

Constant Pursuit of Excellence

It's been almost five years since Estrella Mountain Community College received its initial accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). Recognizing the college's achievement of its goals and quality of service delivery, the Commission granted EMCC its initial 5-year accreditation in 1997.

For colleges and universities such as Estrella Mountain, a rigorous examination of itself and by its education peers is involved in achieving accreditation. Referred to as the *Institutional Self-Study*, the process challenges the college to

measure itself by the highest standards of excellence in all its activities. It also calls attention to areas where there is broad agreement among faculty and administrators that enhancements would be beneficial to the fulfillment of EMCC's mission.

Today, Estrella Mountain employees are once again assessing all that the college is doing, identifying strengths and weakness and making recommendations for continuous improvement in the future. This time 10-year accreditation status is the college goal.

Self-Study Reaches Across Entire Campus



Estrella Mountain is currently seeking 10-year accreditation—the longest given to any college. To show that Estrella Mountain meets the NCA's criteria for accreditation, an Institutional Self-Study Executive Team and Steering Committee were established to lead the college in its self-evaluation.

Clay Goodman, Associate Dean of Occupational Education and Alex Joncas, English faculty, were selected to lead Estrella Mountain's 2000-2002 Institutional Self-Study. An executive team liaison and team leaders were also assigned to each of the five criteria that the college must meet to receive accreditation by the NCA.

Everyone at Estrella Mountain was encouraged to get involved in the process by joining one of the five criterion teams.

Estrella Mountain staff and faculty have spent the last year and a half gathering data and

evaluating the college's past and future educational strategies. The institutional self-study results in a formal report that documents how well the college meets the established criteria. A team of peer evaluators from other accredited colleges will then conduct an on-campus evaluation visit to EMCC to verify the findings of the report.

The official visit by evaluators from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools will take place February 25-27, 2002.

What is the best thing you've discovered about EMCC during the self-study?



"The spirit of cooperation that exists among the EMCC family is evident in everything we do. It is especially obvious with regard to the self-study because so many of us are asked to do things outside the normal range of our activities. Without exception, everyone answers this call willingly and is willing to help others without question. This is most gratifying to observe."

-Rich Marmon, Director Planning and Technology Services
(Criterion II Member)



"I discovered that I could be part of a campus team that gets involved in so many facets of its mission."

-Juanita Parra, Student Services Specialist
(Criterion I Member)

Estrella Mountain Ready for 10-Year Accreditation



EMCC President Homero López

Estrella Mountain is fast approaching its 10-year anniversary as a campus. "The depth and quality of academic programs and our level of service to students positions us as a mature institution of higher education," said EMCC President Dr. Homero López. "A request for 10-year accreditation is appropriate for Estrella Mountain at this time in its development."

Dr. López should know. The president of Estrella Mountain is a consultant evaluator for The Higher Learning Commission and often is called upon to evaluate other colleges in the North Central region.

"I know the criteria that we must meet in order to be successful at achieving 10-year accreditation," said López. He is certain that Estrella

Mountain's faculty and staff are ready to meet the challenges they face. "I am confident that their work and perseverance will produce a thorough and careful review of this college's work during the past five years," he said.

NCA

The Criterion for Accreditation and the Process

Estrella Mountain's self-study is part of a comprehensive process to extend the college's accreditation with The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).

The NCA is a not-for-profit, voluntary, membership organization that is committed to developing and maintaining high standards of excellence in education through evaluation and accreditation. The Association has developed certain criteria that colleges must meet in order to be granted accreditation.

Criterion One—Mission and Purposes

"The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education."

Criterion Two—Resources

"The institution has effectively organized the human, financial and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes."

Criterion Three—Education

"The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes."

Criterion Four—Planning

"The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness."

Criterion Five—Integrity

"The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships."

Pathway to 10 Year Accreditation

1997

- ▲ EMCC receives initial 5-year accreditation
- ▲ Strategic Planning outlines process for next 5 years

1998

- ▲ Progress report on assessment submitted to NCA
- ▲ College redevelops Mission and Goals
- ▲ Institutional Core Values adopted

1999

- ▲ Focus report on assessment accepted by NCA liaison

How does your role at EMCC impact the needs of students?

Breaking Ground, Building Futures

Estrella Mountain has seen growth and change since its initial accreditation in 1997. Paralleling the tremendous economic development happening across the entire West Valley, EMCC has also experienced significant development, most notably in the following:

- Steady increase in enrollment
- Addition of new classrooms and science laboratories
- Relocation and opening of EMCC Fitness Center
- Addition of new technology training curriculum and certification programs
- Recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution by the U.S. Department of Education
- Completion and opening of Center for Teaching and Learning
- Assume administrative leadership of the SouthWest Skill Center
- Development of workforce training programs
- Increased offerings in general education curriculum
- Participation in national grant initiatives - NSF- Title V



Conceptual rendering of Komatke Hall expansion to be completed in 2002.

Architects: SmithGroup, Inc.

This month the college breaks ground on its Komatke Hall expansion, EMCC's final project of the Maricopa Community Colleges 1994 bond initiative. When completed in 2002, the expansion provides facilities for additional student support services, student life and club offices and culinary arts facilities.



"My department requires each instructor to maintain current industry skills. So, the instructor must also remain a student. By meeting our educational needs, we help satisfy the educational needs of our students."

-Randy Larson, CIS Faculty
(Criterion IV Member)

NCA Conducts Its Own Self-Study

The North Central Association's (NCA) Commission on Institutions of Higher Education recently unveiled its new name and identity—The Higher Learning Commission. When the evaluation team visits Estrella Mountain in February 2002, the campus will receive accreditation from The Higher Learning Commission. As Estrella Mountain produces new promotional materials referencing the college's accreditation status with the NCA, the phrase will now read:

Accredited-The Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association or Accredited-The Higher Learning Commission; Member-North Central Association

If you would like to learn more about The Higher Learning Commission's newly adopted guidelines, visit the NCA's web site at: www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org



"I help students transition into the community college by making them aware of the resources available on campus. I also help them investigate different careers in science, mathematics, engineering and technology through various educational opportunities."

-Luvia Rivera,
Learning Associate

2000

- ▲ Self-study co-chairs appointed, Self-study process begins
- ▲ Core Values survey completed

2001

- ▲ Criterion teams complete self-study
- ▲ Report written

2002

- ▲ College hosts NCA Evaluation Team, February 25-27

The Institutional Self-Study Co-Coordinators



Clay Goodman
Associate Dean
of Occupational
Education

“Success with students and their academic progress is at the heart of any institutional self-study.”



Alex Joncas
English Faculty

Clay Goodman, Associate Dean of Occupational Education and Alex Joncas, English faculty, lead EMCC’s self-evaluation process. After all assessments and recommendations are reviewed, the pair will complete a final report that will be sent to the NCA evaluation team in preparation of their formal visit.

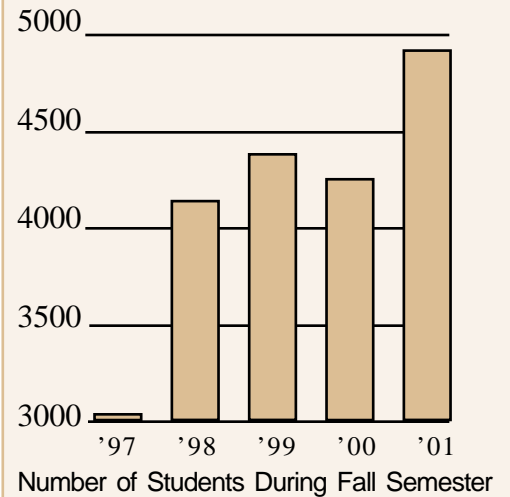
“The institutional self-study identifies ways that we can “do business” as a college better,” said Clay Goodman, Self-Study Co-coordinator. “Knowing that, and having participated as part of Estrella Mountain’s initial institutional self-study process, keeps me committed to doing the best job possible as a co-coordinator.”

With a past to be proud of, the college now reflects on its progress and assesses its future services and commitment to the community it serves. The quality of EMCC’s programs is essential to the college’s success in serving its public’s needs.

“Success with students and their academic progress is at the heart of any institutional self-study,” said Alex Joncas, Self-Study Co-coordinator. “Accreditation acknowledges that Estrella Mountain meets high standards and that students can be assured of a quality educational experience when they come here. I’m honored to help lead this effort.”

A thorough institutional review assists every faculty and staff member in remaining committed to Estrella Mountain Community College’s service strategy, *“Your Success is Our Success.”*

EMCC-Continuing to Grow



E-clips E-clips has been designed to keep various constituencies of Estrella Mountain Community College informed on the college’s request for 10-year accreditation efforts.

Created to capture and communicate information during this process of evaluation and continued development, issues will focus on preparing for the NCA evaluation visit, views from faculty and staff, self-study findings and recommendations for continuous improvement of the college’s practices.

To submit questions or learn more, visit Estrella Mountain’s Institutional Self-Study site at www.emc.maricopa.edu/nca.

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Estrella Mountain on Track

... for Another Ten Years

After almost two years in the making, Estrella Mountain Community College's Institutional Self-Study Report is complete and has been submitted to The Higher Learning Commission of the NCA for review. Final report findings indicate EMCC fulfills its requirements (GIRs) and criteria for 10-year accreditation.



EMCC's 2000-2002 Institutional Self-Study Report is a result of an intensive campus-wide effort. From faculty to students, staff and administrators, "The final report reflects the commitment and dedication of everyone involved," said Clay Goodman, Self-

Study Co-Chair. Because of this hard work, "Estrella Mountain has produced a thorough review and analysis of the work of this institution," he said.

The study shows how the college meets NCA criteria in a number of areas, including resources, course offerings, governance, integrity, support services for teaching and learning, as well as response to community needs.

"The Self-Study confirms EMCC's strong commitment to its mission," said EMCC President Dr. Homero Lopez. "It demonstrates the college's dedication to quality service and product delivery." From its beginnings 10-years ago, "this college has remained committed to our students and our community."

According to Alex Joncas, Self-Study Co-Chair, "The Self-Study challenged us to measure ourselves by the highest standards of excellence in all our activities." It called our attention to the areas where there is "broad agreement among faculty and staff that enhancement of our activities would be beneficial to the fulfillment of EMCC's mission" he said

Today, we as individuals know a great deal more about our institution and ourselves. As a whole, EMCC is prepared and positioned well for the accreditation process. And because of this, we stand better prepared to make well informed decisions about our future.

Institutional Strengths

Included here are selected strengths that were among those identified by the criterion teams during the self-study process. Complete list of strengths for Criteria 1-5 are found within the text of each criterion chapter of the self-study report.

CRITERION ONE

“The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education”

Mission and Purposes

- Estrella Mountain’s Mission and Mission Goals are the driving force of both the Strategic Plan and the Institutional Effectiveness Model. This impacts all aspects of the institution and drives the planning process and implementation of the plans.
- The Mission and Mission Goals statement reflects a commitment to excellence and student centered higher learning by: Emphasizing support for overall student success; Addressing multiple student needs which reflects the overall mission of being a comprehensive community college; and tailoring its programs to the unique needs of the Southwest Valley.
- Members of the Estrella Mountain community understand and value the College Mission and Mission Goal Statement.

Resources

- Estrella Mountain’s leadership council includes employees from all levels of the organization, which encourages participation in both strategic and operational areas.
- The College facilities master planning process enables the institution to capitalize on emerging opportunities and respond to rapid growth.
- Estrella Mountain actively manages enrollment growth to bring new dollars to the institution through the Tuition and Fee Rebate Program and other FTSE -based allocations.

Educational and Other Purposes

- The College developed a Student Success Plan supported by Student Success Coordinator and directly linked to a significant part of the Estrella Mountain’s institutional effectiveness process.
- The General Education program at Estrella Mountain helps students develop effective critical thinking and communication abilities.
- Estrella Mountain students transferring to other institutions have GPA’s that compare to the general population of the institution to which they transfer, while the number of students that transfer to the ASU and UofA continue to increase.
- Developmental students who complete the program sequence of courses and then take MAT121 complete at rates higher than those students who waive the developmental course sequence.
- Estrella Mountain continues to expand its occupational certificate and degree programs. The college has increased its offering to 24 certificate and degree programs from seven in 1996-1997, and the number of completers in certificates and occupational degrees has grown significantly in recent years.
- According to the results of the 2000 - 2001 Noel – Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, Estrella Mountain students are more likely to have their expectations met, have higher satisfaction levels, and are more likely to re-enroll than students at other two-year institutions across the nation.
- Participation rates for credit-based courses continue to improve.

Planning

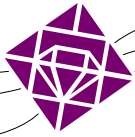
- The college has an excellent strategic planning model that integrates all time frames and types of planning.

CRITERION TWO

“The institution has effectively organized the human, financial and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes”

CRITERION THREE

“The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.”



- All divisions have participated in planning sessions that link division objectives to the larger Estrella Mountain Strategic Plan. And evaluations of the Divisional Planning sessions demonstrate that employees valued the process.
- The Student Academic Assessment Process is faculty owned and driven.

Integrity

- Estrella Mountain's five Core Values were developed *by employees – for employees* and these values guide employees in their daily life on campus.
- Estrella Mountain and the MCCCCD demonstrate strong commitment to the building of a diverse education environment.

CRITERION FOUR

“The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.”

Institutional Challenges

Included here are selected challenges that were among those identified by the criterion teams during the self-study process. Complete list of strengths for Criteria 1-5 are found within the text of each criterion chapter of the self-study report.

Mission and Purposes

Keeping the community informed of the College's Mission and Mission Goals as the population in the service area grows.

Resources

Estrella Mountain will need to recruit and hire high quality, diverse employees while given limited resources and complex hiring practices.

The College needs to identify resources to maintain high quality facilities, technology and staffing support in the face of rapid growth.

Estrella Mountain will need to continue to provide a high quality educational experience with or without bond funding.

Educational and Other Purposes

There is room for improvement in the overall successful course completion rate for the College.

Only two measures of academic assessment have been implemented for general education.

While many students transfer, associate degree completion rates are lower than desired.

Completion rates in math are generally lower than District averages, and completion rates in math have been declining over time..

The growth of occupational degrees and certificates conferred slowed in 2000-2001.

As the student population grows and becomes more technologically proficient, the demand for remote access to resources increases.

Class format issues (length, timing, level) were identified by students as areas needing improvement.

Planning

The anticipated 2004 General Bond must be integrated into all strategic and long-term planning efforts.

Adjunct faculty awareness and number of adjunct faculty in the SAAC process is limited.

With the growth of the campus, keeping the new players involved in the processes and/or encouraging them to be a part of the Estrella Culture will be increasingly difficult.

Integrity

The College needs to keep the institutional Core Values relevant and active in a rapidly expanding college staff

CRITERION FIVE

“The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.”

The Institutional Self-Study Co-Coordinators



Clay Goodman
Associate Dean of
Occupational Education



Alex Joncas
English Faculty

Watch your mailbox for complete information on EMCC's visiting team members.

EMCC will host a team of peer evaluators from The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The team will be conducting an on-campus evaluation to verify the findings of EMCC's 2000-2002 Institutional Self-Study Report.

While on campus, there will be many opportunities for team members to meet and interact with faculty, staff, students and groups. The evaluation team will also have the opportunity to visit with district administrators, the Governing Board, and local community members.

Estrella Mountain's Visiting Evaluation Team Members

Dr. Marilyn J. Schlack, President
Kalamazoo Valley Community College

Dr. Linda L. Avant, Associate Vice President for Academic Support and Development
Oklahoma State University - Okmulgee

Dr. Wayne E. Giles, Chancellor
Metropolitan Community Colleges

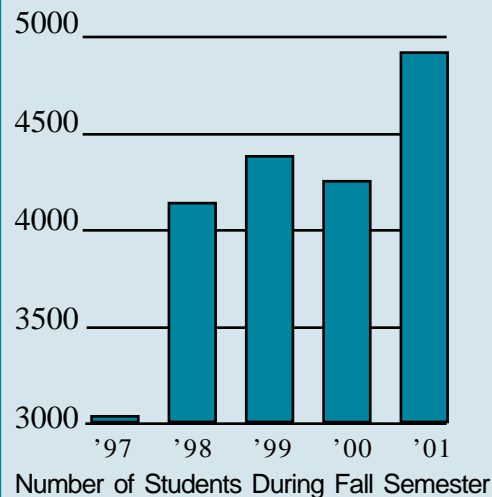
Dr. Olga N. Hernandez-Patino, Chair
Human, Health and Public Service Careers Department

Mr. David McShane, CIO/Vice President
Information Technology
Willaim Rainey Harper College

Dr. Sheila Ortego, Executive Assistant to the President
Santa Fe Community College

Dr. R. Paul Urbanick, Chair
Humanities and Fine Arts
City Colleges of Chicago—Harold Washington College

EMCC-Continuing to Grow



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