

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students

of

COUNTY COLLEGE OF MORRIS
214 Center Grove Road
Randolph, New Jersey 07869

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's Self-Study report
and a visit to the campus on April 13-16, 2008

The Members of the Team:

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair; it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist County College of Morris. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President/CEO:
Dr. Edward J. Yaw

Chief Academic Officer:
Dominic Latorraca J.D.
Vice President

Chair of the Board of Trustees:
Carole M. Harper, Chair
C/o CCM
214 Center Grove Rd.
Randolph, NJ 07869

I. Context and Nature of the Visit

County College of Morris serves populous Morris County, New Jersey from a campus in Randolph. It also has a site in downtown Morristown. Its mission is community college specific and an appointed eleven member Board of Trustees provides oversight and connection to the community. The College received its initial accreditation in 1972.

At the time of the evaluation the College offered associate degrees and one year certificates, as well as a range of continuing education programs. There are no foreign study campuses recognized by MSCHE. The team did visit the Headquarters Plaza site in Morristown, recognized as an additional location by MSCHE, to better appreciate the physical facilities and capabilities at this site to serve students. There are 22 current programs for which 50% or more of the program is available by distance learning. There are also normal grants and industry oriented short term contracts in connection with other entities.

The visiting team was present for a decennial review following the completion of a comprehensive Self-Study which addressed the 14 Characteristics. There was significant participation on steering committee, study groups, through open forums, and via electronic distribution and discussion of multiple drafts of the Self-Study.

II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements

Based on a review of the Self-Study, interviews, the certification statement supplied by the institution and/or other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet the eligibility requirements in *Characteristics of Excellence*.

III. Compliance with Federal Requirements: Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

Based on a review of the Self-Study, certification by the institution, other institutional documents, and interviews, the team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits or that the institution has an acceptable plan in place to address federal compliance issues.

IV. Evaluation Overview

County College of Morris has a strong history of service to its suburban community. It is served by a dedicated, politically appointed Board of Trustees, a faculty committed to teaching and learning, a strong support staff, and an excellent team of administrative leaders. The physical surroundings are excellent and much of the physical plant is newly renovated; plans exist for added renovations in the coming years as capital project funds allow. The financial situation of the College is quite good and financial reports and annual financial controls indicate sound

management. Planning and assessment efforts are routine and some have been in place for a decade. The administrative assessment process is particularly worthy of note.

The visiting team has three concerns: inconsistent connections between all of the already started assessment and planning efforts, the inconsistent availability of measurable course objectives for all courses and programs, and strengthening General Education.

The College has a ten year history of planning and assessment and has more recently taken major strides in assessment in the non-academic areas. While there has been assessment in academic areas, the consistency of these efforts is not yet at a comfortable point when viewed externally. While the College has a good process for involvement of faculty in creating assessments and while the six year program review also is commendable and includes service courses, the independence of the various academic units creates considerable inconsistency. Of particular concern is the baseline non-availability of learning outcomes for a significant portion of courses and programs, hence an incomplete basis for connecting the two and assessing strengths of student performance against these fundamental learning outcomes.

In the area of General Education, the College clearly meets state requirements for General Education course inclusion in all programs of study. It is also participating in statewide efforts to strengthen General Education. General Education is also assessed as part of the six year cycle. But there is no coherent core of General Education courses designed and evaluated independently. Nor can a student ascertain what that core is. They can see that certain non specialization courses - hence General Education courses- exist as part of each program. But there does not seem a coherent and connected program of General Education which is assessed routinely as an entity rather than as part of an individual program review.

V. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Standards 1: Mission, Goals, and Objectives.

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The County College of Morris is guided by a clear and succinct mission statement that is supported and amplified by six guiding values. These six Values statements are identified in the Self-Study as the institution's goals.
- The Mission and Values statements guide the planning and budget building processes at the College. The Strategic Planning process is guided by a Vision Statement; this statement affirms the College's resolve to achieve excellence in pursuing its stated values by pursuing particular strategic initiatives. Thus, the initiatives identified within the Strategic Plan reflect the College's Values implicitly.
- The Mission Statement was reviewed five years ago and approved in 2003. The Values statement is 15 years old and has not been formally re-examined by the entire campus community since that time.

Suggestions

- Give the College Mission and Values statements a more prominent place on the College's public web page and Intranet.
- The team concurs with the Self-Study's recommendation to establish a formalized process for periodic review of the College's Mission and Values statements. At the time of such review, consider a more consistent use of outcomes-based language for each value statement.

Recommendations to be addressed in the Periodic Review Report

- ❖ Make the linkage between the Values statements and the Strategic Plan explicit.

Standards 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The college has a three-year strategic plan currently in the second year. This plan consists of five crosscutting goals. The strategic plan was created based upon comprehensive environmental scan by the office of institutional research. A SWOT analysis was also done by the president's cabinet in conjunction with the Board of Trustees. The planning goals and objectives are developed by the president's cabinet and the Board. This information was shared with the college community for feedback and input through the president's Blog.
- The college also has operational plans for technology, facilities, marketing, and enrollment which are intended to link to the strategic plan. A plan for the Foundation is currently under development.
- The master plan will be updated in fiscal year 2008 and will include feedback from the entire college community. Although these operational plans have some ties to the college's strategic goals, there are no formal methods of assessing the effectiveness of the plans' activities nor are there any set benchmarks to help the college track progress on these plans.
- Growth in the Foundation is an important part of the College's long-term strategy. The new Vice President for Advancement and Planning is tasked with increasing the membership on the Foundation Board and increasing annual giving.
- Each member of the President's Cabinet creates annual objectives that reach back to the strategic goals and are prioritized and vetted by the college community. Although annual objectives are supposed to reach down into the various departments under each Vice President, the team observed a few administrators who did not know about the strategic plan.
- The budgeting process is linked to the strategic plan through the annual operational planning within functional areas.
- Although, a survey of members of the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees was conducted to determine the satisfaction of the Board with the process, no assessment of the planning process was done with other members of the college community. The strategic

plan would be greatly improved by imbedding formal assessment, including metrics to measure goals and objectives, into the process.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- The environmental scan by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning was comprehensive and added much value to the creation of the college's strategic goals.
- The Technology Plan objectives are based upon the College's vision which helps keep the technology goals current with the College's collective goals for enhancing student success and promoting growth for the college.

Suggestions

- The strategic planning process would benefit from more input from external as well as a wider body of internal stakeholders.
- The college should work to strengthen communication about the Strategic Plan to all members of the college community.

Recommendations to be addressed in the Periodic Review Report

- ❖ The College should refine its well-defined assessment process which includes measures and mechanisms for improvement of the College's overall strategic goals and objectives as part of its strategic and operational plans.

Standards 3: Institutional Resources

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- County College of Morris operates in Randolph NJ, and at a site in Morristown NJ. Buildings are well maintained and accessible to disabled persons. The College's maintenance department maintains a complete record of deferred maintenance. The team was pleased with the quality and consistency of resources that have been allocated in terms of services, staffing support, and equipment. The Characteristics of Excellence recognize the importance of a comprehensive facilities or infrastructure master plan. CCM has such a plan and it is very clear that facilities and infrastructure planning are well established and implemented.
- County College of Morris comprehensive planning process provides the primary means by which budgeting, resource allocation and daily operations are aligned with the strategic goals of the institution.
- A product of the College's planning process, the County College of Morris Master Plan for Facilities, appears to effectively complement the College's programmatic needs. The success of these efforts is evident based on the current and recent progress on the College's master planning projects. The only missing piece is clearer integration with the college wide outcomes and assessment process.

- Clearly the facilities department has done great work, keeping the campus and the most visible infrastructure in good shape. However the “hidden” infrastructure needs more of a commitment from the college. The facilities building itself has not changed or expanded much in 40 years, while the rest of the campus has grown tremendously. With available space at such a premium there is little additional space for needed storage. Thus there is a pressing need to move up the timing for building new space dedicated to the facilities / infrastructure area. Until such space is built the existing facilities areas will continue to be very tightly cluttered with supplies and facility related material potentially leading to unsafe conditions.
- The College maintains a strong commitment to safety through the deployment of a well-staffed safety and security dept. It is compliant with state and federal standards.
- Finance and accounting controls appear to be solid. The most recent annual audit report (management letter) was exceptionally brief, an example of excellent fiscal controls. Each year the College undergoes an external audit of its financial records for the period by a certified public accountant. At the conclusion of the audit, the resulting financial statements are certified by the auditor, reviewed and accepted by the Board of Trustees. This positive fiscal audit is a result of a system of internal controls. Similarly, the College performs a variety of tasks intending to safeguard assets including physical control over equipment inventories and stocks. The College currently maintains a healthy financial position, and strong fund balance.
- The budget process appears to be routine and straight-forward. Throughout the budgeting cycle most constituent groups are included in the process, from the Board of Trustees to individual department heads. Input in this cycle is linked to the Strategic Plan. (The team was impressed with the degree to which staff was very aware of the need to link budgets to the College’s Strategic Plan.) Departmental managers are provided routine financial reports, which summarize year-to-date line item expenditures and available balances of unexpected funds in relationship to authorized budget for the year. There is no campus budget advisory committee.
 - The College maintains a strong relationship with and receives financial support from its Sponsor, Morris County. The College also receives funding from the State of New Jersey. While the College has enjoyed fine financial support from its Sponsor, the team did note concern over the uncertainty in the projected level of operating support from the County and State of New Jersey which limits the College’s ability to accurately project future budget support.
 - CCM currently enjoys a strong financial situation, with budgets that include contingency and flexibility. However, because of the questionable future of New Jersey funding it is suggested that CCM develop long term fiscal planning that does not count mostly on retirement savings and lapsed salary to keep their budgets aligned. Given that their tuition is the 3rd highest in the state and with funding at the state level at a decline a major challenge is to expand their revenue base to offset the declining state revenue. The team applauds their recognition of this issue, however as of yet there is no concrete plan for addressing this issue that is also tied to credit and non-credit enrollment forecasting.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- The budget process is sound, well understood, and connected to plans.
- The financial reporting system has been recognized nationally for excellence.

- CCM is committed and able to maintaining strong financial and fund balance positions. The team commends the College for its effort to closely monitor and maintain a strong financial position in light of current funding uncertainties.
- The current Facility Master Plan and Technology Plan clearly identify needs in these areas providing a systematic approach to upgrading and expanding facilities and serving as a tool for securing state funding for construction. Intended outcomes are incorporated within the technology planning document.

Suggestions for improvement

- CCM needs to develop a long term plan to address the declining fiscal situation. To date there is no evidence of a plan with contingencies for addressing this issue.
- It is suggested that a facilities planning needs to become integrated with the overall outcomes and assessment process at the college.
- An updated business plan for the Headquarters Plaza facility and its clearer connection to overall strategic development would be useful.
- Added resources and space to aid the continued success of the facilities department will be beneficial to the success of the College.

Standards 4: Leadership and Governance

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The College's governance system is well documented within the bylaws of the Board of Trustees. The Board adheres to procedures for review of policies to ensure that these are current and relevant to the changing needs of the College.
- Key governance groups at CCM include the Board of Trustees and the College Council along with its seven standing committees (Academic Standards, Curriculum, Disability Awareness, Diversity, Information Technology, Safety, and Student Affairs), as well as four collective bargaining units, and the Student Government Association (SGA).
- Students have an active voice in the governance of CCM through their participation on the Standing Committees and involvement in the SGA.
- The Board of Trustees is comprised of the Morris County Superintendent of Schools and ten other members. Eight of these are appointed by the Morris County Freeholders. Two are appointed by the governor of the State and each graduating class elects a representative to serve as a non-voting member for a one-year term. The president of the College serves as a non-voting ex officio member.
- The trustees are highly qualified individuals who possess an adequate depth of knowledge about the College and a range of individual expertise to ensure that the College is fulfilling its mission and goals.
- The Board is guided by a Code of Ethics for County College of Morris Trustees. This code includes a clearly stated Conflict of Interest Policy.

Suggestions for Improvement

Data from the 2007 Employee Survey reveals that the majority of employees sense disconnect between the Board and the College community. To further promote a climate of mutual support and respect, the team encourages the Board to

- Strive to improve communication of strategic priorities and successes in achievement of these to the College community.
- Continue to work on periodic self-assessment with state and national professional organizations such as the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and the Association of Community College Trustees.
- Adopt a system to periodically assess the operational effectiveness of the Board and its members, including clarification of Board roles on Advisory Committees.

Standards 5: Administration

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The organizational architecture for the College includes four principal divisions and the Office of the President. A CIO position has recently been added as a Cabinet level report. Current job descriptions for employees in these areas are on file in the Office of Human Relations and Labor Relations.
- Recruitment and hiring policies are well defined and communicated throughout the organization.
- Personnel evaluation policies are consistent for administrators and staff.
- The College's concern about diversity is clearly demonstrated by its continuing efforts to diversity its staff and the student body.
- The College's six year non-academic departmental review process has resulted in opportunities for structural improvement that enabled CCM to implement changes to assure the best use of its human and facilities resources.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- The team concurs with the Strengths cited in the Self Study and commends the College on its Employee Leadership Academy. Since its inception in 2004, more than 60 faculty and staff have participated in this program designed to enhance core leadership skills, acquire institutional knowledge, and gain appreciation for CCM's role in its community.

Suggestions for Improvement

- The team concurs with the Self Study recommendations for this standard.

Standards 6: Integrity

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

“Integrity is a central, indispensable, and defining hallmark of effective higher education institutions, and it can manifest itself within the institutions conduct within the other standards,” *Characteristics of Excellence*. The college has demonstrated through its many policies, handbooks, contracts, and codes that it satisfies the fundamental elements of integrity.

- The Catalog, the Campus Life Calendar Handbook, and the website all clearly detail fair and impartial policies for student grievances. It was established that these procedures and policies are consistently followed.
- It was shown to the team that the agreed upon fair and impartial processes for employee hiring, evaluation, and dismissal are followed.
- There is evidence that the college fosters a climate of respect among the students, faculty, and staff; with a few exceptions.
- Confirmation was provided that required and elective courses are offered so students can complete their degrees within the published program length.
- The team found many college policies, procedures, program information, assessment documents, and other college-related information on its open website. However, the Self-Study indicated that “Many policies (such as those for promotion and sabbatical leave) and forms are available on this site. The information provided however, is often outdated (especially committee membership) and/or incomplete. In addition, the search functions differ between the official website and *Spiderweb*.”

Suggestions for improvement:

- The College should develop processes to assure that published information is accurate and current.
- The College should explore how to assure consistency in navigation between its website and intranet.
- As the College’s governance structure evolves, the role of the Department Chairs and faculty leadership and representation should be considered.

Standards 7: Institutional Assessment.

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- A form of student learning outcomes assessment has been in place since 1998 and has been revised at times to make it less cumbersome and more effective. Assessment in academic affairs tends to be decentralized, faculty driven and addresses course outcomes and assessment of academic programs and services in a number of ways. Academic departments are subject to periodic assessment on a six-year cycle. Some departments have done more with assessment than others.
- The entire institutional assessment plan was revisited between 2000 and 2002. The Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education was the first administrative office to develop and formalize a framework for outcomes assessment. After their lead, other administrative areas began to follow-suit and the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education trained other areas in implementing their assessment model. Currently they are responsible for coordinating the assessment plans.
- Each administrative unit at the college is expected to prepare a written assessment plan and use the results for improvement. Each plan should specify outcomes based upon the department's mission, which should be linked back to the overall college mission and objectives. All thirty-six administrative departments have written assessment plans. Some of these departments have completed a full assessment cycle as can be found in their quarterly reports documented on the *Spiderweb*, CCMs intranet.
- Each Vice President is responsible for monitoring the assessment plans of departments under their supervision. Results of assessments are reported quarterly and are made a part of each Vice President's annual report. Departmental assessment plans are at various levels of maturity. Among those departments who have completed a full cycle of assessment are: Plant and Maintenance assessment of the compliance of their recycling process with the New Jersey statewide standards; Institutional Research and Planning who did focus groups with clients on their satisfaction with the Factbook; and the Learning Resource Center assessment of its 'information literacy' services.
- Although there is clearly a foundation for assessment of academic and administrative programs, some processes are informal and policies and procedures are administered unevenly. A more consistent and better understood structure would assist. There is also not always a clear link between assessment of outcomes at the department (programs and services) level and the strategic and operational planning of the College. The College's long-range planning process would be enhanced by a more structured tie between assessment and strategic and operational planning with clear alignment with the process of institutional improvement.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- All 36 administrative units have developed assessment plans, and a number of these units have matured to the point of having analyzed assessment results and made improvements to processes and procedures. Assessment plans and findings can be found on the *Spiderweb*.
- The division of Student Development is to be commended for taking the lead in implementing the administrative assessment model. Specifically the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education and the passion and motivation of its leaders were the pioneers in administrative assessment. They have taken the lead in formalizing a process, training and coordinating the assessment process for the entire college, as well as making numerous national presentations of the model for others to consider.

Suggestions for improvement

- It would be to the College's benefit to transfer the coordination and monitoring responsibility of the College's assessment plan from Office of Career Services and Cooperative Programs to an area more closely associated with college planning and assessment.
- There should be consistency in data used for departmental and institutional assessments with the data generated by the department of Institutional Research and Planning.

Recommendations to be addressed in the Periodic Review Report

- ❖ The College should continue the work to strengthen the alignment between the planning process and the various assessment activities. Specifically, assessment results should drive the decisions made about the marketing plans, technology plan, facilities master plan, enrollment plans, and the strategic plan with a clearer path to fiscal development and resource allocation.
- ❖ The College should review the effect of decentralization and the amount of autonomy given in a variety of areas on the ability of the College to sustain consistent assessment processes and efforts to improve programs and services.
- ❖ The Self-Study has made seven recommendations for this standard. The visiting team agrees with these recommendations and encourages the College to follow them.

Standard 8: Student Admissions

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- A review of institutional publications and the website indicates that admission policies reflect and support the College's mission and are designed to assist prospective students in making informed decisions. The alignment of various services in the renovated Student Center to facilitate a student's enrollment at the College is commendable.
- Procedures regarding the acceptance of transfer credit are in place, although there is no formalized process for the acceptance of extra-institutional college-level learning (e.g., portfolio assessment, internships, work experience, apprenticeships, etc.) and it appears that existing protocols (e.g., credit scores for granting AP credit) have not been reviewed for some time. Formalizing this process and updating current procedures would be beneficial as it would serve as an incentive for attracting working adults to enroll at the College to continue their education.
- A significant challenge for the College is expanding its revenue base through enrollment growth as State support has declined. In response to this, the College implemented marketing and enrollment plans. There is evidence that enrollment development and marketing efforts are proactive, well planned, and coordinated by committed teams representing key College constituencies. These efforts have yielded positive results particularly in the recent increase in the enrollment of first-time, full-time students. There is need, however, for the teams to develop specific enrollment benchmarks,

conduct systematic market research to identify potential new markets and tie efforts more clearly to the College's Strategic Plan.

- Credit and non-credit program development are not yet fully incorporated into enrollment planning. These are essential elements of a comprehensive marketing and enrollment planning process and need to be included.
- Retention of students is an integral part of a College's enrollment development efforts. While there is evidence that the College has engaged in efforts to improve student retention, these efforts need to be more intentional, integrated, college-wide, and assessed as to their effectiveness.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- The College has been very proactive in its marketing and enrollment development efforts.

Suggestions

- The College should formalize processes for evaluating extra-institutional college-level learning and update existing protocols. (See also Standard 13)
- The College should develop specific enrollment benchmarks for credit and non-credit programs to guide the College's enrollment development efforts, link these to the Strategic Plan, and clarify the role of academic and non-credit program development in enrollment planning.
- The College should integrate existing retention strategies, assign leadership responsibility, provide resources to support and sustain retention efforts, and systematically assess their effectiveness.
- The College should develop a more formalized process for assessing the effectiveness of the College's marketing, enrollment development and retention efforts.

Standards 9: Student Support Services

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The College offers a comprehensive array of support services that assist students in maximizing their potential and that reflect the College's mission. The College's commitment to providing appropriate services to meet diverse student needs is evidenced by a variety of programs for special student populations. Staff is well qualified, student-centered, dedicated and readily accessible on campus, although some students expressed concern about interactions with selected offices on campus. It may be beneficial to conduct more extensive and detailed customer surveys across service areas to determine the extent of the concerns. Access to services is available day and selected evenings during the week on the main campus and plans are underway for offering limited student

services at the Headquarters Plaza site. A robust campus life program that offers athletic, cultural, recreational, intellectual, citizenship and leadership opportunities enhances the overall educational experience of the College's students.

- The Division of Student Development and Enrollment Management is to be commended for its efforts in developing assessment plans that clearly indicate each department's objectives and identify measurable outcomes and its 6-year periodic review process that utilizes internal and external evaluators to review student services programs. The Division's assessment plan has served as a model for the College's other administrative units.
- The academic advisement system is primarily a faculty-based model with established protocols and processes in place and the Advising Cadre is an effective model for supplementing advising services during peak periods. Students, however, expressed some concern that their advising sessions focus primarily on course selection and do not address their educational and career goals. There have been recent institutional discussions, however, about infusing developmental advising concepts into the advising system to enhance the advising experience for students.
- Advising training is provided to faculty, although it appears to be inconsistent across academic departments. There is evidence that the administrative processes related to advising are assessed, however, it is less clear to what extent the effectiveness of advising from a student's perspective has been assessed. The College should consider development of a more formal process for assessing the effectiveness of the advising system.
- Policies and procedures are in place to ensure the College's compliance with FERPA, although student records are not maintained in a safe and secure manner. Processes exist for addressing and documenting student complaints and their resolution and the publication "Dealing with Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom and On Campus" is a model for guiding faculty and staff in addressing student behavioral issues.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary innovative practices

- The Division of Student Development and Enrollment Management is to be commended for its fine work with outcomes assessment and its six-year review system using internal and external evaluators is a model for student services.

Suggestions

- The College should consider conducting more extensive and detailed customer satisfaction surveys across service areas to identify potential areas of concern.
- The College should evaluate the effectiveness and consistency of advising training, develop a more formal process for assessing the effectiveness of the academic advising system, and consider incorporating developmental advising approaches into the system.

Standards 10: Faculty

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- The faculty is highly qualified and dedicated to the educational mission of the County College of Morris; they are responsible for the design and assessment of all academic courses and programs.
- The faculty impressed us with their collegial and cooperative relationships. They are passionate about doing the right thing for their students, and they reported frequent and productive relationships across departments and divisions in the service of their students and each other.
- Policies for appointment, promotion, evaluation, tenure, grievance, discipline and dismissal are clear and described in the Faculty Association negotiated agreement and disseminated on the College intranet.
- The College has been creative in supplementing the limited financial resources for off-campus professional development with in-house programs and other opportunities for professional growth. The use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning has increased among the faculty since the last Self-Study. The College has invested in appropriate professional development to support this activity in the Center for Teaching Excellence. Additionally, the Center for Teaching Excellence provides a variety of programs and workshops to support the professional development of the faculty. The Employee Leadership Academy, available to faculty and other employee groups, is another notable example of a professional growth opportunity provided by the College.
- Adjunct faculty are valued members of the academic community. They are welcomed to participate fully in the academic life of the institution as their schedules permit. They are provided the resources and support they require to deliver quality instruction to their students. Evaluation is conducted for the purpose of improving their instruction, and, although the implementation of evaluation processes may be variable across departments, they are consistent with those employed for full-time faculty.

The team concurs with the Self-Study's recommendations. However, the statements concerning classroom scheduling and other space resources are not within the purview of this standard.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- The Center for Teaching Excellence provides exemplary service to the faculty and ultimately to the students of the County College of Morris through its technology training programs and other non-tech offerings.

Standards 11: Educational Offerings

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- Morris offers a wide variety of courses, and almost 100 degree and certificate programs. Programs originate from faculty and/or industry suggestions, and are not offered until and unless they are approved by the department, the Curriculum Committee, the College Council, the President, and the Board of Trustees. All those groups consider the viability of the program, focusing especially on student demand, cost to the college, and industry need.
- The team did not find clearly articulated statements of outcomes for all these courses or programs, however, with significant exceptions such as Nursing - a model for a program that has written outcomes at every level with a 92% NCLEX pass rate.
- Morris is to be commended that many of the traditional courses, as well as some hybrid and online courses, increase student information literacy via a variety of means.
- The Center for Teaching Excellence is a campus resource, headed by faculty on released time, where both computer use and shared teaching techniques improve instruction. Use of the Center's resources is encouraged among faculty.
- There is a clear distinction between college and precollege courses. Many open admission students arrive unprepared for college work. They are tested and assigned to college preparatory courses in math, English, writing as well as other areas that are more specific to their chosen curriculum. In addition, many of the college-level courses have clearly specified sequences and pre-requisites.
- Transfer policies and courses are clearly defined by the New Jersey higher education system. Overall, graduates of Morris are more successful at transferring and at job placement than graduates of other New Jersey Community Colleges.
- Despite these positive signs regarding the educational offerings, many courses and programs lack "clearly articulated written statements of expected learning outcomes ... expressed in observable terms". Course outlines usually include information regarding the relationship of that course to the curriculum, but this merely indicates whether the course is a prerequisite, elective, or required for a particular degree at Morris. Overly general program descriptions also do not make obvious "...a coherent, purposeful, program of study" for the students, who note that they do not understand credit allocation or transfer requirements. Standard 11 explains, "...students learn more effectively when they understand key learning outcomes."
- As the self study recommends, every syllabus for every course needs "clearly articulated written statements of expected learning outcomes."

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- Outside evaluations are in place for many programs and the 6 year review process is inclusive of service disciplines as well as programs of study.

Recommendations Requiring Follow-Up Action

- ❖ The Team strongly supports the Self-Study recommendations regarding the inclusion of learning outcomes at both the course and program level which are measurable and explicit, and urges that this be done promptly and consistently to aid both teaching and learning, as well as to form a proper basis for assessment.

Standards 12: General Education

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

“General Education is an important component of all undergraduate degree programs. ... A general education program – developed, owned, and reviewed by the institutions faculty – should be purposeful, coherent, engaging, and rigorous,” *Characteristics of Excellence*.

- The College lacks a clearly identifiable core of general education offerings that is purposeful, coherent, and measureable.
- The General Education statement for County College of Morris was developed in 1996. This statement includes eight competency areas. A different list of six General Education areas is identified in the College Catalog. To ensure students graduate with appropriate general education skills, each department has identified an appropriate number of courses from the competency areas for requirement in each program of study.
- The New Jersey President’s Council of College’s and Universities is in the process of establishing General Education requirements for transfer. The Chief Academic Officers Association has developed roles for the implementation of General Education Programs in the areas of faculty, administration, and statewide. Implementation of this plan is in progress.
- Assessment of General Education is part of the established Program Review process; not independently assessed. No General Education Program, General Education Committee, or General Education planning exists separate from the individual academic departments.

Recommendations Requiring Follow-Up Action

- ❖ A purposeful plan for General Education should be re-energized, implemented, and assessed. The core program needs to be obvious and coherent. Once established, the General Education plan should be communicated to the College population and included in student publications.
- ❖ A process and designated responsibility to ensure the on-going oversight of General Education should be established.

Standards 13: Related Educated Activities

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

The Self-Study indicates that the College has developed extensive initiatives in each of the areas contained in this chapter:

- Basic Skills: CCM utilizes Accuplacer tests to evaluate prospective student proficiency in basic writing, mathematical computation, and algebra skills. The results determine the proper placement of students in academic courses or remedial courses. Currently CCM is using a blend of computerized and manual placement testing and scoring.
- Certificate Programs: Certificates are credit-bearing courses of study which are at least 30 credits in length. The self study states that these programs contain a minimum of 9 credits of general education, but this could not be verified. General education is an area that needs better definition and identification in the catalog and printed material.
- Experiential Learning: The team was not able to identify any clear documentation, policy or procedure relating to this area. It is recommended that clear procedures be developed, published and disseminated.
- Community and Professional Programs/Youth Programs: Non-credit courses or programs of varying lengths are available. These courses are administered by the Division of Corporate and Community Programs (CCP), formerly called Professional Programs and Distance Education. To develop, create and update courses in this area CCM uses a generally accepted methods (in line with the processes for developing credit offerings) which complement the college mission and goals. Measuring the outcomes and assessment of these various programs still needs to be demonstrated; the team was not able to identify an assessment process for non-credit programs that is consistent and rigorous.
- Administrators/instructors are qualified for the task. However the process for instructional qualification review and approval for the non credit area could benefit from some formality introduced to the process, akin to how credit instructional credentials are verified. Non credit is also an area that could benefit from an enrollment management / marketing plan. This would enable the integration of non-credit future plans into the overall fiscal forecasting.
- Other Instructional Sites: CCM also has courses at Headquarters Plaza in Morristown. The offerings at the Morristown location include general education courses leading to two-year AA and AAS degrees and certificates, non-credit/continuing education programs in business and professional training, community/workforce service programs, and customized/contracted business instruction. All courses, programs, and training offered at the Morristown-Headquarters Plaza location are held to very same standards, policies, and procedures for learning outcomes as those on the main campus. Some services to students and faculty are minimal due to the nature of the facility; however CCM is in discussions to increase the rented space at the Headquarters Plaza site to bring more student and faculty support services to the location. This is a laudable goal, which would be best supported by a business plan analysis of the center and the connection of this plan to other enrollment and strategic plans.
- Distance Learning: At CCM courses and programs offered via distance learning appear to be consistent with the Mission of the college. These offerings are via internet, television, and hybrid formats. For the most part courses offered via distance education appear consistent with their counterparts offered on the CCM campus. Course syllabi, requirements, and learning outcomes are also similar. At this point Distance learning does not offer services to students in the DL programs at a comparable level to students in traditional classes. Assessment of distance learning itself, and assessment of instruction in distance learning is not consistent with the level of assessment for traditional classes. It

is suggested that this be addressed and identification of how DL is included in the overall outcomes and assessment process at the college be documented.

- Contractual Arrangements: Contracts between CCM and other providers or entities is very straight forward and well addressed through appropriate processes and paperwork.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- CCM has a wide variety of non-credit and contract training offerings
- Headquarters Plaza is a great asset to the college and community and cleverly takes advantage of adjacent space and services.

Suggestions

Basic Skills

- The team supports the Self-Study recommendation for basic skills.

Community and Professional Programs/Youth Programs

- A more formal process for evaluation of instructional qualifications needs to be implemented.
- Areas for non-credit to credit articulation should be identified.

Other Instructional Sites

- A business plan for the Headquarters Plaza site should be developed.

Experiential Learning

- The processes and procedures for this must be identified and published.

Recommendations to be addressed in the Periodic Review Report

Distance Education

- Distance Education needs to be connected to the overall outcomes and assessment process
- Assessment of DL class instruction needs to be implemented (similar to traditional class assessment of instruction).

Community and Professional Programs/Youth Programs

- Measuring outcomes and implementing more consistent assessment of these various programs still needs to be demonstrated.

Standards 14: Assessment of Student learning

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based on a review of the Self-Study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students and others, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

- Student learning is assessed within courses at CCM in many ways, including objective tests, written essays, class participation, laboratory work, portfolios, juried reviews, and license exams. In some curricula external evaluative agencies measure student learning at graduation. Articulation agreements, transfer successes, and employment surveys indicate that many students who complete various programs have the “knowledge, skills and competence consistent with ... higher education goals”. Students themselves rate their learning positively, and a survey of students one year after graduation found that

76% of those who transferred to other colleges thought their preparation was excellent, as did 63% of those employed full time.

- The Self-Study states that more than seventy academic programs and general education departments are using student assessment data. Every program does assessment of some sort each year, with a report due on June 15. The 6-year review of each program by the Curriculum Committee includes review of the data from assessments. Documentation for each department and program now required by Vice President of Academic Affairs includes three parts: (1) Describe assessment plan (what, how, when, and how shared with department and/or students). (2) Specific completed assessments (3) Changes that resulted from assessments.
- Assessment is a college goal, and most academic support departments undertake assessment. Among areas that assess student learning is the Learning Resource Center including the Library, and departments within Student Development. The results change practices and enhance learning.
- The Catalogue includes a description of each course, and each course has a course outline that guides faculty (full and part time, in class, hybrid, and online) who teach each course. The team observed numerous instances where such descriptions are not written in ways to measure student learning at the syllabus level, as phrases such as: “provide an overview”, “introduce ideas”, “acquire interest” or simply a list of topics and rules on attendance predominate and do not support the intent of the standard.
- Although formal assessment of stated learning objectives is inconsistent in the academic areas, informal assessment has led to some good outcomes. For example, informal conversations between various departments or between faculty teaching prerequisite and succeeding courses find it easy to collaborate to improve learning outcomes.
- In some cases, implementation of changes as a result of assessment is evident. As cited in the Self-Study, math has used assessment in the form of five simple questions to change the emphasis of their curriculum and the Engineering Technology program has altered their course sequence as a result of assessment.
- The standard recommends “clearly articulated written statements, expressed in observable terms, of key learning outcomes”. This does not seem consistently evident in the academic departments. Hence, assessment of outcomes at Morris is inconsistent, sometimes implicit and informal. Standard 14 suggests a direct, “documented, organized, and sustained assessment process” including a clear timetable. Even sustained and complex assessment of inconsistent and unwritten outcomes does not produce useful results.
- More widespread use of assessment results connected to better stated initial outcomes for academic areas may occur in the future. Some current measures may be too broad, too narrow, or otherwise off the mark. Since assessment is a process, Morris is to be commended for starting the process. Continued attention will, no doubt, lead to changes in the assessment process so that learning outcomes are more widely measured and enhanced.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices

- We commend the rigor of the six year review process, which requires assessment.

Suggestions

- Learning outcomes assessments for all educational programs should be given increased consistency and focus by a designated person within the academic area.

Recommendations Requiring Follow-Up Action

- ❖ The team strongly supports the recommendations of the Self-Study regarding inclusion of learning outcomes at both the course and program level for credit, non-credit, corporate and remedial courses and programs, and recommend that these assessments be measurable, explicit, and analyzed to improve learning. This is critical as a foundation for students to understand expectations, for faculty to use as benchmarks for assessment, and for the interconnections between courses and program level assessments.

VI. Summary of Recommendations for Continuing Compliance and Requirements

The Visiting Team found that the College meets the 14 Standards, hence there are no Requirements. There are the following Recommendations for Follow-Up:

Standards 11: Educational Offerings: The institution's educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.

- ❖ The team strongly supports the Self-Study recommendations regarding the inclusion of learning outcomes at both the course and program level which are measurable and explicit, and urges that this be done promptly and consistently to aid both teaching and learning, as well as to form a proper basis for assessment.

Standards 12: General Education: The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.

- ❖ A purposeful plan for General Education should be re-energized, implemented, and assessed. The core program needs to be obvious and coherent. Once established, the General Education plan should be communicated to the College population and included in student publications.
- ❖ A process and designated responsibility to ensure the on-going oversight of General Education should be established.

Standards 14: Assessment of Student Learning: Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

- ❖ The team strongly supports the recommendations of the Self-Study regarding inclusion of learning outcomes at both the course and program level for credit, non-credit, corporate and remedial courses and programs, and recommend that these assessments be measurable, explicit, and analyzed to improve learning. This is critical as a foundation for students to understand expectations, for faculty to use as benchmarks for assessment, and for the interconnections between courses and program level assessments.