



SELF-STUDY REPORT

Prepared for the Middle States Commission
on Higher Education

December 2010

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Executive Summary

While it is impossible to adequately summarize in a few pages the details of the findings resulting from the work of more than 140 individuals organized into 14 work groups, the following brief discussion attempts to highlight the most significant points raised in the individual chapters of this *Self-Study*.

Institutional Context

Standard One - Mission and Goals

The Middlesex County College mission fits well within the framework of the comprehensive community college. It seeks to promote access, quality, affordability, lifelong learning, and diversity in the context of the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of our community. The College's vision statement should be modified to better reflect its universe of activities and spheres of influence.

As the College moves forwards with modifications to its inspirational documents, an even greater effort should be made to obtain input from as many members of the College community as possible.

Standard Two - Planning Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Since 2006, MCC has had two strategic plans, both developed with considerable input from faculty and staff. A widely-disseminated report on the 2006 – 2009 plan shows the significant impact that it has had on the College's activities and priorities. Similarly, the 2009 – 2012 strategic plan can be seen as guiding the College into the future, with its seven broad goals encompassing the College's mission.

A number of issues have been identified for consideration in future strategic plans and input will be sought from all areas of the College community as they are developed. The College will continue to research student needs and seek input from the College-wide community when developing those plans.

Standard Three - Institutional Resources

Since several components (primarily state and county allocations) of the complex budgeting process are often uncertain until just before the start of a given academic year, the College has become adept at estimating those revenues and developing multi-year plans. By doing so, it has been able to maintain and expand its facilities, provide library and technology resources, and support faculty and staff.

MCC has taken a number of steps to efficiently use its financial and human resources including slightly reducing executive, administrative, and management positions despite growing enrollment. The College has also taken measures to maximize classroom usage and to utilize energy saving measures.

Standard Four - Leadership and Governance

Middlesex County College is fortunate to have a Board of Trustees whose members actively guide the administration in developing policies while allowing it to carry out those policies and related procedures without undue interference. The Board takes ownership of the

process for selecting the College president and in developing long-range and annual financial plans. Going forward, it will consider formalizing the orientation for new Board members.

The College Assembly provides a forum for the entire College community to be heard, through elected and appointed representatives, and during the Public Recognition and Hearing portion of monthly meetings, on matters affecting the College.

Most College personnel have collective bargaining agreements and employee handbooks setting out the terms and conditions of their employment and handbooks will be made available electronically. A comprehensive assessment of all administrative positions has recently been completed.

Standard Five – Administration

The College’s executive organizational structure is relatively flat, with a president, two vice presidents, and three executive directors. Despite a significant increase in enrollment over the past five years, the number of executive, administrative, and management personnel has been slightly reduced. This has been accomplished in large part by merging academic divisions and departments, while actually improving services to students.

Hiring is systematized for efficiency and equity, and there are opportunities for the continuing training of employees, though there is a need for more administrative training and better dissemination of training availability.

Standard Six – Integrity

As an institution of higher learning, the College is committed to academic freedom in the classroom. The Board of Trustees has adopted the American Association of University Professors Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom, and there have been no claims of deprivation of the right. Consideration will be given to specifically extending the concept to performances and exhibitions.

There are effective processes for the handling of student grievances and complaints. The newly appointed assistant deans may well be able to relieve the deans from the handling of most student grievances. The College has a long history of positive interactions with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and the periodic review and self-study processes have been transparent and open to all who wish to participate.

Standard Seven - Institutional Assessment

Middlesex County College has been actively assessing its operations for well over ten years, though some of its earlier efforts lacked consistency and did not always result in the development of quantifiable outcomes that truly measured institutional effectiveness and student success.

The current assessment program can be traced back to 2003 and has been rapidly accelerating since 2007. Through the use of campus assessment “snapshots,” the dramatic growth in assessment can be graphically seen. For example, in the past year, the number of courses utilizing a comprehensive Course Learning Outcomes document has increased from 78% to 100% of all courses offered. In the same period, the number of Program Learning Outcomes forms has gone from 69% to 96% of all academic programs. As the assessment program continues to mature, greater emphasis will be placed on the quality of the data being collected and how it is used.

Educational Effectiveness

Standard Eight - Student Admissions and Retention

As an open access institution, Middlesex County College has its Admissions Office perform key roles in working with other departments that provide support services to students. Newly admitted students are guided through the enrollment testing process, and when needed, and with the help of the Registrars Office, assisted in registering in the developmental courses that will prepare them for college-level work.

Students are provided with a wide range of support services from new student orientation and First Year Experience through tutoring, academic advisement, and financial aid. Additional services, including some delivered online, are being added and considered.

The College seeks to provide comprehensive and accurate information to potential and current students. Its website is frequently updated, both in information and appearance, and those efforts will continue.

Standard Nine - Student Support Services

The scope of services offered students is quite impressive, with the majority of the services housed in the Division of Enrollment and Student Support Services. As soon as they are admitted, students may attend a comprehensive and redesigned New Student Orientation, and approximately 2900 did in each of the past two fall enrollment cycles. The First Year Experience then guides them through their first two semesters.

Continuing students have access to developmental courses, tutoring, academic advisement, library and media resources, a new learning center, and financial aid. There are a number of programs designed for minority students, students with disabilities, as well as an Honors Program for those who may benefit from especially challenging courses. There is also an extensive cocurricular program, though occasionally there is a conflict between cocurricular activities and class scheduling.

Standard Ten - Faculty

The College's academic courses and programs have been designed by the faculty, and faculty members have the primary responsibility for updating and improving them as well as promoting and assessing student learning. Faculty members are appointed after an intense review of their academic credentials and teaching ability following a process designed to ensure excellence. The process has been applied somewhat differently by various departments and greater consistency will be sought. The number of full-time teaching faculty has been consistent over the years, and the ratio of sections taught by full-time compared to part-time faculty is being monitored.

Faculty are evaluated on a regular basis using a self-assessment instrument and classroom observations. Greater attention will be paid to evaluation findings to help faculty members further enhance their skills. There are a large number of faculty development activities, many offered by the faculty-run Center for the Enrichment of Learning and Teaching. A significant number of faculty members have taken part in the Princeton University Mid-Career Fellowship Program, and even more may do so as a sabbatical project.

Promotions in rank are discussed in both the *Faculty Handbook* and the faculty union contract with the College. The criteria for promotion have been in place for many years and will be revisited.

Standard Eleven - Educational Offerings

Middlesex County College offers more than 90 degree and certificate programs in accordance with its mission “to provide access to an affordable, quality education for diverse students and to promote lifelong learning opportunities to strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of the community.” Since courses are offered days, evening, and weekends, on the Edison campus and at the New Brunswick and Perth Amboy Centers, full- and part-time students have many opportunities to complete their courses of study.

Recognizing that the College serves a student body, with many not fully prepared for college-level work, MCC offers a wide range of developmental courses in English, reading, and mathematics. Initial results show that two support activities for these students – Bridge Programs and a Student Success Course – are yielding positive outcomes. Faculty-run learning communities are also proving to be effective and they may be expanded.

The College offers an extensive English as a Second Language Program as well as specialized activities for adult learners, transfer students, and students with a very strong record of academic success.

Standard Twelve - General Education

The general education offerings at Middlesex County College meet the goals and criteria established for the state’s community colleges. The number of credits for each type of degree is met as well in the breadth of offerings. Additional and changed general education courses are reviewed by the College and the New Jersey Academic Officers Association. The College will modify its internal documentation to reflect this newly implemented process.

Assessment of general education courses has always been a somewhat difficult proposition but MCC has developed processes that have yielded valuable data and have led to very positive changes. A Carnegie Grant will allow MCC, along with Rutgers University and William Paterson University, to administer the Community College Learning Assessment exam and to analyze the results.

Standard Thirteen - Related Educational Offerings

In addition to the degrees and certificates offered by MCC, the College also collaborates with a number of other institutions to offer joint certificates and degrees, primarily in health-related fields. These programs follow the same rigorous approval and assessment processes as those offered solely by the College. This nine-step process begins with department faculty and works through the division, College Assembly structure, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, to the President. Ultimately, all degrees and certificates are authorized by the Board of Trustees.

The Division of Corporate and Community Education offers a wide variety of noncredit courses and programs to county residents. Some are for personal enrichment while many others meet the needs of those seeking professional development, a career change or assistance in finding employment. These courses and programs are also developed following stated processes for approval and assessment.

The Perth Amboy and New Brunswick Centers serve the residents of their respective communities with a variety of courses. While the offerings are limited, they allow students to begin their studies near home or work. A wide variety of services, including admissions, academic advisement, tutoring, financial aid, and library resources are available at each Center. A small number of online courses are also available to all students to assist them in meeting their educational goals.

Standard Fourteen - Assessment of Student Learning

As noted in Standard Seven, assessment has been taking place at the College for many years. In particular, the assessment of student learning has been ever increasing - and becoming ever more meaningful – since 2003. The pace has increased significantly in the past several years and there is a great deal of “buy-in” by the faculty and administration. The number of people directly involved in the various assessment processes continues to grow. For example, the campus-wide assessment committee now has 38 members, up from 10 in 2007.

There has also been an increase in the professional staff of the Institutional Research department, and the addition of two assistant deans who are actively involved with assessment, as is the new Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. An assessment website showcases activities to the College community while providing models and guidance for those new to assessment.

The result of these resources and activities is that assessment is fast becoming part of the College’s culture and most decision making is now data driven.

Introduction

Middlesex County, New Jersey

Middlesex County, located in central New Jersey, is 318 square miles in size, includes 25 municipalities, and incorporates extensive industrial, office, and residential zones. With a 2008 estimated population of 790,805, Middlesex is one of the most densely populated counties in the state. The county Office of Economic Development predicts continuing steady growth, with the population reaching approximately 811,000 by 2013.

History

One of 19 community colleges in New Jersey, Middlesex County College was established in 1964 on nearly 200 acres of the former Raritan Arsenal site. In March 1965, Dr. Frank Chambers was appointed the first president of the College. Dr. Robert Harris succeeded him in 1975. He was succeeded by Dr. Rose Channing in 1977, by Dr. Flora Edwards in 1986 and Dr. John Bakum in 1996. In 2005, Dr. Joann La Perla-Morales became the College's sixth president.

Classes began in September 1966 with 728 full-time and 637 part-time students. In June 1968 the first associate degrees were granted to 293 students. In fall 2009, the College enrolled 13,374 students in credit programs, 7,684 full-time and 5,690 part-time. An additional 11,000 individuals enrolled in non-credit programs. For the past three years, the College has graduated an average of more than 1200 students a year.

Middlesex County College serves a diverse student population that mirrors the increasing diversity of the county. Of the 13,374 students enrolled in credit programs, students from minority populations comprise 53%. The number of faculty has increased from 50 in the initial year to approximately 200 full-time and more than 500 part-time faculty members. College administrative and professional staff includes more than 100 members.

During spring 1970, the College received full accreditation from the Middle States Association. The College was reaccredited in 1980 after submission of a *Self-Study* and again in 1991 after a Cyclical Program and Services Review and site visit. In 2000, the college submitted a *Self-Study* and was accredited without any follow-up actions required. Similarly, a *Periodic Review Report* was submitted in 2006 and accreditation was reaffirmed without required follow-up.

Mission

In September 2005, the College's Board of Trustees adopted the following mission statement, which was revised as part of the self-study process. The new mission statement places an increased emphasis on a student-centered learning environment and is reaffirmed by the Board each year.

The mission of Middlesex County College is to provide access to an affordable, quality education for diverse students and to promote lifelong learning opportunities to strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of the community.

Methodology of the Self-Study

The purposes for which the Self-Study was undertaken were to:

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- provide the Commission of Higher Education (CHE) with documented information so that an informed decision concerning MCC's reaccreditation can be made,
 - expand upon the current use of student outcomes assessments and institutional effectiveness data for institutional improvement,
 - encourage participation among the College community to reaffirm an attitude in which self-evaluation and reaccreditation processes are perceived as an opportunity for self-renewal and self-discovery,
 - provide a candid assessment of the College at this point in its history in the anticipation of providing a direction for enhancing student learning and success.

To begin the process of achieving these objectives, in September 2008 President La Perla-Morales appointed the co-chairs of the Steering Committee. Upon consultation with campus leaders (deans, department chairs, directors, and faculty), the other members of the Steering Committee were appointed in March and April 2009. Efforts were made to ensure that the Committee was broad-based and faculty driven. Gender, length of service, ethnicity, academic rank, and personal and leadership attributes were also considered.

During the spring, summer, and early fall of 2009, calls for participation on Work Groups were distributed by several means, and more than 120 members of the College community volunteered. The volunteers were asked to indicate their interest in a preferred area of study.

The Steering Committee co-chairs wrote a draft of the *Self-Study* design in summer 2009, and the entire Steering Committee approved it in the late summer of that year. It was submitted for CHE review in September, and approval to proceed was received later that month.

During fall 2009 and spring 2010, the Steering Committee met regularly to review work group progress. Each of the 14 groups went through several drafts of their reports. Each subsequent draft was reviewed by an increasing number of Steering Committee members to provide the greatest input possible. By mid-May most of the work groups had largely satisfied their respective charges.

To encourage campus-wide involvement in all phases of the self-study process, the College established a web page at <http://infonet/middlestates> where Steering Committee minutes and agendas were posted, along with drafts of Work Group reports. Two open forums were held in April for discussion on the posted reports. All students, faculty, and staff were advised as to the location of the reports and progress in writing the reports in monthly updates in *This Month @ Middlesex*, an electronic publication.

Following the Fall 2010 Convocation, the College community was invited to attend working focus groups in an organized review of all 14 Work Group reports. More than 200 people, in groups of six to eight, evaluated the reports and generated more than 150 comments that were reviewed by the Steering Committee and Work Groups. Most of the Work Group reports were modified based upon the comments, and the revised versions were posted on the InfoNet.

Throughout fall 2010, iterations of the Work Group reports and then of the *Self-Study* were posted on the InfoNet, and all were invited to submit comments. An Open Forum was held on November 8, and those in attendance were able to discuss all areas of the document, as well as submitting written comments then or at any time by email.

Standard One: Mission and Goals

Mission and Vision

The American community college movement is rooted in the late nineteenth century attempt to strengthen undergraduate study by proposing that liberal arts colleges provide only two-year programs, with students transferring to the university after completing their general education. (Ratcliff, 1993). The original mission of the two-year schools was to educate students broadly in the arts and sciences; the mission of the university was to advance knowledge and inquiry.

The community college mission expanded during the twentieth century in three areas: (1) preparing students for employment; (2) providing remedial education for students poorly prepared for college; and (3) delivering English-as-a-Second-Language. In addition, over the last 40 years there has been a steady increase in noncredit courses for those who enroll for professional or personal reasons rather than to complete degrees (Cohen, 2003). Programs for cultural and social enrichment of the community, including films, lecture series, and fine arts exhibits, have become an increasingly important part of community college offerings. These changes demonstrate ways community colleges continually shift and expand their focus to better serve their local communities.

As the mission of community colleges has expanded, so has academic variation. Increasing numbers of students who attend community colleges are not college-ready. This is amplified through an open enrollment policy; high school graduates are typically accepted regardless of academic ability or preparation. The student body has become more diverse not only in ethnicity and socio-economic status, but also in academic goals, ability, and preparation. Students range from excellent, world-class academics to others who are very poorly prepared and need considerable support before they can enroll in credit-bearing courses.

As a result of these developments, while contemporary community colleges serve the collegiate function central to their mission, they have taken on a variety of roles in response to social change. This fits the Truman Commission's (1947) charge that community colleges make their dominant feature "intimate relations to the life of the community they serve."

The College's vision and mission are as follows:

***Vision:** Middlesex County College puts learning first and measures its success only by the success of its students. All members of the College community contribute to student success.*

***Mission:** The mission of Middlesex County College is to provide access to an affordable, quality education for diverse students and to promote lifelong learning opportunities to strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of the community.*

MCC's mission fits well within the context of the comprehensive community college. It includes ideas of access, quality, affordability, lifelong learning, and diversity of our students, and anchors each of these to the unique economic, social, and cultural

characteristics of the local community. The mission represents MCC as an institution that provides a comprehensive, high quality educational program to residents of Middlesex County; hopes to add substantially to the social, economic, and cultural life of the community; and is fully invested in the learning and achievements of its diverse student body. The results of the *Mission and Goals 2010 Survey* indicate that this understanding of MCC's character and values is one the College has of itself. Over 75% of College employees rated the vision and mission statements as leading to an accurate understanding of our character and values.

To expand on the quantitative data from the survey, interviews with over 30 faculty, staff, and administrators were conducted in spring 2010. Interviewees strongly suggested we revise the College's vision statement to more meaningfully express the ideals of our institution, including its close connection to the community, its intellectual and cultural leadership, and its work transforming each freshman class of academically varied students to a graduating class of educated individuals who are culturally aware and prepared for further education or the working world.

An organization's vision statement should be an inspiring, energizing description of its possible future, an attractive mental image that helps members identify with the institution and provokes a sense of pride and purpose (Kirkpatrick, 2008). Our vision statement is seen instead as a limited (and limiting) portrait of who we now are. As noted by one interviewee, "The mission captures something important about us; the vision less so. It's not really a vision. It's a limited view of where we want to go. The vision needs to be more what we are yearning to become, bold and inspiring."

Though the interviewees strongly endorsed the objective that Middlesex County College students learn effectively and become competent in their fields of study, they noted that MCC values include additional ideals and suggested that the College reach out to the community with additional theater, art exhibitions, musical and dance performances, and political debates. "We want to reach beyond our students to the entire community."

There was interest in our vision emphasizing how much we value a meaningful, productive working life for all our employees, and many wanted to include our aim to establish an increasingly active intellectual environment: "I envision us as a place where faculty are actively engaged in their fields, doing creative work, establishing a lively intellectual environment for students, and promoting curiosity as a lifestyle. We're already there in many ways, but we should recognize this perspective as an important value and encourage its further growth."

A related and important point was shared by virtually all interviewed, was that the MCC vision and mission should focus attention on our effective and successful classrooms. Middlesex has a rich mix of students, many with significant economic, cultural, and academic limitations that bar them from entrance to a four-year educational institution, impede their progress in the working world, and restrict their meaningful involvement in civic life. Their development and socialization into competent, thoughtful citizens takes place in our classrooms, suited to our unique community. "It takes creativity and persistence to lead them into an identity as thinking, educated people. ... [W]e meet them

where they are, help them step into an identity as students, and prepare them intellectually and socially for life in the real world.”

The College has a long history of meeting the needs of our students. As noted by one of those interviewed: “From our earliest days we have had a uniquely skilled and creative faculty who know how to transform lives. For 45 years our faculty has been inspiring students of all abilities -- taking them through a profound transformation to a graduation ceremony marking their readiness to engage the world.”

A clear message conveyed in the 2010 interviews is that our vision and mission statements must recognize the layering of our student population, from seriously limited to incredibly strong, so we can meet our students at the level appropriate to them and to communicate our ambitious but reasonable expectations for them.

At the same time we need to support the highest intellectual achievement in our top students. We need to challenge them in class and through special initiatives such as our honors courses and also foster the creation of new ways to provide rich environments for their intellectual growth. This difficult balance can happen only if we remain nimble, able to adjust not only to a variety of students but also to shifting social forces within the county. We must continually reinvent ourselves to effectively mentor and prepare our unique blend of students.

The vision statement should be re-evaluated and rewritten as an inspirational description of who we wish to become with each of these themes in mind.

The current mission statement was developed in 2005 by a core working group of over 40, including faculty, administration, and staff, and ratified by the Board of Trustees in November 2005. The draft statement was discussed and reviewed by the College community at the spring 2005 convocation, with another session held during the annual adjunct faculty development day. In spring 2009, during the process of developing our current institutional goals and strategic plan, the Mission Statement was posted on the InfoNet, the College’s intranet, for community-wide review. It was then sent to the College Assembly in October 2009 and reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees in November 2009. The mission statement is formally reviewed according to an ongoing four-year cycle and is set for formal review and possible revision in 2012.

While the mission and goals statements were made widely available throughout the process of their development and review, interviews indicate that some members of the community were not aware that the statements were being revised or were available for review. The process might be strengthened if in future iterations the proposed mission and goals statements, in addition to being posted on the InfoNet, distributed to the College Assembly, and discussed in various public forums, are added to the agenda of department, division, and College Assembly meetings for active discussion before formal adoption by the Board of Trustees.

Goals

Middlesex County College Institutional Goals: (1) *To provide an excellent education to students pursuing professional, academic and personal goals;* (2) *To foster knowledge,*

encourage self-awareness and support personal and intellectual growth; (3) To work collaboratively with private, public and corporate groups to respond to the changing needs of the community; (4) To offer access to education and resources that enriches the quality of life for the community; (5) To provide a variety of learning experiences to promote success.

MCC's institutional goals are rooted in its mission. The first goal, to provide students an excellent education, reflects the mission's focus on quality. The second goal, to foster knowledge and intellectual growth, comes from the mission's attention to lifelong learning and development. It also highlights students' personal growth and self-awareness. The third goal, to work with our constituents to respond to the community's changing needs, reflects the mission's consideration of the economic, social and cultural life of the community and highlights our efforts to continually update our mission and goals in light of changing social conditions in the county. The fourth goal, emphasizing access to educational resources and enriching residents' quality of life, reflects the first component of the mission, "to provide access to an affordable, quality education for diverse students." The last goal, to provide a variety of learning experiences to promote success, is central to our vision and mission.

The institution has had a stated mission and set of institutional goals since its inception in 1964; they were reviewed and refined on an intermittent basis until 2005. Based on suggestions from the 2000 Middle States Self-Study and the subsequent Middle States Periodic Review, MCC instituted a four-year cycle of reviewing, evaluating, and refining our mission, goals and strategic plan in 2005. The development and refinement of our mission, goals and strategic plan is now an ongoing and iterative process.

Over the past five years, the College has developed two strategic plans, the first, *Planning for Success 2006-2009*, and the second, *Pathways to Success 2009 – 2012*. Both were developed through the efforts of over 75 members of the community, including faculty, administration, staff, and a few students. In the most recent iteration, the College followed a year-long process that involved five key groups. A steering committee formed by President Joann La Perla-Morales mapped and guided the process of developing the institutional goals and strategic plan; faculty, staff and administrators met at the State of the College in January 2009 and developed the institutional goals; and three volunteer working groups met throughout spring 2009 to develop the strategic plan in three broad areas: *Engagement and Success*, *Teaching and Learning*, and *Collaboration and Community*. As part of this process, the goals were posted for review and comment by the community on the InfoNet site in January 2009, where they remained throughout the spring and summer.

Suggestions for modifications made by the faculty and administrative staff during a campus-wide meeting in August 2009 were integrated into a final version by the chairs of the three working groups during fall 2009. The final version of the strategic plan was distributed via email to the College's key advisory group, the College Assembly (composed of faculty, staff, and students), in late October 2009 and approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2009.

The work done over these last five years has brought MCC into a more strategic and thoughtful process for developing institutional goals and plans. Many faculty members were involved in the initial creation of the goals. However, despite the efforts of the strategic

planning steering committees and the administration, fewer faculty members participated in the strategic planning sub-committees. The administration opened various lines of communication to encourage faculty involvement, but the effort failed to bring in most faculty. Others may have had important ideas to contribute and would be more invested in the strategic plan had they been more involved in its development.

The *Mission and Goals 2010 Survey*, Appendix A, along with the results of interviews mentioned earlier, indicate that the requests made to faculty to participate in the process were not generally perceived as invitations to meaningfully contribute. According to the interviews, this seems to be due in part to patterns of faculty-administration interaction formed under previous administrations. It was also noted that the current administration is highly supportive of increased involvement by all members of the College community and, as we continue to develop goals and strategic plans, new and healthier patterns of interaction that are developing will become normative for the College.

In the future, chairs and members of the core planning group should directly invite faculty members to participate. Chairs should also make discussion of the ongoing process a part of department meetings as a context for encouraging faculty members to take part. To foster student involvement, leadership of the various student groups should make concerted efforts to invite their membership to take part. Faculty members and advisement staff could likewise help by more explicitly reaching out to students to encourage them to participate in developing the strategic plan.

In terms of focus, four of the five institutional goals specifically highlight our attention to student learning (goals one, two, four, and five). They recognize the varying needs of our students and how to best support their development and, in that sense, certainly lead toward institutional improvement. Goal three emphasizes the importance of continually assessing changes in the community and responding in ways that improve our institution. All of the goals are further refined and expanded in our current strategic plan (see especially the goals under the heading “Pathways to Teaching and Success”) in ways that focus very specifically on student learning and institutional improvement. Our associated work in assessment, particularly over the last few years, has developed very specific program and course learning outcomes stated carefully in terms of measurable results. Additional measures should be developed to better evaluate students’ preparation for further academic work and professional careers, including meaningful follow-up with alumni, local businesses, and transfer institutions.

Interviews with administrators indicate they have made it a priority to use the MCC statements of mission and goals as a guide for decision making and resource allocation. The *Mission and Goals 2010 Survey* shows this effort is recognized: over 67% of faculty, administration and staff either strongly or somewhat agree with the statement “Faculty, administration, and staff use the mission, goals, and strategic plan to guide their decision-making and planning.” The development of strategic plans for the periods 2006-2009 and 2009-2012 gives strong support to this view. The plans interpret the mission and institutional goals with specific goals and objectives for the College in each of the three areas: *Engagement and Success*, *Teaching and Learning*, and *Collaboration and Community*. The

current strategic plan is discussed continually in College Assembly to foster its acceptance and encourage its use as a guide for planning and decisions at all levels.

As discussed in Standard Three, budget requests are evaluated according to their compatibility with the strategic plan. For example, the recent development of a technology-rich learning center and intensive new student orientation program reflect the high priority given to student success. Similarly, the addition of 23 tenure-track faculty lines over the last five years and the creation of an Honors Program arose from the emphasis in the strategic plan on providing MCC students a world-class education. All this demonstrates Middlesex County College's intention to provide excellent education for students with varying preparation and ability. The strategic plan's focus on collaboration with community partners has spawned or strengthened several initiatives, including joint performances in dance and music with the Edison Arts Society, a number of theatre productions, and art shows featuring artists in the metropolitan area, increased course offerings in Middlesex County high schools, and the expansion of programs with various community partners through Democracy House, the MCC Center for Civic Engagement (the only institution in the state to win a place on President Obama's 2008 Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with distinction).

The *Mission and Goals 2010 Survey* shows that MCC must continue to promote our mission and goals. Forty-six percent of college employees and 36% of MCC students agree with the statement, "The College's mission and goals are effectively publicized and widely known." The Middlesex County College vision, mission, and goals statements do appear in many places including the College catalog, Annual Reports, strategic plan, student *Pathfinder*, social media, and intranet sites. New Employee Orientation programs mention the vision, but that reference does not foster identification with it. Information is provided to selected college search websites about our mission and goals, though references to different versions of the College's mission statement can be found on sites that have gathered previous versions and not kept information up-to-date. Additional presentations should be made to faculty, administration, and staff, especially on MCC's vision, to inspire them and create a sense of purpose.

Recommendations:

- The Vision Statement should be reevaluated, with the goal of making it more inspirational and forward-looking.
- Continue to expand efforts to invite participation in developing and reviewing future versions of our vision, mission, institutional goals, and strategic plans.

Standard Two: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Strategic Planning Process and Activities

The College's most recent strategic planning process began with a December 2008 call by President Joann La Perla-Morales for volunteers to serve on the three subcommittees that were being formed to develop the strategic plan goals.

The development of the College's current strategic plan – *Pathways to Success 2009 - 2012* – was fostered by subcommittees that were formed at the College's Convocation held in January 2009. These Subcommittees were:

- Pathways to Engagement & Success
- Pathways to Collaboration & Community
- Pathways to Teaching & Learning

The formation of these subcommittees provided an opportunity for the entire campus community to get involved in strategic planning. While the College provided an array of opportunities for campus-wide involvement, the number of active participants on the subcommittees did not reflect a significant percentage of the varied constituencies which comprise the MCC campus community. Of the 580 full-time employees working at the college in fall 2008, only 53 actively participated on at least one of these committees. This figure included 13% of all full-time faculty and department chairs and 20% of all managerial and professional staff. While there was little participation by clerical, craft/maintenance staff, or students, these constituencies were able to give their input at a number of events, such as various breakout sessions held during convocation and through the College Assembly, where the plan was discussed and suggestions recorded. The Board of Trustees also had the opportunity to provide feedback prior to approving the plan.

As noted in Standard One, in order to encourage student involvement in College planning, it may be helpful for leadership of various MCC student groups to make concerted efforts to encourage their membership to take part. Faculty and advisement staff may also help by more directly reaching out to students to encourage their participation in the strategic plan development process. In addition, to encourage greater involvement by a broader range of MCC constituencies, including community and business leaders as well as parents and local educators, the College may wish to consider that future committees charged with the development of the strategic plan have composition recommendations that are reflective of the MCC campus community. Setting a composition goal may ensure that strategic planning goals are more reflective of the ideas and concerns of a greater representation of MCC constituents.

The mission statement of MCC reads, "The mission of Middlesex County College is to provide access to an affordable, quality education for diverse students and to promote lifelong learning opportunities to strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of the community." Components of the MCC mission statement include:

- Access
- Quality Education
- Promote Lifelong Learning
- Affordability
- Diversity
- Strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of the community

The current strategic plan, *Pathways to Success 2009 – 2012*, identifies seven broad goals with associated strategic objectives. An examination of these goals as related to the mission components listed above indicates that the objectives of the plan encompass all of the mission components.

Components of Mission

| MCC 2009 - 2012 Strategic Plan Goals | ACCESS | AFFORDABILITY | QUALITY EDUCATION | DIVERSE STUDENTS | PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING | STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMY & CULTURE |
|--|--------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Provide a welcome and effective “front door” to MCC | X | | | | | |
| Provide a First-Year Developmental Education Program | | | X | | X | |
| Provide comprehensive resources and services to enable students to achieve their academic and career goals | | X | X | | X | |
| Be the college of choice for students in Middlesex County | X | X | X | X | | |
| Provide academic and cultural programs and services for the community | X | | | X | | X |
| Provide an excellent education to students pursuing professional, academic and personal goals | | | X | X | X | |
| Create opportunities to develop content knowledge, and personal and intellectual growth | | | X | | X | |

The College is well underway with the pursuance of initiatives related to the current strategic plan that are congruent with the MCC mission. Representative initiatives include:

Provide a Welcome and Effective Front Door to MCC

- Open Houses and Information Sessions for the county community
- New student orientation schedule being expanded to include sessions for transfer students. Orientation programs are also conducted for ESL, MAPS, Project Connections, and EOF students.
- New Testing Center opened in October 2009.

Provide a First-Year Developmental Education Program

- Expansion of MCC’s Summer Bridge Program
- Formed a developmental education committee

Provide Academic and Cultural Programs and Services for the Community

- Hired a marketing company that is currently working on enhancing MCC's website and developing effective promotional materials.
- Offers a comprehensive array of professional development and personal enrichment courses through MCC Corporate and Community Education.
- Built a "black box" theatre and offers additional theatrical performances.

Provide Comprehensive Resources and Services to Enable Students to Achieve Their Academic and Career Goals

- Formed a new learning center to incorporate and expand reading, writing, and mathematics support services for students.
- Expanded academic advisement activities and website
- Built a biotechnology laboratory
- Expanded professional and peer-tutoring programs

Be the College of Choice for Students in Middlesex County

- The College aggressively pursues grant funding from county, state, federal, and private entities to offer programs of benefit to the communities served by MCC and to assist students with paying for their education. Grants include the County of Middlesex Work First New Jersey Program for \$146,905 and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Grant for \$703,194. A recent grant from the Willard T.C. Johnson Foundation provides \$1,000,000 (\$500,000 Matching) for scholarship assistance to MCC students. In fall 2010, MCC received a Trio Student Support Services grant for students with learning disabilities (Project Connections) from the U.S. Department of Education for \$297,987 and an award of \$75,000 from the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education for its Center for Adults Returning to Education (CARE).

Create Opportunities to Develop Content Knowledge and Personal and Intellectual Growth

- The College's Democracy House is a center for service learning.
- MCC offers students a chance to participate in 19 credit co-op courses.
- MCC continues to offer faculty enrichment opportunities through sabbatical leave funding and opportunities through its Center for the Enrichment of Learning and Teaching (CELT).
- MCC is expanding opportunities for faculty to develop and students to enroll in honors courses through its honors program.
- In FY 09, the College's Division of Corporate and Community Education generated 18,785 noncredit enrollments in courses that enhanced professional skills and afforded opportunities for personal growth.

Assessment of Strategic Plan

MCC has been vigorously working to increase the level of assessment across the academic and service areas of the College. A review of selected goals in the *Pathways to Success 2009-2012*

strategic plan indicates that these goals will allow for measurement and assessment and were based on previous assessment results. Some examples of activities undertaken in support of assessment and the utilization of data for improvement can be found below. The President has established a Strategic Planning Steering Committee with the charge to monitor and document the implementation of the current strategic plan. Activities are noted on a website available to the campus community <http://mccsp/Records/Lists/20092012SP/Allitemsg.aspx>

- New student orientation has been assessed over a number of years. Assessment measures include a matched sample of students who attended the programs comparing GPAs and retention to the following semester for students who attended and did not attend orientation. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) findings detail survey outcomes that are relevant to student orientation, and perception of and engagement in institutional programs/services.
- The Summer Bridge Programs were developed to assist students to progress through developmental course sequences. Data has been collected over three consecutive years and clearly documents “that participating students have a higher completion rate of developmental coursework and a greater persistence rate when compared with students who enroll in a traditional schedule of developmental courses for a full fifteen- week semester.”
- First-Year Experience (FYE) provides comprehensive new student orientation with program assessment/outcomes detailed on the assessment site. The 2006 CCSSE had seven survey questions related to “support for learners.” Response data was used to develop and revise FYE’s orientation program.
- Current assessment activities address the relevance and instructional quality of all courses offered by the Department of Professional and Community Programs.
- For the period 2004-2009, the Department of Dental Auxiliaries Education used the National Board Exam as a method of assessment. It posted outcome results and identified appropriate corrective measures.

Use of Prior Strategic Plan

The College’s prior strategic plan, *Planning for Success 2006-2009* was widely distributed to the campus community through a hard-copy publication distributed at convocations and made available in a downloadable PDF document through the InfoNet. Updates on the strategic plan were provided to the campus community at convocations, by President La Perla-Morales in her State of the College addresses, as well as through the InfoNet. A follow-up publication *Successes...2006-2009: Highlights of Accomplishments* providing updates on achievements that were outcomes from the strategic plan, was also widely distributed to the campus community.

It is evident from the accomplishments realized from 2006 to 2009 that the strategic plan played a dominant role in the College’s decision-making process. A full listing of accomplishments may be found in the *Successes...2006-2009: Highlights of Accomplishments* document. Representative accomplishments include the following:

Learning and Teaching

Goal: Make faculty development among the highest institutional priorities

- Allocated additional funds for faculty development, including arranging for outside keynote speakers on Professional Development Day.
- Initiated the Middlesex County College Foundation Endowment Fund to support faculty participation at conferences.

Goal: Support the campus community in using technology that promotes and enhances extraordinary learning in the classroom, lab and beyond

- Created a wireless area of the Library and College Center for student use.
- Equipped 134 classrooms with media enhanced technology.
- Created an Academic Technology Advisement Committee.

Student Success

Goal: Ensure that placement procedures and test instruments for reading, writing, computation, algebra and ESL produce reliable and valid results

- Developed a process for faculty to read and score the essay section of the placement test.
- At the state level, formed a committee to evaluate the effectiveness of cut scores.
- Expanded and renovated the testing center.

Goal: Increase the number and diversity of full-time faculty members to foster faculty/student interaction

- Hired 20 new faculty members in tenure-track positions.
- Established screening committees with diverse and trained members.

Goal: Strengthen retention and graduation rates by increasing awareness, availability, development and use of student support services

- Created the Office of First-Year Experience.
- Designed a new student orientation program.
- Provided counseling and new student orientation at Perth Amboy and New Brunswick Centers.
- Added retention programs and services to the activities offered by the Minority Access to the Professions Scholars program.

Enrollment Management

Goal: Focus on specific markets to increase enrollment in each of the next three years

- Increased enrollment an average of three percent in each of the three years.
- Expanded the number of hybrid and online courses.
- Developed an office to advise NJ STARS students.

Goal: Improve customer service and student use of existing services

- Created a student enrollment center in Chambers Hall.
- Expanded enrollment center hours to include Saturdays.

Goal: Modify financial policies and procedures to assist current students and stimulate enrollment growth

- Established on-line payment of tuition and fees for current students.
- Implemented a payment plan option for students.

Administration, Finance and Facilities

Goal: Review functions of Human Resources Department

- Developed monthly orientations for new employees.
- Created position of Director of Labor Relations.

Goal: Identify adequate space for students to gather during times they are not in class

- Created space in College Center, Edison Hall, Main Hall and IRC for students to gather between classes and furnished these spaces with tables and chairs

Goal: Provide a network and communication infrastructure that supports the College's mission and vision statements

- Developed a schedule for replacement of PC labs, office PCs and faculty and administrator PCs.
- Designed and implemented a plan for data recovery and security.

It was further evident that a substantial number of the College Assembly charges for academic years 2006 – 2009 were tied to strategic planning goals (SPG). A complete archive of College Assembly minutes can be found at <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/assembly/control.cfm>. Representative charges that were reflective of strategic planning goals (SPG) during the past two academic years include:

AY 2007 - 2008

- Academic Standards Task Force – Examine the criteria and rationale for placing students in SSD-101. Evaluate the current policy and make appropriate recommendations. SPG category addressed – Student Success
- Campus Diversity Task Force – Evaluate and discuss student activities, clubs, educational programs, and events on campus in terms of campus diversity. Do they present an effective means to encourage diverse groups to socialize and work together? SPG category addressed – Student Success and Enrollment Management
- Campus Life Task Force – Study the establishment of a student government for Middlesex County College. SPG category addressed – Student Success and Administration, Finance, and Facilities
- Community Concerns Task Force – Investigate the needs of the business sector in the southern part of the county. Determine the credit and non-credit requirements of the area. SPG category addressed – Enrollment Management

AY 2008 - 2009

- Academic Standards Task Force – Working with the Honors Program Committee, review the proposed requirements for a full honors program. SPG category addressed – Learning and Teaching and Enrollment Management
- Academic Standards Task Force – Review the policies of the Admissions office with regard to home schooling guidelines and make appropriate recommendations. SPG category addressed – Enrollment Management
- Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Task Force – Review the previous report on the accommodations in and availability of the technology labs on campus for persons with disabilities. SPG category addressed – Student Success
- Community Concerns Task Force – Review the practice of cancelling schedules due to non-payment. Consider the establishment of an additional emergency fund for tuition and books to be used by students in need. SPG category addressed – Administration, Finance and Facilities

Many of the accomplishments identified in *Successes... 2006-2009: Highlights of Accomplishments* could not have been achieved if funding resources, as well as the human resources, weren't identified and made available to support these initiatives. Information provided by the MCC Finance Office confirms that the budgeting process is aligned with "the college's progress towards meeting the institution's strategic planning goals."

Issues for Future Planning

In addition to reviewing current trends in education noted by organizations such as AACC and in publications such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The Economist*, the committee surveyed a comprehensive sampling of the College's leadership for ideas or concerns that might be addressed in future strategic plans

Some of the respondents saw the strategic plan as a statement of intent or a list of common goals shared by the College community. Others saw it as a business plan and thus saw a need to do an "environmental scan...review considerations that weigh-in on what we do...and modify it if necessary,"...including quarterly reviews. Therefore, responses represent both interpretations of planning as a guide to meet our mission and goals and planning as an assessment of needs and opportunities to fulfill the College's mission to serve the community.

Respondents indicated a need to follow high school enrollment and graduation rates, immigration trends, area unemployment projections, and gender disparities. Greater attention to federal funding opportunities was recommended to supplement scarce state resources as part of any future strategic planning. Seven respondents expressed a need to include in our strategic plan a process to ensure that education and training programs give students a competitive edge in meeting the occupational challenges of the next five years. They also expressed a need to develop a system to forecast demand for new training and education as a strategic goal.

Environmental issues such as conservation and pollution control were mentioned by a few respondents who felt that they should be a priority in our future strategic and master plans. The need to remain competitive and in the forefront regarding technology as an educational tool was also suggested as a priority for future strategic plans.

To gain a broader understanding of what issues members of the College community thought were important for future strategic planning, 13,904 students were surveyed of whom 634 responded. The survey was also sent to 1,172 faculty, administrators, and staff. Of the 680 respondents 15% were administrators, 21% were full-time faculty, 49% were adjunct instructors, and 14% were staff members.

Although the surveys varied in wording, the three groups identified the College's most pressing needs in a similar way. Foremost was the necessity to research and understand the needs of full and part-time students, classified as highly important by 68 percent of surveyed students and by 66% and 71% of faculty and staff respondents and moderately important by an additional 25% of all respondents. There was almost as much interest in the need to know more about occupations and careers in high demand. The concept of developing a contingency plan for College funding to meet state and county funding shortfalls was listed as highly important by 79% of faculty and staff and 63% of student respondents.

While only 38% of students accorded "high school enrollment trends" as a high priority, 58% of faculty and staff felt it was highly important. On the other hand, pollution controls and environmental issues rated higher with students than with their professors and administrators. 45% of students felt we needed to look into a greener approach to the College's operations, and a similar number rated pollution controls as highly or moderately important. The same questions were rated as highly important by 29 percent and 40 percent of faculty and staff, denoting slightly different priorities.

Faculty and staff responses were even more diverse than students' comments. Eighty two instructors and members of the staff made comments that were grouped into 49 categories. The most salient comments dealt with the need for more technology to foster more effective teaching. The role and compensation of adjunct faculty was questioned by nine respondents.

Recommendation:

- The College should further research and analyze student needs as part of an effort to get to know its students and the community better.

Standard Three: Institutional Resources

Resource Allocation and the Strategic Plan

The College has made great efforts to allocate resources in support of the strategic initiatives set out in *Planning for Success 2006-2009*. The list below highlights a number of these recent initiatives.

Strategic Goal

Activity/Project Funded

Faculty Development

Make faculty development among the highest of institutional priorities.

Continued to support the Center for the Enrichment of Learning and Teaching (CELT), expanded Faculty Development Day, provided payment of fees and travel expenses to conferences.

Provide ongoing curriculum evaluation that promotes the success of our students.

Increased development of hybrid and online courses, organized Summer Institute on Assessment and other assessment activities; continuing expansion of media enhanced classrooms.

Student Success

Examine the accuracy of student placement into appropriate classes.

Expanded the Office of Institutional Research and the Testing Center, implemented the use of human readers for placement into English courses.

Provide multiple test challenge opportunities to all affected students.

Expanded the Bridge Program and instituted a Summer Bridge Program; developed challenge tests.

Strengthen retention and graduation rates by increasing awareness, availability, development, and use of student support services.

Increased counseling services and expanded service hours at both urban centers; expanded professional and peer-tutoring programs; created the First Year Experience, which revised and expanded the orientation program.

Develop college-wide tutoring.

Expanded the tutoring center, created a new Learning Center, created a dedicated math lab.

Enrollment Management

Focus on specific markets to increase enrollment in each of the next three years.

Established a new nursing program, created the NJ STARS Advisement Office, added new credit and non-credit programs to meet the needs of the local community.

Improve student use of existing services.

Completed the Enrollment Center, created a Customer Service Program in the Enrollment and Student Support Services Division, expanded staff and added weekend Enrollment Center hours.

Strategic Goal

Activity/Project Funded

Modify financial policies and procedures to assist current students and stimulate enrollment growth.

Established online payment and payment options.

Administration, Finance and Facilities

Improve the operation of Finance and Administration department.

Created the position of Controller.

Review the functions of the Human Resources Department.

Created the Director of Human Resources position, held employee training sessions.

Identify adequate space for students during times they are not in class.

Fully furnished spaces in College Center, Technical Services Center, Edison Hall, Main Hall, and Instructional Resource Center.

The success of these projects and activities is becoming evident. CELT is providing an increasing amount of content to the faculty. Of particular note, initial results show that the Bridge Programs were successful. The Summer Bridge Program 2007 was offered to new students who wanted to work on English and/or reading skills prior to the fall semester. Seventy-two students registered, and 70 returned for the fall semester, having successfully completed ENG-010 or RDG-011 during the summer. The Mathematics Summer Bridge 2007 had 32 students registered, with 25 succeeding in testing out of one or more developmental courses. Standards Two, Seven, and Fourteen contain discussions about resources used to further carry out the strategic plan.

Budgeting Process

The College has a July 1 through June 30 fiscal year, and the budget planning process begins almost two years prior to the start of the budget year. The College's annual operating budget is developed through a process that begins at the department level, where exceptions to the prior year's budget are noted in accordance with its plans and priorities. As these requests move to deans and directors and the Executive Council, they are molded to address the College's priorities within available resources. In the fall, initial expense and revenue projections are generated for discussion and review by the College's staff, the Finance Committee, and the Board of Trustees.

Since external funding amounts are not finalized until just before the start of the July 1 fiscal year, challenges for the budgeting process exist, as the College must generate a detailed budget during the previous fall. The budget is ultimately approved and adopted by the College's Board of Trustees. The doubt about the operating budget has impacted the distribution of budget materials to the College community, at times causing some uncertainty in planning. Middlesex County legally adopts a set funding amount for the upcoming fiscal year; the State of New Jersey also commits to an expected funding amount.

Effectiveness and Accuracy of the Budgeting Process

As the College's fiscal planning is a multi-year project, income and expenses must be estimated, knowing that a number of the projections may be subject to significant fluctuations. Realistic growth rates and probable state and county contributions are used in all projections. Fortunately, enrollment has been quite robust and above the conservative growth estimate used. This has served as an offset to the decrease in state allocations and the lack of growth in funds from the county.

The College has weathered these variances well, since it waits for income to be realized before committing its funds to new or expanded projects. An indication of the success of the planning and forecasting processes is that MCC, unlike a number of other colleges and universities, has not had to lay off any employees, and vital positions have been filled as they become vacant.

State aid is distributed to the 19 county colleges based on enrollment, and final state aid numbers are not available until well into the fiscal year. No matter how accurate projections initially are, flexibility and the willingness to make changes are required. For example, on two occasions in recent years, the allocation from the state was changed mid-year and accommodations had to be made. County aid follows a specific statutory process and is memorialized in a Board of School Estimate resolution. That body is a five-member committee comprised of County Freeholders (a unique New Jersey position) and College Board of Trustee members.

The portion of operating revenue generated by student tuition and fees continues to grow, while the state and county portions continue to shrink. This trend does not seem likely to change in the near future. The College will need to continue to implement cost saving measures, modify expense budgets as needed, monitor revenue and expenses monthly, and make changes as needed in upcoming budgets in an attempt to keep tuition affordable. The MCC Grants Development Office has applied for and received grants that have assisted the College in meeting its financial obligations. The office assists faculty, staff, and administrators in identifying and procuring federal, state, county, and private funding opportunities to support the strategic plan and advance the mission of the College.

Facilities Plans

The facilities multiyear plan was created in 2003 with approval by the Executive Council and Board of Trustees. The facility condition audit, conducted in 2003, describes each building and identifies deferred maintenance issues, capital construction needs, and infrastructure improvement projects for which plans should be made within the next five years. A new audit is planned for 2011-12.

Major capital projects require the College to seek county and state funding. The College takes part in a competitive program known as Chapter 12 funding, with money coming equally from the state and county. This fund is administered by the state and is earmarked for projects greater than \$50,000. Chapter 12 funding is available on a cyclical basis and is administered at the state level by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. The MCC Facilities Department recommends projects to the Board of Trustees. Recent Chapter 12

projects include pool renovations and the replacement of West Hall. This \$12 million dollar, 36,000 square foot environmentally friendly building named for the late freeholder David B. Crabiel will house 13 classrooms, four computer labs, a culinary demonstration kitchen, and a conference center. Crabiel Hall will be completed in accordance with the LEED Green Building Rating System and is expected to obtain a Silver rating.

The College also receives funding from the county for other equipment and facilities. These projects include replacing the outdoor lighting in two campus parking lots. The new lighting provides energy efficiency and the ability to manage the utility load during peak periods. The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning replacement project continues the effort to replace outdated equipment with units that use more energy efficient. The physical plant is very well maintained, with new roofing installed on three campus buildings and new elevators were installed in three others in recent years.

Audit Results and Controls

For at least the past ten years, the College's annual audit resulted in only a single deficiency; it dealt with financial aid and did not result in any repayment of funds. The reports of the College's independent auditors for the past three years are with the materials provided to the evaluation team members..

The Government Accounting Standards Board and the College's Board of Trustees, and its outside auditors all require that certain practices and procedures be followed in the College's operations. As part of the annual audit process, narratives of significant processes and systems (e. g. tuition /cash receipts/accounts receivable) are provided to the College's independent auditors and these controls are reviewed and monitored on an on-going basis. Changes are made as required to safeguard the College's assets. For example, though there have been no indications of misappropriation of cash receipts, the Finance Division recently decided that all cash - from tuition payments to library fines to fees for inoculations - should all go directly to the Bursar's office.

Library Resources

The Educational Resources Task Force of the College Assembly meets monthly during the academic year to look at needs in the library as well as the Information Technology and Instructional Design and Media Support departments and makes recommendations to the College President. Additionally, the Academic Technology Advisory Committee, an ad hoc committee, makes recommendations in those and other areas. Library, IT, and Media personnel implement approved recommendations of these groups and investigate promising technologies and adequacy of existing resources.

Faculty may order books with the approval of their chairperson. The technical services librarian also monitors suggested acquisitions from book vendors and reviews in the areas that the College is involved. The Library currently has 91,300 volumes, with 200 volumes being added and 100 volumes being withdrawn each month, primarily due to technology updates. Reference librarians monitor use of online databases by students and faculty and suggest the purchase of additional databases. New database accesses added in the past year include humanities, science, and social science titles. Several collections of online books have been

licensed, including those in the humanities, social science, and general reference areas. The reference librarians also monitor ease of student access and may make recommendations for additional resources when needed.

In the *Library Collections and Reference Services Survey* conducted from 2001-2009, a large percentage of respondents say that they are extremely or very satisfied with resources in the library. The online databases received the highest ratings, with 72% rating their satisfaction as extremely or very satisfied. Of concern are the non-users: 24% don't use print journals; 16% don't use books; and 6% don't use library web pages or online databases. In answering the question: "How easy is it for you to find the information that you need in the library?" the overall rating on finding information received an extremely or very satisfied rating from 57% of the respondents. In answering the question: "How satisfied are you with the assistance from our reference librarians?" 82% were at least somewhat satisfied and more than half of those were extremely or very satisfied, with only 7% not at all satisfied.

These results, although coming from a small set of students (168) over several years, represent concern and are being addressed. The low numbers on finding information, though, actually reflect a success of the library instruction program which helps students recalibrate the view they have of their information skill levels. Once exposed to non-Google resources and advanced search skills, they see great possibility. The non-users' group also reflects this generation's preference for Google-only, online (rather than print) resources, and lack of reading. To help students expand their skills, the Library continues its vigorous library instruction program – reaching about 125 course sections a year. To encourage reading, the Library has expanded its e-book collection and has Best Reads and ESL Book programs. To expand reach, the Library has moved into the state's 24/7 REF service, launched one-to-one consulting sessions, and is partnering with other student services on workshops.

A total of 121 students responded to questions about use of the Library's book collection. About 65% were extremely or very satisfied with the ease of finding a book. 63% were extremely or very satisfied in using circulation or reserve services; and 70% were satisfied with the staff at the circulation desk, who help with these services. 54% said that they did not use microfilm machines and 20% do not use the copy machines. One summative question was used in the survey: How important is the library to you? 82% said extremely or very, with only 8% responding not at all.

Technology Resources and Planning

MCC has over two thousand PCs with Internet access that meet the needs of students, most of whom are required to take a computer competency class. Reference librarians frequently teach classes to instruct students in searching the Internet, evaluating information that they locate, and referencing the information properly. Students may use PCs in their classes, in labs, and in the library.

The priority in the media area in recent years has been to upgrade classrooms to be media enhanced (Instructor PC connected to the Internet, digital projector with wall switch speakers, DVD, and VCR players). The College currently has 139 classrooms finished out of a total of

250 classrooms. Crabiell Hall will have all of its classrooms media enhanced with Wi-Fi throughout. Courseware upgrades and faculty training for development and delivery of online classes have been other recent priorities. WebCT, our current platform, is being replaced with the Course Cruiser module of Campus Cruiser. The Center for Enrichment of Learning and Teaching Professional offers “best practices” workshops for online teachers on a regular basis.

The Johnson Commons Learning Center (Learning Center), which is adjacent to the Library, occupies 9,000 square feet of the Instructional Resource Center and has 165 computer stations with software designed to correspond with what is taught in the classroom. The Learning Center consists of reading, English, and math labs. Dedicated to helping students in developmental courses become more successful, the College developed the Learning Center in an effort to increase retention and offer supplemental instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics.

IT management meets regularly with user departments. For example, IT generally will meet several times a semester with the Computer Science and Information Technology (CS&IT) Department to plan for the deployment of new and upgraded applications and operating systems in their nine labs. Other departments meet with IT and schedule upgrades based on their academic needs. Software refreshing has been done twice a year and hardware replaced every three to five years. The CS&IT chair and faculty report that the main College-wide IT concern is having Internet bandwidth keep pace with demand as generated publisher web resources increase and become increasingly multimedia oriented. In the past year, the College has increased campus Internet bandwidth from 35 to 70 MBS. The links joining the urban centers to the main campus were also upgraded from .768 MBS to 5 MBS.

Cost Saving Activities

Operational savings have allowed the College to fund several activities within the strategic plan. The College’s efforts to increase efficiencies in operations and reduce operating cost are on-going. Other recent efforts include:

- Serving as the lead agency of an Electrical Consortium with eight New Jersey county colleges.
- Delaying replacement of non-critical vacant positions.
- Freezing purchasing activities as early in the year as possible.
- Increasing course offerings in summer and winter terms.
- Merging academic departments.
- Adjusting schedules to achieve class size efficiencies.
- Participating in NJEDGE, a consortium of 45 New Jersey colleges and universities for the group purchase of Internet access, web course delivery software and phone service.
- Installing light sensors in classrooms, offices, etc. and installing of auto flush toilets.
- Eliminating the paper mailing of grades.
- Expanding the schedule of credit and non-credit classes and maintaining enrollment goals in each class.
- Utilizing a “print to copier” program to achieve copier and printer savings.
- Evaluating heating and cooling settings for optimum cost savings.
- Reviewing publications and mailing for effectiveness and alternative delivery modes.
- Collaborating with other community colleges for purchase of dental and student insurance.

- Participating in the Middlesex County Joint Insurance Fund and Joint Health Insurance Fund.
- Participating in the New Jersey community college insurance pool for workers compensation coverage.

While the savings from some of these actions cannot be precisely quantified, collectively they have allowed the College to continue full operations in the face of flat or decreasing county and state allocations.

Auxiliary Operations

The purpose of the MCC Retail Services Corporation (RSC), an auxiliary organization of Middlesex County College that operates retail activities on behalf of the College, is to provide essential tools and services to support student academic and social needs. In addition to operating the Blue Colt bookstore and subcontracting the food and vending services for the College, the RSC, which is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, pays rent to the College and underwrites special events, upgrades facilities and equipment, and provides student scholarships and emergency student loans.

In addition to its annual contributions, grants, and scholarships, the RSC has funded the complete interior furnishing of the bookstore building and the renovation of the College Center kitchen and serving areas. Between 2006 and 2010, the RSC consistently made contributions to the First-Year Experience, a program aimed at promoting student retention and success.

Faculty and administrators have an opportunity to receive funding from the RSC, which annually posts a *Request for Funding* form on the InfoNet for projects designed to enhance students' experiences at the College. After proposals are submitted to the Director of the RSC, an Allocations Committee evaluates the proposals and makes recommendations to the MCC Retail Services Board of Directors. Examples of funded projects are:

| Grant Projects | 2010-2011 | 2009-10 | 2008-09 | 2007-08 | 2006-07 |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Campus Holiday Events | | \$15,000 | \$15,000 | \$15,000 | \$15,000 |
| Scholarship Ball Support | \$2,500 | \$2,000 | \$2,000 | \$1,700 | \$3,000 |
| MCC Foundation Scholarships | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | | | |
| MCC Scholarships | \$10,500 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$4,254 | \$6,457 |
| English Lecture Series | | | \$1,950 | | |
| First-Year Experience / Orientation | | \$1,800 | \$5,000 | \$2,500 | \$4,988 |
| Peer-Led Team Leader- BIO A&P | \$3,200 | | | | \$2,400 |
| Assessment Methods (CELT) | | \$4,300 | | | \$4,410 |
| ALEKS (Math) | | \$5,000 | | | |
| Quo Vadis | | \$1,418 | | | |
| Democracy House | | | \$3,800 | | |
| Art Gallery | | \$5,000 | | | |
| Student Engagement Assessment | | \$2,292 | | | |
| Championship Banners – Athletics | \$2,100 | | | | |
| Telescope | \$5,000 | | | | |
| EMPOWER – NBC | \$4,000 | | | | |
| Projects Funded | \$32,300 | \$31,810 | \$18,100 | \$8,454 | \$27,255 |
| Rent to MCC | <u>\$570,000</u> | <u>\$550,000</u> | <u>\$550,000</u> | <u>\$535,000</u> | <u>\$535,000</u> |
| Total Payments to MCC | \$602,300 | \$581,810 | \$568,100 | \$543,454 | \$562,255 |

The College’s Board of Trustees appoints the members of the RSC Board of Directors, a diverse group made up of: President of the College as Board Chair, a member of the MCC Board of Trustees as the Vice-Chair, three faculty members, five students, and two members of the community. The RSC is audited annually by an independent auditing firm, and the day to day activities are overseen by the College’s Vice President for Finance and Administration.

The Role of the Middlesex County College Foundation

The Middlesex County College Foundation (Foundation) mission is “helping students open doors to their future with financial aid, scholarship, and educational resources.” By consistently growing financial aid and scholarships and raising funds for select College programs, the Foundation helps students, faculty members, and the greater Middlesex County community realize academic and career goals.

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization registered in the state of New Jersey. It has its own independent 53-member Board of Trustees and Directors. Between 1966 and 2009, the Foundation has provided scholarships and financial aid to 11,880 deserving MCC students and numerous grants to the College totaling \$8,916,747.

As of June 30, 2009, the Foundation’s net assets and liabilities totaled \$8,397,906. Included in this are \$7,444,611 in endowed, permanently restricted, scholarship, or other funds and

\$1,553,995 in temporarily restricted annual scholarship and grant funds. Of its permanently restricted assets, a major portion, \$4,917,080, is held in the Foundation's General Endowment Fund. It generates income for financial aid to students and small grants to College programs that benefit students.

The current nationwide recession resulted in extraordinarily challenging years for the Foundation in fiscal years 2008 and 2009. The Foundation ended FY-08 with a 5% loss on investment value and in FY-09 lost an additional 12%. While disappointing, according to the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, the average Institutional Related Foundation in the United States lost 30% in investment value in both FY-08 and FY-09. As a result, FY-09 and FY-08 audited financial statements both reported significant unrestricted net deficits at year end.

However, the number of students awarded scholarships and the total amount of scholarship money awarded by the Foundation only decreased by 4.5% and 9.6 % respectively between 2008 and, and although the number of scholarships decreased by 16.4% between 2007 and 2008, the amount of scholarship money awarded increased by 9.2%.

MCC Foundation Scholarships

| Year | Students Aided | Scholarship Amount |
|------|----------------|--------------------|
| 2007 | 627 | \$ 576,080 |
| 2008 | 564 | \$ 602,368 |
| 2009 | 544 | \$ 544,272 |
| | 1,735 | \$1,722,720 |

With the help of a \$1 million gift from the Robert Wood Johnson Charitable Trust, (the Johnson & Johnson companies and the Johnson family are major benefactors of the College), the Foundation exceeded its goal of \$3,000,000 for a capital campaign by \$555,000 in December 2006. As a result, 60 new endowed and annual scholarships were established and funded. In December of 2009 the Willard T.C. Johnson Foundation awarded a \$1,000,000 gift, with a \$500,000 scholarship challenge to the MCC Foundation. The Foundation met the \$500,000 challenge requirement, and 75 more students will receive scholarships each year beginning fall 2010.

Standard Four: Leadership and Governance

Board of Trustees Bylaws

The Board of Trustees is appointed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 64-A1 and is responsible for overall planning and policy-making for the purposes of offering Associate Degrees and Certificate programs as well as credit and noncredit community focused programs that meet the needs of county residents. Bylaws clearly articulate the Board's powers and duties, officers, committees, Board meetings, and miscellaneous provisions. While the bylaws are a broad statement of the powers and duties of the Board, they do not unnecessarily limit the Board, which has full authority to modify them and enact policies for the purposes of conducting the business of the College.

Board members refer to the bylaws as a "live document" and, as such, a review of the bylaws is conducted annually and revisions are made as needed. Current board members report no instances that reveal shortcomings within the current bylaws. The bylaws may be accessed via the College web site at <http://www2.middlesexcc.edu/about/board-of-trustees/policy-book.html> and as Appendix B.

Board Policies

Article IV, section 4.2 of the bylaws provides a comprehensive list of the Board's powers and duties, which comprise the framework within which policies are created. The Board is in the process of a policy review and conducts such a review of policies every three years. The Board of Trustees' Policy Book is available on the College's web site at <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/board/control.cfm> and as Appendix C.

Conflicts of interest as they relate to contractual relationships, employment, family, and financial interests are addressed in the Code of Ethics section of the Policy Book. Section A, item 10 stipulates that "Board members will refuse to surrender their independent judgment to special interests or partisan political groups or use the College for personal gain or for the gain of friends." Part B of the Code further defines financial and personal interests, specifically outlining the limitations imposed upon Board members, their staff, spouse, children, immediate family, and business interests with respect to contracts, agreements, and promises of employment that may pose a conflict of interest and negatively impact the discharge of their official duties.

In compliance with New Jersey's "Open Public Meetings Act," advance notice of meetings is publicized in a number of ways: a written notice is posted in the lobby of Chambers Hall, the College's administration building; a notice is placed in *The Home News Tribune*, the county's local newspaper; the notice is filed with the Clerk of the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and filed with the President of the College; as well as forwarded to any individual upon request. Meeting minutes are disseminated to various departments on campus, as well as the Board members, the County Freeholders and the Clerk of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. In addition, the approved minutes are posted on the InfoNet and are available in the College library.

Board Structure and Activities

The Board of Trustees is comprised of 12 voting members. Eight members are appointed to four year terms by the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, while two are appointed by the Governor of New Jersey and also serve for four years. The Middlesex County Superintendent of Schools serves by virtue of position. A representative of the previous year's graduating class is selected by the graduating class to serve a one-year term. Additionally, the College President is a non-voting ex-officio member. Board members have a variety of educational backgrounds and vocations from both the public and private sector. As stated in the Bylaws and as required by statute, "at least two shall be women." A roster of Board members may be found in Appendix D.

There are five Board officers: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary. The Assistant Secretary is a non-Board member. The Chairperson presides over Board meetings and serves as an ex-officio member of all Board committees. In the event of the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson exercises the duties of the Chairperson. The Treasurer ensures the safekeeping of all funds of the College. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary is responsible for taking minutes at all Board meetings. The Board has four standing committees, each made up of three Board members who are appointed by the Chairperson. The committees are responsible for making recommendations, conducting studies, and reporting, informing, and advising the Board on matters related to College operations.

The Academic, Student, Alumni and Minority Affairs Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Board regarding educational programs, curricula and admissions policies, academic standards, accreditation, instructional support, and the strategic plan. Additionally, the committee reviews and recommends policies regarding recruitment, enrollment, and retention of minority students and employees and, in conjunction with the Human Resources Committee, the Affirmative Action Plan.

The Facilities Committee makes recommendations concerning all requirements for buildings, grounds, construction, maintenance, and consultants. In addition, the committee reviews facilities plans and cost estimates, and recommends acceptance of bid responses within the parameters of the County Colleges Contract Law.

The Finance Committee reviews the proposed operating and capital budgets and the institution's financial and facilities plans. The Committee also makes recommendations to the Board regarding the type and amount of insurance to be carried by the College and selects the auditor.

The Human Resources Committee receives recommendations from the President regarding personnel appointments and makes its own recommendations to the Board. Additionally, the Committee makes recommendations regarding the salary structure, grades, and titles for all College positions and reviews and recommends agreements entered into with bargaining unit employees. Working with the Academic, Student, Alumni and Minority Affairs Committee, the Human Resources Committee reviews and recommends policy pertaining to the Affirmative Action Plan.

The College President and a representative sample of Board members were surveyed and interviewed to ascertain their perspective regarding institutional mission, orientation of Board members, by-laws, selection and appointment of the College President, and the Board's role and scope of responsibilities. The survey revealed a number of factors, discussed below.

The orientation for new members is not a formal process. Rather, it consists of hands-on training, with assistance from current Board members, as needed. The level and extent of orientation varies according to the new member's experience. It may involve meeting with the College President or being mentored by current members. Some of the current Board members suggest that a structured orientation would be helpful.

When asked to provide evidence of their ability to act independently from the body that appointed them, Board members cited the budget as a key example of their ability to exercise judgment independent of the Board of Chosen Freeholders, which appoints the majority of members. The Board looks to the College's administrators to help guide them with major decisions such as the budget, and while they acknowledge outside pressures on issues such as the budget, Board members report that they are able remain focused on the interests of students and staff. Decisions regarding programs and personnel were also cited as examples of their ability to act independently.

In addition to the periodic internal reviews of the bylaws and policies, members attend monthly meetings, sponsored by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC), comprised of Board members from other county colleges, Trustee Ambassadors, and Presidents. Through a self-evaluation process, members discuss the effectiveness of their objectives and obligations, with participants reporting back to their respective institutions. The meeting proceedings and newsletters keep members informed of issues and developments pertinent to governance bodies. Additionally, each county college designates a Board member to serve as a Trustee Ambassador to the NJCCC. Ambassadors meet regularly with state legislators and congressional delegation members to promote the interests of the state's county colleges. Ambassadors also serve as NJCCC liaisons, providing state-wide updates to their respective Boards.

Board Relations with Campus Constituencies

The Board looks for data to support their decisions and interacts primarily with the President and other executives at the College. Little interaction with students is reported, which they view as unfortunate, but they see their role as one that supports initiatives that promote students and staff. There is no direct interaction between the Board and the College Assembly; however, the Board does receive College Assembly recommendations.

Board members' standing and ad-hoc committee responsibilities provide them with opportunities to work with various administrators. Interaction with faculty occurs primarily through faculty presentations to the Board. Based on their interactions with various members of the campus community, Board members feel that morale is high. Board members regularly attend College convocations, art show openings, and similar public events.

Despite the current economic climate, Board members report that there is much to be proud of, but some feel that accomplishments are not promoted enough and that the Board should do more to address this issue.

The Board of Trustees provides final approval for new academic programs, personnel, and financial matters through various standing committees. Members emphasize their fiduciary responsibility and believe that the Board should not have a role in the-day-to-day functioning of the College. As they see it, setting policy and long range planning are the Board's responsibilities through collaborative work with the administration on the core plans, with a focus on the mission of student success. They recognize that the responsibility for daily operations rests with the President, administrators, faculty, and staff. The MCC President has confirmed the Board's position, indicating that the trustees have not attempted to involve themselves in the daily operations of the College. Of course, with regard to major decisions, the President will reach out to the Board for input and then discuss with them her decision.

Selection of College President

Members reported unequivocally that the Board takes ownership of the process of selecting and appointing the College President. As set forth in section 4.2, Article IV of the bylaws, the responsibility of the Board is "to set qualifications, appoint, and fix the compensation and term of office of President of the College who shall be the executive officer and an ex officio member of the Board." The current chairperson of the Board of Trustees chaired the selection committee for the current President, with the final candidates interviewed by the entire Board of Trustees. During the presidential search, open forums were held at which the campus community had an opportunity to hear the final candidates speak and participate in a question and answer session. The selection process is evaluated and revised, if needed, as part of the annual review of the bylaws.

Personnel Manuals and Job Equity

Personnel handbooks are updated as needed and distributed to the appropriate individuals. Management handbooks are updated regularly and given to each administrator at the start of service to the College. Full-time faculty handbooks are updated on a yearly basis and distributed each year. A handbook for adjunct faculty is periodically updated. Handbooks for confidential employees are currently being updated and will be distributed upon completion. While Teamsters, American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) do not have handbooks, their contracts are updated regularly and are available online at the New Jersey Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) website under the Public Sector Contracts section at <http://www.perc.state.nj.us/publicsectorcontracts.nsf>

A comprehensive assessment of all administrative positions was conducted from 2003 to 2007 by an outside consulting firm. A total of 122 positions were reviewed and rated based on six factors: 1. education, 2) knowledge and experience, 3) initiative, judgment and job complexity, 4) management, 5) budgeting or technical skills, and 6) interpersonal contacts. Based on the results, some positions were adjusted in terms of salary and level.

Administrators had the right to appeal the results of their rating if they desired. Of the 50 positions that were changed as part of the appeal process, 21 were upgraded while two were downgraded, with no negative impact on the individuals in those positions. Job descriptions are written using a standardized format and are maintained in the Human Resources Department. All job descriptions are reviewed for compliance with all policies and regulations before posting.

The College Assembly

The College Assembly is the only forum at MCC that has mandated representation from all campus constituencies. As a governing body, the College Assembly is responsible for making recommendations to the President concerning academic, student, and other College affairs. Recommendations include changes in curriculum, approval of new academic programs, and academic standards proposals and modifications. The following standing task forces are currently in place to conduct the business of the College Assembly:

- Academic Standards
- Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities
- Campus Diversity
- Campus Life
- Community Concerns
- Curriculum
- Educational Resources
- Bylaws

Charges to the College Assembly task forces may be submitted by any member of the campus community, including faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Task force functions include conducting studies, making recommendations, and reporting, informing, and advising the College Assembly on matters related to the operation of the College. Through a majority vote of the College Assembly, task forces may be created, modified, or dissolved to ensure continued and efficient operation of the Assembly. College Assembly charges, recommendations, membership, minutes and the annual report of the chairperson are available through the Middlesex County College web site at <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/assembly/control.cfm/ID/2659>

The bylaws and policies are sufficient for the effective operation of the College Assembly. If at any time it is determined that the bylaws are not adequate, per 1.0200, Article II of the bylaws, the Assembly retains the prerogative to modify any part of the bylaws for the purposes of fulfilling the responsibilities of the College Assembly. The Bylaws Task Force is currently reviewing the 2009 – 2010 bylaws in order to make recommendations that reflect changes to the College's organizational structure. Current College Assembly membership is comprised of five deans, seven chairpersons/directors/administrators, 17 faculty representatives, 12 student representatives, and five support staff representatives. In order to maintain proportional representation, the distribution of members may change, pending the recommendation of the Bylaws Task Force.

Students have a voice in the College Assembly in three ways. Students are nominated and elected for a one-year term through the Division Councils and serve as voting

members of the College Assembly. Through nominations by the Division Councils and the Dean of Enrollment and Student Services, students are also elected to serve one-year terms on the various task forces. Finally, during the Recognition and Hearing from the Public portion of the monthly College Assembly meetings, which are open to the public, all students are welcome to voice concerns, ask questions, and share observations regarding matters within the purview of the College Assembly.

Additionally, the newly formed Student Government Association held elections for officers at the end of the spring 2010 semester and finalized its constitution that fall. Those elected have taken office and will serve a one year term for the 2010 – 2011 academic year. The Association has been holding meetings and will pass resolutions and forward them on to the College Assembly and appropriate offices and departments for further review and consideration.

Recommendations:

- Consideration should be given to the establishment of a structured orientation for new Board of Trustees members
- Make personnel handbooks available electronically via the College intranet, along with notifications of handbook updates.

Standard Five: AdministrationOrganizational Structure

The College's executive organizational structure is relatively flat, with a president, two vice presidents, and three executive directors (two report to the president, one to a vice president). Organization charts for the past three years may be found in Appendix E.

The impetus for modifications to the MCC organizational structure came from a number of sources. For example, the Finance Department requested changes in the duties and titles of several positions in order to better meet ever increasing financial accountability and audit requirements and to improve the efficiency of financial operations. The position of controller was re-established in 2006, requiring a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA) who is primarily responsible for financial matters and leadership of the finance area. A vacancy presented an opportunity to further review operations and adjust positions, and a Director of Accounting Services position, requiring a CPA license, was created to increase staffing in the areas of financial accountability and reporting. The value of these modifications is evidenced by the timeliness and accuracy of the audits, reviews, and other reports filed with various agencies.

Over the past five years, many changes have involved the College's academic structure with the number of academic departments reduced from 21 to 15. These changes were made with the objectives of encouraging cooperation between related disciplines, enhancing efficiency by reducing costs, and improving services provided to students. The effectiveness of these modifications can be illustrated by looking at two recent department mergers.

In 2006 the College's two engineering technology departments, Electrical and Mechanical/Civil Construction, were merged into one. As with most of the combinations, this was done when one of the department chairs retired. Students, who often take courses offered by both of the former departments, now have the resource of a single chair and unified faculty from which to seek academic and career advice. There was also a significant financial savings in the elimination of the chair's salary. Redundant support staff were placed elsewhere at the College where there were open positions, providing additional savings.

Similarly, this past year the Accounting and Legal Studies and the Business Administration and Management departments merged after a retirement. Besides the budgetary savings to the College that the merger created, this again enabled students to have a more cohesive structure from which to obtain needed information for class offerings and career advisement.

Faced with reduced allocations and increasing enrollment, the College has made changes in the administrative structure designed to increase efficiency and reduce costs, without adversely affecting student learning. The College has thus far accomplished these dual objectives as evidenced by a steady and significant increase in the number of graduates and a slight increase in the average GPA over the past five years. The College will continue to seek to optimize its organizational structure.

Average Degree GPA for Students Graduated in Past Five Fiscal Years

| Fiscal Year | Number of Degrees/Certs. | Average Degree GPA |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 2006 | 1,037 | 3.12 |
| 2007 | 1,083 | 3.10 |
| 2008 | 1,107 | 3.14 |
| 2009 | 1,166 | 3.13 |
| 2010 | 1,473 | 3.18 |
| Total | 5,866 | |

Administrative Staff

Over the last ten years, the number of students enrolled in fall semesters increased 28.0%; full-time enrollment rose to 57.5% in fall 2009 from 46.8% ten years ago. In fall 2000, the College offered degree or certificate programs in 38 areas; by fall 2009 that number had increased to 44. As a result of increases in the total student population in general, and in younger full-time and minority students in particular, the College expanded a number of services.

- Added new faculty and staff members to some departments
- Provided more services with the same number of personnel in other departments
- Extended service hours to include evenings and weekends

At the executive and managerial levels, positions are added or eliminated based on a frequent evaluation of needs, costs, and effectiveness. For instance, the number of vice presidents, deans, department chairs, and directors has been recently reduced. During this period of uncertain state and county budget support, the College has systematically pared back the administrative cost associated with the delivery of education programs and student services, and administrative positions have been eliminated or combined to maximize College resources. Where there were 60 Executive/Administrative/Managerial (EAM) employees five years ago, out of 582 full time employees, there are now 55 EAM of 569 full time employees. While modest, this reduction was implemented during a time of increasing enrollment.

Where there were six academic and student affairs divisions previously within the College's administrative structure, there are now four. In this reorganization, academic departments were either moved to different divisions or eliminated. For example, the Office Administration Department was eliminated and the English as a Second Language department was combined with the Modern Language department.

Changing student demographics have dictated changes at the College. For example, more students who have just graduated from high school require developmental coursework. Specifically, in fall 2005, 72% of new students needed to take at least one developmental course, compared to 78% in fall 2009. Since students who fail developmental courses are more likely to drop out than students who either do not need such courses or who successfully complete them, the College has expanded services by creating a First Year Experience Department which coordinates and supports most all aspects of a student's first

year at the College. Headed by a director and initially funded by a Title III grant, the Department has now been institutionalized. With an increase in responsibility and expansion of services, the First-Year Experience and the Johnson Commons Learning Center has added two full-time positions and 14 part-time positions

Administrators are evaluated annually by their immediate supervisors. Depending upon the job title, the evaluation is based on 15 performance factors, with “needs improvement,” “meets requirements,” and “exceeds requirement” as grading criteria. Following a Rating Guide Chart, these grades are summarized to come up with an overall performance rating. In addition, the progress made towards previously established goals are reviewed, new or follow up goals are then established for the successive year. Employees are given the opportunity to provide comments on the same form.

This evaluation is flexible enough to allow each division and department to align the assessment of the unit with the evaluation of its personnel. This allows the supervisors to determine if the effectiveness of the staff leads to the effectiveness of the unit as a whole.

Hiring and Training

In 2002 a manual regarding hiring procedures was approved and is periodically updated to guide those responsible for hiring new employees. Authorized positions are posted within the College and sometimes publicly advertised. On the College website, available positions are posted under the Human Resources (HR) section. The College often uses other Internet tools to market open positions, such as www.higheredjobs.com and www.njherc.com. When appropriate, additional media outlets, such as newspaper and professional publications, may be used to solicit qualified candidates.

The HR department works closely with the department conducting the hiring to ensure that it is performed in accordance with stated practices and affirmative action guidelines.

Applications and resumes are collected by the HR department and then transferred to a selection committee for review and recommendations.

Members of the HR department then, check listed references, collect the candidate’s official transcripts, run criminal background inquiries as needed, and review the overall credentials to ensure that the successful candidate meets the required qualifications. Every hiring decision is reviewed by the EEO/Civil Rights Compliance Officer before it is submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Training and orientation for new administrative employees is primarily done by their supervisors. Training includes the review of policies, operations, and procedures of the specific departments, programs, and offices. In some instances, manuals and handouts are provided. New employee orientation is offered by the HR department as a College-wide training program in addition to in-person sexual harassment training sessions. The College is presently evaluating online sexual harassment training software. Orientation and training are also offered in FERPA, leadership skills and departmental specific computer software utilized in the College’s operations. In a survey of the EAM of the College conducted in December 2009, only one-third of the respondents said that they have a training program for new administrators and 26% were not aware of any type of training/orientation program at all. As

such, it is recommended that an administrator-specific training/orientation program be created and mandated for all newly hired administrative employees.

Continuing training and development opportunities are available to employees, both on and off campus. In addition to sexual harassment training, the College has sponsored professional development opportunities in the areas of college-wide computer software systems and team building. In the survey noted above, employees indicated that they have attended meetings, workshops, and conferences sponsored by professional organizations and associations and have participated in online seminars. The Educational Opportunity Fund offers state-wide management training programs for directors and assistant directors. In addition, MCC provides a tuition waiver program for employees seeking professional development through courses offered by the College.

That survey also revealed that while approximately 50% of those responding knew of continuing training and development opportunities available to them, the other 50% said they were not aware of such opportunities. Based on these responses, a more effective approach to promoting these training opportunities should be instituted.

Support Staff

More than half of those responding to the 2009 survey stated that they had sufficient clerical assistance. Thirty-five percent believed they did not. Based on the responses received, a more formal assessment of the need for additional clerical staff is warranted.

The performance of clerical/support staff is evaluated annually by their supervisors. Ten identified performance factors are evaluated with ratings ranging from “Excellent” to “Unsatisfactory.” An “Overall Rating” is given as a summary of the general performance. Areas in need of improvement are addressed, and goals established for the future are identified. Staff members review the evaluation with the supervisor and comments accordingly. This method of evaluating staff performance has been in effect for several years with minor changes made as needed and has proven to be satisfactory.

Qualifications and Activities of the President

In 2004, after the retirement of the previous President was announced, the Board of Trustees conducted an extensive search for the best person to lead the institution towards its stated mission and goals. As part of that search, open forums were held to give the campus community the opportunity to hear the finalists speak and participate in a question and answer session. Dr. Joann La Perla-Morales was appointed and the Board of Trustees has since renewed her contract for an additional five years based on her proven performance, education, and experience.

The President has an Ed. D. from Columbia University and 35 years of experience in higher education, with 27 years in leadership positions. At the time of her appointment, she presided over an operating budget of more than 57 million dollars, 212 full-time faculty members, 98 administrators, 293 support staff, and other part-time employees. Since the President’s appointment to Middlesex County College, her community involvement has been extensive and diverse. She serves on the Boards of a wide range of community organizations, including

New Brunswick Tomorrow, New Jersey Community Colleges Consortium for Workforce Development, New Jersey Technology Council, the United Way of Central New Jersey, New Jersey ACE-NET, New Jersey Technology Council, Raritan Bay Medical Center, and the Edison Arts Society. Dr. La Perla-Morales was appointed to the State Ethics Commission in January 2010. She has been the recipient of several honors over the past few years:

- 2010 Central New Jersey Women in Business Award
- Women of Distinction 2008 by Making It Possible to End Homelessness (MIPH)
- Woman of Achievement Award 2008 by the Executive Women of New Jersey
- Community Leader of Distinction 2007 by the Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Women of Distinction in Education 2007 by the Girl Scouts of Delaware/Raritan

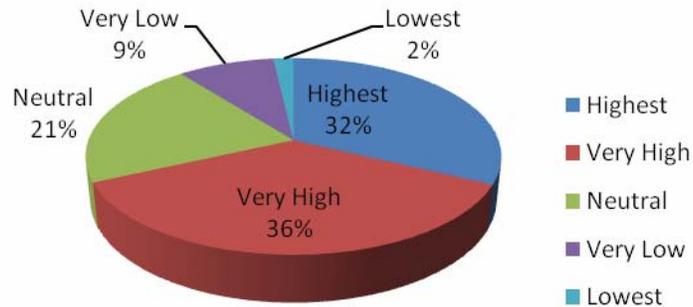
Administrative Information System

The College's administrative information systems consist of frequently upgraded hardware, software, and services that support all administrative and academic activities. The systems' major components are as follows:

- A main frame database system – *Colleague* – is located in a secure location at the Office of Information Technology. It supports information services related to students, faculty, courses, facilities, finances, and financial aid.
- A web portal service hosts the College's InfoNet, which is only available to the campus community. It also hosts the College Internet website which is accessible to the general public.
- A Campus Cruiser portal service supports faculty and students with course-related issues such as grades, course evaluations, communication between instructors and students, etc. It is also a communication and information-sharing platform for students and employees regarding news, clubs, and committees.
- An email service supports daily communication for employees on and off campus.
- A Help Desk service supports all technology-related issues on the campus

As available technology changes, upgrades to the current software programs being used occur and new software and systems are added. Within available resources, the Department of Information Technology strives to change and evolve their services to meet the College community requirements. Several means are utilized to assess the need and effectiveness of the current systems. For example, the Help Desk service offered by the Department of Information Technology allows the campus staff to call for assistance in using a program or place a service call for repair. The types and frequency of calls received are monitored regularly and evaluated for any changes that might be needed. Additionally, technicians conducting repairs on campus routinely leave survey cards at the conclusion of their work to allow the user to respond with any comments or requests regarding their particular systems and allow the Department to assess its effectiveness.

A survey conducted of the campus employees in the spring of 2010 asked how well the College's information systems met the responder's daily work needs. Only 11% of those who responded had a negative opinion.



Recommendations:

- Create training for newly hired administrative employees.
- More widely promote on-going training for all employees.

Standard Six: Integrity

Academic Freedom

The MCC Board of Trustees Policy Book offers the following statement (Policy No. 6.10) on academic freedom:

“Faculty members shall have the freedom within their subject area to report the truth as they see it in the classroom, and to report the truth as they see it in the reports of research activities. There shall be no restraints which would impair the faculty member’s ability to present their subject matter in this context.”

Within the policy is the adoption of the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure (as amended) promulgated by the American Association of University Professors. The 1940 AAUP Statement provides that faculty members should feel free to disclose true findings from research and to speak freely and truthfully in their classrooms, without fear of censorship and/or penalty.

While on occasion there have been discussions among faculty members and between faculty members and administrators concerning the nature of academic freedom, the College is proud to report that there have been no grievances dealing with claims of deprivation of academic freedom.

The College administration and Board of Trustees may wish to consider modifying the current Academic Freedom statement or adding additional terminology that applies to exhibitions, performances, and publications (e.g. plays, art exhibitions, literary journals, and books which faculty may curate, program, or contribute to). This change would indicate that creative freedom is simply an extension of academic freedom.

Student Grievance and Appeal Process

An official student grievance process is in place, although it is clear after discussions with department chairs and deans that most complaints are handled informally. They have not noted any patterns in complaints, which cover a fairly wide area. The Dean of the Division of Arts and Sciences reported that only one percent of complaints have concerned instructors and grades, while the Dean of the Division of Professional Studies reported that there have been only four to five complaints involving employees and no more than ten grade appeals annually.

The procedure for handling student grievances may be found in the MCC College Catalog, (p. 15), the Faculty Handbook (p. 23), and in the Student Handbook (*Pathfinder*) p. 54). The policies are also available on the registrar’s page of the MCC website. All of these give students easy access to information relevant to the grievance process.

Specifically, a multi-step process moves from informal discussions with a faculty member, through oral and written appeals to the department chair, then to the dean, and finally to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. As noted above, few students avail

themselves of this process. The majority of appeals are requests for changes of academic status, which is imposed due to poor performance.

Registrar's office statistics show that in the past full academic year, a total of 1,082 academic appeals were filed, with most requesting a course substitution or waiver or a withdrawal from a course after deadline. Appeals related to grades are less typical, and the process usually begins with the student speaking with the professor or department chair.

The system in place appears to work well and adequately addresses student concerns. Perhaps grievances could be handled by the newly created positions of assistant dean, which would give students an additional opportunity to be heard and relieve the deans of some of the burden.

Hiring Procedures

Although exact formats and timing vary by bargaining unit, the College utilizes standard hiring practices. To fill a vacancy or new position, the requestor fills out a personnel requisition form. The requisition includes details about the position's title, reporting responsibility, status as a new position or replacement, bargaining unit affiliation, budget code, and other pieces of information. Once reviewed and approved by the appropriate departments, the request is forwarded to the Executive Council. If approved, the position information is forwarded to the Human Resources (HR) office for processing. The HR office prepares a job posting based on the personnel requisition form. Advertising is done according to the personnel requisition form and any bargaining unit requirement. Inquiries and applications are processed through the HR office.

The interview process varies by the type of position. Some positions utilize a search committee for the interview and selection process. The Director of HR and the Special Assistant to the President for Labor Relations present instructions to the search committees and are available for questions or other assistance. Once a candidate is selected, the documents are given to the Affirmative Action Officer for review to ensure that the College has complied with all affirmative action requirements. A criminal background check is conducted on all full-time and many part-time applicants. Finally, the candidate is recommended for hire to the Board of Trustees.

While some of the forms have changed over the years, there have been no recent substantive changes to the hiring process. Affirmative Action classifications have been updated to comply with changing state and federal laws. The Full Time Management Personnel Policy Handbook refers management employees to the Hiring Procedures Guide. The Confidential Employee Handbook requires vacancies to be posted on the College website and on bulletin boards in various buildings. Procedures for filling vacancies are included in each of the collective bargaining agreements and when a contract is renegotiated, a copy of the contract is sent to all members of the union.

Discipline and discharge procedures are covered in handbooks and Collective Bargaining Agreements. Hearings, at a number of levels, are available whenever an employee feels

aggrieved by a disciplinary action. Employees also have an opportunity to comment on any portion of a performance evaluation with which they do not agree. These comments are filed with the actual evaluation form.

The lack of any substantiated complaint/arbitration/appeal to state or federal labor/compliance agencies is a strong indication that hiring, evaluation, and termination practices are being applied fairly and impartially.

Print and Internet Publications

Printed materials produced by the College include: The College catalog, the *Pathfinder*, Community and Corporate Education mailings, as well as other recruitment materials. These include the credit brochure, admissions materials, the transfer brochure, and the NJ STARS brochure. In addition to these publications, individual departments often produce recruitment materials as well. In general, materials are high quality, attractive, and well-designed. During the past year, significant efforts have gone into improving all publications and most have been redesigned with an eye towards making them more useful to their audiences and to have consistent branding. The College's website, currently undergoing redesign, provides current and prospective students with access to the online version of the catalog, including program offerings and requirements.

A review of courses designated as general education was recently completed. This review was undertaken to ensure full transferability of the College's degree programs and to comply with New Jersey legislation dealing with transfer between the state's county and state colleges. Any inconsistencies between information in print published prior to the general education review and information on the website will be identified and corrected.

A thorough review of both printed and web-based materials reveals that the College accurately provides information pertaining to program offerings and program requirements. In addition, the recruitment and advertisement materials also reflect accurate information pertaining to program offerings and program requirements.

There is a commitment to change that will enhance the accuracy of all information released in digital form. The College has started to implement a recommendation was made by the Educational Resources Task Force during the 2008 – 2009 academic year to improve the website to become “a single source relational and free-text searchable database to feed all applications.” Consultants have been retained and web enhancements are regularly put in place. The main College web portal may be accessed at www.middlesexcc.edu

Course Offerings and Student Needs

Based on responses from the academic chairs, most courses are offered on a regular basis, with sufficient frequency so that students may complete programs in a reasonable length of time. However, the Dental Hygiene, Medical Laboratory Technology, Nursing and Radiology Programs, and upper level courses in the Media Arts area require courses that

are offered only once per year in the appropriate sequence. Occasionally, courses offered by other departments are canceled due to low enrollment.

One other exception to the perception of a reasonable completion time for a degree is that some students who need developmental education or those students who fail the first half of a two-semester course may not be satisfied with the longer time for degree completion. Either one of these scenarios may cause a student to be out of sequence or to take longer than two years to complete a program. However, neither of these situations is caused by a failure to offer courses with sufficient frequency.

With the exception of most health technology programs, where state and licensing guidelines prohibit them, exceptions are made to academic rules. For example:

- The developmental processes are currently expedited via challenge assessments, bridge programs, safety net courses, and combo courses. These alternatives may either be perceived as exceptions to academic rules or as examples of flexibility within regular rules.
- Students may transfer courses to the College to satisfy one or more requirements within their major. The decision to allow transfer credit is made by the department chair.
- Students are provided with a “Visiting Student” letter, that permits them to take specific classes at other colleges if a certain MCC class is not being offered or does not meet a student’s needs.
- A department chair may permit a student to take an independent study course supervised by the department if degree completion would be delayed by a semester or more by not doing so.
- A few departments use credit by exam for students to earn credit.

The College and Middle States

During recent convocations at the start of academic semesters, announcements were made regarding the Middle States self-study process and faculty and staff were invited to participate. Prior to the start of the fall 2009 semester, faculty sessions were held to garner input for objectives regarding MCC’s vision statement and input about measurable outcomes for the new strategic plan (2009-2012). The administration also convened an oversight committee comprised of faculty and administrators to follow the progress of the strategic plan’s implementation. Faculty meetings prior to the start of each semester have also focused on preparation for self-study.

To initiate the College’s self-study process and to prepare the *Self-Study* document, the Middle States Steering Committee Co-Chairs endeavored to enlist members from diverse constituencies on campus, including faculty, students, administrators, and staff. A call was made via an electronic announcement on the InfoNet for volunteers to participate in Work Groups. This was followed up with emails and in some cases individual telephone calls for volunteers in order to reach as broad a base of participants as possible. This request yielded 114 volunteers, all of whom were used in some capacity. This inclusivity is typical of the institution’s approach to the accreditation process.

Before any Middle States *Periodic Review Report* or *Self-Study* is finalized, there is a campus-wide call for review and campus community reaction and input at meetings. For example, a draft of the PRR was posted on the InfoNet and the College community was invited to comment on it. Members could reply via email, and the College set up an open forum in March 2006. This forum was held twice so that both day and evening students and employees could conveniently attend. A number of changes to the document were made based on the comments received.

A monthly update of the current self-study process has been included in the web publication *This Month @ Middlesex*. A separate web site, <http://infonet/middlestates/> is used for the posting of work group reports. An open forum seeking comments on those reports was held in spring 2010 and one was held in conjunction with the College's fall convocation. A campus-wide meeting to elicit feedback about the draft of the *Self-Study* was also held in late fall and this *Self-Study* integrates the campus input. Copies of recent InfoNet postings concerning calls for participation may be found in Appendix F.

With well over 130 college employees directly involved in self-study, many others in program assessment activities and in course-level assessment activities, and yet more employees responding to questionnaires, surveys, interviews, and providing access to pertinent information, institutional involvement and integrity is wide-spread, well-documented and quite apparent.

Intellectual Property Rights

At Middlesex County College, the issue of intellectual property rights is largely focused on protecting the copyrights of others. The Instructional Design and Media Services department has several publications that define copyright laws and how they relate to using copyrighted material, especially in online courses. It does not, however, have its own policy. Copyright clearance statements are posted at most copiers, and information about copyright is available. Faculty members who use non-library copyrighted materials on reserve for students for more than one semester are required to request copyright clearance. The MCC Information Technology Department posts an Acceptable Use Policy on the College website and in print (*Pathfinder*), which reads "No one shall violate copyright and/or software agreements." In most cases, this appears to be sufficient to protect copyright and intellectual property rights. However, with transformations related to new media and technology, new issues may arise.

The American Association of University Professors offers the following statement regarding Copyright, Distance Education, & Intellectual Property:

The world of higher learning is in the midst of change, often driven by technologies that are profoundly affecting the work of faculty members: they are reshaping the processes of teaching and learning, redefining the roles and authority of faculty members in organizing and overseeing the curriculum, and altering the bases for evaluating student (and faculty) performance.

The implications of these developments extend far beyond teaching and learning activities, for the new technologies are penetrating many, if not all, major facets of higher education, deeply influencing its organization, governance, and finances.

Further study should be considered by the College, including a charge to a task force of the College Assembly, to determine whether the need for a written policy regarding intellectual property rights may be in order.

Recommendations:

- Consideration should be given to modifying the current Academic Freedom statement by adding additional terminology that applies to exhibitions, performances, and publications.
- Handling student grievances should be addressed and resolved by the assistant deans, a newly created position.
- Consider a procedure that permits a small number of lightly subscribed major course offerings to run without fear of cancellation.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

History of Assessment at MCC

Middlesex County College's assessment program has evolved into a comprehensive and extensive plan that measures all aspects of College operations. Specifically, the College has developed methods to incorporate assessment of its mission, goals, and outcomes into most all aspects of its functions.

While there certainly have been attempts at assessment going back more than a decade, prior to 2000, the mainstay of assessment was outside accreditation and periodic five-year program reviews. Such an ad-hoc process lacked consistency across the campus and did not adequately engage the faculty and others in the development of quantifiable outcomes that truly measured institutional effectiveness and student success.

The process to develop a more authentic assessment program began when the College secured a Title III grant, allowing it to engage the services of Jim and Karen Nichols in 2003. Early the following year, these nationally known consultants presented a day-long workshop for faculty and administrators on the development, implementation, and use of effective program assessment. Videos of the workshops were posted on the InfoNet and follow-up meetings and contact with the consultants continued throughout 2004-2005, including attendance by two MCC administrators at a five-day workshop in summer 2004. By the end of the 2004-2005 academic year, 41 academic programs had assessment plans that included three to five educational outcomes, means of assessment, and criteria for success. Similarly, 14 service areas had generated departmental goals, chosen assessment instruments, and selected benchmarks. Samples of assessment plans, data, reports, etc. may be found in the team's resource room.

In 2005, the College's newly-appointed President, noting that many departments needed ongoing assistance, created an assessment committee made up of faculty members and administrators from academic and service areas to help department implement their assessment plans. During the next two years, there was considerable assessment activity on campus including workshops, presentations, and informational meetings. Academic and service departments continued to work on their projects throughout this period.

In spring 2007, however, the committee chairs concluded the plan in place was not sustainable, for while all departments had set measurable goals or objectives, and some had gathered and analyzed data, few had used those data to decide if change was required. It was also noted that a "culture" of assessment had not been created and that many plans were too ambitious and relied upon outside data (such as graduates' performance at transfer institutions) that was difficult or impossible to obtain.

Clearly, the College's assessment efforts up until this time cannot be judged successful since only a small percentage of the assessment projects developed during this period were completed and an even smaller number actually led to improvement. However, the College's assessment work from 2004-2007 did produce some important results that laid the groundwork for a more systematic and sustained effort. For example, every department on campus had begun to work on assessment, some formally for the very first time and assessment dialogue had become regular and ongoing across the institution.

Indeed, this discussion had evolved from 2004 when discourse focused on how to make assessment an institutional imperative to 2007 when queries centered on how to improve the College's functioning assessment program.

As noted in Standard Fourteen:

When it became apparent that the original plans were not sustainable, as assessment projects floundered because of poor planning, the College moved to a more manageable process with the aim of making assessment systematic and consistent. Quite frankly, the early mistakes and the learning that transpired from these initial efforts shaped more recent initiatives that have proven to be much more successful.

In short, assessment of the College's prior assessment efforts guided it to a significantly more productive period of data-driven self-examination that began in spring 2008 with the creation of Academic and Service Assessment Working Groups. These committees were comprised of faculty members, administrators, and staff from most academic and service departments and charged with organizing and presenting assessment training sessions, workshops, and showcases to the entire campus community. Headed by a faculty member who received a one-semester sabbatical leave and continues with six credits of release time per semester, these committees streamlined, clarified, and re-set the College's assessment efforts to ensure that its mission, goals, and outcomes were linked to all department assessment plans. This group also created an internal campus website dedicated to cataloging, assisting, and publicizing the various assessment activities on campus. This website has proven instrumental in helping the College to assess progress.

In order to include more faculty in the assessment process and focus on meaningful, yet manageable work, the Academic Working Group decided in 2008 to turn to course-level assessment. They began by examining Course Outline documents that departments had generated when seeking approval to include a course in the College Catalog. As this document is not altered unless the department wished to make substantive changes in the course, many Course Outlines had not been revisited for many years. Since the course approval process had undergone periodic change, these documents often differed in both format and content. For example, a review indicated that while some course outline documents contain general objectives (what the instructor will do) others do not. Likewise, only some "behavioral objectives" are written as student learning outcomes. Some courses list dozens of these objectives, others only a few.

One of the earliest initiatives, therefore, was to create uniformity in these documents to make them clearer, more student friendly, and more useful for assessment. As a result, a Course Abstract template was designed and posted on the assessment website. Departments were asked to re-examine the Course Outline for each of the nearly 600 academic offering and to consolidate all of the stated behavioral objectives for each course into 3-5 student learning outcomes, list the topics covered in the course, highlight prerequisites, specify elective status, and note the course coordinator on these Abstracts. Appendix G has samples of individual Course Outlines and their corresponding Course Abstracts.

This labor intensive initiative has proven successful. Every course offered by the College now has documented learning outcomes and a course abstract making assessment much

easier. To illustrate, 96% of all courses offered have assessment plans posted, and data has been collected to measure student learning outcomes for 52% of these courses.

Since the Periodic Review Report in 2006, the College has also made significant investments in both personnel and resources dedicated to assessment in addition to those already mentioned. A part-time Assessment Research Technician was hired, and, working through the office of Institutional Research, helps with data entry tasks and the monitoring of assessment activities campus-wide. In addition, three new administrative positions have been created and filled, each charged with overseeing assessments as part of his or her duties. The Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and the Assistant Deans of the Divisions of Professional Studies and Arts and Sciences are also responsible for monitoring and assisting with assessment activities.

The College has also invested in systems to make the collection and analysis of assessment data less cumbersome. A contract with Survey Monkey has been purchased, and the College is currently evaluating tools that it already owns such as Campus Cruiser and Scantron test scoring machines to help survey students, evaluate courses, assess learning outcomes, and collect data more efficiently. This has already yielded substantial results; during the past year, these tools have been used extensively for surveys and testing.

The results of the College's efforts have justified these expenditures. Campus-wide "snapshots" taken in November 2009 and January, May, and November 2010 clearly illustrate, Appendix H, the substantial results that have been generated through our present assessment program. Over 90% of all Service Departments on campus have defined their services and posted program maps, department outcomes, and service outcomes. These departments have identified 104 individual services that they offer. Service outcomes have been written for 85% of these services, and assessment plans have been generated for 68%. In addition, data has been collected to measure the success of nearly half of the services offered; the services studied include some of the most important, such as those offered by Academic Advising and the Library. In total, service departments have closed the assessment loop for 100% of the services for which data has been collected. Specifically, changes have made in the way services are delivered in 39 of the 49 services in question; the data collected for the remaining 12 (two services were assessed twice) suggested that no changes were necessary. According to the latest snapshot, departments have re-assessed 15 of the 39 services that have undergone modification based on assessment.

| Service Department Assessment Snapshots | | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| | November 2009 | January 2010 | May 2010 | November 2010 |
| Program Maps | 22% | 50% | 98% | 98% |
| Department Outcomes | 39% | 64% | 92% | 98% |
| Service Outcomes | 36% | 64% | 84% | 85% |
| Services Defined | 25% | 53% | 98% | 98% |
| Assessment Plans | 36% | 61% | 66% | 68% |
| Assessment Data | 28% | 50% | 46% | 47% |
| Use of Data | 19% | 47% | 36% | 38% |
| Successful Data | NA | NA | 11% | 18% |

Note: In the above chart, highlighted figures represent the percentage of all services while unshaded figures represent the percentages of all service departments.

| Academic Department Assessment Snapshots | | | | |
|--|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| | November 2009 | January 2010 | May 2010 | November 2010 |
| Course Learning Outcomes | 78% | 87% | 97% | 100% |
| Course Abstracts | 59% | 74% | 95% | 100% |
| Course Assessment Plans | 7% | 18% | 80% | 96% |
| Course Data | 4% | 7% | 44% | 56% |
| Program Maps | 34% | 56% | 78% | 86% |
| Program Learning Outcomes | 69% | 79% | 92% | 96% |
| Programs with Assessment Plans | 0% | 29% | 37% | 84% |
| Programs with Data | 0% | 16% | 16% | 19% |
| Programs with Plan(s) to Use Data | 0% | 16% | 15% | 16% |

As shown in the above chart, through January 2010, the College focused primarily on documenting the foundations required for the assessment of student learning, such as the presence of measurable outcomes and assessment plans. For the past year, however, it has documented departments’ success in either using the assessment data to improve how or what they teach or deciding that students are meeting the targeted learning objective thus requiring no present changes.

For example, as of November 2010, departments have collected data measuring student learning outcomes from 331 of the 592 credit courses offered by the College. After analysis, it was concluded that 34% (112) of these courses required no remedial action while data are being used to enhance 49% (163) of the others. For the remaining 10% (32), analysis is ongoing.

According to the latest snapshot, 96% of all academic programs have stated learning outcomes; departments have posted program maps for almost 90% of them, and 84% of programs have explicit assessment plans. Data has been collected for 19% of all academic programs, and departments are using the data to improve 80% of these programs. These figures would no doubt have been higher had not the College decided to first focus on course-level assessment. However, as illustrated in the above chart, the College has made significant and sustained improvement in this area. While many of these results are promising, more work needs to be done. The College must continue the current trend to ensure that departments have not only posted plans to assess all courses, programs, and services, but that they have also more fully implemented these plans.

Assessment of Institutional Mission, Goals, and Outcomes

Since the institutional objectives outlined in the College’s Mission Statement are the genesis of all assessment work, this document is reviewed every four years. The College community revised the Mission Statement in 2005 with participation of approximately 40 representatives from faculty, administration, and staff. The Mission Statement was most

recently reviewed in 2009, without change. Both the 2005 and 2009 reviews were introduced in the January State of the College addresses delivered by the President. After the initial presentation of the review, open discussions were held to gain input from the College's many stakeholders. After this assessment, the new Mission Statement was approved by the Board of Trustees.

The recent review of the Mission Statement was instrumental in developing the current strategic plan, *Pathways to Success 2009-2012*, in which the College's vision, mission, and institutional goals are clearly articulated along with the specific, measureable goals and outcomes that will help the institution achieve these standards during the next four years. In December 2008, President La Perla-Morales called for participants from the College community to serve on planning committees charged with developing the new strategic plan. As documented more fully in Standard Two, this guiding document was developed with input from the assessment that was completed on the previous strategic plan, *Planning for Success 2006-2009* as noted in *Successes...2006-2009: Highlights of Accomplishments*.

All assessment plans arise from the College's mission and goals. To illustrate this crucial connection, the College has "mapped" each of its goals and outcomes in the current Strategic Plan to the work done in each department. The President has established a Strategic Planning Steering Committee charged with monitoring and documenting the implementation of the current strategic plan. Although only in the second year of the present strategic plan, the College has already begun cataloging its progress in meeting these goals and objectives. Please see Appendix I for a sample of those activities. This early documentation has been made less cumbersome because of an assessment-based modification, specifically all institutional goals and objectives are now written as measurable outcomes.

Utilization of Existing Data

To ensure that assessment work uses MCC resources efficiently, efforts have been made to use existing data wherever possible. For example, many departments require departmental final exams or lab tests, and selected items from these instruments are used for course and program assessment. Departments that do not require a standardized final integrate assessment activities into program requirements. Departments that respond to external specialized accrediting organizations also use existing data for internal assessment purposes. These include Nursing, Dietetic Technology, Paralegal Studies, and Dental Auxiliaries Education.

On the service side, the information contained in the Colleague database is frequently mined to gather particulars to improve service. Also, national databases such as the National Student Clearinghouse are frequently consulted to gain insight into student need.

Quality of Assessment Data

The data gathered through our assessment efforts are perceived to be both accurate and forthright. Both academic and service departments, as well as the institution as a whole, have used this information to make substantive changes in what they teach, how they convey this information to their students, what services they offer, and how they

administer these services. Likewise the reliability and validity of our assessment data regularly satisfy the demands of external auditing agencies of those programs that require such outside certification. Finally, multiple measures are employed when appropriate to ensure that data are as accurate as possible.

As detailed in Appendix J and on the “Assessment @ Middlesex” website, an array of both direct and indirect measures are used in the assessment of student learning outcomes, programs, and services. For example, direct measures such as embedded questions in tests and quizzes are the most frequently employed assessment method of those measuring student learning outcomes. However, indirect measures such as surveys of students’ perceptions are also used. For example, the English Department employs student surveys, a final examination, and faculty focus groups to assess its courses.

While 64% of the course assessment plans indicate direct measures as the primary source of assessment data, those examining the performance of the service sectors have depended more heavily on indirect methods as the primary tools for assessment, although direct measures such as counts have also been employed. External evaluations, surveys, employer feedback forms, evaluation by students and faculty, graduation and transfer rates, exit interviews, and self-evaluation forms are just some of the indirect methods that have been widely used across the institution. These measures have also been improved based on assessment. For example, departments, such as CELT, Counseling, and First-Year Experience have been guided away from “satisfaction” surveys to more meaningful measures that are based on outcomes assessment including quiz questions at the end of the survey to measure whether participants have obtained the targeted outcome.

As seen, the goal of MCC’s assessment program is to make changes and improvements based upon reliable data gathered through a variety of methods and multiple measures. To date, the College can point to many successes. But as it continues its assessment efforts, the College is consistently re-evaluating its methods and examining more efficient ways to assess academic and service programs.

Assessment and Decision Making

Assessment results are shared and utilized by those responsible for the necessary improvements that need to be made based on data. These results are used to improve services and programs, thereby improving student planning and success. Budgets are reviewed annually in order to plan for additionally needed services and programs and assist departments toward moving the strategic plan forward. As noted in the discussion of Standard Three, the College has made sustained and significant efforts to support those initiatives.

For example, the College has invested in several general assessment inventories including Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) to measure student engagement. The data generated from these tools have helped the College improve. For example, the new Learning Center grew from the assessment garnered from the SENSE results while changes in the Advisement Center arose from data reported in the CCSSE.

The assessment website catalogs dozens of examples of how assessment results have been used to help MCC make substantial changes. Changes made through assessment prior to the establishment of the assessment website are documented on paper. Standard Fourteen details many of those based on the assessment of student learning outcomes. The following is a sample of those made across the institution.

The Center for the Enrichment of Learning and Teaching (CELT) has been compiling assessment data about its activities and using the results to improve its offerings since the Center's inception in September 2003. One of the most valuable sources of information have been evaluation forms completed on Faculty Professional Day, held each year before the beginning of the fall semester. Since, contractually, faculty members must attend activities on Professional Day, CELT receives assessment information from a good portion of the faculty, not only about the day's activities but also about what CELT should pursue during the upcoming academic year. For example, The Professional Day 2003 evaluation results revealed (as have assessment results thereafter) that faculty members wanted CELT to focus on using technology effectively to help increase student learning, to initiate discussions of best practices in the classroom, and to help examine students' expectations.

As a result of the assessment results received after the August 2003 Professional Day, CELT initiated activities during the 2003-2004 academic year to meet the needs expressed. These presentations included "Teaching Tips on the Research Paper" (facilitated by an MCC research librarian), "Using Small Groups and Other Collaborative Techniques in Class" (open discussion), "Effective Teaching From a Student's Perspective" (panel of student members of the honor society), "Quick and Easy Classroom Assessment" (facilitated by a member of the Biology Department), "Best Practices in a Learning-Centered Classroom" (facilitated by a History and Social Sciences Department member), "Helping Students Communicate: Activities and Strategies" (facilitated by an English Department member), and "Learning Styles and Implications for Teaching and Learning" (facilitated by three members of the Counseling and Career Services Department).

As early as 2005, the Counseling and Career Services Department was making changes based on the number of students attending resume, job search, interviewing, and cover letter workshops. As a result of this assessment, workshops were combined into more comprehensive presentations. Likewise, the Department specifically analyzed the success of its resume writing workshop and found that 100% of the resumes submitted after the workshop and a follow-up visit with a member of the professional staff met the criteria for success. However, the data indicated that only 40% of those attending the initial workshop had submitted a final version. As a result, the Department decided to stress to students that only those who submit a final resume will be able to use the Department's job placement services.

That same year, the LRC Instructional Design and Media Services Department surveyed faculty who attended training in the use of Campus Cruiser or WebCT to gauge whether these faculty had indeed made use of online technologies to enhance student learning. Of the 188 surveys received, 49% of those receiving training reported such increase usage and

71% trained by the Instructional Designer reported the same. As a result, the Department decided to make a greater effort to contact faculty regarding upcoming training events in a variety of ways.

In a 2006 report, the Admissions and Recruitment Department noted that it had surveyed 768 students attending Open House in 2004 and 2005. The 272 respondents indicated that while overall extremely satisfied with the event, only 80% were satisfied or very satisfied with the campus tour. In response to the data, the Department invited members of the Honor Society to serve as guides for the next open house and gave these guides more comprehensive training. This department also surveyed 2,243 students who had submitted an online college application between October 2004 and May 2005. Of the 119 who responded, only 73% indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with information about deciding on a major. As a result, the Department added a more direct link to the descriptions of majors on Campus Cruiser.

In the academic area, the Visual and Performing Arts Department used pre- and post-attitudinal surveys to measure the “communication apprehension” of students in twelve sections of Fundamentals of Public Speaking (SPE 121) during the spring 2006 semester. The results indicated that students “decreased their level of communication apprehension” by the end of the course, suggesting that “the development of public speaking skills knowledge builds confidence and reduces anxiety.” As a result, the Department introduced an impromptu speech assignment into the curriculum to further “enhance student confidence.” Likewise, the English Department analyzed the results of 520 reading comprehension tests taken by developmental reading students at the end of the spring 2006 semester. The data suggested that these students did not meet the benchmark set for inferential reasoning. As a result of this assessment, a more detailed follow-up was done the following year in which multiple versions of the departmental comprehension exams were examined for consistency. As shown, although the College is most proud of its assessment work since 2007, this most recent work is simply an extension built upon an extensive previous foundation.

From 2005 to 2007 all service departments worked on assessment; however, since these departments had been advised by the consultants in 2004 and again in 2005 not to use outcome language, much of this work consisted only of setting goals. One of the first changes made in the College’s most recent effort was to guide service departments to set measurable objectives and to use outcome language when composing these standards. The results of this assessment-based change can be seen in the more recent assessment work of the College’s service departments.

For example, the Academic Advising Department has been assessing the success of the New Advisor and Refresher Training courses regularly through feedback and observations, completion of participant evaluation forms, and short outcome-based quizzes taken by attendees at the end of the training course. Based on this information, the Department modifies the content and mode of this training after each semester and then reassesses these changes to gauge their effectiveness. For example, based on its assessment work, adjustments have included the stressing of the new appeals process, focusing of future

training on the most common advising errors including “mock scenarios” during Colleague training so advisors can compare their advice to the student’s actual registration, and adding material to assist the advising of developmental students, to name just a few.

More recent assessment has become even more sophisticated and meaningful. For example, in fall 2010, the department instituted a new methodology to train instructors to better advise students at New Student Orientation and those entering their second semester at the College. At the conclusion of the training sessions, attendees were given assessments designed to measure their effectiveness at advising students. The results were then compared to the data obtained from earlier training sessions geared solely for instructors of SSD-101. The data suggested that instructors who attended the more recent training exhibited a strong understanding of the material presented, and that their ability to correctly advise students was stronger than those who received previous training. The report outlining this study hypothesizes that the greater emphasis and time devoted to specific topics, and the increase in the number of specific examples used made the new advising program “superior” to the previous method. The department plans on replicating this study to confirm their results.

Over the past few years, the Department of Counseling and Career Services has also used assessment results to adjust the way it provides outreach and deliver services to the College community. Students attending “transfer instant decision days” on campus were given a survey to assess how they learned about the event and to discover what other transfer services they had used on campus. Of the 112 students who completed a survey upon registration for the event, 77% indicated that they had learned about this service via Campus Cruiser, and many had also used the College transfer website as a “transfer resource.” Thus the Department decided to use Campus Cruiser and other electronic communication to more effectively promote events and services offered by the department.

New student orientation has also made assessment-driven, data-based changes. For example, data gathered in the fall 2009 semester indicated that while 2,921 students had attended orientation sessions, 365 students who did not take the placement test until the week prior to or even during the first week of the semester were not able to participate in the orientation program. As a result, the following year two orientation sessions were held at the beginning of the semester to accommodate students who registered late or who did not attend earlier orientations. Likewise, students were given outcome-based quizzes at the end of orientation that indicated that students “did not fully understand course and graduation requirements.”

Specifically a majority did not understand the academic value of developmental courses, and nearly 30% thought that graduation would occur in two years, rather than when they had completed all necessary courses. As a result of this assessment, developmental education was emphasized during the next orientation. An additional informational slide was included in the presentation and student development professionals focused on this topic. Likewise, orientation leaders spent more time explaining the requirements for graduation. When these areas were reassessed the following year, it was found that students understanding of the purpose and credit-value of developmental education

courses had increased nearly 20% (from 53.8% to 63.2% correct answers). Likewise, the percentage of students who erroneously believed that graduation would occur in two years decreased over 10% (from 28.9% to 25.4%). Orientation continues to utilize these new features.

The assessment of student learning outcomes for Student Success (SSD 101), a course required of all students taking two or more developmental classes, provides an example of assessment that is integrated, varied, and productive, and that bridges the work of academic and student support departments. For example, several departments such as the Library, Counseling and Career Services, and Academic Advising provide presentations to support SSD students' efforts to achieve course learning outcomes. When course-level assessment data is collected, it is fed back to these service departments so that they may use it to improve their component of the class and ultimately their services. Specifically the data gleaned from a faculty focus group (November 2009), concerning student performance on multiple choice questions each semester, and more recently pre- and post-tests (fall 2010) have been shared across departments. A variety of direct (presentation rubric, multiple choice questions) and indirect (focus group, self-assessment questions, focused team meetings) have been used to gather useful data.

A recent assessment shows that although a majority of students were able to successfully demonstrate achievement of many of the outcomes (100% scored three or higher on the presentation rubric and 93% correctly answered questions about time management and the study environment), there is definitely room for improvement in other areas (only 67% correctly answered a goal setting question, and 60% did the same for a question on research articles). In addition to this direct evidence, student self-assessment data indicates they are only minimally confident with their research (74-79%) and interpersonal (74-78%) abilities

As a result of this assessment, there have been a number of significant changes made to the SSD-101 course. As first steps, voluntary training for SSD faculty was offered and teaching resources were shared on the department Campus Cruiser site. This unfortunately did not lead to significant improvement. Teaching faculty in the History and Social Sciences Department (where the course is housed) then decided to develop a standardized syllabus. Key service areas such as the Library, Counseling and Career Services, and Academic Advising were involved in the process. In addition to assignments targeting research and interpersonal skills, all sections of the course are now required to attend Library and Counseling and Career Services Department presentations. SSD professors are also now required to attend advising training so they may assist students with the registration process. Online tutorials showing students how to use the library databases, which provide general information about the transfer process and specific advising information, were created for use by faculty in the classroom. A more specific Campus Cruiser website for SSD faculty only was also created to allow for effective communication about the course.

The Tutoring Center also assesses students' satisfaction with the services they provide every semester, and summarizes the findings over each academic year. Based upon data

from 2008-2009, more tutors were hired for the 2009-2010 academic year to cover several key academic areas (Accounting, Chemistry, and Physics) and to provide greater availability for students during the week. Survey results from the 2009-2010 academic year report greater student satisfaction with these services and increased student success. Students who had used the Tutoring Center after receiving an unsatisfactory midterm grade in the fall 2006, 2007, and 2008 semesters, passed their courses with a grade of “C” or better at a rate approximately 20% higher than those students who did not make use of these services.

The Finance Department has utilized several surveys to assess the need for improvement. For instance, after analyzing the increasing traffic in the Bursar’s Office, a change was implemented extending the hours of the office during high traffic times. Another example from this department relates to the use of the Datatel Colleague system for ordering supplies, materials, and accessing budget information. Assessment results indicated that training was needed for users of the ordering and budgeting systems. Using a pre- and post-training assessment, it was found that a new Colleague training program significantly improved the users’ knowledge and abilities. Therefore, the department now offers training courses on a regular basis.

Evidence that assessment is indeed a College-wide commitment is illustrated in work by the Facilities Maintenance Department which assessed the way in which work was assigned and through a monthly examination of work orders was able to more effectively manage its manpower. One example of many such data-driven adjustments occurred in November 2009 when the Department found that there was a backlog of 225 hours in construction and only 75 in painting. As a result of this assessment, two painters were shifted to construction duty. Likewise, the Department monitors the amount of recycled materials collected monthly. While the data indicated that the College was recycling at an above average rate when compared to other community colleges, the Department decided to increase signage and provide additional recycling containers in an effort to increase recycling on campus.

Looking towards the future, the College has committed to a schedule of activities to ensure that assessment will be ongoing. For example, Assessment snapshots will continue regularly; these summaries have proven effective not only in charting assessment progress, but also, since they highlight leaders and laggards in each category, in motivating departments to improve. Also, the College is participating, as the sole community college representative, in a Carnegie Grant sponsored program that allowed it to use the Community College Learning Assessment to test incoming students in fall 2010. This cohort is scheduled to be retested in 2012, and the data will be used to gauge students’ success in meeting general-education learning objectives. Also under this grant, representatives of the College will partner with those from Rutgers University and William Paterson College to generate rubrics that may be used by all three schools to assess general education goals.

Finally, the College will continue to explore methods to improve the way it collects reliable data. For example, in November 2010 a group of service departments including Financial Aid, Student Activities, Counseling and Career Services, Tutoring, the Library,

and Academic Advising, collaborated on a single 25-question student survey that replaces a plethora of individual requests for information. This comprehensive survey is scheduled to be distributed again in May 2011, December 2011, and May 2012.

The College's commitment to assessment and perhaps more important the Community's appreciation of the value of such self-examination, has grown dramatically over the last decade as evidenced by the enormous amount of assessment work already completed. This growth occurred as a result of an extended learning curve during which much work was done and significant resources expended. While the realization that the College would have to document its assessment progress in this self-study no doubt served as added motivation, the results of the College's assessment journey are both clear and promising, and while the College still has work to do in this area, the programs, personnel, and procedures in place posit it well for continued, substantive growth.

Recommendations:

Over the last two and a half years, Middlesex County College has made significant progress in its campus-wide assessment efforts. However, more work remains to be done in both the academic and service areas of the College.

- Determine the sufficiency of the level of assessment staffing and take further action as needed.
- While continuing the current efforts, begin to emphasize the quality and importance of the College's assessment efforts, not just the quantity of it.

Standard Eight: Student Admissions and RetentionAdmissions

In 2006, the reorganization of various offices and services signaled Middlesex County College's rethinking of student experiences with regard to admissions and retention issues. Enrollment Management is now partnered with Student Support Services to function as a cohesive unit and utilize technology in a strategic way for admissions, advisement, registration, financial aid, and other communications. The Office of Admissions on the main campus is headed by a Director/Assistant Dean of Enrollment and Student Support Services who in turn reports to the Dean of Enrollment and Student Support Services. The Directors of the Perth Amboy and New Brunswick Centers report directly to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.

The organizational structure of the MCC Admissions Office is based on clear lines of authority and responsibility. The Director of Admissions/Assistant Dean of Enrollment and Student Support Services directs all aspects of the Admissions office and oversees day to day operations, including all recruitment initiatives, print and electronic communications, student database and imaging systems. In addition, the Director/Assistant Dean and the Dean of Enrollment and Student Support Services share responsibility for planning and implementing Middlesex County College admissions policies.

The primary goals of the admissions process at MCC are to attract, admit, and retain students. The College catalog and website document all MCC admissions policies and procedures. MCC accepts applications to its degree and certificate programs from anyone who holds a high school diploma or G.E.D. and other adults over 18 who can demonstrate an ability to benefit from the collegiate educational experience. There are also programs for students who are younger than 18 and are currently enrolled in a secondary school and for home schooled students. Some programs have specific entrance requirements as well as limited seating, and although applications for most programs are reviewed on a rolling basis, several programs begin during certain semesters and/or have application deadlines.

College admissions counselors visit high schools in the county and offer information sessions and on-site visits at least twice a year. While the goal of the information session is to provide general information on admissions procedures, programs and majors of the College, the on-site visit is also used to encourage potential students to complete the admissions application. The College website is another valuable recruitment tool that helps students easily navigate many of the Colleges offices, departments, and services. The Admissions office web page provides information on admissions, testing, financial aid, and the honors program as well as academic programs, to prospective, current, transfer, and international students and to high school counselors and the community. MCC has successfully made the transition to a web-based admissions application which not only makes the application secure, but also facilitates speed and accuracy of the application process. Open House programs, community events, and mailings are other ways the College creates awareness in the community about admissions procedures, policies, and programs.

MCC administrators, department chairpersons, deans, and the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs regularly review course catalogs. Through technology and shared files, the quality and accuracy of the last two published catalogs improved significantly. Previously, the catalogs were published every two years with a supplement each academic year to inform the College community about changes. MCC now prints a three-year catalog and issues comprehensive supplements during the second and third year. To enhance its image and remain competitive, MCC has invested in a number of innovative strategies. Under the leadership of its recently hired Executive Director of Marketing and College Relations, MCC is working with a consultant to create a more user friendly and attractive website that will enhance and complement the image of MCC and meet the “touch of a button” needs of the millennial generation. The newly redesigned website will ensure that the information is consistent in format and content with other MCC publications and recruitment materials.

Services for Underprepared Students

A large number of programs and services are in place to assist underprepared students achieve expected learning goals. These include testing, developmental courses, the Educational Opportunity Fund program, the Minority Student Affairs Program, and English as a Second Language courses as well as programs offered by Counseling and Career Services.

Testing Center

In an open admissions environment, it is essential to discern student learning needs as well as their ability to benefit from higher education. The College seeks to accomplish this through its assessment and placement process. Upon admission to the College, students who wish to matriculate or take math or English courses are required to take assessment tests in those subjects if their SAT scores are not above 530 for Math and 540 on the Verbal test. The College uses Accuplacer as its placement test to measure students’ reading, writing, and mathematical skills, and a writing sample is hand-scored by a holistic reading team. The results, along with other information, are used to place students in courses appropriate to their level. More than 75% of the incoming MCC students take at least one developmental course. MCC’s testing policies, procedures, and interpretation of test scores are well-documented and followed consistently. Appendix K provides the guidelines that are used for appropriate placement of students.

Beginning in fall 2006, MCC participated in meetings with New Jersey community college testing administrators, as well as English and mathematics department representatives, and recommended a set of common placement scores that designate student placement into either developmental or credit-bearing courses. As a result, New Jersey county colleges implemented common placement scores in fall 2009. The New Jersey Council of County Colleges is currently conducting a study with the College Board to determine the validity of these new cut scores.

In order to provide students with the best academic path for achieving college level skills in reading, writing, math computation and elementary algebra, MCC also offers placement test

workshops and links to test preparation websites. Monthly workshops are publicized during student orientations and on the College website.

Developmental Courses

At MCC, the number of students required to complete developmental courses before enrolling in traditional college-level courses continues to grow. As an institution that welcomes underprepared students, the College recognizes its obligation to prepare these students with the skills they need to succeed in college courses. With that goal in mind, the College offers developmental courses in reading, writing, and mathematics to fulfill its primary mission of teaching all students. See Standard Eleven for a full discussion of the developmental programs. Additional support in the campus Learning Center is provided to students enrolled in developmental courses.

Educational Opportunity Fund

The MCC Educational Opportunity Program (EOF) is an essential program that supports “at risk students” and it has been successful in generating high retention rates for students who would otherwise be at risk. Serving more than 500 students each year, the program prepares students before they start at MCC, monitors their progress, and provides support services in academic, financial, and social areas. MCC EOF students receive financial aid for up to six semesters to complete their degrees. The EOF program accepts students with proven financial and academic deficiencies who have been identified as having potential, as well as the ability and determination to be successful in an academic environment. According to a recent report from the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, eighty-nine percent of Middlesex County College EOF participants made academic progress and moved toward graduation while 75% complete all credits they attempted each semester. Appendix L is the *FY 2008 EOF Program Performance Criteria* for Middlesex County College from the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education,).

The Minority Access to the Professions Scholars Program

Serving 75 to 90 students per semester, the Minority Access to the Professions Scholars Program (MAPS) helps underprepared students meet their educational goals by engaging them for success. Tools include support and peer mentoring/tutoring to insure student retention and success. In fall 2008, nine peer mentors met with 86 students for a total of 208 student contacts and in fall 2009, ten peer mentors met with 157 students, for a total of 404 student contacts, indicating an 80% increase in student participation. The number of students using the quiet study area increased 80% (79 to 143), and computer lab usage increased by 36%, (1,942 to 2,649) from fall 2008 to fall 2009.

English as a Second Language Programs

MCC offers English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to provide students with necessary language skills as they pursue an education and a career. Please see Standard Eleven for a detailed discussion of ESL.

Tutoring Center

The Tutoring Center provides free academic support for MCC students on a drop-in basis. Academic support is offered in a variety of subjects, such as Math, Biology, Chemistry,

Physics, History, Psychology, Sociology, Accounting, Business, Computer Science, Economics, and Statistics.

Due to student requests in 2008-2009, the Tutoring Center increased the coverage and number of tutors in accounting, chemistry, and physics for 2009-2010 and is again seeking to add tutors in those subject areas as well as in Biology during the current academic year. Please see Appendix M for copies of the Tutoring Services Assessment Plan documents for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.

The Institutional Research Department analyzed final grades for students who had received an “F” or “D” midterm grade in the fall 2006, 2007, and 2008 semesters. The data indicated that students who had used the Tutoring Center after receiving their midterm grades had a greater likelihood (14 – 22%) of passing their courses with a grade of “C” or better than those students who did not.

MCC Counseling and Career Services

In keeping with the College’s mission, the Department of Counseling and Career Services strives to help the College’s diverse students reach their fullest potential for growth and success through a wide range of offerings which include: academic, career, personal, and transfer counseling. Specialized services are also available for students with disabilities, international, African-American, Hispanic, and ESL students, as well as returning adults and veterans. Also, department services support the MCC mission by providing students, faculty, and staff with a variety of academic and personal workshops. Please see Appendix N for an overview of department services..

Utilizing Retention and Success Data

The past decade has been one of positive change for MCC regarding retention and success issues. Through on-going assessment and self-studies, several significant realignments and initiatives were purposefully planned and successfully implemented. These include First-Year Experience, Bridge programs, the MCC- New Brunswick Summer Scholars program, and New Student Orientation.

First-Year Experience

Research indicates that First-Year Experience programs are relevant and necessary for higher education student retention. In 2001, support from a Title III grant allowed for the creation of a director of the First-Year Experience; in 2006 this position was institutionalized by the College. The First-Year Experience (FYE) is charged developing collaborative academic and student affairs programs that address first-year student success including transition from high school to college, academic support services, and student engagement. The initiative successfully implements integrative programs and activities designed to create the optimal environment for student retention and success. Programs include the MCC Summer Bridge Programs and New Student Orientations.

Bridge Programs

In a 2007 study, the College found that students testing into remedial programs with a score of just two to three points below the cut score are better served when given the opportunity to complete a short-term intensive course rather than a full semester of remediation. The MCC Bridge Program invites students to attend Bridge courses in mathematics, reading, and

writing, based on their placement test scores. Week-long courses are held during July and August. After successfully passing a Bridge course, students may test out of remediation and begin enrolling in courses that carry graduation credit. Since 2007, approximately 383 students have enrolled in one or more Bridge courses. The Bridge program has been successful in remediating at least one developmental course for about 97% of students in the program. As noted in Appendix O, “Retention Rate of Bridge Students,” over 92% of the 2008 fall Bridge cohort returned to MCC in spring 2009 and 84% returned in fall 2009 compared to 84% non-Bridge students in spring 2009 and 66% non-Bridge students in fall 2009.

The MCC-New Brunswick High School Summer Scholars Program

In 2009, the College initiated the MCC-New Brunswick High School Summer Scholars Program, funded by Johnson & Johnson and the nonprofit New Brunswick Tomorrow. Through this project, offered exclusively to graduating seniors from the urban New Brunswick school district, 20 students are invited to “jump start” their college course work by enrolling and successfully completing reading, writing, and mathematics enrichment courses in order to reduce the number of or need for further developmental courses. This endeavor, similar to the MCC Summer Bridge program, is expected to expand during the coming years.

New Student Orientation

The First-Year Experience Office has partnered with the Office of Student Activities, The Center for Academic Advising, Counseling and Career Services, and the Registrar’s Office, and launched a comprehensive new student orientation. It includes a student development workshop, advising, and registration in recognition that one of a student’s primary goals when coming to college for the first time is to seek advisement for registration. MCC students are often first generation college students who have little experience in navigating application and enrollment processes and whose knowledge and understanding of key concepts, such as registration and financial aid may be limited.

Previously, orientations were held during July and August for the fall semester and in January for the spring semester. New Student Orientations for incoming students are now held between April and September for the fall semesters and from November to January for spring semesters (81 sessions took place for fall 2009; 22 sessions for spring 2010 and 89 sessions for fall 2010). Approximately 2,900 students have participated in New Student Orientation for each of the fall 2009 and 2010 enrollment periods. Surveys taken after New Student Orientations found that 89.5% of participants were able to identify key campus resources, 82.5% could identify courses related to their program of study, and 53.8 % correctly identified how developmental courses assist them with their degree requirements.

Financial Aid

The Financial Aid Office works closely with Admissions Office and they often collaborate in presenting MCC information to high schools, community and business groups. The Financial Aid Office provides students with comprehensive information about federal and state financial aid and grants as well as student loans and scholarships.

The financial aid process for new and continuing students is explained in the financial aid section on the College's website. New and continuing students must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on line at www.fafsa.ed.gov to be considered for federal and state aid. The College recommends a priority deadline date of May 1 so that students are assured of receiving an award notice prior to the start of the new academic year or term. A FAFSA renewal reminder is sent to current students via MCC Campus Cruiser email. Each January, the Federal Aid Application processing center forwards renewal notifications to current financial aid recipients. Also, the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (NJHESAA) forwards two renewal notices to prior year applicants through traditional mail.

Federal aid renewal students who provide email addresses on their previous academic year records are sent renewal reminder emails for the next year. Renewal students whose records do not have email addresses are mailed renewal reminder letters for the upcoming year. If their previous year's transaction was in Spanish, students will receive renewal reminders in Spanish. The Financial Aid Office utilizes periodic Colleague reports and imports federal and state agency data to identify potential financial aid applicants. Files are prepared and identified students are mailed financial aid guidelines and due date information through Campus Cruiser email and traditional mail.

The Financial Aid office uses the Datatel financial aid module to assess eligibility and award federal, state, and institutional aid. FAFSA information is electronically received from the United States Department of Education and each student file is reviewed for eligibility. The College manually posts awards into the Colleague module, the data is then transmitted into the Bursar module and a credit is created and applied to student charges. The Bursar's Office processes and mails financial aid reimbursement checks to students if a credit is due.

During FY 2009 and FY 2010, Middlesex County College received a College Access Challenge Grant from the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education. This federally funded pilot program provided funds for the College to facilitate FAFSA completion workshops in which MCC Financial Aid representatives directly assisted students and their families as they completed and submitted the FAFSA online.

At both the MCC Perth Amboy and New Brunswick Centers, there are periodic financial aid workshops during the academic year, and each Center has a trained employee who handles financial aid matters and assists students with compiling their financial aid documents.

The MCC Financial Aid office is comprised of a director, associate director, two counselors, five support staff, and one technician. The office processes numerous applications and queries from the many applicants who seek information about the financial aid process. In 2009-2010, the number of applicants for financial aid escalated to a record high of 11,230 compared to 9,122 in the previous academic year. This increase in volume was further complicated by the economic crisis that resulted in a 40% increase in files that had "special circumstances" and needed personalized handling by a staff member.

In order not to compromise the quality of service, MCC contracted with a financial aid service company to expedite the financial aid process, and to help integrate the Direct Lending and Year-Round Pell Programs into its systems. During the past calendar year, approximately 1,000 student files have been sent to the company for processing. Though this is considerably fewer files than originally anticipated, feedback provided by the company shows that the College needs to focus more of its efforts on precision and efficiency in document collection and distribution in connection with the awarding of funds. Based upon this assessment, the already-begun process of converting from manual to electronic document imaging and management is moving forward at a faster pace.

The College, mindful of its obligation to make timely and accurate awards, is assessing the sufficiency of staff and technological resources. It has recently created, and is about to fill, the position of Coordinator of Scholarship Programs. It is expected that this will free other staff members to concentrate on the various governmental programs.

Assessment of Student Success

Higher retention and graduation rates are related to the College's mission. Retention rates at MCC are measured by the percentage of a cohort that continues enrollment or graduates by a certain semester in the future. For example, of the freshman cohort entering fall 2007, 59% were still enrolled in the fall 2008. For the first-time freshman cohort of 2008, the retention rate from first to second year was 67% for first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduates, compared to 64% for peer institutions. The retention rate for part time students was 47%, compared to 42% for peer institutions. Despite these generally positive comparisons with peer institutions, MCC is determined to make greater improvements to its first-year student retention rates. Because of the College's commitment to open access, opportunity, and diversity, more than half of MCC students arrive on campus unprepared for college. Data obtained from the MCC Office of Institutional Research show that 67.4% and 70.5% of entering students needed some remediation in fall 2007 and fall 2008, respectively.

The College has established a number of courses, programs, and resources in response to assessment data. In 2005 MCC responded to student needs for remediation by creating a Student Success course, which assists underprepared students, as well as students juggling work, family, disability and other issues, by providing comprehensive career, academic and other specialized counseling. As noted earlier in this chapter, the importance of student retention at MCC prompted the implementation of the Summer Bridge and New Brunswick Scholars programs.

Retention depends substantially on whether incoming students are prepared for the academic standards and expectations of college and the College's attention to addressing these issues. Another outcome of MCC assessment data has been the creation of a new learning center with a mission to "assist students to evaluate their academic strengths and weaknesses and to develop requisite skills needed to succeed in obtaining their academic, career, and personal goals." The Johnson Commons Learning Center is a joint effort of MCC's First-Year Experience and the Tutoring, English, and Mathematics Departments. It opened in January 2010 and features 163 computer stations, a study area, and a Senior Lab Coordinator who oversees the Center's daily functions. Expected learning outcomes from the Learning Center include increased academic success in developmental coursework through additional student

services. The Center provides students with individual customer-oriented services and monitors their academic progress and success.

Information Available to Students

The College catalog offers information on 67 Associate degree programs and 27 Certificate programs. Students have access to degree and certificate requirements through Campus Cruiser, which allows students to perform a degree audit of their declared programs or of a proposed program of interest. This information is also available on the College website and other printed documents. The Transfer Center in the Counseling and Career Services department maintains regular contact with admissions officers and deans of four-year colleges and universities in New Jersey and nearby states to obtain current transfer information and assist students who are planning to continue their education at other institutions. Students transferring to other institutions in New Jersey also have access to NJ Transfer. This online initiative of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and the New Jersey Presidents' Council was designed to provide accurate transfer information about community college courses and specific receiving institutions' course acceptances within New Jersey.

The expected learning outcomes of MCC academic programs are stated with each program description in the College catalog. Faculty members have identified learning outcomes that reflect skills and knowledge that allow students not only to succeed in their chosen field, but also to help them become lifelong learners. These are attained through course completion and participation in co-curricular learning experiences offered at the College.

Transfer Credits

In recent years, transfer students have been an increasing percentage of MCC's student composition. The *Transfer Student Checklist*, published on the MCC website, provides prospective transfer students with the necessary steps to enroll as a transfer student. The Admissions website has a link for transfer applicants that outlines all guidelines and procedures. Please see Standard Eleven for a full discussion of transfer credits.

In addition, the Advanced Placement Exam Program offers high school students the opportunity to experience college-level academic studies and receive advanced placement and/or college credit. Other types of credit for college-level learning include credits from the College Level Examination Program, DANTES Tests, and Credit by Examination, which are discussed in more detail in Standard Thirteen.

Recommendations:

- Revise the comprehensive recruitment and enrollment plan for the College, including admissions and financial aid.
- Continue to enhance the MCC websites for students, faculty, staff, and the public.
- Consider initiation of new orientation sessions for nontraditional students.

Standard Nine: Student Support Services

Scope of Student Service Offerings

The majority of student support resources are housed in the Division of Enrollment and Student Support Services, reporting to a dean. Services include Admissions, Registration, Academic Advising Center, Counseling & Career Services, Educational Opportunity Fund, Minority Student Affairs, Financial Aid, Library, Instructional Design and Media Services, School Relations, Student Activities, Testing, and Tutoring. Also of great importance in providing comprehensive support services are: The Office of First-Year Experience, Learning Center, Athletic Department, Bursar's Office, Campus Police, Health and Safety, Bookstore, and the Child Care Center.

Serving a diverse student population, the College's main campus in Edison is centrally located within Middlesex County and accessible by several bus lines. The College's two Centers in New Brunswick and Perth Amboy afford students flexibility in enrolling at a convenient location. A limited number of online courses extend that flexibility. Please see Appendix P for Student Population Profile Highlights.

Athletics

The Athletic Department oversees a large number of programs and activities for students, including NJCAA intercollegiate athletics, intramural activities, fitness center, swimming pool, weight room, racquetball courts, and tennis courts. Coaches monitor academic progress of athletes and arrange for additional academic support if needed.

Bursar

The College's Bursar's office at the College processes payments for student tuition and fees. In addition, the office accepts payments for library, parking and other miscellaneous fees.

Blue Colt Bookstore

Operated by the Middlesex County College Retail Services Corporation, the Bookstore is a non-profit auxiliary organization of the College. Proceeds are returned directly to the College and its students by funding scholarships, providing emergency student loans, and supporting various campus activities for students. The Bookstore also pays rent and hires students as workers.

Child Care Center

The Child Care Center provides professional child care services for children between the ages of two and five. Open to the public, reduced rates are available to full-time students and to those enrolled in a job training program. The Center partners with the History and Social Science Department to provide field experience opportunities for MCC Education majors.

College Center Office of Student Activities

Student Activities provides an extensive array of student-centric services, including 67 educational, cultural, and recreational clubs as well as co-curricular events: and activities to support academic enrichment and student learning beyond the classroom. The Campus radio

station, Blue Colt Radio WMCC, and *Quo Vadis* student newspaper reside in the College Center. Student Activities highlights include:

- The College Center Programming Board (CCPB), comprised of Student Activities staff and the president of each club, oversees all policies and funding of student activities. The Perth Amboy and New Brunswick Centers receive student activity funding from CCPB and also have additional funding sources for events.
- In spring 2009, the College Assembly approved a recommendation from the College Life Task Force sanctioning the formation of a student government. It has now begun operations.
- Annual cultural events include: African American History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Women's Month.

Two weekly College Hours (Monday at 11:15am and Thursday at 2:00 pm) were created to leave common time available for clubs and organizations to meet. No classes should be scheduled during those two hours. Increasingly, however, classes and labs run into or through the College Hours and students cannot participate in clubs and organizations that meet during those times.

Dental Clinic

Operated by the Dental Auxiliaries Department as a clinical site for students in the Dental Hygiene degree program, the Clinic offers a wide variety of dental services to the College community. It also regularly offers an open free clinic for low income county residents.

Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF)

EOF provides access to academic support for students who demonstrate the potential for success but who come from disadvantaged families (www.middlesexcc.edu/eof). The Department is staffed by a director, assistant director, two counselors, and two support staff.

First-Year Experience (FYE)

The Office of First-Year Experience coordinates activities and initiatives to sustain first-year students (regardless of age), fostering retention, and increasing student preparation for college success. A major initiative, implemented in April 2009, is the completely redesigned new student orientation. Mandatory for all new students coming straight from high school, the new model has two components: student development workshops led by students with a professional counselor, advisement, and registration. New students are invited to register for new student orientation after all application and placement testing requirements have been completed. Previously, student orientation was not mandatory and was held in a large group format. The number of students attending has increased from about 450 in a typical fall semester to more than 2,900 in recent semesters. The number of sessions has increased from two to more than 80.

Development of an online orientation program was begun in fall 2009 but not completed. Online orientation should be implemented because it would offer important services to many categories of incoming students including adult students, returning veterans, bilingual students, and ESL students, and should be implemented.

Police Department

The MCC Police Department is made up of commissioned officers who have all police powers. In addition to traditional police work, campus officers and the Department of Counseling and Career Services work closely on issues of disruptive student behavior and crisis situations.

Financial Aid

The Financial Aid office provides information and guidance to students and their families and processes, awards, and monitors all financial aid programs. The College is moving from the Federal Family Educational Loan Program to Federal Direct Lending. Financial Aid is discussed in detail in Standard Eight.

Health and Safety Services

Students may utilize services that includes first aid, athletic physicals, assessment of immunization records, and some routine health assistance provided by the part-time College nurse.

Johnson Commons Learning Center

The Johnson Commons Learning Center opened in January 2010. It is a comprehensive academic support center for students enrolled in developmental English, math, and reading and discussed in detail on pages 8-7 and 11-3.

Learning Resources

Learning resources include the Library, open computer labs, and Instructional Design and Media Services. They provide resources to help students find and evaluate information sources required for assignments and include traditional and online reference resources.

The January 2010 opening of the Johnson Commons Learning Center in what was previously study space, eliminated a large number of individual student carrels. The effect of this loss of space, combined with study rooms on the lower level being used for classrooms, has displaced some students who utilize the library for study. As a commuter college, it is critical that MCC provide space for students who remain on campus during gaps in their schedule of classes, allowing them to engage in appropriate study or recreational activities that help them connect to the College community. Fortunately, the College's new building, Crabiell Hall, will alleviate this problem it opens in January 2011 at which time the Library's lower level classrooms can then be converted back into library study space.

Minority Student Affairs

The Office of Minority Affairs, staffed by a director, coordinator, and assistant, provides advice and assistance to students, faculty, staff, and administrators on issues related to the needs of minority students, with a focus on retention. The coordinator monitors the academic progress of students in the program and sends notices to students who receive an Early Warning, which requires the student to make an appointment to meet with staff. Department activities include:

- MAPS (Minority Access to the Professions Scholars) which promotes growth and development as well as career planning, counseling, tutoring, exposure to the work

environment and other activities. Nearly 85 students are in MAPS, and the program has an 85% retention rate.

- Probation Workshops are offered each semester to all MCC students with the academic status of academic probation. In January 2010, over 700 students participated.
- Peer mentor program: High achieving students are eligible to serve as peer mentors; most of the mentors are from MAPS. Following a big brother/big sister model, mentors introduce students to the College environment, success strategies, and effective academic behaviors.
- Workshops feature guest speakers on career development, transfer, and academic topics.

NJ STARS

NJ STARS is a state-funded scholarship program that covers the cost of tuition at New Jersey's 19 county colleges for high-achieving high school graduates (www.njstars.net). To ensure the success of our 312 NJ STARS students, the College has a part-time NJ STARS Coordinator and a part time NJ STARS financial aid coordinator.

Academic Advising

All full-time students in a declared major are assigned a faculty advisor, while part-time students are advised in the Academic Advising Center. The Center serves all students, including those with assigned advisors, on a walk-in basis. It has a full-time director, assistant director, two part-time coordinators, and support staff supplemented by faculty members. MCC's new honors program provides faculty academic advisers for honors program participants to assist the students in course selection and advising about the program. New academic advisors are given training that consists of six hours of classroom work, two hours of Colleague training, and a minimum of two hours of shadowing. Refresher advising training is also offered. The Advising Center website, an "Advisors' Manual," and a "Self-Advising Guide" are available to staff and faculty online. In increasing numbers, students email questions to Advising.

"Blast Registration" dates scheduled each spring and fall semester at the New Brunswick and Perth Amboy Centers provide onsite advising and registration services for students who primarily attend classes at those locations. With transfer the goal of over 65% of the student population, questions about the process loom large. MCC's online "Transfer Guide," created by the Department of Counseling and Career Services, provides students and advisors with current, accurate, and specific transfer information.

An extract from a 2010 survey of current students, Appendix Q, reveal that 69.9% (1,409) of the survey respondents have utilized the Academic Advising Center at some point during their time at MCC with 73.6% of those reporting that the Center met their needs. But when asked about their preparation to enroll in spring 2010 classes, only 27.5% (578) of the 2,099 students responding to the question indicated that they visited the Advising Center to consult prior to registration, with 64.6% (1,357) responding that they self-advised. The large number of self-advising students reinforces the commitment to providing readily available and accurate print and online sources of curriculum information and transfer requirements, as well as continually updated curriculum evaluation tools for students in Campus Cruiser/WebAdvisor.

Student Grievance and Disciplinary System

Grievances

The student grievance and appeal process is found in the College catalog, in the *Pathfinder* and on the registrar's page of the College website. Appendix H includes a summary of the process. Questions about a course grade are first directed to the instructor or to the department chair as necessary. Academic appeals are submitted to the academic dean of the division that administers the student's degree or certificate program.

Discipline

The Code of Student Conduct is found in the College Catalog, the *Pathfinder*, and on the Registrar's page of the College website. The College is currently in the process of reviewing the Code and policies and procedures, as well as the student judicial process. The project commenced in spring 2010 with the following identified goals:

- review recent cases and determine if the outcomes are consistent and appropriate; analyze outcomes of discipline imposed
- review and report on the impact resulting from the process and the outcomes of cases
- recommend statements faculty may use on their syllabi regarding the Code of Student Conduct
- review the penalty phase of the process and recommend changes in how the penalties should be determined
- determine the feasibility of establishing a clearinghouse to confidentially maintain information about students who may have violated a code of conduct but were not charged

Department of Counseling and Career Services

Department Overview

The Counseling and Career Services Department combines counseling with career services. The director holds an Ed.D in Counseling and a B.S. in Human Resources. The counseling function is staffed by nine professional counselors and two assistants offering services to students primarily in one-on-one sessions. Please see Appendix R for specific services provided. Career Services is staffed by a manager, one cooperative education coordinator, and an assistant.

Project Connections, a Federal Trio Student Support Services grant program, is a comprehensive academic and counseling support service for students with learning disabilities who are enrolled in mainstream programs at MCC. It is a competitive admission program providing services beyond those required by law. Project Connections is funded to serve 160 students per year and has been in place since 1984.

The Department's professional staff is organized into functional teams to allow consistency of service delivery and collaborative implementation strategies. Diversity in the counseling staff itself is reflective of the College's student population. In addition to ethnic and cultural diversity, the staff offers counseling in English, Spanish, Urdu, and Malayalam. Services are delivered in several formats: one-on-one appointments, workshops, support groups, and in-class presentations. Counselors serve as liaisons to academic departments and facilitate counseling and the development of programs specifically meeting student needs. For example, the counselor-liaison to the Nursing department developed and delivered a series of stress

management workshops when faculty perceived increased anxiety in their students.

Access to counselors via Drop-In service is continually assessed for effectiveness. After implementing Drop-In sessions in 2005, staff assessment identified several issues that constrained the effectiveness of the sessions. Now, specialized Drop-In availability is scheduled to coincide with key semester needs:

- For the first week of each semester, disability counselors, international counselors, and one general counselor are available on a full-time basis.
- When registration opens, transfer counselors are available on full-time Drop-In.
- On the last day to withdraw from classes, two-three counselors are available full-time.

Initial feedback about Drop-In from counselors and students has been positive. In support of students at the New Brunswick Center, onsite counselors are available for a total of eight hours per week - four hours daytime and four hours evenings - for individual student appointments and workshops. One bilingual counselor is assigned to the Perth Amboy Center four hours per week.

Trends and New Initiatives

The Counseling and Career Services Department utilizes professional organizations and affiliations, current publications and periodicals, and observational data to adjust services to match the needs of the student population:

- As noted nationally, more students with psychological issues, cognitive impairments, and social functioning issues including Asperger's are attending college.
- Returning veterans, some with physical or mental trauma, enroll in college.
- Family is increasingly involved in overseeing students' activities on campus.
- Economic pressures have far-reaching impact on the functional health and stability of the population.
- Increased numbers of adults are returning to college for retraining and career change.

The Department has instituted new initiatives as noted in Appendix S. Some of them, while important to students, may negatively impact staff availability for individual counseling appointments. For example, New Student Orientation ran 85 sessions beginning in April 2009 for the fall 2009 semester (255 counselor hours) and 20 sessions beginning in November 2009 for the spring 2010 semester (60 counselor hours). Students seeking counseling appointments experienced waits during periods of peak demands though students in crisis are always seen immediately. In response, CCS provides drop-in availability timed to coincide with key dates in the semester as noted above, as a new means of easing wait times.

As reported in the 2010 Student Survey, Appendix Q, there is work to be done. Though 65% of the students identify "transfer" as their academic goal at MCC, only 22.7% of the students reported accessing transfer counseling. Student Orientation encourages students to meet with a transfer counselor, and other methods are used to advise students of these services. 62% (226) of the students who reported utilizing Career Services expressed satisfaction, but the telling statistic is that only 18.1% (364) students reported accessing Career Services at all. Obviously, continual outreach to the student population is imperative, and ongoing assessment of workshops offered will continue to drive the offerings to ensure they are meeting student needs.

FERPA

Students are advised of their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in a number of ways, including the catalog, College website <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/registrar/control.cfm/ID/297/>, and new student and family orientation. The Registrar is the College's designated source of FERPA information and consults with faculty and staff. This information is also included in the student handbook, the *Pathfinder*.

Student records exist in both paper and electronic formats, with different access and security rules:

- Paper records: Any department that maintains paper records containing confidential information is required to store them in secure areas or locked cabinets.
- Verbal requests: FERPA compliance training took place during fall 2009 for the Admissions and Registrar's Office staff; this training will be delivered to additional student service areas and other departments.
- Electronic records: Colleague, the College's student records system, has many controls in place to limit the amount of sensitive data available to users:
 - Department personnel who access student records are only given access to the data that is relevant to their job functions.
 - Upon every login to the Colleague system, users are required to acknowledge that they understand and will follow all FERPA regulations.
 - Passwords automatically expire every six months and must be changed.
 - Colleague blocks from view all but the last four digits of Social Security numbers displayed on computer screens and on print outs from the system.

In a 2010 survey of students, Appendix Q, more than by 80% of the responding students utilized services provided by the Registrar's Office. Interestingly, students professed a high degree of confidence that MCC handles their personal information with regard to privacy (91.1%), yet only 37.3% (779) of the students in the survey indicated that they were aware of FERPA. Inclusion of FERPA information in the 2010-2011 edition of the student *Pathfinder* will put this information directly in the students' hands.

Recommendations:

- Attempt to identify alternatives to scheduling classes so that students are free to use the College Hour as originally intended.
- Consider an online orientation program.

Standard Ten: Faculty

Faculty Role in Student Learning

The College's governance process calls for all course and curriculum development and changes to begin with faculty members and then go to the full department that will own the course or curriculum. Faculty members have the primary responsibility for promoting, facilitating, assuring, and evaluating student learning on a day-to-day basis. Some departments have faculty coordinators for each program, while others have full-time faculty members who teach the same course working collaboratively to design and update curricula.

Faculty members also design and update curricula. Some examples of recent faculty involvement in designing and updating educational curricula are noted below:

- The nursing faculty members were responsible for writing the entire nursing curriculum for the new nursing program in 2007-2008.
- In the Biology Department, new courses, new lab exercises, and new technology applications in the classroom have all been developed by the faculty.
- In the History and Social Science Department, faculty members have developed over 20 new courses and programs in the last three years, including five honors courses. They have created assessment plans for all courses and have "closed the loop" on several, making changes to curricula and reassessing as needed.
- In the Dental Auxiliaries Education Department, the curriculum review process is conducted by a curriculum committee made up of the department chairperson, all full-time faculty members, and two adjuncts.
- The Accounting, Business, and Legal Studies Department has faculty committees for any courses that have multiple sections. Faculty members are responsible for writing course objectives and are involved in creating new courses.

Another faculty initiative has been the development of learning communities among several departments. Some examples of learning communities developed by faculty members across the College are:

- Psyched to ExSL links Psychology with ESL
- SCRUBS (Students Can Read and Understand Biology Successfully)
- SWIFT (All first-level developmental education and Student Success Development)
- The Summer Bridge Program discussed on page 8-4.

Appointment, Promotion, and Sufficiency of Faculty

MCC employs 171 tenured and tenure-track ten-month full-time faculty members, 19 tenured and tenure-track full-time twelve month faculty members, and approximately 500 adjunct faculty members. In 2009 the student/faculty ratio was 27:1. While this is slightly greater than the New Jersey community college average of 26:1, it matches the average of large New Jersey community colleges, whose student/faculty ratio runs from 33:1 to 22:1.

Some full-time faculty members have expressed the belief that the College uses too many adjuncts. In fall 2010, 50.9% of all sections were taught by adjuncts. The question of how many adjuncts is too many still needs further discussion.

The College fills faculty positions with candidates who hold a minimum of a master's degree in an appropriate discipline from an accredited institution. A minimum of a bachelor's degree is accepted in rare cases for part-time positions. For example, in the Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management Department, highly qualified chefs are hired with a minimum completion of a professional program and/or industry certification. In the Engineering Technologies Department, those hired to teach surveying rarely have a master's degree and are instead required to have a Professional Land Surveyor license.

Since 2005, new faculty members have been given an orientation by the office of the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs prior to the start of classes and by the Center for the Enrichment of Learning and Teaching (CELT) once classes have begun.

Appointment

Faculty selection committees were implemented College-wide in 2006 and screen potential candidates. When the selection committee has chosen qualified applicants based on the job description, it proceeds with the first round of interviews. The department chairperson and the division dean are then invited to a classroom presentation. Afterward, the selection committee selects the top three to five candidates and forwards their names to the department chairperson and division dean for further interviewing.

Faculty members experienced with the search process indicate that during the process they keep in mind the ethnic and racial diversity of the College's students and, all things being equal, might well consider the candidate's ability to increase the diversity of the College's faculty. Nonetheless, faculty members who have served on department selection committees concur that their committees have based decisions solely on candidate qualifications, experience, successful interview, and demonstrated teaching ability.

Promotion

Faculty members must meet minimum standards, including academic and professional experience and community service, in order to be promoted. The *Faculty Handbook* and faculty union contract clearly state the requirements for all ranks of faculty. Both of these documents, as well as all collective bargaining agreements and handbooks may be found in the team's resource room. The faculty union provides its members with information on promotion applications and procedures, as well as sabbatical applications and procedures. From 2006 to fall 2010, 22 faculty members were promoted to assistant professor, 22 were promoted to associate professor, and 14 were promoted to professor.

A committee established by the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and the faculty union studied the promotion, evaluation, and tenure processes at the College. Though no final report was issued, the criteria for promotion have been in place for many years and warrant reconsideration.

Tenure

In accordance with a state statute, to qualify for tenure, a faculty member must usually complete five years of successful full-time teaching. He or she receives positive classroom observations, and have strong support from the department chairperson on the six-point evaluation forms completed by the faculty member and commented on by the chairperson. This system works well at MCC in retaining the exceptional faculty that has been assembled.

Grievance

Faculty members have the option to file a grievance. The College has had few grievances filed, however, due to the exceptional interaction among local AFT 1940 leadership, union members, and management. Faculty and administration strive for a unique bond and appreciation of a truly exceptional learning environment. Both strive for the continuing refinement of practices, establishment of goals, and completion of many projects that benefit the students.

Discipline

There are no pending disciplinary issues involving faculty members. Most problems are minor and are resolved at the informal stage.

Dismissal of Faculty

Should the question of faculty member dismissal arise, all areas of evaluation are explored. The College views the dismissal of a faculty member to be very serious, with consequences that will cause hardships for the faculty member and institution alike. The Faculty Handbook provides the faculty and administration with a set of rules and regulations. An additional source of information is the faculty contract, where promotion, tenure, grievance, discipline, and dismissal of faculty are discussed.

Faculty Evaluation

Faculty evaluation begins with a six-point evaluation form. The faculty member fills it out and the chairperson comments on it. In addition there may be a classroom observation by the chairperson, who prepares a written report. Instructors and assistant professors are observed once during the academic year; associate professors are observed every two years; professors are observed every three years. Nontenured faculty members are observed in the classroom during both the fall and spring semesters. Currently, there is no consistent follow-up to the six-point evaluation comments and classroom observation occurs that might lead to enhancement of a faculty member's skills. The College recognizes outstanding faculty members during a Celebration Day in May.

Support for Faculty Development

The faculty-led Center for the Enrichment of Learning and Teaching (CELT) is largely responsible for faculty development on campus. CELT was formed by the faculty in 2003 and has a current operating budget of \$9,000. Additional funds have been obtained from grants sponsored by the MCC Foundation and the Retail Services Corporation. CELT offers workshops and discussion groups throughout the academic year, and organizes the Faculty Professional Day program in August and conferences in May. CELT also supports faculty members who want to attend the annual Teaching Professor

Conference by paying their registration fee. The Middlesex County College Foundation has established a Faculty Development Endowment Fund that has been used to support faculty attendance at a number of academic conferences.

CELT draws upon MCC faculty expertise for its programs and often brings in outside experts for conferences and keynote presentations on Professional Day. Since its inception, CELT has held 149 workshops, organized five conferences, received seven grants for Professional Day and conference speakers, co-sponsored two speakers with other groups on campus, held 20 workshops at CELT Summer Camp, hosted 17 book discussion sessions, and held 10 Open Houses for faculty members to get to know one another better. In addition, in conjunction with the Office of the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, the CELT director organizes orientation sessions for newly hired faculty members. The director also gives presentations at adjunct orientations and assists the Council for Adjunct Faculty Development (CAFD) with workshop development.

The Instructional Design and Media Services Department (IDMSD) provides resources and support for faculty members who wish to explore and implement instructional technologies in their classes. The department offers workshops and individual consultations and maintains a website that supplies useful links. Since 2007, IDMSD has supplied one-on-one in person and online support for faculty members using Campus Cruiser, as well as workshops and one-on-one support for faculty members involved in online and hybrid learning. The department has held workshops on Student Response Systems used in the Biology, Dental Auxiliaries, ESL, English Math, and Chemistry Departments and has offered 13 workshops for CELT.

The Council for Adjunct Faculty Development was created in 1989. Its members include administrators and long-time adjuncts who meet monthly to plan activities. They sponsor orientation programs for new adjunct instructors at the start of the fall and spring semesters and an annual Adjunct Faculty Development Day. They also provide peer mentoring for new adjunct instructors. The Center for Adjunct Faculty provides office facilities, computers, and a collegial place for part-time instructors to meet. Additionally, all CELT programs are open to adjuncts.

The College hosts graduate courses on the Edison campus that have been attended by some MCC faculty members. Rowan University is presently offering a doctoral program in educational leadership at MCC; five College employees are currently students in the program.

Sabbatical leave is available for full-time graduate study, work on a substantial project, or participation in the Mid-Career Fellowship Program at Princeton University. Thirty five Middlesex faculty members have participated in the Program since it began in 1977. Research projects completed by the MCC Program participants include “Calculators in the Classroom: Beneficial or Detrimental?” “Think, Draw, Write: Using Writing to Improve Student Art Work,” “Using Intelligent Design to Teach Real Science,” “The Usefulness of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in Teaching Ethics,” and “Cultural Literacy and the Developmental Math Student.”

The sabbatical leave committee (comprised of three deans and three faculty members) votes on the merits of each application and may not approve all applications. The number of slots available annually is 10% of the number of eligible faculty members, which is generally about nine each semester. The number of applicants has dropped off slightly in the last few years, so not all the slots have been utilized.

Faculty Community Service

The College Assembly, a body that recommends changes in policies and procedures to the President, provides many opportunities for faculty service. It has several task forces made up of faculty members, support staff, administrators, and students. "Opportunities in College Governance," published by the College Assembly, describes the College Assembly and the opportunities available to serve on the Assembly. It also includes the Assembly bylaws, the annual report from the previous year, and the list of the task forces. The number of members on each task force is determined by the bylaws which also provide guidelines for nominations and breakdown of departments, as well as duration of appointments. Currently, 17 faculty members serve on the College Assembly each year. The Bylaws Task Force is reviewing the membership and may recommend changes more in line with the College's new academic structure. Fifteen of the past 20 College Assembly Chairpersons have been faculty members.

In recognition of their service on the College Assembly, faculty members receive a letter of appreciation at the end of their term. Being part of the College Assembly also helps faculty members develop their personal growth because they have the opportunity to network with their colleagues and others in the College community, contribute valuable opinions and expertise in strategic planning, and learn how this advisory body contributes to the functioning of the College. Participation as a member of the College Assembly or one of its task forces may also increase a faculty member's chance of promotion. College Assembly meetings are held once a month during the academic year. The Assembly website, (<http://www.middlesexcc.edu/assembly/control.cfm>), provides information about the Assembly and service opportunities.

Part-Time Faculty Members

The College has carefully and clearly developed institutional employment procedures and practices for adjunct faculty members. The hiring criteria are the same for full-time as well as part-time faculty members. Virtually all faculty members are required to have a completed master's degree. Adjunct faculty members have a handbook documenting policies and practices that is updated every five years.

Orientation sessions held twice a year provide important information and a forum for questions and answers. The sessions are advertised through the use of flyers on campus and postings to MCC's InfoNet. In addition, the College hosts an Adjunct Faculty Fair each semester and a Celebration Day in May, which recognizes outstanding faculty and staff, including adjuncts. Every year the Council for Adjunct Faculty Development provides two days of professional development for the adjuncts, one in March and one in September. CELT resources are available to adjunct faculty as well as full-time faculty

members. They include the CELT book collection in the MCC library, the CELT website, the Campus Cruiser CELT Office, and resource materials the CELT office.

Chairpersons require that adjuncts provide them with a syllabus for each class they teach in order to evaluate the content for consistency and appropriateness. Adjunct faculty members generally use the department syllabi as a guide and may follow them exactly or make some modifications. In-class observations are performed for adjunct faculty members each semester upon their hire and periodically after that.

Recommendations:

- Follow up on issues in six-point evaluation and classroom observation needing attention, perhaps through mentoring or CELT activities, in order to enhance faculty member.
- Continue discussion of the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty members.
- Revisit the criteria used for faculty promotion.
- Make the Mid-Career Fellowship Program more widely known to faculty members on campus as a sabbatical opportunity.
- Examine the consistency of the faculty selection processes among departments.

Standard Eleven: Educational Offerings

Educational Offerings

Breadth of Offerings

Middlesex County College offers more than 550 courses in 94 degree and certificate programs. Associate degrees may be earned in fields such as education, dental hygiene, criminal justice, paralegal studies, computer science, and engineering technology. The offerings are consistent with the mission of the College, “to provide access to an affordable, quality education for diverse students and to promote lifelong learning opportunities to strengthen the economic, social and cultural life of the community.”

The College offers the following degrees and certificate programs:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 23 Associate in Arts | 3 Associate in Fine Arts |
| 14 Associate in Science | 27 Associate in Applied Science |
| 13 Certificate programs | 14 Certificate of Achievement programs |

Since MCC courses and programs are offered days, evenings and weekends, part-time and full-time, at the Edison campus and at the Perth Amboy and New Brunswick Centers, a diverse group of students with varying interests and schedules may attend the College and earn a degree or certificate. Many of the associate degree programs are designed for students who plan on transferring to four-year colleges and universities.

Evaluation of Programs

Among others, the Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics programs recently completed detailed program reviews. Major requirements were examined and compared to those of other colleges and universities and were determined to have sufficient content, rigor, breadth, and length. In fact, they were all found to be identical, or nearly so, to freshman- and sophomore-level major requirements at those institutions.

Programs with outside accreditation have regular cycles of assessment in place that facilitate their review. For example, the Engineering Technologies Department meets at an annual department retreat to discuss their assessment data results of their assessment data. Changes are then discussed and implemented. Several programs recently underwent reevaluation to comply with new state transfer guidelines; as a result, some courses were eliminated while others were added. For example, the A.S. in Chemistry previously required General Biology I and II. These requirements are no longer part of the program, and two additional chemistry courses were added, making the program more consistent with chemistry programs elsewhere.

Pre-College Offerings

The pre-college offerings at Middlesex County College include developmental mathematics (MAT-009, MAT-010, MAT-013, MAT-014), developmental writing (ENG-009, ENG-010), and developmental reading (RDG-009, RDG-011). Students and faculty may access course descriptions from the New Students link followed by the “Program” and “Majors” link found on the MCC homepage at http://www.middlesexcc.edu/academics/programs/09/Course_Descriptions.pdf

The objective of developmental math courses is to “focus on computational skills and problem solving,” and to “introduce and develop elementary algebra concepts.” The following pre-college level course objectives directly support subsequent college level work:

| Pre-college Mathematics Courses | College Mathematics Course |
|---|--|
| Sketch the graphs of equations using the point-plotting method. | Find the slopes of lines. |
| Find and use the x- and y- intercepts as aids to sketching graphs. | Write linear equations given points on lines and their slopes. |
| Use a pattern to write an equation for an application problem, and to sketch its graph. | Use the slope-intercept forms of linear equations to sketch lines. |
| Determine the slope of a line through two points. | Use the slope to identify parallel and perpendicular lines. |
| Write linear equations in slope-intercept form and graph the equations. | Decide whether a relation between two variables represents a function. |
| Use slopes to determine whether two lines are parallel, perpendicular, or neither. | Use function notation and evaluate functions; find the domains of functions. |
| Use slopes to describe rates of change in real-life problems. | Use functions to model and solve real-life problems. |

After completion of developmental courses (through MAT-013 or MAT-014, depending on major), students are prepared to take appropriate college-level mathematics and science courses.

The objectives of developmental writing and reading courses are to prepare students for college-level study and to improve their “ability to write in Standard American English,” to “develop basic reading comprehension,” and to improve their reading rate, vocabulary, communication, and study skills.” Students who master these learning outcomes as evidenced by their performance in the second of separate two-course developmental reading and writing sequences, or by having this requirement waived as a result of their performance in a preceding developmental course or in accelerated learning programs such as Operation Safety Net or Bridge classes, enroll in ENG-121 (Freshman Composition I), a requirement for graduation.

Because these courses provide “access to an affordable education for diverse students and promote lifelong learning opportunities to strengthen the economic social and cultural life of the community” and prepare students for college level work, they are consistent with the College’s mission. A study of the rate of progress in subsequent credit bearing courses taken by students who have successfully completed developmental courses in the 2009 academic year indicated the following rate of success:

| | Completed MAT 013/013B in 09/SP | Enrolled in MAT 101 in 09/FA | No. of Students w/grade C or better in 09/FA | Pct of Students w/grade C or better in 09/FA |
|----------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| MAT 013 | 464 | 44 | 30 | 68.2% |
| MAT 013B | 91 | 20 | 13 | 65.0% |
| Total | 555 | 64 | 43 | 67.2% |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|--|---------------------------------|--|---|
| 014 | MAT | 351 | 179 | 78 | 43.6% |
| 014B | MAT | 14 | 8 | 1 | 12.5% |
| | Total | 365 | 187 | 79 | 42.2% |
| | | Completed ENG 010 or RDG 011 in 09/SP | Enrolled in ENG 121 in 09/FA | No. of Students w/grade C or better in 09/FA | Pct of Students w/grade C or or better in 09/FA |
| ENG 010 or RDG 011 | | 749 | 220 | 114 | 51.8% |

Student success data for developmental education courses indicated the need to provide more support for students outside of the classroom. A committee was formed to explore ways to assist developmental students, and based on its recommendation, the Johnson Commons Learning Center was opened in January 2010. The Center is equipped with computers and interactive reading, writing, and mathematics software. Learning Center assistants and tutors provide support for all developmental students.

As a result of an assessment of placement and retention rates in the Basic Mathematics and Beginning Algebra pre-college courses, the Mathematics Department has:

- implemented the use of ALEKS, software that allows for individualized instruction and assessment, and scheduled time for students to use it in the Learning Center with the assistance of professional tutors
- conducted ongoing conversations with county mathematics supervisors and chairs in local high schools to ease the transition to college mathematics and
- planned for a coordinated effort with county high schools to implement a college placement testing process as early as the junior year of high school

As a result of an assessment of particular items on departmental examinations in the pre-college Mathematics courses, the Department has:

- conducted faculty meetings to discuss alternative teaching strategies and
- planned workshops in the Learning Center addressing areas of critical concern.

In addition to the Learning Center, the College offers a Student Success course (SSD-101) required of all students who are placed into more than one developmental level course. The Student Success course was developed in response to an assessment of retention and student success in developmental courses to help students “learn and adopt methods for success in college” by providing an “orientation to college, study skills, critical thinking skills...and to developing a career plan.” (<http://www.middlesexcc.edu/families/control.cfm/ID/3348>)

The English Department has also instituted changes based on student performance. Specifically, it has augmented its developmental writing offerings by including two versions of Individualized Approach sections of Writing Skills for College II, the second of the two-course developmental writing sequence. In the first, students whose placement test scores are within a range of passing and who have not tested into developmental reading are invited to enroll in one section in which they meet individually with an instructor in lieu of attending regularly scheduled classes. Another version of this approach is a hybrid-individualized class for which any student may register. In this section, students attend class together for roughly 50% of the semester. During the remaining time, students meet with the instructor individually or with other classmates in peer-writing groups. Preliminary data suggests increases in both retention and student success.

Likewise, the English Department has changed the mode of instruction for the lab portion of Reading Skills for College I, the first of the two-course developmental reading sequence. Students now work on educational software in the new learning center. Students enrolled in Reading Skills for College II who have demonstrated the need for further tutorial services as based on an early skills assessment are also directed to use this resource. The Department also has a pending plan to incorporate an additional hour of lab tutorial for all upper-level developmental reading and writing students.

Success in SSD Course

| SSD Students* | Total | In random sample | Cumulative GPA | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| | No. | No. | Mean | Std |
| Enrolled & Successful** | 401 | 45 | 2.51 | 0.81 |
| Unsuccessful/Not-enrolled | 899 | 100 | 1.45 | 1.32 |
| Total | 1300 | 145 | | |
| SSD Students* | Total | In random sample | Cumulative Completed Credits at MCC | |
| | No. | No. | Mean | Std |
| Enrolled & Successful** | 401 | 45 | 28.16 | 24.64 |
| Unsuccessful/Not-enrolled | 899 | 100 | 18.22 | 23.18 |
| Total | 1300 | 145 | | |
| SSD Students* | Total | In random sample | Received Degree at MCC | |
| | No. | No. | YES No. (%) | NO No.(%) |
| Enrolled & Successful** | 401 | 45 | 4 (9) | 41 (91) |
| Unsuccessful/Not-enrolled | 899 | 100 | 5 (5) | 95 (95) |
| Total | 1300 | 145 | 9 | 136 |
| °° Indicates highly significant. | | | | |
| ° Indicates significant at 5 % level. | | | | |

Student Success Development (SSD) Program Fall 2004: Cumulative Completed Credit and Graduation Rate by May 2007

*First-time degree seeking students from fall 2004 who needed SSD-101 course. **Successful = pass with “C” or better grade any time between fall 2004 and fall 2006.

An analysis was conducted to determine the impact of the SSD course on student success. In 2005, Institutional Research analyzed the performance of two groups – those recommended for SSD who did not complete the class (899 students), and those recommended for SSD who did complete it (401 students). The performance measures were GPA, number of credits completed, and the percentage who completed a degree. As indicated in the table above, the performance of the group that successfully completed SSD was significantly better than that of the group that did not complete SSD for both GPA and number of credits completed.

English as a Second Language

While English as a Second Language is not considered pre-college, second language students may need to complete ESL courses prior to taking the college placement test. ESL courses are designed to assist second language learners in pursuing a college degree while improving their second language proficiency. Students in upper levels of ESL may take credit-bearing classes that provide academic content while they take ESL classes that provide them with necessary English language support.

Once second language learners have completed the ESL program, they take the college placement test; in 2009, more than half were then placed into developmental writing classes and reading classes. Placement into the lower-level reading course precludes students from taking further credit-bearing classes regardless of previous success in these classes. Institutional Research compiled data from three semesters, please see Appendix T, comparing ESL students who were taking credit classes while they were enrolled in ESL classes with native speakers taking the same classes. This study showed that ESL students performed at least on par with native speakers in six of nine content classes.

Based on the progress of second language learners in credit-bearing classes and on research linking content courses with ESL courses (Winter, W.E. Kingsborough Community College), a learning community was developed and implemented in fall 2009 called Psyched to ExSL. It consists of two, level four ESL courses, and one psychology class: ESL 094-Advanced Reading/Vocabulary, ESL 093-Writing/Structure, PSY 123-Introductory Psychology. It uses the same psychology as in all PSY 123 courses but the learning community develops reading comprehension, reading strategies, academic vocabulary development, and academic writing from course content material. Additionally, following current trends, two hybrid classes were developed to integrate technology in order to promote learning: ESL 094-Advanced Reading/Vocabulary and ESL 092-Advanced Grammar. Informal attitudinal surveys at the completion of the learning community semester indicate that students in the learning community develop a feeling of belonging to the larger College community and are more likely to continue to graduation.

Additionally, based on second language learner success rates on the writing and reading placements, a departmental committee reviewed course objectives and student learning outcomes for the capstone course, ESL 099-Reading-Writing Level 5 and they found that few of the outcomes dealt with reading. An informal look at numbers of students who were enrolled concurrently in the advanced ESL reading (ESL-094) classes and advanced writing classes (ESL-099) indicated that those students performed slightly better on the

college placement test than did students who were enrolled in only ESL-099. Therefore, the committee proposed and developed a new six-credit ESL-099 class that includes a three-credit reading component to improve composition and reading skills by analyzing and developing essays in response to readings. The committee adjusted the student learning outcomes accordingly.

Adult Learners

The needs of adult learners have been met in part by the following initiatives:

- Adult/non-traditional students who did not begin college right after high school, or students whose college education was interrupted are welcomed at MCC and can find information at <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/admit/control.cfm/ID/2728>
- CARE (Center for Adults Returning to College) can be accessed from the MCC homepage, <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/care/control.cfm/ID/4281/>. This program targets adult learners not currently enrolled in college but who have completed at least 31 credits.
- Non-credit courses and certificate programs are available through Corporate and Community Education and provide a resource for life-long learners. Information on these programs is available at <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/profcom/control.cfm/ID/162>
- Information specifically developed to assist returning veterans can be found at <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/veterans/control.cfm/ID/4015/>
- The Work Readiness Program <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/pa/control.cfm/ID/1854/>, offered at the Perth Amboy Center, "...assists recipients of public assistance with life and academic skills...."

Course Approval and Syllabi

In both pre-college and college-level courses and programs, course syllabi include objectives and goals. Course abstracts outlining expected learning outcomes and program goals are accessible through the College InfoNet. Student learning outcomes are currently available to faculty only through the "Assessment at Middlesex" link on the InfoNet. There is no link for students, and consideration should be given to providing that access.

New or modified courses must go through an approval and evaluation process, which requires the approval of the department, division council, division dean, Curriculum Task Force, the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, the College Assembly, and the President. There are two exceptions to this process: minor curriculum changes are approved through a Fast Track and courses that run on an experimental basis prior to full approval.

Honors Program

In 2005, the College began a review of the previous MCC honors program as well as the professional literature on honors programs. Preliminary discussion began with the vision of initiating a more efficient and effective model. In 2007, the ad hoc committee settled on a model designed to support student success and challenge academically able students. Since then, the honors program has been fully implemented and admits students with a previous record of superior academic capabilities to individual honors courses,

departmental honors, and a college-wide honors program. The mission of the MCC honors program is “to promote and foster intellectual curiosity and creativity in a stimulating academic environment.” It currently offers eleven courses housed in four departments. The Honors Program site contains goals, benefits, FAQs, a list of courses, downloadable materials including an Honors Program brochure and an application for prospective candidates, all of which are accessible to current students from the MCC homepage, <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/honors/control.cfm/ID/3644/> and for prospective students, <http://www.middlesexcc.edu/admit/control.cfm/ID/2343>.

The Honors Program is. Information on the MCC website provides. Honors acceptance can be achieved in either of two ways designed to ensure that students are prepared for the rigor of the program:

- First-year students need a minimum combined SAT score (math and critical reading) of 1200 and no developmental course requirements or a cumulative GPA of 3.5 out of a 4.0 grading scale (high school) and no developmental course requirements, or
- Current MCC and transfer students need a cumulative GPA of 3.5 after the completion of 12 college credits and completion of all developmental coursework.

A student survey will be used to assess the effectiveness of the honors program.

Information Literacy

Information literacy instruction at MCC is a collaboration between librarians and classroom faculty. Librarians provide instruction by visiting and presenting to individual classes, by presenting to classes that are scheduled for library orientations, and by instructing individual students. Presentations are focused on helping students find and evaluate source material for their assignments.

The primary method employed to assess outcomes related to information literacy is student self-evaluation. Students are asked to rate their own mastery of each course outcome on a scale of 1 to 5. The English Department has indicated that students’ confidence in their ability to “compose a research paper demonstrating the ability to locate, evaluate, and integrate source material and cite this information correctly” was typically in the mid-range. The exception was in the assessment for English-225, (an upper level course) where students felt most confident. In History-121, 60.5% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to produce well-organized and accurate term papers; this rose to 69.98% for History-122. In Philosophy-121, 52.54% of students agreed or strongly agreed on a similar question; in Philosophy-123 this rose to 66.67%.

The English Department strongly encourages all instructors of ENG-121 to take their classes to the library for group information literacy sessions. Since ENG-121 is a required course in virtually all certificate and degree programs, the majority of students participate in these sessions. In addition, the librarians regularly provide instruction to a large number of other classes, including many sections of Student Success (SSD-101) and Writing Skills for College II (ENG-010). During the 2008-09 academic year, MCC’s library staff delivered 224 information literacy presentations.

Technology training begins as part of the First-Year Experience orientation program. Students are instructed how to log into the Campus Cruiser student portal and use the WebAdvisor feature to select and register for classes. The vast majority of technology training for students comes in the form of credit courses provided by the Computer Science and Information Technology Department. At least one technology course is required for most degree and certificate programs offered by the College.

Technology training for faculty and staff primarily comes from the Information Technology (IT) Department and the office of Instructional Design and Media Services. IT has offered instruction when new services or technologies have been introduced on campus, but large group training is relatively infrequent. Online documentation and tutorials are available for many applications widely used on campus. Support is also available via the IT Help Desk. Help desk personnel are very responsive and provide email feedback when a service ticket is opened and when it is closed.

The office of Instructional Design and Media Services regularly provides faculty training individually and in groups and supports faculty members who have developed Internet or hybrid courses. This office also provides training in the development and use of many newer emerging technologies used on campus. These training sessions include online courses, media enhanced classrooms, online surveys, and ePortfolios. The director works regularly with the Center for the Enrichment of Learning and Teaching (CELT) to provide workshops on topics involving the use of technology.

Transfer Credits

The first factor considered in determining whether transfer credit will be granted for courses completed elsewhere is whether they were earned at a regionally accredited institution. When the college where previous work was completed is not familiar to evaluators, an online search to find course descriptions is made to help determine which courses correspond to those at Middlesex County College. Transfer credit for math, science, and technology courses is only considered if courses were taken within the previous five years; most humanities courses must have been taken within the last ten years.

Maximum transfer credits vary according to program:

- For degree programs, a maximum of 45 credits may be transferred
- For certificates of achievement, a maximum of 9 credits may be transferred
- For certificate programs a maximum of 15 credits may be transferred

Before a determination to grant transfer credit to prospective international students is made, the transcript must be evaluated by a recognized evaluation agency, such as World Education Services and then sent to Admissions for a final decision.

Recommendations:

- Consider evaluating transcripts of foreign students while they are taking ESL courses to eliminate repeating courses already taken in foreign institutions and to facilitate advising.

- Investigate expanding learning communities for ESL students, with appropriate assessment.

Standard Twelve: General Education

General Education Program

Overview and Credit Requirements

Several years ago, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) began an initiative to review general education courses. The NJCCC Academic Officers Association established the General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) to address general education at each of the 19 county colleges. MCC has been participating fully in this process, which has resulted in a comprehensive review of the general education offerings and procedures.

The general education program at Middlesex County College meets the goals and criteria established for community colleges in New Jersey. Originally adopted in 1997 with minor revisions ratified in August 2007, the General Education Foundation for New Jersey community colleges may be found in Appendix U. The Associate in Arts Degree (A.A.) has a foundation of 45 general education credits, the Associate of Science Degree (A.S.) has a foundation of 30 general education credits, and both the Associate in Fine Arts (A.F.A.) and the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees have 20 General Education credits within their requirements. Certificates require six general education credits. The breakout of general education course categories and the credits required in each category for degrees and certificates is located in Appendix V.

Discipline specific requirements affect the total number of general education credits required in the different degree programs. A.A and the A.S. degrees require more general education credits since they are designed to transfer to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution and thus mirror the first two years of academic requirements in those institutions. While the A.F.A. degree is also designed to transfer, it requires fewer general education credits because the degree requires students to take appropriate courses to hone their skills in the concentration of their choice (Art, Music, or Theatre). The A.A.S. degree requires fewer general education credits because this degree is constructed to provide students with courses that have practical applications to enhance their skills and abilities for the demands of the workplace and thus increase their opportunities for employment.

Course Approval

General education courses are created and modified by the academic department that offers the course. Each new or revised general education offering is reviewed by the campus General Education Committee, after which the Committee completes the general education section of the course approval form. This section identifies whether the course is approved for a General Education designation and in what area. The course must satisfy the requirements listed under the course criteria for its general education course category to be designated as a general education course.

The course criteria are contained in the General Education Foundation for New Jersey Community Colleges, which is located in the Curriculum Procedures Manual, available to faculty and staff on the InfoNet. The General Education Committee meets whenever

necessary to consider applications. The approval process then continues to the division council, Curriculum Committee, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, College Assembly, and the President.

General education courses approved by an institution as satisfying the New Jersey Community College General Education Foundation are then submitted for state approval:

- Proposed general education courses forwarded to the Academic Officers Association (AOA) General Education Chair.
- Proposed general education courses are reviewed by the AOA General Education Committee following the general education course rubrics.
- The committee distributes approval recommendations to AOA.
- AOA consider approval recommendations at an AOA meeting.
- AOA approval recommendations forwarded to NJCCC Academic Affairs Committee.
- NJCCC Academic Affairs Committee completes review of AOA recommendations.
- NJCCC Presidents' approval forwarded to the AOA General Education Committee chair who notifies the appropriate college Vice President.
- Approved courses added to NJCC General Education Unified Course List and posted on the NJCCC website.

General education learning objectives, defined by the statewide General Education Committee, are divided into eight course categories and nine goal categories. These objectives mesh with MCC's mission statement. The mission to provide a "quality education" is addressed by many of the general education goals, such as written and oral communication, quantitative knowledge and skills, and technological competency. The mission to "strengthen the social and cultural life of the community" is also addressed by many general education goals, such as humanistic perspective, global and cultural awareness, and ethical reasoning and action.

Some of the general education goals, such as quantitative knowledge and skills and scientific knowledge and reasoning, are addressed in courses within a specific discipline, such as mathematics and the various sciences. Other goals, most notably those relating to diversity and ethics, are met in a variety of courses from different disciplines. MCC offers a number of courses that have been designated as diversity electives.

Liberal Arts students are required to take one of these diversity electives; students in all other degree programs and certificates can choose one of these courses to satisfy their elective requirements. Ethical issues are relevant in many of the general education areas, such as scientific knowledge and reasoning, technological competency, and society and human behavior, and thus a separate designation of ethics courses is not required.

Breadth of Offerings

Middlesex County College offers general education courses in oral and written communications, scientific and quantitative reasoning, as well as technological competence. The purpose of the General Education program is to ensure that graduates develop competencies that enable them to analyze and evaluate information, think critically and independently, and be informed and articulate. The courses are organized into the six categories: communication (GE COM), mathematics, science and technology (GE MST), social sciences (GE SS), humanities (GE HUM), history (GE HIS), and diversity [which includes ethical reasoning] (GE DIV).

MCC's general education outcomes contains student-learning outcomes for written communication, speech communication, quantitative reasoning, scientific reasoning, information literacy, technological competence, and critical analysis. The learning outcomes of all general education courses at MCC reflect the general education outcomes adopted by the College. General education courses are included in each degree program check sheet and in course descriptions included in the College catalog. In addition, every course at Middlesex County College, including general education courses, has an associated course abstract. The course description, learning outcomes and content areas are contained in the course abstract. The course abstracts are available to faculty on the "Assessment" website, which is accessible through the InfoNet.

General education courses are included in each degree program and noted on the program outlines and in course descriptions included in the catalog. A list of course offerings that target oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and technological competence are located in Appendix W.

Assessing General Education Courses

General education outcomes are currently assessed at the course level within each department. Each general education course has learning outcomes that include at least one general education outcome, which is consistent with the College's general education learning outcomes. In conjunction with the learning outcomes, there is an assessment plan to evaluate the learning outcomes including the general education outcome. The learning outcomes and how they are assessed are determined by the department on a course-by-course basis. The assessment methods vary widely and include evaluation of written exercises using grading rubrics, student surveys, questions on final exams, and practical exercises in a laboratory.

For example, in BIO-123 (General Biology I) one learning outcome addresses applying the scientific method. The assessment includes multiple choice questions from a practical (lab) exam, an experimental design section on the practical exam, a student self-assessment of knowledge of the scientific method, and a multiple choice exam administered in lecture at the end of the semester. In CHM-121 and CHM-122 (General Chemistry I and II), selected questions in the multiple-choice final exam are used for evaluation of the learning outcomes.

An assessment program using learning outcomes was put into effect during the fall 2008 semester. As of November 2010, all of the general education courses have developed learning outcomes. The number of courses with assessment plans has been steadily growing. Approximately 175 courses or 100% have assessment plans compared to 86% of the courses in September and 50% in April. Of the courses with assessment plans, about 102, or 58% overall, have assessment data, compared to 55% in September and 17% in April.

Several courses for which data has been obtained have had changes made in order to improve them. For example, in the BIO-123 course, additional in-class and homework assignments connected with the scientific method were given. In addition, the questions used for evaluation were rewritten for greater clarity. The experimental design portion of the exam is being modified to better evaluate student abilities at this beginning level. The changes were enacted in the fall 2009 semester, and evaluation at the end of the semester indicated that the students tended to perform better, although further modifications will be considered.

In PSY-123 (Introduction to Psychology), numerous assessments have been conducted during the past two years. In fall 2008, assessment results indicated that students were not achieving learning outcomes at an acceptable level. As a result, faculty members met several times to discuss and develop core content areas. These content areas were published in the course abstract and distributed to all faculty members. In addition, full time faculty members shared teaching ideas with one another. During the spring 2009 semester, several faculty members also visited one another's classroom to observe different teaching techniques. Many techniques were shared on a department website that is accessible to full-time and part-time faculty. All faculty members can contribute to the site.

During fall 2009, the course re-assessment process showed that improvements in many areas were evident. During the spring 2010 semester, results were not as promising. Faculty members are interested in looking at trend data over a couple of years to understand what students are and are not learning. In fall 2010, faculty members reviewed the assessment data and decided to target efforts in the area of research and theory. The plan is to conduct comprehensive assessment in this area and to share more teaching strategies that address these areas.

MCC has obtained a Carnegie Grant, along with Rutgers University and William Paterson University. The Grant provides funds for direct assessment at each institution, and MCC will use these funds to administer the Community College Learning Assessment (CCLA) exam. Analysis of the results of the assessment will occur, along with policy recommendations made to our respective academic officers based upon those results. The three colleges will collaborate to create rubrics for in-house general education assessment and have agreed to target the general education goal of information literacy.

The CCLA tool measures critical thinking, problem solving, and mechanics and persuasiveness of writing. It is a value added methodology focusing on how Middlesex County College contributes to the students' skills. The CCLA offers a longitudinal

approach, in which a sample of students entering MCC was assessed in fall 2010, and a sample of students completing their degrees will be assessed in spring 2012. Students are asked to complete essays in 105 minutes, which are graded according to a rubric. Currently, 562 new MCC students meeting the criteria for taking the test and have been invited to participate in the CCLA. MCC expects to test at least 100 students during fall 2010.

Advising Students of General Education Requirements

Students are first introduced to general education requirements at new student orientation conducted during the fall and spring enrollment cycles. In the April-September 2009 cycle, 2,900 students attended new student orientation, with 407 attending in the November 2009-January 2010 cycle. Students registered in the Student Success course (SSD-101) receive additional reinforcement about general education requirements when they attend the SSD advising sessions during their first semester.

The Middlesex County College catalog includes all degree and certificate programs and their general education requirements. The catalog also has a section that lists all general education electives. These requirements are also found in the degree or certificate specific curriculum check sheets that are available in department offices, the Department of Counseling and Career Services, the Academic Advising Center, the Educational Opportunity Fund Office, the Office of Minority Student Affairs, Project Connections, and the Perth Amboy and New Brunswick Centers. The Registrar's office degree evaluation also apprises students of general education requirements. As is typical, a student's general education and other requirements are established in the catalog in effect when the student is admitted to a program and subsequent changes do not impact him or her.

Each course with general education designation incorporates those learning outcomes into its learning outcomes. When completed, the linking of the course abstract to Campus Cruiser and the MCC website will provide students with a clear-cut understanding of what they should accomplish in a particular course. Professors are encouraged to include this information on their syllabi.

Electronic channels supplement the traditional sources of information about general education requirements. These include the Academic Advising Center's website, the MCC "Guide to Self-Advising," and the online catalog found on the Middlesex County College main web site. Students utilizing their Web Advisor accounts can also learn of their general education requirements when they compile their degree evaluation reports. Recent years have seen an increased emphasis on the electronic outlets mentioned for the best dissemination of timely and accurate information.

For students transferring to or from MCC, a state-wide website documents transfer courses and their status at the receiving college. This website, <http://www.njtransfer.org>, identifies how the course transfers from the sending to the receiving college, whether the course is accepted as a general education course and, if so, to what general education category, as a social science course, a humanities course, etc.

Institutional Support for General Education

As with all College committees and taskforces, the members of the General Education Committee serve voluntarily. There is no financial compensation for participation on any of these committees so there is no budget for the Committee. However, there are College support and incentives for faculty who serve on committees such as the General Education Committee. Members may use their service as a means to gain support for promotion in academic rank as part of the voluntary services they perform for the College. Other members of the General Education Committee serve out of a sense of professional responsibility.

Faculty members of the Middlesex County College General Education Committee have many years of experience in course and curriculum development. In addition, they have served in a variety of positions in the campus community on behalf of course and curriculum development. One member of the current General Education Committee also serves as Middlesex's representative at the state level for general education requirements.

Recommendations:

- Modify the general education section of the course approval form so that it provides direction as to where to find the course criteria that will designate whether a course is accepted as a general education course and in what general education area.
- Review the "Curriculum Procedures Manual" and update as needed to reflect any changes in the curriculum approval process for general education courses.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

Responsibility for all Offerings

Degree, Certificates and Certificate of Achievement Programs

All programs – degree, certificate, and certificate of achievement – offered at the College and conducted under its name demonstrate compliance with the rules of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, and education laws and guidelines, as well as all other federal, state, and applicable accreditation agencies. Degree audits are performed to assure compliance with award criteria. This includes Certificates (30-36 credits), and Certificates of Achievement (16-21 credits). All students in credit bearing Certificate and Certificate of Achievement programs are offered the same resources and services as degree program students. In addition, MCC has a rigorous approval process and ongoing assessment process for all credit courses and programs conducted under its name, including several joint programs with health care institutions. They include:

Dental Assisting Certificate

The Dental Assisting Certificate is jointly awarded by the College and the School for Health Related Programs of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ). A joint committee reviews the application for any MCC student who has successfully taken BIO-111, ENG-121, and PSY-123. The clinical portion of the program is held at the UMDNJ School of Health Related Professions. After a student completes all designated courses, a joint audit committee (MCC/UMDNJ) verifies program completion, and a joint certificate is awarded.

Respiratory Care Joint Program with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

The RST Program is a joint degree with UMDNJ that has a diploma awarded and signed by both MCC and UMDNJ officials. It may originate with MCC or UMDNJ but is affirmed by both institutions. MCC and UMDNJ both perform a graduation audit to check transcripts for completion of the degree requirements.

Joint Nursing Program with Raritan Bay Medical Center

The Joint Nursing Program with Raritan Bay Medical Center is discussed under “Contractual Relationships” below.

Non-Credit Programs

The Division of Corporate and Community Education markets its programs on the College website and develops bulletins and brochures. Division programs serving the needs of industry or professional groups are developed under specific guidelines. For example, the MCC Institute (one of the Division’s components) offers North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners programs for the solar energy sector that adhere to guidelines set by that organization. The Institute’s Transportation and Logistics Certificate courses reflect input from its industry advisory group.

These courses have defined goals and objectives, and this information is provided to participants. For instance, the Professional & Community Programs bulletin includes sections on “Why You Should Attend,” “What You Can Expect,” “Prerequisites,” “Pricing,”

“Texts Required,” and “Payment Options.” Copies of all spring 2011 bulletins and brochures for credit and non-credit programs may be found in the team’s resource room.

A limited number of noncredit courses may qualify for academic credit in specific programs at Middlesex County College. In these instances, students are referred to an appropriate MCC academic department, which reviews the respective noncredit offering. Examples include the MCC Health Information Coding Certificate and the alternative track to ARRT Certification for radiographers.

Assessment and Financial Impact

All noncredit certificate programs are evaluated by students and instructors. Corporate and Community Education administrators provide oversight of instructor ratings, materials, and anecdotal reviews. The dean and directors of Corporate and Community Education programs review evaluations and recommend appropriate program revisions. An example is the Transportation/Logistics/Distribution (TLD) program developed with New Jersey Business and Industry Association funding. The Division adjusted the certificate courses when evaluations indicated that the subject matter should be presented with logistics-related information and that there was a need to provide two courses – one directed to employees with entry-level skills and one targeted at those with experience in the TLD industry.

The Division of Corporate and Community Education documents its revenue and expenses to ensure that Division programs, services and courses generate sufficient revenue or other benefits (e.g., address a community need, assure student satisfaction, etc.) to support continuing these offerings. The MCC Finance office generates net revenue or net loss reports in order to assess the impact of noncredit programs on MCC resources. The New Jersey Council of County Colleges and the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education generate higher education reports each fall to assess the impact of noncredit programming and respective enrollments on the State of New Jersey, and the College considers these reports when planning course offerings.

Approval Processes

Academic Credit Courses

All new courses offered by the College for credit or credit equivalency must follow a sequential course approval process:

- Approval of department faculty
- Approval by department chairperson
- Approval of Divisional Council
- Approval of division dean
- Approval of Curriculum Task Force
- Approval of Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
- Approval of College Assembly
- Approval of President

Occasionally, new credit or credit-equivalent courses are offered on an experimental basis without prior College Assembly action, upon approval by the appropriate dean and the Vice

President for Academic and Student Affairs. Exceptions to the standard curriculum approval process also include a Fast Track approval that may be used to make minor changes in curriculum or courses. The procedures for course and program approvals are rigorous, yet flexible enough to adjust to changing needs.

Professional and Community Programs:

The Division of Corporate and Community Education offers a wide variety of noncredit courses and programs that serve the professional development of many incumbent and dislocated workers. The development process entails work with content experts, associations, governments, or business clients who are knowledgeable about the needs of workers/professionals in a variety of sectors. Development involves securing program approval from the client – a business, government organization, or association, such as the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners or the New Jersey Department of Corrections. Programs are evaluated by students and instructors, and assessments may also be developed for certain programs as required by the grantor or client.

Determining Student Preparedness

Placement Test

In order to determine whether incoming students are prepared for college-level study, the College requires that the following students take the entrance placement test, Accuplacer, before they register for classes:

- New full-time students.
- New part-time students entering degree programs.
- Part-time, non-matriculated students who have completed 11 credits at the College.
- Students who have not attained sophomore status at an accredited U.S. college.

The entrance placement test consists of a 60-minute essay and multiple choice questions that measure student skills in reading comprehension and elementary algebra. Students are also tested on computation *or* intermediate algebra/college level math skills, depending on progress on the elementary algebra portion of the test. Except for the essay, the computerized test is untimed. The test is designed to provide information about student skills in English and mathematics. Results are used to place students in courses appropriate to their level of preparation. Currently, MCC is participating with the other community colleges in a coordinated effort led by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges to use common placement scores and to ensure the validity of the common cut scores.

Developmental Program

All programs and courses offered at the College, including those for student development, are assessed utilizing the same assessment criteria used for credit bearing courses. This includes the development and posting of course abstracts, assessment plans, learning outcomes, data collection, use of data, and program mapping. For a detailed discussion of the College's program of developmental courses, please see Standard Eleven.

Support Services for Students

Students must complete all required developmental courses as early as possible and no credit-bearing courses in English or mathematics may be taken prior to completion of required remedial courses in these areas. Those in two or more developmental courses are provided with support services and must enroll in a Student Success course to help develop study and critical thinking skills. Students are also provided with counseling, tutoring, access to computer labs, and disability services if needed.

The College opened a Learning Center in the Johnson Commons area of the Instructional Resource Center in January 2010. It is committed to empowering students to become efficient, confident, and independent learners. The Learning Center helps foster student retention while promoting positive attitudes and self-confidence. It helps students in evaluating their strengths and weaknesses and developing the requisite skills needed to succeed in reaching their academic, career, and personal goals. The Learning Center also offers support services to students in developmental English, reading, and mathematics.

Approval and Assessment of Certificates and Certificate of Achievement Programs

Certificate and Certificate of Achievement programs follow the College's standard development, approval, review, and assessment processes.

The effectiveness of MCC Certificate and Certificate of Achievement programs is measured through continual assessment, including a review of the program and outcomes measurement through goals and benchmarks at the course and program level. Also, many MCC programs must comply with agency-required standards for accreditation. Due to the occurrence of ongoing changes in accreditation standards, the College developed a Fast Track approval process which accommodates changes in accrediting agency standards, in a timely fashion.

Experiential Learning

The College has published and implemented policies for the awarding of experiential learning credit. A general overview of these policies is available in the front section of the Middlesex County College Catalog. Various methods are used to award credit for experiential learning. These include the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and MCC's Credit by Examination Program (CBE). Applicants for CLEP and CBE include those who have work experience and wish to demonstrate it, or have taken courses at a non-accredited educational institution, or through adult education or correspondence programs, or in the military. These credits are granted when they are evaluated as equivalent to college-level courses, as determined by the academic departments with the concurrent approvals of the chair and dean. Basic military training is accepted credit toward the physical education requirement. MCC also considers USAFI/DANTES credits.

Students entering the Health Science Associate in Applied Science degree program are required to have a non-degree certification or licensure in an allied health field. Students may receive up to 30 credits for previous allied health training; experiential learning credit award is based upon an evaluation of the total hours of training and the level of training. Published policies regarding experiential learning credits for previous allied health training are available in the Health Science section of the College catalog.

The evaluation for the Health Science Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) Program is conducted by the program director, who is certified by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (C.A.E.L.), with a Certificate of Achievement as a Prior Learning Assessor and a Certificate of Mastery in Prior Learning Assessment. The director has oversight of the Health Science curriculum and collaborates with other department chairpersons.

New Brunswick and Perth Amboy Centers

Facilities and Programs

The Middlesex County College New Brunswick Center serves the greater New Brunswick community. It was first established more than 30 years ago through the efforts of the College and the city's re-development organization, aided by an advisory committee comprised of representatives from government, business, industry, and community groups. The Center provides educational opportunities to meet the needs of the community it serves. There are twelve classrooms, including three Computer Labs, a Biology Lab, and a Multipurpose Room that is utilized for courses that require a specialized area, such as an Art or Theatre class.

The MCC Perth Amboy Center has provided educational services to the city of Perth Amboy and its surrounding communities since 1974. The Center is located in a new facility shared with the Vocational School that has eight classrooms: three computer labs that include an ESL lab and an Instructional Lab; a multipurpose room; and a student lounge. Both Centers offer a variety of courses, which include English as a Second Language; developmental courses in reading, writing, and math, and college-level courses in liberal arts, science, and business.

Academic instruction at the Centers is supervised by the appropriate College academic department chairperson, who hires, trains, and evaluates teaching at the centers and utilizes the same curriculum and books used on the Edison campus.

Student Services

Provided at each Center is a full range of enrollment services, which include:

- Assistance with admissions applications and class registration
- In person registration and student accounting services
- Approvals and processing of Drop/Add forms
- Tutoring
- Assistance with academic and financial appeals
- Financial aid orientation and FAFSA application assistance
- Academic student support workshops
- College placement test preparation workshops
- Transcript requests
- Change of address notifications
- Tuition payments plan processing
- Student photo ID cards
- Access to counselors for transfer, career, and personal counseling by appointment or through group sessions and workshops
- Various educational, cultural, and social activities each semester.

New Brunswick Center and Perth Amboy Center students have full privileges at the campus in Edison. With their MCC ID, students may use the learning center, library, gym

facilities, and cafeteria, as well as participate in a wide range of activities led by student clubs and the Student Activities office.

Library Services

The College offers limited library services at both the New Brunswick and Perth Amboy Centers. Both have part time librarians to support the research needs of faculty and students. The New Brunswick Center also offers a limited collection of reference books and the part-time librarian utilizes the ten-seat open computer lab to assist students. The room is small and space restricts storage for resource books to one small cabinet. Library services available at both Centers include group and individual instruction on using MCC's online catalog and online databases, evaluating Internet Sources, MLA and APA formatting, effective research strategies, and career research. Students may request and borrow circulating books and videos from the Edison campus library; the items are delivered to the respective Center.

The New Brunswick Center has six media enhanced classrooms, a portable laptop lab for use in biology courses, as well as two NOMAD systems laptops for faculty that are set up upon request. All classrooms at the Perth Amboy Center are media enhanced with projectors, using either desktop PCs or laptops.

Distance Learning Courses

Overview, Outcomes, and Approval

The College is not a major provider of online courses. Distance learning courses, including hybrid courses, that MCC does offer have the same learning outcomes as traditional classes. Program maps visually demonstrate the connection between courses and program outcomes for each academic major. Distance learning assessment is integrated into course and program level assessment. All credit bearing distance learning and hybrid courses go through the same approval, accreditation, and assessment process as all other credit courses.

There is a 19 member Ad Hoc Committee on Distance Education charged with assessing the current level of development in distance education; identifying planned and currently offered courses/programs (hybrid, online and other non-traditional courses); as well as reviewing enrollment and success rates. The committee may recommend a strategic plan for the future direction of distance education, identify software/hardware needs, recommend a timeline for the implementation of the plan, and identify course/program evaluation strategies.

MCC uses three methods of providing students with access to distance learning and hybrid credit courses: Campus Cruiser, MOODLE, (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) and WebCT, part of the NJ Virtual Community College Consortium. Noncredit distance learning courses are offered through MCC Professional and Community Programs in partnership with *Education to Go*, which provides the College with hundreds of high quality noncredit continuing education courses that it would otherwise be unable to offer. The College thus benefits from a small income stream while the community has a wide selection of courses from which to choose.

All new courses offered for academic credit or academic credit equivalency must go through a standard sequential course approval process detailed on page 13-2. Distance learning and hybrid courses go through an additional review process via the Distance Education Committee and the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.

Training of Faculty

The Director of Instructional Design and Media Services (IDMS) in conjunction with the MCC Distance Education Committee and the Center for Enrichment of Learning and Teaching, offers orientations and workshops about online and hybrid learning, learning management systems, and online learning technologies. The Director of IDMS provides one-on-one mentoring and support to all faculty members involved in developing and delivering a distance or hybrid course, including assistance with the instructional design and course development and implementation. The Director maintains a comprehensive website with information on a wide variety of learning technologies and online learning resources and that provides information about and access to local, state, and online professional development opportunities in distance education.

Student Services

Library and media services provide access to a wide range of online services via the Internet. Students may search the library catalog and have access to a wide range of online bibliographic databases, journals, newspapers, and reference resources, including: the ARTstor online database of over one million images, nearly three hundred streaming videos, and a selection of e-books and audio books for download. Also, students may easily access online subject guides, guidance on citation formats, Internet sites, and library blogs. An online library help forum and professional college librarian assistance is also available via a link to *Q&A New Jersey*, a network of experienced New Jersey librarians offering free live, interactive search assistance twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

The MCC website provides access to a wide range of online information and ancillary services, including the College catalog, course availability, enrollment, College bookstore, information about academic advising and self advising, counseling and career services, financial aid, and many other service departments on campus. Online Information Technology help desk services are available via email and email.

Assessment

At Middlesex County College, distance learning assessment is integrated into course and program level assessment. When engaged in course level assessment, departments consider the outcomes of students in online versus on-ground coursework. For example, recent PSY-123 course level data indicates that students in online and on-ground courses perform similarly across learning outcomes. Institutional Research has provided an annual summary of data, Appendix X, comparing distance and traditional courses that shows overall no significant difference in effectiveness between online and traditional modes of delivery.

Contractual Relationships

Contracted educational services support the mission of MCC "...to provide access to an affordable, quality education for diverse students and to promote lifelong learning

opportunities to strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of the community.” These relationships to provide educational services are consistent with Middlesex County College Institutional Goals. Contracts follow a review process to insure compliance with New Jersey statutes and regulations.

Several departments and programs at the College enter into contractual relationships to provide educational services to support program offerings. For example, there is a partnership agreement between Middlesex County College and Raritan Bay Medical Center (RBMC). Discussions regarding a nursing program began in January 2006. The agreement, submitted for approval to the Commission on Higher Education as a substantive change, provides that virtually all academic aspects of the program are controlled by MCC. RBMC has a long history of involvement with nursing education and provision of healthcare in the county. In October 2006, the Middlesex County College Associate in Science Degree Nursing Program in Association with Raritan Bay Medical Center was established. The program was approved by the New Jersey Board of Nursing in February 2007 and accepted its first class in fall 2007.

The Nursing Program is fully accredited by the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission from 2009-2014. The initial partnership agreement is six years in length; the agreement may be renewed for five-year terms by mutual written agreement of the parties and discussion has begun for a continuing partnership. The partnership promotes excellence in nursing education, enhances the nursing profession, and benefits the community of Middlesex County and the State of New Jersey.

MCC departments that use contractual arrangements to provide educational services offer a variety of noncredit programs through external partnerships with organizations such as the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the New Jersey Department of Education, Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools, and Middlesex County Regional Educational Services Commission. These agencies are often the main suppliers to the community of professional development, job training and re-training, and personal enrichment. A wide variety of certificate programs, professional development for K-12 teachers and other professions, as well as courses that focus on personal enrichment are offered each semester and meet the needs and demands of the community.

Contracted educational services assist students with job placement, provide child care while the student is attending classes, offer career advisement, and make academic support available to students. Programs are also created and supported that offer both nontraditional and traditional students the content knowledge and career ladder options to make career transitions. For example, nontraditional students switching to teaching careers may work toward their certification process at the College through a partnership program with New Jersey City University, the New Jersey Department of Education, and the state’s community colleges. MCC offers customized training through The Institute in response to local business and organization needs to adapt to industry changes and increase employee skills. Students in MCC programs provided by contractual relationships are offered services consistent with those made available to students in College run programs. For example, MCC youth grant programs funded by the county offer referrals to a variety of MCC departments in order to provide special support services.

College Oversight of Activities Carried Out in Its Name

The College has sufficient oversight of all activities carried out in its name. All MCC noncredit programs include student and instructor course evaluations that are regarded as key assessment tools. Directors and chairs review evaluations and address any necessary program and staffing changes. In the case of grant-funded programs (both credit and noncredit), additional program assessments are often conducted by an outside evaluator as specified by the funding source. These assessments may include a written report and/or an actual monitoring visit, as well as a program and fiscal audit. Programs such as Early Employment Initiative, Community Work Experience, and Job Search Assistance were developed based on the needs of the community and are typically funded through grants provided by various federal, state, and county government agencies such as the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board. Each grant-funded program is assessed through monthly reports and annual monitoring visits from the agency that awarded the grant.

Programs that serve the needs of an industry or professional group may be developed and delivered under specific guidelines and standards. MCC develops these programs in collaboration with industrial and professional experts, associations, or business clients who are knowledgeable about the needs of workers and professionals in a variety of sectors. For instance, the Division of Corporate and Community Education offers a Transportation and Logistics Certificate, developed with input from an industry advisory group and supervised and assessed according to industry standards.

Recommendation:

- Explore the possibility of expanding and developing new career ladders from the noncredit certificate programs that would enable students to continue their academic growth through a transition into credit courses and programs, thus providing lifelong learning opportunities that strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of our community.

Standard Fourteen: Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment Program

Middlesex County College has developed an assessment program that evaluates student learning outcomes at the course and program level. Our assessment journey began nearly 10 years ago with several assessment initiatives such as the hiring of nationally known experts on assessment as consultants and the establishment of an assessment committee. Significant focus on assessment was made starting in January 2004 when all members of the campus were expected to participate in full day training on creating assessment plans. Also during this time period, a campus wide assessment committee was formed. During 2004-2005, consultants provided additional guidance and conducted a follow-up training for the College. As a result of this training, consultation, and committee work, all departments created assessment plans.

Given the fact that most of the members of the College had very little experience or training in assessment, these initial efforts unfortunately did not result in assessment becoming integrated into college operations. Follow through in a transitioning administration coupled with personnel changes let these efforts languish. All departments generated assessment plans, but this is where most efforts ended. This was most likely due to the focus being on creating assessment plans without a strong focus on establishing clear, precise, and measurable learning outcomes. Many departments did not use action verbs consistent with Bloom's taxonomy when developing outcomes and many assessment plans relied on data that was not easily obtainable. In other words, important foundation steps in the assessment process were overlooked. A more detailed look at the chronology of earlier assessment attempts may be found on page 7-1.

These efforts did however lay some groundwork for assessment dialogue and preliminary efforts on campus. A report from the assessment committee in spring 2007 summarized the issues that were keeping the College from reaching its long standing goal of creating the "culture of assessment" sought by most institutions that are serious in their assessment efforts. When it became apparent that the original plans were not sustainable, as assessment projects floundered because of poor planning, the College moved to a more manageable process with the aim of making assessment systematic and consistent. Quite frankly, the early mistakes and the learning that transpired from these initial efforts shaped more recent initiatives that have proven to be much more successful.

In spring 2008, new academic and service assessment working groups, chaired by an associate professor were formed. These committee members led the College through a much more manageable, yet comprehensive and meaningful, assessment journey that began by offering a 2008 Summer Assessment Institute for faculty. Recognizing the need for ongoing training and support, the committees offered 10 additional assessment workshops held in the fall 2008 semester (ranging from reviewing the assessment process to sharing how departments used data to improve learning and services. These workshops were led by the assessment working group committee chair and members. Please see Appendix Y for a list of recent assessment activities.

The faculty member began this initiative during her sabbatical in fall 2008 and has been receiving six credits of release time per semester for her assessment work and these assessment training opportunities continue to take place. More recently, there has been a shift toward more individual consultation and technology based training (narrated PowerPoint presentations and screen movies) to meet the individual needs of each department. These shifts were made based on feedback from members of the campus. For example, survey responses from the Assessment Resources and Program Assessment Workshop that took place in March 2010 indicated that the majority of participants wanted further individual consultation versus additional training.

Evidence that this assessment is a sustained one comes from various data. Perhaps the most compelling is the assessment “snapshot” data which were collected in November 2009, January 2010, May 2010, and November 2010. The newly established assessment website allowed us to “track” and share our assessment progress. These data visually display our assessment progress and activities as a campus. In fall 2008, the College asked all academic departments to revisit the existing course level objectives and update and revise them using outcome language. Similarly, academic departments were asked to review existing course outlines and update the content areas. One of the primary purposes of this task was to bring consistency to every course at the College. The course description, learning outcomes, and content areas were then packaged into a document called the Course Abstract.

In less than two years time, departments have revamped objectives into learning outcomes for 100% of the courses being offered at the College. Similarly, departments created new course abstracts for 100% of the courses at the College. This process of developing course abstracts required faculty members to identify core content areas for each course. The “snapshots” show how quickly progress in these areas was achieved. For instance, in November 2009, 59% of the course abstracts were completed, while this percentage jumped to 75% in January 2010 and is now complete for all courses.

Departments also engaged in program assessment activities that started with the creation of program maps, directly linking program and course level outcomes. Each academic department reviewed the entire curriculum for each major offered. This activity in and of itself proved useful. For example, in the Biology Department, it was discovered that the scientific method was not being explicitly taught in the BIO-111, Anatomy and Physiology, course. Since this was a general education and program outcome, immediate action was taken to include this outcome at the course level.

That assessment is being sustained is further demonstrated by looking closely at the assessment plans, data collection, and use of data. Specifically, the percentage of courses that have an assessment plan posted is currently 96% (November 2010), which is up from 80% in May 2010, 18% in January 2010, and 7% in November 2009. Initial emphasis was placed on courses with general education status and courses that are heavily populated. It is important to note that the plans posted during this process are manageable and will be easy to implement.

Evidence for this comes from the data that has already been collected and used. Again, there has been a tremendous increase in data and use of data for improvement. In November 2009, only 4% of the courses had data and used it while this number increased to 7% in January 2010, 16% in March 2010, and shot up to over 50% of all courses having assessment data in

May 2010. A total of 331 courses have already collected assessment data. A significant number of new assessment initiatives are being conducted during the fall 2010 semester which will bring the percentage of courses with data up to 61% (371 courses) by December 2010. After taking action to address areas that need improvement, departments are re-assessing to find out whether interventions proved to be effective. By the end of the fall 2010 semester, 17% of the courses offered at the college will have re-assessment data. This is up from 9.3% in May 2010. This is strong evidence that assessment activities are becoming integrated into educational practices across the campus.

The College has also made investments in personnel to assist the campus in moving forward. In addition to the six credits of faculty release time provided to the chair of the assessment working groups, the administration approved the request for a part-time assessment and research technician. This position was created due to a needs analysis that indicated the need for support with data entry tasks and monitoring of assessment activities. The Director of Institutional Research is also very involved in assessment efforts, serving on the assessment committee and assisting departments with accessing the data they need. In addition to this position, several new administrative positions have been recently created, with one of the primary responsibilities being in the area of assessment.

The new Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, for instance, is actively involved in monitoring and supporting campus wide assessment activities. The vice presidents and deans also have key roles in the institutionalization of assessment at the College, charged with overseeing and supporting assessment efforts. Recently, two new assistant deans for the academic divisions were created and filled. The assistant deans are already very involved with assessment efforts, working with individual departments to continue assessment progress. The increasing size of the assessment committee is further evidence that this assessment movement is strong and becoming institutionalized. The voluntary assessment committee had approximately 10 members in 2007 and now has 38 members from across all areas of the College.

The Assessment website is a strong component of the formalized assessment efforts. It is the repository of the continuing and sustained efforts being made for continual improvement in student achievement. In addition, it allows the entire campus to view and share assessment activities. This communication has been an essential part of the College's transition journey to having an integrated and ongoing assessment process on campus.

Statements of Learning Outcomes

Following efforts begun in 2003, an augmented effort was rejuvenated in August 2008 to restructure, redefine, and tailor course and program learning outcomes campus wide to better align with manageable and measurable assessment plans. During this process, all academic departments reviewed existing academic objectives and updated and transformed the objectives into learning outcomes. Emphasis was placed on capturing the intent of the course or program with measurable outcome language that aligned with Bloom's taxonomy and that was suitable for both communication and assessment purposes.

As a result of this process, learning outcomes have been identified at the course, program, and institutional level. As of November 2010, 100% of courses, 100% of programs, and 96% of

certificates programs have learning outcomes posted on the assessment website. All new courses and programs going through the curriculum process are required to have outcomes established prior to seeking approval from the Curriculum Task Force. Teams comprised of faculty and administrators began the process of developing course learning outcomes during the Summer Assessment Institute that took place in August 2008. The entire faculty then became involved through a workshop entitled “Defining Academic Expectations: The Faculty Voice” held at the start of the fall 2008 semester, and these efforts continued through department meetings and additional campus-wide meetings. Resources were utilized to ensure that the learning outcomes developed were in keeping with external standards in higher education.

On the institutional level, Middlesex County College adopted the General Education Outcomes created by a statewide organization. Courses designated with General Education status comply with the state standards. Please see Appendix U. Although campus community members have been provided with resources to create effective learning outcomes, a quality check is only in place for new courses and programs. In these cases, the task force evaluates the learning outcomes.

As described in the strategic planning process, members from across all areas of the College participated in the development of institutional goals and strategic planning outcomes. Departmental outcomes were then linked to the institutional goals and strategic outcomes via a mapping process. Please see Appendix Z for a map showing the relationship of department plans and the College’s strategic teaching and learning goals.

Utilization of Existing Data

The consistent message that has been sent to the campus was that the assessment process must be meaningful but manageable. Whenever possible, existing data is used. For example, many departments require a departmentalized final exam or lab tests. For departments that do not require a standardized final, an embedded question approach is undertaken so that assessment activities are integrated into current practices rather than becoming an “add on.”

Efforts have been made to effectively use existing resources when possible. For example, Scantron machines that were already being used by departments for examination purposes are also utilized for assessment purposes. When examining assessment methods being used, most departments are relying on assignments and activities that are already a part of the course. For example, a breakdown of the percentage of assessment methods is as follows: 38% exams (objective and short answer), 12.5% assignments (written and other), 7% lab work, 4% presentations or performances, and 3% classroom discussions. Choosing these methods that are already integrated into the course makes assessment more productive and less cumbersome.

It became evident that the College needed some additional survey resources, so a one-year contract with Survey Monkey was recently purchased, expanding the previous tools that were available. The College also has a trial period for a survey and course evaluation tool within the Campus Cruiser system. A workshop on these tools was offered in March 2010, and several departments are currently using “Cruiser Eval” for assessment purposes. As these

tools are already integrated into our current computerized system, the transition to utilizing them for expanding assessment efforts has been fairly seamless.

To help keep assessment manageable from a human resources viewpoint, departments have been encouraged to use samples rather than entire populations. This helps keep the data entry and analysis less cumbersome. Departments have expressed concerns about the amount of time required to enter data and compile assessment results. To address this issue, a part-time assessment and research technician has been hired to expand the Institutional Research department support for assessment efforts. As noted above, the College is currently looking at assessment tools available within the course management system (Survey and Course Evaluation tools). It is hoped that these tools may make the data collection process much more streamlined, saving large amounts of time via computerized data collection and compilation of results.

The entire campus is aware of the assessment process, and all activities are shared via the assessment website. This is where all of the materials from workshops and assessment documents are posted, and all members of the campus have access to this information. Assessment activities are communicated via the President's address at the start of each semester, InfoNet postings, workshops, e-mail communications, and on the assessment website. In support of the effectiveness of using the InfoNet as a primary communication tool, there were 470 views of the President's memo about assessment in the spring 2010 semester.

Members of the campus community, who attended assessment workshops (including the obligatory Faculty Development Day in August 2008), completed an evaluation that was directly connected to the learning outcomes for the session. Results indicated that 100% of the attendees agreed that they had met the learning outcome. This was further evidenced by their ability to correctly answer quiz questions about assessment. Self-reports about being able to discuss the value of assessment increased from a 4.12 (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 indicating strongly agree) in August 2008 to a 4.53 in October 2008, providing additional evidence that the mindset about assessment and its value was becoming more positive. Members of the College valuing assessment clearly set the foundation for the extensive assessment work that followed.

Confidence in Data

Though there are limitations with all types of data, assessment data appears to be generally accurate. Perhaps the most significant evidence for the accuracy of the assessment findings stems from the fact that faculty members from across the College have reviewed the data and have made substantive changes based on the data. The majority of assessment plans (60%) have indicated the use of multiple measures in order to insure quality data. A variety of methods are being used including embedded questions in examinations, quizzes, self-reports, graduation surveys, competency skill tests, peer and faculty graded rubrics, externship evaluations, service opportunities, objective clinical simulation, and lab technique proficiency exercises.

Not surprisingly, objective test questions, often embedded on final exams (32% of methods indicated in assessment plans) seem to be the most commonly used assessment method. This method is advantageous because of ease of use and the direct data it provides about student

learning. Direct measures are primarily being relied on and comprised 83% (471 course assessment plans) of the methods indicated in assessment plans. Please see Appendix J for a summary of methods used.

Departments, however, have not been relying solely on direct measures. Indirect measures were being used in 38.8% of the cases. Several departments such as History and Social Science and Visual, Performing, and Media Arts have used self-assessment questions, an indirect measure, and have found this method to provide additional useful data. For instance, in Psychology, students are not reporting high levels of confidence with using APA style. As a result of this information, the department worked with the textbook publisher to add a supplemental APA style companion book as part of the textbook package for the Introductory Psychology course. Other departments such as Dental Hygiene and Modern Languages have used other indirect methods like survey tools. These varied approaches have provided much needed information to help departments shape interventions aimed at improving student learning.

Not surprisingly, the assessment efforts are stronger in the programs that have accreditation. There is also more evidence of student learning outcome data at the course level as compared to the program level because this was where the emphasis was initially placed. The rationale for focusing on the course level data first was twofold. First, it is more manageable to collect course level data and second, faculty members often see the course-level data as being most directly related to their daily experiences in the classroom. More efforts to extend course level assessment and program assessment are therefore needed.

Types of Data Collected

A few very recent examples of data collected and used for the purpose of improving student learning may be found in Appendix AA. Additional examples can be found on the Middlesex County College Assessment website <http://infonet/assessment/>. A few samples of course-level assessment activities will be reviewed here.

As a result of data that indicated students were not achieving learning outcomes at an acceptable level in the Introductory Psychology course, the History and Social Science department created a department website where teaching materials could be housed and shared among full time and part time faculty members. In addition, a discussion on the importance of having departmentally approved core content areas stemmed from the assessment process. As a result, a course abstract, where learning outcomes and core content areas are identified, was created and approved by the College Assembly. The effectiveness of these interventions was assessed by comparing spring 2008 data (before intervention) to 2009-2010 data (after the intervention). The results indicated that improvements were made in all categories; however, students did still not meet expectations in several categories. These interventions will continue and the course learning outcomes will be re-assessed. The department is targeting assessment efforts in two areas that needed improvement to gain a better understanding of what type of intervention is needed to improve student learning.

As a result of data collected as part of the assessment process for Anatomy and Physiology, the Biology department re-wrote the student “must-know” handbook, devised teaching strategies to better assist students with mastering the material, and conducted department

specific workshops for faculty to share teaching and assessment techniques. Practical exams given in fall 2008 and spring 2009 provide re-assessment data. Student performance was generally similar, but there was some improvement noted in a few areas (i.e., Articulations, Ventricle Models, and Discretions).

Several departments have posted re-assessment data on courses to determine if the interventions implemented were effective. The Nursing, Radiography, Dental Auxiliaries, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, History and Social Science, and English Departments have all documented this re-assessment process on the College's assessment website. Other departments are in the process of re-assessing. For instance, the Visual and Performing Arts Department is re-assessing all of their courses this fall 2010 semester. With the assessment program becoming integrated into current practices, it is expected that this re-assessment process will continue to grow. It is important to note that in some cases, the re-assessment process is delayed because courses are not offered every semester. Thus, although there is a plan in place to re-assess, it is not yet possible to gather new data.

Faculty Assessment Skills Development

To maximize the campus benefit of professional development in the area of assessment, most of these opportunities have been provided at the College. The first campus-wide training opportunity occurred in 2003-2004 when the College hired two consultants to conduct full-day workshops at the start of the spring and fall semesters. Materials from these workshops including videos of the training sessions were posted on the InfoNet so that they could be referred to as needed. The next assessment training offered by an outside expert was in January 2008 when there was campus wide training on the assessment process, with a focus on developing outcomes. As indicated in Appendix Y, there have been numerous in house workshops on assessment offered since fall 2008.

These training opportunities have included approximately 20 formal presentations, two open forums, one poster session, and three on-line tutorials. It should be noted that periodic needs assessments were conducted to determine the nature and method of these training opportunities. For example, a needs assessment of chairpersons was conducted in May 2009, please see Appendix BB, and this assessment shaped future training opportunities. Specifically, the College moved to more individualized versus group presentation support and emphasized the role of accreditation in assessment.

In terms of financial investment on behalf of the College, the chair of the assessment committees began these efforts as a sabbatical project and continues these efforts with six credits of release time per semester. There is a history of financial investment as evidenced by two faculty members receiving three credits of release time each for several years to lead assessment efforts on campus. College faculty members, staff, and administrators have attended national and local conferences to further learn about assessment. Members of the College have also presented on the topic of assessment. For example, the Assessment Chairperson and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs presented a workshop entitled "Assessment in Action at the Community College" at the League for Innovation at the Community College in March 2010.

The Center for Enrichment of Learning and Teaching (CELT) is a faculty run center solely focused on providing support for professors. This is clearly connected with the goal of assessment which is to improve student learning. It offers numerous professional enrichment opportunities for faculty. Please see Appendix CC for a list of recent CELT activities. The primary purpose of CELT is best described by its department outcome: “Faculty members will be able to discuss and apply effective teaching strategies.” CELT offers three primary services to help faculty members achieve this outcome: professional enrichment opportunities, information resources, and mentoring. The College supports CELT in many ways including financially. The director of CELT receives six credits of course release time per semester and the Center has an annual budget of \$9000.

This funding, in addition to College grants from the MCC Foundation and the Retail Services Corporation, has been used to bring nationally known speakers to campus. For example, Dr. Stephen Brookfield, Distinguished Professor at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, Minnesota and author of several award-winning books on adult education, led a day-long workshop in May 2005 focusing on “Responding to Resistance, Lack of Interest, and Passivity in the Classroom.” The conference was attended by over 60 faculty members from MCC and surrounding New Jersey community colleges. In May 2007, Dr. Virginia Anderson of Towson University led a workshop on “Effective Grading and Assessment: Strategies to Enhance Student Learning, Faculty Satisfaction, and Institutional Success.” Over 40 people attended her day-long workshop. At Faculty Professional Day in August 2007, the keynote address was given by Dr. Terri M. Manning, Director of the Center for Applied Research at Central Piedmont Community College, on “Millennials: The Next Generation in College Enrollment.” Dr. Manning also led several workshops during the day.

CELT has also received College grants for faculty professional growth projects. For instance, a Retail Services Corporation grant for \$4,300 has funded a 2009-2010 “Teaching with Technology” project. The grant allows CELT to fund six faculty technology mentors who have been surveying faculty members in each academic department (using “Audience Response System” technology) to determine which of several selected types of technology faculty members might want to spend time learning well enough to use in their teaching. Based on the survey results, the mentors developed workshops that were held at a Teaching with Technology institute in May 2010.

Most of the Center’s activities are facilitated by the College’s faculty members since part of CELT’s purpose is to have faculty members share their expertise with one another. Around 25 workshops are created and led each academic year by faculty members. In addition, eight to ten faculty members meet each year to discuss a selected book about learning and teaching. All CELT events are open to the campus and special efforts are made to include adjunct faculty. In addition, CELT maintains a website (<http://www.middlesexcc.edu/celt/control.cfm>) and other online locations where all faculty members can share teaching materials. It also has a collection of books on teaching and learning in the Middlesex County College library.

CELT helps fund faculty attendance at conferences related to teaching and learning by paying the registration fee. Each year, a team of full-time faculty members attend the Lilly East Teaching and Learning Conference and the Teaching Professor conference. In May

2009, seven faculty members attended the Teaching Professor conference and then shared what they learned at a CELT Professional Day workshop.

Recommendations:

Although there is significant evidence of assessment progress across the campus, continued efforts to expand all levels of assessment, particularly at the program and institutional levels, are needed. The tide appears to be turning, and the value of assessment is being recognized; however, these activities can be time consuming and place additional burdens on already taxed administrators, faculty, and staff members. The current assessment website has provided a foundation upon which to build; however, it needs to be significantly updated to accommodate new assessment needs. It is therefore essential that the College actively pursue ways to streamline the assessment process through technology. Specific recommendations follow:

- Explore options to move from the assessment website to a data based system that is more user friendly and functional, allowing for easy updating, monitoring, and searching.
- Explore technology options to streamline assessment efforts and assist us with program and institutional level assessment.
- Assess whether the current administrative support is sufficiently meeting needs and expand support and resources as needed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Middlesex County College began the process of mobilizing the campus community for its decennial self-study in spring 2008. The *Self-Study* design provided a framework for the findings about every division, department, and program that were examined for content, technological currency, consistency with the College mission, and, especially, effectiveness. From a core group of about five people, at various times over the next two-and-one-half years, more than 140 people were directly involved in the research, writing, and editing of the *Self-Study*. Through regular campus-wide reviews of work group report findings and drafts of the *Self-Study*, countless others contributed data, opinions, insights, comments, and criticisms that improved them.

Through this process, the entire College community was enriched and educated about College operations and programs. Overall, the reaccreditation process was one of intense self-assessment. It afforded the incentive for introspection and challenge, and provided a direction for improvement and renewal. The College community, building upon the *Self-Study* recommendations, must seek to strengthen programs and services to improve the student college experience and enhance student success.

Recommendations:

Standard One - Mission and Goals

- The Vision Statement should be reevaluated, with the goal of making it more inspirational and forward-looking.
- Continue to expand efforts to invite participation in developing and reviewing future versions of our vision, mission, institutional goals, and strategic plans.

Standard Two – Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

- The College should further research and analyze student needs as part of an effort to get to know its students and the community better.

Standard Three - Institutional Resources

- No recommendations

Standard Four - Leadership and Governance

- Consideration should be given to the establishment of a structured orientation for new Board of Trustees members.
- Make personnel handbooks available electronically via the College intranet, along with notifications of handbook updates.

Standard Five – Administration

- Create training for newly hired administrative employees.
- More widely promote on-going training for all employees

Standard Six - Institutional Integrity

- Consideration should be given to modifying the current Academic Freedom statement by adding additional terminology that applies to exhibitions, performances, and publications.
- Handling student grievances should be addressed and resolved by the assistant deans, a newly created position.
- Consider a procedure that permits a small number of lightly subscribed major course offerings to run without fear of cancellation.

Standard Seven - Institutional Assessment

- Determine the sufficiency of the level of assessment staffing and take further action as needed.
- While continuing the current efforts, begin to emphasize the quality and importance of the College's assessment efforts, not just the quantity of it.

Standard Eight - Student Admissions and Retention

- Revise the comprehensive recruitment and enrollment plan for the College, including admissions and financial aid.
- Continue to enhance the MCC web sites for students, faculty, staff, and the public.
- Consider initiation of new orientation sessions for nontraditional students.

Standard Nine - Student Support Services

- Attempt to identify alternatives to scheduling classes so that students are free to use the College Hour as originally intended.
- Consider an online orientation program.

Standard Ten - Faculty

- Follow up on issues in six-point evaluation and classroom observation needing attention, perhaps through mentoring or CELT activities, so faculty member skills can be enhanced.
- Continue discussion of the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty members.
- Revisit the criteria used for faculty promotion.
- Make the Mid-Career Fellowship Program more widely known to faculty members on campus as a sabbatical opportunity.
- Examine the consistency of the faculty selection processes among departments.

Standard Eleven - Educational Offerings

- Consider evaluating transcripts of foreign students while they are taking ESL courses to eliminate repeating courses already taken in foreign institutions and to facilitate advising.
- Investigate expanding learning communities for ESL students, with appropriate assessment

Standard Twelve - General Education

- Modify the General Education section of the Course Approval Form so that it provides direction as to where to find the Course Criteria that will designate whether a course is accepted as a general education course and in what general education area.
- Review the Curriculum Procedures Manual and update as needed to reflect any changes in the curriculum approval process for general education courses.

Standard Thirteen - Related Educational Activities

- Explore the possibility of expanding and developing new career ladders from the noncredit certificate programs that would enable students to continue their academic growth through a transition into credit courses and programs thus providing lifelong learning opportunities that strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of our community.

Standard Fourteen - Assessment of Student Learning

- Explore options to move from the assessment website to a data based system that is more user friendly and functional, allowing for easy updating, monitoring, and searching.
- Explore technology options to streamline assessment efforts and assist us with program and institutional level assessment.
- Assess whether the current administrative support is sufficiently meeting needs and expand support and resources as needed.