



**Maricopa County Community College District
Governing Board Minutes
February 4, 2015**

A Special Session of the Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board was scheduled to be held beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the District Support Services Center, 2411 West 14th Street, Tempe, Arizona, pursuant to A.R.S. Section 38-431.02, notice having been duly given.

GOVERNING BOARD

Tracy Livingston, President
Johanna Haver, Secretary
Doyle Burke, Member
Alfredo Gutierrez, Member
John Heep, Member
Jean McGrath, Member
Dana Saar, Member (Absent)

ADMINISTRATION

Maria Harper-Marinick
Debra Thompson
LaCoya Shelton-Johnson

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Session was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

President Livingston introduced Dr. Shouan Pan, President of Mesa Community College to present an orientation to accreditation in higher education.

PRESENTATION

Dr. Pan informed the Board that the presentation would provide a general overview of what accreditation is and how it relates to the Governing Board. Mesa is sharing the work they've done with the Board in preparation for their visit from the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) accreditation team so the Board can help Mesa to succeed. He then introduced his co-presenters, Dr. Brian Dille, Political Science faculty, and Mr. Matt Ashcraft, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness.

Dr. Dille opened with an introduction to accreditation followed by the importance of accreditation, especially in regard to being eligible to receive federal funds. Mr. Ashcraft continued discussion with a brief history of the creation of the accrediting bodies and the evolution of the process. Copies of the presentation and handout materials are included in the appendix.

**Q&A, CONCLUSION,
AND CLOSING**

Board members had a couple of questions for clarity. One member asked what ratio of full-time to part-time faculty the HLC required. Dr. Dille responded that the HLC doesn't proscribe a number, rather they check to see if the institution is comprised of what it says it's comprised of, does the institution follow its own rules, and does it have enough to meet the Board outcomes. They also want to know the quality of the faculty hired, regardless of status. Another question asked concerned the consequence of HLC reporting the MCC does not meet the criteria. Mr. Ashcraft replied that the institution would be put on notice and given time to adjust and resubmit evidence. The worst case scenario would be the institution having its accreditation suspended. A Board member asked for clarification on what was meant by having the cycle start all over again after this visit. Dr. Dille replied that the five-member peer review team would go back to the Board of Directors of the HLC with a recommendation to renew accreditation. Once that is done, the 10-year cycle begins again. A Board member clarified that the old process necessitated a two-year preparation time before a site visit, followed by a data-dump which the HLC team would review, every ten years. The new process is continuous. Reporting will be ongoing for the entire 10-year cycle, with intermittent visits and check-in along the way.

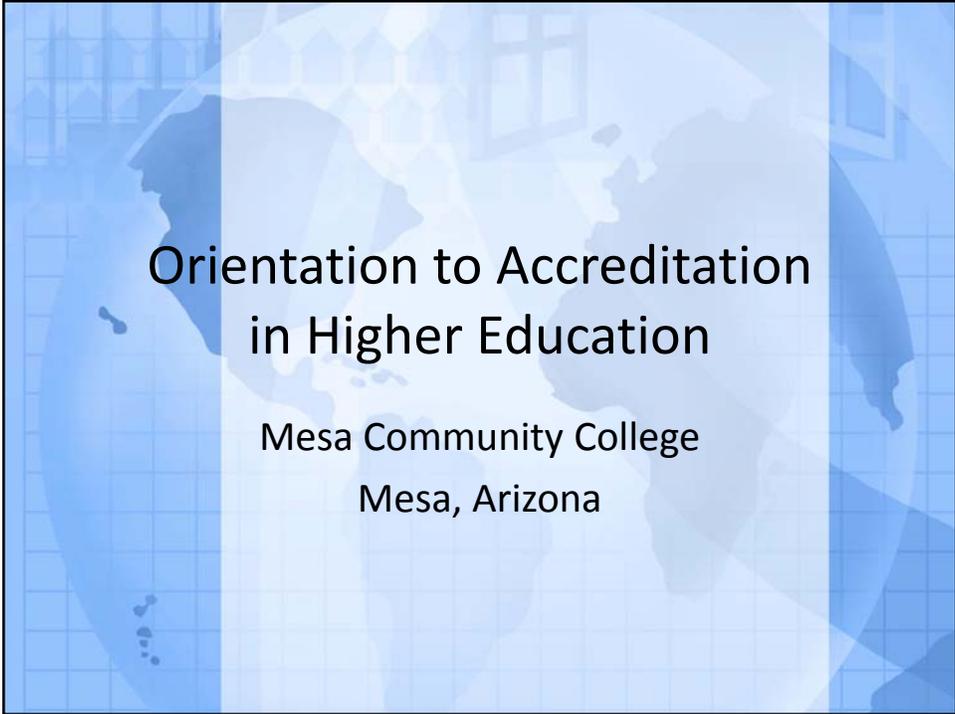
ADJOURNMENT

The Special Session was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Appendix

Orientation to Accreditation in Higher Education

Accreditation in Higher Education



Orientation to Accreditation in Higher Education

Mesa Community College
Mesa, Arizona



Introduction to Accreditation

- Assuring stakeholders that we are a responsible institution
- Formally accountable to peers and governing bodies

Importance of Accreditation

- Assure quality
- Allows students to transfer credits to other accredited colleges and universities
- Enables students to obtain financial aid and veteran's services
- Empowers the college to participate in projects funded by federal grants

Higher Learning Commission

- An institutional accrediting agency evaluates an entire educational institution in terms of its mission against the agency's standards or criteria.



**Higher
Learning
Commission**

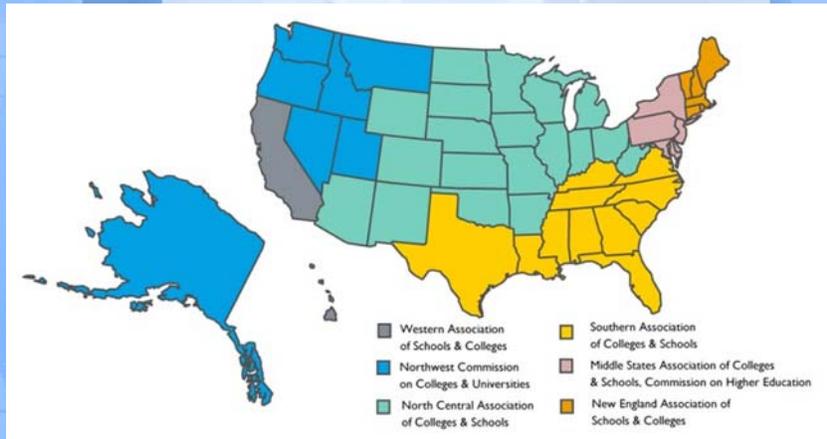
A commission of the
North Central Association

Higher Learning Commission

- Criteria:
 - Criterion One: Mission
 - Criterion Two Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
 - Criterion Three: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
 - Criterion Four: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
 - Criterion Five: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness



Accreditation in the United States



Higher Learning Commission

- Accreditation Process
 - Open Pathway
 - Assurance
 - Improvement
 - 10 year cycle
 - Comprehensive Evaluation Visit



Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

Higher Learning Commission

- Accreditation Process- 10 year cycle

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Enter Years</i>										
<i>Assurance Process</i>	Institution may contribute documents to Evidence File			Assurance Filing (Assurance Argument and Evidence File) ²	Institution may contribute documents to Evidence File				Assurance Filing (Assurance Argument and Evidence File); Federal Compliance Requirements ³	
				Assurance Review (no visit) ⁴					Assurance Review and Comprehensive Evaluation (with visit)	
<i>Improvement: The Quality Initiative</i>					Quality Initiative Proposal Filed (window of opportunity to submit)					
					Quality Initiative Proposal Reviewed					
					Quality Initiative Report Filed					
<i>Commission Decision-Making</i>				Action to Accept Assurance Review ⁴					Action on Comprehensive Evaluation and Reaffirmation of Accreditation ⁷	
					Quality Initiative Report Reviewed					

Governing Board Role in Accreditation

- Assumed Practices
 - Transparency in Governing Board meetings
 - Governing Board has final approval authority for the Budget
- Criteria for Accreditation
 - Governing Board has sufficient autonomy
 - Governing Board considers relevant interests of internal and external constituencies

Relationship between HLC Criteria and MCCCCD Governing Board Outcomes

- Both require documentation of performance
- Both focus on systematic educational improvement
- The HLC requires goals and tracking of student retention, persistence, and completion. The Board metrics track progress on those goals

Federal Compliance

- Federal Department of Education delegates many federal compliance matters to accrediting agencies

MCC's Accreditation Visit

- March 2-3, 2015
- Team of 4-5 peer evaluators
- Lunch Monday March 2, with visit team and governing board

How can you help?

- Be informed about accreditation, Mesa Community College, and MCCCCD
- Become familiar with the criteria and our Assurance Argument at:
<http://www.tinyurl.com/hlcmcc>

Accreditation in Higher Education

Prepared by Mesa Community College for the MCCCCD Governing Board
February 2015

Accountable Institutions

As stewards of higher education in Maricopa County, the Maricopa County Community College District and Governing Board have a responsibility to our students and the larger community. We must meet the needs of our students and ensure the needs of the future workforce of Arizona. In addition, we are responsible to the taxpayers in this county for the wise and appropriate use of the resources placed at our disposal. Accreditation is the means by which an educational institution assures its stakeholders that it is acting responsibly in these ways.

In addition to Maricopa County voters and taxpayers, we are accountable to the US Department of Education since we receive federal financial aid, veteran's benefits, and participate in federal research grants. The US Department of Education has delegated authority to assure the quality of higher education institutions to six regional accrediting bodies. Arizona colleges and universities are accredited through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association. The HLC has established a set of assumed practices and evaluative criteria which colleges and universities must meet to maintain their accreditation. These assumed practices and criteria will be discussed in detail below.

Each of the ten Maricopa County Community Colleges are accredited individually. However, since the Governing Board and the District Office set policies and budgets and provide key services to all ten colleges, they play a key role in the accreditation process. Governing Board and District administrators will have the opportunity to meet with peer evaluators from the HLC each time they visit to reaffirm the accreditation of one of the ten colleges. During this visit, evaluators will seek evidence that the college they are reviewing is a quality institution. They will look at things such as whether the Governing Board and District administrators are performing their appropriate governance roles; whether the college has a stable funding base so that students and the community can rely on them to provide what they need; and whether there are sufficient numbers of qualified full-time faculty to ensure that the college's claim be an institution of higher education is credible. For this reason, it is essential that members of the Governing Board and the District administration be familiar with the HLC criteria and how the district and specific colleges meet those criteria.



Criteria

Criterion One

Mission - The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Criterion Two

Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct - The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Criterion Three

Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support - The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Criterion Four

Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement - The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Criterion Five

Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness - The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.



Overview of Higher Education Accreditation in the United States

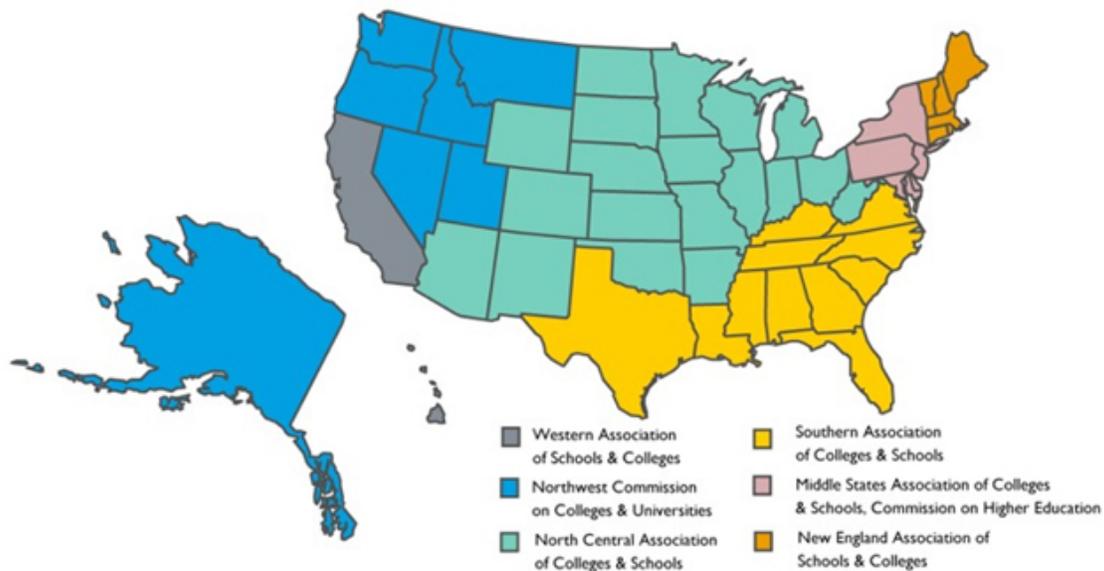
- Higher Education Authorization Act- United States Congress
- Six main regional accrediting bodies recognized by U.S. Department of Education
- Numerous specialized or programmatic accrediting agencies

The practice of accreditation in the United States began in the early 1960's as a means for post-secondary educational institutions (colleges and universities) to demonstrate to the Federal government a basic level of quality in their institution and programs for the purpose of certifying eligibility to receive Federal funds, which include Stafford loans, grants, and research monies.

There are two types of educational accreditation: institutional and specialized. Institutional accreditation is provided by regional and national associations of schools and colleges. Schools and colleges voluntarily seek accreditation from non-governmental accrediting associations. There are six regional associations, each named after the region in which it operates (Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, Western).

These regional associations are independent of one another, but they cooperate extensively and acknowledge one another's accreditation and all report directly to the U.S. Department of Education. Several national associations focus on particular kinds of institutions (for example, trade and technical colleges or religious colleges and universities). An institutional accrediting agency evaluates an entire educational institution in terms of its mission and the agency's standards or criteria. It accredits the institution as a whole. Besides assessing formal educational activities, it evaluates such things as governance and administration, financial stability, admissions and student services, institutional resources, student learning, institutional effectiveness, and relationships with internal and external constituencies.

A specialized accrediting body evaluates particular units, schools, or programs within an institution. Specialized accreditation, also called program accreditation, is often associated with national professional associations, such as those for engineering, medicine, and law, or with specific disciplines, such as business, teacher education, psychology, or social work.



The HLC's Accreditation Process

The HLC's Accreditation process, called Pathways, has two focuses: Assurance and Improvement. The assurance process asks a college to submit evidence of its effectiveness and responsibility. The improvement process tasks institutions with developing an ambitious and meaningful Quality Initiative as evidence of the institution's commitment to improvement.

In the fall of 2010, the Higher Learning Commission invited Mesa Community College to join a cohort of colleges and universities helping to develop and pilot the Pathways accreditation process. MCC was the only Maricopa County Community College selected to

participate in the HLC's Pathways Pioneer Project due to our long, good accreditation standing with the HLC.

Assurance

MCC is currently in the process of engaging the college community in the Assurance Process. A series of active learning sessions focused on the HLC's new criteria for accreditation are being conducted with many key stakeholders across campus. Additionally, a web-based learning resource focused on the criteria has been produced by our Center for Teaching and Learning: <http://tinyurl.com/HLCMCC>. Here you can find the new criteria along with other valuable information related to the assurance process.

Improvement

MCC's Quality Initiative, called informed improvement, empowers a culture of evidence-based decision-making dedicated to advancing student success. Informed improvement acknowledges the 21st century community college's greatly increased capacity to gather and analyze relevant data, and to deploy that information to make the most effective use of the college's resources. Placing an iterative process of critical inquiry at the heart of every college unit's planning processes, informed improvement is premised upon the realization that every aspect of the college contributes to student learning and success.



Every 10 years, MCC seeks continued accreditation status through a comprehensive assurance argument and college-wide evaluation visit of peer-reviewers. The visit culminates with a finding by the visit team and a recommendation to the Commission Board of Directors who in turn makes a final decision. MCC's goals are to provide evidence that the College meets or exceeds the criteria for accreditation and receive continued accreditation.

Governing Board Role in Accreditation as defined by HLC Assumed Practices and Criteria for Accreditation

Assumed Practices

- The HLC assumes that every MCCC college follows a set of generally accepted institutional practices in the United States.
- A. Integrity and Ethics: These include transparency in **Governing Board** decision-making, a conflict of interest policy, the **Governing Board** has public members with authority to approve the annual budget and hire or fire the chief executive officer.
 - B. Teaching and Learning Quality, Resources and Support: Faculty have oversight of the curriculum and assure consistency in the quality of instruction.
 - C. Teaching and Learning Evaluation and Improvement: Instructors have the authority to assign grades; institutional data on student learning, retention, persistence, and completion are accurate and reflect the full range of students who enroll.
 - D. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness: The institution has future financial projections addressing its long-term financial sustainability.

Criteria

Criterion One

Mission - The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1A The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1A.1 The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the **governing board**.

1D The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1D.1 Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

1D.2 The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

1D.3 The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Criterion Two

Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct - The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2A The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its **governing board**, administration, faculty, and staff.

2C The **governing board** of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

2C.1 The **governing board's** deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

2C.2 The **governing board** reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

2C.3 The **governing board** preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

2C.4 The **governing board** delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Criterion Five

Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness - The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5B The institution's **governance** and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

5B.1 The **governing board** is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

5B.2 The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its **governing board**, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

5B.3 Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

5D The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

5D.1 The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

Correspondence of HLC Criteria to MCCC D Governing Board Outcomes

- 4C The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.
- 4C.1 The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
- 4C.2 The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
- 4C.3 The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
- 5C The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.
- 5C.2 The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
- 5D The institution works systematically to improve its performance.
- 5D.1 The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

Federal Compliance

- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.020 – Assignment of Credits, Program Length and Tuition
- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.030 – Institutional Records of Student Complaints
- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.040 – Publication of Transfer Policies
- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.050 – Practices for Verification of Student Identity
- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.060 – Title IV Program Responsibilities
- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.070 – Public Information: Required Information for Students and the Public
- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.070 – Public Information: Advertising and Recruiting Materials and other Public Notifications
- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.080 – Review of Student Outcome Data
- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.090 – Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies
- Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.070 – Public Information: Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment