

Assurance Argument

Maricopa Community Colleges-Rio Salado Community College - AZ

12/3/2015

Introduction

Rio Salado College, headquartered in Tempe, Arizona, was established in 1978 by the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) to serve nontraditional students at a distance. Thirty-seven years later, Rio Salado is the largest of the 10 colleges that comprise the MCCCD both in terms of headcount and full-time student equivalent (FTSE), serving a total student population of 56,472 in FY2014-15, including close to 30,000 online.

Rio Salado is dedicated to providing innovative educational opportunities to meet the needs of today's students, offering affordable access to higher education through a variety of avenues that include online learning, college bridge pathways, community-based learning, corporate and government partnerships, early college initiatives, and university transfer. The College approaches these purposes through a focus on active engagement in local communities, customized courses and programs offered both online and in location-based settings, the employment of data analytics to ensure institutional accountability, and a comprehensive slate of student support services. These are offered in multiple modalities to provide personalized service and a commitment to student success to a widely dispersed and diverse student body.

Rio Salado has been committed to the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) for close to 25 years. The visiting team for Rio Salado's 2012 comprehensive visit commended the College for its support of the community, national leadership role in online learning, and commitment to continuous quality improvement in an extremely supported environment. While remaining true to its nontraditional roots, Rio Salado has matured into a successful model for high-quality, low cost, accessible higher education.

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

1.

Rio Salado College is one of 10 institutions in the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), one of the largest districts in the nation. A seven-member Governing Board oversees all 10 colleges. Each MCCCD college has a unique mission, while conforming to the broader framework of the District's mission documents. Rio Salado's vision, mission, and values align with those of the District, but reflect the College's innovative culture and unique role within the District.

Rio Salado's culture has long been rooted in the principles and practices of Total Quality Management, which will be explained in detail in Criterion 5.C.2.

During the process of updating and refining the College's strategic plan during FY2012-13, the Rio Leadership Council (a representative body comprising all departments and divisions) came to realize that the vision and mission statements no longer fully aligned with the College Strategic Plan Goals, which focus on the needs of the College's students, their learning experiences, and student success and completion initiatives. A revision of the mission documents (collectively comprising the vision, mission, and values) was then conducted through a collaborative process of cross-departmental subgroups of the Leadership Council, who in turn solicited review feedback from their constituent groups.

The new vision ("We reinvent the learning experience to change lives") highlights a focus on transformative learning, as exemplified by the College's concentration on degree and certificate completion, workforce development with community partners, university transfer, and GED attainment. Rio Salado's mission documents were approved by the MCCCD Governing Board

on May 21, 2013, and determined not to require Substantive Change consideration by the Higher Learning Commission on April 8, 2014.

2.

Rio Salado is a public community college, and in keeping with its role as a public institution, provides affordable access to academic programs across a wide spectrum. The mission documents state: *Rio Salado offers affordable access to higher education through college bridge pathways, community-based learning, corporate and government partnerships, early college initiatives, online learning, and university transfer.* Each of these programs will be described in detail in the appropriate context.

The College provides a comprehensive slate of student support services that align with its mission commitment to “personalized service and a commitment to student success.” Because of the multiple instructional modalities offered, support services also are offered in multiple modalities (online via chat or email, in person, via telephone, etc.) and in the locations throughout the Greater Phoenix metropolitan area where courses and programs are offered. These support services will be described in detail in Criterion 3.D.

Rio Salado’s enrollment profile is also consistent with its stated mission. Founded in 1978 as a nontraditional “college without walls,” Rio Salado has evolved into the largest of the Maricopa Community Colleges in terms of both Full Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) and Headcount.

3.

Rio Salado’s strategic planning and budgeting processes are driven by the College vision, mission, and core values. Planning and budgeting will be addressed comprehensively in Criterion 5.C.1.

Sources

- GB Summary_RSC Mission Approval_1.A.1
- HLC-Vision_Mission Approval_4.8.14_1.A.1
- MCCCCD_Vision and Mission_1.A.1
- Rio_Culture Page_1.A.1
- Rio_Fact Sheet_2014-15_1.A.2
- Rio_Fact Sheet_2014-15_1.A.2 (page number 2)
- Rio_Services_1.A.2
- Rio_Strategic Plan_1.A.1
- Rio_VisionMissionValues_1.A.3

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

1.

Rio Salado's mission documents are displayed on a "Culture page" which is posted on the College website, and in public spaces throughout the College buildings across all locations. Additionally, Culture Page handouts are distributed to all employees and to community members as part of presentations to special groups.

The Institutional Advancement Department is charged with communicating the College's mission and vision to diverse internal and external audiences. When the new mission documents were adopted in 2014, activities included college-wide meetings for employees on the change of focus in the mission and vision, and alignment with the strategic plan. The revisions were also integrated into the new employee orientation process, and adjunct faculty orientation and continuing education materials.

Rio Salado's employees have consistently indicated knowledge of and engagement with the College mission. In the most recently available Employee Engagement Survey data (N=290; spring, 2014), the statements "I am aware of Rio Salado College's Mission Statement" and "I understand how my job supports Rio's mission" each showed a mean score of 4.37 out of 5 and a 90% agreement rate. Trend data demonstrate that these two statements have consistently been top performers in this survey over the years.

Over 92% of the adjunct faculty who responded to a 2015 Adjunct Faculty Survey (N = 258) agreed with the statements "Rio Salado College's new mission is relevant to my role as an adjunct faculty member" and "I understand how my faculty role supports Rio Salado's mission," with mean scores of 4.42 and 4.45 out of 5, respectively. Additionally, adjunct faculty indicated knowledge of institutional priorities, as demonstrated by 90% agreement with the item "I understand the major initiatives and goals of Rio Salado College" (mean = 4.32).

2.

Rio Salado's leadership reviews the mission documents every two to three years to ensure that they still reflect current priorities and planning.

The prior mission statement read:

Rio Salado College transforms the learning experience through:

- *Choice, access, and flexibility*
- *Customized, high quality learning design*
- *Personalized service and organizational responsiveness*

In 2014, this was augmented to the current statement:

We transform learning through:

- *Active community engagement and organizational responsiveness*
- *Customized, high-quality courses and programs*
- *Data analytics and institutional accountability*
- *Flexibility, affordability and innovation*
- *Personalized service and a commitment to student success*

Thus, the language of the College mission was enhanced in FY2013-14 to reflect the focus on community engagement, a culture of assessment and data-driven decision-making, and an overt commitment to student success, all of which had in fact long been hallmarks of College practice.

3.

Rio Salado's mission documents speak to affordable access to higher education through college bridge pathways, community-based learning, corporate and government partnerships, early college initiatives, online learning, and university transfer. Within this context, the College's transformative approach to learning is realized through the following five areas of focus:

- **Active community engagement and organizational responsiveness**

Rio Salado is actively engaged with its community throughout the greater Phoenix area (commonly referred to as "the Valley,"), providing classes and services in multiple locations. These locations provide programs and services appropriate to populations in local communities, including College Bridge Pathways, veterans, active military personnel, lifelong learners, early college students, corporate-, government-, and military partners, and incarcerated students, in addition to serving traditional college-age students. Because of Rio's "systems approach" to problem solving and its flexible structure, which have long been part of its culture, the College is poised to respond quickly to needs and to adapt to changing realities for learners. Examples of

this approach include the establishment of two “Communiversities” over the past few years, which were built in response to climate studies that resulted in partnerships with the local communities. Another example is the development of a comprehensive grant application and monitoring infrastructure as a response to changing budgetary realities in Arizona (See Criterion 5.C.1).

- **Customized, high-quality courses and programs**

Customization has been a hallmark of Rio Salado’s educational programs since its inception, with courses and programs targeted to the specific student populations referenced above in addition to general education. The high quality of all College curriculum is driven by a process whereby materials are reviewed regularly by the faculty chairs, the College Curriculum Committee, advisory committees, and business and industry partners. New curriculum is vetted through a rigorous internal College process before being submitted to the District, where curriculum is developed via a common MCCCDC course bank and district-wide approval process. Prior to the development of a new program, the College researches industry needs and program viability, and seeks input from community leaders and business partners. The curriculum process will be described in detail in Criterion 3.C.1.

The College’s extensive online course offerings (almost 900 distinct courses) are offered via RioLearn, Rio Salado’s customized, proprietary Course Management System. Developed in-house in partnership with Microsoft, RioLearn accommodates the College’s unique centralized online course development model (allowing for rigorous quality control) and multiple course start dates (40+ Mondays per year). This course infrastructure and model will be detailed in Criterion 3.D.4.

- **Data analytics and institutional accountability**

The use of data analytics tools allows Rio Salado to spot trends, diagnose issues, and create solutions and innovations in a shorter time than is generally the norm in higher education. Examples of this approach include:

- PACE (Progress and Course Engagement) employs a predictive-analytics model built on historical student data to help students identify whether they are on track for successful course completion. This model, which relies exclusively on student behaviors and alerts faculty when students may need interventions, is being used in 23 of Rio’s highest enrolling courses, affecting over 16,000 students annually, and is currently predicting student success with 81% accuracy.
- Rio Salado is a founding member of the Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework (PAR), a non-profit provider of analytics designed to help institutions identify practices that contribute to student success.
- The College is partnering with Civitas, which uses data analysis to help identify student needs and match them with available resources, thereby enabling customized interventions for students who are at risk of dropping out.
- The annual assessment report, containing student learning outcomes performance data, is posted on the public-facing Assessment of Student Learning website.

- Rio Salado’s Department of Institutional Integrity regularly reviews data on students residing out of state to ensure compliance with State Authorization requirements.
- Department heads, including faculty chairs, follow trends through tools such as data cubes and BOExi (Business Objects Enterprise xi) retention reports, to assist with planning and interventions as needed. For example, a BOExi real-time dashboard tracks the number of students enrolled and retained per semester, with the ability to drill-down to prefix, course, section, and instructor level. Colored icons indicate whether the value meets the established benchmark for student retention (85%) at each level. Chairs use these data to make decisions in areas such as curricular modification, outreach, and faculty staffing.
- In FY2013-14, College departments conducted in-depth, data-driven analyses to determine the efficacy and sustainability of all academic programs and student service areas as part of the MCCCDC-wide Maricopa Priorities initiative (see Core Component 2.B).
- **Flexibility, affordability, and innovation**

These hallmarks of Rio Salado’s course offerings manifest through an innovative instructional model that allows students the flexibility to begin online courses on any one of 40+ Monday “starts” per year (see Criterion 3.A.3). Also, as part of the MCCCDC, Rio Salado is committed to making educational opportunities affordable, and leads all 10 District colleges in its low operations costs, while generating 25% of the District’s revenues. Rio Salado also spends a greater proportion of resources on instruction and academic support (65.6% vs. 54%) than its sister colleges. Finally, because the College is committed to seeking “blue oceans” for the delivery of services to students (as represented by Goal 4 in the College Strategic Plan: *Blue Ocean and Innovation*), Rio Salado is deeply committed to finding new ways of bringing learning to its key constituencies. Current College Action Plans (CAPs) under this goal include community and partner engagement strategies, and researching and initiating new avenues of growth for the College. This will be explained further under Strategic Planning in Core Component 5.C.

- **Personalized service and a commitment to student success**

Comprehensive student support services that target student populations across the board, including those with specific needs and goals, are provided as appropriate in the multiple instructional modalities that the College offers; online and via chat service, in addition to the traditional in-person and telephone.

Employee behaviors in meeting mission service areas are measured via service standards which have been implemented systemically across departments in order to outline the level of customer service to which departments are committed.

Sources

- BOExi Report Example_1.B.3

- Civitas_1.B.3
- Culture Handout_1.B.1
- MCCCDC_Maricopa Priorities _1.B.3
- PAR Framework_ 1.B.3
- Rio Wave_Catch the Culture_1.B.1.
- Rio_Assessment of Student Learning _1.B.3
- Rio_AssessmentReport_2013-14_1.B.3
- Rio_College-wide meeting_1.B.1
- Rio_Institutional Advancement_1.B.1.
- Rio_Service Standards SharePoint_1.B.3
- Rio_Services_1.B.3
- RioPace_June 2011_1.B.3

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

1.

The Maricopa Community Colleges have long demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity. Inclusiveness is a governing value of the District and diversity an area of emphasis in the District mission, while the Governing Board undertakes to... "govern with appreciation of the diversity of our internal and external communities. Diversity is defined as the environment created within Maricopa that demonstrates equity and mutual respect of each person." Administrative Regulation 5 addresses non-discrimination in the learning and work environment at MCCCCD in considerable detail. The District's Diversity Calendar of Events for FY2015-16 demonstrates the wide scope of efforts across the MCCCCD.

Rio Salado College includes both diversity and inclusiveness in the list of core values that form part of the College mission documents.

Maintaining a Diverse Workforce

The College makes consistent efforts to hire and maintain a diverse workforce, in keeping with the MCCCCD's Affirmative Action Program for Minorities and Women, the Affirmative Action Program for Individuals with Disabilities, and the Affirmative Action Program for Veterans. For high-level administrative positions, or those requiring very specific qualifications and expertise (such as residential faculty), national advertising is done via websites, newspapers, and journals targeted to the discipline. Additionally, venues are used that allow for the widest possible diversity in the applicant pool. For example, advertisements are placed in publications such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Native American Times*, *Journal for Blacks in Higher Education*, *Latinos in Higher Education*, *American Association of Community Colleges*, *National Association of Asian American Professionals*, *Diverse Jobs*, and *Higher Ed Jobs*.

The demographics of Rio's employees and students show close alignment of both ethnicity and gender.

Diversity/Inclusiveness Employee Training

Once hired, all Rio Salado employees undergo a new employee orientation process, followed within their first year of employment by a rigorous orientation and training in the Rio culture

and work environment, *The Rio Way*. A foundational day introduces participants to the College's core values. Six half-day in-depth workshops then explore each of the values independently, with the tenets of workforce diversity and inclusion presented in an interactive and engaging format. Over the past three years, the Rio Way has provided in-depth orientation and training to 243 employees. Employees report that they find the training extremely valuable. Further information will be provided in Criterion 5.A.4.

MOSAIC (Maximizing Our Strengths as An Inclusive Community), developed by the District Employee and Organizational Learning Team (EOLT), is required for all supervisory employees in the MCCCCD and is open to all interested employees. The 24-hour series is designed to enhance understanding of the principles of diversity, inclusion and engagement as lifelong learning skills. Over the past three fiscal years, approximately 30 Rio employees have completed the training each year.

In addition, MCCCCD offers mentorship programs that match interested employees with experienced and diverse models and mentors from colleges across the District. Rio Salado has approximately five mentee participants per year.

College Participation in Events for Diverse Communities

Rio Salado participates in numerous community events targeted towards specific populations, as explained below in Criterion 1.D.1.

Diversity Advisory Council Award

The MCCCCD Diversity Advisory Council Award is presented annually to an employee or program at each MCCCCD college that exemplifies a commitment to diversity and inclusiveness through support of Student Success Initiatives, One Maricopa, and/or Public Stewardship.

Rio Salado College DAC Award recipients from the past three years are:

- 2015—Advisement and Support Teams of the Adults Achieving a College Education (AACE) program, which serves at-risk, first-generation college students.
- 2014—Incarcerated Re-entry Division of Community Development, which utilizes a one-stop philosophy to provide incarcerated individuals with the services and resources needed for them to be successful.
- 2013—East Valley Veterans Education Center (EVVEC), a “one-stop resource shop” for Arizona veterans and their families, providing assistance with applying for VA educational benefits, tutoring and academic skill building, and referrals to community resources.

Another example of alignment with Rio Salado's core values is the Diversity/Inclusiveness Award, one of several categories available through the *Rewards & Recognition* (R&R) program, which will be further explained in Criterion 5.A.4. Inclusiveness within the R&R program is defined as “valuing internal and external customers as whole persons while respecting both differences and commonalities.”

The MCCCDCD supports a number of employee constituency groups. Representatives of these constituencies serve on the district-wide Diversity Advisory Council and are consulted by the Chancellor in conjunction with the Chancellor's Community Advisory Committees as community or institutional issues require.

2.

Rio Salado College Diversity Processes and Activities

The vision of the Maricopa Community Colleges is to work “collectively and responsibly to meet the life-long learning needs of our diverse students and communities.” As indicated above, Rio Salado has incorporated both diversity and inclusiveness as core values, and serves widely diverse constituencies through a number of different processes and at various College locations in keeping with these values:

- **“Start at Rio” Customized Process**

Rio Salado has developed a guided, online process for entering students, featuring steps tailored to their educational goals. Students enter through one of two portals (program-seeking or taking classes) and then choose from detailed program-specific pathways, including Veterans, Active Military, Dual Enrollment, High School Equivalency, English Language Acquisition for Adults, Teacher Education, and online.

- **College Bridge Pathways**

Rio Salado College is the largest provider of Adult Basic Education in the state of Arizona. Through state and federal grants administered by the Arizona Department of Education, College Bridge Pathways (CBP) programs are offered at College Locations throughout the greater Phoenix area. CBP programs serve many first-generation and underprepared college students by teaching foundational coursework to prepare them for college classes. Between fall, 2012 and spring, 2015, almost 9,500 students were served in the High School Equivalency (HSE, formerly GED) preparation programs.

Rio Salado also offers students enrolled in College Bridge Programs the opportunity to complete their High School Equivalency through a scholarship-based college and career preparation program named AACE (Adults Achieving a College Education), geared towards adults aged 16 or older who are ready to commit to completing a degree, certificate, or workforce training program, and offered in both face-to-face and hybrid modalities. AACE was named a Bright Spot in Hispanic Education by the White House in fall, 2015.

English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA), face-to-face classes for legal residents aged 16 years or older, enrolled close to 7,000 students between fall, 2012 and spring, 2015.

STAR-PATH (Successful, Talented Adults @ Rio-Practice, Analytics, Technology, and Help) is a five-tiered college and career student support model, designed to support the needs of the students entering and exiting the program as a bridge to post-secondary education and/or training to obtain employer identified skills.

College Bridge Pathways students are eligible for membership in the National Adult Education Honor Society (NAEHS). Rio Salado holds an annual induction ceremony to recognize outstanding CBP students.

- **Co-Curricular Opportunities**

Rio Salado College participates in district-wide co-curricular initiatives designed to support diverse student populations. ACE Puente (Youth ACE) assists at-risk high school students to get a head start on college by taking online or hybrid classes in their junior and senior years, in a mentored, cohort-structured environment. Rio Salado has a fledgling chapter of the Male Empowerment Network (M.E.N.), an MCCCDC program designed to improve enrollment, retention, and degree completion or transfer rates of male students from various backgrounds. Co-curricular programs are further described in Criterion 3.E.1.

- **Disability Services and Accessibility**

Rio Salado's Office of Disability Resources & Services provides information, resources, and services which promote a successful, customized learning experience for students with documented disabilities, in keeping with MCCCDC Administrative Regulation 2.8 (see also Criterion 3.D.1). The College's Web Accessibility Team is comprised of faculty and personnel from IT, instructional design, course production, and disability services, and works on addressing accessibility issues in the online environment and to ensure compliance with applicable laws and standards, as stipulated in MCCCDC Administrative Regulation 2.8.3. Largely as a result of the work of this team, Rio's Course Production Department spent 967 employee hours creating Universal Design/ADA compliant improvements and modifications to courses in FY2014-15 (see Criterion 3.D.4).

- **RISE**

RISE Learning for Life, geared towards senior citizens, is hosted by Rio Salado and housed at the College's Lifelong Learning Center, constituting the largest student association in the MCCCDC. RISE provides non-credit community classes to retirement-age adults, taught by volunteer content experts, and covering numerous topics requested by members. The organization has its own constitution and governance structure, and curriculum is determined by a RISE-appointed curriculum committee with input from members. In FY2014-15, RISE provided 389 classes to 1,151 organization members, with an average attendance of 26 participants per class.

- **International Education**

The International Education Center is housed within Admissions, Registration & Records, and provides international students with online learning opportunities for immersion in an educational system different from their own. The Center staff provides a number of personalized services, such as individual help in selecting and registering for classes, academic advisement, information about course materials, assistance with completing the online tutorial, and guidance regarding required documents to comply with Immigration rules and regulations and residency requirements. International Education serves over 1,000 walk-in students per year, and responds to over 10,000 email inquiries and 2,000 telephone inquiries annually. Data on F1 Visa students from 58 different countries for the past three calendar years are as follows:

- 2012: 442 students completed 1,720 credit hours
- 2013: 496 students completed 1,921 credit hours
- 2014: 724 students completed 3,142 credit hours

Rio Salado celebrates International Week each year, designed to celebrate the diversity of different cultures and provide an opportunity for international and ELAA students to educate others about their countries of origin, and for employees and students to broaden their horizons. Events are held each day in multiple locations, while the Rio Café presents cuisines from around the world. A sampling of international week events over the past three years demonstrates the diversity and engagement value of these enculturation activities. Additionally, the College holds Diversity Brown Bags covering a wide spectrum of topics.

- **Division of Public Service Diversity Initiatives**

Rio Salado's Division of Public Service manages three public radio stations and a youth media center, and is at the forefront of several initiatives targeted at serving diverse populations.

Fronteras: The Changing America Desk is a regional journalism center founded by public news station KJZZ 91.5FM as a collaboration between seven public radio stations, to focus on creating and reporting local news content pertinent to the residents of the Southwestern U.S. Established in FY2010-11, the program has been enormously successful and generated over 3,300 reports on topics such as Native American Issues, Mexico, Demographics, Border Issues and Policies, Climate and Environment, Arts, Immigration, Law Enforcement and Education. These reports have had regional, national, and international distribution to an estimated 26.4 million listeners through NPR and its 800 public radio affiliates across the country.

SPOT127 is an Emmy-Award-winning Youth Media Center established by KJZZ on the west side of the Phoenix metropolitan area. The program was designed to work with and mentor high school students in digital media production and journalism skills, with the goal of bridging a pathway to college for disadvantaged youth and motivating them to aspire to secondary education. The program has served approximately 620 students in its first three years of operation.

Sun Sounds is a reading service providing audio access and information to the print-disabled, reaching over 50,000 people state-wide via radio live stream, web download, podcast, or

smartphone access. Sun Sounds received the American Psychological Association's Local Psychologically Healthy Workplace award in 2014.

Other diverse populations that are served by targeted programs and services include active military, veterans, and incarcerated adults. More detail on these populations will follow in Criterion 1.D.3.

Sources

- APA Excellence Awards_1.C.2
- Bright Spot in Hispanic Ed_1.C.2
- Fronteras Desk_1.C.2
- MCCCDC Diversity Calendar 2015-2016_1.C.1
- MCCCDC_2.8 Students with Disabilities_1.C.1
- MCCCDC_AAP_Disabilities_2014_1.C.1
- MCCCDC_AAP_Minorities_2014_1.C.1
- MCCCDC_AAP_Veterans_2014_1.C.1
- MCCCDC_Acknowledgement_2.A
- MCCCDC_Admin.Reg 5_1.C.1
- MCCCDC_Advisory Committees_1.C.1
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- MCCCDC_Constituency Groups_1.C.1
- MCCCDC_DAC_1.C.1
- MCCCDC_MOSAIC_1.C.1
- NAEHS_1.C.2
- Rio Diversity Series_2012-2015_1.C.2
- Rio_Int.Ed Week_1.C.2
- Rio_AACE_1.C.2
- Rio_ACE Puente_1.C.2
- Rio_CBP_1.C.2
- Rio_Disability Services_1.C.2
- Rio_Division of Public Service_1.C.2
- Rio_ELAA_1.C.2
- Rio_Employee-Student_Ethnicity_1.C.1
- Rio_Employee-Student_Gender_1.C.1
- Rio_HSE_1.C.2
- Rio_Internat. Week Diversity Activities_1.C.2
- Rio_International Student Program_1.C.2
- Rio_Locations_1.C.2
- Rio_M.E.N. Chapter_1.C.2
- Rio_Orientation_1.C.2
- Rio_RISE_1.C.2
- Rio_STAR-PATH_1.C.2
- Rio_Student Orientation_1.C.2
- SPOT 127_1.C.2

- Sun Sounds_1.C.2

1.D - Core Component 1.D

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.

Rio Salado College serves the population of Maricopa County, not only through the academic offerings to its student body, but also through a wide array of other services, subordinate entities, and programs.

Involvement in Community Events

Rio Salado responds to its constituencies by sponsoring and co-sponsoring special events hosted by organizations that share a common goal with the College, or depend on it for service.

This extensive involvement in community events includes participation in the Valley of the Sun United Way campaign, the annual Phoenix Heart Walk, and a diverse spectrum of activities geared towards specific community groups. The College has spent just over \$100,000 on community sponsorships in the past three years.

Community Facilities Use

Rio Salado's facilities at both the Tempe headquarters and other locations are utilized by community groups for a variety of different purposes such as professional activities, community advisory groups, Veterans' groups, Honors-sponsored activities, and presentations on topics of interest to various constituencies. A total of 372 programs, events, and activities that were open to the public were held at College facilities during FY2014-15.

Employee Giving Campaign for Student Scholarships

Rio Salado has established an annual Employee Giving campaign to raise funds for student scholarships. Funds raised have almost doubled in the first three years, demonstrating a strong commitment by College employees:

- FY2012-13: \$13,413 funded 26x \$500 scholarships.
- FY2013-14: \$16,117 funded 32x \$500 scholarships.
- FY2014-15: \$25,449 funded 50x \$500 scholarships.

Division of Public Service

As mentioned above, the College's Division of Public Service maintains two award-winning public radio stations, KJZZ and KBAQ, which operate as a public service and are principally public-supported, providing local, national, and international news, information, and culturally-enriching programming for the citizens of Maricopa County.

KJZZ 91.5FM is a listener-supported public radio station featuring a mix of local, national, and international news (including *Fronteras Desk* coverage), jazz, and blues. During the first nine months of 2015, Nielsen Audio ratings data indicate that KJZZ broadcast to almost 102,000 listeners every day and streamed its signal to computers and mobile devices an average 216,000 hours per month. Data for the 24x7 classical music and arts information station KBAQ 89.5FM for the same period show that KBAQ broadcast to over 50,000 listeners every day, and streamed to computers and mobile devices an average of 136,000 hours per month.

The KJZZ and KBAQ membership operations generate over \$4 million annually through sustaining gifts, direct mail, and pledge drives. An additional \$3 million is generated through corporate underwriting support.

Rio Salado Dental Clinic

The Rio Salado College Dental Clinic provides preventive dental hygiene care to community members while enabling dental hygiene students to gain practical educational experience. In addition, the Clinic participates in events sponsored by the Arizona Dental Foundation that are designed to enable disadvantaged children to receive free prophylactic dental care. In summer, 2015, two free clinics provided over \$23,000 worth of treatment to almost 200 children.

Café@Rio

The Café@Rio is a ground-breaking concept whereby Rio Salado combined the basic need for food service provision with an academic program (Sustainable Food Systems) grounded in the College's core value of sustainability. By developing partnerships with local producers, the Café is stimulating the local economy while reducing "food miles." Results from a 2015 survey sent to employees (N = 95) indicate that the Café@Rio provides excellent customer service and an excellent dining experience, with 96% and 86% agreement, respectively.

The Sustainable Food Systems program offers Community Education classes in the areas of cooking, gardening, and nutrition at multiple College locations.

As stated in the broad Outcome Statement of the MCCCCD Governing Board:

“As an educational institution devoted to learning, Maricopa Community Colleges exist in order that the diverse communities served have effective, innovative, learner-centered, flexible, and affordable life-long educational opportunities, with outcomes optimizing use of available resources.” Within this context, the Board’s outcomes for the 10 Maricopa colleges are:

- University Transfer Education and General Education
- Workforce and Economic Development
- Developmental Education
- Community Development and Civic and Global Engagement

These educational responsibilities filter directly to the individual colleges as units of the District. As a result, Rio Salado College has no relationship with investor interests or other external relationships.

3.

Engaging with the Community—Institutional Advancement

In keeping with Rio Salado’s mission commitment to “active community engagement and organizational responsiveness,” the Institutional Advancement (IA) Department handles all aspects of creating and disseminating information about the College to current and prospective students and community stakeholders. IA works to increase enrollments, foster partnerships, and enhance Rio’s public image, encompassing the functions of advertising, graphic design, the College Copy Center, media relations, outreach, recruiting, and Web design and development. Analytics data, such as reports showing activity for the top 50 pages on the College website, are used extensively to determine website usage and trends and to make adjustments as indicated.

The College maintains Facebook and Twitter accounts, and extensive video content is highlighted on the Rio Salado YouTube Channel, including informational, instructional, and training videos. Rio’s YouTube channel had 53,681 views for an estimated 83,840 minutes watched in FY2014-15. The Rio Salado News Blog provides stories and events that populate the College’s main website, mobile app, internal employee portal, and RioLearn LMS, and averages about 13,000 hits per month. The College’s weekly online employee newsletter, The Wave, provides information about a variety of topics such as new tools and training opportunities to improve the employee experience, employee recognition, and inspirational student success stories. In addition to College employees, The Wave is distributed to the Chancellor, Governing Board members, and the President’s Advisory Council.

Engaging with the Community—Boards and Committees

The Rio Salado College President, Dr. Chris Bustamante, engages with the community through Board service representing a wide spectrum of educational and community organizations both

nationally and locally. Dr. Bustamante also utilizes a President's Advisory Council whose members are representative of Rio's partnerships with employers, community-based organizations, state and municipal agencies, and other educational institutions. This diverse constituency provides the President and Executive Council with perspectives relating to the College's strategic priorities, helps identify new opportunities and markets, and provides advice and assistance related to external challenges and political issues. Meetings include a wide range of topics related to increasing Rio's ability to meet the educational needs of the communities it serves.

Partnerships—Business, Industry and Government

Rio Salado College engages in a number of Educational Service Partnerships (ESPs) with business and industry partners and government entities, enabling students who are employed within specific industries and professions to earn college credit at their places of employment. A Partnership Personalized Service Survey that is utilized to measure the program's effectiveness with partners is sent to ESP instructors, managers, directors, and key contacts on a semi-annual basis. Survey data indicate that 84% of respondents are very satisfied with the service and professionalism of Rio's Partnership team, and 94% agree that Rio provides opportunities for employees to accelerate their degree completion by offering flexible degrees that use college credits received from the Partnership. This model will be described under Criterion 3.A.3 in the required interim report.

Serving Local Communities and Targeted Populations

In keeping with its nontraditional structure, Rio Salado College has operated in a dispersed community context since its inception in 1978, working with local communities to provide programming in facilities that have been established in high need areas. Known as "Educational Empowerment Zones," the locations are placed in communities that have underserved populations, near families that might have first generation college students, those who have not completed high school, and families that may need college orientation services. As detailed in Criterion 1.C.2, these locations primarily offer College Bridge Pathways programs and classes, as well as a range of student support services, including counseling, computer labs, advising, tutoring, testing centers, and library services.

Veterans and Military

The East Valley Veterans Education Center (EVVEC) is a unique facility created to provide educational outreach and college advisement services for veterans and their family members. The EVVEC is a partnership between four MCCCDC colleges and numerous government and community agencies.

Rio Salado became an officially designated Arizona Veteran Supportive Campus in December, 2014. Data from the survey conducted in preparation for this process indicated that although more than half of survey respondents were interested in the services offered by the EVVEC, just over 25% had actually visited it and less than 25% of respondents had checked the College's Military Central website. Thus, Rio's Veterans Task Force is actively working on ways to

increase communication about the information and services offered. Almost half of respondents indicated that they had met with a Military Academic Adviser, and most shared positive comments about the benefit of having an adviser dedicated to military students. In fall, 2015, Rio Salado hosted a Veteran Classroom Success Dialogue Day for MCCCCD faculty in keeping with the supportive campus designation.

The College was recognized as a 2015 Military Friendly School by G.I. Jobs for the sixth consecutive year. FY2014-15 enrollment included 869 active military service members and 2,628 veterans, representing all five service branches.

Communiversities

The Communiversities at Surprise and Queen Creek represent an alternative model of higher education where community colleges, universities, and municipalities partner to offer progressive degrees and seamless transfer options to residents of the outlying areas of northwest and southeast Maricopa County, respectively, allowing students to save money by earning lower division credits through a community college partner, then transferring to a university partner to complete their degrees through articulation agreements. Each of the Communiversities was established after a process of environmental scanning, economic modeling, and climate surveys. Program pathways were determined through academic and occupational needs assessments of the surrounding communities and are offered in a variety of course formats, including in-person, online, and hybrid. Both Communiversities offer academic advising, counseling, and other college support services.

Incarcerated Re-Entry

Rio Salado's Incarcerated Re-Entry programs constitute a partnership with the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) designed to provide skills training in high-demand occupations that promote employability upon release. To complement the coursework, Rio Salado trains students who may then be placed in jobs through the ADC. This allows students the opportunity to gain work experience during incarceration, and may assist them with obtaining employment following release. In addition to these on-site educational opportunities, the program provides the inmate population with access to distance learning classes in print-based or mixed-media formats, thereby presenting an opportunity for earning college credit which may lead to Certificates of Completion and the opportunity to earn a degree.

Active Military

Rio Salado has been a long-time partner with Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Arizona, offering in-person classes for military personnel and their families at the installation, as well as military veterans and U.S. citizens who have been issued individual base-access passes. Classes offered are subject to the same curricular oversight and instructor evaluation as all other Rio Salado courses.

Grants Development

In spring, 2012, Rio Salado created a Grants Department that supports the development of College projects and programs by collaborating with faculty, administrators, and staff in planning and developing competitive grant proposals to federal, state, local, and corporate/foundation funding sources, and providing technical assistance in the management and evaluation of funded proposals. The Grants Department also alerts faculty and administrators of grant opportunities that align with the College's mission documents or address institutional needs. Information on specific grants will be provided in context and in Criterion 5.C.1.

Sources

- AZ Veteran Supportive Campus_1.D.3
- Communiversity QC Survey_1.D.3
- Dr. Bustamante Boards_1.D.3
- G.I Jobs_1.D.3
- KBAQ_1.D.1
- KJZZ_1.D.1
- MCCCCD_Broadest Outcome Statement_1.D.2
- MCCCCD_Veterans Dialogue Day_1.D.3
- Rio Analytics_Top50_1.D.3
- Rio_Community Events_1.D.1
- Rio_Dental Clinic_1.D.1
- Rio_Educational Partnerships_1.D.3
- Rio_EVVEC_1.D.3
- Rio_Free Dental Clinic_1.D.1
- Rio_Incarcerated Re-Entry_1.D.3
- Rio_Locations_1.D.3
- Rio_Luke Air Force Base _ 1.D.3
- Rio_Military Central_1.D.3
- Rio_PAC Meeting Topics_1.D.3
- Rio_PAC Members_1.D.3
- Rio_President's Advisory Council_1.D.3
- Rio_Queen Creek_1.D.3
- Rio_Surprise_1.D.3
- Rio_Sustainable Food Systems_1.D.1
- Rio_Wave_1.D.3
- Rio_YouTube Channel_1.D.3
- RioNews Blog_ United Way_1.D.1
- RioNews Blog_1.D.3
- RioNews_ Sustainable Food .1.D.1
- RioNews_Dental Clinics _1.D.1

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

Consideration of the documentation provided in support of Criterion One highlights the following evidence:

- Rio Salado's mission documents are made clear to College stakeholders. A robust, inclusive, and collaborative process of developing and updating the "Culture Page" occurred in 2014. The resulting current documents are articulated publicly during college-wide meetings, shared with the President's Advisory Council, posted on the public website, and disseminated via external publications that are shared with the community.
- The mission documents guide Rio Salado's operations through a deliberate, clearly-articulated alignment between the mission and institutional structure; the pervasive, wide-ranging, and comprehensive services offered to the College's students; and programs that exemplify the institutional values and mission.
- Rio Salado focuses on inclusive practices for developing and maintaining a diverse workforce and serving a wide diversity of student populations.
- The College is a strong presence in the local community through its Division of Public Service, community partnerships, and sponsorship of multiple events.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

The Governing Board and employees of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) abide by a set of Institutional Values, which are published on the District website and are transparent to all stakeholders.

The District is governed by a seven-member Governing Board, which has established a Code of Conduct that determines expectations for ethical, professional, and lawful conduct by Board members. The code addresses fiduciary responsibility, public stewardship, institutional ethics, conflict of interest, and civility, amongst other factors, and outlines a process for complaints and perceived violations of Board policy. Governing Board members are required to participate in Public Stewardship and Ethics Training during their probationary period or within one year of hire, and triennially thereafter.

Similarly, the MCCCD mandates integrity and ethics training for all employees, with renewal generally required every three years. All mandatory training modules are offered in an online course format, which is a cost-effective model that enables efficient tracking of employee completion. *Legal Issues: Public Sector Employment, MCCCD Public Stewardship, Preventing Sex Discrimination and Harassment, and Information Security and Privacy* are mandated for all full- and part-time employees, including adjunct faculty. Additional role-specific mandatory training requirements are in place also, such as the MCCCD Employee FERPA Compliance Tutorial which is required for all employees who access student records, and training in the ethical responsibilities required of employees before chairing or serving on hiring committees. These mandatory requirements provide assurance to the College's students and stakeholders of the importance that the MCCCD places on employee knowledge and awareness in their roles as public stewards.

The MCCCD Governing Board Policies and Administrative Regulations provide the framework for employees' duties and responsibilities. Each employee is expected to be aware of these rules and to abide by them. In order to foster accountability and transparency, employees are required to submit annual disclosure forms regarding conflict of interest, hiring of relatives, enrollment irregularities, internal control, and travel policies.

The MCCCDC maintains a Staff Policy Manual with Employee Group Manuals as Appendices for five employee groups. All policies are a result of the Meet and Confer process that is negotiated jointly by representatives of District and College administration, along with members of the relevant employee group. A ONE Maricopa Workforce plans to combine these five employee groups into a single classified staff group by late 2016.

The rights of Faculty are governed by the Residential Faculty Policy Manual (RFP), and Adjunct Faculty Employee Handbook, respectively.

Adherence to Federal, State, City, and District Laws and Regulations

Rio Salado College, together with the other MCCCDC colleges, upholds and protects its integrity by following all applicable federal, state, local, and district regulations. The MCCCDC Office of the General Counsel provides advice and counsel to all MCCCDC institutions relating to strict legal compliance with these laws.

Institutional Integrity

Rio Salado's Institutional Integrity Division is headed by an associate dean and serves as a centralized hub for compliance efforts, which include State Authorization (see Criterion 2.B.), Gainful Employment, and adherence to the various mandates related to the Higher Education Act. Institutional Integrity is also responsible for coordinating the College's new program research, vetting, and approval process. Working closely with Faculty, Administration, Curriculum, Instructional Design, Financial aid, Advisement, Institutional Advancement and other key stakeholders across the College, Institutional Integrity ensures that compliance begins with program creation and stems out into the operational areas of the institution. Institutional Integrity also collaborates with the Institutional Advancement Division by verifying that all marketing materials and policies adhere to accreditation and federal compliance guidelines.

Fiscal Integrity

The MCCCDC is audited annually by the Arizona State Auditor General's Office. Copies of the audits are included in the District's Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFRs). The District has always received an unqualified audit report, most recently for the Fiscal Year Ended June 2014.

The Arizona State Auditor General's Office is not permitted to issue audit reports for individual MCCCDC colleges. Consequently, in 1996, the North Central Association and MCCCDC created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to satisfy the need for an institutional external financial audit by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or a public agency at least every two years. The memorandum was updated in 2004 to reflect the name change to Higher Learning Commission. The memorandum addresses criteria related to resources, uses, and assurances. It provides records that demonstrate efficient management of individual expenditure budgets consistent with maintaining the fiscal viability of the District, and demonstrates the integrity of the College and the District.

The MCCCCD Internal Audit and Management Advisory Services Department (IAMAS) supports the vision, mission, and values of the MCCCCD and its colleges and centers by providing independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve the organization's operations, and to help ensure the efficient and effective use of resources, program operations, and stewardship over assets.

The Maricopa Priorities project was conceived by the Chancellor as a systemic, district-wide self-evaluation to ensure that the MCCCCD's operations reflected appropriate alignment and the best possible stewardship of public resources. During FY2013-14, every academic program and support service conducted a self-assessment according to a required template, gathering data and making recommendations for maintenance, improvement, or discontinuance. These recommendations were reviewed by a District taskforce during FY2014-15, and priorities were established that are currently in process of implementation, with committee participation from Rio Salado employees.

Grants Monitoring

The District Office provides compliance and support to College grant project directors with applicable rules, regulations, terms, and conditions for grants management.

Student Policies

Rio Salado College abides by the student policies established by the MCCCCD, which are clearly articulated in the College Catalog and on the Student Policies page of the College website.

Instructional Grievances and Non-Instructional Complaints

The College provides detailed information for students regarding the MCCCCD instructional grievance and non-instructional complaint resolution processes from its Student Solution Center website, and maintains an internal electronic system to track and aggregate information regarding both academic and non-academic student complaints. Once an instructional student issue is escalated to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for resolution, a structured instructional grievance process is followed. Nonacademic student complaints are handled by the Dean of Enrollment Services and Student Affairs and the Associate Dean of Judicial Affairs who work together to resolve issues in a timely fashion.

Sources

- MCCCCD_4.1 Governing Values_2.A
- MCCCCD_4.10_GB Code_2.A
- MCCCCD_6.16 Public Stewardship_2.A
- MCCCCD_AF Handbook_2.A
- MCCCCD_Annual Disclosure_2.A
- MCCCCD_Annual Financial Report_FY14_2.A
- MCCCCD_FERPA+College Records_2.A

- MCCCCD_Financial Reports_2.A
- MCCCCD_Governance+Admin_Regs_2.A
- MCCCCD_Governing Board_2.A
- MCCCCD_Internal Audit_2.A
- MCCCCD_Legal Services_2.A
- MCCCCD_Mandatory Training_2.A
- MCCCCD_Maricopa Priorities_2.A
- MCCCCD_MOU_2004_2.A
- MCCCCD_ONE Maricopa Workforce_2.A
- MCCCCD_RFP_2015-2016_2.A
- MCCCCD_S-6 Instructional Grievance_2.A
- MCCCCD_S-8 Non-Instr.Complaint_2.A
- MCCCCD_Staff Policy Manual_2.A
- Rio_Instructional Grievance Process_2.A
- Rio_Nonacademic Student Complaint_2.A
- Rio_Student Policies_2.A
- Rio_Student Solution Center_2.A

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

Programs, Requirements, and Costs

Rio Salado's College Catalog contains information on academic programs, partnership programs, course descriptions, general education and transfer options, policies, procedures, student services, community services, and other learning opportunities. Additionally, the catalog functions as a static reference to academic programs for purposes of determining the catalog under which a student graduates. Primary access to the catalog is provided online, with CD or print options available for populations in need of alternative delivery formats. In addition to the current catalog, archived college catalogs dating back to 2001 are available on the College website.

The class schedule allows students to search for current course offerings in all modalities via several customizable search options. Rio Salado is transparent in providing students with cost information pertaining to credit hour tuition rates and other fees. The website provides a link to a Net Price Calculator for students to estimate cost of attendance, based on expenses incurred by similar students in a previous year. A Tuition Calculator is also provided to assist students with assessing costs. Additionally, the College provides a centralized Program website for information on all online programs, certificates, academic certificates, and degrees offered, as well as district-wide associate degrees and other learning opportunities and pathways.

Syllabus Language

In an effort to meet the needs of Rio Salado students and provide consistency and clarity in the learning experience, all Rio Salado online course syllabi are standardized to contain district-approved course competencies/outcomes, and a well-defined assessment methodology. Common elements such as course requirements, time requirements, testing procedures, final grade options, and copyright acknowledgements are customized for the specific course and incorporated across all disciplines. Standardized language is included in all syllabi for basic elements such as academic misconduct, civility policy, active participation requirements, disability statement, and library services.

College Website Information Verification Process

As described in Criterion 1.D.3, Rio Salado's Institutional Advancement Department (IA) is responsible for all public website production. The Director of Institutional Advancement works with the Associate Dean of Institutional Integrity to verify that the information released to the

public on the College website is accurate and appropriate. A variety of workflow process checks and balances are utilized to maintain a high standard of regulatory accuracy and manage the regulatory areas of misrepresentation. IA personnel work closely with employees from relevant departments to verify factual accuracy of content before materials are made available to the public. Additionally, when launching new programs or including a curriculum element from an existing program in promotional materials, IA meets with the College's Curriculum staff and the appropriate faculty chair to ensure that all content is accurate.

State Authorization

The Institutional Integrity Division is responsible for the College's state authorization efforts. Rio Salado operates in states across the nation, both through individual state authorization / exemption and via its participation in the national State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). The College was approved as a SARA participating institution in April, 2015 by the Arizona and National SARA Councils. The College is proactive in its communication with students in relation to state authorization. For example, when prospective out-of-state students visit Rio Salado's public website, a pop-up message appears that informs them of state authorization and directs them to a state authorization program page. This is one of several protocols the College uses to best serve students while maintaining compliance with state authorization requirements and disclosure of the SARA consumer information policy on the College's Student Solution Center website.

Institutional Effectiveness Reporting

The Department of Institutional Effectiveness, (known within the College as *Institutional Research*, and described in detail in Criterion 5.D.1) provides official annual reporting information on its website pertaining to diversity of enrollment and Pell recipients, retention rates, and graduation and transfer rates, in addition to a Fact Sheet which provides highlights about the College and statistical data regarding students and employees.

In conformance with the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), Rio Salado makes required disclosures to enrolled and prospective students, parents, employees, and the public via its Student Consumer Information website, as well as the College Catalog.

Faculty and Staff

Details about the institution's administrative leadership and residential faculty are provided on the public website and in the College Catalog. Information includes positions held and academic qualifications.

Control and Accreditation Relationships

As indicated in Criterion 1.D.2, Rio Salado College operates under the purview of the Chancellor and Board of the Maricopa Community Colleges and is not beholden to shareholders or outside interests. Rio Salado was established in 1978 and granted candidacy for regional accreditation status by the North Central Association at that time. Since 1981, the College has been

continuously accredited, and was last reaffirmed after a comprehensive visit in March 2012. In keeping with HLC requirements, the College displays a statement of accreditation and the official logo link to the HLC website on its public website. Programmatic Accreditation and Approvals are also maintained for the following programs:

- Addictions and Substance Use Disorders
- Dental Hygiene and Clinical Dental Assisting
- Dual Enrollment
- Spanish Medical Interpretation
- Teacher Education Programs

Sources

- MCCCCD_Net Price Calculators_2.B
- Rio_Accreditation_2.B
- Rio_Administration_2.B
- Rio_Certificate Programs_2.B
- Rio_Class Schedule_2.B
- Rio_College Catalog_2015-2016_2.B
- Rio_College Catalogs_2.B
- Rio_Fact Sheet_2014-15_2.B
- Rio_Institutional Effectiveness_2.B
- Rio_Programmatic Accreditation_2.B
- Rio_Residential Faculty_2.B
- Rio_State Authorization State Selection_2.B
- Rio_State Authorization_2.B
- Rio_Student Consumer Information_2.B
- Rio_Student Solution Center_2.B
- Rio_Tuition and Fees_2.B
- Rio_Tuition Calculator_2.B

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

1.

The priorities of the MCCCCD Governing Board, as stated in its mission, are: University Transfer Education; General Education; Developmental Education; Workforce Development; Student Development Services; Continuing Education; Community Education; Civic Responsibility; Global Engagement.

These areas of focus are in keeping with the public stewardship responsibilities of one of the largest community college districts in the nation. Board members undertake to represent the residents of Maricopa County in "determining and demanding appropriate organizational performance." Primary outputs for board members are identified in the Board Job Description.

In 2009, an anonymous complaint to the Higher Learning Commission relating to Governing Board members overstepping their role in shared governance led to a request by the HLC for the Chancellor to investigate the complaint. The Chancellor then appointed a consulting team composed of administrators and retired governing board members from across the U.S., and as a result of their investigation and recommendations, a number of specific actions were undertaken during 2010 to educate and train Board members and to remediate the situation. The HLC accepted the final report and noted that concerns had been appropriately addressed. In 2011, Board policy language was amended to restore the integrity of the District's governance structure.

Partially as a result of these events, legislation was passed by the Arizona Legislature in 2010 (HB2261) requiring that the existing five-member Board (with each Board member representing a single District) be expanded to seven through the addition of two at-large members, and that the six-year term for Board members be reduced to four once the current incumbents had served out their terms. Challenges led to the law being put on hold, but in August 2014 the Arizona

Supreme Court ruled that it was constitutional. As a result, during the November, 2014 elections, the Board was expanded to its current seven-member structure.

2.

The Board has identified outcomes to better serve and be accountable to its constituencies, which include the people of Maricopa County, students at the MCCCCD colleges, private and public sector employers in Maricopa County, and other educational institutions in the County. The Board's broadest outcome statement reads: "As an educational institution devoted to learning, Maricopa Community Colleges exist in order that the diverse communities served have effective, innovative, learner-centered, flexible, and affordable life-long educational opportunities, with outcomes optimizing use of available resources." In keeping with the mission of a public community college district serving the identified constituencies, the Governing Board outcomes are:

1.1 University Transfer Education and General Education

1.2 Workforce and Economic Development

1.3 Developmental Education

1.4 Community Development and Civic and Global Engagement

These outcomes are measured via metrics intended to gauge institutional effectiveness, and published annually in a District Monitoring Report. The Governing Board uses these metrics to evaluate the overall financial health of the District. These metrics will be further referenced in Criterion 4.C.4.

3.

In its Manner of Governing, the Board undertakes to govern in a lawful, nonpartisan manner.

Board meetings are open to the public, and are recorded so that stakeholders can view the proceedings in full via the District MCTV website, with archives available dating back two years.

Minutes of Governing Board meetings are available from the Board website. In the interests of transparency, the Board publishes a Citizen's Guide to inform community members of its make-up and governance model.

4.

The Chancellor, who serves as the CEO of the District, is the single employee who reports directly to the Governing Board. The Governing Board's Delegation to the Chancellor provides direction that allows for the Chancellor's own reasonable interpretation of policy. As referenced above, the Administrative Regulations are rules adopted by the Chancellor for day-to-day management of District operations, and address the areas of Fiscal Management, Students, Instruction, Auxiliary Services, Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Board Resources, and various guidelines and procedures. The Chancellor is responsible for all authority and accountability of employees, and delegates implementation of the administrative regulations to appropriate personnel, such as vice-chancellors, college presidents, etc.

This separation of the Board from day-to-day management was exemplified by a decision made in early 2015. Newly-hired District employees had been included on the Governing Board's consent agenda for approval, which constituted the employee's official "Board Approved" date of hire. As of February 2015, the process was changed to conform more closely to existing policy language which stated that the Board would not prescribe "organizational means" which had been delegated to the Chancellor. Therefore, hiring of employees should not be under the purview of the Governing Board.

The Residential Faculty Policy Manual (RFP) defines faculty governance as a process determined by the residential faculty, whereby it is understood that they "have primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process." The Governing Board approves the RFP after it has been ratified by the residential faculty each year at the conclusion of the Meet and Confer process.

Sources

- HB 2261_2010_2.C.1
- MCCCCD_2014_GB Monitoring Report_2.C.2
- MCCCCD_3.2 Chancellor Accountability_2.C.4
- MCCCCD_3.3 Chancellor Delegation_2.C.4
- MCCCCD_4.2 Manner of Governing_2.C.3
- MCCCCD_4.3 Board Job Description-2.C.1
- MCCCCD_Administrative Regulations_2.C.4
- MCCCCD_Citizens Guide_2015_2.C.3
- MCCCCD_GB Minutes_2.C.3
- MCCCCD_Metrics_2.C.2
- MCCCCD_Outcomes_2.C.2
- MCTV_Governing Board_2.C.3

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

The rights of MCCCDC residential faculty are delineated in the Residential Faculty Policy Manual relating to Instructional Rights/Academic Freedom and Intellectual Property Rights, while the Adjunct Faculty Employee Handbook contains language relating to Academic Freedom and Freedom of Research and Publication.

In accordance with these principles, the Academic Freedom Philosophy Statement of the Rio Salado College Residential Faculty places a high value on supporting academic freedom in the context of the institution's mission. The statement is posted on both the residential and adjunct faculty SharePoint sites.

Sources

- MCCCDC_AF Academic Freedom_2.D
- MCCCDC_RFP_Instructional Rights_2.D
- Rio_Academic Freedom Philosophy_2.D

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

1.

Institutional Review Board

Because the Maricopa County Community College District encourages and supports the scholarly pursuits of faculty and students at the colleges, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) has been convened for the protection of Human Subjects who are used for data collection and analysis. The IRB, made up of representatives from each college and the District Office, meets regularly to review Human Subjects research proposals to ensure that the rights and welfare of study participants are protected. The Rio faculty instituted a College Research Review Committee (CRRC) to comply with the District and national mandates to evaluate Human Subjects research that does not require full Board review, and the Chair of the CRRC sits on the District IRB. Since the District IRB was convened, 123 protocols have been approved for faculty, staff, and external investigators to conduct research at Rio Salado College.

Academic Ethics and Integrity

In response to the needs of its students, colleagues, and professional community, the Rio Salado College Faculty place a high value on promoting academic integrity and supporting academic freedom. An Academic Ethics and Integrity statement of practices is included on the College's public website for dissemination to all of its stakeholders.

The New Student Orientation (NSO) is a non-credit class providing an overview of what students can expect as a Rio Salado College student. The NSO addresses the issues of academic integrity and plagiarism and notifies students of the several uniform elements in Rio classes that are designed to educate, inform, and preserve student conformance to these principles. More information on the NSO is provided in Criterion 3.D.2.

Copyright Processes

Rio Salado has a centralized Copyright Department housed within the Library, whose functions are to provide assistance and guidance during the Instructional Design and Course Production

processes for use of third-party content provided in online courses, secure copyright and/or licensing permission where indicated, and track permissioned items by course in an internal copyright database. This comprehensive and centralized process involves library copyright personnel at all levels of course design, development, and production. The Copyright Department eliminates the need for individual course developers to secure permissions for copyrighted content, while simultaneously ensuring that the College's practices with respect to third party intellectual property are appropriate. In addition, the Faculty Chair for Library Services serves as a resource to College employees for information and education regarding appropriate copyright practices. The MCCCDC maintains extensive copyright information and educational resources for employees and students on the Intellectual Property pages of its Legal Services website.

2.

Because of Rio Salado's considerable footprint as a nontraditional institution serving large numbers of online students and the increased opportunities that the digital environment creates for abuse, the College has been particularly vigilant in establishing and promoting policies and mechanisms to ensure the ethical use of information by students. Information Literacy is a college-wide student learning outcome that is measured at the college-, program-, and course levels, and a number of interventions are in place in online courses across all disciplines, including library information in all online course syllabi. Additionally, third-party materials are cited appropriately with verbiage indicating that material is being retrieved from the Rio Library when library resources are linked in online courses. Because of the seamless nature of persistent linking to library articles and films, students had no prior awareness that these resources were coming from the College Library rather than the open Web. The Library Instructional Coordinator works with online course developers to identify appropriate third party content for courses, including library subscription materials (articles, films, and images) as well as open educational resources that have Creative Commons licensing, so that ethically-used materials are provided and modeled for students.

In addition to non-tolerance plagiarism verbiage in syllabi of all online courses, the library provides a plagiarism tutorial to educate students that is linked, as appropriate, in online courses. Survey data have indicated that students understand this concept. The Research Readiness Self-Assessment (RRSA) survey, administered in 2010 with a follow-up in 2014, had 80.19% of students demonstrating an understanding of plagiarism in 2010 (N=308), and an even higher 81.5% in 2014 (N=451). These data demonstrate that the College's commitment to ensuring that ethical information practices are incorporated and assessed in the teaching and learning environment are proving effective. Details on the RRSA are provided in Criterion 4.B.3. The library also provides guidance to students on the ethical use of information in student work, such as appropriate citation of sources, and legal use of images, in a series of Research Guides.

Open Educational Resources

The Maricopa Millions project launched in FY2013-14 with the goal of saving MCCCDC students \$5 million over five years through promoting use of authentic and valid Open Educational Resources (OER) in courses in lieu of traditional textbooks, providing a “low cost/no cost” option for students. The project models responsible use of qualitative content. Rio’s Faculty Chair for Library Services and Interim Dean of Instructional Technology and Support have been members of the District Maricopa Millions team since inception.

3.

MCCCDC Administrative Regulation (AR) 2.3.11 contains policy language pertaining to definitions, academic consequences, disciplinary sanctions, and appeal procedures relating to Academic Misconduct. Rio Salado College Policies align directly with those of the District. The College’s Academic Misconduct Policy and Civility Policy are posted in every course syllabus and are enforced by faculty members.

Academic Integrity Processes

- The Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection System was developed in-house, and won awards from the WCET and Arizona Quality Alliance in 2010-2011. The software works by scanning student assignment submissions across course sections and terms to identify possible cases of peer-to-peer plagiarism. The faculty chair investigates the case and decides on a sanction, which can range from requiring the student to take a remediation module on academic integrity, a “0” on the assignment, an F for the class, or expulsion. Students are notified via an Academic Integrity alert within the course that the Peer-to-Peer system is in place.
- Turnitin.com is an e-plagiarism detector that scans student work against a database that includes electronic documents previously published online. The College has subscribed to Turnitin since it was first introduced, and it is available within the RioLearn Course Management System for faculty use, alert and to students in courses where they are required to self-check their work before submitting.
- The Academic Integrity Team is a cross-functional group responsible for maintaining Academic Misconduct records electronically in Rio’s Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. In addition to documenting incidents of Academic Misconduct resulting from peer-to-peer and online plagiarism, the Academic Integrity Team systematically reviews uploaded documents to identify potential issues related to students submitting assignments from identical IP addresses, matching file properties, and other factors that could indicate a violation of academic integrity standards. The Team alerts the discipline faculty chair when a student has a history of incidents across courses and/or disciplines. The chair may then convene the Academic Integrity Council, an ad-hoc committee that includes the Faculty Senate President, the faculty chairs of affected disciplines, and the Associate Dean of Student and Judicial Affairs. The Council forwards any recommendations for probation, suspension, or expulsion to the Vice

President of Academic Affairs for a final decision. Students have the right to appeal academic sanctions by following the Instructional Grievance Process described in Criterion 2.A above.

- In an attempt to be transparent and proactive, the Vice President of Academic Affairs communicates academic integrity information to students who enroll in the same course from the same address.

Sources

- MCCCCD_2.3 Scholastic Standards_2.E.3
- MCCCCD_2.3 Scholastic Standards_2.E.3 (page number 10)
- MCCCCD_Institutional Review Board_2.E.1
- MCCCCD_Intellectual Property_2.E.1
- MCCCCD_Maricopa Millions_2.E.2
- Rio_Academic Ethics+Integrity_2.E.1
- Rio_Academic Integrity RioLearn_2.E.3
- Rio_Academic Integrity Team_2.E.3
- Rio_Academic Integrity_VPAA_2.E.3
- Rio_Academic Misconduct Policy_2.E.3
- Rio_Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial_2.E.2
- Rio_Citation Help_2.E.2
- Rio_Civility Policy_2.E.3
- Rio_Start Your Classes in RioLearn_2.E.1
- Rio_Syllabus_Library_2.E.2
- Rio_Syllabus_Plagiarism_2.E.2
- Rio_Using Images Legally_2.E.2
- RIO_WCET_WOW Award_2.E.3

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

Consideration of the documentation provided in support of Criterion Two highlights the following evidence:

- District-, college-, and individual accountability have been established through adherence to a code of conduct; expectations for professional and personal ethics; and mandatory training that ensures compliance with state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.
- Well-defined rights and responsibilities are codified in manuals for each policy group.
- The College has clear and comprehensive policies and procedures governing student complaints and institutional responsiveness.
- Institutional transparency is achieved through continual monitoring and regular reporting to the Governing Board and the community.
- Rio Salado maintains an Institutional Integrity Department to ensure compliance with federal and state law.
- Well-developed and systemic academic integrity policies and practices are in place for modelling, promoting, and guiding ethical student conduct.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

1.

Rio Salado College offers a number of academic and occupational degree and certificate programs, each designed to meet specific student needs.

Academic Programs

Rio Salado students planning to transfer to a four-year institution can choose from a number of Associate degrees that are available District-wide to MCCCDC students, including an Associate in Arts, an Associate in Science, an Associate in Business, General Requirements, or an Associate in General Studies. In addition, students planning to transfer to another Arizona higher education institution may complete a 35-credit general education certificate, called the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC), which is intended to transfer as a block without loss of credit for the student.

Transfer and Articulation

Transfer and university articulation are handled through the Center for Curriculum and Transfer Articulation (CCTA) at the District office. University transfer has been a central tenet of the MCCCDC mission since its inception, and along with the other Maricopa colleges, Rio Salado participates in articulation agreements with Arizona's three state universities as well as a number

of private and out-of-state institutions. These agreements provide Rio Salado's students with a seamless transfer experience. Residential faculty serve on statewide Articulation Task Forces to ensure that courses and curricula meet the needs of university partners and transfer students. Also, Rio's Advisement Services personnel specialize in assisting students with the transfer process. Students who responded affirmatively to the spring, 2015 *Survey of Online Student Engagement* (SOSE) that they had received transfer credit assistance (N=49) indicated 83.7% agreement that they were very or somewhat satisfied with the service received.

Occupational Programs

These programs are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for employment in their chosen fields. Students completing an occupational program earn either a Certificate of Completion (CCL) or an Associate in Applied Science (AAS). The majority of the College's Certificates of Completion are the core of an Associate in Applied Science degree. The College currently offers 26 Associate in Applied Science degrees and 69 Certificates of Completion in the fields of Allied Health, Business, Computer Technology, Customer Service, Education, Management, Public Safety, and Workforce Development.

Educational Service Partnerships

Educational Service Partnerships will be described in Criterion 3.A.3 in the required interim report.

Academic Certificates

Rio Salado also offers seven Academic Certificates for students who want to earn additional credits for professional certifications, gain knowledge in an academic field, or have a special interest.

Quality Assurance Processes

Rio Salado College has a number of processes and structures in place to ensure that its courses and programs are current and appropriate:

- **Instructional Councils and Articulation Task Forces**

Instructional Councils are district-wide, discipline-specific committees comprised of faculty representatives from each of the 10 Maricopa Community Colleges which oversee the District's common course bank and shared programs, and are responsible for evaluating the quality and content-appropriateness of academic curricula. Rio Salado has a residential faculty representative on each of these councils, as well as representation on discipline-specific Articulation Task Forces.

- **Program Advisory Committees**

Program Advisory Committees constitute a platform whereby community members and industry leaders provide expertise to inform the College's curriculum for occupational programs. Advisory Committee members work with faculty chairs in program development and review, serving as content experts and practicing specialists.

- **Industry Exam Pass Rates**

Pass rates on industry exams for Dental Hygiene and Teacher Education provide evidence that these programs are current and require appropriate levels of student performance.

- **Specialized Accreditation**

Several Rio Salado programs meet the criteria for External Certification or Accreditation.

- **Program Review**

Rio Salado has established a comprehensive, systemic, and sustainable Program Review process, which includes an examination of program currency and student performance. Program Review will be covered fully in Criterion 4.A.1.

2.

Rio Salado College offers associate degrees, post-baccalaureate teacher preparation, and certificate programs. The requirements for each program, including prerequisites and credit hours, are detailed in the course catalog. District-approved web pages that list the outcomes (learning goals) for each certificate and degree are available on the Programs page of the College's public website.

3.

All courses offered by Rio Salado College must adhere to district-approved competencies and outlines in a shared MCCCDC course bank, which supports consistency not only among various instructional modalities at the College, but also across the District. Rio delivers online, mixed-media, hybrid, dual credit, traditional face-to-face, and educational partnership classes. Instructors are required to teach to the same competencies, regardless of modality. Faculty chairs maintain department websites for adjunct faculty that include expectations relative to class preparation, facilitation, communication, and assessment.

Distance Learning

- **One Course, Many Sections**

Rio Salado College offers its online, hybrid, and mixed media courses through a “one course, many sections” model. This means that there is a single version of a given course, with all of the content and assessments included. Courses are developed and written by the department faculty chair or a designated content expert, often an experienced adjunct faculty member, working with the Instructional Design Department. That content is published by the Course Production Department and then serves as the basis for any adjunct faculty member who teaches that particular course. Instructors have the freedom to enhance the lessons with additional information and resources, but the core content remains intact. Rio’s model presents many advantages to the College, instructors, and students:

- Course materials are consistent in look, feel, and navigation.
- Courses follow established quality standards for instructional alignment and assessment.
- Third-party materials in courses are compliant with copyright law.
- Instructors do not need to update content and assessments each semester.
- Instructors have more time to focus on interacting and engaging with individual students.

Furthermore, student performance data can be collected easily, because assessments are uniform among sections of a course. As a result, interventions can readily be implemented in course content, assessments, or teaching strategies that affect a large number of students simultaneously.

In a spring, 2015 administration of the pilot Survey of Online Student Engagement (SOSE), 81% of students (N=287) indicated that online courses at Rio Salado helped them to learn effectively on their own, while approximately three quarters of student respondents indicated that they received prompt and regular feedback from their instructors.

- **Multiple Start Dates**

Most of Rio Salado’s distance courses are offered through 40+ start dates per year. The College has a well-developed infrastructure for maintaining this model, including a block calendar system for degree or certificate program seekers.

Dual Enrollment

Rio Salado has a robust Dual Enrollment program, whereby high school students can earn both high school and college credit for courses taken during the regular school day. In FY2014-15, Rio offered 138 different courses at 41 high schools throughout Maricopa County, and over 7,100 students took more than 19,000 classes, earning in excess of 62,000 college credits. The Maricopa District Dual Enrollment Catalog governs which courses may be offered in a dual setting. Instructors who teach dual enrollment classes must meet the same qualifications as the college faculty, and teach to the same competencies. The College’s in-house developed Syllabus Builder software automatically populates in-person (including dual) syllabi with college-approved course descriptions, competencies, and policies. Faculty chairs oversee all academic

aspects of the dual enrollment program including, but not limited to, instructor qualification, prerequisite enforcement, textbook selection, and instructor evaluation. More information about the Dual Enrollment program will be provided in Criterion 4.A.4.

Face-to-Face Classes

Traditional face-to-face classes are offered at locations throughout Maricopa County and are subject to the same oversight as the courses offered for dual credit. Faculty chairs are responsible for on-site instructor evaluations at all the locations where courses are offered.

Educational Service Partnerships

Rio Salado College engages in a number of Educational Service Partnerships (ESPs), which involve partnerships with business and industry partners and government entities. In accordance with a memorandum to the Institutional Actions Council of the Higher Learning Commission dated April 21, 2015, Rio Salado is submitting this Educational Service Partnerships Interim Report providing extensive detail about the educational partnership model.

Additional evidence as referenced in the document includes: The MCCCED Educational Services Agreement with Partners; the Certificate of Understanding/Conditions of Employment for ESP Adjunct Faculty; a sample Program Curriculum for Certificate of Completion in Law Enforcement Technology Academy; the Adjunct Faculty Observation Template that is used to evaluate classroom performance; and the Student Feedback Evaluation Form whereby students evaluate instructors after the completion of their classes.

Sources

- ESP_Cert of Understanding_3.A.3
- ESP Interim Report_3.A.3
- HLC Memo for ESP Interim Report_3.A.3
- Maricopa University Partner List_3.A.1
- MCCCED_Academic Subjects_3.A.3
- MCCCED_AGEC_3.A.1
- MCCCED_ATF_3.A.1
- MCCCED_CCTA_3.A.1
- MCCCED_DE_ 2015-2016 Catalog_3.A.3
- MCCCED_ESP Contract_3.A.3
- MCCCED_Instructional Councils_3.A.1
- Rio_Adjunct Faculty Observation_3.A.3
- Rio_Adjunct Faculty Standards_3.A.3
- Rio_Block Calendar_3.A.3
- Rio_CCL LET Academy_3.A.3
- Rio_Certificate Programs_3.A.2
- Rio_Dental Hygiene Program Outcomes_3.A.1
- Rio_Occupational Advisory Committee_3.A.1

- Rio_Programmatic Accreditation_3.A.1
- Rio_Student Feedback Form_3.A.3
- Rio_Teacher Ed Pass Rates_3.A.1
- SOSE_Spring 2015_3.A.3

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

1.

The MCCCDC has established curriculum and transfer articulation as the key factors in development of general education programs in the District. As indicated in Criterion 3.A.1, the District's CCTA manages curriculum articulation areas, and Rio Salado's General Education program aligns with the CCTA statement that: "Curriculum and transfer articulation are interrelated and interdependent processes. It is the collaborative efforts between these areas that provide for the development of efficient, student-centered, general education programs." The Rio General Education Program is comprised of numerous courses under various disciplines that are housed in multiple departments. They include: Biology; Counseling; English; Reading; Humanities and History; Information Studies; Languages; Mathematics; Physical Sciences; Psychology, Philosophy and Religious Studies; Communication; and Social Sciences. General Education courses are offered in online, mixed-media, hybrid, dual credit, and traditional face-to-face learning environments, and the chairs collaborate on formal General Education Program Review.

2.

General Education at MCCCDC includes specific elements across the curriculum, designed to provide the learner with essential knowledge and skills in: Communication; Arts and Humanities; Numeracy; Scientific Inquiry in the Natural and Social Sciences; Information Literacy; Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking; Cultural Diversity.

Through its general education requirements, the MCCCDC is committed to helping students develop qualities and skills that will serve them throughout their lives. Attainment of these foundational skills will contribute to student success in the following areas: transfer to a baccalaureate program; associate degree recognition and/or specialization certification as affirmation of proficiency in a particular content and/or skill area; application of these skills for employment and job advancement; development of critical and evaluative reading, composition, research, and critical thinking skills (e.g., analysis, evaluation, inference) which will increase the quality of life at home, at work, in the community, and in social situations; and overall self-improvement, including interpersonal communications and development of life skills.

To facilitate the achievement of these characteristics, Rio Salado College has selected five student learning outcomes as the focus of college-wide student learning assessment work.

Assessment of these outcomes at the college-, program-, and course levels will be discussed in detail in Criterion Four.

3.

In addition to the college-wide learning outcomes work on critical thinking and information literacy referenced above, every degree program at Rio Salado requires students to demonstrate the ability to apply critical inquiry skills to varied and challenging materials. Students must achieve a District-approved score on the reading portion of a nationally-normed standardized assessment, or they must earn a passing grade in CRE101 (College Critical Reading).

Capstone assignments, like the Case Documentation and Community Oral Health projects in the Dental Hygiene program, provide evidence of collection, analysis, and communication of information, and final projects, such as those in Computer Programming, require students to master modes of inquiry and creative work. Furthermore, students pursuing certificate and degree programs in Computer Technology and Early Learning and Development produce portfolios to demonstrate their relevant workplace skills, and those studying Teacher Education, Addictions and Substance Abuse Disorders, Early Childhood Administration and Management, eLearning Design, Paralegal Studies, and Sustainable Food Systems, engage in in-person practicums and/or internships designed to develop adaptable skills in various environments.

4.

The commitment of the MCCCDC Governing Board and Rio Salado College to the principles and values of diversity and inclusiveness, and practices to hire and educate a diverse workforce, were addressed in detail in Criterion 1.C.1. As noted in Criterion 1.A.2, Rio Salado has identified diversity and inclusiveness as core values, which supports the District's vision to work "collectively and responsibly to meet the life-long learning needs of our diverse students and communities." To this end, as described in Criteria 1.C.2 and 1.D.3, the College offers a wide array of educational programs and opportunities that recognize the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work, including College Bridge Pathways, Veterans, Active Military, Incarcerated populations, RISE, the Communiversities, etc. Student programs such as ACE Puente and M.E.N., and organizations supporting diverse employee and student groups, were also addressed in Criterion One.

In addition to college- and district-wide initiatives, Rio Salado offers an array of courses that focus on human and cultural diversity.

5.

Residential Faculty Professional Activities

As a two-year college, Rio Salado does not directly engage in scholarship as one of its primary functions. However, the residential faculty of Rio Salado are instructional leaders who remain current in their fields, participate actively in professional organizations, pursue regular professional growth opportunities, and review current research to put theory into practice. Rio Salado's residential faculty members are able to provide substantial evidence of professional contributions during the past three years.

MCLI Learning Grants

The Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction provides Learning Grant funds for innovative projects designed to enhance student learning and promote student success. Recent examples of grants to Rio residential faculty include funding in the amount of \$3,000 to explore implementation of intentional critical thinking strategies for online learners, and \$8,000 to develop two learnshops on the topic Underrepresented Males of Color: What Faculty Must Know!

Maricopa Millions Internal Grants

As mentioned in Criterion 2.E.2, Maricopa Millions is a district-wide initiative designed to fund grant proposals for faculty to locate, adapt, and/or create Open Education Resource (OER) materials for their courses. Maricopa Millions has expended approximately \$60,000 for the development of 11 courses during the first four grant cycles (FY2013-2015). Two of Rio Salado's faculty chairs each received funding in FY2014-15 in the amount of \$2,589 (3 overload hours) for development of PSY101 (Introduction to Psychology), and GBS151 (Introduction to Business), respectively. The courses will be piloted during FY2015-16.

RioLogs (Rio Learning Outcomes Grants)

RioLogs are internal College grants that require the involvement of adjunct faculty in student learning outcomes work. This process will be described in Criterion 4.B.4.

Student Contributions to Scholarship

Rio Salado students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge through active involvement in various co-curricular activities, which will be described in Criterion 3.E.1.

Sources

- MCCCCD_CCTA_3.B.1
- MCCCCD_CRE101_3.B.3
- MCCCCD_Gen Ed Knowledge_3.B.2
- MCCCCD_Learning Grants_3.B.5
- MCCCCD_Maricopa Millions_3.B.5
- Rio_Addictions_3.B.3
- Rio_Assessment_3.B.2
- Rio_Computer Programming_3.B.3
- Rio_Computer Technology_3.B.3
- Rio_Dental Hygiene_3.B.3
- Rio_Diversity Courses Fall 2015_3.B.4
- Rio_Early Childhood Admin_3.B.3
- Rio_Early Childhood_Early Learning_3.B.3
- Rio_Educator Preparation Program_3.B.3
- Rio_eLearning Design_3.B.3
- Rio_Faculty Scholarship Examples_3.B.5
- Rio_Gen-Ed-Program-Review_3.B.1
- Rio_Paralegal Studies_3.B.3
- Rio_Sustainable Food Systems_3.B.3
- Underrepresented Males of Color_MCLI_3.B.5

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

1.

The Rio Salado Faculty Model

- **Residential Faculty**

Since it was founded in 1978, Rio Salado College has maintained a nontraditional faculty structure. A small faculty chair cohort (22 chairs in fall, 2015) serves as department and/or program heads and instructional leaders. There is generally one full-time residential faculty member per academic discipline or department who also serves as the faculty chair. The Chair Model is based on maintaining a compact, flexible, and innovative leadership group of discipline experts who manage their programs, projects, initiatives, and services while supervising a large contingent of adjunct faculty. Many of the faculty chairs' responsibilities differ from roles at traditional campuses. The College has support systems to assist chairs with operational responsibilities such as recruiting, hiring, and training adjunct faculty, and staffing. As mentioned in Criterion 3.A.1, faculty chairs represent the College through service on District-wide Instructional Councils and Articulation Task Forces, serving as academic leaders to ensure the currency, quality, and rigor of the common District curriculum. Faculty leadership positions are held by elected individuals who serve as liaison between the residential faculty and other College entities, as well as serving on the District Faculty Executive Council.

- **Faculty Instructional Team**

In order to maintain this small cohort of residential faculty while meeting enrollment needs and continued delivery of high-quality instruction, a sustainable instructional support model is in place. This unbundling of faculty chair responsibilities allows for the hiring of tiered positions including Instructional Director, Instructional Coordinator, Discipline Specialist, or Lead Adjunct Faculty, as appropriate, to assist the chair with such matters as refinement of department policies and procedures, overseeing the tracking of instructional issues, and coordination of assessment efforts, among others. All faculty instructional support personnel are hired from the ranks of expert adjunct faculty members.

- **Adjunct Faculty**

In FY2014-15, 1,562 adjunct faculty, most of whom are practitioners in their fields, taught the vast majority of Rio Salado courses to an enrollment of 56,472 total student headcount. Rio's nontraditional model is better served by the use of adjunct faculty which allows for more flexibility in staffing classes, including online classes with 40+ start dates per year. Extensive processes are in place to evaluate and to support adjunct faculty, while the "one course, many sections" online content model ensures high quality in course design and delivery (see Criteria 3.C.3 and 3.C.4).

Curriculum Development Processes and Oversight

As mentioned in Criterion 3.B.1, the Maricopa Community Colleges share a common course bank and follow a District-wide curriculum approval process, as defined in the Curriculum Procedures Handbook. The Center for Curriculum and Transfer Articulation supports the MCCCDC faculty and administration in the development of quality curriculum for District students, as well as the articulation of the curriculum to post-secondary institutions. Rio Salado has a designated faculty chair who leads processes for the development, coordination, and review of the College's curriculum, and serves on the District Curriculum Committee (DCC). The alignment of the Curriculum Department under a residential faculty chair shows the College's commitment to faculty-driven curriculum processes. Additionally, the Curriculum Department works closely with the Institutional Integrity Department on compliance and regulations as indicated in Criterion 2.A.

Faculty-Driven Assessment

Rio Salado's assessment processes are faculty-driven and will be described in detail in Criterion Four.

Course Support

Course Support provides a number of behind-the-scenes functions that assist adjunct faculty and facilitate the smooth operation of Rio Salado's 40+ weekly course starts. As examples, the department monitors live enrollment data and opens new sections as required, schedules class sections for all instructional disciplines, mails required course materials automatically to students

upon registration, mails or couriers print-based assignments to adjunct faculty members for grading, and calculates worksheets for the adjunct faculty payroll process.

2.

Residential Faculty

All Rio Salado residential faculty must meet the certification requirements of the MCCCDC. Faculty are initially employed in a probationary status, and attain appointive status at the beginning of their sixth consecutive year. The District does not employ academic rank for faculty members. The official files of Rio Salado's residential faculty are housed at the District Office.

Adjunct Faculty and Dual Enrollment Instructors

Adjunct faculty and dual enrollment instructors are required by the MCCCDC to meet the same credentialing requirements as residential faculty, and they too are required to complete EDU 250 within two years of initial hire date to remain eligible for employment. Official files of adjunct faculty members and dual enrollment instructors are housed in the College's Faculty Services Department (see Criterion 5.A.1).

3.

Residential Faculty Evaluation

- **Peer Assistance and Review (PAR)**

Residential faculty hired into the MCCCDC system are considered probationary for their first five years of employment, and are required to participate in the PAR (Peer Assistance and Review) during those years, in accordance with Section 3.6 of the MCCCDC Residential Faculty Policy Manual: Probationary Faculty Peer Assistance and Review. As outlined in the Rio Salado PAR handbook, the primary purpose of PAR is to encourage, support and mentor probationary faculty members while building an archive for achievement and performance. The information gathered during the PAR process is used as one tool in the decision-making process for renewal of a probationary faculty member. During PAR, probationary faculty document their instructional expertise, service to the College and community, and professional development through an Individual Development Plan (IDP) each year. Peer Mentors are required to undergo specified training and to meet frequently with their mentees in a designated process that includes mentoring activities and oversight. A Peer Assistance and Review Committee (PARC), consisting of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and qualified, appointive faculty, evaluates IDPs each year and makes recommendations to the college president regarding renewal of the probationary appointment, and appointive status at the end of the fifth year. PAR evaluations are

maintained at the College, with recommendations forming part of the faculty member's official personnel file at the District office.

- **Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP)**

In addition to PAR and the IDP process, Rio's residential faculty are evaluated according to the Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP), a self-examination process as outlined in Section 3.5 of the Residential Faculty Policy Manual. Residential faculty are required to complete an FEP annually for the first five years of employment as they progress through the PAR and IDP process, and every third year thereafter. FEP committee members are chosen from among faculty peers, college vice presidents, or other discipline experts, while student input is sought in the teaching, learning, or service area.

Probationary Assistance Plans and Faculty Evaluation Plans for all Rio Salado residential faculty are up to date, and maintained in the faculty files at the District Office.

Adjunct Faculty and Dual Enrollment Instructor Evaluation

Adjunct faculty and dual enrollment instructors are evaluated in accordance with Section G of the MCCCDC Adjunct Faculty Employee Handbook. At Rio Salado, formal evaluation is conducted once each semester during the first three semesters of teaching, in accordance with this MCCCDC policy. After the first three evaluations, all adjunct faculty are evaluated every three to five years according to criteria established by the department faculty chair, and are conducted by the chair, an instructional support team designee, or Instructional Helpdesk personnel. The chair reviews each evaluation and recommends interventions, if indicated, for required ongoing professional development and improvement.

4.

Residential Faculty Development

As academic and instructional leaders, Rio Salado's residential faculty are diligent in keeping current in their fields and attending and presenting at conferences. Through the Residential Faculty Policies, residential faculty are provided with the opportunity to engage in faculty professional growth activities such as conference and seminar attendance, classes, summer projects, travel, work experience, sabbaticals, and other activities intended to enhance their professional growth, maintain currency in their fields, and connect with colleagues. During the three most recent fiscal years, amounts expended by the District for conference registration and travel by Rio Salado's 24 residential faculty members were:

- FY2012-13: \$49,159.00
- FY2013-14: \$56,776.00
- FY2014-15: \$61,521.00

In addition to these district-supplied funds, Rio Salado College supports faculty attendance at conferences and workshops as needed, if they have exhausted their District allowance and are representing the College or attending a conference of particular importance in their areas of specialization.

Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction

The Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI) is a district-wide office that provides leadership in the areas of teaching and learning, and ongoing professional development opportunities for residential and adjunct faculty. “Dialogue Days” are workshops on topics across the spectrum related to teaching and learning, including events relating to effective use of technology in instruction. The MCLI is also the Arizona lead agency for *Quality Matters*[™], a peer review process whereby faculty assess and certify the quality of online courses. Five current Rio faculty chairs have undergone *Quality Matters* training to become certified reviewers.

Adjunct Faculty Development

Because of Rio Salado’s large contingent of adjunct faculty and dual enrollment instructors, deliberate and comprehensive continuing education processes are in place to ensure ongoing professional growth.

- **All Faculty Meetings**

The College holds All Faculty Meetings twice a year, which include programming such as a keynote by the college president or an outside expert on some aspect of teaching and learning, an update on College technologies, and “TED Talk”-style presentations (RioChats) by volunteer adjunct faculty on topics such as course development, curricular improvements, student success and motivation, retention efforts, etc. Additionally, one meeting a year includes a focus on student learning outcomes assessment with an update by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and distribution of the annual assessment report. General sessions are followed by department meetings where adjunct faculty meet with their faculty chairs and engage in discussions relating to discipline-specific matters. All online and location-based adjunct faculty are invited to attend these biannual meetings, which generally elicit approximately 600 attendees each semester (89% of survey respondents to the 2015 Adjunct Faculty survey indicated they had attended at least one of these meetings within the previous year).

- **Dual Enrollment Conference**

The College also holds a Dual Enrollment Conference each year which generally includes a keynote, workshops, and breakout sessions of interest by discipline and/or pertinent to teaching and learning topics. Over 90 active dual enrollment instructors attended this event in fall, 2015. In addition to the conference, most faculty chairs meet with their dual enrollment instructors at least once per year, and more often with new instructors. Chairs also provide training and orientation for new instructors, including use of the syllabus-building tool, College expectations, and course-related matters, and remain in contact via email, telephone, and newsletters.

- **Adjunct Faculty Development Workshops**

Rio Salado's Adjunct Faculty Development (AFD) online workshops are designed to provide comprehensive continuing education for adjunct faculty. Topic tracks include Online Teaching; Student Learning Outcomes; Online Course Development; Student Experience; and Learning Theory. AFD 101 is mandated at hire, and continuing participation in these workshops may be required by the faculty chair as an intervention to improve instructor effectiveness, or as a required component of sequential instructor evaluations. Additionally, the workshops that are tied to the College's student learning outcomes may be required for all adjunct faculty by some departments. All AFD workshops are presented in RioLearn, thereby providing adjunct faculty with an opportunity to experience the system from the student viewpoint.

Since inception of the AFD workshops in 2007, 1,083 adjunct faculty members have completed AFD101, and 926 have completed one or more of the remaining AFD offerings through June, 2015. For the past three years, data show fairly consistent numbers of completers, with an increasing success rate:

- FY2012–13: 260 total Successful AFD Workshop Completers (79% Success Rate)
- FY2013–14: 178 total Successful AFD Workshop Completers (78% Success Rate)
- FY2014–15: 230 total Successful AFD Workshop Completers (84% Success Rate)

The 2015 Adjunct Faculty Survey (N=258) provided overwhelmingly positive data regarding perspectives on Rio's mission and culture, knowledge and understanding of policies and procedures, and effectiveness of communication strategies.

- **MCCCD Adjunct Faculty Professional Growth Program**

The program provides limited funding assistance on a reimbursement basis to adjunct faculty employees to attend external conferences, seminars, workshops, and professional meetings that are directly related to the teaching field and that will enhance the learning of MCCCD students taught by the applicant. Between FY2013 and FY2015, 59 Rio adjunct faculty were awarded funds totaling \$33,372. Adjunct faculty professional development is tied to the Rio Salado College *Strategic Plan Goal 1: Teaching and Learning*. A departmental action plan adopted by all the faculty chairs calls for documentation of ongoing adjunct faculty development as a condition of preferential rehire status, with the requirement to complete a minimum of two professional development activities per year.

5.

The Rio Salado faculty chairs' Instructional Support Model was described in Criterion 3.C.1. This model, in conjunction with department-level published expectations (see Criterion 3.A.3) requiring that adjunct faculty respond to student inquiry within designated timeframes (and which form part of adjunct faculty evaluation criteria), ensure that students are able to maintain regular and substantive two-way communication with their instructors. Thus, there are several

layers of opportunity for all students to contact faculty regarding content, instructional support, or general inquiry questions, including the Instructional Helpdesk, which is a Rio-specific innovation (see Criterion 3.D.1 for details).

6.

Hiring of Qualified Staff

Rio Salado's student support services personnel are hired according to the criteria established by the MCCCDC. The Human Resources Jobs Bank lists the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for specific positions, along with examples of the education and experience that would meet the skill set. Details of MCCCDC hiring processes will be provided in Criterion 5.A.4. Required qualifications for higher level positions generally include a college degree along with commensurate experience in the field. For example, Rio's Tutoring Coordinator, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Advisement Services, Honors Coordinator, and PTK Coordinator have master's degrees along with many years of experience in their positions.

Student Affairs Employee Training

The Student Affairs Division conducts regular in-service trainings for all departments under its purview. In order to make these sessions more meaningful and substantive, the Division conducted a survey in summer, 2014, that identified "Tier I" knowledge questions; information that everyone within the departments would need to know as a basis for assisting students. A total of 144 employees completed the survey, with an average score of 72.19%. Based on these data, which fell short of the Quality Assurance target of 80%, the Division formed a Quality Assurance & Training Team that has developed process improvements and additional training in areas of identified need, along with a "buddy system" to break down silos and improve communication amongst the departments.

Professional Growth Funds

The MCCCDC provides professional growth funds to support employees for tuition costs towards additional coursework and to attend professional conferences. During the past three fiscal years, the District spent \$60,402.29 on tuition costs and \$398,555.37 for conference registration fees and travel costs for Rio Salado MAT (Management, Administrative and Technical) employees, and \$83,207.96 in tuition costs along with \$76,121.54 for conference registration fees and travel costs for Rio Salado Professional Staff employees.

Service Standards Measurement

Rio Salado's departments have developed service standards whereby employee performance in meeting customer service standards aligned with the College's mission is measured according to a target that is meaningful to the department. These standards and data on employee performance will be further described in Criterion 5.D.1.

Non-Financial Indicator Report: NFI5 and NFI7

Rio Salado was directed to provide a report in response to the Non-Financial Indicator trigger notification from the HLC dated November 6, 2015 regarding NFI5: ratio of full-time faculty to degree programs, and NFI7: graduation/persistence rates compared to peers. As directed, Rio Salado has addressed these topics extensively throughout this comprehensive Assurance Argument report. To assist the Team in further review of the non-financial indicator issues, the College is submitting this NFI5 and NFI7 Summary Report to encapsulate the major points of explanation.

Sources

- HLC NFI 5+7 Report_3.C.6
- Maricopa CC_Rio Salado CC NFI Letter_3.C.6
- MCCCCD_Adjunct Eval_3.C.3
- MCCCCD_Curriculum Proc.Handbook_3.C.1
- MCCCCD_DCC_3.C.1
- MCCCCD_Faculty Min.Quals_3.C.2
- MCCCCD_FEP_RFP_3.C.3
- MCCCCD_Job Descriptions_3.C.6
- MCCCCD_MCLI_3.C.4
- MCCCCD_P.G. Funding_3.C.6
- MCCCCD_PAR_RFP_3.C.3
- Rio_AF Survey Report_2015_3.C.4
- Rio_AFD Workshops_3.C.4
- Rio_PAR Handbook_2014_3.C.3

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

1.

Rio Salado's student support service infrastructure operates in multiple modalities, including in-person, online, live chat, telephone, and email. While all service departments have a physical presence at the Rio Tempe site and at some of the College's locations, the focus is on reaching the dispersed student body in the most effective and convenient ways possible for students.

Counseling Services

Rio Salado's Counseling and Career Services Department is led by the Faculty Chair for Counseling and provides services through face-to-face sessions, "Ask a Counselor" email (including online resumé review), telephone, and live chat. Six adjunct faculty counselors provide services at College locations throughout Maricopa County, with special arrangements available for evening and weekend appointments based on student needs. The Director of Career Services (also a Masters-degree certified counselor) maintains the Rio Salado Online Career Center under the purview of the Counseling Chair. Counseling faculty also reach students through blogs on topics related to study skills and self-management tips, and present Student Success Seminars and workshops customized for different College programs. Students served during the past three fiscal years across all modalities are as follows:

- FY2012-13: In-person 1,471; online 2,855; Groups/Workshops 1,302; Total: 5,628
- FY2013-14: In-person 1,575; online 2,480; Groups/Workshops 2,507; Total: 6,562
- FY2014-15: In-person 2,086; online 1,877; Groups/Workshops 2,022; Total: 5,985

The increased in-person students served during FY2014-15 is reflective of a deliberate strategy to provide additional counselor availability at the College's locations. Students who responded affirmatively to the *Survey of Online Student Engagement (SOSE)* that they had used career counseling services (N=26), indicated 88.5% agreement that they were very or somewhat satisfied with the service received.

Tutoring Services

Tutoring services are offered to Rio Salado students in 19 subject areas, as well as in writing across the curriculum, both face-to-face and online. In-person tutoring is offered during late afternoon and evening hours, as well as on Saturdays, to provide maximum convenience for nontraditional working students. Online tutoring is offered through an outsourced contract with smarthinking.com, which provides 24x7 service in some of the subject areas offered.

A full-time Tutoring Coordinator supervises a group of approximately 20-25 in-person tutors. These are subject-matter experts, of whom over 90% have a master's degree in the subject that they tutor. Approximately 70% of current tutors are drawn from the ranks of the College's adjunct faculty, ensuring excellent content knowledge and advanced teaching/tutoring skills. For the last three fiscal years, usage of the Rio Salado tutoring services is as follows:

In-person tutoring:

- FY2012-13: 2,252 students; 5,575 sessions; 7,726 hours
- FY2013-14: 2,658 students; 6,259 sessions; approx. 8500 hours
- FY2014-15: Unavailable

Smarthinking Online Tutoring:

- FY2012-13: 2,883 students; 8,094 sessions; 5,167 hours
- FY2013-14: 2,470 students; 7,810 sessions; 4,983 hours
- FY2014-15: 4,663 students; 6,740 sessions; 7,305 hours

Students who responded affirmatively to the *Survey of Online Student Engagement (SOSE)* that they had used tutoring services (N=24), indicated 79.2% agreement that they were very or somewhat satisfied with the service received.

Instructional Helpdesk

Because of the nontraditional nature of Rio's student body and its extensive online course offerings and large adjunct faculty cohort, the College has a dual helpdesk structure. In addition to the more familiar Technology Helpdesk which is discussed below in Criterion 3.D.4, Rio Salado has an Instructional Helpdesk to help online students with course-related questions, and to assist the faculty chairs in the mentoring, training, and evaluation of Adjunct Faculty. The Instructional Helpdesk is headed by an Associate Dean of Instruction, assisted by five employees who are also experienced adjunct faculty and provide a broad, cross-disciplinary knowledge base in assisting students and adjunct faculty with issues related to teaching and learning. Instructional

Helpdesk staff also serve as instructors for many of the College's Adjunct Faculty Development courses described in Criterion 3.C.4. In FY2012-13, Instructional Helpdesk staff created over 8,000 Helpdesk requests resulting from online chats, phone calls, and emails. During FY2013-14, in spite of staffing shortages, the department handled close to 9,000 emails, while assisting with the mentoring of 64 new adjunct faculty (equating to approximately 640 hours) and conducting 23 formal peer faculty evaluations, equating to approximately 184 hours spent evaluating new and continuing adjunct faculty. During FY2014-15, 54 new adjunct faculty were mentored (540 hours) along with 18 formal peer evaluations (approximately 124 hours). Emails and voice messages were down to just below 4,000, but as of fall, 2015 the department is once again fully-staffed and is ramping up to prior service levels.

Admissions, Registration & Records

As a community college, Rio Salado has an open admissions policy. Rio Salado's Admissions, Registration & Records Department handles student registration functions, along with such items as requests for transcripts, determining residency for tuition, and student identity verifications. Employees also educate students on how to use the MCCC My.Maricopa online portal for self-service with these processes.

Financial Aid

The Financial Aid Office provides assistance to students with navigating the financial aid process at the College, and ensuring timely student access to U.S. Department of Education Title IV Student Aid programs. The office is led by a Director of Financial Aid who holds a Master's in Educational Leadership, and is responsible for all aspects of departmental evaluation, planning, and performance. An Assistant Director of Financial Aid works with the Dean of Enrollment Services and Student Affairs to handle student complaints, serve as a resource for staff, and provide oversight of the Scholarship Processing Office. The financial aid technicians perform all processing, including awarding, authorization, and return of federal funds, and encourage responsible borrowing by proactively discussing the attendant responsibility when loan debt is incurred. They are also responsible for scholarships, customer service, and support to the outsourced entities that assist with financial aid for the District. Training of financial aid staff is ongoing via departmental training, cross-departmental training, and attendance at state, regional, and national conferences. The MCCC outsources Tier 1 Financial Aid calls to Blackboard, which is staffed by agents trained in financial aid processes. The District also uses the Maricopa Verification Processing Center to perform verification district-wide.

The numbers of Rio students receiving aid has increased over the years, while the level of service given to students has evolved to meet the more complex current environment. As regulations have become more complicated, and processes have fragmented to various third party servicers, more time is spent with students to ensure their understanding of the processes. Financial Aid has also adapted to the growing student (and environmental) need for online methods of communication and notification. Students have access to their files on a 24/7 basis through the My.Maricopa self-service center, where they can view their award letters and check the status of their files. For FY2014-15, a total of 26,546 financial aid applications were received, totaling \$33.9 million in disbursements.

Students who responded affirmatively to the *Survey of Online Student Engagement (SOSE)* that they had used financial aid advisement services (N=64), indicated 84.4% agreement that they were very or somewhat satisfied with the service received.

Testing Services

Rio Salado provides in-person testing services at nine of its locations across Maricopa County, offering college course placement, distance learning testing, credit by examination and extensive proctoring services. The College is a member of the National College Testing Association (NCTA), and adheres to their Testing Standards and Guidelines, receiving official NCTA certification in July 2013. Students are served on a walk-in basis with no appointments necessary (unless required by the external company), and extended evening and weekend hours accommodate the schedules of Rio's nontraditional students. During the past three years, Testing Services administered an increasing number of exams at all College locations:

- FY 2012-13: 40,454
- FY 2013-14: 50,939
- FY 2014-15: 61,390

Testing Services also provides proctoring for over 21,000 distance learning students per year, as well as approximately 7,500 paper exams for print-based students each year. The Testing Center has developed a Test Tracker database which allows the department to produce reports on how many students were tested, which exams they completed, time lapse, and any other notes recorded at the time of testing. These reports are then used to strategize improvements in customer service by manipulating staffing, hours, training, and resources. The Testing Department also houses the Academic Integrity Team, which monitors the plagiarism detection email reports and offers additional support and research regarding any potential academic misconduct, as described in Criterion 2.E.3.

Computer Labs

Rio Salado provides Computer Labs at four of the College's locations in Maricopa County, and Lab staff members assist students in-person, online via email or chat, and by telephone. The Computer Labs are managed by a coordinator, assisted by five full-time employees and 26 part-time lab technicians, of whom 17 are certified CIS instructors. The certified instructors assist with grading CIS online assignments while they are on lab duty. During the past three fiscal years, the Lab Grading Teams were directly responsible for grading student work in over 80 sections of 13 different online courses, which represented 6,880 students and literally thousands of assignments. During the same period, the Computer Labs supported student learning in 70 different credit courses across multiple disciplines, with a duplicated login count of 32,652. In addition, students use the labs to register, submit financial aid paperwork, request transcripts, and take proficiency or placement practice tests.

Veterans Affairs

Rio Salado's Veterans Affairs (VA) Department assists veterans with achieving their educational goals as they transition from military to civilian life. The College's 40+ weekly enrollment starts provide an ideal model for veterans, who are able to begin coursework according to their military exit schedules, without having to wait for the start of a traditional term. Assistance is provided with registration, completing educational benefits applications, and referrals to College and community services. In FY2014-15, 2,628 enrolled Rio Salado students were veterans, and approximately 1,200 student and potential student veterans were served via Veterans Services at the College's primary Tempe location, as well as at the EVVEC, which was described in Criterion 1.D.3. As mentioned in Criterion 1.C.2, the College also has a customized Start at Rio for Veterans website that guides students as they begin the registration process.

Rio's Veterans Affairs office is audited by both the Phoenix Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office and the State Approving Agency. The College VA office has always passed these audits, many times with a perfect score. These audits are a form of quality assurance and prove that Rio Salado is in compliance with VA rules and regulations.

Disability Resources and Services

Rio Salado's Disability Resources and Services office assists students with documented disabilities by providing appropriate accommodations in strict conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the MCCCDC Administrative Regulation 2.8: Students with Disabilities. The department is run by a Disability Services Manager and currently serves approximately 600 disability-registered students, with numbers increasing each year:

- FY2012-13: 497
- FY2013-14: 501
- FY2014-15: 583

Referrals are provided to other College services as appropriate. The office tracks all student information (disability needs, accommodations, correspondence, interaction with faculty and staff, etc.), allowing staff to review how many students are registered with specific disabilities in a given semester or year, and for College administration to plan for additional staffing resources, as needed.

2.

Placement Testing

Placement Testing is required for all students new to college, program-seeking students, students taking their first college-level English, Reading, or Mathematics class or one requiring these as a prerequisite, and students for whom English is not the primary language. According to District policy, students who enroll in English, Reading, or Mathematics will be advised and placed into courses based on valid district-approved scores. Students who test into courses that are below college-level (i.e., below 100-level) will be advised and placed into the appropriate courses

within the first two semesters enrolled. A faculty chair or designee may grant a course placement waiver under special circumstances, and the signed waiver will be noted on the student's electronic record. Students assessed at college-level are enrolled in courses and programs that meet their academic goals.

Start at Rio

Rio Salado has developed a guided, online process for entering students, featuring steps tailored to their educational goals, which was described in Criterion 1.C.2. These checklists walk new students through the process of creating an account, exploring program options, researching funding options, and registering for classes.

Online Student Orientation (NSO101)

As part of the process for facilitating new online students' transition to Rio Salado, the Online Student Orientation (NSO101) is a free non-credit class designed for students seeking an online certificate or degree with Rio Salado College. Tailored to nontraditional online students, NSO101 serves the same purpose as in-person orientation offered at traditional campuses, providing an overview of the College's student services, policies and procedures, and tips for college success, as well as financial literacy. NSO101 is automatically added to students' schedules when they register for their first class if they are degree-seekers or plan to transfer to a Bachelor's degree program. The orientation is offered in RioLearn, and therefore familiarizes students with the Learning Management System that they will use for their online classes.

College Bridge Pathways

As described in Criterion 1.C.2, Rio Salado provides nontraditional, under-prepared students with a bridge to college-level programs through its College Bridge Pathways (CBP) programs, which seek to strengthen academic skills and increase confidence in a college learning environment through several different program options.

Adaptive Learning Market Acceleration Program (ALMAP)

Between FY2013-FY2015, Rio Salado secured a grant in the amount of \$99,904 from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation with the goal of expediting transition to college-level outcomes for developmental learners, within a personalized and accelerated timeline. While ALMAP results were inconclusive, the College will continue to investigate options for further exploring the possibilities of adaptive technologies for this student population.

3.

Academic Advisement Services

Rio Salado's Academic Advisors provide assistance to students with selecting courses and programs that will help to meet their career and/or university transfer goals, and serve as guides through student completion. Advisement is offered in person, by telephone, and online via chat and email, Monday through Friday, including evening hours. The Director of Advisement Services holds a Master's in Counseling, and new advisors undergo a rigorous process of onboarding for approximately one month. This is followed by weekly staff meetings, monthly trainings, in-service workshops, and professional conferences to ensure ongoing currency with policies, procedures, programs, theory, and best practices in advisement.

The Advisement Department is divided into teams for maximum efficiency, but all staff members are cross-trained and can assist fellow teams as needed. Advisement is offered at 13 College locations, which includes a team familiar with military student needs and regulations. The office also handles formal admissions to programs when required, and processes transcript evaluations and prerequisite approvals.

Advisement Services utilizes RioCompass, a secure portal developed in-house as part of the RioAchieve Grant (described in Criterion 4.C.3) that provides students, staff, and faculty with 24x7 comprehensive resources designed for facilitating student success and goal completion. Students are able to upload transcripts for review, choose a degree program, and communicate with their dedicated advisors and peer mentors through direct email links. The system provides a holistic view of student progress by displaying course enrollment, degree plan checksheets, interventions, helpdesk tickets, tutoring use, and placement scores, along with a graphical display indicating their progress toward degree completion, and the ability to request Credit for Prior Learning. RioCompass has automatic interventions built in, such as reminding students of the need to complete NSO101, and manual interventions can be implemented for communication between departments when a student issue arises. RioCompass also displays an icon for the College's predictive analytics tool RioPACE, so students can track progress in their courses. Because of the notable success of the RioCompass portal with the RioAchieve population, it was rolled out to the entire online student body in October, 2015.

Students who responded affirmatively to the *Survey of Online Student Engagement (SOSE)* that they had used advisement services (N=91), indicated an overwhelming 91.2% agreement that they were very or somewhat satisfied with the service received.

4.

Technological Infrastructure

As a technology college supporting large cohorts of online students and faculty, Rio Salado places primary emphasis on ensuring that its online systems are reliable and scalable. Substantial budget resources have been devoted to a technology infrastructure which includes state-of-the-art equipment and appropriate backup systems for both the online systems and the physical plant. Information Services (IS) is headed by the Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and

Information Services, with teams dedicated to Technical Support, Networking, and Programming.

The **Technical Support Team**, managed by the Director of College Technology, runs the Technology Helpdesk (THD), which is part of a comprehensive College Helpdesk system used to house data related to student and employee issues that can then be referenced by authorized personnel in various departments. The THD supports students by troubleshooting technology-related course issues, and supports employees by installing and updating hardware and software, as well as addressing any technology-related problems. Technical support is provided via telephone, email, live chat, and in-person service, and Helpdesk tickets are logged when students and employees call or submit issues online. Over the past three fiscal years, IS fielded over 20,000 calls per year and resolved and closed an average of 12,000 Helpdesk requests per year.

The **Networking and Security Team** continually monitors the health and uptime of the production servers and network to maintain a stable environment for teaching and learning. An IS manager and a networking staff member are on call 365 days per year. Rio Salado has extensive backup procedures for the College's production servers. The long-term goal is to have a completely redundant system in standby mode ready to go online if Rio's primary system goes down.

Programming Team members are responsible for building new applications, as well as fixing problems with existing applications.

Information Services maintains a SharePoint-based employee portal to support inter and intra-departmental communication and collaboration. "EP2" has become institutionalized throughout the College and provides an ideal forum for departments to share and store information and to work collaboratively. Cross-college teams and processes (including Strategic Planning, Assessment of Student Learning, Faculty Development, Strategic Enrollment Management, Development Team, Special Ops, etc.) provide up-to-date content on SharePoint sites, enabling all team members to have instant access to reliable information and to participate in group processes.

RioLearn

In FY2014-15, 28,965 of the College's 46,836 credit students were taking their coursework online. RioLearn, the College's customized, scalable Learning Management System, was created in 2003 to accommodate the College's 40+ Monday "start" dates, and the need to scale up using the "one course, many sections" model as opposed to individual faculty course creation. Because the College runs thousands of sections per term, a customized system that would automatically create these sections based on a master course and then link and assign all associated faculty and students to that section, was essential. When RioLearn was initially deployed, the College migrated over 450 courses into the new system, and that number had grown to over 1,100 currently active courses in fall, 2015.

The advantage to a customized system is that improvements can be implemented based on stakeholder feedback. Thus, faculty and student input are solicited on an ongoing basis and, in

the years since the original implementation, RioLearn has been substantially modified eight times to improve functionality, ease of use, and effectiveness as a system for teaching and learning. In the fall, 2015 *Survey of Online Student Engagement* (SOSE), 85% of students responding to questions about their course website (N=233) indicated that it was easy to use, while 76.8% agreed that the site's structure helped their learning. Of the 191 students providing feedback about the structure of the online course, the percentages replying *very often* or *often* are impressive and speak to the structured and consistent format of the "one course, many sections" framework:

- Received information about the starting times for activities, due dates, grading criteria, and other class policies (88.0%)
- Received a clear introduction to course topics (87.4%)
- Received clear descriptions of course goals (80.7%)
- Received guidance on ground rules for discussion and online participation (53.6%)

Rio Salado's asynchronous online course model is thought possibly to account for the low percentage agreement of the last item. The College is looking at ways to further support students' understanding of appropriate discussion protocols for all forms of online communication.

Instructional Design and Course Production

- **Instructional Design**

In implementing the "one course, many sections" model described in Criterion 3.A.3 above, Instructional Design Services (IDS), led by a Director of Instructional Design and Technology, assists faculty chairs in the course design and project management of more than 350 online, hybrid, and mixed-media courses each year. IDS designs all course content and assessment materials in collaboration with the chairs or their designated developers (often experienced adjunct faculty members) following established course templates and models. The department employs seven instructional designers and a full-time editor, and also incorporates an instructional media design department. Additionally, the Library Instructional Coordinator (one of the personnel described in the Faculty Support model) provides research services to identify authoritative, validated third-party course content as part of the instructional design workflow, thereby enabling seamless integration of library resources into online courses.

Instructional designers in the department have formal training and advanced academic credentials in learning design, and most have also been trained as *Quality Matters*TM Certified Course reviewers for online courses

- **Course Production**

Once distance learning courses have been designed and developed, they are produced by a centralized Course Production (CP) Department. CP is led by a Director of Instructional Technology and Course Production, and employs 10 course production specialists. The department operates via a standardized production process model whereby course documents are moved from one team to another until the entire course has been produced. Course Production

utilizes a Course Lifecycle SharePoint tracking system, which tracks courses from development through their deactivation, and provides real-time information for all processes during the life of a course: development, production, and maintenance. Lifecycle data allow customer surveys and reports to be generated which are reviewed at regular intervals to identify issues that need to be addressed.

Over the past three years, Instructional Design and Course Production have created new courses or made major revisions to existing courses as follows:

- FY2012-13: 315 courses
- FY2013-14: 270 courses
- FY2014-15: 359 courses

Additionally, during that timeframe, the number of employee hours spent updating live courses were:

- FY2012-13: 448 hours
- FY2013-14: 541 hours
- FY2014-15: 967 hours

The substantial increase in FY2014-15 reflects modifications being made to courses to reach compliance with Universal Design and ADA standards, in keeping with the work of the Web Accessibility Team mentioned in Criterion 1.C.2.

Scientific Laboratories

- **Science Lab**

The Rio Salado College Science Lab is a unique concept designed to meet the needs of students enrolled in online science laboratory courses. Science Lab employees assemble kits that are sold through the College Bookstore for 14 distinct courses in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Physical Science, and Physics. Depending on the course, the laboratory kits include a range of 20-70 different items. The Science Lab Assistant works closely with the faculty chairs of these departments in the creation and modification of the kit components, maintaining a quality product at the lowest possible cost to the students. During the past three years, approximately 3,000 kits were assembled and sold each year. Science Lab employees attend laboratory health and safety training to be in compliance with Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA).

- **Café@Rio Lab Programs**

As mentioned in Criterion 1.D.1, the Café@Rio is a teaching kitchen that serves students, faculty, staff, and the local community. The Sustainable Food Systems Program offers a living laboratory to teach students the principles of sustainability in the food industry. Hybrid classes utilize the Café kitchen for baking and cooking classes, and as students progress through the program, they complete fundamental culinary coursework and prepare for hands-on learning

experiences in the Café. The Garden@Rio is the second living laboratory on campus and is where students learn to “complete the food cycle” by planting, growing, harvesting and composting food. This program aligns with Rio Salado’s core value of sustainability.

Library Services

Because of Rio Salado’s nontraditional structure, Library Services are focused on reaching distance learning students online, and serving the College’s locations. The College has a small physical library at the Rio Tempe location, which forms part of a “Knowledge Commons” area also housing the Computer Lab and Tutoring Services. This library serves employees of Rio Salado and the District Office as well as students, and contains a collection of approximately 17,000 books and DVDs. Students and employees have access to the physical collections of all libraries within the MCCCDC through a shared online catalog and intra-district loan services, totaling 503,358 books and physical media. Interlibrary loan services are provided for retrieval of items from the MCCCDC libraries, or from libraries throughout the United States. Additionally, the Library has installed small collections of books and media at several of the College’s locations throughout the Valley, which are customized to the specific student populations served by the location (e.g., College Bridge Pathways, Veterans, Communitiversity programs), and location staff are trained in checking out materials and monitoring the collections.

Rio Salado’s four librarians include the Faculty Chair for Library Services who serves as the library director, student learning outcome coordinator for information literacy, and copyright officer; two residential faculty librarians who provide reference, instruction, and manage website functionality; and a Library Instructional Coordinator whose responsibilities include identifying and integrating library resources into online courses as part of the centralized course development and production process described above, and developing research guides for use across multiple disciplines. A Manager of Access Services is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the library, and three support staff handle circulation and technical services functions.

- **Online Library Use**

In addition to physical books and DVDs, The Rio Salado Online Library provides students and employees with access to approximately 75 databases of journal, magazine, and newspaper articles and media collections, and collections of ebooks containing approximately 125,000 volumes. As evidence of student usage of these resources, the library website was the sixth most-visited site on the entire College website in FY2014-15 with 129,284 page views, and has consistently ranked in the top 10 for the past five years. The single most-used area of the library website is the Databases page, with 138,311 page views in FY2014-15. This is appropriate as the subscription library databases (journals, newspapers, images, streaming films) are all accessed from this web page, and the data indicate that students are making most use of these paid resources vs. open web information. These data, used in tandem with usage statistics provided by the vendors, allow for a clear picture of the extent to which students are accessing subscription resources and also provide a mechanism for data-driven budget decisions. These numbers do not account for the 1,838 database articles and streaming films that are integrated into multiple sections of 236 distinct online courses, and are therefore accessed directly from the

course content and not through the library website. Overall, therefore, student usage of library database content is extremely high, and it can be inferred that the library's instruction program in the effective use of research and information resources (described below in Criterion 3.D.5) is contributing to this use.

Students who responded affirmatively to the *Survey of Online Student Engagement (SOSE)* that they had used library services (N=76), indicated a strong 92.1% agreement that they were very or somewhat satisfied with the service received.

- **Reference Services**

Reference services are provided in person and via telephone to students visiting or calling the library, but the College reaches the greatest percentage of students via the Ask a Librarian virtual reference chat service, which is supported by the MCCCCD for all the Maricopa Colleges. In FY2014-15 Rio's students accounted for 1,209 of the District total 7,974 chats, equating to the second-highest usage of the system across the District. Ask Service exit survey data for this period (N=93) had 90.3% of Rio students agreeing that "I would recommend this service to someone else," and a substantial majority indicating that the librarian fully understood their question (89.2%), and that they had learned something new (81.7%).

Library Services also manages the College's centralized copyright processes, described in Criterion 2.E.1.

Clinical Practice Sites

- **Dental Programs**

The Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting Programs Clinic contains 21 complete, functional treatment units for use during preclinical and clinical instruction, including state-of-the-art dental chairs, wall-mounted sinks, assistant stools, dental handpieces, radiographic equipment, sterilization equipment, and cabinetry. In addition, 12 laboratory workspaces provided on two 24-foot countertops are used for instruction in Dental Science courses. The building is fully ADA compliant, allowing disabled persons to be accommodated throughout the clinic and for all treatment procedures. The Faculty Chair for Dental Programs serves as the program director, and is responsible for overseeing and managing equipment needs and issues in conformance with current concepts of dental hygiene practice.

The Dental Programs are separately accredited by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation.

5.

Library Instruction Program

Rio Salado has a robust Information Literacy instruction program for students enrolled in classes in Dual Enrollment schools, as well as face-to-face classes offered at College locations. During FY2014-15, as part of a service standards initiative, 1,029 dual enrollment students participated in an assignment intended to measure their ability to correctly log in to the Rio Salado Library and locate a particular article after a library instruction session, using Dynamic Forms technology. A total of 80.7% of the students provided a URL demonstrating they were able to log in through the Rio Salado protocol, while over three quarters of the students provided a correct URL for the assignment article. While these data were considered extremely positive for the first administration of this assignment, refinements are being implemented to improve the process and template. Library instruction was provided to 1,451 students in 71 classes in FY2014-15.

A post-library instruction survey administered in FY2012-13 (N=508), had the vast majority of students reporting that they were either very confident or somewhat confident with using the skills that matched the five objectives of the session.

Tutorials and Research Guides

- **Tutorials**

The Library provides a number of How Do I? video tutorials designed to assist students with basic information such as logging in from home, printing ID/library cards, and the initial steps in searching for different types of materials, as well as tutorials teaching the use of some of the more frequently-used databases. These tutorials are updated each summer to ensure they are providing the most current information and content. In FY2014-15, the video tutorials received 18,347 page views from the library website.

- **Research Guides**

Research Guides assist students and faculty with comprehensive strategies and content for conducting the research process over a wide number of subject areas. The guides have been embedded in 196 distinct courses as of fall, 2015, and have been accessed a total of 46,330 times. Additionally, a series of guides aligning with student learning outcomes rubrics that the Assessment Team has established for measuring cross-college student learning outcomes (see Criterion 4.B.1) were developed during spring and summer, 2015. These guides have been embedded in Adjunct Faculty Development (AFD) modules to familiarize the adjunct faculty with use of the rubrics for grading assignments, and will be implemented in multiple courses across disciplines to provide students with just-in-time instruction in the tenets of critical thinking, information literacy, oral communication, reading, and writing.

As mentioned in Criterion 3.D.4, librarians are instrumental in assisting course developers with integrating library content and assignments requiring library research into online courses during the centralized course development process. College- and course-level measurement of student learning outcomes in information literacy will be described in Criterion 4.B.3.

Sources

- MCCCCD_2.8 Students w. Disabilities_3.D.1
- MCCCCD_Ask a Librarian_3.D.4
- MCCCCD_Placement Scores_3.D.2
- My Maricopa_ 3.D.1
- NCTA_3.D.1
- Rio_Academic Advisement_3.D.3
- Rio_Admissions_3.D.1
- Rio_ALMAP Final Report_3.D.2
- Rio_Career Services_3.D.1
- Rio_College Bridge Pathways_3.D.2
- Rio_Computer Labs_3.D.1
- Rio_Counseling Locations_3.D.1
- Rio_Counseling News_3.D.1
- Rio_Counseling_3.D.1
- Rio_Dental Clinic Floor Plan_3.D.4
- Rio_Dental Programs_3.D.4
- Rio_Disability Resources_3.D.1
- Rio_Employee Portal_3.D.4
- Rio_EP2_3.D.4
- Rio_Financial Aid_3.D.1
- Rio_HowDoI_3.D.5
- Rio_Instructional Helpdesk _3.D.1
- Rio_Learning Outcomes Guides_3.D.5
- Rio_Library Databases _3.D.4
- Rio_Library Instruction Survey_FY2012-13_3.D.5
- Rio_Library Subject Guides_3.D.5
- Rio_Library_3.D.4
- Rio_Placement Testing_3.D.2
- Rio_RioLearn _3.D.4
- Rio_RioPACE_3.D.3
- Rio_Start at Rio for Veterans_3.D.1
- Rio_Start Your Classes in RioLearn_3.D.2
- Rio_Student Orientation_3.D.2
- Rio_Sustainable Food Systems_3.D.4
- Rio_Technology Helpdesk_3.D.4
- Rio_Testing_3.D.1
- Rio_Tutoring_3.D.1
- Rio_Veterans Affairs_3.D.1
- RioCompass_3.D.3

3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

1.

Rio Salado College defines co-curricular programs as those directly contributing to student learning. Although limited participation is a function of Rio's dispersed student model, the College provides a number of programs for all types of learners, and respects their diverse needs.

Phi Theta Kappa

Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) is the international honor society for two-year colleges, and is the biggest honor society in the United States, with over 3.1 million members. PTK aims to recognize and encourage scholarship while also promoting leadership, service, and fellowship. Students who have completed 12 or more credits of 100- or 200-level college work at Rio Salado or another MCCCDC college, with a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher, are eligible for membership in Rio Salado's Alpha Theta Omicron chapter. The chapter is led by the Coordinator of Student Life and Leadership and the Faculty Chair for Counseling. On average, one in approximately 100 eligible students becomes an active member, totaling approximately 165 enrollees over the past two years. Alpha Theta Omicron has won a number of awards over the past three years, and the PTK Regional President was the keynote speaker when he graduated from Rio Salado in May, 2015.

Honors Program

The Honors Program provides intellectually stimulating learning opportunities for academically outstanding students. The program includes scholarships, distinguished multidisciplinary classes, project-based learning, the Honors Forum Lecture Series, and cultural opportunities including Symphony Connections and free admission to the Phoenix Art Museum.

Students who have completed 12 or more credits of 100- or 200 level college work at Rio Salado or another MCCCDC college with a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher are eligible to receive the Honors Achievement Award (a partial fee waiver). Presidents' Scholars receive a scholarship of

a dollar amount equal to fifteen credits of tuition. Rio has between 100 and 200 Honors students per year enrolled in specified honors courses which are designed to challenge the high achiever.

Recipients of the Presidents' Honors Scholarship and Honors Achievement Award are required to complete co-curricular activities designed to enrich and enhance the educational experience, and to submit a reflection paper. These activities include: academic lectures, volunteer hours (through a Rio club or activity or MCCCDC service learning community partner), cultural/arts (e.g., theater performances, museum visits, exhibits, arts events, or documentary film showings), campus involvement, academic involvement (such as voter registration drive, invited lectures), and other approved events.

National Society for Leadership and Success

The National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) is a leadership honor society with 472,947 members at 509 colleges nationwide. Rio Salado's chapter was established in fall, 2013. This organization helps students discover and achieve their goals through a leadership guidance process that includes lectures featuring prominent leaders, and small accountability groups geared to success-oriented individuals. The Rio chapter's vision is for students to build leadership skills while actively progressing towards their educational, career, and personal goals. In the first two years of operation, Rio's chapter has enrolled 282 general members, and honored 75 students as inducted members (via completion of a Leadership Training Day, three Speaker Broadcasts, and three Success Networking Team meetings).

ACE Puente (Youth ACE)

ACE (Achieving a College Education) Puente is Rio Salado College's Youth ACE scholarship program to assist at-risk high school students with getting a head start on college. The program was established in 2007 as an internal Puente (bridge) program following research that was conducted to determine effective mechanisms for reaching out to Hispanic high school students, identified by the College as an underserved student population. In 2009, as the result of the need to expand funding sources, the program transitioned into the Maricopa Community College ACE program structure, and extended to include all underserved high school student populations. The first ACE Puente formal cohort was enrolled in 2010 and graduated high school with a 97% graduation rate, while 91% of the 2011 cohort graduated high school in 2012. In 2013, the average GPA of Rio's ACE high school graduates was 3.43.

M.E.N.

Rio Salado has a chapter of the Male Empowerment Network (M.E.N.), an MCCCDC program designed to improve enrollment, retention, and degree completion or transfer rates of male students from various backgrounds. The chapter has a designated liaison, residential faculty representative, and advisor. The residential faculty representative is a strong advocate for underrepresented males of color, and received grant funds to present two learnshops geared towards Maricopa faculty, as described above in Criterion 3.B.5.

National Adult Education Honor Society

The National Adult Education Honor Society (NAEHS) recognizes adult education students who demonstrate dependable attendance, a cooperative attitude, and a strong work ethic. Rio Salado inducts approximately 25 students from Adult Basic Education programs into the NAEHS per year.

The Student Public Policy Forum

The Student Public Policy Forum (SPPF) is an academic program that provides an overview of local, state, and national public policy making, and promotes citizen influence and involvement. SPPF gives students an up-close experience of how government works and may culminate in travel to Washington, D.C., where students have the opportunity to lobby members of Congress on higher education policy issues. SPPF is a program of the MCCCDC, and typically has an enrollment of 16-20 students from the different Maricopa colleges. Rio Salado has averaged between two and three student participants over the past three years.

Noyce Scholars

Noyce Scholars are recipients of a National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Scholarship Grant for its SMILE (Science and Math Innovative Learning Environments) for Encore Careers in Education program. The grant awards a \$16,500 stipend for professionals who already possess a Bachelor's degree and have industry experience in the STEM fields, and who are transitioning into teaching careers for grades 7-12. As of fall, 2015, 30 students have been admitted into the Noyce Scholars program, of whom 12 have completed, and eight of these completers have received full-time math or science teaching contracts.

Student learning outcomes data from some of these co-curricular cohorts is included in the College's holistic assessment of student learning outcomes, which is detailed in Criterion 4.B.2.

2.

Research

- **Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework (PAR)**

Rio Salado is a founding member of PAR, a collaborative, multi-institutional data-mining project that brings together two-year, four-year, public, proprietary, and nontraditional institutions aimed at identifying points of student attrition in online U.S. higher education. Partners review predictive models for actionable data and return on investment, linking interventions to student success and cost analyses.

- **Civitas**

In fall, 2015, College administration, faculty and staff began implementation of a partnership with Civitas, employing data-informed methodologies to increase student persistence and completion in conformance with Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan.

Community Engagement

Rio Salado includes community-based learning amongst the purposes listed in its mission documents. Accordingly, students have the opportunity to participate in several community engagement activities as part of their educational experience at the College.

- **Phi Theta Kappa**

Students in Rio Salado's PTK chapter participate in community service projects, such as an August, 2015 donation drive for the homeless, which collected personal hygiene items to distribute to homeless individuals. Also, PTK conducts an annual Honors-In-Action Project based on a theme tied in with a community project. For example, in 2014 students from the Rio Salado chapter sponsored and co-hosted a Technology and Science Discovery Day at the Tempe Public Library focusing on why women are under-represented in these fields, with activities geared towards youth ages 11-17.

- **Honors Program**

As mentioned above, Honors recipients of the Presidents' Honors Scholarship and Honors Achievement Award are required to participate in co-curricular activities, and many choose community service projects. In spring, 2015, examples included volunteer work at food banks, homeless shelters, Phoenix Children's Hospital Cancer Ward, a crisis response center, and a low income assistance center, amongst others.

- **National Society of Leadership and Success**

In FY2014-15, 13 students received the National Engaged Leader Award, which required completion of additional requirements that included community service. Students volunteered at the Blinded Veterans' Association, the public library, Hospice of the Valley, the Arizona Children's Association, Boy Scouts, and others.

- **The Democracy Commitment**

Rio Salado participates in the Democracy Commitment, a national initiative that encourages community colleges across the country to engage students in civic learning and democratic practices. Examples of civic activities include Phi Theta Kappa and the Student Public Policy Forum (described above), the Arizona Town Hall, and Sustainability Programs.

- **Chancellor's Civic Leadership Medallion**

The objective of the Chancellor's Civic Leadership Medallion is to highlight and promote student accomplishments related to civic participation and leadership as a central goal and

function of higher education. To earn this award, a student must accumulate 100 points from qualifying civic leadership activities. Rio Salado has had four students earn the award in its first two years offered.

Community Engagement Grants

- **Insurance Development Program (The Griffith Insurance Education Foundation)**

This \$7,000 grant assisted with the accelerated creation of a CCL and an AAS in Insurance Studies, along with development of a university transfer program to a four-year degree. The programs launched in fall, 2015.

- **Arizona Statewide Summit on Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship)**

The College received a grant of \$5,500 is to hold an Arizona NACCE entrepreneurial summit in November, 2013, which included all Arizona community colleges as well as significant statewide economic development groups from both the private and public sectors. Over 80 attendees from throughout Arizona participated in discussions based on the Virtual Incubation Network (VIN) Toolkit which was developed by a collaboration of 11 community colleges from across the nation, including Rio Salado.

- **Community Intergenerational Sustainability Program (City of Surprise)**

This grant allowed Rio Salado to offer a series of three non-credit classes in the science of food and nutrition, gardening techniques, and healthful cooking. Classes were held as part of the RISE Learning for Life Program at the Rio Salado Lifelong Learning Center (described in Criterion 1.C.2), and were extremely well-received, generating wait-lists for enrollment. As a result, a second series was offered during FY2014-15.

Service Learning

The MCCCDCD defines service learning as “a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service with academic learning through guided reflection.” Students have opportunities for community service as part of mediated course work. Rio Salado provides opportunities for service learning in three of its programs:

- **Dental Programs Service Hours**

Rio Salado’s Dental Assisting program students are required to volunteer at one community service event, while Dental Hygiene Program students are required to complete 40 hours of community service as part of program requirements. Dental Hygiene students also complete external rotations known as clinical enrichment experiences, in venues such as CASS Dental Clinic and Desert Mission Children's Clinic serving the homeless and disadvantaged, the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health special needs clinic, and St. Joseph's Hospital. As noted in Criterion 1.D.1, the Rio Salado Dental Clinic hosted two children’s dental wellness events in

summer, 2015, in coordination with Give Kid's A Smile, providing over \$23,000 worth of free dental care.

- **Paralegal Program Service Hours**

Rio Salado's Paralegal Program offers internship opportunities involving both education and practical work experience, requiring accrual of a minimum 160 hours during each semester. The internship lead instructor coordinates the process with students and assists in placement of interns.

- **Post-Baccalaureate Educator Preparation Field Experience**

Most courses in the EDU program require a field experience in a pre-K through 12 classroom. Depending on the course, elements may include classroom observation and personal reflection, tutoring, personal reflection, or teaching a class (beyond Level I courses).

Economic Development Grant

- **National Information, Security, & Geospatial Technology Consortium (U.S. Department of Labor)**

Rio Salado was one of five MCCCCD entities awarded a US Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant between 2011 and 2015 in the amount of \$2,772,240 to support Information Technology career training. Rio partnered with four MCCCCD colleges to offer programs in networking, mobile applications, cyber security and IT entrepreneurship to 631 students, including 105 veterans. Grant funds were used to enhance or redesign over 70 courses, incorporating virtual labs and other technologies. Participants were also provided with success coaches and received additional assistance with job placement. As of late fall, 2015, student participants have earned 86 associate degrees and 244 certificates.

Sources

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- CASS Dental Clinic_3.E.2
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- Civitas_3.E.2
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- MCCCCD_Medallion_3.E.2
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- MCCCCD_Service Learning_3.E.2
- NACCE Rio Salado Summit_3.E.2
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- PTK Awards_3.E.1
- Rio_ACE Puente_3.E.1
- Rio_Democracy Commitment_3.E.2
- Rio_Honors Program_3.E.1
- Rio_HonorsInAction.Flier.STEM_3.E.2
- Rio_M.E.N. Chapter_3.E.1
- Rio_Non-credit food classes_3.E.2
- Rio_Noyce Scholars Program_3.E.1
- Rio_NSLS_3.E.1
- Rio_Paralegal Internship Hosts_3.E.2
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- Rio_Phi Theta Kappa_3.E.1
- Rio_Post-Bac_Field Exp.Overview_3.E.2
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- VINToolkit_3.E.2

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

Consideration of the documentation provided in support of Criterion Three highlights the following evidence:

- A focus on high-quality education across all instructional modalities is a hallmark of Rio Salado College.
- Faculty qualifications are consistent for all courses and programs, including dual enrollment and Educational Service Partnerships.
- Courses, programs, and degrees are well-articulated internally, as well as with external partners. They are responsive to, and aligned with, student needs and the College mission.
- Rio Salado has a unique faculty model that is ideally suited to its nontraditional structure.
- A comprehensive network of services, offered in multiple modalities and locations, supports students and student learning.
- Rio Salado recognizes that participation in co-curricular activities enriches the educational experience of its students, and is actively investigating options for higher participation in these activities, given the geographic dispersion of its student body.
- The embedded interim report on the Educational Service Partnership program provides detailed evidence of the College's control of partnership curriculum, and required credentials and evaluation of adjunct faculty members.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

1.

Rio Salado's Program Review model and processes allow the College to make an in-depth examination of its programs, incorporating both curricular and co-curricular components, to ensure that the program is effective, relevant, and transforms the learning of Rio Salado students. The College defines a program as "a set of college-level courses resulting in a certificate or degree" which includes General Education. Faculty chairs are responsible for conducting program reviews with the support of Institutional Research. A structured template format contains foundational components, such as goals and learning outcomes for the program, assessment of college-wide student learning outcomes, strategies used to increase student learning, and program resources. The template questions align with available college data supporting the components. Depending on the program, additional elements may also be

included, such as external accreditations. Final program reviews receive feedback from the Learning Assessment Team, and executive summaries are posted to the College's Assessment website (see Criterion 4.B.1). During FY2014-15, eight program reviews were initiated, which will be finalized during fall, 2015. Four more programs are scheduled to begin the review process during FY2015-16, with additional programs systemically added each year.

2.

Credit for Prior Learning

Rio Salado adheres to the Chancellor's Administrative Regulation 2.2.4 Credit for Prior Learning, which allows the College to award up to 30 hours of prior learning credit in accordance with assessment methods recommended by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the American Council on Education (ACE): Articulated Programs, Credit by Evaluation, or College-Level Equivalency Examinations. In accordance with District policy, Rio Salado conducts credit for prior learning evaluation in a variety of ways, including: National Standardized Tests, such as College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and DSST (formerly Dantes); departmental credit by evaluation, credit by examination, portfolio assessment, and professional licenses and certifications.

Business and Industry Training Program Credit Evaluation

The process for evaluating and awarding credit for prior learning in these programs is detailed in the ESP interim report in Criterion 3.A.3.

3.

Rio Salado's Academic Advisement team evaluates transfer credit for equivalency with Rio's courses. Students submit a transcript evaluation form to begin the process for courses completed at U.S. regionally-accredited colleges and universities, and/or ACE-evaluated programs and credits. These data are then uploaded to the student's RioCompass portal (described in Criterion 3.D.3), where staff create checklists that indicate how the student's prior coursework has been applied to the program of study.

4.

Dual Enrollment Infrastructure

Rio Salado College has over 20 years' experience offering Dual Enrollment courses and is the only community college in Arizona that is nationally accredited by the National Alliance of

Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). With its national accreditation, Rio Salado College Dual Enrollment credits transfer to all Arizona public colleges and universities, and articulation agreements are in place with a variety of colleges outside Arizona. As mentioned in Criterion 3.A.3, during FY2014-15 Rio Salado's Dual Enrollment program offered 138 different courses at 41 high schools throughout Maricopa County, and over 7,100 students took more than 19,000 classes, earning more than 62,000 college credits.

Dual Enrollment students are required to meet standard college under-18 admission requirements, and to take the ACCUPLACER test for enrollment in English, Reading and Math. Enrollment in language courses requires either ACCUPLACER or departmental approval.

Rio Salado maintains a Dual Enrollment Office with a comprehensive infrastructure in place to support the dual enrollment school locations. The Director of Community Partnership Programs and three Dual Enrollment Coordinators meet regularly with designated dual liaisons at each high school to collect registration paperwork, disseminate information, resolve student issues, and discuss potential new dual courses and instructors, and maintain a telephone hotline that students, parents, and high school staff members can call with questions or concerns. Members of the dual team also meet with the administrators at the high school and school district level, to request feedback on quality of service and explore new ideas for future dual offerings.

Dual Enrollment Faculty Qualifications

As indicated in Criterion 3.A.1, instructors who teach dual enrollment classes must meet the same qualifications as the College faculty, and they teach to the same competencies, while the Maricopa District Dual Enrollment Catalog governs which courses may be offered in a dual setting. Rio faculty chairs oversee all academic aspects of the dual enrollment program including instructor qualification, instructor evaluation, prerequisite enforcement, and textbook selection. Continuing education for dual instructors includes the annual Rio Salado Dual Enrollment Conference, described in Criterion 3.C.4.

Dual Enrollment Student Access to Learning Resources

In addition to online library access commensurate with all other Rio students, the Instruction Librarian provides an orientation to the College's online library resources and a formal program of face-to-face library instruction to students at dual enrollment location schools as described in Criterion 3.D. In addition, the Ask a Librarian 24x7 live chat service is available to students at all times and anecdotal evidence (research paper topics) indicates that dual enrollment students take advantage of this service as a result of receiving their in-class library instruction.

Dual Enrollment Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Dual Enrollment students are included in college-wide student learning outcomes assessment via the ETS Proficiency Profile, and data indicate that this cohort consistently demonstrates higher performance on the ETS exam compared with incoming freshmen nationally. Dual students averaged a mean total score of 453 on the long version of the exam (spring, 2012, N = 52), which

is 31 points higher than the ETS incoming freshman cohort nationally. The College adopted the shorter version of the ETS Proficiency Profile and administered the exam to 30 Dual Enrollment students in spring, 2015. Although the sample size was not adequate for reliable results, the mean score (439) trended higher than the ETS Cohort by 16 points.

NACEP Accreditation Data

To maintain accreditation of the dual enrollment program, NACEP requires partnership colleges to administer surveys to alumni, instructors, counselors, and principals, following a prescribed schedule and required questions. December, 2013 data (the latest available) indicate that, on average, alumni (N = 170) transferred 14.0 college credits from Rio Dual Enrollment courses. Of the alumni who attended a two-year college after graduating from high school, 88% indicated that Rio dual enrollment courses were at least as challenging as college courses. Additionally, 92% of instructors (N = 172) and 88% of counselors (N = 17) agreed that students taking Rio dual enrollment courses participate in rigorous learning.

5.

Rio Salado College maintains specialized accreditation for the following programs:

- **Addictions and Substance Use Disorders**—National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission (NASAC)
- **Dual Enrollment**—National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). As indicated above, Rio Salado has the only NACEP-accredited Dual Enrollment Program in the State of Arizona.
- **Dental Hygiene and Clinical Dental Assisting**—Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)
- **Spanish Medical Interpretation**—Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI)
- **Teacher Education Programs**—Arizona Department of Education

6.

Student Success in the Workplace

- **Educational Service Partnerships**

A strength of the ESP program (described in the interim report in Criterion 3.A.3) is the strong link to workforce partners and employment. A key indirect indicator of student achievement is post-completion employment, or the frequency of ESP program students who are placed in related positions upon completion of each program. Post-completion employment for ESP

program graduates is close to 100%, as confirmed by partner Advisory Councils. This is testimony to the value of these programs to the workforce, as well as an indicator of student achievement. Further, Rio's Law Enforcement Technology partnership program was recognized as the #1 U.S. School for preparing correctional officers by CorrectionalOfficer.org in June, 2015.

- **Dental Hygiene Program**

The District conducted a survey of dentists in Maricopa County in 2014. Rio graduates fared well as assessed by their employers, with 77% of all responses indicating that Rio graduates were above average in their skills and abilities.

- **Teacher Education Program**

The Teacher Education program is designed to prepare students for teacher certification and endorsement from the Arizona Department of Education. Success of graduates can be measured in two ways: student scores on AEPA/NES exams, which are required by the State prior to certification being granted, and job placement rates.

- On the AEPA/NES exams, 98% of all program completers in FY2014 and 2015 successfully passed the assessment. Of these students, over 80% passed the assessment on the first attempt.
- For those students who disclosed their employment status, the job placement rate was approximately 70%.

The program's "Grow Your Own Teachers Certification Pathways" was recognized as an exemplary National Commitment to Action by the White House in fall, 2015.

Sources

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- Arizona Department of Education _4.A.5
- CAEL_4.A.2
- CODA _4.A.5
- DH Employer Survey 2015_ Rio Grads_4.A.6
- DH Employer Survey 2015_4.A.6
- DOE First in the World Grant_4.A.1
- E.E. Accreditation Program_4.A.5
- MCCCDC_2.2.4 CPL_4.A.2
- MCCCDC_D.E.Course Catalog_4.A.4
- NACEP_4.A.5
- NASAC_4.A.5
- Rio_Credit for Prior Learning_4.A.2

- Rio_Dual Enrollment_4.A.4
- Rio_LET Award_4.A.6
- Rio_Program Review Model_4.A.1
- Rio_Program Review Questions_4.A.1
- Rio_Program Review SP_4 A 1
- Rio_Transcript Evaluation Form_4.A.3
- Teacher Ed_Nat.Commitment_4.A.6

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

1.

As mentioned in Criterion 3.B.2, Rio Salado has established the following College-wide outcomes for assessment of student learning across the curriculum.

- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Oral Communication
- Reading
- Writing

The rubrics to assess levels of student performance for these outcomes are posted on the College's public Assessment website. In addition to applying standardized rubrics to course-level assessments, Rio Salado administers the nationally-normed ETS Proficiency Profile to assess student performance on these cross-college outcomes and compare them with peer institutions. Results from course-level assessments, ETS administrations, and other outcomes work is also posted to the Assessment website in the form of annual assessment reports (see Criterion 4.B.2 below).

Strategic Planning Goal 1: Teaching and Learning

Rio Salado's strategic planning processes will be discussed in Criterion 5. Under Goal 1 (Teaching and Learning) of the College Strategic Plan, a College Action Plan (CAP) is focused on annual assessment of student learning outcomes. Using data from over 750,000 assessments, course data from multiple courses across disciplines were analyzed as a component of this CAP with the target that 80% of students perform at college level (which has been established as earning 70% or better) in the cross-college student learning outcomes listed above. Over 80% of students performed at college level for all of these learning outcomes.

2.

Rio Salado's Assessment Philosophy is posted on the College's public Assessment website, and in the College Catalog.

The Learning Assessment Team

The Learning Assessment Team includes representation from faculty chairs (who serve as Assessment Coordinators for the college-wide student learning outcomes), senior academic administrators, and Institutional Research personnel, and has responsibility for coordinating all aspects of student learning assessment. The team issues an annual Assessment of Student Learning Report detailing results of student learning outcomes assessment at the institutional- and course levels, identifies best practices, and indicates areas for improvement and future growth. The report is shared with College employees, including several hundred adjunct faculty members at the spring All-Faculty Assessment and Learning Experience. Executive summaries of the reports from the past 15 years are also publicly available on the College's Assessment website, ensuring transparency for all stakeholders.

ETS Proficiency Profile

The ETS Proficiency Profile is an assessment designed to measure academic competence in four core skill areas that align with three of the college-wide student learning outcomes: critical thinking, reading, and writing, as well as mathematics. Rio Salado has administered the assessment six times since 2006, with the most recent administration in 2015, at which time information literacy questions were added as well. Rio's mean total scores have been consistently and significantly higher than the ETS comparative cohort (Total Mean = 435).

Co-curricular Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Course-level data from the 750,000 student assessments referenced above were further analyzed to determine performance by students involved in various Rio Salado co-curricular activities (Honors, Phi Theta Kappa, Adult ACE, ACE Puente, and the National Society for Leadership and Success). The findings were impressive, and showed that a greater percentage of co-curricular students performed at college level for all five cross-college student learning outcomes as compared with the general student body, ranging from 87% to 90% of co-curricular students.

3.

Rio Salado has a "systems" culture based in the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), and is accustomed to using a TQM tool, the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, to collect data, assess outcomes, and implement improvements based on the data. This culture of assessment and improvement will be explained further in Criterion 5.C.2.

Course-Level PDCA Cycles

In addition to institution-level data collected for the college-wide student learning outcomes, these outcomes have been measured at the course level over a number of PDCA cycles in the past decade. As an example, in FY2013-14, student performance in critical thinking and writing on a focal assignment in a number of high-enrollment general education courses was measured both before and after the implementation of the GEAR guided feedback tool for instructors (see the RioAchieve Grant in Criterion 4.C.3 below for more context). The PDCA cycle data were then analyzed by Institutional Research, and reviewed by the faculty chairs to determine whether this intervention had resulted in improvements, and to plan for next steps.

For FY2015-16, faculty chairs are reviewing data from the course-level analysis conducted in fall, 2015 (see Criterion 4.B.1 above) in order to identify courses needing intervention for the five college-wide student learning outcomes. New PDCA cycles will then be implemented at the course level.

Information Literacy Assessment—a PDCA Cycle Case Study

Between 2010 and 2014, a systemic and intentional Plan-Do-Check-Act improvement cycle was conducted to assess student competence in online information literacy at the college-, department-, and course-levels. The Research Readiness Self-Assessment (RRSA) was administered in 2010, data were analyzed, and a comprehensive college-wide intervention plan was established with the cooperation of all faculty chairs (PLAN phase). Specific interventions were implemented in over 30 courses across 20 different disciplines, along with general interventions in the online syllabi of all online courses (DO phase). During the CHECK phase, the RRSA was administered again to gauge effectiveness of these interventions. Data indicated improvement in all assessed categories, with a 13.62% gain in the percentage of students performing at college level (70% or better) in 2014. National comparative data also showed that Rio Salado's students performed almost 16% points above average overall performance across sampled colleges. During the ACT phase, these interventions were accepted as permanent improvements to increase successful outcomes in students' online information literacy skills. The full report was posted online, and also reported in RioNews, thereby sharing these assessment data with all College stakeholders. This years-long, collaborative initiative serves as a prime example of Rio Salado's approach to using information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

As mentioned above, beginning in 2015, information literacy student learning outcomes assessment at the college level was incorporated into the ETS Proficiency Profile, while course level assessment forms part of the Instruction Librarian's service standards initiative referenced in Criterion 3.D.5.

4.

Collaborative Assessment Processes

Within the framework of Rio's unique faculty model (described in Criterion 3.C.1), faculty chairs and administrators have implemented collaborative and integrated processes for assessment of student learning at the college-, program-, and course levels. Maintaining a small cohort of residential faculty who serve as chairs and represent multiple disciplines, and who meet biweekly, facilitates effective interdisciplinary decision-making. Collaborative planning activities ensure academic integrity and promote curricular coherence. Faculty chairs are able to discuss, plan, design, and implement common initiatives to assess and improve student learning. Examples of these initiatives include the college-wide student learning outcomes referenced above, which were chosen as a result of a deliberate process of shared governance including faculty, administration, and co-curricular leadership. From there, faculty members collaborated in the development of the standardized and tested rubrics that could be applied across various disciplines. Thus, student learning outcome data can be extracted and analyzed at the course, discipline, department, program, and college levels, as demonstrated by the examples in Criteria 4.B.2 and 4.B.3 above. These data are then used to inform curricular modifications and/or instructional interventions.

Annual All-Faculty Assessment Meetings

Rio Salado holds an All-Faculty Assessment and Learning Experience for adjunct faculty each year, which includes a general assembly session featuring an assessment update from the Vice-President of Academic Affairs, and data updates on college-level assessment of student learning outcomes. The general session is followed by discipline-specific discussion of assessment content during individual department meetings.

RioLogs

Rio Learning Outcomes Grants (RioLogs) provide a mechanism and the resources to support faculty chairs in developing student learning outcomes-based initiatives, directly linked to assessment results data. The instructional initiatives or projects proposed for RioLog funding require the involvement of adjunct faculty members.

Institutional Research

Rio Salado College's Institutional Research (IR) Department plays an integral role in the College's efforts to assess student learning. With representation on the Assessment Team, IR works with faculty chairs and college administrators on systemic efforts towards effective assessment. The IR Department collects and reports on student learning outcomes at the course level, administers annual assessments of student learning outcomes, and provides substantial data for program review.

Sources

- Rio Assessment Philosophy_4.B.2
- Rio_AFM Agenda Fall 2014_4.B.4
- Rio_Assessment Website_4.B.1

- Rio_AssessmentReport_2013-14_4 B 2
- Rio_Co-Curricular SLO Assessment Data_4.B.2
- Rio_Course Level PDCA__4.B.3
- Rio_Critical Thinking Rubric_4.B.1
- Rio_ETS Trended Analysis _4.B.2
- Rio_Goal 1 CAP_4.B.1
- Rio_Information Literacy Rubric_4.B.1
- Rio_Institutional Effectiveness_4.B.4
- Rio_Oral Communication Rubric_4.B.1
- Rio_PDCA Cycle_4.B.3
- Rio_Reading Rubric_4.B.1
- Rio_RRSA Article 4.B.3
- Rio_SLO Assessment Data_4.B.1
- Rio_Writing Rubric_4.B.1
- RioLog Examples_4.B.4
- RRSA Report 2010 to 2014_4.B.3
- RRSA_4.B.3

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

- 1.

Strategic Plan Goal 2: Student Success

Rio Salado's Strategic Plan and its alignment structure of goals, college action plans (CAPs), and departmental action plans (DAPs), will be described in detail in Criterion 5. Goal 2 of the Plan covers student success, with a CAP focused on completion of student goals. In 2014, a pilot study was conducted to identify and contact students who had completed or almost completed all requirements for one of five specified certificates, but had not applied to graduate, in order to inform and assist students towards completing a certificate. Completion and enrollment rates of pilot students were measured against a baseline group of students. The findings indicated positive traction; for students who had completed their course requirements, the pilot group earned 15% more certificates than the baseline group (56% compared to 40%). The pilot was extended to 2015 to test implementation efficiencies and determine if the process was scalable and sustainable across certificate programs. Although the 2015 results were positive at the program level, with a 12.7% gain in certificates earned for the Organizational Leadership Certificate, the effect at the institutional level (.17% gain in completed certificates) was nominal. These pilots can help inform future decisions about automating efforts to support student success and institutional persistence and completion goals.

In alignment with Goal 2, Rio Salado received a highly-competitive \$2.6 million DOE First in the World Grant in fall, 2015. Grant work will focus on success of Pell-eligible, degree-seeking

students by pairing general education courses, a student success seminar, and success coaches utilizing an adaptive learning platform.

Student Enrollment Management (SEM)

During FY2014-15, Rio Salado formed a cross-functional Student Enrollment Management (SEM) Committee with members representing academic affairs, student affairs, and business operations. The committee developed a nascent one-year SEM plan aligned with the District's SEM plan and Rio Salado's strategic plan. Student retention, persistence, and completion rates were key elements of defining and evaluating the plan. In addition to articulating strategies as actionable projects for the first year, the committee conducted internal scans exploring existing practices that bolster student retention, persistence, and completion at the program- and service unit levels. Having met the goal of creating, disseminating, and implementing a SEM plan, the committee is evaluating the goals and strategies to inform the plan's second version, a two-year SEM plan for 2015-2017.

RioAchieve Grant

This grant, which has as its goal the increase of degree completion to 50%, will be described in detail below in Criterion 4.C.3.

Higher Learning Commission Persistence and Completion Academy Experience

Rio Salado is currently investigating application to the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy Experience for a potential fall, 2016 cohort. A leadership team comprising senior administrators and faculty chairs is discussing and exploring the benefits this experience would bring to the College's ongoing efforts to improve student completion. Since Rio has a robust infrastructure of college-wide assessment and of collecting data to make meaningful improvements, the likelihood is that the College would consider the Project Development Track to be the most valuable. A decision will be made in spring, 2016, which would best line up with Rio Salado's selection of a Quality Initiative to meet ongoing Open Pathway requirements.

2.

Completion and Persistence Data

Over the past six years, Rio Salado's completions in Associate Degrees, Academic Certificates, and Certificates of Completion all show year-to-year increases, with the total awards for all categories as follows:

- - FY2009-10: 2106
 - FY2010-11: 3510
 - FY2011-12: 4404

- FY2012-13: 4839
- FY2013-14: 5073
- FY2014-15: 5534

During FY2014-15, Rio Salado awarded 676 Associate Degrees, an increase of 2.4% from the prior year, and an increase of 40% since FY2010-11. During the same year, Rio Salado awarded 4,858 Certificates of Completion and Academic Certificates, representing an increase of 10.1% from the previous year and 61% since FY 2010-2011. It should be noted that this increase in awards granted has occurred concurrently with a decline in enrollment.

Rio Salado has ranked nationally in the top six producers of one-year certificates in 10 of the past 11 years, ranking fourth in 2015.

Program Review Data

Through the program review model described in Criterion 4.A.1, Institutional Research pulls comprehensive data on course persistence, term-to-term persistence, year-to-year persistence, and award completion rates for each program undergoing review. The data are disaggregated and analyzed by Certificates of Completion and Associate Degrees and include three, four, or five years of trended results.

Persistence and Completion Reporting

As part of evaluating the RioAchieve Wave iiiB grant, the Institutional Research Department provides a biannual report to the RioAchieve leadership team. Data include course persistence, term-to-term persistence, year-to-year persistence, and completion rates. Results are compared to a historical cohort of Rio students, created using the same criteria as the RioAchieve students, to inform the success of the RioAchieve model. The RioAchieve data are detailed in Criterion 4.C.3 below.

3.

In keeping with the College's core value of Relentless Improvement, Rio Salado has a number of different initiatives underway to make data-informed improvements in student retention, persistence, and completion.

Program Review and Program Advisory Committees

Rio Salado's comprehensive and systemic program review process, which yields actionable data and is part of a cycle of continuous improvement, was described in Criterion 4.A.1. Program Advisory Committees, referenced in Criterion 3.A.1, also assist the College in ensuring the continuous currency and relevancy of occupational program curriculum.

RioAchieve: All Roads Lead to Student Success at Rio Salado College (Next Generation Learning Challenges)

The RioAchieve Wave iiiB grant was funded by a three-year \$970,000 Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) grant. NGLC is a partnership led by EDUCAUSE and primarily funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. RioAchieve was designed to target five specific interventions that supported student success, retention, and completion, delivered to 5,000 program-seeking students who are new to college. As of September, 2015, semester-to-semester persistence rates are 7% higher for the RioAchieve cohort (39%, N = 3,483) compared to the historical cohort (32%, N = 4,154). Similarly, year-to-year retention rates are 5% higher for the RioAchieve cohort (24%) compared to the historical cohort (19%). Completion rates show promise; the fall, 2013 cohort of RioAchieve students (N = 1,076) have an Associate Degree completion rate of 1.9% after 4 semesters. This is slightly higher compared to the historical cohort's completion rate after 8 semesters (1.5%). Additionally, data are explored for trends within the RioAchieve cohorts that may inform the collection of interventions implemented.

Adaptive Learning Market Acceleration Grant (ALMAP)

As mentioned in Criterion 3.D.2, this grant was funded to expedite transition to college-level outcomes for developmental learners, within a personalized and accelerated timeline.

In November, 2014, Mr. Bill Gates and other leaders from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation visited Rio Salado for a progress report on these programs and the College's student success efforts.

The Arizona Center for Early Childhood Management (AZCECM)

Rio Salado's Early Childhood Education Program formed the grant-funded AZCECM as a coaching project designed to support 30 protégés (students) annually in reaching their professional development goals.

EDU Student Success Coaching Programs

Rio Salado's Teacher-In-Residence Intern Program, approved by the Arizona Department of Education, allows students who already hold a bachelor's degree to receive employment in a classroom while simultaneously completing their education coursework toward certification. Because failure to make adequate academic progress can result in the intern candidate's removal from the program and loss of teaching position, identified students are mentored by a success coach, who initiates weekly or bi-weekly contact to offer assistance, and monitors whether the student is on track with student teaching activities.

4.

MCCCD Metrics

The MCCCDC Governing Board has established 51 metrics that it looks at annually to determine the state of the District in the context of its four outcomes. These metrics include course success rates, student persistence rates, graduation rates, transfer rates, and workforce preparation. Rio Salado submits an annual report to the District detailing accomplishments and future plans in alignment with these metrics.

Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA)

As mandated by federal regulation, Rio Salado participates in IPEDS data collection and reporting. In the 2014 IPEDS data submission, the First-time, Full-time Student Cohort, upon which most IPEDS data relies, represented approximately 1% of the College's fall student population. As this population is unrepresentative of Rio's total student body, the College has sought out other methods for collecting and reporting on student outcomes. For the past two years, Rio Salado has participated in the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) established by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC). This framework looks at similar student outcomes as IPEDS, using six different cohorts that are a better representation of the Rio student body. It provides greater visibility into student success at Rio, and provides the opportunity to benchmark Rio Salado student outcomes against national trends.

Sources

- AZCEM_4.C.3
- DOE First in the World Grant_4.C.1
- IPEDS compared to VFA_2015_4.C.4
- One-Year Certificates_CC week_4.C.2
- Rio Year-End Report_2014-2015_4.C.4
- Rio_Completion Pilot Study_2014_4.C.1
- Rio_Completion Study_2015_4.C.1
- Rio_Degrees + Certificates_4.C.2
- Rio_Early Childhood_4.C.3
- Rio_Gates Visit_4.C.3
- Rio_SEM_4.C.1
- Rio_Teacher-in-Residence Programs_4.C.3
- RioAchieve Biannual Report_4.C.2
- RioAchieve_4.C.3
- VFA Public Outcomes Report _2015_4.C.4

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Consideration of the documentation provided in support of Criterion Four highlights the following evidence:

- Rio Salado has a well-developed, consistent process for conducting formal, regular program review.
- The College's dual enrollment program is NACEP-accredited, and instructors meet the same hiring and evaluation criteria as all College faculty, and teach to the same course competencies.
- Assessment of student learning outcomes is faculty-driven, and measured at the college-, program-, and course levels through administration of nationally-normed instruments and ongoing, data-informed, improvement cycles.
- Grant-funded initiatives are underway to increase student success, retention, and completion rates, and initial results have proven positive.
- While the College is proud of the growth in certificate completion, vigorous efforts are underway to increase retention and persistence for degree-seekers.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

1.

Fiscal Resources

MCCCD uses the fund accounting financial structure to manage its resources and is guided by accounting principles as defined by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB). The adopted FY2015-16 budget for MCCCD is \$1.5 billion, which represents a decrease of \$213 million or 12.51% as compared to FY2014-15.

- **Unrestricted General Fund (Fund 1)**

Fund 1 is the main operating fund for the District. For FY2015-16, the District general fund amounts to \$731,059,890. This includes college and District Office operational funds including salaries and benefits of most faculty and staff, supplies and materials, fixed charges, communications, utilities, travel, and transfers.

- **Auxiliary Fund (Fund 2)**

For the District, Fund 2 totals \$147,360,247. This fund includes other auxiliary programs such as scholarship support, non-credit programs, operations that are generally self-supporting, and course fees. The self-supporting operations include the bookstores, food services, and other education-related services.

- **Restricted Fund (Fund 3)**

The District's Restricted Fund budget for FY2015-16 is \$274,420,899. These funds often come from grants (e.g., Title V, Title III, Carl Perkins), contracts, student financial aid, and Proposition 301 (a state sales tax that supports workforce development programs).

- **Plant Fund (Fund 7)**

The District's capital fund totals \$336,619,901 for FY2015-16. These funds are used for new construction, major remodeling, major maintenance, land purchases, and capital equipment. During FY2008-09, the legislature eliminated capital state aid. Therefore, most of the resources for this fund are provided by proceeds from the 2004 General Obligation Bonds, secondary property taxes, and balance carryforward from prior years.

The Financial Advisory Council (FAC) supervises and coordinates all District-wide budgeting processes. It is a recommending body to the Chancellor's Executive Council (CEC) regarding budget matters. The CEC then brings recommendations to the Chancellor, who presents the final recommendations regarding the budget, tuition, and fees to the Governing Board. Distribution of revenue to the colleges is formula-based, through the provision of Fund 1, Fund 2, and Fund 7 allocations.

Centralized support and technical assistance are provided to all MCCCDC colleges by the District Business Services division. Services include accounting, auditing (external and internal), purchasing, surplus and auxiliary services, accounts payable, payroll, grants administration, and budgeting.

Human Resources

- **The Rio Salado Employee Model**

At Rio Salado's inception, Governing Board decree established that the College would have a limited number of full-time faculty. The faculty model was detailed in Criterion 3.C.1. Therefore, full-time employees fall primarily in the areas of administration and support.

- **Hiring Qualifications and Processes**

Rio Salado abides by MCCCDC guidelines which follow Federal regulations and define staffing, hiring qualifications, and hiring processes for each employee group. The Rio Salado Human Resources Department conducts all full-time hiring functions in accordance with the guidelines set by the District Office. Administrators, managers, and faculty serve as chairs of hiring committees and are experts in the required qualifications needed from applicants, while HR

personnel provide guidance throughout the advertising, interviewing, and hiring processes. The MCCCDC also mandates training for all employees serving on hiring committees. Rio Salado College's position openings are advertised weekly on the MCCCDC Human Resources website. The College Human Resources Department also handles the first step of all employee relations issues.

Rio Salado's employee breakdown by ethnicity and efforts to recruit, hire, and train a diverse workforce were detailed in Criterion 1.C.1. Employee development will be addressed in Criterion 5.A.4.

- **Adjunct Faculty Hiring**

As indicated in Criterion 3.C.1, a small cohort of residential faculty serve as department chairs and provide instructional leadership for a large cohort of adjunct faculty, who are required by the MCCCDC to meet the same credentialing requirements as the residential faculty. At Rio Salado, adjunct faculty are hired through a centralized Faculty Services Department, which pre-screens qualified candidates and verifies credentials before scheduling interviews with the appropriate departmental faculty chair. The College's adjunct faculty cohort is stable, as evidenced by the fact that almost two thirds of the 1,562 instructors who taught during FY2014-15 had been with the College five years or more.

Physical Infrastructure

- **Locations**

Although Rio Salado College is a nontraditional institution that specializes in distance learning, accelerated formats, and customized programs, physical facilities are still needed in order to serve its students. In addition to the administrative and student services headquarters in Tempe, Arizona, the College operates a number of additional locations throughout the greater Phoenix metropolitan area. An Associate Dean of Instruction and Community Development has oversight of the College-owned locations, and each location operates under a Director of Community Partnership Programs, responsible for supervising and evaluating staff and serving as liaison with the local communities and with partner stakeholders. The designs of the learning spaces at the locations feature state-of-the-art technologies that support an optimal student learning environment. Comprehensive college services are also provided. Details of the types of programs and classes offered at the locations, such as College Bridge Pathways and community classes, have been included throughout this report in the appropriate contexts.

Technological Infrastructure

Rio Salado's technological infrastructure was described in Criterion 3.D.4. The College's technology budgeting process follows the general budget processes described above. The technology operational budget is slightly over \$1 million per year.

2.

Rio Salado has developed a comprehensive, real-time cost management system, allowing for timely review of all cost components relating to educational purposes, which aggregate to a total cost per FTSE for the various categories tracked by college administration. These FTSE categories, which are meaningful to administration in making business decisions and tracking performance, are:

- Communities: Courses delivered face-to-face to community members at one of the College locations and not part of one of the other categories listed below.
- Distance Learning: Comprised of all programs that deliver teaching at a distance, including online, hybrid, mixed media, and print-based.
- Dual Enrollment: College-level courses delivered to students who are currently enrolled in high school as juniors and seniors, taught by approved, certified high school instructors during normal high school hours.
- Education Service Partnerships (ESP): Education delivered via partner corporations and government agencies that provide the education to new or continuing employees at no cost to the corporation or the employees.
- College Bridge Pathways Programs: Classes funded by the Adult Education Division of the Arizona Department of Education, and geared towards adults who did not complete high school, high school graduates who need to brush up on their basic academic skills for job retention or advancement, and non-English speaking adults.

Through gathering and analyzing these data, College Administration can make informed decisions and adjust priorities regarding funding and staffing for its learning environments.

Rio Salado spends a greater percentage of its General Operating Budget on instruction and academic support than the combined average of the other nine MCCCDColleges (65.6% vs. 54%). The chart also demonstrates that Rio Salado College spends approximately half as much as its sister MCCCDColleges on operations and maintenance. This is possible because of the College's emphasis on distance and nontraditional rather than campus-based learning modalities. These data provide evidence that the College's prioritization of fiscal resources supports its educational mission.

3.

As indicated in Criterion One, Rio Salado's culture is focused on its educational purposes: college bridge pathways; community-based learning; corporate and government partnerships; early college initiatives; online learning; and university transfer. At Rio Salado, these purposes are actualized through a mission of active community engagement and organizational responsiveness; customized, high-quality courses and programs; data analytics and institutional accountability; flexibility, affordability and innovation; and personalized service and a commitment to student success. The four goals of the Rio Salado College Strategic Plan stem

from the mission and encompass planning, implementation, and operations in keeping with available resources, with future opportunities envisioned to 2020.

Detail on the specifics of the Rio Salado Strategic Plan will follow in Core Component 5.C.

4.

Rio Salado College devotes considerable resources to the orientation, training, and development of both new and continuing employees to nurture a workforce that has a deep understanding of the Rio culture and mission documents. Employees are trained to be change-adept, and therefore able to respond to the innovations and new directions that are implemented at the College. Goal 3 of the College Strategic Plan centers on People Development and Communication, and a number of College- and Departmental Action Plans (CAPs and DAPs) are in process of implementation, data-gathering, and assessment.

New Employee Orientation (NEO)

Along with the MCCCCD new employee orientation, Rio Salado employees undergo the Rio NEO, which is designed to provide an introduction to the Rio workplace. Employees have the opportunity to learn about fundamental college services that will help them better function in their new positions, meet representatives from various college departments and programs, and take a tour of key areas. Between FY2013 and 2015, 219 employees underwent NEO training.

The Rio Way

After completion of the NEO, full-time employees are invited to take the *Rio Way*, which is ideally completed during the first year of employment. A *Foundation Day* presents information on the history of the College along with six one-hour introductory workshops highlighting the core values of Customer Focus, Diversity, Inclusiveness, Innovation, Professionalism, Sustainability, and Teamwork, as well as the Wellness Program. Six individual three-hour modules follow over the subsequent months, focused on each of these topics. A total of 243 employees have completed the Rio Way over the past three years. A Rio Way Survey measures the degree to which the objectives of the three hour sessions are met. Data from the 2015 administration indicate that the sessions successfully equip employees with appropriate knowledge about the Rio culture. For example, employees (N = 32 and N=39 respectively) indicated that objectives of the training session were met for skills such as teamwork (over 80%) and customer service (over 90%).

Faculty Chair Mentoring

As indicated in Criterion 3.C.3, an extensive mentoring process is in place for newly-hired faculty chairs. In addition to the PAR process described there, a mentoring committee made up of chairs who have considerable longevity at Rio Salado, as well as experience in faculty governance at both the college- and district levels, hold regular enculturation and information

sessions to familiarize new faculty with Rio Salado and the unique chair role at the College. Second-year mentees provide additional value for new hires during group mentoring sessions. This program is designed so that new chairs develop the knowledge of Rio's systems and the skills required to manage their departments in accordance with the College's unique faculty model, as well as the leadership skills to enable effective participation in the small faculty chair cohort.

The instructional support personnel described in Criterion 3.C.1 are drawn from the ranks of experienced adjunct faculty, and hired to assist the chairs with the many instructional responsibilities involved in running their departments. The skill set that is developed by these personnel stands them in good stead as competitive applicants for future faculty chair positions.

Ongoing Employee Training

Rio Salado has undertaken a number of college-wide training initiatives over the years to ensure that employees continue to develop and hone the skills needed to contribute and succeed in a dynamic, innovative, and diverse work environment.

The Maricopa Community Colleges also offer an extensive slate of professional and personal development opportunities for all employees in addition to the mandatory training described in Criterion 2.A. The Employee Resource Guide, 2015-2016 highlights the opportunities available.

Monthly Supervisors' Meetings

The monthly Supervisor's meetings provide an opportunity for ongoing personnel development through dialoging with colleagues, sharing best practices, and hearing from guest speakers about College and District initiatives that need to be communicated to their departments and supervisees. Data from a 2014 survey (N=51) indicated that 82% of respondents agreed that the Supervisors' meetings increased their engagement with the mission and culture of the College, while 80% felt that the meetings provided them with a broader knowledge of leadership practices and management issues. Attendance records show that 95% of supervisors attend at least one meeting per year, while approximately 70% of supervisors attend at least half of the meetings.

Quality Assurance Training

Quality Assurance training for Student Affairs personnel was detailed in Criterion 3.C.6.

Diversity and Inclusion Training

As described in Criterion 1C.1, employee development is offered at both the District and College levels in the areas of diversity and inclusion, through such vehicles as the Rio Way Diversity and Inclusion Module, the Women's Leadership Group Mentor Program, and programming offered by employee constituency groups.

NAU Master Degree Cohort

The MCCCDC has partnered with Northern Arizona University to form an accelerated cohort program that allows employees to earn a Master of Education Degree in Educational Leadership over a two year period, with MCCCDC staff teaching most of these courses. Since 1998, 14 cohorts have graduated through this program, which is open to all MCCCDC employees, including full-time, part-time, and short-term employees, and adjunct faculty members who are planning for career advancement.

Rewards & Recognition Program (R&R)

The Rio Salado Rewards & Recognition Program provides a means for employees to recognize their co-workers for an exemplary effort in keeping with the principles of Total Quality Management. The reward categories align with the College's Core Values. Rewards and Recognition for the past three years show 330 awards for FY2012-13, 493 awards for 2013-14, and 469 awards for 2014-15. The vast majority of these are for Teamwork, reflecting Rio's collaborative, team-oriented culture.

Workplace awards

Rio Salado was recognized by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* each year between 2012 and 2014 as a Great College to Work For, achieving Honor Roll status in 2012 and 2013.

The College also received the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility in both 2011 and 2012. The award recognizes exemplary employers who use flexibility as an effective workplace strategy to increase business and employee success.

Further, Rio Salado College was named a Top Company to Work for in Arizona by CareerBuilder in both 2013 and 2014. Employers are evaluated and selected based on satisfaction scores from an employee engagement survey along with employer questionnaire data.

5.

Rio Salado operates on a July 1 through June 30 fiscal year. Budget planning for the following fiscal year starts in October and continues through March when the College budget is submitted to the MCCCDC Budget Office. The District's Adopted Budget is not finalized and published until the first week of June. Rio Salado considers its budget holistically for the entire institution, and not as a compilation of individual departmental budgets. Department budget managers work together and with College administration to achieve the maximum use of budget resources. Hence, the budget is much more flexible and can be adjusted more easily during the fiscal year to meet College priorities and goals in an ever-changing higher education environment. Rio Salado's total base operating budget (Fund 1), as for all the Maricopa Community Colleges, is calculated by the District budget office. The College has complete authority to allocate that base budget to meet its goals and objectives for the upcoming fiscal year. The College's budget

development process illustrates its inclusive nature. The Budget Task Force includes staff members and administrators from departments across the College, as well as faculty members.

Rio Salado uses an incremental budget development process in which the current year's operating budget is used as the starting point for next fiscal year requests. Department budget managers assess their anticipated needs for the next fiscal year and adjust their preliminary budgets either up or down. Since the College approaches the budget systemically, budget managers do not need to be concerned about equipment needs or other expenses that are handled at the College level. Departments, and consequently the budget, are organized by function. Therefore, only one department needs to budget for certain types of expenditures for the entire College. Once budget requests have been submitted, reports are prepared for review by the Budget Analyst and the Vice President of Administrative and Employee Services. Changes are made, as needed, to balance the College budget with the total calculated by the District. The College President has the final authority to approve the College's budget before it is submitted to the District.

Sources

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- MCCCCD_FAC_5.A.1
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- MCCCCD_G.O. Budget_5.A.2
- MCCCCD_Jobs Page_5.A.1
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- Rio_Culture Page_5.A.3
- Rio_Employee Development_5.A.4
- Rio_Faculty Services_5.A.1
- Rio_Locations Map_5.A.1
- Rio_Mission Statement_5.A.3
- Rio_R+R Rewards Chart_5.A.4
- Rio_Sloan_5.A.1
- Rio_Strategic Plan_5.A.3

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

1.

As detailed extensively in Core Component 2.C., the MCCCCD Governing Board is composed of representatives from five districts that make up the Maricopa County area, along with two representatives for the County at large. As described in Criterion 2.C.1, primary outputs for board members are identified in the Board Job Description. The Governing Board serves in an oversight role and delegates day-to-day management to the Chancellor, per Board Policy 3.3 Delegation to the Chancellor. The Chancellor and District administration then oversee day-to-day operations of the District, which is accomplished via the framework of the Chancellor's Administrative Regulations.

In its oversight role, the Governing Board establishes Board committees which are then charged with gathering information on a given topic and reporting back to the full Board. Examples of these committee focus areas are Board Policy, Budget and Finance, and Charter Schools.

2.

District Governance

As indicated in Criterion 2.C.4, under the overarching Maricopa Governance Policy and Regulations Manual of the Governing Board, the Chancellor's administrative regulations provide for day-to-day management of District operations, and address the areas of Fiscal Management, Students, Instruction, Auxiliary Services, Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Board Resources, and various guidelines and procedures. The Chancellor is responsible for all authority and accountability of employees, and delegates implementation of the

administrative regulations to appropriate personnel, such as vice-chancellors, college presidents, etc. The MCCCDC senior administration includes an Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost whose purview includes both Academic and Student Affairs, and Vice Chancellors of Business Services, Human Resources, and Information Technology. The Chancellor's Executive Council (CEC) is comprised of the Chancellor, vice-chancellors, college presidents, and faculty leadership. Other district-wide councils include the vice presidents of academic affairs, vice presidents of student affairs, occupational deans, etc.

Rio Salado College Governance

Collaboration and a "systems" approach to leadership are the hallmarks of governance at Rio Salado. These characteristics are clearly observable in the multi-layered structure that pervades each level of the organization. In particular, there has long been a culture of closeness and collaboration between administration and faculty leadership that is atypical in some higher education settings. The College has a systemic structure of committees that are interrelated, and allow for participation in governance and operations across the spectrum of employees.

Faculty Governance

Because of the especially collegial and collaborative relationship among faculty and administrators, Rio Salado lives the shared governance model through a variety of systematic and institutionalized processes that support the Rio culture. Rio Salado's residential faculty model was described in Criterion 3.C.1, and the 24 residential faculty (22 chairs and two faculty librarians) are all voting members of the Faculty Senate. The small faculty cohort allows all members to have a voice in governance issues, including the election of the Faculty Senate President and President-Elect. In addition to providing college-level leadership, the Faculty Senate President and President-Elect serve two-year terms as Rio's representatives to the MCCCDC Faculty Association. The Constitution of the Rio Faculty Senate was last amended and approved in November, 2014.

- **The Vice President's Advisory Committee (VPAC)**

VPAC includes the Vice President of Academic Affairs, past Rio Faculty Senate Presidents, the current Faculty Senate President, and the Faculty Senate President-Elect. VPAC meets regularly to discuss issues such as strategic initiatives, common academic policies, and faculty staffing. Faculty members of VPAC, dubbed the VP or "VEEP" Team, advise the VPAA on matters that are of importance to Academic Affairs and act as intermediaries to help solve problems and advance the agenda of teaching and learning, working collaboratively to ensure that faculty maintain an active role in College-wide decision making.

- **Instructional Councils**

In addition to shared governance at the college level, all faculty chairs at Rio Salado are members of district-wide Instructional Councils. In this capacity, they serve as academic leaders at the District level to ensure the currency, quality, and rigor of the common District curriculum.

Additionally, the Faculty Chair for Curriculum Development and the Vice President of Academic Affairs serve as voting members of the District Curriculum Committee. The role of Instructional Councils was explained more fully in Criterion 3.C.1.

Student involvement in Governance

Because of Rio Salado's nontraditional, dispersed educational model, the College does not have a traditional student government structure or student body president. Student involvement manifests through less formal channels, such as leadership and participation in co-curricular groups that include Honors and Phi Theta Kappa, as described in Criterion 3.E.1.

3.

Curriculum Development

The process for curriculum development at MCCCCD, and the faculty-driven processes followed at Rio Salado, were described in Criterion 3.C.1. Rio Salado's curriculum is reviewed regularly by the College's faculty chairs, the College Curriculum Committee and Curriculum Department members, advisory committees, and the College's partners in business and industry. In addition, new curriculum is vetted through a rigorous internal College process before being submitted for District Curriculum approval. Prior to the development of a new program, the College researches industry needs and program viability, and seeks input from its community leaders and business partners.

Academic Requirements and Policies

Academic requirements and policy for the MCCCCD are set via the Chancellor's Administrative Regulations. 2.3 Scholastic Standards addresses the academic criteria for MCCCCD students.

As indicated in Criterion 2.B, the College Catalog is an in-depth guide to Rio Salado's mission documents, academic information, areas of study, tuition, policies, and student services, while detailed Student Policies pages on the College website provide comprehensive information consistent with the Chancellor's Administrative Regulations.

Adjunct Faculty Focus Forums

Rio Salado's adjunct faculty provide valuable feedback on processes and policies, which is particularly important in light of the College's large adjunct cohort. Biannual "Focus Forums" allow for input on multiple topics related to teaching and learning as a Rio Salado adjunct. This enhanced connection to the College provides a stronger sense of integration for adjunct faculty, and in turn, increases the effectiveness of their role in the classroom. Varied and diverse participants are identified for each forum, so that in-depth information relating to improving the adjunct faculty experience can be elicited. For example, a comprehensive revision of the AFD (Adjunct Faculty Development) initial training and ongoing professional development modules

in 2013-14 was a direct outcome of these focus forums. Data from the 2015 Adjunct Faculty Survey (See Criterion 3.C.4) indicate that adjunct faculty (N = 258) are knowledgeable regarding the policies and procedures in their department (98%), the College (95%), and the District (79%).

Sources

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- MCCCCD_Board Members_5.B.1
- MCCCCD_Policy Manual_2015_5.B.2
- Rio_College Catalogs_5.B.3
- Rio_Committee Alignment Plan_5.B.2
- Rio_Faculty Senate Constitution_5.B.2
- Rio_Student Policies_5.B.3

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

1.

Resource Allocation

As detailed in Criterion One, Rio Salado is a member of the MCCCCD, and this multi-college environment dictates that the governance and operations of the College are strongly influenced by the added dimension of the District. This external institutional environment has a considerable impact on planning, especially in terms of resource allocation, direction of strategic focus, and new programmatic directions. The MCCCCD Governing Board adopts planning and priority processes that affect and guide Rio Salado College's strategic planning efforts. To ensure fiscal accountability, Governing Board outcomes are monitored on a regular basis to determine the level of current attainment and the need for subsequent improvement via a series of metrics, as detailed in Criterion 4.C.4.

Each year, the college presidents submit an annual report to the Executive Vice Chancellor, outlining what their colleges have achieved in alignment with the District Strategic Plan. College performance on the Governing Board metrics is used to provide evidence of the success of various college initiatives. The District rolls these data up into a comprehensive annual monitoring report which is posted to their website for transparent disclosure to all community and student stakeholders.

Rio Salado's budget prioritization and planning processes, which align with its mission focus areas and the District's outcome focus areas, were detailed in Criterion 5.A, above.

Grants Alignment with Strategic Planning

The College has secured an average of \$5.3M in grant funding annually during the past three fiscal years as a response to declining traditional budget resources. The grant application and implementation process is strategically designed to align with Rio's mission and planning priorities. The funded grant projects are tracked in conformance with one or more of the goals in the College Strategic Plan. As fluctuations occur with College revenues and new needs arise, Rio Salado will continue to identify, develop, and submit grant applications to federal, state, local, and corporate or foundation funding sources to address these priorities.

2.

Total Quality Management and Continuous Quality Improvement

In 1991, Rio Salado College committed itself to a planning process organized around the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

As part of a total organizational effort to incorporate these principles into both strategic planning and day-to-day operations, a major CQI tool was adapted and implemented for use in college-wide planning; the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle (PDCA). Each phase of the PDCA emphasizes certain steps necessary for effective planning, implementation, and evaluation. For almost 25 years, the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Cycle has been incorporated into the fabric of the College's operations. The Cycle has become an expected standard and an integral part of the organizational culture of planning and development. This has placed greater emphasis on organizational learning, and has fostered a total "systems" approach to the planning and decision-making processes at Rio Salado. College employees are familiar with setting targets to evaluate processes for Quality Assurance (Q.A.), or identifying the need for Relentless Improvement (R.I.—the "Rio-ized" version of Continuous Quality Improvement) if targets are not met. Relentless Improvement is a core value that forms part of the mission documents, and departments are accustomed to setting service standards that are measured via this cycle (see Criterion 5.D.2).

As part of the overall culture of relentless improvement, budgetary resources are also committed to supporting the administration of national assessment instruments such as the ETS Proficiency Profile and the Research Readiness Self-Assessment, as well as internal faculty-driven Rio Learning Outcomes Grants (RioLogs). Rio Salado also deployed a considerable investment of assessment dollars towards elective participation in the HLC Assessment Academy during 2007-12.

3.

Strategic Planning--MCCCD

The strategic planning processes of the District guide the coordination of MCCCDC-wide planning. Four Strategic Planning Core Areas provide a conceptual framework for planning in the context of the Governing Board Outcomes listed in Criterion 2.C.2. These core areas, which underlie the MCCCDC Strategic Planning Goals, are:

1. Access to Learning: MCCCDC provides access to learning opportunities for students and the community.
2. Pathways to Success: MCCCDC builds educational and career pathways and supports student goal attainment.
3. Effective Teaching and Learning: MCCCDC researches, assesses, and improves student learning and invests in strategies to improve organizational learning and effectiveness.
4. Organizational Integrity: Policies and practices necessary to support the accomplishment of the above through effective use of public resources. This includes financial, human, and technological resources.

A crosswalk demonstrates alignment between the Outcomes and these four Core Areas. As indicated above in Criterion 5.C.1, each college president and the District's vice-chancellors provide reports on accomplishments in the designated areas, for each fiscal year.

Strategic Planning—Rio Salado College

Rio Salado's strategic planning process incorporates a dispersed level of responsibility across College leadership. The College vice-presidents act as sponsors rather than operational implementers, while each of the four goals has a quad-chair team comprised of academic deans and faculty chairs. This allows for incorporation of multiple perspectives as they develop, plan, and implement each of the goals. In their roles as sponsors, the vice presidents move the proposed initiatives forward in the President's Executive Council. Regularly scheduled meetings of College leadership teams such as the President's Executive Council and the cross-functional Development Team and Special Operations Team, allow for stakeholders to view and discuss the plan goals and monitor progress on the different aspects. The goals are reviewed annually, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are set by the Executive Council, and are planned for three to five years out from initial implementation.

Strategic to operational planning is a structured, three-level process:

- College Action Plans (CAPs - reviewed annually) - High level plans aligned with achieving the goal. KPIs for CAPs are set by the quad-chairs on the Strategic Planning Team and are planned for one to three years out from initial implementation.
- Departmental Action Plans (DAPs - reviewed semi-annually) - Lower level plans with actions designed to support a College Action Plan. KPIs for DAPs are set by department heads in consultation with the Strategic Planning Team quad-chairs, and are planned for six months to two years out from initial implementation.
- Individual Action Plans - Very specific plans by individual employees to support the overall Departmental Action Plan (Not yet implemented—could be tied to annual performance evaluations).

The internal Strategic Plan SharePoint site is open to all College employees, which allows for viewing and tracking of specific CAPs and DAPs, and the submission of comments or questions about the plan. CAPs and DAPs that align with specific College processes have been referenced in context throughout this Assurance Argument.

External Constituency Input

The President's Advisory Council was described in Criterion 1.D.3, and ensures that a wide spectrum of local business and community leaders is consulted regarding College initiatives within the community. Also, as referenced in Criterion 3.A.1, Rio Salado's use of Program Advisory Committees provides a platform whereby community members and industry leaders can contribute input that helps to shape the College's curriculum for occupational programs, ensuring ongoing currency and relevancy. Community-based partnerships, such as the Communiversities and the East Valley Veterans Education Center, also make use of advisory committees to ensure ongoing relevance within the local community.

4.

Loss of State Funding

State support for the Maricopa Community Colleges declined from \$59.5 million in FY2009 to \$0 in FY2016. In this environment, the MCCCCD and Rio Salado College continue to work closely together to anticipate the financial impacts of fluctuations in enrollments and the economy. As of June 30, 2015, the College still had an end-of-year surplus carryforward in both of its operating funds (Fund 1 and Fund 2).

Financial Planning—District Level

The District has developed a 15-year financial plan that looks back five years, includes the current year, and then looks forward nine years. This plan incorporates all District Governing Board financial policies and objectives for financial operation of the District. The MCCCCD District Financial Plan FY2009-FY2023 was released in December, 2013.

Financial Planning—College Level

The College's base operating budget is adjusted annually through Enrollment Growth Funding (EGF)—increases or decreases in Full-time Student Equivalent (FTSE) for the current fiscal year as compared to the prior fiscal year. FTSE projections are prepared for the District Budget Office each fall and updated in the spring for the next two fiscal years. These projections are used to determine potential EGF allocations that Rio may receive from or return to the District. This funding source is currently \$2,130 per FTSE.

Fund 2 is an operating fund, but its budget is not calculated by the District Budget Office. Instead, this fund is where self-supporting auxiliary enterprise operations are recorded. Out-of-

state tuition is the largest revenue source in this fund. All such tuition revenues received are controlled and managed by the College. Out-of-state tuition for students residing outside the State of Arizona is set at \$215 per credit hour. This equates to \$6,450 per FTSE, nearly three times more than the revenue received by the College for in-state enrollments. Therefore, the College is actively seeking to increase out-of-state enrollments to provide additional resources.

5.

Technology Planning

As a nontraditional college currently supporting close to 30,000 online learners, Rio Salado has always been cognizant of the importance of remaining abreast of emerging technologies. The prime example of this is RioLearn, the College's customized Learning Management System, which came about over a decade ago following an in-depth visioning process, recognizing the need to identify an innovative technology solution that would support Rio's centralized online course model and multiple start dates (as described in Criterion 3.D.4). In the years since, the system has been updated on a continuous basis to ensure currency, with the most recent innovation being a Feedback Scoring Tool launched in fall, 2015. The biannual Focus Forums mentioned above ensure that adjunct faculty are part of the planning and visioning processes for ongoing quality control and improvement to RioLearn. Because of current budget realities, the IT infrastructure is being supported and maintained, but no major technological changes are planned in the near term.

Environmental Scanning and Planning

Goal 4 of Rio Salado's Strategic Plan speaks to "Blue Ocean" and Innovation: *We innovate to support, engage, and serve the educational needs of our current and future stakeholders.* Under this umbrella, a College Action Plan (CAP) aims to research and initiate new programs, services, and partnerships that might offer additional revenue streams, generate additional enrollments, and increase completion. Examples of Departmental Action Plans that are being explored under this CAP include, among others, investigating possibilities for out-of-state initiatives, exploring new community service partnerships, and ongoing research into new courses and programs.

Over the years, in order to develop resources and extend educational opportunities to those who need them the most, Rio Salado College has forged collaborative partnerships with community leaders, the Arizona Department of Education, schools, civic organizations, churches, social service agencies, government agencies, and businesses. The initial approach involves a process of listening and dialogue with constituents to understand the scope of their needs, followed by research to learn more about potential student demographics and employment opportunities in the area. As examples, the College has used local and national researchers, Department of Labor statistics, and information provided by the Workforce Development Department at the District Office to glean specific information about an area. A prime example of this approach was the establishment of the College's two Communiversities locations, in Surprise and Queen Creek, in the far west and far east reaches of the Valley, respectively, as mentioned in Criterion

1.D.3. Other avenues of cooperation include working with local city government officials (e.g., council members, economic developers, K-12 education administrators, hospitals, and private industry) to further determine appropriate programs and services for a given area. For instance, the College Bridge Pathways programs detailed in Criterion 1.C.2 offer classes at multiple Rio Salado locations based on the Arizona Department of Education's requests for service, and where need is determined to exist.

The Institutional Integrity division coordinates the College's new program research, vetting, and approval process, working closely with Faculty, Administration, Curriculum, Instructional Design, Financial Aid, Advisement, Institutional Advancement and other key stakeholders across the College. As part of this process, Rio Salado conducts environmental scans to determine program need. These scans include gathering data on similar programs in the target area, collecting market need indicators such as employment data and salary projections, and gauging industry support for the new program, among other viability meters. In this way, institutional planning involves multiple departments and key personnel across the College. Institutional Integrity ensures the alignment of program development processes for both internal and external stakeholders. Thus, the College is able not only to anticipate emerging factors, but also to respond to those factors efficiently.

Sources

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- Rio_Strategic Plan DAP Examples_5.C.3
- Rio_Strategic Plan Goals_5.C.3
- Rio_Strategic Plan SharePoint Site_5.C.3
- Rio_Strategic Planning Process Flow_5.C.3
- Rio_Strategic to Operational_5.C.3

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

1.

As indicated above, Rio Salado has subscribed to a culture of Total Quality Management for almost 25 years, and includes the core value of Relentless Improvement as a part of its mission documents. Accordingly, Rio Salado conducts continual measurement of its activities as an embedded function to ensure that this core value is being met. Evaluation and assessment processes are ongoing in the realms of institutional effectiveness and assessment of student learning.

Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional Research (IR) is responsible for initiating and implementing comprehensive institutional effectiveness efforts across the College. The IR Department is highly integrated in planning, measurement, analysis, and data mining for all departments across the College as evidence of performance is developed and documented. Thus, IR coordinates the reporting and distribution of college-wide assessments, provides student evaluations and reports, designs and administers surveys, publishes the College Fact Sheet and other reports, assists with research projects, supports grant data collection and analysis, and responds to ad-hoc requests. IR plays a significant role in student learning outcomes assessment by administering national assessments such as the ETS Proficiency Profile (See Criterion 4.B.2), providing data analysis related to student learning in the classroom, and furnishing a framework for faculty chairs to quickly identify course assignment components where students are not performing well.

IR staff help to ensure that the key performance indicators identified in the College Strategic Plan are both relevant and measurable. Efforts are underway to develop a dashboard that will show real-time progress on achieving the outlined goals. Institutional Research oversees the College's participation in the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (see Criterion 4.C.4), and includes VFA results in the data published on the public-facing website. Also, IR works closely with Institutional Integrity to ensure that Rio remains in compliance with all local, state and federal reporting regulations, as well as HLC reporting guidelines.

2.

Service Standards

Rio Salado has implemented service standards systemically across departments in order to outline the level of customer service to which departments are committed, and measure employee performance in meeting those standards. Three PDCA measurement cycles were conducted between 2009 and 2012 by a limited group of departments. When the revised mission documents were adopted in 2014, the standards were revised to align more closely with the mission and to ensure institutional effectiveness at the department and employee level via reliable, quantifiable, and valid metrics. Also, the process was expanded to include more participating departments. Institutional Research leads the service standards process and works closely with department heads and process owners to assure that their standards are measurable.

Two PDCA cycles were conducted during 2014 and 2015, with 35 departments participating, accounting for over 75% of all college employees. Data from cycle one indicated that about half of the departments met one or more of their service standard goals. As many College supervisors were new to this process, this first cycle served to set a benchmark for measuring progress going forward. Most departments elected to keep their same service standards for cycle 2, which is ongoing, in an effort to demonstrate progress.

Grant Pilot Processes

The establishment of Rio's Grant Development Office was described in Criterion 1.D.3 and alignment of grants with the Rio Salado strategic plan demonstrated in Criterion 5.C.1 above. The College often uses these grant-funded projects to pilot new initiatives, assess viability, and make decisions as to whether to implement or adopt more broadly across the institution.

Sources

- Rio_Institutional Effectiveness_5.D.2
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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Summary

Consideration of the documentation provided in support of Criterion Five highlights the following evidence:

- Given that the State of Arizona no longer provides any financial support to the Maricopa County Community College District, Rio Salado has had to be vigilant in ensuring that resources are allocated appropriately in alignment with its educational purposes.
- The College has a solid technology base to support high-quality educational offerings for the foreseeable future, and is actively seeking alternative revenue streams to fund new technology initiatives.
- Rio Salado has an extensive orientation and training support structure for all employees.
- Appropriate stakeholders across employee groups are engaged in governance functions and responsibilities.
- The Strategic Plan goals align with the College mission, and the strategic planning process includes active participation of stakeholders across the College.
- Service Standards are in place to measure employee performance at the department level.

Sources

There are no sources.

