



ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

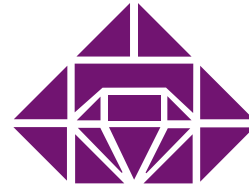
2011 SELF-STUDY REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEFINING OUR JOURNEY







ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

2011 SELF-STUDY REPORT **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** DEFINING OUR JOURNEY

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

Ernest A. Lara, Ph.D., President
Estrella Mountain Community College
3000 North Dysart Road
Avondale, Arizona 85392
623 935 8000
estrellamountain.edu

*Estrella Mountain Community College and the Maricopa County
Community College District are EEO/AA Institutions*



This Executive Summary provides highlights from the Estrella Mountain Community College 2011 Institutional Self-Study Report for the College's third accreditation visit with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

After an intensive and evaluative self-study process, the faculty and staff of Estrella Mountain Community College have demonstrated that the College is achieving its vision of providing exceptional and creative learning experiences that prepare all learners to achieve their dreams and transform their lives.

With a wealth of support services available to help students succeed in university transfer, workforce development and community education programs, Estrella Mountain's self-study report outlines how the Institution is meeting its mission as a vibrant learning college, alive with growth, opportunity and achievement. The purpose of this Executive Summary is to provide an overview of the organizational history, highlight accomplishments since the 2002 accreditation visit, document how Estrella Mountain satisfies the five HLC criterion for accreditation, and based upon the findings, provide a framework for the College to move forward on its path toward comprehensiveness.

OVERVIEW OF ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Estrella Mountain Community College, one of the 10 Maricopa County Community Colleges, serves the communities in western metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona. Since opening in 1992, the College has strived to create a "sense of place" that represents the historical and cultural values of the West Valley, while providing students and the community with meaningful and engaging learning experiences. Initially awarded accreditation from the HLC in 1997, the College has spent the past 14 years distinguishing itself as an innovative institution of higher learning focused on student success.

The College currently enrolls more than 15,000 students per year and is master-planned to be a comprehensive college of more than 40,000 students at full build-out. For the past 10 years, enrollment at the College has been characterized by steady growth in both headcount and fulltime student equivalents (FTSE).

EMCC Overall Headcount and Basic FTSE

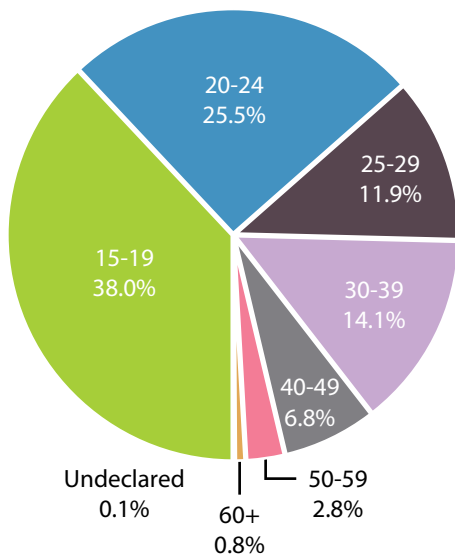
	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 09-10 Change	Fall 08-10 Change	Fall 05-10 Change
Headcount	5,978	5,894	5,973	6,358	7,202	8,122	13%	28%	36%
Basic FTSE	2,582	2,715	2,855	3,002	3,621	4,045	12%	35%	57%

The student population at Estrella Mountain reflects the diversity of the surrounding West Valley communities. In fall 2001, Estrella Mountain was designated a Hispanic Serving Institution, indicating that at least 25 percent of the College's Title III eligible student population consists of Hispanic undergraduate students.

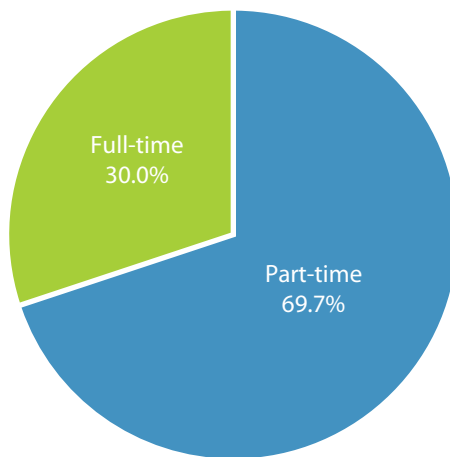
One of the increasing challenges the College continues to face is a growing population of underprepared students. In fall 2010, 44 percent of Estrella Mountain students placed into one or more developmental classes, with 35 percent placing into developmental math, 23 percent placing into developmental reading and 16 percent placing into developmental English.

EMCC Student Demographics, Fall 2010

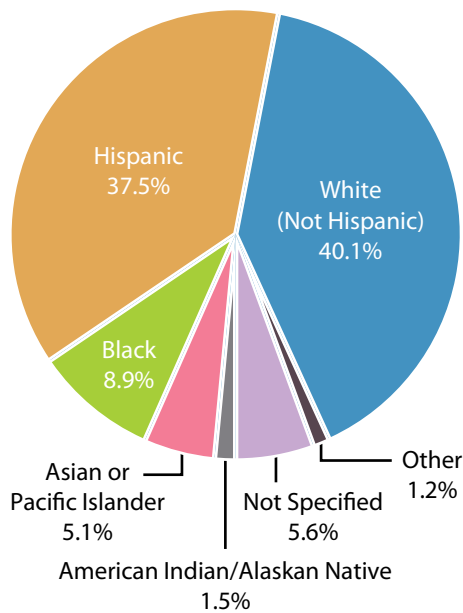
Student Age



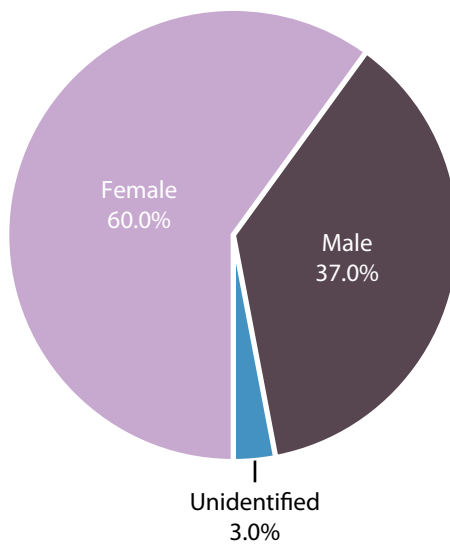
Full-Time vs. Part-Time



Student Ethnicity



Student Gender





For new and continuing students, the Estrella Mountain experience offers comprehensive programs and services, instruction from award-winning faculty, robust learning support services, dynamic learning environments, and one-stop student services. In fall 2010, 83 residential and 296 adjunct faculty members provided instruction and services to students through the following 10 divisions:

- Arts and Composition
- Behavioral Sciences and Cultural Studies
- Counseling
- Information Resources
- Instructional Computing
- Mathematics, Physics and Engineering
- Modern Languages
- Nursing and Allied Health
- Occupational Education
- Science

Estrella Mountain also provides flexible learning options such as online and 'hybrid' courses – a blend of in-person and online coursework – as well as weekend and evening courses. As of fall 2010, over 90 percent of the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) courses (a 35-credit transfer certificate) can be completed through combining hybrid and online offerings at the College. The student experience is further enriched by on- and off-campus activities such as an Honors Program and a Phi Theta Kappa International Honors Society for student scholars, student leadership opportunities, athletics, student clubs, social awareness events, internship opportunities, and research activities.

As part of the College's broad offerings available to students, the SouthWest Skill Center, which became part of Estrella Mountain in 2000, provides quality training for immediate job entry into the allied health and distribution industries.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE LAST ACCREDITATION

Since the last self-study in 2002, the Institution has experienced dramatic enrollment growth, a leadership transition, a \$71 million Capital Development Program to support expansion (as part of a \$951 million District bond program), budget cuts, and an organizational culture shift to support a learning-centered philosophy. Always operating with the service strategy of “Your Success is Our Success,” the Institution has navigated the many challenges of a growing institution while capitalizing on opportunities to foster and advance an organizational focus on teaching and learning.

Major institutional accomplishments since 2002 demonstrate the College’s progress toward comprehensiveness as a future-oriented, learning-centered, connected, and distinctive community college.

Estrella Mountain is Future-Oriented

Estrella Mountain’s processes and institutional resources demonstrate a future-oriented approach to planning. Driven by the College’s vision, mission and academic priorities, long-term institutional planning documents aid the College in maintaining a future-oriented approach in the implementation and improvement of programs and services for students.

In 2005, Estrella Mountain began its third phase of expansion as part of the District-wide voter approved 2004 General Obligation bond program (District-wide \$951 million program). With over \$71 million allocated for construction, equipment and land, the College referred to the Phase III 10-year building program simply as “Building our Future.” Capital projects for the College have included two new classroom buildings, the remodel and expansion of an existing classroom building, a remodel and expansion of science labs, a remodel of the SouthWest Skill Center, a physical plant expansion, and an upgrade to the central plant.

As part of the 2004 bond program, the College also purchased 80 acres in Buckeye to serve as a future campus site. To help bridge the gap until the land can be developed, the College opened the Buckeye Educational Center in fall 2011. Adjacent to a high school, the Estrella Mountain Community College Buckeye Educational Center consists of six classrooms and includes spaces for enrollment services, tutoring, administrative support, and faculty work areas.

To ensure that scholarship dollars remain available for future students, the faculty and staff at Estrella Mountain remain committed to growing the College Endowment through various scholarship fundraising activities and have successfully raised more than \$1 million.

Always operating with the service strategy of “Your Success is Our Success,” the Institution has navigated the many challenges of a growing institution while capitalizing on opportunities to foster and advance an organizational focus on teaching and learning.



Estrella Mountain faculty have reinforced the evaluation of student learning by adopting General Education Abilities as common learning outcomes for all Estrella Mountain students.

Estrella Mountain is Learning-Centered

In spring 2007, Estrella Mountain began an organizational culture shift aimed at transitioning the college environment from one focused on growth to one centered on learning. Considered a Learning College Journey, emphasis was placed on strengthening an organizational culture in which policies, programs, practices, and employees all work collaboratively to support learning.

During the 2002 self-study, the visiting team noted that College needed to improve efforts in the area of assessment of student academic achievement. As a result, Estrella Mountain faculty have reinforced the evaluation of student learning by adopting General Education Abilities as common learning outcomes for all Estrella Mountain students, utilizing curriculum-integrated assessment, implementing an Institutional Assessment Cycle, and participating in a college-wide program review process.

EMCC General Education Abilities Matrix								
	Abilities/ Thinking Skills	Communication	Composition/ Writing	Numeracy	Scientific Inquiry	Information Literacy	Technological Literacy	Social, Civic, and Global Responsibility
Lower Order ↓ Higher Order	Level 1 Remember Identify & define basic components of a discipline.	Know appropriate presentation vocabulary and conventions.	Know writing conventions.	Recall principles, procedures and correct terminology.	Remember basic components of science.	Recognize the need for information. Construct research question and searching strategy.	Know basic digital terminology and identify technology and its safe use.	Identify current social, civic and global issues.
	Level 2 Understand Describe relationships between basic components.	Articulate an understanding of content by expressing the idea in your own words. Identify key concepts of a presentation.	Demonstrate an understanding of context. Identify purpose, audience, and/or situation of a document.	Draw conclusions and justify methods and procedures.	Understand science in context.	Understand issues affecting the use of information while observing laws, regulations, and institutional policies.	Understand the relationships between technological components, the nature, behavior, power, and consequences of technology and how it impacts our values and culture.	Discuss and interpret social, civic and global issues.
	Level 3 Apply Exhibit knowledge of components through presentation, performance and solutions in a new context.	Presents information using appropriate language and delivery through a variety of techniques.	Apply knowledge of a topic to a given scenario using appropriate writing conventions.	Apply a strategy for a solution.	Apply knowledge and comprehension of science components to various situations.	Know where to find information. Use information for a specific purpose.	Responsible use of technology solutions to generate new ideas, processes, and products.	Apply knowledge of global, social and civic mores to current situations.
	Level 4 Analyze Uses critical and creative thinking skills to analyze materials and/or products.	Analyze and adapt a presentation for a particular audience.	Demonstrate ability to analyze perspectives using appropriate writing strategies such as compare and contrast, cause and effect, etc.	Determine relevant information, appropriate mathematical concepts and logical/reasonable responses.	Analyze data and techniques using knowledge of components.	Analyze information needs to determine best sources.	Analyze technology for appropriateness, functionality, and social impact.	Differentiate social, global and civic practices from an ethnocentric perspective.
	Level 5 Evaluate Evaluates information to reach reasonable conclusions.	Organize information for a presentation. Critique a presentation according to specified criteria.	Evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of an argument. Support a position by using and citing appropriate sources.	Verify a procedure using concrete models.	Evaluate data and conclusions using knowledge of components.	Evaluate validity of sources, understand peer review, primary, and other types of sources. Consider author's bias.	Evaluate the authenticity, credibility, and reproducibility of information and products to determine the cultural, social, political and economic effects.	Evaluate and consider change in perspective from a social, civic and global viewpoint.
	Level 6 Create Create materials and/or products that demonstrate critical thinking.	Prepare and deliver a presentation on a given topic.	Compose a piece of writing for given purpose that meets the needs of a specific audience and/or situation.	Integrate parts into something new to form a new product.	Create materials or products using scientific components and relationships.	Create original work using information from sources using correct citation format.	Create products that satisfy the needs of society and contribute to continued innovation.	Construct a model which integrates social, civic and/or global engagement.

Note: Higher order thinking skills signify critical thinking. Levels are based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning Theory.



Strengthening the commitment to improving student learning, the assessment of learning outcomes is directly linked to the budget development process. Requests for resources are examined by the Budget Development Steering Team for their impact on learning. Budget allocations reflect that improvements to teaching and learning are a college priority. Over 78 percent of the institutional budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-2010 was allocated to instruction, academic support and student services.

- Instruction: 52 percent
- Academic support: 15 percent
- Student services: 12 percent
- Physical plant: 8 percent
- General institutional: 6 percent
- Administration: 5 percent
- Scholarships: 2 percent

In addition to ongoing assessment efforts focused on learning outcomes, Estrella Mountain faculty continue to experiment with and assess the effectiveness of various teaching pedagogies. From integrated learning communities and modular classes, to the utilization of innovative learning spaces, the Estrella Mountain General Education program has evolved in the past 10 years to now demonstrate a wide range of instructional pedagogies.

Estrella Mountain is Connected

As one of the 10 Maricopa County Community Colleges, Estrella Mountain is strongly connected to the District. The College purposefully aligns its vision and mission in a consistent manner with the District, while allowing the Institution to still meet the distinct needs of its community.

Estrella Mountain also values strong relationships with educational, business and industry partners, and civic and community leaders. The College is proactive in creating and facilitating opportunities to connect with its constituencies through programs, outreach activities, advisory boards, and committees. Soliciting feedback from the communities it serves enables the College to develop innovative solutions to meet ever changing and diverse needs. Estrella Mountain faculty members actively participate in professional organizations relevant to the disciplines they teach, as well as professional development opportunities provided through the District and the College. These experiences assist faculty with maintaining the currency of their curriculum by keeping them connected to both their profession and the emerging skills required of students to be competitive in today's technological workforce.

MCCCD and EMCC Vision, Mission and Core Value Statements

MCCCD's Vision	EMCC's Vision
A Community of Colleges...Colleges for the Community...working collectively and responsibly to meet the lifelong learning needs of our diverse students and communities.	We provide exceptional and creative learning experiences that prepare all learners to achieve their dreams and transform their lives.
MCCCD's Mission	EMCC's Mission
<p>The Maricopa County Community College District provides access to higher education for diverse students and communities. We focus on learning through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Transfer Education • General Education • Developmental Education • Workforce Development • Student Development Services • Continuing Education • Community Education • Civic Responsibility • Global Engagement 	<p>Estrella Mountain is an innovative higher learning organization responding to the diverse needs of West Valley communities. Learners have an opportunity to successfully accomplish their educational and personal goals through the following college purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Education – Building the academic foundation and providing learning support to prepare learners for collegiate success. • General Education – Expanding educational experiences for all learners while fostering core academic abilities. • Transfer Education – Offering transfer courses and programs that enable learners to achieve success at their institution of choice. • Learner Support Services – Supporting learners through exceptional educational services, programs and guidance. • Workforce Development – Responding to the community's dynamic workforce needs by establishing partnerships and creating relevant programs of study, training and services. • Community Education – Providing learning experiences that enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of life-long learners. • Civic Responsibility – Creating opportunities and partnerships that provide a framework for learners to act responsibly in society. • Global Engagement – Engaging learners in the discovery, contribution and creation of local solutions in response to global issues.
MCCCD's Values	EMCC's Core Values
<p>The Maricopa County Community College District are committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community – We value all people – our students, our employees, their families, and the communities in which they live and work. We value our global community of which we are an integral part. • Excellence – We value excellence and encourage our internal and external communities to strive for their academic, professional and personal best. • Honesty and Integrity – We value academic and personal honesty and integrity and believe these elements are essential in our learning environment. We strive to treat each other with respect, civility and fairness. • Inclusiveness – We value inclusiveness and respect for one another. We believe that team work is critical, that each team member is important and we depend on each other to accomplish our mission. • Innovation – We value and embrace an innovative and risk-taking approach so that we remain at the forefront of global educational excellence. • Learning – We value lifelong learning opportunities that respond to the needs of our communities and are accessible, affordable, and of the highest quality. We encourage dialogue and the freedom to have an open exchange of ideas for the common good. • Responsibility – We value responsibility and believe that we are each accountable for our personal and professional actions. We are responsible for making our learning experiences significant and meaningful. • Stewardship – We value stewardship and honor the trust placed in us by the community. We are accountable to our communities for the efficient and effective use of resources as we prepare our students for their role as productive world citizens. 	<p>We value learning and engagement through:</p> <p><i>Integrity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being accountable to fulfill goals, objectives and responsibilities. • Being truthful, respectful, sincere, and responsible in interactions with others. <p><i>Diversity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the contributions and worldviews of others. • Promoting an inclusive campus culture that supports social awareness. • Committing to comprehensive inter-cultural learning and awareness. <p><i>Collaboration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing partnerships and building relationships that enhance the learning environment. • Practicing communication methods that engage all learners. <p><i>Innovation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing to the continued exploration and development of successful learning practices. • Encouraging creativity and professional exploration within our community of learners. <p><i>Sustainability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how our actions impact the local and global community. • Reducing negative effects on the environment through proactive and sustainable practices. • Applying practices that encourage environmental, economic and social responsibility.

Established in 2002, the NASA Center for Success in Math and Science serves as the College's core driver for student success in mathematics and science. Through efforts such as the NASA Center, the College is preparing students to take part in Arizona's knowledge economy by providing a strong connection to the State's growing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields.

Communication between administrators, faculty, staff, and students is ongoing and dynamic. In order to obtain candid and relevant feedback from students, forums are held throughout the academic year. These forums are designed to give students an open platform to express concerns, opinions and ideas about various issues affecting them to administrators, faculty and staff. Facilitated by student leaders, topics have included financial aid, advisement/transfer, tuition increases, administrative updates, and college master planning. More than 200 students attended student forums during the 2010-2011 academic year. Outcomes from student forums have resulted in the creation of a college mascot, implementation of an athletics program and the inclusion of independent study rooms in newly constructed buildings.

Estrella Mountain is Distinctive

At Estrella Mountain, every corner of the campus is considered a potential and prospective learning environment. When students or community members walk across the campus, they experience beautiful buildings and archways that are complemented by native landscaping, peaceful water features and public art. Various courtyards provide informal gathering spaces for students, faculty and staff to meet and engage in social, professional and academic collaboration. Classroom spaces, referred to as Learning Studios, integrate mobile furniture, technology, lighting, and color to create stimulating and adaptable educational spaces. Examples of distinctive learning spaces at Estrella Mountain include a culinary kitchen and restaurant, an art studio with darkroom and a high-tech nursing simulation lab. To enhance the educational experience of Biology students, an 800-gallon Reef Tank that supports live reef organisms (e.g. crustaceans and coral) has been integrated into the curriculum by faculty. The tank, which is on display for public observation, is a visible example of how learning can occur outside the classroom.

Recognizing and valuing the diversity of its service area and constituencies, the faculty and staff at Estrella Mountain also strive to create innovative programs to address unique student needs. With 44 percent of Estrella Mountain students placing into one or more developmental classes, faculty have teamed together to create various learning communities that focus on helping developmental students succeed. Other efforts include early outreach programs, such as the Achieving a College Education (ACE) pipeline program for middle and high school students, that aim to entice and encourage students to pursue and complete a college education.

Students who attend Estrella Mountain are encouraged to pursue academic excellence. The College proudly offers students an award-winning Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society and Honors Program, as well as various opportunities to participate in undergraduate research. An annual Student Conference provides students with the opportunity to work directly with faculty to conduct formal research, as well as fieldwork across all disciplines, and present their findings at the conference. In 2008, the Student Conference received national recognition in a publication from the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

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Examples of other distinctive programs available to West Valley students at Estrella Mountain include an award-winning Physics program, the only Speech Language Pathology Assisting Program in the State and innovative energy programs, including Radiation Protection and Power Plant Technology.

Estrella Mountain was formally recognized in spring 2011 when the Aspen Institute listed the Institution among 120 community colleges with outstanding academic and workforce outcomes. Representing the top 10 percent in the country, the community colleges chosen not only demonstrate high standards in learning and college completion, but have established that they are training grounds for jobs that pay competitive wages. Estrella Mountain was the only Maricopa County Community College to be recognized by the Aspen Institute.

2011 SELF-STUDY PROCESS

The purpose of Estrella Mountain's self-study is to demonstrate that the Institution meets all criteria for continued accreditation and make clear any opportunities for continuous improvement. The goals of the self-study process consist of the following:

- Analyzing, evaluating and documenting institutional strengths, concerns, opportunities, and challenges in order to continually improve all aspects of Estrella Mountain Community College and effectively prepare for the future
- Cultivating an organizational culture that embraces collaboration, fosters community and creates learning opportunities for employees
- Supporting a culture of evaluation and authentic assessment as a priority for all areas of the Institution
- Developing and implementing a process for communication that will continue to support institutional improvement

The 2011 self-study process began in March 2009 when the Self-Study Coordinators were appointed and the Executive Team was formed. The Executive Team identified the Criterion and Resource Team leaders and the Steering Team was created. What followed was a two-year intensive self-evaluation process.

In October 2009, an All-Employee Kick-Off began the formal self-study process, and all employees were encouraged to join one of the Criterion Teams. An awareness campaign was launched that included a self-study Web page, movie-themed posters situated throughout the College, trivia contests, and humorous yet informative videos about accreditation. The videos and contests were easily accessible through Estrella Mountain's website. More than 120 employees participated in Estrella Mountain's self-study efforts.

In the semesters that followed, the Executive Team, the Steering Team and the Criterion/Resource Teams met regularly. Employee meetings and student forums were conducted to increase awareness of the importance of the process and findings. The College began sharing the findings with the community in spring 2011. Estrella Mountain's self-study process has been inclusive, comprehensive, evaluative, and enlightening, successfully accomplishing its goals and providing direction for continuous improvement.

Copies of the Institutional Self-Study Report as well as this Executive Summary are posted to the College website so they are available to all employees and the general public. Hard copies are available upon request.



THE ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

Criterion 1: Mission and Integrity

Estrella Mountain Community College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff and students.

A hallmark of Estrella Mountain's vision, mission, core values, and governance structures is the focus on learning. The College takes great care to ensure the inclusion of constituency groups in all institutional processes. Such efforts included a two-year comprehensive review of its vision, mission and core values statements that gathered input from students, community members and employees. The newly revised statements enable the College to be responsive to and reflective of the diverse communities it serves. Shared with the Maricopa County Community College Governing Board in fall 2010, the newly revised mission documents clearly and publicly articulate the College's commitment to helping all learners achieve their educational and workforce goals.

Estrella Mountain recognizes the diversity of its learners and the communities it serves. The Institution strives to create inclusive teaching and learning environments that promote positive change on both the individual and social level. Although diversity is a core value of the College, an economic downturn has influenced budgeting and subsequent progress of initiatives designed to increase diversity opportunities. In addition, a college team focused on addressing campus diversity issues ceased to function after 2009. A recommendation for the future is that the College continue to strengthen its commitment to diversity initiatives, an example could include the reinstatement of the Diversity Committee.

Criterion 2: Preparing for the Future

Estrella Mountain Community College effectively allocates its resources and through its planning processes demonstrates its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of learning and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Estrella Mountain has a strong history of planning. College planning processes focus on helping the College become more learning-centered in its policies and practices. Strongly guided by environmental forces such as trends, demographics, community needs, and competition, institutional planning enables Estrella Mountain to continuously improve the services it provides to the West Valley community.

Integrated planning processes reflect an ongoing strategic planning process that is reviewed, analyzed, supported, and exhibited through the College's strategic directions. The 2011-2013 Estrella Mountain Strategic Plan represents the College's strong commitment to learning. Aligned with the Learning College objectives identified by the League for Innovation in the Community College, while remaining consistent with the Maricopa County Community College District, the Strategic Plan guides all planning and resource allocation processes that occur across the Institution.

- **Direction I: Maximizing Student Success**
Estrella Mountain will create and expand learning-centered programs and strategies that support the success of students
- **Direction II: Creating a Culture of Assessment**
Estrella Mountain will commit to assessing and documenting learning outcomes across divisions that result in strategies to improve learning
- **Direction III: Creating an Organizational Culture that Supports Learning**
Estrella Mountain will cultivate an organizational culture where policies, programs, practices, and employees support learning as the major priority. This includes professional development programs and diversity initiatives that prepare all employees to become more effective facilitators of learning
- **Direction IV: Creating Dynamic Environments that Support Student Learning**
Estrella Mountain will promote and support the expansion of dynamic learning environments that improve student learning through the effective use of information technology and teaching pedagogies
- **Direction V: Maximizing Partnerships and Resources to Support Learning**
Estrella Mountain will maximize existing partnerships and resources (capital and human), while continuing to pursue new opportunities to support learning

Coordinated planning and budget activities are driven by the College's vision, mission and academic priorities. Planning processes and the allocation of institutional resources demonstrate Estrella Mountain's capacity to fulfill its mission, while being responsive to future challenges and opportunities.

Although the College has been forced to implement multiple budget cuts, the supplemental use of Enrollment Growth funds (one-time funds) has resulted in minimal impact on student support services. One-time funds have also provided the College with the opportunity to provide some financial support for new initiatives. However, as enrollment has grown and the permanent operational budget has decreased, Estrella Mountain is limited when it comes to permanently expanding faculty, staff and addressing operational needs. This current dilemma has created a growing dependence on short-term employees (i.e., adjunct faculty, one-year-only, one semester-only, specially-funded, and temporary staff).



To address the limited budget for staff and operational needs, the College needs to continue to expand alternative funding sources through federal, state and private grants. As Estrella Mountain prepares to begin construction of the last capital-funded project from the 2004 bond program, the College must also begin planning for how it will accommodate future campus expansion and how it will maintain facilities and technology demands once bond dollars expire.

Guided by a desire for the continuous improvement of planning processes and taking into account current budgetary and enrollment concerns, Estrella Mountain has worked to strengthen the linkages between planning efforts and institutional assessments such as core indicators, environmental scanning, Program Review, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and student academic achievement outcomes. Institutional collaboration and planning integration will continue to enable Estrella Mountain to improve learning experiences for students, the community and staff.

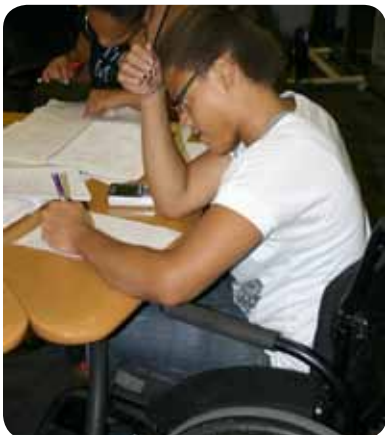


As with any institution experiencing the transition from a small college to a large comprehensive college, communication can be a challenge. Although, Estrella Mountain provides access to college information through open meetings and a campus e-newsletter entitled *Campus Updates*, greater communication and understanding of college planning processes is desired. To help facilitate increased knowledge and comprehension of college planning processes among all stakeholders, a visual tool (concept map) needs to be established. Such a tool would illustrate how planning documents support each other, how components are incorporated into each document and how stakeholders are represented.

Criterion 3: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Estrella Mountain provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Estrella Mountain continues to grow and infuse a culture of assessment into the teaching and learning environment to inform improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and student services. Supported by a faculty-driven Student Academic Achievement Committee, faculty members across the College are engaged in various assessment efforts aimed at improving student learning at the course, program and institutional level. By utilizing curriculum-integrated assessment, following an Institutional Assessment Cycle and adhering to a General Education Abilities Matrix, faculty have placed learning at the center of the College's academic mission. The General Education Abilities Matrix articulates to the public the seven abilities that an Estrella Mountain student will attain during their educational experience at the College. A process is established to identify the association between the curriculum and the general education abilities and an extensive program review process is utilized to help evaluate the Estrella Mountain General Education Program. Although the College has made significant progress in the areas of assessment, increased participation among residential and adjunct faculty needs to continue to be encouraged.



Estrella Mountain strongly values and supports effective teaching. The Maricopa County Community College District provides opportunities for Estrella Mountain residential faculty to improve teaching pedagogies in the form of Faculty Professional Growth, Sabbaticals and Summer Projects. The Estrella Mountain Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which opened in 1999, provides a supportive environment for faculty to experiment, explore, develop, implement, and share ideas and experiences for the advancement of student learning. During the 2010-2011 academic year, the CTL conducted workshops for more than 1,000 faculty and staff in support of continuous growth and learning. Adjunct faculty are strongly encouraged to participate in CTL activities and are also provided information regarding college resources through an online Adjunct Faculty Orientation.

One of the challenges facing the College in the area of student learning and teaching effectiveness is that budget constraints and reductions pose a threat to maintaining quality services. Programs that are critical to a student's academic experience, such as Honors and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), do not have permanent, full-time staff or space. In addition, there is a heavy reliance on part-time faculty and staff to address demands caused by enrollment growth. In an effort to further expand co-curricular experiences for students in programs such as Honors and PTK, Estrella Mountain needs to continue to explore strategies to reallocate resources to provide more permanent funding to these areas.

Criterion 4: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge

Estrella Mountain Community College promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

With an organizational commitment to lifelong learning, Estrella Mountain has greatly invested in providing and facilitating intellectual, educational, personal, and professional opportunities for all faculty, administrators, staff, and students. Through the Maricopa County Community College District and the College, employees are provided a wide array of professional development opportunities. As a Learning College, Estrella Mountain encourages and supports all faculty, administrators and staff to utilize the many professional development options provided to them as District employees.

Estrella Mountain regularly seeks input from the West Valley community on how to establish creative and inclusive learning environments for students. Estrella Mountain supports experiential learning events, strong general education standards and enhanced internship experiences to provide students with the necessary attitudes and skills for a life of learning in a diverse society.

Estrella Mountain has a comprehensive and coherent general education program with defined learning outcomes (General Education Abilities). A comprehensive program review process is used to assess instructional and service programs throughout the College. Information about the general education program, academic policies and resources is provided to students in various formats.

Although Estrella Mountain does support professional development opportunities that encourage all employees to become more effective facilitators of learning, the College needs to increase its efforts to provide students with opportunities for experiential learning and community-based projects. To bolster continuous improvement efforts, the College needs to gather more feedback from students who have graduated and entered directly into the workforce.

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Criterion 5: Service and Engagement

As called for by its mission, Estrella Mountain Community College identifies its constituencies and services them in ways both value.

Considered a college for the community, Estrella Mountain builds and fosters strong relationships with educational partners, community leaders and industry partners that are specifically designed to promote student success. The College cares about its constituencies and invests in relationships, partnerships, programs, and services that facilitate positive outcomes. Estrella Mountain strives to invite and involve all constituent groups in establishing responsive, creative and stimulating programs and services for students. Estrella Mountain solicits feedback from all constituents, utilizing their input to make improvements and enhance the educational experience for West Valley students.

The College identifies and serves its constituencies in mutually valuable ways, working to be proactive in creating collaborative educational, business and community partnerships. It seeks immediate qualitative and quantitative feedback from its communities regarding its perceptions of the Institution's performance and solicits feedback from local businesses regarding the competitiveness of workforce program certificates and degrees. Strong collaborative partnerships aid the College in addressing the needs of its constituencies and achieving positive educational outcomes for students. This is shown through its efforts in the areas of outreach and access programs, occupational training, career planning, and policies and practices to increase university transfer.

The College also collaborates with partners to meet the needs of underprepared and underserved populations. This is evidenced through learning-centered efforts to improve services and support for underprepared learners through a variety of distinctive early outreach initiatives and programs targeting these populations.

Through national instruments such as the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, the College regularly seeks feedback from students about service areas. Although the College has made efforts to improve the area of advising, assessment results indicate that student satisfaction with advising continues to rank slightly below the national average.

Moving forward, the College needs to continue to implement improvements to advising services. Estrella Mountain students and faculty have expressed a desire for greater service learning and community volunteerism, yet the College struggles to provide such opportunities due to a lack of systematic coordination and facilitation of efforts. In response to increasing demand, the Institution needs to develop a Service Learning office designed to solicit both service learning opportunities for students and program partnerships with community organizations and business leaders. Creation of a database system is needed to collect engagement and service project data on a regular basis.

SELF-STUDY FINDINGS AND REQUEST FOR ACCREDITATION

The Estrella Mountain Community College 2011 Self-Study demonstrates that the Institution successfully fulfills the five criterion for accreditation of the Higher Learning Commission. Resulting from the inclusive and intensive organizational self-examination that accompanied the self-study process, recommendations from each of the Criterion Teams has provided the College with a guide as it continues on the path to become a comprehensive Learning College.



Recommendations for the Future

- Reinstate and support a college Diversity Team to expand campus diversity-related events
- Establish a visual tool (concept map) illustrating how planning documents support each other, how components are incorporated into each document and how stakeholders are represented
- Expand alternative funding sources through federal, state and private grants to help address the limited budget for staff and operational needs
- Reallocate resources in order to provide more permanent resources to support growth and decrease reliance on short-term employees (i.e., adjunct faculty, one-year-only, one semester-only, specially-funded, and temporary staff)
- Plan for how the College will accommodate future campus expansion and maintain facilities and technology demands once bond dollars expire
- Plan for a future bond program that supports the Master Plan and the Learning and Technology Plan
- Increase participation among residential and adjunct faculty in assessment efforts
- Reallocate resources in order to provide more permanent funding to support co-curricular activities for students such as Honors, PTK and Service Learning
- Improve college advising services
- Create a database system to regularly collect campus engagement and service project data

Based on the extensive documentation of data and evidence in the 2011 Institutional Self-Study Report, Estrella Mountain Community College formally requests continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The Institution also requests approval of an additional location, as well as a change in status so that the College may now be considered a distance delivery degree-granting institution.



**3000 North Dysart Road
Avondale, Arizona 85392
623 935 8000
estrellamountain.edu**



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MARICOPA SKILL CENTER | MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE | PARADISE VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE | PHOENIX COLLEGE | RIO SALADO COLLEGE
SCOTTSDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE | SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE | SOUTHWEST SKILL CENTER