

INTRODUCTION –

The Self-Study Project

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PURPOSE AND PROCESS

A North Central evaluation team completed their visit to St. Charles Community College in early April of 1996. Although the NCA visit resulted in continued accreditation (continued, that is, from the initial accreditation in 1991) the team would not recommend accreditation beyond five years. It acknowledged that “a second five year accreditation is unusual,” but asserted “that given the unique set of circumstances at SCC,” the College would benefit from debating and analyzing “major choices and strategic directions” through the process of self-study.

From the inception of this endeavor, it has been clear to the participants that its success would be measured not only by renewed accreditation, but in terms of the project’s authenticity as well. Toward these ends, the College has generously dedicated its resources. This self-study has been truly collaborative, and by the time that the final draft was submitted to the printer, every member of the college community had been invited to participate.

The self-study afforded an opportunity to look ahead as well as to reflect on the past. In that sense, the process is on-going so that these pages represent only a part of that continuum. In drafting this text, steering committee members and their subcommittees were asked to consider the following question:

What is your vision for SCC in the next 10 years?

The question was distributed to college employees at the self-study project kick-off during in-service in August, 2000 and posters with space for hand-written responses were posted around the campus, inviting students to participate as well. This “vision question” informs these pages.

STEERING COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEES

In guiding the selection of steering committee members as well as of those serving on subcommittees, the president and vice-presidents encouraged broad representation and participation. The fourteen-member steering committee included four staff members, four faculty members, and four administrators. The subcommittees included representatives from every employee group as well, and more often than not, individuals were asked to serve on committees charged with reporting on areas in which they were not actively involved. Responses to this process were enthusiastic and positive. An English professor spoke glowingly in appreciation of the Child Development Center; an assessment coordinator who began the task of reporting on Financial Resources with trepidation, finished with confidence and insight; a learning specialist spoke of his new understanding of Human Resources with animation and perspicacity.

The co-chairs and members of the Self-Study Steering Committee were appointed by the President who ensured access to documents and individuals requisite for the execution of the task, and the availability of resources for the entire project. In preparation for their work, all members of the steering committee attended the April 2000 NCA conference in Chicago. It was the responsibility of

the co-chairs to direct the development of the self-study process and report and to be available as a resource for subcommittees.

Steering Committee members had the duty to shape and refine the plan for the self-study and to facilitate and coordinate its implementation in order to develop this report and prepare for the NCA visit. The Marketing and Communications department was responsible for facilitating the “Third Party Comment” process for the accreditation visit.

SELF-STUDY STEERING COMMITTEE

Michael Banks, Co-Chair and Coordinator	Dean of Arts and Humanities
Jacqueline Gray, Co-Chair	Associate Professor of English
Jim Benedict	Vice President for Student Services
Terri Borger (through November 2000)	Finance Assistant
Doug Brown	Learning Specialist, ACE Center
Ann-Coburn-Collins (through May 2001)	Assistant Professor of Sociology
Laura Davidson	Assessment Coordinator
Linda Estes	Professor of Early Childhood Education
Theresa Flett	Reference Librarian
Yvette Hubbman	Student Activities Coordinator
Karen Jones	Chair, Department of English
Daniel Larson	Vice-President for Academic Affairs
David Marshall	Assistant Professor of English
Kevin Patton	Professor of Life Science
Ron Pennington	Director of Institutional Research And Effectiveness
Pat Porterfield	Dean of Math, Science & Health
John McGuire (Ex-Officio)	President
Dan Conoyer	Member – Board of Trustees
John Freeborn	Student

The Steering Committee met monthly during 2000 and 2001 and then as needed in the months leading up to the visit. Twelve subcommittees were formed, with a member of the steering committee serving as chair of the subcommittee. In some cases a co-chair was appointed from the general committee membership. Each subcommittee was responsible for one component of the self-study and report. Subcommittee membership varied in number and area representation depending on the specific nature of the research, analysis, and reporting required for the tasks assigned. Subcommittee meetings were called at the discretion of the chairs on an as-needed basis. Specific resources, readers, and support staff assisted each subcommittee in the completion of the work.

SELF-STUDY SUBCOMMITTEES

SUBCOMMITTEE	CO-CHAIRS	MEMBERSHIP
Institutional Overview (Last Five Years) General Institutional Requirements Institutional Assessment	Ron Pennington Suzanne Walton	Linda Shipley
Mission and Purpose Governance and Organization	Dan Larson Sally Faith	Glen Chapuis Tim Davison Arlene Hoffman Barbara Keim Sheri Laramie Grace Matthews Paula Peraino Koreen Smiley Ann Vernon Sr. Marie Wiederholdt
Human Resources	Doug Brown Heather McDorman	Marge Bill Pam Bova Dorene McCrackin Curt VanGeison Bob Whittaker
Financial Resources	Laura Davidson Bill Berry	Rose Brooks Callie Daniels Diane Eysell Carol Fitzmaurice Nancy Greenwood Kathy Stearns

SUBCOMMITTEE	CO-CHAIRS	MEMBERSHIP
Physical Resources	Kevin Patton	Lisa Adams Nancy Crabtree Sharon Delaney Audrey Gose Leon Jones Chuck Knight Valerie Ravenscraft Katherine Solomon (Student) Stacey Thater Rick Tiek
Auxiliary Services	David Marshall	Tana Burton Holly Costello (Student) Ann Long Mike Ott Nancy Pittman
Academic Support	Theresa Flett Cindy Strodman	John Bookstaver Dorrit O’Hallaron Scottie Priesmeyer Tina Sieker Fran Stumpf
Educational Programs	Ann Coburn-Collins Karen Jones	Hal Berry April Blessman Pam Cilek Barb Chandler Gayle Checkett Christy Gant Joyce Lindstrom Paula Lorio Betty Warren

SUBCOMMITTEE	CO-CHAIRS	MEMBERSHIP
Corporate and Community Development	Linda Estes	Larry Checkett Debra Crank-Lewis Angela Gielow Karen Owen David Parker Bill Reynolds Bonnie Shiller
Student Services	Yvette Hubbman	Renee Bales Kathy Brockgreitens Lisa Freise Rich Christiansen Jane O'Donnell Elke Overton Brian Smith
Strategic and Operational Planning	Jim Benedict	Dana Ellis Pat Porterfield Chris Scherer Eileen Schnelle Yvette Sweeney Vicki Woodrum
Institutional Integrity	Pat Porterfield	Eve Diel Joe Hartnett Ernestine Love Trish Orf Elizabeth Sanders Martha Toebben Karen Vossenkemper Bruce Welz

OBJECTIVES

The Steering Committee adopted the following objectives:

- To publish a forthright, comprehensive, evaluative self-study document authored and edited in a manner that is both inclusive and egalitarian.
- To report on compliance with the NCA criteria as well as General Institutional Requirements.
- To examine areas of concern as outlined by NCA consultant-evaluators in the report following the 1996 visit.
- To identify issues and programs that will affect the direction of the College in the next decade.
- To establish the utility of the self-study in terms of its application to long-range planning.
- To utilize the self-study process itself for evaluating the effectiveness of the institution within the context of its stated mission.

FOCUS

St. Charles Community College describes itself as “an open admission institution dedicated to providing accessible post-secondary educational programs and community service at a reasonable cost.” The institution’s mission statement asserts that students are made ready to achieve their “educational, professional, and personal goals” and to enjoy enhanced “cultural experiences” through programs that incorporate “academic excellence and technological advancements.” The focus of this study was to make a comprehensive examination of the institution within the context of its stated mission, as well as the guidelines established by the NCA, in the interest of achieving a shared vision for the next ten years. Moreover, it was the goal of the steering committee to achieve unqualified accreditation for that time period. Toward this end, the subcommittees considered the following:

1. The efficacy of the institution in terms of its mission and vision.
2. The role of assessment, including performance indicators, in measuring that efficacy.
3. The usefulness of identified strategic priorities in planning for and realizing the institution’s vision.
4. Improvements and strategies that move the institution toward its stated goals.

AUDIENCE OF THE STUDY

The self-study was written in preparation for the visit to SCC by NCA consultant-evaluators; however, it is the hope of the authors that it will provide a comprehensive description of the institution, useful to all members of the college community in terms of strengthening the organization and realizing its vision.

STRUCTURE OF THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

The self-study document is organized into 3 sections: an introduction, the body of the report, and its conclusion. The introduction includes a description of the College, as well as its accreditation history. Furthermore, the introduction describes the self-study process, as well as its purpose and intended audience. The concerns of the visiting team as stated in the 1996 NCA report are discussed within the text, together with noteworthy changes in the institution since that visit.

Each subcommittee was charged with writing a portion of the self-study that was then incorporated into the body of the document. These reports, as authored in subcommittee, include descriptions that accommodate understanding, on the part of informed peers, of the information in the report. The subcommittee reports included evaluation and analysis of the committees' findings as well as recommendations for action or further consideration.

As part of the editing and revision process, this document, in draft form, was made available to the entire college community during fall semester of 2001.

THE SELF-STUDY REPORT'S DATA SOURCES:

In addition to the College's standard operational reports, meeting minutes, policy and procedures documents, and information contained in College publications, several additional data sources were used to support the description and analyses that follow in the various chapters of the self-study.

Student Tracking/Assessment Computerized System (STACS): The core component of the STACS database is a set of term/demographic student files that have been pulled from the SCC's Colleague computer system. Files have been created on a term basis across six years (i.e., 18 separate files) and are maintained by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE).

The Student Opinion Survey was developed by the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness and was administered to a randomly selected group of classes between the terms of 00/SP and 01/FA. The survey asked students a variety of questions about their life situation and institutional experiences while attending SCC. Some data were also drawn from *The Faces of the Future Survey*, conducted in October 1999, which was a precursor to the *Student Opinion Survey*.

The High School Survey was conducted in July 1999 at high schools within the SCC service delivery area and asked high school juniors and seniors to respond to questions about their grades, programs of study, demographic data, educational plans, reasons for attending college, needs for special help, personal life goals, and reasons for selecting a particular college.

The 180-Day Survey is conducted each year by Student Services. Graduates who have received an Associate of Applied Science degree (AAS) are surveyed on the phone to find out if they have secured employment within a degree-related field 180 days after graduation.

General Education Rubric Data Set: Since the spring term of 1999, the IRE office has collected general education rubric scores in English, Humanities, Social Science, Speech, and Computer Science. These numeric scores are stored in a data set and used as part of the regular assessment of general education. (See Chapter 10)

Missouri State-Wide Transfer Study: The Presidents and Chancellors of Missouri's Community colleges funded a study in 1999 to survey what community college students thought about their transfer experiences when enrolling in Missouri's four-year public educational institutions, including attitudes about the transfer process, institutional experiences at the community college, and institutional experience at the transfer institutions.

An Employee Climate Survey, with a sample size of 289, was conducted in November 2000 and asked full-time and part-time staff, faculty, and administrators to evaluate their levels of satisfaction with different aspects of their work life at SCC.

A Full and Part-Time Faculty In-House Survey was conducted by the Educational Programs sub-committee which looked at a variety of faculty issues, including classroom practice, professional development, and use of technology in the teaching and learning process.

Additional surveys and studies used in the self-study process include the *Annual Library Survey*, the *Dual Enrolled Study*, the *A+ Student Study*, and the *ESL Study*.