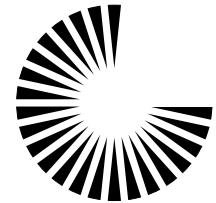


Chapter 1

Introduction



OVERVIEW

Chandler-Gilbert Community College, one of nine colleges and one center that make up the Maricopa Community Colleges, is located in Arizona on the outskirts of metropolitan Phoenix, in the Southeast Valley. It serves the communities of Chandler, Gilbert, Queen Creek, Higley, Sun Lakes, and Chandler Heights, some of the fastest growing cities and towns in the United States. Appendix 1-A provides a map of the Phoenix Metropolitan Area with the location of Chandler-Gilbert Community College and its two extension sites, the Williams Education Center and the Sun Lakes Education Center, identified.

ACCREDITATION STATUS

Chandler-Gilbert Community College began as an extension of Mesa Community College. Its courses and programs were accredited by way of its affiliation with Mesa Community College. In 1992, CGCC received its initial independent accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

Since its inception in 1986, the college has dedicated itself to positively affecting the lives of its students and the surrounding community. The Self-Study process coincided with the celebration of ten years of education and service and afforded the opportunity to look back at the college's accomplishments, to assess its present position, and to plan for the educational needs of the Southeast Valley residents into the 21st century.

SELF-STUDY PROCESS

In summary, the purposes of the Self-Study were:

1. To evaluate the extent that we are providing programs and services in accordance with our stated mission and goals.
2. To describe and evaluate our instructional programs, support services, and facilities; our system of administration, governance and planning; and our human, financial and physical resources.

3. To improve our existing self-evaluation systems and to provide for continued strategic planning.
4. To provide evidence that the college meets the evaluative criteria and the general institutional requirements for accreditation.
5. To provide the commission and the on-site evaluation team documentation to assist in their evaluation of the college.

President Arnette Ward appointed the NCA Self-Study Coordinator in the fall of 1994. Committee chairpersons, each responsible for overseeing evaluation of a segment of the Self-Study, and chapter editors were appointed by President Ward and the Self-Study Coordinator after discussion with the President's Executive Council.

Steering Committee

Membership on the Steering Committee represented a serious commitment of time and energy. The administration in consultation with the Self-Study Coordinator made the appointments, which included a broadly representative group of faculty, staff and managers/administrators. CGCC's Steering Committee was composed of each committee chairperson, the Deans and the President, the previous Self-Study Coordinator, and the current Self-Study Coordinator. The members of the steering committee are identified in Appendix 1-B.

Maximizing Participation and Communication

An NCA Self-Study Kickoff event was held in the spring of 1995 for the purpose of orienting all employees to the Self-Study process. At that time, each employee was given an opportunity to hear about various ways in which they could participate in the Self-Study process and sign-up for involvement in the process. Appendix 1-C details the roles and responsibilities that were reviewed with employees at the Kickoff event. Appendix 1-D indicates the involvement preferences of the employees.

Each committee was comprised of five or more members from the faculty, staff, management and administration. Committees completed the bulk of their work in the 1995-96 academic year. Some committees involved students and community members in meetings; some committees surveyed students and community members as part of the evaluative process. Each committee prepared a chapter of the Self-Study Report.

Some employees had specialized roles in the process such as editing and proofreading, creating graphics and designing document layouts, and collecting data.

To help Self-Study committees function well and understand their tasks, several staff development sessions were held during the 18 month period.

In March of 1995, the President and the Self-Study Coordinator attended the annual NCA training and meeting in Chicago. At that time, the President and the

Self-Study Coordinator also attended a full-day of special training workshops on the Self-Study process.

In April of 1995, the first meeting of the Steering Committee was held. We reviewed roles, responsibilities and time lines. Each committee chair and editor, as well as each member of the steering committee, received a packet of materials that included the Criterion, the General Institutional Requirements, NCA handbook excerpts related to their area of evaluation, a copy of CGCC's previous Self-Study chapter for their committee, copies of at least two other college's Self-Study chapter related to their committee, and other materials.

Also in April of 1995, an all-employee meeting was held for the purpose of "orienting" all employees to the Self-Study process. At that time, each employee was given a Self-Study folder with reference materials. Employees participated in a collaborative activity designed to help them understand the Self-Study process. The NCA Resource Room contains a copy of the collaborative activity, the NCA Quiz, with which groups used their copies of the Criterion and General Institutional Requirements to answer questions. After sharing the answers in the large group, we discussed the process of working in groups to accomplish the task and noted that it was analogous to the Self-Study process in many ways. The feedback and evaluation forms from that orientation event provide evidence that most employees felt that they understood the purpose, the process and the time line for the Self-Study.

During the summers of 1995 and 1996, the Self-Study Coordinator scheduled Dr. Cecilia López, our NCA liaison, for training and meetings with faculty and staff. Dr. López also provided support and training for the faculty chairpersons of the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee.

The Self-Study Coordinator attended most meetings of each committee to assist as needed. Each Dean and the President provided administrative support for the committees, attending their meetings as needed, and arranged for support as needed.

Forums. In an effort to more actively involve all employees in the Self-Study process, participation in a series of Self-Study forums was offered as an option to serving on a Self-Study committee. Forum participants were asked to attend and actively participate in at least four of six forums offered over the course of the 1995-96 academic year. Forums were held on Friday afternoons at a time agreed upon by professional staff, managers, and faculty.

Forum topics were:

- September, 1995—Strengths and Challenges
This forum consisted of a review of the strengths and challenges that the college Self-Study and the Visiting Team identified. Various presenters discussed the progress that had been made in these areas during the last five years.
- October, 1995—Assessing Critical Thinking
Dr. Tom Haladyna from Arizona State University worked with the faculty on student learning outcomes assessment, particularly in regard to assessing critical thinking.

- November, 1995—Employee Rewards and Recognition
Collaborative activities were used to involve employees in thinking and talking about the advantages and disadvantages of employee recognitions systems. Employees voted that they would like to have a campus-based employee recognition program and they supplied suggestions for it.
- February, 1996—Williams Education Center
Thirty-five employees participated in a bus tour designed to help them become more aware of CGCC's plans at the new campus extension at the Williams Education Center (WEC). Staff who have been involved in the planning for WEC provided a window tour of the Williams facilities. At several stops along the way participants walked through various on-site buildings.
- March, 1996—Continuous Improvement: Assessment and Evaluation
The Self-Study Committee on Instructional Programs and Services facilitated activities to help faculty and staff understand the "why's" and "how's" of ongoing assessment and evaluation of our programs and services.
- April, 1996—Strategic Planning
The administration facilitated a meeting whereby employees learned about the process and the products of campus-wide planning efforts. This forum was followed-up by division and department planning to involve all employees in the process.

Self-Study Newsletters. At the first Self-Study Forum, held in September 1995, employees had a chance to hear about steps that had been taken to address the concerns from the 1991 Self-Study and the Evaluation Team Report. Feedback received from participants indicated it was reassuring to hear that many improvements had been made to alleviate previous concerns; however, the feedback also indicated a need to improve internal communication.

Many committees and councils had already begun to address concerns about internal communication by sharing meeting minutes with all employees and publishing information about issues discussed and progress made. The NCA Self-Study Coordinator also wanted to contribute to the efforts being made to improve internal communication, so it was decided that an occasional newsletter with Self-Study related information would be published.

Each edition of the newsletter focused on one of the Criteria and at least one General Institutional Requirement. Columns included excerpts from the previous Self-Study Report, explanations of roles and responsibilities, information about new programs and services at CGCC, stories of student successes, and a listing of upcoming Self-Study events. Copies of the newsletters are available in the NCA Resource Room.

Data Collection and Methodology

Each committee developed a methodology and strategies, then gathered data for evaluating its specific area. The committees addressed their topic in relation to alignment with the mission and goals of the college, effective and efficient use of college resources, existing strengths and challenges, and plans for the future.

A common set of tasks that each committee performed included:

1. The identification of programs, services, and processes that are the subject of evaluation for their particular area; and, for each of the criteria, the determination of relevant evaluation questions.
2. The identification of specific types of information needed to answer each question, the types of instruments needed to collect the information or the existing sources for the information, and the method of analysis.
3. The production of a committee report of the evaluation with identified strengths and concerns or challenges and recommendations, following an established timetable and guidelines.

Most committees conducted surveys. The purpose of the surveys was to gather information about employee, student and community members' perceptions of the degree to which CGCC meets the NCA Criteria. Copies of each survey instrument as well as the results are included in the Appendices. Findings of surveys are important, but they are only one component of the extensive Self-Study that the college has undertaken. Many other sources of information have been utilized. The results of the surveys will contribute to the overall understanding of the effectiveness of CGCC at this point in time.

The following general principles were used to guide the Self-Study process:

- The Self-Study built upon the ongoing evaluation processes of the college.
- Careful planning of the process enabled the college to gain maximum benefits from the Self-Study process.
- The Self-Study Report addressed each of the NCA Criteria and General Institutional Requirements.
- The Self-Study evaluated all of the college's components.
- The Self-Study Report would not just describe the programs, operations and environment; it would be evaluative, identifying strengths and areas needing improvement.
- Institutional improvement would be the major goal of the Self-Study process.

THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

After discussion with the President's Executive Council, it was decided that this Self-Study Report would be organized similar to the 1991 Self-Study Report which worked well for the college.

Chapter 1 includes a brief introduction of the college, its accreditation status, and the Self-Study process.

Chapter 2 describes the communities the college serves and provides profiles of its students, employees, programs and services. It also describes changes that have occurred since the time of the last Self-Study and changes regarding the concerns of the last Visiting Team.

Chapter 3 describes the mission and purposes of the college, and evaluates the appropriateness of the mission statement given the community we serve and our relationship with the Maricopa County Community College District. It also provides an evaluation of the extent to which students, community members and employees feel the Mission and Strategic Goals are being met.

Chapter 4 describes and evaluates the governance and organizational structure of the college. It includes brief descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of each administrator or manager, as well as a review of the academic division structure and the committees and councils.

Chapter 5 describes and evaluates the allocation and organization of the human resources of the college, on which the success of the organization is dependent.

Chapter 6 reviews college financial resources, including processes for budget development, allocations, accounting and control.

Chapter 7 describes and evaluates the physical resources of the college at the main campus and the Williams Education Center, as well as the planning for the Sun Lakes extension. The building expansion program, technology and other equipment are also included.

Chapter 8 provides an overview of the instructional program, including descriptions of the degree structure, general education requirements, curriculum process, and related information. The majority of the chapter is devoted to evaluative discussions of CGCC's curricular offerings. The chapter concludes with an evaluative description of learning resources.

Chapter 9 lists each student and administrative service provided at the college, describing recent accomplishments or changes. Then for each service or department, an evaluation is provided along with future goals that have been derived from the evaluation process.

Chapter 10 describes the college strategic planning process and its institutional effectiveness plan. It also reviews the evaluation of a variety of critical indicators such as student satisfaction measures, graduate and employer satisfaction, and institutional climate and community measures.

Chapter 11 describes the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment plan, pilot cycle, and first full implementation cycle. It includes information about the multiple measures being used to assess student academic achievement, and the results of those assessments. It concludes with an evaluation of the process and the products, and gives goals for the future.

Chapter 12 examines four areas of institutional integrity relative to Criterion Five: relationships with other institutions, policies and practices related to grievances, access and equity issues, and institutional advertising and publications.

Chapter 13 details CGCC's compliance with the new NCA federal mandates on default rates, program length, professional accreditations, advertising and recruitment materials.

Chapter 14 provides a summary of the Self-Study Report, an overview of the major strengths and challenges identified by the Self-Study Steering Committee, and a brief explanation of plans for the next ten years to continue quality educational programs for CGCC students and the community.

A separate document includes Appendices to the Self-Study Report. Each appendix corresponds to a chapter: Appendix 1 corresponds to Chapter 1, Appendix 2 corresponds to Chapter 2, etc.

As evidence of meeting the General Institutional Requirements (GIR's) arises in each chapter, a notation in a side column is provided. A complete chart of the GIR's and the pages of the report that provide evidence for meeting them is located in Appendix 1-E.

Most of the Criteria are addressed in some manner in each of the chapters. Although there is much overlapping of the information, we have tried to concentrate the pattern of evidence for meeting each Criterion in a grouping of chapters. The Criteria correspond to the chapters in this way:

- Criterion 1 - Chapter 3
- Criterion 2 - Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7
- Criterion 3 - Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11
- Criterion 4 - Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 14
- Criterion 5 - Chapter 12, and all others

The new Federal Compliance Program is addressed in Chapter 13.

The Self-Study Report has been designed to allow for easy reading and note taking. Next to the main body of the report is a "sidebar" of white space for notes containing references to Criterion and GIR's addressed in that section of the report. The sidebar also occasionally includes highlights about the college or quotations from students and employees.

Each Self-Study committee worked diligently to research and evaluate an area of the college in order to provide a meaningful evaluation with the specific feedback necessary for improvement. Each committee also wrote its report and presented

its findings in a form and voice appropriate for its purposes. Therefore, when the chapters were compiled into the final Self-Study Report, every effort was made to preserve the voice, integrity, and unique features of each committee's work, and only minor changes were made to keep the format and structure consistent.

The final Self-Study Report is the result of a campus-wide participatory process of careful and thoughtful research and reflection that will help guide us into the next century, and help us to continue providing the best possible educational opportunities for the rapidly growing communities we serve.