PC. In this newsletter you will read an update of the progress in each of these five areas. The complete self-study report will be submitted in February 2006.

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### **CRITERION ONE**

#### **Denny Sheehan**

The work of the criterion committee has truly been a learning experience. There is some real soul searching involved when you ask questions of yourself and your college such: as who are we, what is our mission, what are we doing, what are we doing right, do we do what we say we do?

The criterion #1 committee has been meeting regularly for over a year now and the committee of thirteen has been asking these kinds of questions. Not only are we asking the questions, but we are trying to determine how to show someone from the outside (the site visit evaluation team) the answers we arrive at, and demonstrate to them how true we are to our mission.

In our undertaking we have come to realize how integral the campus goals, formerly campus initiatives, are to the campus mission, how the strategic planning process has enabled our campus budget process, and how the processes have evolved in keeping with the mission and goals of the campus. Just in the past week the committee has been looking at the strategic planning process and the curriculum process. Did you know that many consider the Phoenix College curriculum process to be a benchmark for successful campus curriculum processes?

It is the committee's hope that all Phoenix College constituencies will embrace the college mission. If you prominently display the college mission and/or your department's mission in your work area, give any committee member a call. We would like to take a picture of your displayed mission statement, and enter your name in a drawing for lunch for two at the Culinary Café.



### **CRITERION THREE**

#### **Mike Mitchell**

The HLC/NCA Criterion 3 Committee has worked very hard during the Fall 2004 semester to gather data relating to goal formation for educational outcomes, assessment, instructional effectiveness, institutional support of teaching and learning, and much more. In the coming weeks, the committee will complete its primary data collection and begin the task of evaluating that data. Simultaneously, the committee will be reviewing and revising drafts of its report. It has been a busy time, but it has also been time well spent.

It is a common experience among instructors that having to teach a topic often leads to a greater understanding of that topic. The same can be said for the work done in this committee. In our efforts to educate ourselves to the diverse and pervasive policies and practices that create and support effective teaching and learning here at Phoenix College, our committee has learned much about the campus. What we see is encouraging – a campus dedicated to teaching and learning, a campus supported in its efforts to provide effective teaching and learning, and a campus committed to remaining relevant and responsive.

As an exercise in self-improvement, this self-study promises to give us a lot to think about. Particularly important to Criterion 3 are issues like the implementation of conclusions drawn from our various assessments, adjunct-faculty support, and institutionalizing data collection/storage. This self-study also gives us a lot to be proud of – particularly our commitment to user-driven assessments, our commitment to learner-center pedagogy, our commitment to innovation and our commitment to the diverse constituencies we serve.

There is still work to be done in committee and, in the end, there is a conclusion to be drawn and recommendations to make. To see some of the progress the Criterion 3 Committee has made, check out our web page on the NCA/HLC link from Phoenix College's web site. There one can find copies of the agendas and minutes from previous meetings as well as the archived data we have already collected.

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### **CRITERION FOUR**

#### **Karen Christen**

**Criterion 4: "Acquisition, Discover 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."

In Criterion Four, we demonstrate that we value helping our students become independently creative people, informed and dependable citizens, and socially aware and responsible individuals. It is about the impact of good general education on our students, and how our curriculum is directly relevant to the lives of graduates and their need to continue to learn throughout their lives. It explores how we promote social responsibility on campus, as well as acquiring, discovering and applying knowledge responsibly.

The Core Components support the Criterion in a variety of ways. 4A addresses how Faculty, Staff and Administrators model for students that we value a life of continuous learning by our participation in Professional Growth, Staff Development and other renewal activities. 4B looks at our General Education requirements, and the skills and attitudes we have defined as important for our graduates to possess. We must show how we teach our students the fundamental skills of intellectual inquiry that will enable them to continue to learn throughout life. 4C demonstrates that we work with leaders from business and industry to determine a curriculum that is useful to students who will live and work in a global, diverse and technological society. Lastly, 4D shows how faculty, students and staff acquire, discover and apply knowledge responsibly, and the ethical and moral implications of this practice. How well do our students, faculty and staff know and apply the policies we have on confidentiality of records, copyright, plagiarism and cheating?

Many excellent examples of how PC meets this Criterion have already been identified by the Criterion 4 Committee, and the campus will be asked to assist in data collection, outcomes assessment and documentation to support this evidence in the coming months.



## **CRITERION TWO**

### **Ann Roselle**

What will the future hold? To quote Yogi Berra, the only thing we know for sure is that, "The future ain't what it used to be."

If our present is any indicator of our future, then Phoenix College will continue to be affected by emerging technologies, demographic shifts, increased partnerships, a multicultural society, online learning, globalization, new workforce needs, and constant innovation and change. As part of our accreditation process, the Higher Learning Commission encourages us, in our self-study, to address the question, "How well are we prepared for the future?"

The Criterion 2 Committee has been busily working this year on collecting evidence that Phoenix College is indeed prepared for the future, however unknown it may be. The Committee has been:

- Examining planning documents and processes,
- Analyzing our financial, physical and human resources,
- Reviewing our evaluation and assessment processes, and
- Determining if planning is aligned with our mission and goals.

The Criterion 2 Committee is comprised of 19 dedicated faculty and staff members. A complete listing of participants is available from the Phoenix College's Accreditation Webpage at <http://www.phoenixcollege.edu/NCA>. Many persons across the campus have already been contacted by members of the committee to help us answer questions about resources and planning. In addition, extensive interviews with various members of Phoenix College have already taken place. Don't be surprised if your next email subject line reads: Criterion 2 Help!

The Criterion 2 Committee meets every two weeks, usually on Monday from 3:00pm-4:30pm, to brainstorm about areas of evidence that demonstrate that Phoenix College is meeting Criterion 2. The committee also identifies areas of opportunity for improvement. The meetings are open to EVERYONE. Come join in on the discussion, even just once! Contact Ann Roselle (602-285-7549) for more details about the next upcoming meeting.



## **CRITERION FIVE**

### **Queta Chavez**

Criterion 5 calls on the college to show evidence that we live up to our mission by identifying our constituents and serving them in ways that are mutually beneficial and valued.

Effective engagement and service consists of four core components:

#### **5a) The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.**

This core component asks the college to demonstrate how we learn and discern the educational needs of those we serve and how effective we are at meeting those needs and expectations.

#### **5b) The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.**

This core component asks us to demonstrate that we are committed to our constituents through effective programs and activities that connect learning to serving the needs of our community.

#### **5c) The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.**

This core component recognizes that educational institutions are natural partners. It asks us to demonstrate how we respond to

our elementary, secondary and university partners to provide opportunities for seamless pathways to higher education.

#### **5d) Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.**

This core component asks us to demonstrate that the college students and faculty, as well as our constituencies value the services and programs provided.

Our committee members have worked diligently over the last year to examine and interpret the criteria and its core components, define and identify PC's constituents and identify examples of effective engagement with college, local, regional and national partners. Now the committee will embark on collecting evidence from those of you who deliver these great examples of effective engagement. We will be calling on you to answer some questions which will help document your programs, services and activities. Once collected, the committee will evaluate what is generated and identify 2-3 best practices for each of the four core components. All material collected will be cataloged and available to members of the self-study team.

Collecting evidence is a great way to learn more about the variety of PC's programs, services and activities. If you would like to volunteer to be a member of this committee, please call Queta Chavez, at 602-285-7398, or feel free to send her an email. In advance, thanks for your assistance in documenting the wonderful programs and services that PC provides for those we serve.

## HLC/NCA Open House

On October 20, 2004 the Self-Study Steering Committee held an open house in the staff dining rooms for the purpose of making the campus community more aware of the self-study process and progress. Each criterion committee provided a display of activities and information related to their

specific area of evaluation. We estimate that around 150 faculty, staff, administrators, and students came through to look at the displays and engage in conversation on this important subject. All who attended received information and free prizes. Look for the self-study logo on items that were given out to those who attended.



October 2004 Open House

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