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San Diego Mesa College
Institutional Planning Manual
Spring 2011

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San Diego Mesa College

Institutional Planning Manual

Prepared by the
Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee

Spring 2011

Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee

(formerly Strategic Planning Committee)

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San Diego Mesa College

Institutional Planning Manual

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Note on Acronyms

In the belief that an excessive use of acronyms and abbreviations disrupts the flow of reading, I have generally avoided their use except for the following terms (which are either commonly accepted in planning, occur frequently in the text, or stand in for awkwardly long phrases):

ACCJC   Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
IELM   Instructional Equipment and Library Materials
PIEC   Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee
PRC   Program Review Committee
SDCCD   San Diego Community College District
SDMC   San Diego Mesa College
SLO/AUO   Student Learning Outcomes/Administrative Unit Outcomes
S.M.A.R.T.   Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (goals)
SWOT   Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats (analysis)

Preface

This manual provides—for the first time at San Diego Mesa College—an overall guide and handbook to planning on our campus. The Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee (PIEC, formerly the Strategic Planning Committee) created it at the point in our institutional history at which we had been remaking our planning processes for more than a decade and when we had just integrated those processes across the campus. Much remains to be developed, but a basic planning framework is in place. The members of the PIEC envision that this manual will be a living document, constantly updated as planning processes evolve, and will be available on-line to all members of the campus community.

Every member of the PIEC made useful insights and suggestions during the creation of this manual; Interim President Elizabeth Armstrong, Dean Yvonne Bergland, and Campus-Based Researcher Susan Mun contributed important portions of the document.

Donald Abbott
May 10, 2011

The PIEC depended upon numerous sources and planning guides in the course of its work, but I would like to acknowledge three resources that were especially useful in the writing of this manual: Donald M. Norris & Nick L. Poulton, *A Guide to Planning for Change* (Society for College and University Planning, 2008); John M. Bryson, *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations,* 3rd ed. (Jossey-Bass, 2004); and Jens J. Hansen, *Strategic Planning for Dummies* (Wood Hill Park, 2008).

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I. Introduction

Administrators, faculty, staff, and students at Mesa College have been planning for many years. Since the 1980s, program review has been at the center of our planning efforts, and numerous participatory governance bodies have made—and the institution has carried out—plans for accomplishing our mission of serving students. However, a 'sea change' in the conception and implementation of educational planning has been underway since the earlier 2000s. For Mesa College, this shift was marked by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Standards of 2002 and was brought home to the institution during our 2004 Accreditation.

New Standards for Planning

The ACCJC has defined this new approach to planning in this way: "At the simplest level, plans describe the pathway from a current institutional quality, condition, or outcome, to an envisioned quality, condition, or outcome at some defined future date. *Plans are the promise to change*…."[1] The centerpiece, then, is that institution's plan for change rather than reacting to change. The ACCJC envisions this as a process of strategic foresight and integration of planning at all levels on the campus: "…the ACCJC's requirement for Integrated Planning…requires that institutions 'assess progress toward achieving stated goals and make decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation.'"[2]

The ACCJC Accreditation Site Team that visited Mesa College in 2010 reinforced these requirements when they asked the campus to follow-up our original self-evaluation with a response to this standard:

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[1] *ACCJC News*, Fall 2009 (my emphasis).
[2] *ACCJC News*, Fall 2009.

In order to achieve a sustainable program review, planning, and student learning outcomes process, the college should develop and implement an integrated process that links all components within program review and ensures that an integrated planning process directs resource allocation.[3]

Fortunately, the campus had long been in the process of developing and implementing just such an integrated plan and was able to adequately respond to this recommendation. But the standards go beyond merely promulgating a plan; the standards require that "institutions be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level in planning."[4] We must continually improve the quality of our institution through the ongoing use of this process.

Reasons to Plan for Change[5]

Are accreditation standards the best reason to use such an approach? No, there are numerous benefits to Mesa College for embracing this model. First, 'Planning for Change' (the best name to use for this approach because the purpose of the model is to prepare for change before it occurs) is just good management. It positions the College to anticipate change and prepare for it, rather than merely reacting to change and constantly trying to adapt to it after the fact. Second, we can build on what we have done for many years—the centerpiece of this approach (theoretically and as mandated by the ACCJC) is program review. Third, it is a transparent and equitable approach to planning; it is neither solely top-down nor bottom-up, but incorporates all levels of planning in an integrated fashion. Finally, it depends upon participatory governance practices, a long-cherished principle at Mesa College.

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[3] ACCJC letter to SDMC Interim President Elizabeth Armstrong, 31 January 2011.
[4] ACCJC letter to SDMC, June 2009.
[5] I have taken this name directly from the title of Norris and Poulton (*Planning for Change*) because of its aptness in describing the central tenant of the approach.

Description

Although a plethora of schemes and models exist for this type of planning, all 'planning for change' approaches share three crucial characteristics: they are integrated, strategic, and aligned.[6] Indeed, each of these characteristics satisfies requirements mandated by the ACCJC.

- Integrated Planning: Planning must be integrated (or comprehensive) because even the most focused and narrow of plans are impacted by, and impact other, elements of the campus. All elements of planning (academic, resource, and facility) are interconnected, and any planning must take into account how changes will affect all three.[7]

- Strategic Planning: Perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of the three elements, Strategic Planning is 'big-picture' planning. It may be defined as "…a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide an [entire] organization."[8] It may be long- or short-term, but must:
    - define the institution's relationship to the environment;
    - treat the organization as a whole;
    - depend on input from many functional areas; and
    - provide directions for activities throughout the institution.[9]

- Aligned Planning: In one sense, integration implies alignment; but Aligned Planning has come to mean (especially in the sense that the ACCJC uses the term) that strategies, actions, outcomes, and achievements are linked together. Alignment among the various aspects of planning is crucial to deal with pressures to be accountable and provide evidence of performance because the critical tools

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[6] The description of these three characteristics is drawn principally from Norris and Poulton, pp. 14–23.
[7] See Section II, below, for a description of the Integrated Planning Process at SDMC.
[8] Bryson, p. 6.
[9] See Section III, below, for a description of the Strategic Planning Process at SDMC.

of alignment are measurable performance indicators and professional expertise.[10] Alignment allows us to satisfy the ACCJC requirement that the College "develop an ongoing and systematic cycle that links program review, planning, resource allocation, and re-evaluation based upon the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data."[11]

Mesa's Path to Integrated Planning

It is worthwhile to review the history of Mesa College's planning efforts in order to understand how we implemented integrated, strategic, aligned planning. As noted before, the College has a long history of planning, regularly re-assessed and modified through the participatory governance structure, and based on internal and external information. The charge and membership of specific planning committees is defined, with each committee providing input into the decision-making and planning processes. The four constituent bodies of participatory governance faculty, classified staff, students, and administration are represented on President's Cabinet, the role of which is to make the final recommendations to the president on all planning and resource allocation decisions. This structure has supported the evolution of planning at the College, informed by major external changes such as Assembly Bill 1725, the 2002 ACCJC Standards, the 2004 accreditation site visit, and the evolving advice and interpretation from the Commission on how to implement the Standards. Modifications resulting from these external drivers have been made in ways respectful of the strong campus participatory governance structure. Following the model of continuous quality improvement, existing processes have been modified to meet new requirements and criteria, thus honoring the campus culture of inclusiveness in planning. Thus, when the 2002 standards were introduced, the College had two choices: to start from the beginning with a new Strategic Planning process followed by development of specific processes to fit, or to work from existing planning processes culminating in the overall Integrated Plan. The College elected to follow the second path and our model can be viewed as an "inverted triangle" (Figure 1).

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[10] See Section III, below, for a description of Institutional Research at SDMC.

[11] ACCJC letter to SDMC Interim President Elizabeth Armstrong, 31 January 2011.
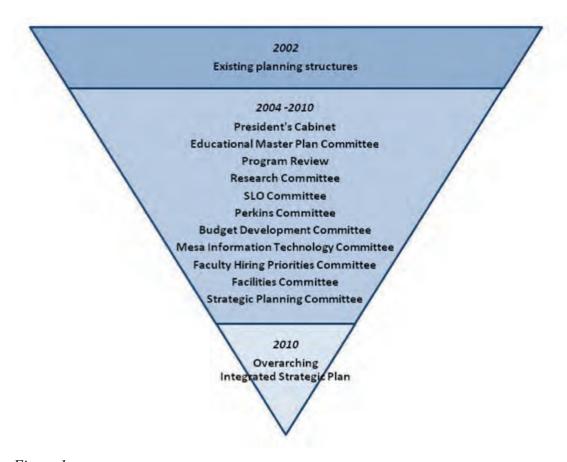
Figure 1.

During the 2002-2010 timeframe, each of the planning processes went through extensive scrutiny and annual modification with improvements each time. Using the continuous improvement process, committees were formed or revised, documents created or revised, and progress was made towards an overall integrated planning framework that links planning, program review, institutional effectiveness data, and resource allocation. Annually, at the President's Cabinet retreat, self-assessment resulted in recognition of areas for improvement and changes were then made to address these issues.[12] This approach allowed the campus to develop each planning process to meet accreditation standards with the culminating integration occurring only late in the process (during 2008-2010). For instance, program review has existed at Mesa College since the 1980s—

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[12] See Section III, below, for a summary of the decisions made at the last four retreats.

becoming the 'heart of planning' for the campus—and has undergone review, revision and improvement annually. A similar evolution has occurred as Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Administrative Unit Outcomes (AUOs) have been instituted. Following the "inverted triangle" approach for planning, models have been more recently developed using over-arching strategic planning and tying multiple processes together with an integrated planning model. San Diego Mesa College has been fully committed to planning over the years and, under the guidance of the PIEC, unified these planning components into a cohesive whole during the 2010-11 academic year.

II. Integrated Planning

Institutional planning at Mesa College comprises three inter-related, integrated, participatory governance processes: (1) the Strategic Planning Process, (2) the Program Review Process, and (3) the Allocation Recommendation Process. Two committees on campus have primary oversight responsibilities for these processes: the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee (PIEC) advances the overall planning work of the College through coordination of processes (1) and (3), while the Program Review Committee (PRC) advances bottom-up planning through coordination of process (2). The principal steps and relationships of these processes are graphically displayed in Attachment 1, with each process denoted by a different color. Note that the flow chart is simplified for the sake of clarity—for example, only the principal forward paths of information (solid lines) and feedback information paths (dashed lines) are shown. Each process occurs every academic year and informs the others through reviews, recommendations, and reports. This overview will briefly describe the integrated planning procedures, while each process will be treated in greater detail in subsequent sections of the manual.

Planning begins with the campus mission, vision, and values statement, which informs and guides all planning on campus (the mission-vision-values statement is created and regularly reviewed by participatory governance bodies). Long-term goals are described in three long-term planning documents: the Educational Master Plan, the Information Technology Plan, and the Facilities Plan. Each year, the PIEC reviews progress toward long-term goals by looking at campus-wide performance indicators. Based upon that review, the PIEC recommends campus-wide annual objectives and priorities to President's Cabinet in order to provide guidelines for the Program Review Process the following year. The participatory governance groups that conduct the strategic planning process are, of course, cognizant of the allocation decisions made the previous year.

Program review is conducted in a five-year cycle on an annual basis. Each academic program and service area sets its goals informed by campus long-term goals, campus-

wide annual objectives, and its own internal assessment. In this way, each program and service area is integrated with campus-wide goals, but takes advantage of the expertise and 'hands-on' experience of the appropriate faculty and staff. Mesa College has long recognized that such self-assessment and evaluation—by the professionals in each field—should be the heart of planning for the campus, and it remains so in integrated planning. As a result, each program or service area continues to set its own goals and assesses its own progress, informed by strategic planning guidelines (mission–vision–values, campus-wide long-term goals, and annual objectives), SLOs or AUOs, quantitative and qualitative data, and feedback from allocation review committees.

In order to more effectively integrate goals and allocations, as well as simplify allocation request processes, program plans will now include requests for resource allocation for the following year. Thus, four applications are replaced by a plan that justifies requests in a single document. The Program Review Process is currently under revision to simplify procedures and include allocation requests.

Before the end of the academic year, deans and vice presidents receive their area's program plans for prioritization. School prioritization is conducted in a coordinated manner, in which deans and department chairs meet to collegially work out priorities within their schools, before passing to the vice presidents. While not intended to usurp traditional deans' responsibilities, this encourages cooperation within each school among chairs and their respective deans.

The annual Program Review Process concludes at the beginning of the following academic year to allow department chairs, school deans, and vice presidents to make last-minute changes to program plans based upon unexpected changes that might occur over the summer.

The four arenas ('silos') of the Allocation Recommendation Process already exist and—although the PIEC recommends that in the future these processes be reviewed with the aim of increasing shared governance and eliminating redundancies—integration of the

processes can be implemented immediately using current practices. The PIEC will act as the principal integration body, receiving program plans (with their concomitant requests) and reviewing them for the purpose of coordination. The PIEC will not rank or recommend allocations, but provide information to the appropriate committees that would then be aware of requests in one arena that might impinge on another.

After conducting their respective reviews, the various allocation recommendation committees will pass their recommendations back to the PIEC to insure that they are integrated with one another. The President's Cabinet reviews and makes the final recommendation for allocations to the President of the College. These allocations inform the following year's strategic planning decisions, both long- and short-term. Although not depicted on the graphic, allocation decisions inform each of the processes as a matter of course, as programs, service areas, and all the concerned committees are aware of and impacted by each year's allocations. In addition, while it may appear that this is a three-year cycle, each process occurs every year and is informed by the activities of the other two processes every year.

III. Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning is the process by which the campus analyzes the present in order to shape its future. Its purpose is to provide guidance and identify objectives for measuring institutional effectiveness, program planning, and allocations. It should aim at "positioning [our] institution to be successful in the face of competition and changing expectations and realities."[13]

Right up front, it is worthwhile to identify what strategic planning is <u>not</u>: it is not just a collection of previously unconnected plans (although it will guide the creation of other plans); it is not a scheme for requesting and granting resources (although it provides a clear rationale for funding decisions); it is not merely 'long-term' planning (while much of it deals with a long-term scale, it also provides guidance for mid- and short-term planning). Strategic planning <u>is</u> 'big picture' planning that considers the institution as a whole in its scope. While it employs research and analysis to understand the environment and a college's performance, it must also rely on the expertise and intuition of the professionals who make up the campus community. Ultimately, it should provide guidance and coordination for a college to successfully deal with future challenges and opportunities.

How does the Strategic Planning Process at Mesa College achieve these lofty goals? (See Attachment 2.) We start with a statement of our mission, vision, and values. A mission statement describes an organization's purpose—it explains why that organization exists. A vision statement embodies that organization's concept of how it will achieve that purpose. Finally, a statement of values elucidates the principles to which the organization will adhere in pursuing that vision.

Mesa College adopted its first mission-vision-values statement as part of the Educational Master Plan of 2007 (see Attachment 3 for the current statement.) Since then, the

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[13] Norris and Poulton, p. 18.

statement has been reviewed and revised in accordance with participatory governance practices. Starting in 2011, the responsibility of initiating the review was vested in the PIEC. The statement is reviewed bi-annually during the fall semester of even-numbered years, but will be revised only as needed. Any recommendations for revising the mission-vision-values statement will be vetted through participatory governance bodies.

- The current mission of Mesa College is: "To inspire and enable student success in an environment that is strengthened by diversity, is responsive to our communities, and fosters scholarship, leadership, and responsibility."

- The current vision is: "San Diego Mesa College shall be a key force in our community to educate our students to shape the future."

- Our values are: Access, Accountability, Diversity, Equity, Excellence, Integrity, Respect, Scholarship, Sustainability, and Freedom of Expression.

The fundamental basis of the mission-vision-values statement review (as well as the setting of long-term goals) is an environmental scan. Environmental scanning has been defined as the "acquisition and use of information about events, trends, and relationships in an organization's external environment, the knowledge of which would assist management in planning the organization's future course of action."[14] The scan looks at the external environment of the College, including various regulatory agency changes and expectations, transfer university circumstances and outlook, and economic/job market forecasts for the region, thereby analyzing economic, social, organizational, and educational indicators. Such a scan may depend upon outside agency research (which must be funded out of campus or district budgets) or research conducted 'in-house' (see below for a fuller description of Mesa's internal research process). The results of this research are used to conduct a long-term Strength-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis. This procedure (conducted annually at the President's Cabinet spring retreat) stacks the current status of the campus against the environmental scan in order to

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[14] C. W. Choo and E. Auster, "Scanning the Business Environment: Acquisition and Use of Information by Managers" in *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology,* vol. 28, edited by M. E. Williams (Learned Information Publishers, 1993): 279–314.

help determine planning goals and developmental priorities. (See Attachment 4 for the most recent scan and SWOT analysis.) Finally, the review of the mission-vision-values statement and setting of long-term goals may also be informed by significant proposals or shortcomings identified in program plans and by recent allocation decisions.

The four most recent President's Cabinet Retreats accomplished the following tasks:

- April 18, 2008: Examined the core purpose, essential elements, key drivers, and current context of planning. All stakeholders participated in breakout groups that identified the strengths and weaknesses of planning at Mesa, and in groups that examined the processes that would be essential to future planning. There was consensus that the campus: (1) needed an overarching strategic plan; (2) would plan using a culture of evidence; (3) would set "S.M.A.R.T." goals; and (4) would track progress using key performance indicators.[15]

- April 24, 2009: Breakout groups refined Mesa's mission-vision-values statement, drafted goals, examined performance indicators, and further developed a planning model.

- April 30, 2010: Conducted group discussions on the measurement of performance indicators, as well as the strengths and limitations of the data we collect. Breakout sessions defined the parameters of participatory governance, and examined the varied roles and responsibilities of campus stakeholder groups.

- March 4, 2011: Reviewed and approved: (1) the integrated planning framework; (2) strategic planning's role and relationship to other phases of planning; (3) current SWOT analysis; and (4) annual objectives and benchmarks. Breakout groups examined the current status of allocation silos and made recommendations

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[15] S.M.A.R.T. = Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (see "Annual Objectives and Priorities" below).

for reforming the allocation process, and for revising the structures of planning-related committees.

The results of research and analysis form the basis for establishing long-term goals and plans. Long-term goals (also known as major goals) are broad, overarching aspirations of the entire campus. Long-term goals are designed to establish priorities for up to five years, although they are reviewed by the PIEC and President's Cabinet every year and modified as needed. The current Mesa College goals are:

- To deliver and support exemplary teaching and learning in the areas of transfer education, associate degrees, career and technical education, certificates, and basic skills.

- To provide a learning environment that maximizes student access and success, and employee well-being.

- To respond to and meet community needs for economic and workforce development.

- To cultivate an environment that embraces and is enhanced by diversity.

These campus-wide goals are embodied within the overarching long-term plan, the Educational Master Plan. Two additional long-term plans supplement long-term planning for their respective areas: the Information Technology Plan, and the Facilities Master Plan.

Educational Master Plan

The current Educational Master Plan expires in 2011; the College will, therefore, create a new five-year master plan during the 2011-12 academic year. The President's Cabinet will create a participatory governance ad-hoc committee or Educational Master Plan task force to begin work early in fall semester 2011. The task force will employ the strategic planning process described above to arrive at its broad goals. It will work within District and State strategic plans and requirements, and will review other master plans from other

colleges as part of a literature review. Although the Educational Master Plan has a major review and re-write every five years (and establishes five-year goals), it will also look out at very broad trends and expectations over ten and fifteen year time frames as well.

Information Technology Plan

The Mesa Information Technology Committee promulgates the Information Technology Plan. The roles of the Mesa Information Technology Committee are to: (1) establish campus-wide technology objectives consistent with the College's goals; (2) set specific strategies for meeting those technology objectives; (3) annually assess the status of the information technology objectives; and (4) provide recommendations for the future. The Information Technology Plan provides the guidelines by which this is accomplished. The plan is updated annually and a status report presented to President's Cabinet (it is also placed on the Mesa Information Technology website). The Mesa Information Technology Committee and the PIEC coordinate with one another to integrate technology planning into campus-wide planning processes.

Facilities Master Plan

Overall campus facilities planning is governed by the plan promulgated for the construction of projects authorized and funded through Propositions S and N, approved by the voters in 2003 and 2007, respectively. This Facilities Master Plan to guide campus facilities development was one of the first projects completed with these funds. Since Prop S/N did not fund all of the projects identified in the plan, the unfunded facilities will be addressed in the next iteration of facilities planning. (Information about Prop S/N is maintained on the SDCCD website at www.sdccd.edu.) To oversee each of the Prop S/N construction projects, the campus creates a planning committee constituted of members of the programs to be located in the newly constructed building. As we approach the completion of Prop S/N construction, the campus will need to develop a new long-term facilities plan.

Institutional Research at Mesa College

Research is an integral part of strategic planning. It is both guided by the College's mission-vision-values statement and long-term goals, and it informs planning at every level, from strategic and long-term to operational and short-term. Institutional research is conducted every year in accordance with the SDMC Research Planning Agenda (Attachment 5).

Mesa College's integrated planning is informed by external data through the environmental scan (described above), as well as internal, or institutional, data through key performance indicators, which describe the College's progress and help to determine whether we have met the goals we set for ourselves relative to student achievement and institutional effectiveness. Based on the results of the environmental scan and SWOT analysis, both challenges and opportunities are identified to inform decisions regarding future strategic directions for the College.

In concert with the environmental scan, internal data (or institutional data—i.e., key performance indicators) are examined (Attachment 6). Key performance indicators are regularly produced measures of student achievement and institutional effectiveness that are used for assessment, planning, and decision-making.[16] The key performance indicators relative to student achievement rely on multiple measures that correspond to the College's mission, including: (1) matriculation, retention, persistence, and course success rates; (2) basic skills preparation; (3) career-technical education degree and certificate completion; and (4) transfer to four-year degree-granting institutions. Institutional effectiveness indicators measure myriad facets of the College that address our mission–vision–values, including diversity, productivity, and operational planning. The current results of the analysis of key performance indicators are communicated through a *Scorecard* that visually displays the College's progress relative to benchmarks that were set collectively through reflective dialogue (Attachment 7). Benchmarks are

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[16] R. Alfred, C. Shults, and J. Seybert, *Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges* (Community College Press, 2007).

measurements for 'baselining' (setting the initial values), goal-setting, and improvement-tracking, which can lead to dramatic innovations.[17] Each performance indicator on the *Scorecard* corresponds to a College goal and strategic initiative in the Research Planning Agenda, which in turn uses the mission–vision–values and goals as its anchor. The key performance indicators are then used to set measureable objectives and annual priorities for the College that inform integrated planning.

Thus, through the environmental scan process and examination of key performance indicators, the external data help us to determine *Where are we headed?*, while the internal data respond to the question *Have we arrived?* Furthermore, by conducting a gap analysis that indicates the difference between where we would like to be as a college and where we actually stand, we are then able to formulate a vision for *Where do we need to go next?*

Annual Objectives and Priorities

As we have seen, research informs planning for the long-term, but it also guides short- and mid-term planning. With the help of the performance indicators *Scorecard*, as well as program plans, campus-level SLOs, the results of the previous year's allocation process, and in alignment with campus mission-vision-values and long-term goals, the PIEC formulates or reviews annual objectives and priorities (Attachment 8).

Annual objectives describe specific aims that the College intends to pursue for that year in order to meet campus-wide goals. In creating such objectives, Mesa has adopted the S.M.A.R.T. principal; that is, an objective must be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. At the same time, the PIEC formulates the specific priorities upon which the College will focus to meet these objectives for the upcoming academic year. These priorities guide evaluations in the following year's Resource Recommendation Process. Annual objectives and priorities are formulated at President's

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[17] B. S. Shafer and L. E. Coate, "Benchmarking in Higher Education: A Tool for Improving Quality and Reducing Cost," *Business Officer* 26 (1992): 28–35.

Cabinet Retreat in March and then vetted through participatory governance bodies for final adoption at President's Cabinet in May. Thus, they are in place when the new academic year begins.

At this point, the Strategic Planning Process for the year is complete; the outcome of the process—campus-wide objectives and measurable annual priorities—inform the Program Review Process and the Allocation Recommendation Process during the following year. In this way, planners at the program and service area level know what the campus is trying to achieve, and evaluators reviewing allocation requests have a transparent scheme on which to base their recommendations. Program plans and resource allocations are tied to campus objectives, based upon analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

IV. Program Review Process

As pointed out earlier in this manual, the Program Review Process is truly at the heart of planning at Mesa College. It is appropriate that this should be so for several reasons. First, this is where the campus began building an integrated planning framework back in the 1980s—over many years the process has been refined and improved. Second, program review is planning from the ground-up: it depends upon the expertise of the faculty, staff, and administrators who possess the professional skills and have the first-hand knowledge of the activities on campus. As a result, it is a function with many stakeholders and participants. Finally, the ACCJC has mandated that program review play a vital role in campus planning.[18]

The Program Review Process as developed at Mesa College is an integrated process, used by instructional programs, student services, and administrative services in order to conduct their own operational planning on the mid- to long-term time frame. Mesa's Program Review Process allows each division to maintain its identity and uniqueness, while using a standardized approach to program review. The process has been designed by faculty, staff, and administrators to examine all academic, student, and administrative services programs at the College to determine the overall effectiveness of the institution. The purpose of reviewing all programs and service areas is to facilitate their ongoing improvement in order to meet the evolving needs of students and to fulfill the College's mission–vision–values.

Program review is designed to provide every program and service area with the opportunity to assess itself in relation to its own goals and objectives, as well as the mission and goals of the College and District. In addition, program review is the core of all campus planning because it originates where planning should originate: in each program and service area. The Program Review Process leads ultimately to campus-wide master planning and accreditation; it is the basis of program and service area goal setting

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[18] ACCJC Accreditation Standard I.B.

and identification of needs; and it forms the base of the Allocation Recommendation Process.

Each department, program, and service area should use its program plan (created or modified each year at the culmination of the Program Review Process) as the basis for its operational planning, budgeting, and resource allocation requests. Program or service area goals and progress toward reaching those goals are integral to the program plan. Collectively, these plans are used for several purposes—they are at the center of the College's self-assessment for accreditation and they are key to the processes of budgeting and resource allocation. Therefore, program review is conducted every year so that the program and service area plans are current, appropriate to changing conditions, and recently documented.

Continuous Quality Improvement of the Program Review Process

To maintain "sustainable continuous quality improvement" (as mandated by the ACCJC), regular review and implementation of recommended changes to the Program Review Process is conducted.[19] The PRC continually seeks ways to improve the process itself, as well as to streamline the forms and guides used during the review.

Although Mesa's program review framework has been long established, ongoing and systematic examinations are required to ensure that its results are effectively linked to institutional planning and accreditation requirements. Since the Program Review Process is central to the institution's planning and it must be clearly linked to resource allocation, the PRC instituted a pilot (during fall 2010 through spring 2011) involving both programs and service areas to test the use of a "Goal Matrix" in conducting program review. The results of this pilot, along with recommendations from the PIEC and recommendations received from the October 2010 accreditation visit, are currently being used to refine the Program Review Process. The purposes of using this Goal Matrix are to ensure that program review provides the information needed to support the College's strategic

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[19] ACCJC, "Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness—Part I: Program Review."

planning and resource allocation, improve reporting to all constituents within the integrated planning framework, and reduce the workload associated with conducting a review.

The Program Review Cycle

Although program review is conducted every year, the process is on a five-year cycle:

Year 1.   Program Assessment (including development of goals and action plan)

Year 2.   Progress Report

Year 3.   Mid-Term Report

Year 4.   Progress Report

Year 5.   Final Report

Currently, the Year One Review is a larger undertaking than Years Two through Five; nevertheless, every year's review is crucial to planning and resource allocation decisions. Owing to the differing tasks undertaken in each year of the cycle, this manual will not describe the annual timelines or specific responsibilities associated with each report. For complete instructions and deadlines for conducting the program review itself, see the "Program Review Handbook" at www.sdmesa.edu/instruction/prog-rev/pdf/Year1-5Handbook.pdf.

Before the review actually gets underway in the fall, a Lead Writer for each program or service area is identified during the previous spring semester. FLEX training is available at the start of the semester (if requested), with Lead Writer training conducted by the PRC during the fall.

The Lead Writer is selected by the discipline or service area faculty and staff to coordinate completion of the review. The Lead Writer may be selected by any process deemed appropriate by the faculty and staff within each program or service area, and should work collaboratively with colleagues in the program or service area as the

program plan is developed. As the review progresses, drafts should be circulated to all members of the program or service area as they are produced so that revisions and modifications may be made in a timely manner. Lead Writers are encouraged to consult with their assigned Liaisons (see below) for assistance and feedback at this stage of the process. All members of the program/discipline/service area should be involved in producing the raw material for the report and should review it regularly for accuracy and completeness. The Lead Writer, with the assistance of the department chair/program or service area director, will maintain an on-going dialogue with members of their programs/service areas to ensure the widest possible participation in the process.

All members of any department or service area are responsible for producing the program plan. Their specific roles are dependent on the size of the program or service area; in a very small one, for example, everyone may participate in writing the plan. In larger programs/service areas or those with several divisions (e.g., ESOL, Journalism, English and Business Operations), sub-groups of faculty or staff may be assigned to write drafts for their sections, with the Lead Writer—as the reporter for the program or service area—given responsibility for putting the material together into a coherent whole. Whether or not everyone in a program/ service area participates in writing the document, however, all members should be involved in the preliminary discussions of the process, in developing documentation and providing data, and in reviewing drafts circulated within the program. When the program plan goes to the respective manager and vice president, everyone in the program/service area should be familiar with its contents.

During the Program Review Process, the Lead Writer should take advantage of the expertise provided by the PRC. To facilitate such consultation, two Liaisons from the PRC are assigned to each program and service area. During the process, drafts of the program plan are submitted to respective managers and to the PRC for evaluation and feedback.

As proposed in the integrated planning framework adopted by the campus early in 2011, requests for resources will be embedded in each year's program plan. These requests

derive from the goals established by each program and service area, and should align with campus-wide goals, objectives, and priorities. The justification and supporting evidence for the requests will be an integral part of the program plan as it is developed, thus simplifying application processes and reducing the workload previously associated with making multiple allocation requests each year.

Deans, managers, and vice presidents receive their respective area's program plans for prioritization before the end of the academic year. Since managers have been reviewing drafts of the plans as they were being developed, they should already be familiar with the significant requests embedded in the plans. School prioritization will be conducted in a consultative manner, in which program deans and department chairs or managers/supervisors meet in order to better understand the plans of every unit within the school or service area. In this way, requests for resources can be coordinated more effectively and transparently. Deans and vice presidents retain their managerial responsibilities for making recommendation, but the greater communication made possible by this collegial process should help all stakeholders to better understand management recommendations.

The annual Program Review Process concludes at the beginning of the following academic year to allow for last-minute changes to program plans based upon unexpected changes that might occur over the summer. This should not be seen as an additional step in the process itself or as an opportunity to fundamentally alter the previous year's plan, but rather as a contingency to allow for unforeseen changes. If no such changes have occurred, then nothing need be done to the program plan.

V. Allocation Recommendation Process

The Allocation Recommendation Process has several related purposes: to ensure that resource allocations are made in alignment with the College mission and goals; to provide a method whereby allocations are linked to strategic planning and program review; to clearly tie allocations to the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data; and finally, to guarantee the role of participatory governance practices in allocation recommendations. The integrated planning framework adopted in spring 2011 achieves these goals, employing the PIEC as an oversight group to coordinate the process. Within the overall process, allocation recommendations are made in four 'silos' or categories of resources: (1) human resources, (2) equipment, (3) discretionary funds, and (4) facilities improvement.

In preparation for the 2010 Accreditation Site Visit, the College recognized the need to review campus processes for allocating resources. Using the planning strategy of continuous improvement, the PIEC reviewed all fours silos of resource allocation and formulated proposed reforms to bring this part of integrated planning into alignment with the mission–vision–values statement as well as with program review. For now, this manual will briefly note the current silo review practices and describe the proposed guidelines for reform during the 2011–12 academic year.

The Allocation Recommendation Process starts shortly after the beginning of the academic year, allowing time for programs and service areas to make last-minute updates to their plans necessitated by unforeseen circumstances occurring over the summer. The applications for resources contained within the program plans are forwarded to the PIEC for review and dissemination to the appropriate committees. The purpose of this review is not to evaluate or rank the applications; rather, it is to coordinate requests so that the various silo committees will be aware of requests for resources that impact more than one committee. For example, a program plan that proposes a new teaching area might require an additional faculty member as well as equipment and facilities to make the program viable. Approval of the faculty hire would be of no value without the appropriate

equipment and space. The PIEC will be responsible for informing the silo committees reviewing such requests of contingent needs. As part of this review, the PIEC will also be responsible for passing the requests to the appropriate reviewing body.

Coordination and communication will also be necessary during the review process. The silo committees may require further information from programs and service areas, or find that they must work in tandem with other committees, deans, or vice presidents. The PIEC may assist in these efforts either by having one of its members sit as an advisory (non-voting) member of the silo review committee, or by acting as a clearing house for information and queries.

Silo 1: Human Resources

Requests for new faculty positions are currently reviewed by a participatory governance committee, the Faculty Priority Subcommittee (which reports to President's Cabinet). That body is in the process of revising their criteria, which will be embedded within the Program Review Process. Requests for vacated classified staff positions are reviewed by the Executive Staff (the President and Vice Presidents), and recommendations to hire or leave empty are made to Chancellor's Cabinet. This process allows for the expeditious filling of critical vacated positions so that they are not lost to the campus. The PIEC recommends that a process parallel to that in place for new faculty positions be established for the review of requests for new classified staff positions.

Silo 2: Equipment

Two processes are in place for reviewing equipment requests from outside sources: occupational equipment federally-funded by the Perkins program and state-funded Instructional Equipment and Library Materials (IELM). Campus occupational equipment needs are identified during the Program Review Process, following federal guidelines for Perkins funding. A participatory governance committee reviews these requests and forwards recommendations to President's Cabinet. On the other hand, requests for IELM

resources are sent directly to the Deans' Council for review. The Vice President of Instruction works with the Deans' Council to prioritize the list that is then forwarded to the Budget Committee for review. The list then goes to President's Cabinet for final approval. The PIEC recommends that a participatory governance committee be created to undertake these two prioritization functions, possibly a joint sub-committee of members of both the Dean's Council and the Chairs' Committee. Procedures must also be established which will clarify what information technology equipment is included in the Information Technology (roll-down) Plan for regular replacement, as well as other equipment which is on regular maintenance or replacement schedules and does not, therefore, need to be included in program plans.

Silo 3: Discretionary Funds (4000/5000 Accounts)

At present there is very little formal process in place for discretionary funding: the budget is 'rolled-over' each year, with increases and decreases dealt with by individual deans and their respective vice presidents. The PIEC proposes that roll-over budgeting continue, but in a climate of shifting budgets (generally reductions in the recent past) a participatory governance process must be in place that employs transparent rubrics and connects changes in allocations for this silo to campus goals and priorities. The PIEC also proposes that the Budget Development Committee take on this role in years when the discretionary budget is expected to increase or decrease.

Silo 4: Facilities Improvement

Minor capital expenditures for facilities updating and minor construction may be initiated either in the Program Review Process, or (in the case of short-fused projects mandated by emergencies) directly by the Vice President of Administrative Services' office. Facilities planning is coordinated through the Facilities Committee (a participatory governance body) and the Vice President of Administrative Services, who is responsible for oversight of all campus facilities and infrastructure.

All of the committees involved in the Allocation Recommendation Process have (or will develop) their own internal processes and rubrics on which to base their recommendations. This must be transparent and available to all members of the campus. At the same time, the standards of evaluation must conform with ACCJC-mandated planning practices: recommendations for allocations must be based upon the College mission–vision–values; integrate with long-term goals; and align with campus-wide objectives and priorities. Allocation recommendation committees will consider measurable assessments of programs (such as performance indicators and program SLOs) as well as professional expertise by the members of each program or service area when evaluating requests for resources. The purpose of these committee reviews is not to punish or reward programs, but to identify needs, challenges, and opportunities so that resources will flow to the most appropriate areas as defined by the College's mission and goals.

After conducting their respective reviews, the various allocation recommendation committees will pass their recommendations back to the PIEC to ensure that they are integrated. Once again, the PIEC will not rank or give preference to the recommendations made by the silo committees, but will review them to confirm that allocation-contingent recommendations are coordinated. Should they find such inconsistencies, they will confer with the allocation recommendation committees involved for resolution. The PIEC will then pass the recommendations on the President's Cabinet for final participatory evaluation and recommendation to the President.

VI. Planning Timeline

Although the principal planning processes—Strategic Planning, Program Review, and Allocation Recommendation—have been in place at Mesa College for some time, their integration into a systematic and cohesive whole was only approved through participatory governance during the 2010–11 academic year. Therefore, as the campus moves through the various planning processes during 2011–12, many details of coordination and timing will need to be developed as we go. Even so, the PIEC felt that it was essential for all planning participants to have at least a tentative timeline that includes the most important schedules and deadlines as we move into a new year of planning. The "Tentative Integrated Planning Calendar, 2011–12" (Attachment 9) provides such a template.

The PIEC puts forward this timeline with the expectation that it will require some modifications as the year progresses and the campus further develops the details of integrated planning. The PIEC and PRC will monitor planning processes and report to President's Cabinet any recommendations for changing the timeline, which will then be widely disseminated at the earliest possible moment. At the same time, we expect that all participants at all levels of planning will bring forward, through participatory governance channels, any recommendations they may develop for modifying and refining the details of the timeline. It promises to be an exciting and challenging year in many respects, but the campus now possesses the framework to plan for the changes that await us.

VII. Appendix: Planning Bodies at Mesa College

The following bodies play significant roles in planning at Mesa College; the purpose of each is provided here for the reader's convenience. As planning procedures evolve in line with the proposals set out in this manual, some of these descriptions will require revision. Further information on all campus committees is provided on the campus website at www.sdmesa.edu/governance/committees/index.cfm.

Academic Affairs Committee

Review, make recommendations, and help to carry out Senate policy regarding curriculum and instructional services.

To include within its purview policy regarding course review and approval, program review, District and GE requirements, catalog, articulation, prerequisite and co-requisite validation, review of standards and practices, and instructional assistance (lab techs, tutors, readers, etc.) and class caps.

To create and, where appropriate, have its own members serve as chairs of standing subcommittees of the Academic Affairs Committee, which may include but not be limited to Curriculum Review committee, Catalog Review Committee, Standards and Practices Review Committee, and an Honors Committee. Membership of subcommittees shall contain representatives from other shared governance bodies where appropriate.

Budget Development Committee

The Mesa College Budget Development Committee is a representative committee to be appointed through the shared governance process by its constituent groups. It is designed to engage on focused work in the development of principles, recommendations and priorities for the Mesa's General Fund Unrestricted Budget. Recommendations will be brought directly to President's Cabinet. Detailed below is the specific charge to the Committee.
- To develop a General Fund Unrestricted "operating budget" that carries out the Mission of the College as delineated in the College Master Plan;
- develop and direct the process for long and short-term strategic planning;
- review and assess the impact of budget reductions/increases;

- justify the level of any additional funding in program allocations required to provide an appropriate schedule of classes and level of service;
- justify the level of any reduction in funding in program allocations;
- keep represented constituents apprised of the budget development process and solicit input as needed.

Facilities Planning Committee

The Mesa College Facility Planning Committee is a representative committee to be appointed through the shared governance process by its constituent groups. Its purpose is to review major facility issues which impact Mesa College, provide long-range facilities planning and oversee the maintenance, repair, remodeling and building of Mesa College's Facility Master Plan. Recommendations will be brought directly to President's Cabinet. Detailed below is the specific charge to the Committee.
- Reviews a broad range of facility issues which impact Mesa College;
- reviews all plans and makes recommendations for the construction, remodeling, and/or reassignment of existing facilities;
- studies and recommends development of future facilities including classrooms, laboratories, faculty and staff office space, and grounds;
- studies existing facilities and recommends alterations and improvements;
- reviews and ensures timely construction progress of Mesa College's Facility Master Plan;
- keeps represented constituents apprised of the facility master plan and construction timeline as needed.

Information Technology Committee

To assess the current status of Information Technology in the delivery of services to Mesa College students and to put in place and maintain a strategic IT plan to carry us into the future.

The committee shall serve in an advisory capacity to faculty, staff, and administrators on matters pertaining to instructional, administrative, and student services computing, telecommunications, and other technologies.

Instructional Deans' Council

The Instructional Deans' Council coordinates the day-to-day activities of the Division of Instruction and develops near and mid-term plans for instructional

activities and initiatives.

Activities of concern include but are not limited to: Catalog and Schedule Development, Curriculum, Enrollment Management, Accreditation, Athletics, Research, Articulation, Tutoring, Faculty Hiring, Faculty Evaluation, Basic Skills, Student Learning Outcomes, Program Review, Instructional Technology, Distance Education, Instructional Equipment and Library Materials (IELM), New and Adjunct Faculty Orientation, Classroom Assignment, Staff Development, and Flex.

The Instructional Deans' Council provides management representatives from the Division of Instruction to serve on various campus committees. Whenever necessary, the Council invites representatives from Administrative Services and/or Student Services divisions to attend Council meetings to resolve particular areas of mutual concern or to provide a forum for all-management training.

Members of the Instructional Deans' Council participate on an individual basis in many campus-wide activities, committees, and ad-hoc committees and report on those activities to the Council as a whole.

Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee
(formerly Strategic Planning Committee)

The Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee (PIEC) is one of two participatory governance committees charged with planning that report directly to President's Cabinet, the other being the Program Review Committee (PRC). The recommendations of each committee are submitted independently to the President's Cabinet for review and adoption.

The PIEC is designed to advance the overall planning work for the College, whereas the PRC advances planning at the unit level—program or service area. These two committees work in tandem as illustrated on the Integrated Planning diagram (approved by President's Cabinet, March 1, 2011).

Following the sustainable continuous quality improvement model, the PIEC is responsible for assuring that the College's planning framework is consistent with accreditation standards; for guiding the annual assessment of progress on stated goals, objectives and priorities and recommending changes as indicated; and for assuring the integration of planning across the campus.

The PIEC may establish sub-committees to carry out specific purpose and objectives of the committee. These sub-committees will report directly back to the PIEC.

President's Cabinet

The President's Cabinet serves as the College's central, participatory-governance council, functioning as the institution's primary decision-making and planning body. The structure and nature of the President's Cabinet facilitate its interaction with all institutional constituencies. As the College's central decision-making body, the Cabinet's planning role is enhanced by its familiarity with all functions of the College, ensuring both a knowledgeable and an integrated perspective.

Specialized projects are referred by the Cabinet to other governance organizations for review, such as the Academic Senate and Deans' Council for instructional matters, the Classified Senate for staffing issues, and the Associated Students for student issues. These bodies report back to the Cabinet with recommendations. For most issues, the determination of the President's Cabinet is final. In some instances, however, in which District-wide concurrence is necessary, the individual groups also make recommendations to their counterparts within the broader District. The College President is charged with representing Cabinet determinations to the Chancellor, the Chancellor's Cabinet and the Board of Trustees.

In addition to its internal process of input and participation, the Cabinet also looks to external organizations and groups as part of its annual process of review and planning, such as the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, the San Diego and Imperial Counties Community Colleges Association, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the Community College League of California, the American Association of Community Colleges, etc.

The President's Cabinet endeavors to integrate all aspects of communication, decision-making and planning tasks rather than permit the institution to become isolated or its activities to become fragmented due to the centrifugal impulses of this large and complex collegiate environment. The President's Cabinet establishes committees to assist with specialized projects.

Program Review Committee

Review and modify as needed on a regular basis, and disseminate the program review handbook containing questions, criteria, guidelines and forms.

Determine and publish the schedule of programs and service areas in the five-year cycle.

Establish and publish timelines for the program review process.

Provide training and guidance on a regular and as-needed basis to groups and individuals.

Provide training workshops at least once annually to describe the program review goals and process.

Provide structured guidance to and collaboration with lead writers, department chairs and service area supervisors through the program review process; program review committee members will be assigned as liaison to each program/service area at the start of the process, and assist writers in assuring that program reviews are appropriately documented to support subsequent budgeting and hiring decisions.

At the conclusion of the program review process, prepare final written reports to be presented to the Academic Affairs Committee and then to the President's Cabinet.

Research Committee

The San Diego Mesa College Research Committee works to build and implement a culture of evidence in which data-derived information and knowledge are used to improve student learning and engagement, instruction, delivery of services, and institutional effectiveness. The Research Committee is committed to:
- creating, promoting, and encouraging the use of a repository of research literature and institutional research;
- building awareness of good practices through Research Brief publications, professional development opportunities, the Research Committee and Institutional Research web pages, and presentations to the campus community;
- serving as a dynamic resource for instructional programs and service

areas; and

- recommending practice and policy, further research and evaluation, and professional development opportunities.

Student Services Council

The Council reviews issues concerning student services as they affect the College, and makes recommendations. Areas of concern include but are not limited to: admissions, DSPS, matriculation, recruitment, financial aid, EOPS, student affairs, evaluations, student employment, student retention, health services, veterans and records.

The Committee assigns tasks to subcommittees such as the Matriculation Advisory Committee for implementation of plans and recommendations.

The Committee also serves as a connection to the District Student Services Council for district-wide student services issues.

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