



PHOENIX COLLEGE
2006 Self-Study
Executive Summary



PHOENIX
COLLEGE

PHOENIX COLLEGE

2006 Self-Study

Executive Summary

For continued accreditation by
The Higher Learning Commission of the
North Central Association of
Colleges and Schools

Dr. Anna Solley
Acting President



PHOENIX
COLLEGE

1202 West Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85013
www.phoenixcollege.edu



MARICOPA
COMMUNITY
COLLEGES

Phoenix College and the Maricopa
County Community College District
are EEO/AA Institutions.

This Executive Summary provides highlights from the Phoenix College Self-Study Report which was submitted for continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Occurring on a ten-year cycle, the self-study process represents a comprehensive review and evaluation of the college in the light of its vision, mission, and goals. The programs and services of the college have been shown to reflect the actualization of the vision, mission, and goals of Phoenix College. Voluntary accreditation also provides an opportunity to assess formal educational activities as well as to evaluate governance and administration, financial stability, admissions and student personnel services, preparation for the future, student academic achievement, organizational effectiveness, and relationships with outside constituents. Through this self study Phoenix College has demonstrated that it satisfies the five criteria of the Higher Learning Commission. It also provided a vehicle for examination of the strengths and opportunities for improvement at the college. The full report is available through the President's Office or at www.phoenixcollege.edu/selfstudy.

Overview of Phoenix College

Phoenix College was established in 1920 by the Phoenix Union High School District to increase access to higher education for their graduates. By 1922, the original 18 student enrollment had increased to ninety-three students, and in 1939 when the permanent campus was established at 15th Avenue and Thomas Road, 821 students were enrolled. In 1962, the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) was established, and Phoenix College became the first of what is now a 10-college district.

Phoenix College, led by Dr. Anna Solley, who was appointed Acting President in January, 2005 has grown to meet the needs of the community. In Fall 2005, there were 12,549 students enrolled in credit courses.

Since 1996, enrollment has remained relatively stable ranging from a high of 13,150 students in 2003 to a low of 10,819 students in 1997.

The student body at Phoenix College reflects the diverse, multicultural, central city community it serves with 15% of its students—almost 1,900—being immigrants, refugees or foreign visitors. With a Hispanic student population of 30%, Phoenix College is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution. The percentage of students who attend school full time has remained consistent at about 25%. In Fall 2005, women made up 59% of the student body with men comprising 36%, with 5% not reporting gender.

Student goals are also diverse. Of students enrolling at Phoenix College in Spring 2005, 46% reported their intention for attending Phoenix College as undeclared; job skills were listed by 28%; transfer to a 4-year college was cited by 15%, and 11% of the students listed personal interest or enrichment as their reason for attending.

Phoenix College has 458 Governing Board-approved employees, including 181 residential faculty, 59 management and administrative personnel (MAT), 149 professional staff (PSA), and 45 maintenance, crafts, and operations employees (M&O). Approximately 570 adjunct faculty members taught at Phoenix College in Fall 2005.

Phoenix College is a comprehensive institution and students have a wide choice of degree and program offerings. There are five transfer-oriented Associate Degrees: Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Business, Associate in Arts in Elementary Education, and Associate in Transfer Partnership. Students who plan to transfer to an Arizona public community college or university may also pursue the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC). This is a 35 semester-credit-hour block of courses, fulfilling lower

division general education requirements at these institutions. The AGECE transfers as a block without loss of credit.

Phoenix College currently offers 53 Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree programs designed to prepare students to enter specific careers or occupations. In addition, students may choose from over 100 Certificates of Completion (CCL). These programs require fewer courses than degree programs and are a good choice for those seeking immediate entry into the work force or on-the-job advancement. For students whose educational goals require flexibility and a broader choice of classes, the Associate in General Studies (AGS) Degree is recommended. Phoenix College also offers a wide variety of customized courses and community education as well as non-credit courses through the Custom Training and Education programs.

Financial support for Maricopa County Community Colleges comes from three major sources. County property taxes account for approximately 56% of the funding with tuition and fees providing 25% and state aid 12%. For FY2004–05, the general fund budget for Phoenix College was \$43,241,490. For FY2005–06 the general fund budget is projected to be \$43,283,098.

Summary of Accomplishments Since the Last Accreditation

Since the last comprehensive self study, Phoenix College has continued to follow its mission of excellent teaching and learning and service to students. Among the most significant changes in the past ten years have been building projects, technological enhancements to classrooms and the college infrastructure, new course and program development, and increased diversity in students, faculty, and staff. Some of the most significant changes include the following:

- Remodeled Fannin Library increasing library collection allocations and expanding computer facilities.
- Built a new state of the art Dalby Science Building with technology equipped classrooms and laboratories.
- Received voter support for a \$951 million Maricopa County Community Colleges' bond referendum; Phoenix College's allocation totals approximately \$69,000,000 that will allow the college to build new facilities, remodel existing facilities, advance technology infrastructure, and meet the needs of a growing population.
- Revamped course offerings at the PC Downtown Campus to provide more access to students. Phoenix College is serving as a lead college for the creation of the Maricopa County Community Colleges' Downtown Campus.
- Created the Education and Partnership Commission and the President's Advisory Council to seek community input concerning college issues and to share information about college initiatives.
- Created the Custom Training and Education (CTE) Center to facilitate partnerships between instructional departments and community businesses and organizations while tailoring training programs to meet their individual needs.
- Increased access to distance learning programs. In Fall 2005, there were 65 courses with more than 100 different sections offered in hybrid or online format.
- Increased student access to technology by equipping classrooms with a standard array of presentation technology and the creation of several specialized computer laboratories; by Fall 2005, approximately 75% of classrooms were equipped with full technology (TV, VCR, Screen, Data Video Projector, DVD, and an instructor computer) with the rest of the classrooms scheduled to be equipped within the next year.

- Developed new workforce development curriculum offerings to address local job training needs in areas such as biotechnology, healthcare, and education.
- Developed a comprehensive program to assess student learning outcomes, conduct program reviews, and determine institutional effectiveness.
- Developed new faculty orientation and mentoring programs.
- Expanded the facilities, staff, and role of the Learning, Technologies and Development Center (LTD), an academic department dedicated to faculty and staff instructional support and development.
- Implemented strategic, operational, and departmental planning and budgeting processes.
- Developed and implemented recruitment and hiring strategies that target the hiring of the most qualified faculty and staff with an emphasis on achieving a diverse employee base.
- Developed comprehensive values known as PC Basics that serve as the foundation for quality customer service and employee recognition.
- In partnership with South Mountain Community College developed a Teacher Preparation Charter High School (TPHS).
- Improved college business practices by implementing a new online financial system, payroll system, and library information system; initiated plans to implement a new student system.
- Increased the staffing of the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness (PRIE) to enable greater use of data for decision-making, strategic and operational planning, student outcomes assessment, data analysis and dissemination, program review, and institutional research.
- Created the Office of Institutional Advancement to promote the mission of Phoenix College through effective

communication and collaboration with college and community partners. The office builds relationships with schools, universities, businesses, organizations, alumni, and neighbors through varied means of mass and interpersonal communication.

The Self-Study Process

In March 2003, the Phoenix College self study began with the initial purpose of preparing for ten more years of accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In support of its primary purpose, student learning, Phoenix College also used this self study 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.

Although the initial stimulus was achieving accreditation, the process quickly became much more. As the criterion committees collected data and examples of evidence, the self study became more for the college's own use, and many improvements were begun. The Phoenix College self study became a living, evolving document, allowing the college to meet the goals of the self study but also to identify and address opportunities for improvement. In addition, the self-study structure resulted in in-depth participation and input from many members of the college community. A broader and deeper sense of college pride and community has developed as more and more data and examples of evidence were collected. An offshoot of the self study has been the collection in one body of information about the college's history, programs, students, employees, and constituents. It has become a valuable historical repository.

The self-study structure included a number of committees with members selected from all areas of the campus community. Membership on these committees mirrored Phoenix College's

diversity, including gender, ethnicity, and employee group membership. More than eighty individuals served on the self-study committees. These committees used data from interviews, discussion groups, district and college reports and documents, and surveys of employees, faculty, students, and community leaders to analyze institutional effectiveness. As they collected data, the committees identified the four Higher Learning Commission cross-cutting themes and inserted them as highlights in the criterion chapters.

One feature unique to Phoenix College was the assignment of a writer to each criterion committee from the beginning of the process. Having criterion writers and chairs evaluate and analyze the data and then draft each committee's findings resulted in more extensive involvement of self-study committee members. The Phoenix College accreditation self study is truly a result of an extensive group of college representatives evaluating the college and recommending changes for improvement.

The Accreditation Criteria

Criterion 1: Phoenix College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Phoenix College's mission documents demonstrate that the college operates with integrity through its structures, policies, and processes at both the college and district levels. The college has publicly stated its mission, vision, and values. Phoenix College's commitment to teaching and learning and to its diverse community, both internal and external, is demonstrated throughout the college in its publications, its policies and procedures, and its academic and non-academic activities. Strategic, operational, and fiscal planning at Phoenix College are all closely aligned with the college's mission. In turn, the college's mission and strategic plans directly support the district's vision, mission, and values. A policy

of shared governance demonstrates employee and student involvement and an established structure of governance and administration supports the development and realization of the college mission.

Strengths

The vision and mission statements at Phoenix College are clear and consistent. Periodic reviews continue to demonstrate that the administration, faculty, staff, and students understand and accept the vision and mission of the college.

The vision, mission, and values are well-publicized in college publications, on the college website, and at college locations including offices, classrooms, and labs, and public access areas including the gymnasium, theatre, and auditorium.

Campus administrative and governance processes are stable, inclusive, collaborative, and well documented. They provide stability, continuity, and guidance during administrative transitions permitting day-to-day campus operations to continue effectively while new leadership is developed.

Diversity of the college campus and community is recognized in the mission and goals and the student body, the staff, and academic and co-curricular activities reflect this diversity.

Opportunities for Improvement

Solid communication structures and procedures are important, and improving communication progress has been made through regular e-mail bulletins from the President's Office and from the Academic Affairs Office. Minutes of key campus committees placed on the college website are communicated to the campus as a whole. The college website has been updated and additional updating and improvement continue. Additional avenues for improved internal and external communication are being developed.

The changing demographics of the college service area represent an opportunity for Phoenix College to explore enrollment growth related to these changing demographics. Students in Developmental Education, English as a Second Language, and Workforce Development represent a few of the new areas for enrollment growth.

Criterion 2: Phoenix College's allocation 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 and opportunities.

Phoenix College uses data to understand the diverse needs of its campus community and to plan realistically to meet those needs. In preparation for the future, Phoenix College evaluates institutional effectiveness and assessment of student learning; this plays a significant role in college planning. Sound financial resources, thorough strategic planning, and timely environmental scanning support future development of campus facilities, incorporation of new technologies, and investments in human resources. All these contribute to quality educational programs.

Strengths

The Strategic Planning processes at Phoenix College are collaborative and open and closely linked to the mission and vision. The PRIE Office has become a vital part of decision-making at the college. This office supplies consistent and accurate data which are used in strategic planning and other college decision-making.

Phoenix College enjoys strong support from the community as evidenced by the successful passage of a bond initiative in 2004. The college will receive \$69 million over the next ten years for capital improvements and new buildings.

College budget processes allow for flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs of

the college community. The Budget Review Committee, with broad representation from the campus employee groups, reviews and makes recommendations regarding campus budgeting. Requests must be in line with the college strategic plan and support the college's mission, thus assuring the alignment of mission, planning, and budget.

The people working at Phoenix College are its most valuable resource. Employees truly understand the mission of the college as evidenced by the overwhelming support for teaching and learning. Excellent professional development programs provide opportunities for lifelong learning, while strong employee policies enable creativity and integrity.

Good teaching and learning require up-to-date facilities and technology. Therefore, the majority of Phoenix College classrooms are equipped with full technology including computer, data video projector, and DVD. Plans are to have all classrooms up-to-date by the end of 2006.

Phoenix College has recently hired an Associate Dean for Technology to assure continued currency of technology for teaching and learning.

Opportunities for Improvement

Phoenix College and the Maricopa County Community Colleges are facing the prospect of substantial numbers of retirements in the near future. This requires attention to succession planning to ensure leadership continuity.

As a land-locked institution, space is at a premium. Comprehensive planning will be necessary to optimize the use of existing and new buildings.

Maintenance and operations for a large campus with mix of old and new structures is a challenge. The many special events offered at the college place an additional burden on the maintenance and operations staff. The newly

hired director of maintenance and operations has already begun to review and revise some of the maintenance processes.

An area of opportunity includes improving the communication process between administration and the department once the annual report has been submitted. There has been a lack of feedback from administration that can seem to diminish the importance of the report. The campus recognizes the need to continue to improve the annual report process. Annual reports encourage the campus to reflect upon the year and identify areas for improvement based in part on evaluation and assessment results.

Criterion 3: Phoenix College provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Phoenix College provides evidence that its commitment to quality in learning and teaching is imbued in its culture, history, and processes. Learning for educational, professional, and personal enrichment goals is pivotal to the college and is clearly articulated in Phoenix College's mission, goals, values, and strategic plan. Clearly stated learning outcomes, effective teaching and learning environments, comprehensive teaching and learning resources, and a faculty-owned curriculum combine to ensure that Phoenix College will continue to fulfill its commitment to provide a variety of quality learning experiences for students. Furthermore, consistent and comprehensive assessment policies and practices contribute to continued improvement of the teaching and learning experiences.

Strengths

Assessment has become a strength at Phoenix College. Faculty and administration understand the importance of assessment, and it enjoys broad-based support, including a line-item budget. General education outcomes assessment has been in effect for more than ten years and covers five comprehensive

areas: writing, numeracy, oral presentation, critical thinking, and information literacy. The process is dynamic and self evaluative.

Phoenix College provides excellent learning environments that support teaching and learning. Learning environments such as technology equipped classrooms and labs enable quality instruction in an up-to-date environment. Developmental and at-risk programs ensure success for under prepared students while the Honors program affords opportunities for students seeking academic challenge.

Opportunities for Improvement

As with many assessment programs, documentation and closing the loop can be a challenge. Progress has been made in these assessment areas; however, opportunities remain for improvement. More widespread involvement and decision-making by faculty will result from a more thorough documentation and dissemination of assessment outcomes.

Adjunct faculty are an integral part of the teaching and learning community at Phoenix College. Retention and training of adjuncts must be a priority. Comprehensive programs of support services and professional growth activities are critical to their success. While there have been improvements in these services, the opportunity exists to expand.

Adequate support services to students attending at non-traditional times such as evenings and weekends, and in non-traditional settings such as online are essential. Student support services available during the day must be expanded to include these populations.

Criterion 4: Phoenix College 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.

Throughout its 85 year history, Phoenix College has responded to the needs of its community by evolving into an institution of

higher learning that does more than simply provide degrees that are transferable to the university or certificates and degrees needed for employment. Surpassing these traditional functions, Phoenix College provides a rich environment for its students and employees, an environment that instills in them a love for lifelong learning and continually stimulates their educational, professional, and personal goals. A rich tradition of delivering teaching and learning experiences for the diverse community is embedded in the vision, mission and strategic goals of the college. This tradition is evident in the curriculum, in employee and student policies, in ample professional growth possibilities, and in diverse student life opportunities. The college demonstrates a strong general education philosophy. These values and characteristics serve students, graduates, and employees so they may lead productive lives in an ever-changing world.

Strengths

Phoenix College promotes a life of learning for faculty, administration, and staff through its extensive professional growth programs. The employees have professional growth opportunities afforded by their policy groups including tuition waivers, continuing education opportunities and career exploration programs. Strong academic freedom policies allow for creative and responsible inquiry.

The wide variety of co-curricular activities at the college enables students to participate in activities that promote social responsibility, diversity, new ideas, and career related training.

Strong district and college policies regarding privacy of records, academic honesty, affirmative action, academic freedom, and appropriate employee and student conduct provide an environment that fosters and supports inquiry, creativity, and responsible use of knowledge.

Opportunities for Improvement

Program review is critical to ensure that the curriculum is useful and current. Every Phoe-

nix College program, academic, workforce development, and student service must be reviewed on a regular basis. The existing process needs to be strengthened and expanded. New review documents have been developed and will serve as the beginning of a revitalized program review process.

Criterion 5: As called for by its mission, Phoenix College identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways that both value.

The Phoenix College mission both guides and drives the dialogue across different levels of the institution and community. College engagement and service are defined by programs and activities which serve the common good and are deemed valuable and beneficial for both the institution and the community.

As called for by its mission, Phoenix College serves the needs of students who are pursuing academic goals through transfer partnerships, students seeking workforce development training or employment skill enhancement, under-prepared students needing developmental classes to prepare for their college experience, community members seeking personal enrichment classes for interest or personal growth, and working professionals needing additional education to meet requirements in their field.

Phoenix College identifies its constituencies in formal and informal ways: by the immediate geographical service area, through enrollment in programs unique to Phoenix College, and by community agency referrals. Constituencies are also created as a result of partnerships through grants initiated, developed, and coordinated by Phoenix College and its community partners.

Phoenix College constituencies also include its faculty, staff, administration, and alumni as well as the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). The college also seeks collaborative partnerships and relationships with other MCCCD colleges and District

Office departments, business and industry, government agencies, community based organizations, colleges and universities, K-12 as well as charter and home schools and other non-traditional public school education entities. These community partners participate in college affairs and, in turn, faculty, staff and students contribute to our community in a variety of ways.

Strengths

Transfer and General education are two of the mission goals of Phoenix College. Phoenix College and the Maricopa County Community Colleges have strong and well-defined articulation agreements with many colleges and universities. In particular, the statewide articulation systems in place with Arizona universities and community colleges allow for seamless transfer to these institutions.

In support of the mission, Phoenix College has strong ties to its community partners. Mutual benefits are derived from strong relationships with the Alumni Association, the President's Advisory Council, and the Education and Partnership Commission, among other entities.

A unique program at Phoenix College, Custom Training and Education (CTE), works closely with business and community agencies to deliver customized programs and services. Additionally, this office provides a wide range of non-credit course offerings.

Workforce Development programs are a strength of Phoenix College. The many programs provide the community with a well-trained labor pool for business and industry, including the rapidly emerging biotechnology and health-related fields. The use of advisory councils maintains the currency of the various programs.

Opportunities for Improvement

While Student Life and Leadership provides extensive activities for students, the opportunity exists to establish a formal system of

student government which would provide students with greater leadership training and a more systematic voice in campus planning.

The assessment of mutual college/community benefits can be expanded. Recently completed environmental scanning is the first step in this process, but a regular system of identifying and evaluating community engagement is necessary. This includes evaluation of co-curricular activities, clubs, and community partnerships.

Future Applications of Self-Study Findings and Request for Accreditation

The Phoenix College self study and the analysis and evaluation of data and evidence show that the college fulfills the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation criteria.

In addition to the report's demonstrating that the original goals of the self study were met, many unplanned positive results developed. The college has a clear picture of the breadth of activities and programs it provides. The self-study process brought together many members of its diverse community, and the report itself provides a centralized collection of the college's history and activities. The Phoenix College 2006 self-study report not only supports the college's request for ten more years of accreditation but provides a well-researched blueprint for the college's future development and direction.

Based on the extensive documentation of data and evidence in the report, Phoenix College respectfully requests continued accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools for a period of ten years.



PHOENIX
COLLEGE

1202 West Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85013
www.phoenixcollege.edu



MARICOPA
COMMUNITY
COLLEGES

Phoenix College and the Maricopa
County Community College District
are EEO/AA Institutions.