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

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Rio Salado College

Rio Salado College and the Maricopa County Community College District are EEO/AA Institutions
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## Core Component – 5d

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**College Profile**

Rio Salado College, headquartered in Tempe, Arizona, was established in 1978 as a non-traditional institution designed to provide education to the underserved and un-served geographic areas of Maricopa County. Thirty-four years later, Rio Salado, “the College within everyone’s reach,” is the largest of the 10 colleges that comprise the Maricopa County Community College District in credit headcount, with a focused mission to provide innovative approaches to choice, access, and flexibility, customized, high-quality learning design, and personalized service and organizational responsiveness. Rio Salado College appeals to students seeking quality educational programs and services delivered conveniently to their homes, workplaces, and community locations. The College’s unique approach toward education for the twenty-first century includes online courses that start 48 weeks each year and currently enroll over 43,000 unduplicated students (the largest online community college enrollment in the nation), innovative educational partnerships, and customized programs offered both online and throughout the College’s local communities.

While remaining true to its nontraditional roots, Rio Salado has matured to emerge as a national leader in higher education, exemplifying a successful model for high-quality, low-cost, accessible educational opportunities. Within just the past year, the College has received considerable national recognition for its efficient and highly effective model:

- Rio’s Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detector, developed in-house to help ensure the long-term value and integrity of Rio’s academic programs, won the WCET WOW Award in October, 2010.
- *Winning by Degrees* (November, 2010), produced by McKinsey and Company and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, featured Rio Salado as one of eight highly productive online institutions, and reported that Rio Salado College’s educational model was 48% more cost-effective than the national average.
- *Flexing the Faculty*, the cover story in the Lumina Foundation’s Summer 2011 Focus publication, highlighted Rio Salado’s highly effective faculty model.
- A case study of Rio Salado College was included in *The Innovative University: Changing the DNA of Higher Education*, by Clayton M. Christensen and Henry J. Eyring, July, 2011.
- *Beating the Odds: What It Means and Why It’s Important*, (August, 2011), developed with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, featured 32 postsecondary institutions considered as national models for their approaches to boosting completion rates. Rio Salado College was recognized as a high-performing, low-cost institution.
- The Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detector won a Showcase in Excellence Award in the Arizona Performance Excellence Program (Arizona Quality Alliance), December, 2011.
Rio Salado College is organized into five divisions under the leadership of President Chris Bustamante:

- Academic Affairs
- Student Affairs & Advancement
- Administrative & Employee Services
- Strategic Initiatives & Information Services
- Public Service

The College employs 463 Board-approved employees in these five divisions, of whom 23 are residential faculty members. Along with nearly 1,400 adjunct faculty who are supported by a comprehensive infrastructure, the College’s workforce provides an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning for its diverse and nontraditional student body.

Rio Salado is part of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), which is located in Maricopa County, the largest county in Arizona, measuring 9,222 square miles. With almost 3.9 million residents, the county is home to over half of Arizona’s population. MCCCD includes 10 colleges, two skill centers, and a number of education centers serving the greater Phoenix metropolitan area. Although the Maricopa colleges are all units of the larger MCCCD system with a single Governing Board and District administration, as well as common policies and processes regarding personnel, curriculum, students, etc., each college is individually accredited. The MCCCD had 4,349 Board-approved employees in September, 2011, serving over 260,000 students.

**Growth and Change Since 2002**

**Enrollment Growth**

Rio Salado College was well-established as a leader in online education and innovative programs and partnerships at the time of its last Self-Study Visit in 2002, and the College has grown enormously in the decade since, with the capacity to scale up continuously as it deals with this ongoing growth. The following chart shows enrollment trends at the College over the past 10 years. While the trend has been upward almost every year, it is particularly notable that the Institution’s Credit Headcount increased by 10% between FY 2009-10 and FY 2010-11, representing the largest single annual increase in the past 10 years, which also translated into an 18% growth in Full Time Student Equivalent (FTSE). In 2010-2011, over three-quarters (75.36%) of credit students at Rio Salado were distance learning students, of which 72.41% were taking classes online.
In addition to growth, the following significant changes have occurred over the past decade. Each of these will be addressed in detail in the body of this Self-Study report.

- The College vision was focused from the notion of creating “a climate of high expectations for...success” of students, customers and employees to “We astonish our customers!”

- Subsequently, in order to define a common understanding of “astonishment” in the implementation of the vision, the Service Standards of Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness were adopted as part of the College’s mission documents and institutionalized at the departmental level.

- The College developed RioLearn in partnership with Microsoft and Dell Computers. This online course management and delivery system was customized to accommodate Rio Salado’s unique centralized course development model and multiple course start dates and scalability.

- A 13,600-square-foot Conference Center was built adjacent to the College’s Tempe headquarters.

- The College received $64.5 million for construction and renovation projects as part of a $951 million General Obligation Bond that was passed overwhelmingly by voters in 2004.

- The College purchased the 60,000-square-foot building next to its Tempe headquarters. This building, with minimal renovation, became the College’s administrative headquarters, known as Rio@Hohokam, while the original Tempe building was renamed Tower@Rio.

- Rio Salado’s core educational value of continuous improvement was strengthened to Relentless Improvement, to emphasize the College’s long-standing commitment to the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle of improvement.

- Sustainability was added as a College core educational value, with a commitment to the triple bottom line of sociocultural, environmental, and economic sustainability initiatives.
• Rio Salado elected to join the Higher Learning Commission’s Academy for Assessment of Student Learning in 2007, and built a systematic and comprehensive Program Review process as its project.

• The College partnered with the City of Surprise to build the first Communiversity in the western United States, the Communiversity@Surprise.

• In February 2010, Dr. Linda Thor resigned from her position as president of Rio Salado College after almost 20 years. Dr. Chris Bustamante was appointed interim president, and subsequently named President of Rio Salado College in June, 2010.

• Rio Salado College emerged as the only community college recognized nationally in the arena of data mining and predictive modeling to promote student success.

Accreditation History
• 1978: The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools granted Rio Salado Community College candidacy accreditation status.

• 1981: Rio Salado Community College received accreditation for five years, following a request from the College for an evaluation for accreditation at the Associate Degree level.

• 1986: Rio Salado Community College was approved for continued accreditation for a six-year period.

• 1992: Rio Salado Community College was approved for continued accreditation for a 10-year period.

• 2002: Rio Salado Community College was approved for continued accreditation for a 10-year period, with no follow-up reports or visits required.

Significant Accomplishments, Strengths, and Challenges from 2002
The 2002 visiting team did not note any areas of concern. During the exit interview, the team noted the following areas of significant accomplishment:

1. The College has developed a focused mission statement, which has enabled efficient use of resources and targeted growth. The mission statement, together with vision, purposes, pride factors, and values are well understood by all employees and are posted prominently throughout the College. There is a commitment to live the values on a daily basis and to reward and recognize those who lead their colleagues by example.

2. The College has developed an exemplary process for recruiting, hiring, training and evaluating, and rewarding adjunct faculty members and supports the work of teaching and learning with a network of support people and services that is broad and deep to serve effectively its distributed student body and employees.

3. The College’s enrollment has grown by 15% a year for the last five years, while the cost per student has increased only 19%. Such efficient growth is a significant accomplishment, made possible by innovative programs such as dual enrollment whose popularity has contributed significantly to sustain this level of growth.

4. Rio Salado’s systems approach to Distance Learning, with its amazing level of technical and personal support, is a national model that balances access and convenience of learning and student support, with high expectations for student success and instructional rigor. It is principally through its distance learning model that the College’s twenty-six enrollment
periods enable students to learn anytime, anyplace and be supported in a variety of ways tailored to meet the individual needs of each student.

5. The College has an exemplary approach to the development and evaluation of a number of Educational Service Partnerships designed to meet the needs of both public and private sector clients. The commitment to quality assurance of teaching and the focus on clear learning outcomes is outstanding.

6. Rio Salado College has demonstrated its commitment to the improvement of teaching and learning through its extensive and comprehensive assessment program. There is notable involvement of both full time and adjunct faculty and staff in the assessment process, a mature process which has in most of its elements reached high end levels of two and three in the Higher Learning Commission's assessment evaluation grid.

7. Rio Salado College has successfully undertaken to build an organizational structure that is coordinated, systemic rather than geographic, and fosters a collaborative approach to the work of teaching and learning in a rapidly changing world. The notable and significant ability to be limber, flexible and respond rapidly should be a model for the district. The College is a model of organizational learning and adaptability based on that learning.

In the Assurance Section of the Report of the Comprehensive Visit, 38 areas of strength were particularly commended, and 10 areas of evidence that needed strengthening were noted. These have been addressed within the Self-Study document in the context of the content as follows:

1. *The College has articulated its concern for its own ability to sustain the high level of service it has made a standard in the face of the projected growth of both the population of the county and the enrollments at the College.*

   **Response:** As indicated above, Rio Salado committed to College-wide Service Standards—Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness—as part of its mission documents. Information about how these standards have become institutionalized at the departmental level will be provided in Criterion 2c. Where appropriate, the College has also outsourced frontline services to maintain high levels of service. This is explained in Criterion 2b.

2. *The College also recognizes the importance of recruiting, employing, and retaining a diverse work force across all the levels of the institution as it seeks to serve a population that will shift in the next 5-7 years to a majority minority.*

   **Response:** The percentage of ethnic minorities employed by Rio Salado has increased in all categories since 2002. More information is provided in Criterion 2b, where it is noted that the ethnic diversity of employees is well-aligned with the majority of Rio Salado College students, and also generally well-aligned with the population of Maricopa County.

3. *The College itself, as well as the District, has benefited from a strong financial base of support for many years. Rio Salado acknowledges the importance of sustaining and increasing that support to fund programs and services to meet the changing needs of a growing and changing population.*

   **Response:** The College's initiatives to scale up responsibly are addressed in Criterion 1e, and the real-time cost management system currently under development is described in Criterion 2b.
4. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated October 18, 1996 entered into between MCCCD and the North Central Association, the District agreed to provide a breakout of its expenditures by each of its colleges. It is the team’s observation that the Memorandum of Understanding that exists relative to individual college reporting makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the team to express a detailed opinion about the finances of an individual college. A more appropriate model may be for a team to periodically review and express an opinion on the finances of MCCCD taken as a whole.

Response: This recommendation is a District-level issue and is not within the College’s purview. The MOU, which is still in place and which was updated in 2004, is described in Criterion 2a.

5. Even with the admirable and advanced attention given to the assessment of student academic achievement and to the support of student success across the multiple modes of delivery of instruction, the College acknowledges the need to find ways to motivate students to use services that will help them achieve their desired learning outcomes. This is especially the case with students who engage for the first time with distance learning.

Response: Each of the support services departments provides multiple modalities for student access and interaction. Metrics are employed to gauge usage of these services, and this evidence is provided in context throughout this Self-Study, primarily in Criterion 3c and Criterion 3d. The evidence indicates that most of the services are now well-used.

6. Consider establishing intervals for overall review of General Education which could lead not only to the obvious comprehensive look at the program but also to appropriate and timely recommendations to the district for curricular changes. Such an approach might put the College in a more proactive position to affect the reportedly lengthy process of approval at the district level.

Response: The College has instituted General Education Program Review as part of its comprehensive Program Review process. This is described in detail in Criterion 3a.

7. To get a better gauge of transfer student success, the College is encouraged to pursue the Criterion Three Committee recommendation to make transfer information a part of the articulation agreement with its articulation partners as well as attempt to collect data from major in-state transfers, and out-of-state transfers, especially for dual enrollment students.

Response: Transfer and articulation agreements are District processes and not within the purview of individual MCCCD colleges. These processes have improved significantly, and are covered in detail in Criterion 4c. Notably, the Maricopa-ASU Pathway Program (MAPP) is part of the Getting AHEAD (Access to Higher Education and Degrees) statewide effort between Arizona’s Board of Regents, universities, and community colleges, which is partially funded by a $1.5 million grant from the Lumina Foundation.

8. In its self-study (p. 174), the College acknowledges that although “a great deal of planning is ongoing at the department level . . . much of this activity is held in departmental memory by personnel rather than in written form.” The team observed this phenomenon as one of the indicators of the need for formalizing and communicating more effectively the process of continuous improvement across and for the entire institution that is so much a part of the culture of the organization.
Response: The need for more formal communication between departments and employees has been consciously addressed as part of the College's employee development efforts, and will be discussed in Criterion 2b. In addition, Relentless Improvement has been institutionalized as an educational core value, and deliberate efforts have been made to inculcate greater awareness of the PDCA cycle of improvement to College employees at all levels. These efforts have included PDCA brochures and posters, an employee engagement PDCA contest, and the introduction of the system-wide formal and sustainable Program Review process referenced above. Project Management, which was adopted by the College several years ago, formally documents and communicates cross-College collaborative planning and initiatives.

9. Although the College is clearly in compliance with the requirement to establish a process and to receive and respond to student complaints, the self-study report acknowledges that “the existing student complaint documentation process does not include enough information to determine college-wide trends or patterns. The team agrees with the College's own recommendation to “develop an electronic tracking and reporting system for formal and informal student complaints” (p. 187)—in conformity with its philosophy of going beyond customer service to customer astonishment.

Response: The creation of this centralized system for receiving and responding to student complaints at all levels, developed through the College’s Helpdesk system, is described in Criterion 1e.

10. The Orientation/Teacher Education Program Plan lists six steps necessary to successfully complete the teacher preparation programs…Promotional materials for the program should clearly communicate to students that the secondary program requirements range from 33 – 57 credits and that, before they can student teach, secondary education students must pass the Arizona Educators’ Proficiency Assessment, which includes questions about content.

Response: Program Progression Information is posted on the Teacher Education Post-Baccalaureate Program Plans website, and is updated regularly.

The Self-Study Process
Rio Salado College began the visioning process for the 2011-2012 Self-Study with a kick-off meeting in May, 2008. During the 2008-2009 academic year, College leadership reviewed the 2002 Self-Study report and conducted preliminary planning for the committee structure, roles, and processes for the upcoming Self-Study. The purpose of the 2011-2012 Self-Study was articulated as an opportunity for the Institution to formally examine itself and thereby assess its strengths and challenges in accomplishing its mission. Therefore, the Self-Study process would be based on the College's foundation of continuous improvement, which had been institutionalized in the College culture since the early 1990s.

An employee contest was held to identify a theme for Rio Salado's Self-Study process. The winning slogan, “Innovation and Improvement,” embodies the College’s long history as an innovative and forward-thinking institution, continually seeking new and unexplored paths to meet the needs of its stakeholders, while remaining cognizant of the necessity for evaluating processes in a cycle of improvement. A self-study icon was designed that maintained Rio Salado’s branding by incorporating the Rio “wave,” but in a manner that set it apart from the
College's traditional branding, by flipping the wave and adding the color yellow. The wave is emerging from an object, symbolizing the progress of Rio's Self-Study as the College moves through the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle in compiling and evaluating the evidence.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), as the College's Chief Academic Officer, has served as Co-Chair of the Self-Study process. In addition, the College President appointed the Faculty Chair of Library Services to serve as Co-Chair with the VPAA. The Library Faculty Chair had been designated as the writer prior to the Co-Chair appointment, and she retained that role as well.

A Planning Team was formed in fall 2009, and the formal Self-Study Plan was developed. A tri-chair structure was established to lead each of the Criterion Teams. Tri-Chairs were drawn from the ranks of senior administrators and Faculty Chairs, and along with the Self-Study Co-Chairs and Planning Team members, made up the Self-Study Steering Team. Some changes occurred on the original teams as a result of retirements and personnel moves. The final members of the teams were as follows:

**Self-Study Co-Chairs**
Vernon C. Smith, Vice President, Academic Affairs
Hazel Davis, Faculty Chair, Library Services

**Roles**
- To provide direction to the Self-Study Steering Committee
- To provide resources and personnel as appropriate to the Criterion Committees
- To compile and publish the final Self-Study Report

**Self-Study Planning Committee**
Chris Bustamante, College President
Vernon C. Smith, Vice President, Academic Affairs
Hazel Davis, Faculty Chair, Library Services
Jennifer Shantz, Faculty Chair, Curriculum Development/Digital Media Content
Sharon Koberna, Dean, Administrative & Employee Services
Nicole Albo, Associate Dean, Instruction & Institutional Integrity
Rick Vaughn, Faculty Chair, STEM Initiatives

**Roles**
- To develop the Self-Study timeline
- To write the Self-Study Plan
- To communicate and disseminate the Self-Study Plan to internal and external stakeholders
- To monitor the implementation of the Self-Study Plan
- To provide logistical coordination for the HLC Self-Study Team visit

**Self-Study Steering Committee Members**
In addition to the Planning Committee members, the Self-Study Steering Team included the
Tri-Chairs of the five Criteria for Accreditation:

**Criterion 1**
- Chris Bustamante, College President
- Angela Felix, Faculty Chair, Languages
- Sharon Koberna, Dean, Administrative & Employee Services

**Criterion 2**
- Todd Simmons, Vice President, Administrative & Employee Services
- Dana Reid, Dean, Instructional Technology & Support
- Kerrie Specker, Faculty Chair, Computers

**Criterion 3**
- Pat Case, Faculty Chair, Communication/Social Sciences
- Jo Jorgenson, Dean, Instruction & Community Development
- Kishia Brock, Vice President, Student Affairs & Advancement

**Criterion 4**
- Rick Kemp, Dean, Instruction & Partnerships
- Kirk Bowden, Faculty Chair, Chemical Dependency
- John Jensen, Faculty Chair, Mathematics

**Criterion 5**
- Edward Kelty, Vice President, Strategic Initiatives & Information Services
- Ron Burns, Faculty Chair, Public Safety Programs
- Melanie Abts, Faculty Chair, Counseling

**Roles:**
- To align the Self-Study Process with the College's Strategic Planning processes
- To provide operational leadership across the College for the Self-Study Process
- To serve as informed reviewers of the Self-Study plan
- To coordinate implementation of the Self-Study Plan
- To review the findings of the Self-Study Process
- To write Self-Study Criterion draft content

**Self-Study Criterion Committees**
Criterion Committees were assembled, each of which included a large cross-section of employees from all employee groups and departments across the College. These committees met regularly during the 2009-2010 year to investigate patterns of evidence, and collect data. Most committee members were charged with investigating processes outside of their own areas of responsibility, allowing them to gain insight into the workings of the College from the systems perspective, a hallmark of Rio Salado's culture. Overall, close to 100 employees served directly on one of the Criterion teams. At the end of 2010, the College held a celebration of the work to-date of these team members. Lunch was provided, and a specially designed Self-Study icon was awarded to employees for their Reward & Recognition plaques, along with congratulatory letters from the College President and the Self-Study Co-Chairs.

During this time, the Steering Team collectively developed a comprehensive outline of the planned Self-Study document, making decisions about where content would be included to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure that all team members had a common understanding of the overall process.

**Self-Study Content Template**
A Self-Study Draft Template was developed to collect standard information about each
department at the College. As part of this template, employees identified how their work at the departmental level lined up with the College’s mission documents, and they also provided evaluative information about metrics used to determine the effectiveness of their work. This content was then used to begin drafting the Self-Study document.

Engagement of the College Community

In addition to the direct involvement of large numbers of College employees who served on criterion teams and provided content for the Self-Study template, the Planning and Steering Teams devised an ongoing series of events designed to create awareness and engagement with all employees.

- A SharePoint site was developed in fall 2009 that included information about the Self-Study process, the Self-Study Plan, minutes of the Planning and Steering Team meetings, links to pertinent information, and the opportunity to submit questions in confidence to the Self-Study Co-Chairs. As the work of the Criterion Committees progressed, each had a work area on the site where minutes and content were posted. A survey page allowed for the posting of all survey reports. Drafts of the Self-Study chapters were posted for review and comment. This SharePoint site was accessible to every College employee.

- Information about the Self-Study process and progress formed part of the agenda of each College-wide meeting held since fall 2009, and each biannual All-Faculty Learning Experience beginning in spring 2010.

- A public Self-Study website was developed in spring 2011 to provide information to all the College’s external and internal stakeholders. Content was added to this site as the process progressed, and the complete Self-Study will be posted to the public website upon submission to the Higher Learning Commission in January, 2012. A notable feature of the public website was the Self-Study film series, which highlighted the Criteria for accreditation in parody form, while still providing accurate and substantive information, and the “Telling our Story” video which explained the Self-Study process in the form of a children’s story. This offered an additional employee engagement opportunity, when a “casting call” was issued for young children of Rio employees who are featured in the film.

- Self-Study 101 and Self-Study 102 workshops were presented by VPAA Dr. Vernon Smith and the Planning Team to College employees at the Tempe headquarters, and at several of the College’s locations throughout the county. Self-Study 101, presented in fall 2010, included an introduction to the Higher Learning Commission and the Self-Study process, an explanation of the Criteria for Accreditation, preliminary data findings and how these were being addressed through the PDCA cycle of quality assurance and relentless improvement, and an invitation to employees to become involved in the Self-Study work. Quality Assurance (Q.A.) and Relentless Improvement (R.I.) buttons were distributed, and many employees began wearing these. Self-Study 102 was conducted in fall 2011, and reported on the findings of the Self-Study process. R.I./Q.A. t-shirts were provided for all employees in the lead-up to Self-Study 102, and many employees wore them for the events.
An employee engagement PDCA contest was held in spring 2011. Employees used recycled materials (including Q.A. and R.I. posters that had been widely posted in the lead-up to Self-Study 101) to demonstrate how their respective departments followed the PDCA process, which also reinforced the College’s core value of Sustainability. Members of the President’s Advisory Council selected the winners from a group of finalists identified by the Planning Team.

A Self-Study Ice Cream Social was held at Rio’s Tempe headquarters in July, 2011. Customized mouse pads showing the College’s culture page were distributed.

HLC Fairs were held at the College’s Tempe headquarters and several of the College’s locations in fall 2011. Employees created booths that required participation in activities relating to the Criterion Core Components with which their departments identified. Reaction to the Self-Study fairs was overwhelmingly positive, both in terms of the learning that took place, and the sheer fun and opportunities for interaction that the experience provided.

An HLC Self-Study Banner was created and taken to all Self-Study events, where employees had the opportunity to sign and signify their identification with one of the five Criteria for Accreditation.

Towards the end of the Self-Study process in fall 2011, all supervisors were required to take their employees through an exercise that investigated how departments saw their roles related to each Criterion, providing evidence and airing any concerns that they had regarding departmental performance. These results were then discussed at the Supervisor Team meetings.

The inclusive model used to engage all employees in self-study, with large Criterion Committees, the process of reflection, evaluation, and use of the template to develop content at the departmental level, in addition to the series of engagement activities noted above, has resulted in a Rio Salado College Self-Study document that is truly the product of a collaborative effort, involving employees across a wide spectrum of the College.

Request for Continued Accreditation
The following intended measurable outcomes of the Self-Study were established by the Planning Team at the outset:

1. Achieve 10-year accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, without the requirement of progress reports, monitoring reports, or focus visits.
2. Review the College’s progress since the 2002 Self-Study Evaluation, paying special attention to the recommendations of the previous HLC team.
3. Assess the College status relative to accomplishment of its vision, mission, and purposes.
4. Describe student learning outcomes through a culture of ongoing assessment and systematic, comprehensive Program Review.

5. Involve all of the College’s internal and external stakeholders, and provide opportunities to contribute to the accreditation process.

6. Produce a Self-Study Report that can serve a variety of internal and external purposes, including achieving continued accreditation.

7. Determine the College’s best option for the next accreditation cycle.

In reviewing the substantial evidence for these outcomes provided in the completed Self-Study document, the Planning Team has determined that outcomes two through seven have been met through the Self-Study process, in conformance with the principles of innovation and relentless improvement that are Rio Salado’s hallmarks.

Rio Salado College has therefore determined that it meets the five Criteria for Accreditation, and looks forward to the peer-review validation process while hosting the Visiting Team on March 5-7, 2012.

With the submission of this Institutional Self-Study report, Rio Salado College formally requests reaffirmation of accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools for a period of 10 years.

**Formally submitted: January 6, 2012**
Criterion One – Mission and Integrity

Criterion Statement: The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.
Core Component – 1a
The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

Rio Salado College is one of 10 institutions in the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). The District has a five-member board that oversees all 10 institutions. Each MCCCD college has a unique mission, while conforming to the broader framework of the District’s mission documents. Rio Salado’s vision, mission, purposes, and values align with those of the District, but reflect the College’s innovative culture and unique role within the District.

Mission Documents
Maricopa Community College District
The mission documents of the District clearly reflect its role as a leader in community college education and its commitment to promoting access, retention, and completion in the Maricopa Community Colleges. The Governing Board regularly reviews, updates, and communicates its mission documents to the colleges and throughout the local and national communities.

MCCCD Vision
A Community of Colleges — Colleges for the Community — working collectively and responsibly to meet the life-long learning needs of our diverse students and communities.

MCCCD Mission
The Maricopa Community Colleges provide access to higher education for diverse students and communities. We focus on learning through:

- University Transfer Education
- General Education
- Developmental Education
- Workforce Development
- Student Development Services
- Continuing Education
- Community Education
- Civic Responsibility
- Global Engagement
MCCCD Values
The Maricopa Community Colleges are committed to:

- **Community**
  We value all people – our students, our employees, their families, and the communities in which they live and work. We value our global community of which we are an integral part.

- **Excellence**
  We value excellence and encourage our internal and external communities to strive for their academic, professional and personal best.

- **Honesty and integrity**
  We value academic and personal honesty and integrity and believe these elements are essential in our learning environment. We strive to treat each other with respect, civility and fairness.

- **Inclusiveness**
  We value inclusiveness and respect for one another. We believe that team work is critical, that each team member is important and we depend on each other to accomplish our mission.

- **Innovation**
  We value and embrace an innovative and risk-taking approach so that we remain at the forefront of global educational excellence.

- **Learning**
  We value lifelong learning opportunities that respond to the needs of our communities and are accessible, affordable, and of the highest quality. We encourage dialogue and the freedom to have an open exchange of ideas for the common good.

- **Responsibility**
  We value responsibility and believe that we are each accountable for our personal and professional actions. We are responsible for making our learning experiences significant and meaningful.

- **Stewardship**
  We value stewardship and honor the trust placed in us by the community. We are accountable to our communities for the efficient and effective use of resources as we prepare our students for their role as productive world citizens.
Rio Salado's mission documents—mission, vision, purposes, core values, core practices, and service standards—are displayed on a “Culture” page which is available on the College website, and are prominently displayed in public spaces throughout College buildings at all locations, such as meeting rooms and elevators, as well as in each department. Additionally, Culture page handouts are disseminated to all employees and to community members as part of presentations to special groups. These principles are integral to the work of the College and inform all that employees do. College Leadership reviews these documents on a regular basis every two to three years, to ensure that they continue to reflect current priorities and future plans. The Culture Page was last reviewed and reaffirmed at the Leadership Council meeting on April 13, 2009.

Rio Salado has long been rooted in the principles and practices of Total Quality Management. In 2004, College Administration and Faculty Leadership conducted an extensive process of reflection and evaluation of College core principles within the framework of “Customer Astonishment.” Underpinning the discussions was the deeply-held belief that students have a choice in selecting an institution of higher learning, and that Rio Salado, in anticipating, meeting, and exceeding the needs of stakeholders, validates that choice. As a result of these discussions, the College vision statement was completely altered to the simple “We astonish our customers!” with astonishment defined as the total fulfillment of a customer need. Employees across the College subsequently underwent Customer Astonishment training, and this concept has been completely integrated and ingrained into the College culture.

1a 1: Rio Salado College Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2004-present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through living our values, Rio Salado College creates a climate of high expectations for the success of our students, customers and employees.</td>
<td>We astonish our customers!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2004, the mission language was reviewed and tightened, and items from the mission statement were moved to the core practices and core values, which are listed below. The thinking behind this revision was that the mission changes and adapts as needed over time, but that the core values are more stable, and a part of the organizational culture that should be reinforced and retained. Additionally, the core practices were separated from the mission statement as a means of accomplishing the mission through central practices across the College. To a great extent, the core practices show the means by which the College accomplishes its mission, while the mission determines how Rio Salado intends to realize the College vision.
1a 2: Rio Salado College Mission

**2001**
As an institution of higher education placing high value on student learning, Rio Salado College creates convenient, high-quality learning opportunities for diverse populations. We specialize in customized, unique programs and partnerships, accelerated formats and distance delivery. In all that we do, we pursue continuous improvement and innovation, and we challenge the limits of tradition.

**2004-present**
Rio Salado College transforms the learning experience through:
- Choice, Access, and Flexibility
- Customized, High Quality Learning Design
- Personalized Service and Organizational Responsiveness

The purposes statement complements the mission by providing direction to the College in identifying the specific populations served through its programs and services. The statement of purposes has remained largely consistent over the past several years.

### Our Purposes
Serving our local, national, and international communities through online learning and collaborative partnerships, we provide:
- General education and courses for university transfer
- Programs for workforce development in business, industry and government
- Adult basic education
- Comprehensive student services
- Cultural enrichment and community service
- Continuing education and lifetime learning opportunities

### Our Core Values
Through living our values, Rio Salado College creates a climate of high expectations for the success of our current and future students, clients and employees. We are unalterably committed to demonstrating, assessing and being accountable for the following core organizational values:
- Sustainability
- Customer Focus
- Relentless Improvement
- Inclusiveness
- Professionalism
- Teamwork

### Our Core Practices
In the context of our core values, and sustained by disciplined people, thought, and action, our work is focused on the following core organizational practices:
- Learning
- Innovating
- Partnering

### Our Service Standards
In order to implement our vision, we are committed to the following service standards:
- Accuracy
- Consistency
- Timeliness
The College adopted the institution-wide service standards of accuracy, consistency, and timeliness in keeping with its commitment to customer astonishment. At the department level, specific, measurable functions are identified and tracked to ensure that service targets are being met, and to provide metrics for assessing “astonishment.” These data are reviewed regularly for quality assurance. Service standards and metrics will be discussed in more detail in Criterion 2c, when Institutional Effectiveness is addressed.

Dissemination of the Mission Documents
Rio Salado’s Institutional Advancement department is charged with communicating the College’s mission, vision, and culture to diverse internal and external audiences. External marketing efforts to the broader community will be described in Criterion 5b. Information and data about the College’s programs and course offerings are disseminated to students and prospective students as follows:

1a 3: Dissemination of Mission Documents Fiscal Year 2010-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Number Distributed</th>
<th>Intended Audience &amp; Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catalog</td>
<td>410,000 pageviews</td>
<td>Students and potential students, employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to the Online Catalog</td>
<td>450 printed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Bulletin (Rio Wave)</td>
<td>270,000 printed</td>
<td>Students and potential students via public libraries, grocery stores, and various locations throughout Maricopa County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Fact Book</td>
<td>750+ readers x 50 issues</td>
<td>College employees, Governing Board, and Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– distributed weekly</td>
<td>via email &amp; posted on employee portal (EP2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Website</td>
<td>250 printed</td>
<td>Employees, College visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also available on College website</td>
<td>Website: Students and potential students, Governing Board, Community, employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12,500,000 pageviews</td>
<td>Students and potential students, Governing Board, Community, employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Core Component – 1b
In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

Diversity/Inclusiveness
District Commitment
The Maricopa Community Colleges have long demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity and inclusiveness at the District level. The Governing Board’s Diversity goal states: *Students will be served by faculty and staff who reflect the communities we serve and who create an environment of equity and mutual respect of each person* (Governing Board Goal, 1995)

As noted above, the notion of diversity is addressed in the District vision statement, as well as in Rio Salado’s mission documents.
At the District level, diversity and inclusiveness are defined as follows:

**Diversity** refers to the individual and group/social differences that exist among people.  
**Inclusiveness** is the intentional and ongoing engagement with diversity to create an environment that actively encourages full recognition of student and employee abilities and contributions in all aspects of the organization.

The District-wide Diversity Steering Committee was established in 1995 and has evolved into the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), which includes leadership from the vice-chancellor and college president level, representatives from the District Office, and diversity coordinators from all 10 Maricopa colleges. In addition, there is representation from all employee policy groups, and from the following constituency groups:

- Arizona Association of Chicanos for Higher Education - MCCCD Chapter (AACHE)  
- Asian Pacific Islanders Association (APIA)  
- Equality Maricopa (formerly GLHRA)  
- Maricopa Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (MACHE)  
- Maricopa Council on Black American Affairs (MCBAA)  
- Women’s Leadership Group (WLG)  
- United Tribal Employee Council (UTEC)

The District maintains an Office of Equity, Opportunity, and Engagement, whose vision is to: maintain a harmonious work environment conducive to serving our students, employees and community with equal and fair service to all. The office reviews allegations and resolves complaints, and provides equal opportunity consultation and counseling services.

The District also makes a Diversity Infusion Program available, whereby interested faculty from all colleges can implement conscious infusion of diversity principles into courses across multiple disciplines.

**Rio Salado College Commitment to Diversity/Inclusiveness**

As noted in Criterion 1a, Rio Salado has identified Inclusiveness as a core value, which supports the District’s vision to work “collectively and responsibly to meet the life-long learning needs of our diverse students and communities.” Inclusiveness is manifested within the College culture in a number of ways. The College President originally established a Diversity Steering Team in 1991, led by a Diversity Coordinator who provided regular activities such as a monthly Diversity Brown Bag Series and online Diversity Contests with scholarship awards. This Coordinator worked with a Diversity Council that included membership from a broad spectrum of employee groups and constituencies at the College. When the MCCCD moved to a Diversity Coordinator model in 2005, they were institutionalizing a practice across all 10 colleges that had long been in place at Rio Salado.

In recent years the role of the Diversity Coordinator and Inclusiveness training and events have been incorporated within the department of Employee and Organizational Learning at the College.

**MOSAIC** (Maximizing Our Strengths as An Inclusive Community) training, developed by the District Employee and Organizational Learning Team (EOLT), has been offered to Rio employees.
In addition, several MCCCD mentoring programs are available to help employees find diverse role models and mentors.

**1b 2: Mentoring Program Participation of Rio Salado Employees 2008-11**

| 19 | Women's Leadership Group Mentor Program |
| 6  | Leadership Advancement Program (LAP)    |
| 2  | Executive Development Program          |

Rio Salado also maintains relationships with community organizations through employee membership and volunteerism, career fairs, and conference participation. Some of the events in which the College participates are:

- International Women's Day Luncheon
- Hispanic Women's Scholarship Luncheon
- United Black Firefighters Award Banquet
- Phoenix Indian Center Award Banquet

**Diversity Advisory Council Award**

The District's Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) Award is presented annually to an employee or program at each MCCCD college that exemplifies a commitment to diversity and inclusiveness through support of Student Success initiatives, One Maricopa, and/or Public Stewardship.

Nominations may be proposed for efforts that:

- Enhance existing practices or programs by incorporating inclusive ideas
- Demonstrate leadership and dedication by creating and implementing programs, strategies or initiatives that expand inclusiveness at the college or site
- Identify and remove barriers to access and opportunity at the college or site

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

**2011 – Dr. Sharon Koberna, Dean Administrative and Employee Services**

- Dr. Koberna was nominated for instituting the requirement for all supervisors and managers to complete MOSAIC and StrengthsQuest training, which provide employees with tools to better serve students across the spectrum of backgrounds and abilities.

**2010 – ACE Puente Program**

- ACE stands for Achieving a College Education. This program is both a scholarship program and an early outreach program that introduces at-risk high school students to hybrid and online learning. Students are assigned mentors and become part of a cohort. The program was nominated for recruiting students who fall into the following at-risk categories: underrepresented groups, low socioeconomic background, single parent homes/foster care/temporary housing, working students, teen parents, or voluntarily disclosing a disability.
2009 – Sun Sounds of Arizona

- Sun Sounds of Arizona is an outreach service providing radio reading and information access service for people who cannot use printed material due to a disability—either the visually impaired, or those with difficulty in holding or understanding printed material. At the time of nomination, 500 volunteer readers provided 49,000 residents across Arizona with access to local and national newspapers, magazines, weekly grocery ads, and books, thereby breaking the cycle of isolation and enabling the societal inclusion of these individuals.

2008 – Claudia Lopez, Staff support for the new Online ESL Track

- Ms. Lopez went above and beyond her role as a faculty support staff member as she dedicated her time to promoting the new Online ESL Track at the College, serving as a recruiter, adviser, role model, and mentor to a diverse and underserved population of learners.

2007 – Dr. Linda Thor and Beatriz Cohen, Rio Salado Inclusiveness Program

- Dr. Thor and Ms. Cohen were nominated for establishing and institutionalizing the Rio Salado College Inclusiveness Program, which since 1991 had been a College-wide, systemic effort for planning and implementing Diversity and Inclusiveness Education to College employees.

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 4a. Inclusiveness within the R&R program is defined as “valuing internal and external customers as whole persons while respecting both differences and commonalities.”

The following table shows the number of inclusiveness awards that have been presented since 2007. The long-time coordinator of the Diversity program retired in 2009, and the position was absorbed into the Department of Employee and Organizational Learning. During this period of transition, awareness of the availability of the inclusiveness award decreased, noted by the fact that, during FY 2009-10, there were no peer nominations in this category. As the position has become established within its new framework, the number of awards has begun to increase, and this upward trend is continuing.

### 1b 3: Rewards & Recognition Diversity and Inclusiveness Awards, 2007-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Number of Awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Division of Public Service Diversity Initiatives
Rio Salado’s public radio stations are at the forefront of several initiatives targeted at serving diverse populations. These include:

• *Fronteras: The Changing America Desk*, a multimedia collaboration among seven public radio stations led by Rio Salado’s KJZZ news station and KPBS in San Diego
• *Sun Sounds*, a reading service that provides a “conditional access” signal, designed for and directed to 49,000 people with print disabilities
• *Youth Media*, a nonprofit enterprise that is currently in development

The Division of Public Service will be covered in detail in Criterion 5d.

Sustainability—the Triple Bottom Line
A strong correlation exists between social justice and diversity. Rio Salado College is heavily invested in the triple bottom line of Sustainability, which includes social progress along with economic growth and environmental stewardship. In the social progress arena, credits are being earned in the Diversity and Affordability category through STARS®: the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™, a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. STARS was developed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) with broad participation from the higher education community.

STARS is designed to:
• Provide a framework for understanding sustainability in all sectors of higher education
• Enable meaningful comparisons over time and across institutions using a common set of measurements developed with broad participation from the campus sustainability community
• Create incentives for continual improvement toward sustainability
• Facilitate information sharing about higher education sustainability practices and performance
• Build a stronger, more diverse campus sustainability community

STARS has established a credit system which allows institutions to earn points in three self-reported categories, with subcategories to provide additional structure. The three main categories of STARS credits are: Education and Research (ER), Operations (OP), and Planning, Administration & Engagement (PA&E). Each of these categories contains credits worth a total of 100 points. An institution’s STARS score is based on the average of the percentage of applicable points it earns in each category. Rio Salado College earned an overall Silver STARS rating in fall 2011.

Information about the STARS category of Operations will be provided in Criterion 2b.
Diversity, a subcategory of PA&E, seeks to recognize institutions that are working to advance diversity and affordability on campus. Rio Salado earned the total 13.50 points available in this subcategory.

Additionally, Sustainability is being investigated as a potential addition to Rio Salado’s slate of College-wide student learning outcomes. This will be addressed in more detail in Criterion 3a. The College earned 19.86 of a potential 49.00 points in the Curriculum subcategory of Education and Research for its initial efforts. Rio Salado is also committed to addressing social sustainability via the volunteer service program Pay30 Forward, which will be covered in Criterion 5b.

Sustainability is available as an employee award category in the College’s Rewards & Recognition program. Also, 105 College employees took an online sustainability awareness and training course in fall 2011 and earned Sustainability icons. More information on this workshop will be provided in Criterion 2b.

1b 4: Rewards & Recognition Sustainability Awards, 2008-11

In a fall 2009 employee survey (N=213), 70.85% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “As a Rio employee, I find the following services valuable: Sustainability Initiatives.” This was below the Quality Assurance target of 75%, set a little lower than usual since sustainability initiatives were still ramping up at the College. However, by fall 2010 (N=419), 87% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that Rio Salado valued Sustainability, exceeding the 80% Quality Assurance target.

The following events have been held for Rio employees during the past three years, supporting the College’s commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and social sustainability:
### 1b 5: Rio Salado College Diversity/Inclusiveness/Social Sustainability Events, 2008-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010-11</th>
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<td>WLG Architects of Change Women’s Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women of Distinction Award and Luncheon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Black Tie Student Scholarship Fundraiser</td>
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<td>Black History Month – Gospel Festival</td>
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<td>WLG: Random Acts of Kindness</td>
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<td>Know Your Rights: Disability</td>
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<td>Taste of Rio – International Food Challenge</td>
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<td>Just Add Water Bottle Drive</td>
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<td>Tools for Teachers School Supply drive</td>
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<td>Triple Bottom Line Fair</td>
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<td>Gospel Festival</td>
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<td>Women’s History Month: Celebrating Women of Invention</td>
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<td>Leadership Development Program for Higher Education Conference</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Pacific American in Higher Education Conference</td>
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**Diversity and Inclusiveness in the Rio Way new employee orientation**

Rio Salado’s orientation process for new employees, the Rio Way, will be addressed in detail in Criterion 2b. The training focuses on inclusion by making all new employees feel welcome and helping them to integrate into the Rio culture. Additionally, presentations for employees
highlight opportunities, organizations, and programs within the College that are founded on the principles of inclusion, diversity, and respect.

Employee Understanding and Commitment to Diversity/Inclusiveness
Rio Salado's employees are surveyed regularly as part of the College's commitment to Quality Assurance (Q.A.) and Relentless Improvement (R.I.). The College has deep roots in the Total Quality Management (TQM) movement and has institutionalized the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle, which will be described in detail in Criterion 2a. The College sets targets for expected Quality Assurance (Q.A.) performance, and in the event these targets are not met, the effort is judged to be in Relentless Improvement (R.I.) mode, with interventions indicated in order to improve performance. Detailed reports of the surveys referenced throughout this document are available in the Resource Room.

In a fall 2009 employee survey (N=213), 60% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the question “As a Rio employee, I find the following services valuable: Inclusiveness Programs.” After actively working to promote the program and involve more employees, the question was slightly amended in a 2010 employee survey (N=419) to incorporate the concept of inclusiveness as a core value at the College: “Rio Salado values Inclusiveness.” Data showed considerable improvement, with 78.23% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing. This fell just short of the 80% target for Quality Assurance. Employees will be surveyed again in late fall, 2011.

Survey data from spring 2010 (N=28) showed that 100% of Leadership Council members agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: “Rio Salado College's policies and statements of expected behavior in regards to diversity and inclusiveness are congruent with its mission.” Additionally, agreement/strong agreement with additional statements relating to diversity/inclusiveness were all well above the target of 80%.

In terms of diversity outreach, Rio's Institutional Advancement (IA) department works with several local, state and national Spanish-language media outlets including: Latino Perspectives magazine, Latino Future magazine, La Voz, Prensa Hispana newspaper, KISS FM radio station and the Latino Vibe radio station, to promote Rio Salado’s educational opportunities to Latino students. In addition, media outlets are used to reach other diverse markets, including Echo Magazine, IONAZ Magazine, and Arizona Informant newspaper, and special outreach events are held for demographic groups including African-American, Native-American, Asian-Pacific Islander, and GLBTQ.

Core Component – 1c
Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Institutional Understanding of the Mission Documents
Survey Data
Rio Salado's employees across all employee groups show clear knowledge of the mission documents, as well as an understanding of how the work they do supports the mission. This understanding is both broad and deep, as evidenced by extensive survey data.

In a Malcolm Baldrige Foundation Are We Making Progress survey of employees (N=279) conducted in winter 2010, 97.13% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the
statement “I know my organization’s mission (what it’s trying to accomplish),” while 95.67% agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “I know my organization’s vision (where it is trying to go in the future).” Additionally, the statement “My senior (top) leaders use our organization’s values to guide us” had a strongly agree/agree rate of 88.85%. This survey was conducted as a foundational step towards applying for an Arizona Quality Alliance award, which will be described in Criterion 2b.

Additional survey data have shown that employees have a strong understanding of Rio Salado’s Mission Statement and Core Practices, and how each can be applied to their jobs. In 2010, the statements “I am aware of Rio Salado College’s Mission Statement” and “I understand how my job supports Rio’s mission” both had Quality Assurance percentages greater than 93%. In 2011, the same two statements both had Quality Assurance percentages greater than 95%, an increase from the previous year. In 2009, the statement “Rio encourages the Core Practices of Learning, Innovating, and Partnering” had a Quality Assurance rating of 85%. In 2010, those Core Practices were broken out, and employees rated each Core Practice higher than the established target of 80%. Specifically, employees felt that Rio Salado used the Core Practices of Innovation (82%), Partnering (81%), and Learning (81%) to accomplish its mission.

Employees at the College’s locations were surveyed in fall 2011. In response to the statement “I feel connected as an employee of Rio Salado College,” 93.94% agreed/strongly agreed, while 97.37% agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “I understand how the work I do contributes to Rio Salado’s mission.”

Adjunct Faculty members have also shown a strong understanding of Rio Salado’s mission. In 2009, the statement “I am aware of Rio Salado College’s Mission Statement” had a Quality Assurance rating of 91%. In 2011, the Quality Assurance rating jumped to 95% for the same statement. Even more impressively, in 2009 the statement “I understand how my Adjunct Faculty role supports Rio Salado’s mission” received a Quality Assurance of 94%, which then increased in 2011 to 96%.

In 2010-2011, employees across the College were asked to consider how the work being done in their departments related to the College mission documents. Employees provided extensive analysis across all College systems, showing deep understanding of their department-level roles in contributing to student success as part of the whole, as well as clear alignment of their work with the vision, mission, purposes, core practices, and core values. Also, where relevant, employees enumerated the service standards being used at the departmental level to measure
their success. These documents have been compiled and retained as evidence of employee understanding of the mission documents.

The Employee Rewards & Recognition program provides a means for employees to recognize their coworkers for exemplary effort. The six categories in the program are Sustainability, Customer Focus, Relentless Improvement, Inclusiveness, Professionalism, and Teamwork, which are directly aligned with the College’s core values. Employees reinforce their understanding of these core values each time they nominate a colleague for an award or receive one themselves. More details about the Rewards & Recognition program will be provided in Criterion 4a.

**Strategic Planning**

Rio Salado’s strategic plan drives the planning, implementation, and operational efforts related to the College’s mission documents. As mentioned in Criterion 1b, Rio Salado College has a long history of quality improvement, and is a higher education leader in recognizing and implementing principles of Total Quality Management, Relentless Improvement, and becoming a Learning Organization. In 2006, College leadership, under the direction of the College President and with the assistance of external consultants, underwent a specific effort to examine and align the strategic planning processes, utilizing the Balanced Scorecard approach. The consulting process involved two rounds of data collection from key leadership (including faculty, administration, and employee group representatives) across the College.

Since 2009, the strategic planning process at the College has been chaired by the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Information Technologies with committees of tri-chairs having responsibility for development, planning, and implementation of each of the strategic goals. These tri-chairs are drawn from the ranks of academic deans and faculty chairs, who then report to the College Vice Presidents. In their roles as sponsors, the Vice Presidents move the proposed initiatives forward in the President’s Executive Council. The strategic plan, which aligns with the MCCCD strategic planning process, will be discussed in detail in Criterion 2d.

Regularly scheduled meetings of College leadership teams such as the President’s Executive Council and the Leadership Council, as well as the cross-functional Development and OpX (Operational Excellence) Teams, allow for stakeholders to view and discuss the plan and monitor progress on the different aspects. Intranet and public websites allow for tracking and the submission of comments or questions about the plan.

College leadership survey data showed 100% agreement that strategic decisions at Rio Salado are mission-driven, both in 2010 (N=28) and 2011 (N=29). Also Leadership Council members indicated that they had sufficient opportunity to participate in the development of Rio Salado’s Strategic Plan. In 2011, 100% of the survey respondents indicated agreement/strong agreement, an increase of over 10% from the 2010 survey results.
Core Component – 1d
The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Statewide Community College Leadership
In Arizona, the primary responsibility for community colleges resides at the local level, with the powers invested in each District Governing Board as defined by Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.). In addition, there are a number of coordinating and governing entities at the state level. The following descriptions are provided in the Arizona Association of District Governing Boards Handbook:

The Arizona Association of District Governing Boards (AADGB) represents the interests and concerns of district governing boards to federal, state and local entities. Membership is open to any district governing board of an Arizona public community college. According to AADGB’s Bylaws, the corporate purpose of the organization shall be the advancement and betterment of community colleges in Arizona by:

• Providing an organization for the exchange of information among district governing boards.
• Representing the interests and concerns of district governing boards on issues pending before the Arizona Community College Council
• Assisting district governing board members by providing timely information on legislation affecting community colleges
• Developing, implementing and supporting educational programs designed to assist district board members in understanding and carrying out their responsibilities
• Studying or authorizing studies of issues of concern to district governing boards to develop recommendations to district boards and other appropriate agencies
• Coordinating legislative advocacy efforts in concert with ACCPC, to promote a common agenda

The Arizona Community College Presidents’ Council (ACCPC) provides a means of maintaining communication between Community College Districts and a forum for addressing community college issues. Membership is open to the chief executive officer (CEO) of each community college district, college or campus in the State.

This organization’s stated purpose is to:

• Provide leadership in meeting community college needs in Arizona
• Provide a mechanism for communication between community college districts
• Provide a forum where common concerns and problems can be discussed, and where information, opinions and innovations can be shared
• Provide coordinated advocacy for community colleges
• Facilitate coordination of reports required by statute
The Arizona Community College Council (ACCC) authority derives from the Governor. Members are appointed by the Governor and include all of Arizona’s community college CEO’s and representatives from the rural and urban areas, both citizens at large and district governing board members. As such, the council is established, abolished, and its purpose are all under the direction of the Governor.

The ACCC’s stated purpose is to:

• Develop a recommendation for long-term coordination and governance of [the] community college system
• Propose revisions to the community college funding formulas
• In partnership with the Arizona Board of Regents and others, improve transfer and articulation of community college credits to ensure that a greater number of community college credits count towards a bachelor's degree
• Establish standards for the exchange of data between community college districts and the other education institutions of Arizona, including a longitudinal data system
• Establish statewide accountability and performance measures for the community college system

District Governance
The Maricopa Community Colleges are led collectively by a five-member governing board, a chancellor, an executive vice chancellor and provost, four vice chancellors, and 10 college presidents.

1d 1: Executive Organizational Structure
Governing Board

Governing Board members are elected from geographical districts throughout Maricopa County, to serve staggered six-year terms. Board members derive their powers to direct the activities of the District pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes Section 15-1444.

1d 2: Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board Members

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Governing Board Member</th>
<th>First Elected</th>
<th>Current Term Expires</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Randolph Elias Lumm</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>December 31, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Doyle W. Burke</td>
<td>2010 appointed*</td>
<td>December 31, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Donald R. Campbell</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>December 31, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Debra Pearson</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>December 31, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Dana G. Saar</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>December 31, 2016</td>
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*Mr. Doyle Burke was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Ms. Colleen Clark in District 1 after her resignation.

1d 3: Governing Board Districts

Governing Board members are subject to the provisions of the Arizona State Constitution and their own Code of Ethics. Their Manner of Governing (Amended February 22nd, 2011) is described as follows:

The Board will govern lawfully, in a manner that is nonpartisan, with an emphasis on a) integrity and truthfulness in all of its activities and practices, b) outward vision, c) encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, d) strategic leadership, e) clear distinction between Board and Chancellor roles, f) collective rather than individual decisions, and g) proactive leadership.

The MCCCD Governance Policy Manual encompasses governance policies and administrative regulations. The policies adopted by the Governing Board address such areas as Outcomes, Chancellor Limitations, Board-Staff Relations and Governance Process of the Maricopa County Community College District. The Administrative Regulations are rules adopted by the Chancellor for managing the District and address the areas of Fiscal Management, Students, Instruction, Auxiliary Services, Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Board Resources, and various guidelines and procedures.
Actions of the Governing Board gave rise to concern in 2009. The Board amended their Manner of Governing policy language to provide board members with the ability to become involved, either individually or collectively, in the operational functions of the District and/or the individual colleges. This amendment permitted Board members to focus on administrative or programmatic means and other responsibilities normally viewed as within the purview of the Chancellor or Chief Executive Officer. Resultant actions of some board members created a climate of uncertainty, fear and intimidation across the colleges in the District. An anonymous complaint was filed by employees of MCCCD alleging that the board was overstepping its role by acting as chief operating officer. As a result of the complaint, the Chancellor brought in a team of HLC Consultants and retired Community College Trustees from the HLC/NCA region to investigate. The details and resolution of this issue are explained fully under Criterion 1e.

The Chancellor
The Chancellor is the single District employee who reports directly to the Governing Board. In turn, the Chancellor is responsible for all authority and accountability of employees. The Chancellor delegates implementation of the administrative regulations mentioned above to appropriate personnel.

Chancellor’s Executive Council
Membership of the Chancellor’s Executive Council (CEC) is comprised of the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, College Presidents, District Faculty Senate President, and District Faculty Senate President-elect.

Rio Salado College Governance
Collaboration and a systems approach to leadership are the hallmarks of governance at Rio Salado College. These characteristics are clearly observable in the multilayered 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.

President’s Executive Council
This council is comprised of the College President, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Vice President of Administrative Services, the Vice President of Strategic Initiatives & Information Services, and the Dean of Public Services. The Executive Council meets at least twice a month to make decisions surrounding strategic College initiatives, and to serve in an advisory capacity to the College President.

Leadership Council
The Leadership Council is composed of Faculty Chairs, President’s Executive Council members, senior administrators, and employee group presidents and/or representatives (including MAT, PSA, and Adjunct Faculty Association). Between 2006 and 2010 (partly as a result of the recommendations that emerged from the consulting process referenced under Criterion 1a), this consolidated and expanded Council replaced the prior President’s Cabinet and Senior Administration Council, which had each included executive and senior administrators and employee group presidents. The Leadership Council engages in and contributes to strategic initiatives, which have included refinement of strategic planning goals and the strategic enrollment management process. These will be detailed under Criterion 2a. The Council meets approximately four to six times per year.
Faculty Governance
As noted above, the College benefits from an especially collegial and collaborative relationship among faculty and administrators. The College lives the shared governance model through a variety of systematic and institutionalized processes that support the Rio culture.

Rio Salado’s residential faculty are all voting members of the Faculty Senate. The small faculty cohort (22 full-time and one half-time) allows all faculty 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 for the Maricopa Community College District’s Faculty Association. The Constitution of the Rio Faculty Senate was last amended and approved in April 2009.

As noted earlier, faculty governance at Rio is a shared responsibility. Survey data support the effectiveness of this shared governance model. In spring 2010, 89.29% of Leadership Council members agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: “Leadership Council members have sufficient opportunity to participate in the development of Rio Salado College’s strategic planning documents.” Residential Faculty had 86.96% agree/strongly agree with the same statement, providing further evidence of the effectiveness of this model. In 2011, the Quality Assurance rating for the same statement in a combined Leadership Council/Residential Faculty survey was 100%, an increase of over 10% from the previous survey. These data show the level of investment that Rio Salado’s Leadership and Faculty have placed on participation in the development of the strategic plan.

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. First convened in 2009, 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, work 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 Instructional Council process will be explained more fully in Criterion 3b.

Development Team
The Development Team is a cross-functional body that supports Rio Salado’s Core Practices of Learning, Innovating and Partnering, as well as reflecting the College’s roots in Learning Organization theory. Established in 1994 and co-chaired by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the same Faculty Chair since its inception, the membership includes residential faculty, deans, directors and key personnel. The Development Team meets weekly and is the primary evidence of an organizational governance structure for implementing the College’s systems approach. Interdisciplinary and interdepartmental decision makers are all present,
allowing for collaborative and rapid consensus. The team regularly generates innovative practices that facilitate interdepartmental and interdisciplinary collaboration and communication. True to its name, this team develops and implements ground-breaking initiatives, which have included:

- The evolution from six, through 16, 26, and finally to 48, flex start dates
- The centralization of distance learning from a separate, “silo-ed” division to a centralized function “owned” by the entire college
- Providing access to the entire College online, including all support services in addition to online courses
- Early student success interventions, including a student call program
- A block calendar student schedule
- Sharing of best practices from business and industry

**The OpX (Operational Excellence) Team**

OpX is an offshoot of the Development Team. Managers and staff are tasked with operationalizing Development Team initiatives and streamlining processes and operations to create greater efficiencies and savings for the College. More information on these process improvements and the work of OpX is provided in Criterion 2c.

**Presidential Selection Process**

The effectiveness of Rio Salado College’s stable and integrated governance processes was clearly demonstrated during the presidential transition which took place in 2010. In December 2009, Dr. Linda Thor announced that she was leaving the presidency of Rio Salado after almost 20 years, effective February 16, 2010. Dr. Chris Bustamante, one of the College’s Vice Presidents, was appointed Interim President until a permanent president could be hired. At the College level, Dr. Bustamante had been an active member of the President’s Executive Council, the Leadership Council, and the Development Team. Dr. Bustamante had also participated in the Maricopa District’s Talent Management Program, designed to make internal candidates more viable for advancement, by building “a cadre of talent so that when opportunities become available, current and potential employees are recruited and selected to fit the needs of MCCCD.”

Shortly after this interim appointment, an ad hoc committee of faculty leadership (consisting of the Faculty President, President-Elect, and two past faculty presidents) met to discuss the possibility of approaching the Chancellor, Dr. Rufus Glasper, to request that the appointment be made permanent, without undergoing the usual extended external hiring process. The reasons for this initiative were these:

- Rio Salado is a unique college with a unique style of governance, which would be best led by a person who had intimate knowledge of the College culture.
- With an HLC Self-Study visit in the near future, the College wished to continue its stable leadership pattern.
• Because of his participation in College governance structures, employees generally considered Dr. Bustamante well-qualified to assume the permanent leadership role.
• As a participant in the MCCCD Talent Management Program, Dr. Bustamante was a beneficiary of the District’s “grow your own” succession planning initiative, and would therefore make an excellent choice.

The faculty leadership committee then invited the presidents of two other College policy groups – MAT and PSA – to join a united effort to propose to the Chancellor that Dr. Bustamante be appointed permanently to the position of President. Leadership of all employee groups agreed with this proposal, which was taken to the Chancellor in March 2010. Dr. Glasper wanted to ensure that employee leadership had defined a process that allowed the opportunity for all stakeholders – employees and community alike – to have input. This process was then defined by the Rio Salado employee committee, and after the Chancellor agreed to the process, a series of meetings with employee and community groups was scheduled for late April, 2010. At these meetings, a questionnaire was distributed which enabled individuals to provide confidential feedback to the Chancellor.

After review of the feedback, the Chancellor proposed the appointment of Dr. Bustamante as permanent President of Rio Salado. The MCCCD Governing Board approved this recommendation for appointment at its meeting in June 2010.

This process was remarkable in that it was a grass-roots effort showing unified support from all employee groups at Rio Salado College, and is clear evidence that the College’s governance structures were highly functional. This type of employee-led effort is believed to be unprecedented within MCCCD, and further demonstrates the extremely close-knit relationship between faculty and administration that exists at the College.

**Employee Groups**
The Maricopa District recognizes the following employee groups, each of which has its own policy manual. Additionally, an All-Employee Groups Policy Manual contains policies that apply to all groups.

• **Chancellor’s Executive Council** (CEC)
• **Residential Faculty**
• **Management, Administration, and Technology** (MAT)
• **Professional Staff** (PSA)
• **Adjunct Faculty**
• **Maintenance and Operations** (M&O)
• **Public Safety**
• **Crafts**
• **Specially Funded**

The District’s policies for these groups will be discussed further in Criterion 1e.
Core Component – 1e
The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

**MCCCDD District HLC Governance Issues**
As mentioned in Criterion 1d, an anonymous complaint was filed with the Higher Learning Commission on May 1, 2009, stating in part: “We believe our Governing Board is overstepping their role. They are acting as the chief operating officer and ignoring the shared governance structure.” In support of this accusation, the complaint cited the change in the Manner of Governing policy language (referenced above in Criterion 1d) and the “servant leadership” Board Action Item offered by the then-Board President, but not approved by the Governing Board. This item proposed the reduction in salaries of top-level administrators, the withdrawal of benefits, and the reallocation of funds “to front line service needs,” without any prior discussion with executive leadership or among any of the affected employee groups.

On May 13, 2009, the Higher Learning Commission requested, via letter to the Chancellor, a complete assessment of the anonymous complaint to determine compliance of the Maricopa District with accreditation requirements, specifically Criterion 1, Core Components 1d and 1e.

In August 2009, an independent consulting team composed of administrators and retired governing board members from across the United States was employed by the Chancellor to investigate the complaint. The team was chaired by Dr. Peg Lee, President of Oakton Community College, and included the following members: Dr. Gerald Baird, Executive Vice President, Johnson County Community College District; Dr. Michael Chipps, President, Mid-Plains Community College; Ms. Pearl Washington, former Board Chair/Member, Metropolitan and State Community Colleges; and Mr. Darrell Shumway, former Board Chair/Member, Pratt Community College. Dr. Art DeCabooter, President Emeritus, Scottsdale Community College, served as liaison with the consulting team.

From September 20-23, 2009, the consulting team visited the Maricopa Community Colleges and interviewed a number of individuals, including the following:

- the five Board members, both individually and at a special Board meeting
- College Presidents
- District Vice Chancellors, both individually and collectively
- students
- representatives of constituency groups and employee groups
- community members
- the Chancellor

A detailed report of the consulting visit with recommendations for resolution of the issues observed was presented to the Chancellor in October 2009, who reviewed it and responded by sending a copy to the Higher Learning Commission, with a letter containing a plan of action to implement the recommendations:

The following actions were implemented to resolve the issues noted by the consulting team:
Three Board Retreats on Governance were held on November 6, 2009, January 15, 2010, and January 29, 2010, respectively. Each was facilitated by ACCT facilitators, Mr. Wayne Newton and Dr. Norm Nielsen, and addressed directly the consulting team's recommendations, including the recommendation for governance training and orientation for Board members. Outcomes from the Board Retreats included clarification of the role of the Board, the role of individual Board members, the role of the Chancellor, team building, trust building, and a commitment to improved Board governance to benefit the Maricopa District and Maricopa students. The two January retreats were structured by the facilitators to respond directly to the priorities and action plan developed by the Chancellor and the Governing Board to implement the recommendations.

On January 12, 2010, a Board Retreat on Finance and Budget was conducted. Also at this meeting, the annual Board Election of Officers resulted in Mr. Randolph Lumm becoming Board President and Mr. Jerry Walker being elected Secretary.

At the Governing Board meeting of January 26, 2010, Board members discussed, as a First Reading Item, changes in language to their Board Policies including the Board President's Role and the Manner of Governing Policy. The language in the Manner of Governing Policy was returned to prior verbiage, so that there was a clear distinction based on the role of the Board to determine long-term outcomes in its governance role, and the role of the Chancellor to provide for the means to achieve those outcomes.

At the January 26, 2010 meeting, Board members also approved the Chancellor's recommendations and action plan related to implementing the strategies for enhancing teaching and learning and greater organizational effectiveness and efficiency now called the 21st Century Maricopa Initiative.

On February 11, 2010, the Chancellor sent an update letter to the Higher Learning Commission. It listed the specific actions and documents mentioned above that addressed the priorities and action plan of the Governing Board. The letter also specifically listed each recommendation from the consulting team's report, and reported progress on how it was being addressed and resolved. Governing Board members adopted the policy language changes noted above at their meeting of February 23, 2011.

On March 1, 2010, the Chancellor provided another update via letter to the Higher Learning Commission, outlining how he believed the Governing Board was addressing compliance with Criterion 1, specifically Core Components 1d and 1e. He invited the Commission to view recordings of recent Board meetings to ascertain for themselves that positive improvements had been made in Board civility and interactions between Board members themselves, and Board members with the Chancellor and other staff.

A further Board Retreat was held on March 2, 2010 with ACCT facilitator Dr. Narcissa Polonio, to continue discussions of the role of the Board, civility and code of conduct, and interaction with the Chancellor and other staff.

On May 18, 2010, the Higher Learning Commission sent a letter to the Chancellor accepting the final report, and noting that the Board had taken positive steps to ensure ongoing
compliance with the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation, particularly Criterion 1. The concerns raised in the complaint were considered to have been appropriately addressed. Another Board Retreat on governance was conducted on August 27 and 28, 2010, by Mr. Bill Charney, a noted consultant on Policy Governance. Mr. Dana Saar, candidate for the Board seat in District #2, was present.

Changes in the composition of the board also took place at this time. On August 24, 2010 Board Member Colleen Clark resigned with approximately two years remaining in her term, and Mr. Doyle Burke was appointed to fill Ms. Clark's unexpired term in District #1 in November 2010. Also in November, Board Member Jerry Walker was defeated by candidate Dana Saar. Orientation for both of the new members was started immediately.

On January 11, 2011, Mr. Dana Saar was sworn in for a six-year term as a Board member. Mr. Randolph Lumm was elected Board President for another year, and Mr. Doyle Burke was elected Board Secretary. Mr. Bill Charney conducted a second Board Retreat and reviewed revised policy language with Board Members at this time, and as a result of Mr. Charney's consulting work, the Board members discussed revised Outcomes related to their policy language on February 8, and adopted the revised language on February 22, 2011. Also in February, Board Members Dr. Don Campbell, Debra Pearson, Doyle Burke, and Dana Saar attended the ACCT Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C.

With the appointment of one new Board member and the election of another, extensive additional Board training and education, and changes to Board policies, the governance issues at MCCCD have been resolved and the integrity of the District’s governance structure has been restored. A review of Board policy language will provide this assurance. Also, videos of Board meetings are publicly available on the District's website.

**District Blue Ribbon Panel**

MCCCD Chancellor Rufus Glasper appointed a Community Member Blue Ribbon Panel on Internal Controls for the Maricopa Community Colleges on November 17, 2006, in order to develop internal controls over select business operations. Recommendations were sought in an effort to improve operations and better safeguard the public's assets. The Blue Ribbon Panel Report was released in February 2007.

Among the recommendations of the Panel were mandatory Public Stewardship and Ethics trainings for all employees, which were implemented in 2008. All Board-approved employees (full-time, part-time, one semester only, one year only, and specially-funded) are required to participate in this training every three years. For convenience of employees, the training is offered online. Additionally, the Office of Public Stewardship established the position of employee ombudsperson to provide informal, neutral, and confidential guidance on District or College-related concerns. Employees are also required to sign annual disclosure forms regarding conflict of interest, hiring of relatives, enrollment irregularities, internal control, travel policies, and a Blue Book acknowledgment. The Blue Book contains selected Governing Board policies and administrative regulations of the entire MCCCD, as well as the All Employee Policy Manual, and is updated each year.
Adherence to Federal, State, City, and District Laws and Regulations

Rio Salado College, together with the other MCCCD colleges, upholds and protects its integrity by following all applicable federal, state, local, and district regulations. These include:

- Civil Rights Act
- Americans With Disabilities Act
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act
- Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration Laws

The MCCCD Office of the General Counsel provides advice and counsel on legal matters to all District institutions. The Office of Equity, Opportunity and Engagement is an arm of Legal Services and provides support for adherence to Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action laws.

Detailed information about adherence to state and federal law, including State Authorization and national partnerships, is provided in the Compliance appendix.

District Processes

Employee Group Policy Manuals

As mentioned in Criterion 1d, the Maricopa Community Colleges maintain policy manuals for all 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. Employee policy manuals establish the rights, responsibilities, employment conditions, compensation, grievance procedure, and hiring practices for each of the employee groups. They are updated annually, and provide details regarding grievance rights and appeal processes. A collective manual also contains policies common to all groups.

Student Policies

Rio Salado College abides by the student policies established by the MCCCD. These policies are made available in the College Catalog and on the Student Policies page of the College website.

FERPA

The Maricopa Community College District has policies in place to ensure that all colleges comply with the regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which places restrictions on any school, college, or university receiving federal funds regarding the release of student records. Rio Salado College adheres to these guidelines, and also mandates that all employees who have access to the District’s Student Information System complete training on their FERPA responsibilities. This online training was developed by the District Office of General Counsel, and is accessible to employees, along with other FERPA information, on the MCCCD FERPA website.
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 reviews Human Subjects research proposals to ensure that the rights and welfare of study participants are protected. The IRB is made up of representatives from each of the colleges and the District office, and meets regularly to review proposals. The Rio faculty instituted a College Research Review Committee (CRRC) to comply with the District and national mandate, and the chair of the CRRC sits on the district IRB. The CCRC is charged with evaluating Human Subjects research that does not require full Board review.

Since the District IRB was convened, the following numbers of protocols have been approved for faculty, staff, and external investigators to conduct research at Rio Salado College:

1e 1: MCCCD Institutional Review Board Protocols Approved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Protocols Approved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 (to 10/5)</td>
<td>12</td>
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Internal Safeguards

The college has numerous contractual arrangements with external entities. These contractual agreements require review by the MCCCD Office of General Counsel and in some cases direct approval of the MCCCD Governing Board. Grant proposals are reviewed by the district Grants Office, approved by the Governing Board, and monitored for compliance by both the College and the District.

Services outsourced to private entities such as the bookstore, after-hours Technology Helpdesk and Instructional Helpdesk services, janitorial, landscaping, and alarm monitoring are continually monitored for the quality of services.

Risk Management Investigations and Audits

Maricopa Integrated Risk Assessment (MIRA)

MIRA is the Chancellor’s initiative aimed at assessing and managing risks and opportunities. The goal of MIRA is to embed risk assessment and management into the District’s daily operations.
State Audits
The District is audited annually by the Arizona State Auditor General’s Office. Copies of their reports are included in the District’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFRs). The MCCCD has always received an unqualified audit report, most recently for the FY 2009-10 CAFR. MCCCD has been awarded the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 18 consecutive years.

Internal Audits
Additionally, the MCCCD Internal Audit and Management Advisory Services Department (IAMAS) is charged with providing independent, objective assurance and consulting services, and with helping to ensure the efficient and effective use of resources, program operations, and stewardship over assets.

OSHA
In the Maricopa District, the establishment, implementation, and monitoring of specific college health and safety practices are the responsibility of the individual colleges as set forth in the Auxiliary Services Section IV of the Maricopa Governance Policy Manual. Rio Salado follows the codes and regulations specified by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and a District OSHA team provides support and training to the College as needed.

Rio Salado conducts itself in full compliance with all federal, state, and local regulatory agencies which govern conditions of employment, public education, and workplace safety.

External Accreditation and Regulatory Agencies
Rio Salado College has been continuously accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools since its founding in 1978. In its most recent reaffirmation process in 2002, Rio Salado was granted reaffirmation of accreditation for 10 years—the maximum award possible—with no follow-up reporting requested.

In addition to general accreditation, the following programs offered by Rio Salado College have specialized accreditation status from the following bodies:

- Dental Hygiene and Clinical Dental Assisting
  American Dental Association
- Dual Enrollment
  National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP)
- Teacher Education Programs (Special Recognition)
  Arizona Department of Education

Employee Grievance and Appeals Processes
As provided by Arizona State law and the MCCCDD, Rio Salado College has clearly stated policies in place to maintain a safe and welcoming environment for students and employees. Specific policies are included in the College Catalog, in District policy manuals for all employee groups as detailed above, which outline grievance rights and appeal processes, and through administrative regulations established by the MCCCD (described in Criterion 1d). Rio Salado College, as part of the Maricopa Community College District, conforms to and participates in the Public Stewardship Program that offers a 24 hour/7 day per week Concernline where employees can voice concerns and complaints in a confidential environment without fear of retaliation.
In College-wide surveys conducted in 2009 (N=213) and 2010 (N=419), employees responded to the question “I know where to access District policies and procedures when needed” with an 85% agree/strongly agree rate, and in 2010 with 83% agree/strongly agree. These response rates surpassed the target of 80% to attain Quality. In the same surveys, the question “I am knowledgeable about documented Rio Salado policies and procedures when needed” elicited 74.65% agree/strongly agree in 2009 which indicated a need for improvement, but in 2010 87.53% of employees either agreed or strongly agreed with a similar statement: “I am knowledgeable about Rio Salado policies and procedures pertaining to my job,” which was well above the Quality Assurance target of 80%, probably because the question was somewhat more specific and therefore, more clearly understood, and also because the N was considerably higher.

**Institutional Integrity**

Rio Salado College offers a full description of its vision, operating philosophy, student services and learning opportunities through publications, online information and public processes. Other examples include: state audits (as described above), reports to the MCCCD Board, the President’s Reports, and all documents sent to the State Legislature.

In addition, Rio Salado is a member of Transparency by Design: College Choices for Adults, which is a voluntary collaborative transparency effort addressing adult learners and online institutions of higher education. Data gathered by this organization are independently verified by WCET. This initiative will be explained more fully in the context of Program Review in Criterion 3b.

**Growth Issues**

Rio Salado College also demonstrates its institutional integrity by “scaling up” responsibly. Because of the College’s innovative culture and mission incorporating choice, access, and flexibility, Rio Salado is always looking for new “Blue Oceans” to explore. Managing rapid growth, while prioritizing initiatives to ensure that the high quality of the College’s offerings is maintained, is an ongoing challenge. The evidence clearly shows that the College has managed this over the past 10 years, and that its scalable systems are working. Details of how this is approached strategically through the planning and budgeting processes will be addressed in Criterion 2b.

**Academic 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 in the context of the institution. The following statement is included on the College’s public website for dissemination to all of its stakeholders.

*As an institution of higher learning, Rio Salado College promotes the principles of Academic Integrity with its associated ethics and values, namely: Honesty, Trust, Fairness, Respect, and Personal Responsibility. It is the duty of all stakeholders—including students, faculty, employees, clients and partners—to support the principles of Academic Integrity and incorporate them into all aspects of our core practices of Learning, Innovating, and Partnering.*

*Rio Salado College demonstrates its commitment to Academic Ethics and Integrity through an extensive set of programs, initiatives, and policies designed to publicly support and reinforce the*
above identified values and virtues, and to assist in the formation and continued development
of acceptable ethical behaviors and values among its students, faculty, employees, and other
stakeholders. These initiatives, programs, and measures include:

- College-wide plagiarism policy included in all courses
- Plagiarism warning preceding submittal of written assignments
- Plagiarism detection software and department procedures for enforcing plagiarism policy
- Syllabus elements that attest to the College’s valuing of academic ethics and integrity
- Integration of academic ethics content into the course material and assignments when appropriate
- Academic ethics and integrity workshops for students, adjunct faculty, and new employee orientation
- College-wide civility policy and enforcement that supports the principles of academic ethics, in
  particular mutual respect and civil behavior
- A conscientious and systematic review process through the faculty department chairs and the
  Vice President for Academic Affairs for fair investigation and review of student concerns and
  complaints, consistent with District policies
- The clear identification of a set of College-wide values attesting to the College’s pursuit of
  excellence and quality, which are communicated to all Rio employees and practiced by everyone

In spring 2011, Adjunct Faculty members were asked about Academic Ethics and Integrity
practices. The statement “Are you aware of Rio Salado’s Academic Ethics and Integrity Practices”
received a Quality Assurance rating of 91%, well above the 80% target. Of those respondents
who were aware of Rio Salado’s Academic Ethics and Integrity Practices, 96% understood
how these practices support Rio Salado’s mission statement. This is further evidence of the
integration of these practices across the College.

**Academic Misconduct**

**District Academic Misconduct Policies**

MCCCD Administrative Regulation (AR) 2.3.11 includes the following policies regarding
Academic Misconduct:

1. **Definitions**
   A. Academic Misconduct - includes misconduct associated with the classroom, laboratory or
      clinical learning process. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to,
      cheating, plagiarism, excessive absences, use of abusive or profane language, and disruptive
      and/or threatening behavior.
   B. Cheating - includes, but is not limited to, (a) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes,
      tests, assessment tests or examinations; (b) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond
      those authorized by the faculty member in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems,
      or carrying out other assignments; or (c) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or
      other academic material belonging to a member of the college faculty or staff.
   C. Plagiarism - includes, but is not limited to, the use of paraphrase or direct quotation of the
      published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment.
      It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency
      engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. Information gathered from
      the internet and not properly identified is also considered plagiarism.

2. **Sanctions**
   Any student found by a faculty member to have committed academic misconduct maybe subject
   to the following sanctions: (Note: sanctions A, B, C, and D may be imposed by a faculty member.
   The faculty member may recommend to the department chairperson and the appropriate
vice president of academic affairs or designee that sanctions E, F, or G be imposed. College suspension or expulsion will be imposed only by the appropriate vice president of academic affairs or designee.)

A. Warning - A notice in writing to the student that the student has violated the academic code.
B. Grade Adjustment - Lowering of a score on a test or assignment.
C. Discretionary Sanctions - Additional academic assignments determined by the faculty member.
D. Course Failure - Failure of a student from a course where academic misconduct occurs.
E. Disciplinary Probation - Disciplinary probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe sanctions if the student commits additional acts of academic misconduct.
F. College Suspension - Separation of the student from the college for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for readmission may be specified. (A suspension from one Maricopa Community College will apply to all other colleges/centers in the District.)
G. College Expulsion - Permanent separation of the student from the college. (Expulsion from one Maricopa Community College will apply to all colleges/centers in the District.)

3. Appeal of Sanctions for Academic Misconduct
Students can appeal sanctions imposed for academic misconduct by following the instructional grievance process. (AR 2.3.5; Appendix S-6)

Rio Salado College Academic Misconduct Policies
Rio Salado College Policies align directly with those of the District. The College's Academic Misconduct Policy and Civility Policy, reproduced below, are posted in every course syllabus. The wording of the Academic Misconduct Policy was updated and strengthened in September 2011 to address Plagiarism along with other examples of Academic Misconduct. The new wording, included below, addressed the increasing number of Academic Integrity violations that faculty have observed as the unauthorized online sharing and posting of copyrighted content, assessment content, and assessment answers becomes ever more prevalent.

Rio Salado College Course Syllabus Language
Academic Misconduct
Academic Misconduct includes cheating (such as conspiring to cheat, soliciting to cheat, attempting to cheat), plagiarism, fabrication on an assignment, or other forms of dishonest presentation.

Posting assessments on an unauthorized website, soliciting assessment answers and the unauthorized acquisition of assessments, assessment answers, or other academic material is cheating.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use of paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling or sharing of term papers or other academic materials. Information gathered from the Internet and not properly identified is also considered plagiarism.

We expect every student to produce his/her original, independent work. Any student whose work indicates a violation of the MCCCD Academic Misconduct Policy (including cheating and plagiarism) can expect sanctions as specified in the college catalog.
Rio Salado College uses software that uncovers plagiarism from student to student and other data sources on the Internet. If a student is found to have plagiarized content, grade consequences will be applied in accordance with departmental policies.

Civility Policy

- The faculty of Rio Salado place a high value on the importance of general ethical standards of academic behavior and expect that communication between students and instructors or among students shall maintain the level of formality and mutual respect appropriate to any college teaching/learning situation.
- Language or behavior that is rude, abusive, profane, disruptive, or threatening will not be tolerated. Activity of this type is Academic Misconduct as defined in MCCCD Policy AR 2.3.11. Students engaging in such behavior will be removed from the course with a failing grade. Additional sanctions may be applied pursuant to AR 2.3.11.

Rio Salado College Academic Misconduct Processes

Rio Salado has implemented a number of innovative and systemic processes to address the issues of Academic Integrity.

- The Academic Integrity Team is a cross-functional group responsible for maintaining Academic Misconduct records electronically via the College's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. In addition to documenting incidents of Academic Misconduct resulting from peer-to-peer and Internet 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. Members of the Team include Faculty Chairs, Deans, personnel from Testing Services, and programmers.
- The Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection System is a nationally-recognized innovation in higher education. This software, which was developed in-house, won the 2010 WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) Award, and an Arizona Quality Alliance Showcase in Excellence Award in late fall, 2011. The software works by scanning student assignment submissions across course sections and terms to identify possible cases of peer-to-peer plagiarism. The software is not “fooled” by changes in paragraph order, punctuation and capitalization. “Plagiarism Alert!” emails are sent to the Faculty Chair indicating how similar the two submissions are (e.g., 85% similar). They also contain all relevant student and course information, along with the full text of the submissions from both students. The submissions are presented together with exact matches highlighted to help facilitate accurate analysis. 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.
- Turnitin.com is an e-plagiarism detector that scans student work against a database that includes electronic documents previously published on the Internet. The College has subscribed to Turnitin since it was first introduced.
- In addition to documenting potential issues of academic misconduct, the Academic Integrity Team alerts the Faculty Chair when a student has a history of incidents across courses and/or disciplines. In such cases, the Faculty Chair will 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 Enrollment Services. The Academic Integrity 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 the MCCCD online policy manual.

**Student Grievance and Complaint Processes**

**Instructional Grievances**

The policy for documenting and responding to formal student instructional grievances states:

A student who feels that he/she has been treated unfairly or unjustly by a faculty member (full-time or part-time) with regard to an academic process such as grading, testing or assignments, should discuss the issue first with the faculty member involved. This conference should be requested by the student within fifteen (15) working days from the time the student knew or reasonably should have known about the unfair or unjust treatment.

The process followed at Rio Salado College to respond to Instructional Grievances in keeping with this policy is detailed in Appendix B: Federal Compliance Materials.

**Student Complaints—District Policies**

**Ombuds Processes**

The Maricopa District has been offering ombuds services to external constituents since 2001. In this capacity, the office assists external constituents (including students) as follows:

- Receives concerns from external constituents about some aspect of Maricopa's operations and forwards those concerns through the proper channels
- Upon request from an external constituent, provides information about and assistance in construing-Maricopa policies, regulations and procedures
- Facilitates an external constituent's efforts to maneuver through what the constituent feels to be “bureaucratic red tape”
- Informs the individual(s) initiating the complaint of the review's outcome and may offer advice as to an appropriate course of action
- Attempts to guide parties toward options that are fair and conform to MCCCD policies

The office does not resolve student complaints regarding grades.

**Student Complaints—Rio Salado College (Non-instructional)**

Rio Salado College follows the steps set forth by the Maricopa District as outlined in the Non-Instructional Complaint Resolution Process. The online policy manual states:

A student who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly or unjustly by any employee with regard to a non-instructional process such as a student or administrative service has the right to file a formal and written complaint according to the approved procedures.

The process followed at Rio Salado College to respond to Non-Instructional complaints in keeping with this policy is detailed in Appendix B: Federal Compliance Materials.
Documentation of Student Issues at Rio Salado College

Prior to 2003, the Helpdesk system was only used to track employee issues. In order to address the recommendation of the 2002 Visiting Team to develop an electronic tracking and reporting system for formal and informal student complaints, and in the spirit of Relentless Improvement, the College modified its existing system, and the Instructional Helpdesk became the primary intake and resolution center for student complaints. Instructional Helpdesk staff document student calls, emails, in-person visits, and complaints entered via the Suggestions/Problems/Feedback feature available on the public website. This provides a method for tracking student issues from initial student contact through resolution, and the College is able to document individual student complaints, identify patterns, and report on trends.

A number of improvements have been made as a result of this tracking and reporting process. For example, a 2009 analysis of data from the Instructional Helpdesk indicated that a large number of student complaints focused on issues related to instructor communication in online courses. In an effort to address these issues, the Rio Salado Faculty Chairs adopted a common set of Instructional Service Standards. These standards, which are clearly communicated to students via Course Syllabi and/or Welcome Letters, include minimum expectations for instructor/student communication – seven days or less to provide feedback on instructor-graded work, and 48 hours or less to respond to email messages. Though some departments adhere to tighter timelines, these minimum requirements help to manage student expectations for feedback in an online environment, and instructors are held accountable for these standards in their evaluations.

Analysis of student complaint data available via the Helpdesk system has also resulted in several enhancements to RioLearn, the College's proprietary learning platform, which will be addressed in detail in Criterion 3c.

Authentication and Verification Procedures

Rio Salado College continually updates authentication protocols for students and faculty with regard to facilitating identity across multiple systems supported by the College. At the District level, when a student is accepted into one of the MCCCD institutions, a Maricopa Enterprise ID (MEID) is created. Rio utilizes the student's MEID to create a secure username and password which is then utilized across multiple systems, including the College's Learning Management System, RioLearn. In order to manage the secure username and password, Rio utilizes a Microsoft Active Directory environment which allows the College to employ automated processes to activate and reset/change passwords for user accounts.

Security protocol at the College also includes continual tracking and evaluation of data gathered in relation to student and employee accounts. In order to identify potential authentication issues, the College monitors access logs for all user accounts and has built activity reports into most systems, including RioLearn. The logs include user information, date and time of access, what was accessed, and the IP address for the computer used to access the information. In addition to tracking within RioLearn, the College also tracks the number of password resets, the number of users that change password via a call to the Technology Helpdesk, students who have used either a Web form or a phone call to the Helpdesk to change their passwords, and the identity of the employee who last changed a password for a user.
Effects of Arizona Legislation

Arizona legislation related to immigration reform (e.g., Proposition 300, HB 2008, and SB 1070) has placed pressure on higher education professionals to verify citizenship status and to report undocumented immigrants to authorities. Maricopa Community College students are required to complete a Student Declaration of Citizenship or Status form upon registration. Rio Salado College has devoted time and energy to ensuring that the enrollment process retains its integrity and remains as seamless as possible for incoming students, while maintaining compliance with new legislative regulations.

Evaluative Summary

In reviewing the patterns of evidence, the Self-Study Planning Team has determined that Rio Salado College demonstrates significant evidence in support of the Core Components of Criterion 1, and has established that the organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Strengths (Q.A.):

• The mission documents truly reflect the reality of the College, and employees report a significant connection between their roles and the mission documents.
• Effective governance processes are in place to build collaboration and produce innovation. The Development Team is a stellar example of this cross-functional model.
• The Administration and Faculty Leadership enjoy a strongly collegial and mutually respectful relationship.
• The College continues to adapt to the diversity of its students and communities. Inclusiveness is a core organizational value.
• Academic Integrity processes and procedures have been institutionalized in the fabric of the College, utilizing technology in innovative ways, such as the Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism detector.

Challenges (R.I.):

• As technologies advance, institutional integrity efforts will need to keep pace with increasing opportunities for digital cheating.
• The College’s highly innovative culture will need to be consciously maintained in an increasingly competitive environment.

Planning for the Future:

• The College will need to consider ways to align the mission with the emerging national completion agenda.
• The College will continue to investigate and implement innovative means for maintaining academic integrity practices.
• The College will continue to develop its capacity to meet U.S. Department of Education and Higher Learning Commission regulations, including State Authorization requirements.
Criterion Two – Preparing for the Future

Criterion Statement: The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.
Core Component – 2a
The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

Institutional History of Planning and Decision-Making
To understand how Rio Salado College plans for the future and makes the decisions that result in the allocation of human, physical, and financial resources, it is useful to review the history and development of the processes that the College has adopted.

Continuous Quality Improvement and Total Quality Management
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 number of tools associated with these systems were examined. As a result, a major CQI tool was adapted and implemented for use in College-wide planning; this was the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle. Each phase of the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle emphasizes certain steps necessary for effective planning, implementation, and evaluation. The College's goals in following these steps were to be able to improve the quality of the College's instructional programs in an orderly fashion, and to be able to evaluate the results of changes made for this purpose.

2a 1: Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle

During the past two decades, the Plan-Do-Check-Act 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 use of the Cycle has placed greater emphasis on organizational learning, and has fostered a total systems approach to the planning and decision-making processes. College employees are familiar with setting targets to evaluate processes for Quality Assurance (Q.A.) in meeting the designated targets, or for Relentless Improvement (R.I.—the “Rio-ized” version of Continuous Quality Improvement).

The five principles of Peter Senge's Learning Organization, adopted and adapted by the College, include:

- Systems Thinking
  - Involves understanding the interrelationships of the system, rather than linear cause-effect chains
- Personal Mastery
  - Individuals gain the personal capacity to create results, accomplish goals, and work in a learning environment
• Shared Mental Models
  - Assumptions within an organization, and the way those assumptions are implemented and held

• Shared Vision
  - Creation of an engaging and shared view of future possibilities that elicit real motivation and commitment

• Team Learning
  - The communication and dialogue that must occur in order for a team to think together

Survey data have shown that while College leadership has a good awareness and understanding of the improvement cycle, this is less widespread amongst College employees in general. In the Leadership Council survey of spring 2010 (N=28), the statement “The College effectively supports continuous improvement and feedback loops” elicited 92.86% agreement/strong agreement, while in the Leadership Council survey of spring 2011 (N=29), the statement “Rio uses the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle to provide Quality Assurance (Q.A.) and promote Relentless Improvement (R.I.)” had 96.55% agree/strongly agree responses. However, in the fall 2010 Employee Survey (N=419), only 50% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that “Rio Salado uses the Plan Do Check Act (PDCA) to accomplish improvements,” while in the same survey the statement “Rio Salado values Relentless Improvement” garnered 80% agreement/strong agreement. These somewhat contradictory data seemed to demonstrate that the PDCA process is not sufficiently clear to employees below the leadership level.

Several interventions were implemented in 2010 and 2011 to address this issue. For example, “Q.A.” and “R.I.” posters and buttons were distributed, workshops were held explaining the principles and processes of Quality Assurance and Relentless Improvement, and a PDCA department contest was held for which departments created projects, using recycled materials, exemplifying how they used the PDCA cycle to evaluate and improve processes at the departmental level. It is hoped that these interventions will improve the Quality Assurance level of PDCA understanding when employees are next surveyed in late fall 2011.

Strategic Planning
Rio Salado’s strategic planning processes will be discussed in detail in Criterion 2d.

Budget and Financial Planning

Budget

District Level:
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.

The Vice Chancellor of Business Affairs is the chief financial officer for the District and reports to the Chancellor. Centralized support and technical assistance are provided by the MCCCD business services division to all MCCCD colleges. Such services include accounting, auditing (external and internal), purchasing, surplus and auxiliary services, accounts payable, payroll, grants administration, and budgeting.
College Level:
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 MCCCD 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 with each other and college administration to achieve the maximum use of budget resources. Hence, the budget is much more flexible and can be adjusted much 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 is illustrated below.

2a 2: Rio Salado College Budget Development Process

Rio Salado uses the 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. Some of these types of expenditures include copier needs, travel, office supplies, repairs and maintenance, human resource hiring requirements, technology, and capital equipment. Once budget requests have been submitted, reports are prepared for review by the Budget Analyst and the Vice President of Administrative & Employee Services. Changes are made, as needed, to balance the College budget with the total calculated by the District. These changes are reviewed by the Executive Council, which consists of the President, Vice Presidents, and Dean of Public Service. Once reviewed by the Executive Council with any additional changes made, the revised departmental budgets are redistributed to budget
managers for their review and input. Any additional changes recommended by budget managers are again reviewed and approved by the Executive Council. The College President has the final authority to approve the College’s budget before it is submitted to the District.

Multiple statements in the 2010 Leadership Council survey received a Quality Assurance rating of 100%, including the following: “Rio Salado College’s resources for day-to-day operations are effectively allocated to meet Rio’s mission and goals,” and “The College mission effectively drives planning and budgeting priorities.” Survey results from the 2011 Leadership Council survey were similarly strong.

Financial Planning

District Level
The District has developed a 15-year financial plan that looks back five years and forward 10 years. This plan incorporates all District Governing Board financial policies and objectives for financial operation of the District. The MCCCDDistrict Financial Plan FY2006-FY2020 was released in December, 2010.

College Level
The College’s financial position is impacted by three major factors: FTSE growth, out-of-state enrollments, and the 2004 General Obligation Bond funds. A detailed explanation of expenditures of the 2004 General Obligation Bond funds is provided in Criterion 2c.

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. This fund is where self-supporting auxiliary enterprise operations are recorded. Out-of-state tuition is the largest source of funding 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 boundaries 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.

Strategic Enrollment Management Planning
In the 2006 Enrollment Management Plan, College leadership noted that while Rio Salado had experienced more than a decade of exponential enrollment growth, the Institution might be facing flattening or possibly declining enrollment in the 2007-2008 academic year. This was foreseen as the result of a number of local and national factors—the struggling economy leading to declining enrollment across all colleges in the Maricopa District, a decrease in business and industry hiring, hiring freezes and retrenchments, the passage of Proposition 300 (requiring documentation of lawful status), and the growth in online course and program offerings across the United States, leading to increased competition for this sector.

In the Rio 2012 Strategic Plan created in 2007, the College committed to “actively manage enrollment with an integrated and Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan.” Strategic
Enrollment Management is, by definition, a comprehensive, institution-wide process actively integrated with the vision, mission, and the College strategic planning processes, rather than one limited to the Student Affairs department. Overall, the organizational structure and culture at Rio were ideal for the development and implementation of a SEM plan, given the College’s systems approach to supporting collaborative teams.

In order to first stabilize enrollment and then launch an effective SEM plan, the College implemented the following three-phased approach.

**Phase I – Student Enrollment and Support Services Stabilization**

The College hired and trained a team of temporary staff to handle the increased demand and decreased speed in processing which had been caused by the implementation of a new Student Information System, PeopleSoft, throughout the Maricopa District.

**Phase II – Recruitment and Outreach Initiative**

In fall 2008, the College launched the Outreach Center (OC). One manager and five temporary staff were responsible for recruitment and retention efforts using Rio’s Customer Relations Management System (CRM) for inbound and outbound campaigns. The team also provided support and coverage for Registration, Advising, and Financial Aid, as well as attending recruitment events and assisting with quality assurance studies.

The OC started making calls to students and prospective students in January 2009, and has attempted over 125 different types of campaigns. An example of an effective campaign was “Save the Student,” which was designed to promote the CPD115 Creating College Success course and targeted at students who failed, dropped, or withdrew multiple times from the same class. In 2010 the OC called 2,538 students, and 138 students enrolled in CPD115. Another successful example is the “Information Request” Campaign. Leads are generated through the College website and downloaded into the CRM system. Leads are called as soon as contact information is received, and emails are sent out, thereby eliminating mailing materials.

Each OC agent is responsible for making 100 calls per day, and quality assurance mechanisms are in place to monitor agent calls in conformance with the department’s service standards. For FY 2010-11, the Outreach Center processed 64,782 phone calls, with 44,694 being outbound calls, and attended 55 recruitment events.

**Phase III – SEM Integration**

In FY 2010-11, the College embedded the SEM plan into its Strategic Plan, which will be discussed in Criterion 2d. This new model provides increased efficiency and places student success at the forefront of the College’s strategic initiatives.

**Succession Planning**

**District Level**

The Maricopa Community Colleges have a number of programs in place designed to “grow our own” and prepare current employees to become competitive applicants to advance within the organization.
• **Talent Management Initiative**  
The Maricopa District Talent Management (TM) initiative is a “deliberate and conscious process of preparing, developing and retaining employees to meet the needs of MCCCD now and in the future.” Several different programs under the TM umbrella offer MCCCD employees the opportunity to participate in developing their skills and talents:

• **Executive Development Program**  
This program, which has had only one cohort to date, identified senior administrators who reported to members of the Chancellor’s Executive Council to prepare them to compete for positions in the highest echelons of District Administration. As mentioned in Criterion 1d, Rio Salado’s new president, Dr. Chris Bustamante, is one of two Rio Salado graduates of this program.

• **Leadership Advancement Program**  
The Leadership Advancement Program (LAP) is designed for MAT employees aspiring to enter or advance within the senior leadership ranks (e.g., vice presidents, division chairs, deans, associate deans, and directors). The program is built on the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Competencies for Leadership as well as internal MCCCD leadership principles. Six of Rio Salado’s administrators have completed the LAP.

• **Administrators from Faculty**  
The Administrators from Faculty Program (AFP) will have its first cohort in 2012-2013, and is designed to identify and prepare appointive faculty to become competitive applicants for senior administrative leadership positions identified for the LAP.

• **Chair Academy**  
The Chair Academy is a one year competency-based leadership program for academic leaders. Eight of Rio Salado’s 20 Faculty Chairs have gone through the program, or are currently enrolled, and 13 of Rio’s current administrators and managers have completed it as well.

• **Women’s Leadership Group (WLG) Mentor Program**  
The WLG Mentor Program matches interested employees with experienced mentors from colleges across the District, to focus on individual learning goals and also to be better equipped for professional opportunities throughout MCCCD. Between 2008 and 2011, 19 Rio Salado employees took advantage of this mentoring opportunity.

**Rio Salado Succession Planning**  
**Faculty**

• **Faculty Chair Mentoring**  
An extensive mentoring process is in place for newly-hired Faculty Chairs during their first two years of employment. The mentoring committee is 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 (the “VEEP” team referenced in Criterion 1d). Second-year mentees provide additional value for first-year mentees during group mentoring sessions, as they share their experiences from their first year of hire. 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.
• **Instructional Coordinator Model**

The Faculty Chairs at Rio Salado have developed a support model that will be described in detail in Criterion 3b. Non-faculty instructional coordinators, drawn from the ranks of experienced adjunct faculty, are hired to assist the Chairs with the many instructional responsibilities involved in running their departments. The skill set that is developed by the instructional coordinators will stand them in good stead as competitive applicants for future Faculty Chair positions.

**Managers**

• **Leaders Managing the Rio Way**

In addition to the WLG program described above, Rio Salado has conducted a two-year development program for managers entitled *Leaders Managing the Rio Way*, which will be described in more detail in Criterion 2b. An important component of the program was the assignment of experienced mentors. Forty-two supervisors participated in the program, assisted by 25 mentors.

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**Core Component – 2b**

The organization’s best resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

**Resource Base Allocation**

**Financial 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 FY 2011-12 budget for MCCCD is $1.4 billion, which represents a decrease of $205 million (12.7%) as compared to FY 2010-11.

• **Unrestricted General Fund (Fund 1)**

  Fund 1 is the main operating fund for the District. For FY 2011-12, the District general fund amounts to $684,000,000. This includes College and District Office operational funds including salaries and benefits of most faculty and staff, supplies and materials, fixed charges, communications and utilities, travel, and transfers.

• **Auxiliary Fund (Fund 2)**

  For the District, the FY 2011-12 Fund 2 budget totals $105,500,000. 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 such items as bookstore, food services, and other education-related services. Since Arizona State Law prohibits the use of state support funding for education provided outside the boundaries of the State, out-of-state educational operations are also recorded in this fund.

• **Restricted Fund (Fund 3)**

  The District’s Restricted Fund budget for FY 2011-12 is $223,400,000. As the name implies, these funds are restricted in use, and 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 $396,600,000 for FY 2011-12. These funds are used for new construction, major remodeling, major maintenance, land purchases, and capital equipment. During FY 2008-09, the Arizona State Legislature indefinitely deferred capital state aid. Therefore, most resources for this fund are provided by proceeds from the 2004 General Obligation (G.O.) Bonds (which will be described in detail in Criterion 2c), interest income, interfund transfers, and balance carryforward from prior years. The District levies a secondary property tax to support the debt service payments on the 2004 General Obligation bonds.

**Financial Audit – Memorandum of Understanding**
As indicated in Criterion 1e, the District is audited annually by the Arizona State Auditor General’s Office, and has always received an unqualified Financial Audit report.

The Arizona State Auditor General’s Office is not permitted to issue audit reports for individual MCCCD colleges. Consequently, in 1996, the North Central Association and MCCCD 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.

As explained in Criterion 1e, the MCCCD Internal Audit and Management Advisory Services Department (IAMAS) supports the vision, mission, and values of the MCCCD 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.

**Financial Strength**
An institution’s bond rating is a key measure of financial strength. MCCCD is one of a very small number of community college districts in the nation to maintain a AAA bond rating from all three agencies. This rating has resulted in saving the District $120 million dollars on the cost of financing Series A through D of its 2004 General Obligation Bonds. The total amount of these series is over $800 million. Another way to assess financial strength is to look at analysis trends of total net assets. The following chart shows the growth of the MCCCD general operating fund balance/net assets since FY 2000-01, and the amount of growth contributed by Rio Salado College. Since FY 2002-03 through FY 2009-10, the MCCCD fund balance/net assets have grown a total of nearly $400 million, and Rio Salado has accounted for $228 million, or 57%, of that total.
Although Rio Salado College does not have a bond rating or net assets of its own, it does have fund balances that the District allows the College to use in planning for future needs and objectives. MCCCD allows the College to carry over to the subsequent fiscal year balances that remain in Funds 1, 2 and 7. The amount that can be carried over in Fund 1 is limited to 3.5% of the adopted budget. There are no limitations on the carryover amounts in Funds 2 and 7. The chart below shows the amount of carryforward balances in these funds from FY 2002-03 through FY 2010-11. As illustrated, the total carryforward has been growing for the past two years and is at its highest level ever. The estimated total of all three funds as of June 30, 2011 is nearly $15 million, or approximately 18.6% of the College’s annual Funds 1 and 2 budgets.

These data demonstrate that Rio Salado College is very strong financially, and also has the backing of one of the most financially secure community college districts in the nation.

College Financial Systems

Most of the District’s and College’s financial systems have been automated and upgraded. The current system used is Oracle/PeopleSoft, which has been in place since 1996. Version 11.5.10.2 will be upgraded to Version 12 by the end of 2012. The financial system (CFS) is supported by a web-based reporting system, Web Financials. Real-time access to financial data is readily available to department budget managers.
Revenue Sources
MCCCD receives the majority of operating funds from three primary sources: property taxes (57.9%), student tuition and fees (32.6%), and the state of Arizona (1.0%). Other revenue sources include fund balance (6.0%) and federal support and interest (2.5%). Shown below is The Revenue Source Summary.

2b 3: Maricopa Community Colleges General Operating Fund 1 Revenue Source Summary - FY 2011 vs. FY 2012

Property Taxes
Property taxes are the dominant District revenue source and have been consistently supported by taxpayers. In FY 2011-12, property taxes provide 58% of total revenue in the general operating fund. The effects of the mortgage crisis and the drop in assessed property values have been factored into the calculation of the budgeted property tax collections, and are reflected in the increase in the property tax rates for the past two years. Primary tax levy is used for the operating needs of the MCCCD, and secondary to pay off general obligation bond indebtedness approved by the voters. The historical property tax rates for primary and secondary tax on real property are shown below.

2b 4: Property Tax Rates Per $100 of Assessed Valuation

Property taxes are a major revenue source for the operating and capital needs of the MCCCD. The table below provides historical information on the primary and secondary property tax rates for the last 10 years.
Tuition and Fees

The table below illustrates the historical tuition and fee rates from FY 2002-03 through FY 2011-12. While this increase seems large, it is needed to offset decreases of 86% in state aid appropriations during the same time period.

2b 5: MCCCD Historic Tuition and Fees FY 2002-03 through FY 2011-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Per Credit Hour</th>
<th>Annual (per Full-time Equiv.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>$46.00</td>
<td>$1,380</td>
<td>6.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>$51.00</td>
<td>$1,530</td>
<td>10.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>$55.00</td>
<td>$1,650</td>
<td>7.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>$65.00</td>
<td>$1,950</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>$65.00</td>
<td>$1,950</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>$71.00</td>
<td>$2,130</td>
<td>9.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$71.00</td>
<td>$2,130</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$71.00</td>
<td>$2,130</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$76.00</td>
<td>$2,280</td>
<td>7.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though tuition and fees have increased 65% since FY 2002-03, MCCCD remains very competitive when compared with regional and national averages for community colleges, and the lowest cost alternative when compared to the local public university. The national average tuition rate has increased an estimated 94%, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) average rate has increased 87%, and the Arizona State University (ASU) rate has increased 276% over the same period.

2b 6: Maricopa Community Colleges Historic Tuition and Fees Comparison FY 2002-03 through FY 2011-12

Source: Maricopa County Community College District Adopted FY 2011-12 Budget
### State Appropriations

Per Arizona Revised Statutes, state aid appropriations are based on a formula related to enrollment levels and inflationary increases and include operational and capital support. For several years the State has not fully funded the formulas. In FY 2009-10 the State eliminated capital state funding, and for FY 2011-12 it reduced operational state funding to the Maricopa District by 85%. Currently, the State of Arizona provides $7 million of operational state funding. This amounts to 1% of the general operating fund budget and 0.5% of the entire District budget. It is very possible that during the next several years, state support will be eliminated entirely.

### Carryforward/Capital Fund Transfers

Rio Salado takes full advantage of the District guideline that allows the College to carry forward up to 3.5% of its unexpended Fund 1 base budget into the subsequent fiscal year. In addition, the College can transfer some of this balance to the capital fund (Fund 7). As shown in Exhibit 2b 2, the total amount of unexpended resources in Funds 1, 2 and 7 is increasing and is at its highest level ever. The amount for Fund 1 remains relatively constant at $1.8 million. The balances in Funds 2 and 7 are growing and currently sit at approximately $8,600,000 and $4,500,000 respectively.

In FY 2009-10, the State suspended the state aid appropriation for capital as described in the Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S. §15-1464). These carryforward balances will allow the College to transfer resources to the capital Fund 7 for future technology and educational equipment needs, as well as facilities.

### Expenditure Analysis

As noted in Criterion 1a, the mission of the MCCCD Governing Board is focused on student learning. This emphasis is evidenced by the fact that over the past two years the MCCCD District Office has committed 75% of the general operating fund budget to the colleges where teaching and learning take place, while retaining only 8% for District operational support. These expenditures are shown in the chart below.
Rio Salado’s FY 2011-12 share of the MCCCD general operating fund budget allocated to the colleges is 12%. Yet, per the FY 2011-12 adopted MCCCD budget, Rio Salado generates 18.8% of the total District FTSE. The College has chosen to allocate these resources as shown in the chart below. The chart compares the allocation of general operating budget resources of Rio Salado College to the other MCCCD Colleges. Rio spends a greater percent of its budget resources on instruction and academic support than the average of the other nine MCCCD Colleges (67.3% vs. 63.8%). Couple this statistic with the fact that Rio operates 27% more efficiently than its sister colleges, and it is easy to understand how the College can successfully achieve its goals and objectives with the resources it has available. The chart also shows that Rio Salado College spends over 60% less than its sister MCCCD colleges on operations and maintenance. This is possible because of the College’s emphasis on distance and non-traditional rather than campus-based learning modalities.

Even though the Maricopa District is in the middle of an economic recession, its enrollments and general operating Fund 1 annual budgets continue to grow. Since FY 2002-03, Rio Salado’s
operating budget has grown 129%. The chart below shows the strong correlation between enrollments and the budget. This is due to the fact that the main contributor to the growth of the operating budget is Enrollment Growth Funding (EGF) which is calculated and provided by the Maricopa Community Colleges District Budget Office.

2b 9: Historical Comparison of Operating Budget vs. Enrollment

Personnel expenses account for the largest portion of costs to the College, including salaries and benefits, as demonstrated in the following Expenditure Classification by Object Code.

2b 10: Rio Salado College Expenditure Budget by Object Code FY 2011-12

Future Planning
As part of scaling up responsibly (addressed in Criterion 1e), and in order to plan effectively for unforeseen future challenges, Rio Salado College must first understand its past and present performances. It must have a clear picture of its accomplishments and what resources were expended to achieve those outcomes. To this end, the College is developing a very comprehensive, real-time cost management system, that allows for instantaneous review of all cost components that aggregate to a total cost per FTSE for the various FTSE categories that are tracked by college administration.

These categories, which are meaningful to administration in making business decisions and tracking performance, are:
Communities – Courses delivered in-person to community members at one of Rio’s locations and not part of one of the other categories listed below. This includes education delivered to inmates at state and federal prisons and paid for by the prison as part of their rehabilitation and re-entry programs.

Distance Learning – Comprised of all programs that deliver teaching over distance, including online, mixed media, print-based, incarcerated distance, and independent study.

Dual Enrollment – College-level courses delivered to students who are currently enrolled in high school as juniors and seniors. Courses are taught by approved, certified high school instructors during normal high school hours.

Education Service Partnerships (ESP) – Education delivered via partner corporations and government agencies who provide the education to new or continuing employees at no cost to the corporation or the employees. Some examples are Correctional Officers Training Academy, Cox Communications, Discover Financial Services, Progressive Insurance, USAA, and US Airways.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)/General Education Development (GED)/English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA) – These classes are funded by the Adult Education Division of the Arizona Department of Education, and are 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.

After the cost per FTSE project is completed, Rio Salado will be able to gather trend expenditure data to forecast future cost per FTSE performance.

Student enrollment is the other major parameter that the College needs to be able to predict. Rio Salado College has developed a FTSE forecasting model, but it has only been implemented for the current fiscal year. This is invaluable for helping Rio project ending carryforward balances, but needs to be expanded to include a five-year projection.

With these two major financial modeling systems, Rio Salado is in the process of developing a very detailed five-year plan as an integral component of the College’s strategic planning. “What-if” modeling techniques will allow the College to plan for a large number of possible variables. It will also be operational in real-time, so that as events occur, the model can quickly be adjusted.

This system will allow the College to continue to plan for an ongoing challenge—double-digit growth—as noted in the 2002 self-study report. Being able to predict future resource requirements will allow the College to “scale up” deliberately, rather than as a reaction.

Human Resources: Hiring
As noted in Criterion 1d, by design, the full-time employees of Rio Salado College fall primarily in the areas of administration and support. At its inception, Governing Board decree established that the College would have a limited number of full-time faculty. Also, because of the extraordinary student support infrastructure that the College maintains in the absence of a traditional physical campus, and the extremely distributed nature of Rio’s student body, this employee structure is necessary in order to provide services that afford all students the opportunity to succeed.
As part of the MCCCD, Rio Salado abides by District guidelines which follow federal regulations and define staffing, hiring qualifications, and hiring processes for each employee group. For the past 10 years, the Rio Salado Human Resources department has conducted all full-time hiring functions in-house, in accordance with the guidelines set by the District Office. This has expedited the hiring process, and also allows for close interaction between administrators and managers who chair the hiring committees and who are experts in the required qualifications needed from applicants, and HR personnel who can provide guidance throughout the advertising, interviewing, and hiring processes.

Rio Salado College’s position openings are advertised weekly on the MCCCD Human Resources website.

For high-profile 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, when the College hired new Faculty Chairs in the areas of Psychology and English in 2010, in addition to the Chronicle of Higher Education, advertisements were placed in Latinos in Higher Education, The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, Indian Country Today, the National Association of Asian American Professionals, Diverse Jobs, APA PsycCareers, etc.

The College Human Resources department also handles the first step of all employee relations issues.

The following chart shows the breakdown of Rio Salado employees by employee group, gender, ethnicity, and years of service. The ethnic breakdown of employees is considered in more detail below in Exhibit 2b 12 in the context of the ethnicity of the College’s student body and Maricopa County.

2b 11: Rio Salado College Employee Group Demographics and Years of Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Group</th>
<th>CEC</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>MAT</th>
<th>Professional Staff Association</th>
<th>Maintenance and Operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100</td>
<td>174</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Service at Rio Salado</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-4 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
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<td>15-19 years</td>
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<td>20+ years</td>
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</table>
Maintaining a Diverse Workforce

The College makes consistent efforts to develop and maintain a diverse workforce, in keeping with the Maricopa District’s Affirmative Action Program. The District also routinely places advertisements in publications and on websites targeted to specific minority populations, as illustrated in the MCCCD Advertisement Schedule for Minority Faculty/Staff Recruitment 2011-2012.

In September 2011, the College’s full-time employees represented the following ethnic breakdown, as compared with the College student body, and the population of Maricopa County:

2b 12: Rio Salado College Credit Student and Employee Ethnicity Data with Maricopa County Census Data

The percentage of ethnic minorities employed by Rio Salado has increased in all categories since 2002. The ethnic diversity of employees is well-aligned with the majority of Rio Salado College students, and generally well-aligned with the County in which the College is located.

Human Resources: Employee Development

Rio Salado College has a deliberate and intensive process of developing and retaining employees. Through extensive orientation, training, and continuing education, the College focuses on developing and growing a workforce that has a deep understanding of the Rio Culture and mission documents. Employees are change-adept, and therefore able to respond to the innovations and new directions that are implemented at the College.

The data shown in Exhibit 2b 11 for years of service break down as follows for the College as a whole:

2b 13: All Employees combined: Years of Service
It is notable that 72.10% of employees have been hired within the past 10 years; 18.4% of those within the past two years alone. As a result, the College devotes considerable resources to the orientation, training, and development of both new and continuing employees.

**New Employee Development**

**New Employee Orientation**

The New Employee Orientation (NEO) is an eight-week introduction to Rio's culture for both full- and part-time employees (who were included as of April 2010). Conducted by staff of the Rio Employee & Organizational Learning (EOL) department, the NEO is offered in the form of a hybrid course that includes sessions with the College President, the College Vice Presidents, and the Employee Group Representatives. Employees also complete assignments through RioLearn, the College's customized learning management system, thereby enabling all new employees to become familiar with it. Assignments include defining key concepts of the Rio Culture and conducting interviews with their supervisors. Upon the completion of Rio's NEO, employees receive an “L” (Learning) icon and their personalized plaque for displaying this and future icons earned through the College's Rewards & Recognition program, which will be described in more detail in Criterion 4a.

Three hundred and sixty-nine employees underwent NEO training from 2006-2011. This figure includes part-time employees as of April 2010. Taking into account the time commitment required by employees and trainers, the College estimates it has invested over $180,000 in employee hours for New Employee Orientation training.

**The Rio Way**

After completion of the NEO, full-time employees are qualified to take the next level of training, known as The Rio Way, which is completed during the first year of employment. The format of this 16-week program is a hybrid learning experience, whereby part of the program is delivered online (allowing for a deeper immersion into the RioLearn LMS) and the remainder is conducted in a more traditional workshop learning environment. The Rio Way on the Job Learning Guide is an assessment instrument incorporated at the conclusion of the training, which can be used to evaluate the core competencies, and then further incorporated into a personal development plan that is updated during annual evaluations, if elected by employees and their supervisors.

Data from evaluations conducted at the end of the in-person training show a consistent theme: Employees value the opportunity to get to know, network, and collaborate with individuals from other departments. A graduation luncheon is held at the conclusion of The Rio Way training, and it is observable that the cohorts of employees who have moved through the training develop a strong collegial bond, which carries over into their work and enables them to be successful as a part of Rio's collaborative systems culture. Supervisors are invited to accompany their employees to the graduation, where employees are presented with a completion certificate and Rio Way icon by the College President.

During 2006-2011, 177 employees completed the full Rio Way training. Taking into account the considerable time commitment required by employees and trainers, the College estimates it has invested close to $170,000 in employee hours for Rio Way training.
The discrepancy between the New Employee Orientation completers (369 employees) and the 177 employees who completed the full training can partially be explained by the fact that certain groups of employees are exempted from the full training, and also that the NEO includes part-timers.

**Ongoing Employee Development**

**District**
The Maricopa Community Colleges offer an extensive slate of professional and personal development opportunities for employees. The Employee and Organizational Learning Team (EOLT) is a unit of the Employee and Organizational Development department and provides personal and professional learning opportunities offered through a variety of methods on topics relevant to Maricopa, as illustrated in the Fall 2011 Learning Opportunities Catalog. These include new employee orientation, supervisory and leadership-related training, diversity and inclusion training, a mentor program, career development training, health, safety, and environmental training, among others.

**Rio Salado College**
Rio Salado has undertaken a number of College-wide 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 major Rio employee development initiatives from the past five years are:

- **Diversity and Inclusiveness Training**
  As detailed in Criterion 1b, extensive and ongoing employee development is offered at both the District and College levels in the areas of Diversity and Inclusiveness.

- **Crucial Conversations**
  *Crucial Conversations* workshops, based on the book of the same name, were offered to employees at all levels of the organization between 2006 and 2008. This training equipped employees with the skills required to handle difficult conversations in a candid and forthright manner, while remaining respectful. Two hundred and eighteen employees underwent this training.

- **Leaders Managing the Rio Way**
  This comprehensive, two-year program began in late 2006. *Leaders Managing the Rio Way* was offered to all supervisors at the College, and incorporated *Crucial Confrontations* training (based on the book of the same name) designed to enable supervisors to identify and resolve performance gaps in their supervisees. This was followed by sessions on specific supervisory topics, along with a regular series of Brown Bag events featuring guest speakers, and the assignment of rotating mentors from the ranks of administrative and faculty leadership. Forty-two supervisors participated in the program, assisted by 25 mentors.

- **Follow this Path**
  In 2009, EOL began facilitating book discussions with managers to increase employee engagement, through the OpX team mentioned in Criterion 1d. The first book, *Follow This Path*, led to the creation of a toolkit of best practices and the establishment of standards for exemplary Rio Salado manager/supervisor performance. This toolkit is available online and content is still added occasionally. Fifty-eight supervisors and managers participated in this training. As a result of principles learned during the study of this book, *StrengthsQuest* training was subsequently provided to all Rio Salado employees and is an ongoing initiative.
In addition, the Employee Engagement Survey was developed in accordance with the principles of *Follow this Path*. Data from the 2009, 2010, and 2011 administrations of this survey are referenced in context, and the full reports are available in the **Resource Room**.

- **StrengthsQuest**
  Between 2008 and 2011, 653 Rio Salado employees underwent StrengthsQuest training and took the Strengths assessment to gain an understanding of how to use their strengths for enhanced job performance and team building. Of this number, 507 employees were trained using **Renewal Funding** from the District office, which will be covered in more detail in Criterion 4a. StrengthsQuest sessions continue to be offered twice a year at various locations throughout the Valley so that employees from the College's locations have access to the training as well. Additionally, ongoing assistance is given to managers who request help with follow-up activities for their individual departments. Twenty-five departments received customized follow-up training on request in 2009-2011.

- **Speed of Trust Training**
  Speed of Trust is a training program developed by Stephen M.R. Covey of the Franklin Covey Institute. Rio Salado College introduced *Leading at the Speed of Trust* as a mandatory training for the College's senior administrators and faculty leadership early in 2011. Participants prepared by asking their supervisors, supervisees, and colleagues to complete Trust questionnaires that enabled them to learn how their credibility was perceived by others, and then underwent an intensive three-day training program aimed at making the building of trust an explicit outcome of their work. The 42 members of the Leadership Council completed the training first, and *Leading at the Speed of Trust* was then extended to managers across the College during several sessions offered during 2011, to a further 140 individuals. Also in 2011, *Working at the Speed of Trust* was introduced for front-line staff employees. The Trust workshops have the ultimate goal of creating a high-trust workplace where people feel valued, resulting in improved productivity and increased collaboration between departments. In Rio's systems culture, this training was seen as a good fit to reinforce concepts already in place. EOL anticipates offering this training to a total of 230 employees.

**Customized Training**
Employee and Organizational Learning provides customized training to individual department managers upon request, to meet their employees' needs. Over the past five years, examples of these have included *Communicating to Astonish the Rio Way* (196 participants), Telephone and Conflict Training, (33 participants), Customer Service Training (66 participants), *Improving the Core Value of Professionalism*, and *Building your Circle of Trust* (42 participants).

Survey data show that employees recognize the value in these learning opportunities provided by EOLT, but that this is an ongoing challenge. In Employee Engagement Surveys conducted in spring 2009 (N=421), spring 2010 (N=466), and spring 2011 (N=348), the statement “This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow at work” had 79.2%, 78.62%, and 76.26% agree/strongly agree responses. The statement “There is someone at work who encourages my development” showed 75.78% 73.04% and 75.44% agreement/strong agreement. All of these data are slightly below the Quality Assurance target of 80%. It is hoped that the newly-convened Supervisor Team (described below) will address these issues as part of its mandate.
**Development Team Book Study**
As detailed in Criterion 1d, the Development Team is a cross-functional group that supports Rio Salado's Core Practices of Learning, Innovating and Partnering, as well as reflecting the College's roots in Learning Organization theory. Beginning in 2010, Development Team members have undergone a process of intensive study and discussion of a series of books relating to the **Core Practices:**

- **Learning:** *Brain Rules*, by John Medina
- **Innovating:** *The Ten Faces of Innovation*, by Tom Kelley
- **Partnering:** *Power of 2*, by Rodd Wagner and Gale Muller

These books have also been adopted by the OpX Team. Through learning activities associated with these materials, these cross-functional teams gain a deeper understanding of the College's culture and how the Core Practices inform Rio Salado's collaborative and systemic practices.

**College-wide Meetings**
Twice each year, a College-wide meeting is held for all employees. In addition to a "State of the College" update from the President, these meetings may include presentations from different departments to heighten awareness of departmental functions and initiatives to improve awareness among College employees, or a national speaker on a topic of interest in higher education. Over the past few years, topics have included Robert Wendover from the Center for Generational Studies who addressed workforce trends, a Rio Salado 30th Anniversary retrospective featuring guest panelists from the College's early years, and Josh Jarrett of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation who spoke about the national completion agenda in fall 2011.

In the employee survey of fall 2009 (N=213), 79.13% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “College-Wide meetings are effective in providing me with information about college accomplishments and goals,” just shy of the 80% Quality Assurance target. In fall 2010 (N=419), this statement was in Q.A., with 83% of employees in agreement/strong agreement.

**Formalizing and Communicating More Effectively Through Employee Development Evaluation**
In the 2002 final report of the HLC visiting team, the following was noted:

> In its self-study (p. 174) the College acknowledges that although “a great deal of planning is ongoing at the departmental level . . . much of this activity is held in departmental memory by personnel rather than written form.” The team observed this phenomenon as one of the indicators of the need for formalizing and communicating more effectively the process of continuous improvement across and for the entire institution that is so much a part of the culture of the organization.

In the years since that time, much of the organizational training detailed above has been focused on the need to ensure that in the innovative and fast-moving environment that constitutes the "norm" at the College, employees are equipped with the necessary skills to communicate well and work collaboratively. There has also been a focus on improving
interdepartmental communication. However, survey data have shown that more needs to be done in this arena. In the Employee Surveys of fall 2009 (N=213) and fall 2010 (N=419), the statement “Supervisors communicate information about updates and changes that I need for my job” elicited 73.17% and then 76% agree/strongly agree, respectively. While this showed improvement, it was still short of the 80% Quality Assurance target. More telling was the response to the statement “Communication across departments about updates and changes is effective.” In fall 2009 the agree/strongly agree percentage was 54.9%, and this had fallen to 51% in fall 2010. Because Rio Salado is a fast-moving organization with change as a constant, it is evident that further intervention is required to keep employees across the College apprised of developments and initiatives at the institutional level.

Based on these data, sessions have been held in which supervisors strategized ways to improve communication within and between departments. In fall 2011, it was decided that this effort needed to be escalated and institutionalized. A standing Supervisor Team was convened, comprised of all personnel who supervise employees, with the goals of maximizing employee engagement by sharing best practices, clarifying the supervisory role and responsibilities, and encouraging ongoing personal development (as a response to Employee Engagement survey data, referenced above). An important function of this team is also to identify, share, and emphasize important information that needs to be communicated at the department level.

Additionally, Student Affairs holds a half-day in-service training for all front line employees on a monthly basis (10 times per year) for ongoing training and development, in addition to meetings of their Collaboration Team, and Departmental meetings.

**Sustainability Training**
As part of Rio Salado’s STARS initiative (described inCriterion 1e), Rio Salado College employees were asked to complete an online Sustainability workshop developed, implemented, and instructed by the Faculty Chair for Physical Science/FON in 2011, for the College to earn STARS credit for the Human Resources category of PA&E. One hundred and five employees completed this formal training on Sustainability as it relates to the triple bottom line during their scheduled work hours, and received Sustainability icons for their employee plaques as part of the Rewards & Recognition program. The College earned a total of 15.78/19.75 STARS points in this category.

**Professional Growth Funds**
Professional Growth Funds are available from the District office for Faculty, MAT, and PSA employees. These programs and the amounts expended will be discussed in Criterion 3b and Criterion 4a.

**Human Resources: Lateral and Peak Service Initiatives**
In 2008, as a response to the decrease in funding and resources and increase in processing time that resulted from the MCCCD conversion to PeopleSoft SIS, the Student Affairs department
launched two initiatives to maintain existing service standards for students. For both initiatives, the goal was to identify and train personnel outside of Student Affairs who could then assist with inbound phone calls and associated transactions during the peak enrollment periods (August and January).

**Peak Service Model**
Identified employees were provided with basic level training and access to a knowledge base in order to answer general information questions, such as:
- How do I get an official transcript?
- What are your hours of operation?

By redirecting these types of calls via an electronic phone tree, the College was able to dedicate its highly-trained staff to the processing and resolution of more complicated student transactions, such as admission and registration. The Peak Service program was in place during the 2009-2010 and the 2010-2011 academic years. The College has now concluded that all activity can be considered at peak, and is continuing with only the similar (but ongoing) Lateral Service Model.

**Lateral Service Model**
The Lateral Service Model was developed following the implementation of the PeopleSoft SIS system in 2008. The College identified a team of employees from departments outside Student Affairs to receive training on general information, admission, and enrollment, in order to increase staff levels during peak enrollment periods and thereby improve the student experience. This team received the same training as the Registration team, and assists with enrollment during the following busy times:
- Every Monday
- The day following a holiday
- August
- January

The lateral service model contributes not only to an improved student experience and a more efficient and effective service model, but also increases interdepartmental collaboration.

**External Resources (Outsourcing)**

**Outsourcing of Instructional and Technology Helpdesk Services**
For the past several years, the College has contracted with Perceptis to provide after-hours coverage for both the Technology and Instructional Helpdesk services, thereby enabling 24x7 telephone Helpdesk services for students and employees. Perceptis employees are trained in technology support and in Rio's systems, and can provide assistance and troubleshoot routine issues. More information about Perceptis will be provided in Criterion 3d.

**Outsourcing of Student Affairs General Inquiries**
In addition to increasing the College's part-time workforce and cross-training employees from other departments to assist during peak enrollment periods, the College identified the need to outsource general information inquiries during peak periods and outside normal operating hours. The College thus expanded the scope of Perceptis, training a team to address general information calls. The College uses the service when required beyond normal hours of operation, and during staff trainings and in-service sessions.
Outsourcing of Financial Aid Inquiries
In fall 2011, the College commenced outsourcing tier 1 Financial Aid calls to Perceptis FA, a new call center staffed by Perceptis agents trained in financial aid. The College continues to experience a 50% annual increase in Financial Aid applications, and this will allow the department to focus internal resources on the accurate and timely processing of student aid applications.

Partnering with Perceptis through these various initiatives allows Rio Salado to provide access to Helpdesk services 24x7, meet seasonal spikes more cost effectively, increase the number of students served, improve operational efficiencies, and thereby improve the overall end-user experience.

Outsourcing of Tutoring Services
Rio Salado contracts with Smarthinking.com to provide 24x7 tutoring services as an adjunct to the in-person tutoring offered to students. This will be described in more detail in Criterion 3d.

Outsourcing of Virtual Reference Services
Rio Salado is a participant in the District-wide Ask-a-Librarian service, which is outsourced to QuestionPoint for after-hours service, allowing for 24x7 coverage. This will be described in more detail in Criterion 3d.

Physical Resources and Master Planning Locations
Although Rio Salado College is a non-traditional institution that specializes in distance learning, accelerated formats, and customized programs, physical facilities are still needed in order to serve both online and in-person students. In addition to the administrative and student services headquarters in Tempe, Arizona, the College operates eight additional permanent physical locations and leases seven more, all located throughout Maricopa County, which is the fourth most populous county in the United States (3,817,117 according to 2010 U.S. Census data). In addition, the College teaches classes in high schools through its Dual Enrollment program, and at business and industry locations. Therefore, service centers range anywhere from a testing center co-located on a high school campus to a fully functional College site, depending upon the community need.

The following chart indicates the growth in the total square footage of the College-owned physical facilities since 2002.

2b 14: Facility Space vs. FTSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
<th>FTSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>FY02</td>
<td>14,1851</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY03</td>
<td>14,1851</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY04</td>
<td>15,469</td>
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<td>FY05</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY07</td>
<td>2,402,920</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY08</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY09</td>
<td>2,679,760</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FY10</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY11</td>
<td>3,195,760</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY13</td>
<td>4,820,880</td>
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The major funding source for these new facilities has come from the MCCCD General Obligation (G.O.) Bonds that voters approved in 2004. Seventy-six percent of all voters endorsed the measure to issue $951 million in general obligation bonds. Broad support of the Maricopa County Community College District by the diverse electorate was evidenced by the fact that the ballot passed in every precinct.

2b 15: Rio Salado Locations

Rio Salado College's allocation of the 2004 G.O. Bond dollars was approximately $64.5 million, or about 7% of the total. The allocation consisted of a flat amount of $50 million, plus $10.4 million to completely demolish the existing buildings and construct 33,000 square feet of new space at 7th Avenue, and $4.1 million for two new service centers of 7,000 square feet each, located at the College's discretion anywhere in Maricopa County.

The flat $50 million allocation included:
- $26.6 million to construct an additional administrative facility located near the Rio Main Tower at 14th street in Tempe
- $3.1 million to renovate the Lifelong Learning Center in Surprise
- $12.5 million for technology equipment
- $5.2 million for Occupational Education related equipment purchases
- $700,000 for upgraded radio station equipment
- $1.9 million for major maintenance, security, and legal compliance

Also included in the 2004 General Obligation Bond planning were additional operating funds so that Rio Salado College would be better able to operate the new facilities. The funding was initially $15 per square foot for new facilities and $5 per square foot for renovated. In 2009, this was changed to $10 per square foot for new facilities and the funding for renovated space was eliminated.

Due to a downturn in the Arizona commercial real estate and construction economy, Rio Salado College determined that the taxpayers' G.O. Bond funds would be maximized by purchasing and renovating existing facilities, rather than building new. Additionally, the College identified internal resources to supplement the Bond dollars. As of fall 2011, the College has completed the following projects:
• Renovated and expanded the Lifelong Learning Center in Surprise
• Constructed a 12,000 square foot service center in Avondale
• Built the 27,000 square foot Communiversity@Surprise located in the City of Surprise City Center Complex next to the City Hall
• Purchased and renovated a new administrative facility in Tempe, including renovations of multiple floors in the Tower@Rio at Tempe. The new building, Rio@Hohokam, is approximately 67,000 square feet.
• Expanded the Tower@Rio to house the Sustainable Food Systems program in the Café@Rio
• Purchased and completed renovation Phases 1 and 2 of the Rio@Northern facility in North Central Phoenix (34,000 square feet)
• Purchased Rio@Thomas, located in West Phoenix at 37th Avenue and Thomas (23,000 square feet)
• Purchased the Rio@Southern site in East Tempe at Southern and Price
• Constructed a two-story facility at the Rio@7th Avenue location for Adult Basic Education (13,800 square feet). This building was awarded a gold LEED certification.

The following projects are in the planning or construction stages:

• Renovate Rio@Thomas as a new Adult Basic Education (ABE) location. This site will house occupational labs to offer training in “green” jobs. This location will also complement the College’s new Youth Media project currently in development, to be housed in a Phoenix Union High School District facility located adjacent to this building.
• Renovate the existing south building at the Rio@7th Avenue location to house “green” jobs training labs. Rio Salado College has also entered into a joint venture with Brighten a Life/Cause and Effect to construct two green schoolhouses. The two buildings are being designed to achieve platinum LEED certification and are being built entirely with private donations of products, services, or funding. After the buildings are completed and furnished, they will be donated to Rio Salado College. Rio Salado College has contracted with the Phoenix Union High School District to operate a “green” high school program to prepare high school graduates to enter the College’s green jobs training programs that will be offered in the newly renovated south building.
• Complete renovation Phases 3 and 4 at the Rio@Northern location. These phases will add additional classrooms and a drop-in daycare facility for Rio Salado students.
• Renovate the Rio@Southern facility. The location consists of four buildings totaling 67,500 square feet. One building will remain a leased facility that generates revenue for the College.
• Construct a new Communiversity@Queen Creek on leased property owned by the Town of Queen Creek. The facility will be approximately 20,000 square feet and will be located adjacent to the Town’s Public Library.

The College is on track with providing technology and occupational equipment for these locations, and has purchased and installed upgraded equipment for the radio station.

College services are available to students at the locations, such as Advising, Tutoring, Counseling, Testing, Computer Labs, and kiosks that connect students in real time to services at the main campus. In fall 2011, the first of several planned core library collections was installed.
at Rio@Northern, to provide a supplement to the already-provided online library services for students in ABE programs. Further library installations are planned at other locations.

The design of the learning spaces at Rio Salado’s locations throughout the valley feature state-of-the-art technologies (interactive boards, projection) that support an optimal student learning environment. The locations will also have workforce development training laboratories to support hands-on, experiential learning for students in healthcare, education, and green training certificate and degree programs.

Overall, Rio Salado College has been able to nearly double the square footage originally funded in the 2004 G.O. Bond issue.

**Sustainability: STARS Operations Category**

As described in Criterion 1b, Rio Salado participates in the STARS initiative established by AASHE. The STARS Operations category seeks to recognize institutions that are taking steps to improve the sustainability performance of their buildings.

In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Rio Salado College has implemented the following:

- Purchased high-efficient hybrid automobiles for car fleet
- Utilizes low or non-VOC emitting paints, coatings, and cleaning supplies
- Adjusted set levels of air conditioning during summer months
- Installed energy efficient lighting across campus
- Replaced water pumps with high energy efficient units
- Employs green technology programs (energy star LCD monitors, virtualization of server)
- Participates in the Maricopa County Trip Reduction Program
- Provides a work week reduction and alternative work schedule programs
- Operates an extensive recycling program including paper, scrap materials, hazardous waste, etc.
- Installed alternative watering systems for plants (timing systems, drip)

In 2009, Rio Salado College was selected as America’s Greenest Campus by Climate Culture, from a field of almost 500 colleges and universities, for having the highest average carbon reduction per person. The College also was awarded $5,000 to go toward green initiatives. The prize money was used to help fund the Community Garden Project, which is part of the Sustainable Foods Program, described in Criterion 3c.

Rio Salado has earned 30.43 credits of a possible total 90.50 (33.62%) in the STARS Operations category, as part of its Silver rating.

**Café@Rio**

The Café@Rio is a ground-breaking concept whereby the College combined the basic need for food service provision with an academic program grounded in the College’s core value of Sustainability. The Café@Rio lab program will be described in Criterion 3c.

The café strives for zero waste generation through comprehensive recycling and composting, and features seasonal menus, locally-produced food, and food that is produced using humane labor practices. Each week, the Café@Rio’s chefs contact local farmers, ranchers, and artisans to source products that are at the peak of freshness. These products are featured in
daily specials in the café, allowing the chefs creative freedom to use what is being harvested from local farms in the community. By developing partnerships with local producers, the Café is stimulating the local economy while reducing “food miles.” In turn, the Café receives and prepares better tasting ingredients.

In a November 2010 Café survey of employees (N=86), more than half of the respondents indicated that they visit the Café 3-5 times per week (55.48%). When asked “Would you recommend our Café to a friend,” 97% of the respondents stated that they would.

**College Public Safety**
Beginning in 2004, the College realized the importance of separately identifying expenditures for College Safety rather than combining them with Maintenance and Operations. The Public Safety department, headed by a certified officer, was established in June 2005, and provides protection at all Rio Salado College locations. The College’s growth necessitated this escalation of service. College Safety is responsible for managing and monitoring the building access systems, patrolling the College buildings and grounds to ensure a safe environment, responding to service calls, addressing suspicious and criminal behavior, maintaining a “Lost and Found” repository, and providing identification badges to all College employees (along with building “fob” access as appropriate). College Public Safety is also an integral part of the Maricopa Emergency Management System (MEMS), the MCCCD District’s emergency preparedness initiative.

Since FY 2008, the College has increased expenditures for College Safety 66%, to over $600,000, as demonstrated by the following chart. This is due, in large part, to the number of new locations.

**2b 16: College Safety Expenditures**

The Employee Surveys of fall 2009 and fall 2010 posed the statement: “As a Rio Salado Employee, I find the following services valuable: Safety/Security.” In 2009, 81% either agreed or strongly agreed, while in 2010 the percentage was 78%. Although this was slightly below the target of 80%, it was not considered a significant decrease.
Technology Resources
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 are devoted to a technology infrastructure which includes state-of-the-art equipment and appropriate backup systems for both the online systems and physical plant.

Information Services (IS) is headed by the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Information Services. The department has four teams dedicated to supporting various areas: Technical Support, Networking, Programming, and Project Management.

Technical Support Team
The Technical Support team provides support for both employees and students, and runs the Technology Helpdesk, which will be described in more detail, along with other College student resources, in Criterion 3d. Employee computers are recycled on a predetermined schedule intended to maximize usability and to reduce hardware failures, with approximately 20% of the College’s technology recycled annually. All meeting rooms are equipped with standard, state-of-the-art technology (computers, projectors, speakers, etc.) to support the needs of College-wide groups and meetings. Media-rich classrooms across Rio Salado's locations support teaching and learning, and facilitate faculty needs for effective instruction. An audio and video conference bridge, as well as virtual meeting software such as MicroSoft Live Meeting and Elluminate, facilitates College- and District-wide communication and collaboration by providing a forum for virtual meetings. In support of Rio Salado’s sustainability initiatives, IS employs power saving and green technology programs where possible, to manage and administer the technology environment. Examples include power-saving LCD monitors, automated timeouts that put desktop computers to sleep, and the implementation of server virtualization technology to maximize capital budgets, staff resource time, and data center space.

Additionally, technology training is provided to employees as new programs are adopted, in seminar format, via online modules, or one-on-one. The District Office also provides training for common software applications used across MCCCD.

Networking and Security Team
The Networking team continually monitors the health and uptime of the production servers and network to maintain a stable environment for teaching and learning. Networking is responsible for the installation, maintenance and monitoring of the College’s servers, routers, switches, wireless network, VPN services, dialup services, and cabling infrastructure. Rio Salado has approximately 200 servers, 60 routers and switches, three different wireless networks, and well over 10,000 cable drops.

Servers are monitored through two different systems, Solar Winds Orion Network Monitor and Solar Winds IP Monitor. Most production systems are load-balanced and clustered to help maintain the goal of 99.7% uptime on all critical production servers, which allows for approximately 24 hours of unaccounted for downtime a year (IS performs routine maintenance every Thursday morning from 5am-8am, which goes unnoticed by most users). Additionally, 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. A full backup is performed once a week on the weekends, which backs up all data, regardless of the date stamp or the last time it was accessed. A differential backup is performed every night, Monday through Friday, which backs up information that has changed since the last full backup. Additionally, monthly backups are saved to tape, and these tapes are then stored at an off-site location for added data security. Information Services is in the process of implementing offline backups to the Maricopa Community Colleges Disaster Recovery site located at the Scottsdale Air Park in Scottsdale. Currently, all the College databases are backed up to the disaster recovery site three times a week. 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 of this team are responsible for building new applications, as well as fixing problems with existing applications. The Programming team has integrated best practices into system development and has instituted deployment processes to improve the quality and uptime of all Rio systems. Best practices include using software components that meet or exceed performance requirements. The deployment process helps track and control system changes on production to minimize downtime. Proposed system changes must pass development and quality assurance testing before they are deployed to production during a regularly scheduled maintenance window. The development and continued evolution of the College’s customized RioLearn Course Management System, which is a collaborative process between IS and other departments across the College, will be addressed in Criterion 3c.

**Project Management Team**

Project Managers assist teams of Rio employees to structure projects of all types, so that team members have a shared understanding of the project’s scope, and its designated parameters, timeframes, and goals. Other members of the Project Development Team include a business analyst, quality control tester, and trainer. While projects vary considerably in size and scope, an example of a large effort incorporating employees from all levels and multiple departments across the College is the development of RioLearn v.8 referenced above, which began in fall 2011.

The IS Director of Research & Development facilitates the research of new technologies and initiatives. This position, which serves as Rio Salado’s Chief Technology Officer, attends weekly Development Team meetings along with the Vice President of Information Services. This further enables the cross-functional team to stay informed on new and upcoming projects and initiatives, hear reports on new technologies and programs, and provide feedback or ask questions about technology issues.

Information Services logs Helpdesk tickets when employees and students call or submit issues online. For the 2009-2010 year, IS resolved and closed 16,825 Helpdesk requests, and in 2010-2011, the department resolved and closed 18,109 requests. On average, most Helpdesk requests are resolved and closed within 24 hours.
Information Services implemented a SharePoint-based employee portal to support inter-and intra-departmental communication and collaboration in 2004. Since that time, “EP2,” the Employee Portal, 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, Development Team, OpX, 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.

**Technology Budget**

The College's technology budgeting process follows its general budgeting process, and has been in place for over 10 years. There are two primary funding sources: operational and capital.

**Operational Funding**

Over the last seven years, the technology operational budget has been slightly over $1 million per year. Approximate technology expenditures, excluding personnel, are as follows:

- **Equipment maintenance and repair—10%**
  
  Includes standard contracts for maintenance on existing technology such as scanners, telephone system hardware, and video conferencing equipment. Cisco Smartnet covers all switches, routers, firewalls, and other Cisco network equipment, and allows for software maintenance and upgrades.

- **General Supplies—5%**
  
  The majority of the general supply line is used to purchase laser and fax toner for the entire College.

- **Licenses—15%**
  
  Covers larger ticket items that increase slowly over time. Some examples are the Microsoft Campus license agreement, which allows almost all Microsoft software to be used on Rio Salado’s computer systems; Explorance Blue, the College’s survey software; Commvalt backup software maintenance; QuestionMark assessment software used in RioLearn, the College’s Course Management System, and others.

- **Software—4%**
  
  Used for purchase of specialty software, or for faculty and/or staff to test new applications. Examples are statistical software used by Institutional Research, reading software for visually impaired employees, and Adobe software used by Institutional Advancement.

- **Technology Supplies—7%**
  
  Miscellaneous technology items, such as headsets, projector bulbs, printers and fax machines, end-user memory upgrades, and networking cable used in offices and labs.

- **Telephone—19%**
  
  Covers all telephone services, as well as dedicated network connections between Rio’s Tempe location and all other Rio locations.

- **Employee Training & Travel—3%**
  
  Covers expenses for employee professional growth.

- **Professional Services –30%**
  
  Covers a number of different services, such as Perceptis outsourced support, Edu Dynamics, the private social networking software integrated with RioLearn, the College’s customized Course Management System, and Microsoft Premier Support used for advanced technical support of Rio’s online systems.
Capital Funding
Since 1994, Information Services has utilized a clearly defined recycling program to maintain almost every type and style of technology at the College. Computers, printers, faxes, servers, networking equipment, Storage Area Network (SAN), and telephone systems are all included in the program. This process makes it easy to understand the baseline capital funding technology requirements of the College. The only time this baseline is increased is if Rio Salado purchases a new location or undertakes a new initiative. In these cases, the decision to proceed goes through a comprehensive review process by the stakeholders, and ultimately the Executive Council, before allocation of capital funding is approved for the new initiative.

Evaluation
Leadership Council Surveys of spring 2010 (N=28) and spring 2011 (N=29) posed the statement: “Rio Salado College’s investment in new technology over the past five years shows a forward-looking concern for ensuring educational quality.” Response data showed 92.59% agreement/strong agreement in 2010, and 82.76% agreement/strong agreement in 2011, which although somewhat lower, still met the Quality Assurance target of 80%.

Technology Resource Surveys in spring 2010 (N=238) and 2011(N=254) also showed Quality Assurance data for the following two statements, surpassing the Q.A. targets of 80%:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rio Salado College’s environment is supportive of applying technology in innovative ways.</td>
<td>91.74%</td>
<td>87.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The technologies the College provides allow our employees to work more effectively.</td>
<td>91.27%</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the need for improvement was noted in the following statements, which substantially failed to meet the Q.A. targets of 80%:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rio Salado College’s Information Services Department has an effective process whereby I can propose ideas for new technologies.</td>
<td>65.27%</td>
<td>53.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Salado College’s Information Services Department effectively researches ideas that are brought forth by employees to determine their viability</td>
<td>66.27%</td>
<td>46.48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In June 2006 Information Services created an Innovation/New Technology Review Process to assist employees in understanding how to move new and/or innovative technology ideas forward for review. Although this process is reviewed with the Development Team twice per year, it is clear from these survey results that the existence of this process is not expanding to the entire College. To improve overall communication and understanding of the initiatives coordinated by Information Services, an online IS Newsletter has been created to help employees at Rio Salado have a better understanding of the teams within IS, what their roles are, examples of different projects that are upcoming or underway, as well as tips and general information. To increase employees’ understanding of the process and to allow all employees to surface their new ideas about technology, links to the Innovation/New Technology Review Process are now a standard part of the IS Newsletter. Also, twice a year, this process will be featured in the employee newsletter The Wave to create added awareness.
Core Component – 2c
The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

College-wide Evaluation and Assessment
As indicated in Criterion 1a, Rio Salado includes the core value of Relentless Improvement among the mission documents on the College’s Culture page. 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. This section will address institutional effectiveness activities across multiple departments and processes throughout the College, while student learning outcomes assessment will be covered in detail in Criterion 3a.

Institutional Effectiveness
Institutional Research
Rio Salado’s Institutional Research (IR) department has more than doubled the number of full-time employees since 2002, as it has become progressively more integrated into the planning, measurement, data analysis, and data mining for departments across the College. The department is responsible for coordinating the reporting and distribution of College-wide assessments, providing student evaluations and reports, designing and administering surveys, publishing the College Fact Book and other reports, assisting with research projects, responding to ad-hoc requests, providing standardized District-wide reports, creating MCCCD Business Objects Enterprise (BOExi) reports for end users, running various databases (e.g., official functions, travel, etc.), and supporting grants. Additional functions directly related to assessment of student learning and student success, such as providing support for student learning outcomes assessment at the course and College level, design and implementation of learner analytics, and participation in the Program Review process (including the Transparency by Design initiative) will be described in Criteria 3a and 3c. IR also developed and supports the peer-to-peer plagiarism detection algorithm which was described in Criterion 1e.

Analysis of Data: Examples
IR provides Crystal Reports (standardized reports that allow users to select from specified parameters) for multiple departments and customers throughout Rio. These reports pull information from databases that departments use to make decisions, primarily RDS (Relational Database System), a database containing PeopleSoft SIS (Student Information System) data that is updated daily. Additionally, IR accesses the District-maintained IRIS (Institutional Research Information System) database to retrieve official reporting numbers for Rio Salado and the District. The Decision Support System (DSS) provides unofficial information on all of the colleges in the District. Users are able to access point-in-time information on enrollments, FTSE, and other high-level information. Although the data are unofficial, they are useful for comparing Rio to other schools on selected parameters. For example, Faculty Chairs could
compare enrollments in their departments with those of other schools at any given week in a semester. IR also accesses the ASSIST (Arizona State System for Information on Student Transfer) database. This contains university level information about Rio and MCCCD students, and allows the College to track Rio students as they transfer to one of the three state universities.

IR also uses College-developed systems for a variety of research needs. These include the RioLearn Course Management System, the QuestionMark testing software that is integrated with RioLearn, the Teacher Preparation Program database, Faculty Information System (FIS), and the Matrix of student data, a centralized system that manages and integrates the various Shadow Systems built on site at Rio Salado College. As an example, IR accesses assignment information in QuestionMark to complete the analysis of the course-level assessments for the student learning outcomes cycles that will be described in Criterion 3a. Additionally, the Teacher Preparation database is used to validate data relating to Teacher Preparation students in the Student Information System (SIS). IR also uses FIS information to validate information about instructors and obtain demographic information on adjunct faculty.

Measuring Institutional Effectiveness: Surveys and Evaluations

Institutional Research coordinates the collection of the following surveys that address institutional effectiveness. Detailed reports and data from all surveys are available in the Resource Room.

- **Noel-Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL).** This survey was given to a random sample of online learners in fall 2008 and fall 2010. Students were asked to rank the importance of and satisfaction with a variety of aspects of Rio Salado. These results were then compared against each other to measure the gap between importance and satisfaction. The results were also compared against national learners. In 2010, overall satisfaction at Rio Salado College was equal to or higher than the National scores in 14 out of the 26 general item questions on the PSOL. Detailed data from the PSOL surveys will be referenced in the sections covering the specific departments and services surveyed.

- **SOSE (Survey of Online Student Engagement).** This is a pilot project of CCSSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement), designed to measure student engagement through the different activities in which they participate as online students. CCSSSE recruited community colleges to pilot the instrument, and Rio Salado administered the SOSE in fall 2011. Students were asked to rank their most frequent experiences at Rio Salado College from a given list of activities. Seventy-seven percent of respondents agreed that they very often or often “Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on their performance,” while over half (57.98%) responded that they very often or often “Worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations.” Students were given a list of activities and asked to rank Rio Salado’s emphasis on those activities. Over 82% responded that Rio Salado placed an emphasis on “Encouraging you
to spend significant amounts of time studying.” On a scale of one to seven, with seven being extremely challenging, over 85% of students rated the challenge of their online exams between five and seven. Overall, 91.33% of respondents indicated that they would recommend online classes at Rio Salado College to a friend or family member, and 82.66% evaluated their entire online educational experience at Rio Salado College as excellent or good. As the instrument becomes more fully developed and implemented, Rio Salado looks forward to using these types of data for Relentless Improvement, and to evaluating how well the College benchmarks against other institutions nationally. SOSE pilot participation demonstrates that Rio Salado is in the forefront of efforts to extend evaluation of student engagement in ways that are relevant to online students.

- **Employee and Stakeholder Surveys.** The College regularly surveys employees and stakeholders to measure institutional effectiveness. Data from these surveys have been provided as evidence throughout this Self-Study document, where relevant. These include:
  - Employees (general survey)
  - Employee Engagement
  - Faculty Chair/Residential Faculty
  - Leadership Council
  - Community
  - Partners

- **Employees at Locations.** Employees at the College’s locations (outside the Rio@Tempe main site) were surveyed in fall 2011.

- **Program and Department-specific.** Surveys conducted to assess institutional effectiveness will be referenced in their specific contexts.

- **Instructor Evaluations.** IR coordinates instructor evaluations for all classes offered at Rio Salado. These provide students with a mechanism for anonymous feedback to faculty chairs and instructors about the quality of the instruction they received. Additionally, aggregate reports are provided to deans and vice presidents to assist in decision making.

- **Student Focus Groups.** Student focus group sessions were held in fall, 2010 and fall, 2011. The purpose of the sessions was to investigate how well student’s incoming expectations of Rio Salado had been met, their perceptions of the effectiveness of the learning environment, their use of College learning resources, and what the College could do to help them be more successful students. Transcripts of these sessions are currently being evaluated to identify trends.

A formal satisfaction survey regarding the Institutional Research department was conducted in 2006, and repeated in spring 2011. A comparative analysis showed that although scores were slightly higher in 2006, the overall data were positive, as averages in both years were above the quality assurance target of 4.00 (80% agree/strongly agree).

**Business Intelligence Team**

In addition to the formal Institutional Research department, Rio Salado has a Business Intelligence (BI) team within the Information Services department. Data compiled by the BI team are reported and displayed via a “data cube.” These data are unofficial and are primarily used for planning purposes.
Service Standards: the OpX (Operational Excellence) Team

Departments across the College have developed Service Standards intended to measure “astonishing” performance in the areas of Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness. The notion of College-wide service standards originated with the Development Team in 2004, but the idea was not implemented College-wide. The current areas of measurement were established in 2009 under the purview of the OpX Team, which instituted a Service Standards sub-team to advise departments on how to make their service standards reliable, quantifiable, and valid to provide metrics in conformance with the College mission documents. Service Standards have since been institutionalized across Rio Salado, and specific departments keep track of their metrics for improvement.

For example, in the category of timeliness, the Rio Salado Library measures wait times for its Ask a Librarian chat service, which will be described in Criterion 3d. The standard stipulates that patron wait time should be two minutes or less after the initiation of a virtual reference transaction, and the Q.A. target requires that this standard be reached 90% of the time. Data are reviewed regularly to assure that the target is being met.

OpX has several other ongoing projects designed to increase institutional effectiveness. Employees are encouraged to submit innovative ideas for process improvement both for their departments and for the College at large, which are then reviewed by the Submission Review sub-team. Viable ideas are presented to the OpX Committee for discussion of feasibility, logistics, and possible implementation steps.

Much of this process improvement work aligns with the Arizona Quality Alliance, which is a state version of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award framework. The Arizona Quality Alliance exists to recognize excellence and innovation in quality processes across Arizona organizations. Organizations submit processes and process improvements for consideration. These annual submissions are based on the Malcolm Baldrige award criteria and are reviewed by trained examiners. As mentioned in Criterion 1c, an employee survey was conducted in winter 2010 to set a baseline in a long-term effort to apply for a Baldrige award. This survey will be repeated on an annual basis to measure improvements.

National Benchmarks: National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP)

Rio Salado College has participated in the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) since 2006. Two hundred eighty community colleges participated in the NCCBP in 2011. The chart below shows Rio Salado’s Institutional Strengths Report for 2011, indicating benchmarks for which the College was above the 85th percentile of all participating institutions. Most of these strengths benchmarks have shown an upward trend in the past three years. A chart showing a more detailed comparison of the three year NCCBP strengths trend data is available in the Assessment Documentation section of the Resource Room.
An analysis of benchmarks for which the College was below the median for the years 2009-2011 showed an upward trend for 2009-2011 in all but two categories, as demonstrated in the chart below. A chart showing a more detailed comparison of the three year NCCBP below median trend data is available in the Assessment Documentation section of the Resource Room.

2c 2: NCCBP Rio Salado College Items Identified as Below Median Benchmark, 2011 Trend Differences 2009-11

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall-fall Persistence Rate</td>
<td>23.40%</td>
<td>49.50%</td>
<td>-26.10%</td>
<td>4.84%</td>
<td>3.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next-term Persistence Rate</td>
<td>44.00%</td>
<td>71.80%</td>
<td>-27.80%</td>
<td>10.28%</td>
<td>7.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Retention Rate</td>
<td>77.23%</td>
<td>89.97%</td>
<td>-12.74%</td>
<td>4.15%</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Enrollee Success Rate</td>
<td>54.56%</td>
<td>56.89%</td>
<td>-2.33%</td>
<td>11.58%</td>
<td>9.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Enrollee Success Rate</td>
<td>64.08%</td>
<td>64.91%</td>
<td>-0.83%</td>
<td>9.13%</td>
<td>7.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Completer Success Rate</td>
<td>62.39%</td>
<td>67.58%</td>
<td>-5.19%</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Retention Rate</td>
<td>76.36%</td>
<td>90.10%</td>
<td>-13.74%</td>
<td>8.71%</td>
<td>6.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Enrollee Success Rate</td>
<td>49.09%</td>
<td>72.22%</td>
<td>-23.13%</td>
<td>4.97%</td>
<td>2.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Completer Success Rate</td>
<td>64.29%</td>
<td>80.94%</td>
<td>-16.65%</td>
<td>-0.93%</td>
<td>-1.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Retention Rate</td>
<td>77.40%</td>
<td>90.77%</td>
<td>-13.37%</td>
<td>-6.81%</td>
<td>-9.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Core Component – 2d
All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

**Strategic Planning**

**District Level**

As detailed in Criterion 1, Rio Salado College is a member of the MCCCD, and therefore accountable to the Governing Board. Rio Salado College is part of a multi-college environment where the governance and the operations of the College are strongly influenced by the added dimension of the District. This external institutional environment has a considerable impact on any planning, especially in terms of resource allocation, direction of strategic focus, and new programmatic directions. The MCCCD Governing Board adopts planning and priority processes that affect and guide Rio Salado College’s strategic planning efforts. The Governing Board has identified outcomes which are closely tied to the benefits the MCCCD offers its constituents (the people of Maricopa County, students, the public and private sectors, universities, and K-12 schools). To ensure accountability, these outcomes are monitored on a regular basis to determine the level of current attainment and the need for subsequent improvement. In February 2011, the Governing Board refined its outcomes to the following areas of focus:

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

The District-wide Instructional Research Council then began the process of developing metrics whereby these outcomes would be measured collectively by the colleges within the Maricopa system. This process is currently ongoing and completion is expected by March, 2012. Rio Salado College’s purposes, described in Criterion 1a, fall broadly within the scope of these Governing Board outcomes.

The strategic planning processes of the MCCCD are spelled out in a Strategic Planning Handbook that guides the coordination of District-wide planning. In addition to long-term strategic planning efforts, the process requires operational, or action, planning to implement the strategic planning outcomes. Rio Salado College submits its operational plan each year along with the other MCCCD colleges, and they are published collectively as the Maricopa Community Colleges Strategic Plan: Operational Plans. These operational plans align with the Strategic Directions of the Governing Board, which are:

1. Maximizing Access
2. Enhancing Learning Environments and Delivery Options
3. Enhancing Collaboration and Increasing Partnerships
4. Pursuing Revenue Sources and Promoting Cost Effectiveness
5. Recruit, Develop, and Retain a Quality Diverse Workforce
6. Maintaining a Strong Identity

Additionally, in 2010-2011, the Vice Chancellor for Technology led a District-wide process for formulating an Information and Instructional Technology (IIT) Strategic Plan for 2011-2016 as
part of a new governance structure for District-wide IT processes. A District-wide Consolidated IIT Plan for 2011-2012 was subsequently compiled with input from all 10 MCCCDD Colleges and all divisions at the District Office.

**Strategic Planning—Rio Salado College**

To understand the system-wide organizational planning, decision-making, and resource allocation at Rio Salado College, it is important to review the structure and process of the College’s Strategic Plan. As mentioned in Criterion 1c, College leadership began a visioning process in 2006 that resulted in a realignment of the strategic planning documents and also included the exploration and adoption of the Balanced Scorecard perspective to approach strategic planning. This revised plan, entitled *Rio 2012: The Strategic Plan for Innovation, Improvement, and Growth*, was a result of over 18 years of evolving efforts. To facilitate this newly-structured planning process, the Leadership Council, comprised of Faculty Chairs and upper administration as described in Criterion 1d, was consolidated. Environmental scanning, internal and external needs assessments, and other data collection occurred during this time period as well. In 2007, the College moved into the implementation phase, and subsequently added a new goal addressing sustainability.

At the time, the strategic goals aligned with the Goals and Measures of the MCCCDD Governing Board, and the Beyond Boundaries I and Beyond Boundaries II initiatives established by the Chancellor, Dr. Rufus Glasper.

As indicated in Criterion 2b, over the course of 2010 the Strategic Plan was revised and realigned for better conformance with the governance structures of the College and the District. The team that was coordinating the strategic planning effort was also adjusted to include a more dispersed level of responsibility across College leadership—in essence, the Leadership Council took a more active role as leads for the specific strategic initiatives, with the Executive Council moving into the roles of sponsors rather than operational implementers. Emulating the successful process of having Tri-Chair leadership for each of the Self-Study Criterion Teams, Strategic Planning Tri-Chairs were realigned across the College’s strategic goals, allowing for overlap of at least one person between the HLC Self-Study Criterion and the related strategic goal. This was done to help reduce duplication in data collection and to fully integrate ongoing HLC Self-Study requirements into the continuing strategic planning process. The name of the plan was also simplified from *Rio 2012: The Strategic Plan for Innovation, Improvement, and Growth*, which was considered limiting, to RSVP (Rio Strategic and Visioning Plan) to the more straightforward and instantly recognizable *Rio Salado College Strategic Plan*.

In late 2010, a team from Rio Salado attended the annual Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) conference, and based on information brought back from the conference, the format of the strategic plan was improved. The new format of the plan, in time, will allow each employee to see how he or she fits into the organization’s mission.

The Strategic Plan structure allows for three levels of action planning under each Goal:

- College Action Plans
- Departmental Action Plans
- Individual Action Plans

This three-tiered structure helps to drive strategic initiatives from a high level directly down to the individual level. The strategic planning team has also committed to making sure that all action plans implemented at the College, Departmental or Individual levels are measurable.
The timeline for fully implementing this updated format is currently ongoing and the realignment of previous strategies and key performance indicators at the College and Departmental levels is expected to be complete by 2012. Individual action plans will be implemented after that time. As noted above, in 2011 the Governing Board revised its outcomes statements, which adds a layer of complexity to the current process. The College plan will need to be realigned as necessary to conform to these outcomes, as well as to the outcomes of Chancellor Glasper’s ongoing “One Maricopa” initiative, which was expanded in fall 2011.

This diagram demonstrates the decision-making processes and information-sharing mechanisms at Rio Salado College:

**2d 2: Decision-Making and Information-Sharing**
The Employee Survey of fall 2009 (N=213) had 82.32% of College employees agreeing/strongly agreeing that they were “aware of Rio’s Strategic Plan (formerly known as Rio 2012).” However, only 70.85% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “I know where to find Rio’s Strategic Plan (formerly known as Rio 2012) on EP2 (the Employee Portal),” falling short of Quality Assurance. This response rate fell to an even lower 64.73% of agreement/strong agreement in the fall 2010 Employee Survey (N=419). It seems likely that the re-visioning process and renaming of the plan has resulted in some confusion for employees, and to date only the College-level action plans have been developed. Once development of the Department-level and Individual action plans is further advanced with participation from employees across the College, it is anticipated that awareness and understanding will increase.

**Strategic Planning Related to Budgeting Processes**

As indicated in Criterion 2a, the College’s budget managers, who are associate deans, deans, or vice presidents, also serve on the Leadership Council. As members of the Leadership Council (and in some instances, Tri-Chairs of the Strategic Planning goals), they are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the budgets for their respective departments support the goals and objectives enumerated in the College’s strategic plan. After all departmental budgets are complete and submitted, the Executive Council reviews and approves the College budget. All departmental budgets (with each budget manager’s individual budget recommendations) are combined and considered as a cohesive unit in a systemic manner. This ensures that each department’s budget is placed in its proper perspective to support the goals and objectives of the entire college as included in the strategic plan.

In spite of this deliberate process, surveys of College leadership indicate that the alignment between strategic planning and budgeting needs strengthening. In the Leadership Council survey of 2010 (N=28), the statement “Rio Salado College’s strategic planning processes are effectively linked directly with its budget process” elicited 100% agreement/strong agreement. However, in the 2011 Leadership Council survey (N=29) the statement “Rio Salado College’s strategic planning process is linked directly with the College’s budget process” failed to meet the 80% Quality Assurance target (74.07%). Also in 2011, 75% of Leadership Council respondents agreed/strongly agreed that “The College’s leadership has sufficient input into the budget process,” which fell short of the 80% target and was down from the 2010 measure of 84.62%. These data indicate a contradiction in the understanding and alignment between strategic planning and budgeting, and will be addressed in future Leadership Council meetings.

**Evaluative Summary**

In reviewing the patterns of evidence, the Planning Team has determined that Rio Salado College demonstrates significant evidence in support of the Core Components of Criterion 2, and that the Organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.
Strengths (Q.A.):
- The College has proven its ability to allocate resources to fulfill its mission and grow as an Institution in a sustainable manner.
- The College has a robust process for employee orientation, training, and development that reinforces the institutional culture.
- Rio Salado College benchmarks well against national data for institutional effectiveness.
- The College has been able to maximize the utilization of General Obligation Bond funding to provide additional service locations for its communities.
- Rio Salado has the most cost-effective model among the Maricopa Community Colleges, and is 48% more cost-efficient than peer IPEDS institutions nationally.
- Rio Salado has a strong technology infrastructure that meets the needs of an innovative online institution.

Challenges (R.I.):
- Alignment of strategic planning and budgeting processes needs to be regularly reviewed by the Leadership Council.
- Given the current economic and funding environment, external scanning and scenario planning in the Strategic Planning process will need to be increased.
- As more students take advantage of Federal Financial Aid, the College will need to take measures to prevent a rising debt load.
- Resources will need to be reallocated to align with changing Governing Board priorities, State access, retention and completion goals, and the Chancellor’s “One Maricopa” initiative.

Planning for the Future:
- As the College brings new locations on board, the Institution will seek to meet the needs of local communities in innovative ways.
- Real-time cost budgeting systems will be developed to assist in decision making and strategic planning.
- Technology will continue to be used to connect locations and students, both in person and online.
Criterion Three – Student Learning and Effective Teaching

**Criterion Statement:** The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.
Core Component – 3a
The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

Assessment
Philosophy of Assessment—District Level
The Maricopa Community College District’s Philosophy of Assessment is expressed as follows:
The purpose of assessment in the Maricopa Community Colleges is to improve teaching and student learning in support of the Governing Board’s goal of post-secondary competencies according to the colleges’ assessment committees.
The key characteristics of assessment are:
• Owned and driven by faculty
• Directed by local colleges
• Involves multiple methods
• Ensures an ongoing, sustainable process of review
• Uses results to contribute to curriculum, budget and planning
• May be addressed on various levels (i.e., course, program, institutional)

Philosophy of Assessment—College-Level
Within this framework, Rio Salado College faculty and administration have implemented collaborative and integrated processes for assessment of student learning at the College, Program and Course levels. Rio’s unique faculty structure, comprising one full-time residential faculty member per department, facilitates effective interdisciplinary decision-making. Collaborative planning activities ensure academic integrity and promote curricular coherence. This faculty model will be explained more fully under Core Component 3b. Biweekly meetings bring all 20 faculty chairs together to discuss, plan, design, and implement common initiatives to assess and improve student learning. Examples of these initiatives include the College-wide Critical Thinking, Writing, Information Literacy, and Reading learning outcomes which are detailed below. These outcomes were chosen as a result of a deliberate process of shared governance including administration, faculty, and co-curricular leadership. From there, faculty members collaborated in the development of standardized rubrics that could be applied across various disciplines. Thus, student learning outcome data could be extracted and analyzed at the course, discipline, department, program, and college levels. These data were then used to inform curricular modifications and/or instructional interventions.

Rio Salado’s Assessment Philosophy is posted on the College’s Assessment of Student Learning website, and in the College Catalog:

Rio Salado College focuses on assessment-directed improvement for increasing student learning and improving the teaching and learning process.

We believe that 1) learning is the primary purpose of assessment; 2) assessment should lead to improvement and not be an end unto itself; and 3) faculty and students who understand the value of assessment and participate in assessment activities benefit most from this work.
Therefore, the College expects every individual to participate fully in this effort.

College-wide student learning outcomes statements and rubrics are also posted on the assessment website, along with Program Review data incorporating both full program review and mini-review.

Institutional commitment to these principles has been further demonstrated by Rio Salado’s membership in the Higher Learning Commission’s Academy for Assessment of Student Learning, which began with the second cohort of 2007. The College voluntarily chose to participate, based on a deep commitment to build an even stronger culture of assessment than was already well-established. Detailed information about the College’s Academy project, a formal, sustainable Program Review process, will be provided in the discussion of program review.

A Culture of Assessment: the Learning Assessment Team
Rio Salado College’s first assessment plan was implemented in 1991. In the two decades since then, ongoing assessment initiatives aimed at increasing student learning have continued to demonstrate evidence of the College’s central focus on this work. Student learning outcomes, measured at the College, program, and course levels, provide the foundation for assessment and increasing student learning. Assessment efforts have matured from a static plan that was reviewed and updated periodically to a dynamic, living process in which employees across the College participate.

The Learning Assessment Team (previously known as SLOT: Student Learning Outcomes Team) includes representation from Faculty Chairs, Senior Administration, Institutional Research, Student Services and other Co-Curricular Services, and Instructional Design, and has responsibility for coordinating all aspects of student learning assessment. In 2010, members of the team revisited its purpose and functions, and decided to split the group into two teams, the other being the Student Success Team (which will be covered in more detail in Criterion 3c). The name “Learning Assessment Team” was judged to be a better fit than SLOT, considering the broad spectrum of activities related to student learning that the team oversees. Also at this time, the Faculty Chair Assessment Coordinator led a major initiative to gather the information and data on all aspects of assessment of student learning that were being conducted across the College under one umbrella Assessment of Student Learning SharePoint site. Thus, data on course-level student learning outcomes work, program review, Transparency by Design (College Choices for Adults), RioLogs (Assessment grants provided to Faculty Chairs for student learning outcomes projects incorporating adjunct faculty), and assessment of academic co-curricular departments, all of which were robust processes being conducted in tandem, were integrated at one site so that the interrelationships between all these forms of student learning assessment were more clearly established. Details of each of the processes mentioned above that are included at the site will follow.

Each year, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Assessment Coordinators issue an annual Assessment of Student Learning Annual Report detailing results of student learning outcomes assessment at the college level and at the course level, identifying best practices,
and indicating areas for improvement. The report details interventions which have been put into place during the past year and the results of the interventions. An executive summary of this annual report is shared with College employees, including several hundred adjunct faculty members at the fall All-Faculty Assessment and Learning Experience, and executive summaries of the reports from the past 10 years are also publicly available on the College’s assessment website. All assessment documents mentioned in this Criterion are available in the Resource Room.

College-wide Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
As stated on the College website, Rio Salado is committed to the assessment and improvement of four College-wide student learning outcomes, which are defined as follows, and measured by designated rubrics which are also linked from the assessment website. The rubrics have been developed and refined over time by the Faculty Chair Outcomes Coordinators, and then approved and adopted by the Faculty Chairs:

Critical Thinking
The Rio Salado College Critical Thinking Rubric
The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze information, evaluate material, use inference to draw conclusions, and use deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning at a college level.

Information Literacy
The Rio Salado College Information Literacy Rubric
The student will demonstrate the ability to determine an information need, access successfully and evaluate critically the needed information, and organize and apply the information appropriately to accomplish a given research task.

Reading
The Rio Salado College Reading Rubric
The student will be able to demonstrate comprehension of written materials through application of specific critical reading techniques appropriate to the type of materials and purpose of the reading task.

Writing
The Rio Salado College Writing Rubric
On a written assignment, the student will demonstrate the ability to generate relevant and sufficient content; organize his or her thoughts coherently; adhere to the conventions of correct mechanics and sentence structure; and use correct terminology and rich vocabulary in the fulfillment, at the college level, of his or her writing assignments.

Each of these learning outcomes will now be considered in detail. As indicated, data have been collected in these areas for many years. College-wide assessments, using either nationally-normed or in-house developed instruments, are placed into a randomly selected group of courses on a biennial cycle. The most recent data, from spring 2011, are provided below. In addition to the College-wide assessments, course-level measurement and improvement of these four student learning outcomes now also takes place via a formal Plan-
Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle across multiple disciplines. The first course-level PDCA cycles for Critical Thinking and Writing were implemented in 2008, and for Information Literacy and Reading in spring 2011.

**The Plan-Do-Check-Act Improvement Cycle for Course-Level Assessment**
As explained in Criterion 2a, the College has a culture of employing the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle to determine Quality Assurance or the need for Relentless Improvement. For a given course in each of their disciplines, Faculty Chairs create a plan for measuring one or more of the dimensions from the relevant student learning outcome rubric. During the “Plan” phase, with the assistance of Institutional Research, a baseline measurement is taken to determine student performance. Data are converted to a four-point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>90% &amp; Above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>70-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>59% &amp; Below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

College-level performance is set at a standard 70% or better across all disciplines, so that students performing at 3 or 4 on the scale are considered to be doing college-level work. The target measure is to have 80% of students performing at the 70% college-level or above. Once the baseline measurement is established and the Faculty Chairs determine whether the data show that students are performing at College-level for the specific competency, they then move to the “Do” phase of the cycle, where, if the data indicate a need, they implement an intervention designed to increase student performance. Interventions may include changes to course content or assessments, or training for adjunct faculty. Online AFD (Adjunct Faculty Development) workshops are available to teach adjunct faculty how to use the Critical Thinking and Writing Rubrics effectively for grading student work, and also to teach them the tenets of Information Literacy. Faculty Chairs can require that their adjunct faculty complete these workshops as an intervention. (These workshops will be discussed in more detail in Criterion 3b).

When the intervention has been in place for a stipulated length of time, Institutional Research pulls comparison data (the “Check” phase of the cycle) to determine if student performance has improved. Based on these data, chairs determine the “Act” phase of the cycle: how they will institutionalize the change in their departments if indicated, or, if the change was shown not to be effective, they may choose to begin another cycle with a new intervention.

**Student Learning Outcomes Reports**

**Critical Thinking**

**College-wide Assessment Report**
The Test of Everyday Reasoning was administered in spring 2011 as a College-wide critical thinking assessment, and was completed by 162 students. Overall, students had an average total score of 2.76, out of 4.00, on this assessment. Over two-fifths of respondents (44.44%, N=72) scored at or above college level (a score of 70% or higher).
The Critical Thinking assessment is a normed test that allows for comparisons with national groups of students. Overall, Rio Salado College students scored higher than three-fifths of the comparison group of students. As a whole, Rio students were in the 62nd percentile, answering an average of 24 of the 35 questions correctly. Rio students scored in the 68th percentile on the Inductive Reasoning and Deductive Reasoning sections. Rio students scored in the 97th percentile on the Evaluation section.

In general, scores are higher on the Critical Thinking assessment than in the previous two assessment years. The average total score had decreased from 2007 (Avg = 2.60) to 2009 (Avg = 2.45), with a substantial increase in 2011 (Avg = 2.76).

Course-Level PDCA Data
A total of 11 courses had improvement cycles during the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Sixteen PDCA cycles were completed. Seventeen PDCA cycles are currently in process, carrying over to the 2011-2012 fiscal year. The cycle progress updates, including the number of students impacted, are shown in the table below.

Successful interventions implemented during the 2010-2011 fiscal year include links to critical thinking resources online, Flash learning tutorials instructing students on critical thinking strategies, improvements in assignment wording and instructions, and adjunct faculty training in providing appropriate feedback and support to students.

3a 2: Critical Thinking Cycle Progress for FY 2010-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle Progress Update</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs that have improvement cycles</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles completed</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles ended (as baseline students met college level)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles ended (for other reasons)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles in progress</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses involved</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students impacted during PDCA cycle</td>
<td>2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students immediately impacted by “Act” step</td>
<td>2056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing

College-wide Assessment Report
The Writing Assessment instrument was originally developed in-house and has been administered over several cycles. The 2011 College-wide Writing Assessment was completed by 184 students. The majority of students (91.41%, N=181) were distance students, with the remaining 17 students (8.59%) enrolled in Dual Enrollment courses. Overall, students had an average total score of 3.02, out of 4.00, on the Writing assessment, while over three-fifths of respondents (69.02%, N = 127) scored at or above college level (a score of 70% or higher).

Students received the highest average (3.36) for the Vocabulary Choices skill set. The raters were asked to indicate which areas of the students’ essays needed improvement. A total of 350 responses were recorded, and nearly two-fifths (38.29%, N = 134) indicated that Organization was an area that needed improvement. Over three-fifths of respondents (69.02%, N = 127) scored at or above college level.
The writing assessment scores were also examined longitudinally. The same writing assessment that was administered in spring 2011 was also administered in 2009 and 2007. More students completed the writing assessment in previous years. Students in spring 2011 had a slightly lower overall average score (Avg = 3.02) when compared to spring 2009 (Avg = 3.19) and spring 2007 (Avg = 3.10).

Course-Level PDCA Data
A total of 10 programs had improvement cycles during the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Four PDCA cycles were completed. Fifteen PDCA cycles are currently in process, carrying over into the 2011-2012 fiscal year. The cycle progress updates, including the number of students impacted, are shown in the table below.

3a 3: Writing Cycle Progress for FY 2010-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle Progress Update</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs that have improvement cycles</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles completed</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles ended (as baseline students met college level)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles ended (for other reasons)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles in progress</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses involved</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students impacted during PDCA cycle</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students immediately impacted by “Act” step</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information Literacy
College-wide Assessment Report
In general, Rio Salado students have scored high on previous instruments used to evaluate Information Literacy skills. In spring 2010, because student research is now conducted almost exclusively online, and because of the ongoing increase in resources offered to Rio Salado students through the online library, a new instrument was adopted that is specifically designed to measure “electronic information competencies,” and which also measures the gap between students’ perceived online research skills and their actual skills. The Research Readiness Self-Assessment (RRSA) is a nationally-normed assessment tool that was developed by Central Michigan University. The Research Readiness Self Assessment was administered online during the spring 2010 semester to dual and distance students, and again to a cohort of dual enrollment students in fall 2010 (N=308: Distance students: 149; Dual students: 159).

The following findings from the combined 2010 RRSA surveys were deemed significant:

- Overall, the students’ perceived Research Skill Level was 74.01% (college level=70%). Their actual research skill level was 67.87% (below college level).

- Although the students’ self-reported perceived Research Skill Level was 74.01% (college level), their self-reported Research and Library Experience score was 42.09%. Therefore, although students perceive their research skills to be at college level, they are not equating these skills with using the library to do quality research.

- Students who rely less on simply browsing the Internet for their information needs have better research skills (Obtaining and Evaluating Information and Awareness of Plagiarism).
than those with more reliance. (Browsing the Internet equates to “Googling;” doing general Web searches for information needs rather than using online library resources that ensure access to validated, authoritative, peer-reviewed, and scholarly content.)

• Self-reported Research and Library Experience was positively correlated with a better understanding of Plagiarism. By inference, an increased requirement for students to use library resources might also lead to increased skill in Obtaining Information and Evaluating Information. [This hypothesis was tested in spring 2011. The RRSA was administered in fall 2010 as a pre-test to a cohort of Dual Enrollment students at the beginning of ENG101, and again as a post-test at the conclusion of ENG102 in spring 2011 to assess whether the library research requirements in these courses resulted in improved Information Literacy skills. More information on this initiative will be provided under Library Services in Criterion 3d].

• It is notable that Rio Salado students have an extremely high understanding of plagiarism, well above college-level and far above their scores on the other two skill sets measured by the instrument (obtaining information, and evaluating information). This is ascribed to the College’s emphasis on plagiarism awareness and detection efforts.

Course-Level PDCA Plans
Based on the 2010 survey data reported above, the following interventions were recommended to the Faculty Chairs and adopted and implemented in spring 2011:

• Included a paragraph across all syllabi in all online courses, explaining the availability of library services and providing contact information

• Added verbiage indicating that the resource was being retrieved from the Rio Library when library resources are linked in online courses. Because of the seamless nature of persistent linking to library resources, students had no prior awareness that these resources were coming from the College library rather than the open Web.

• Included at least one assignment in an online course within each discipline area that requires students to perform research using resources from the Rio Salado library rather than the general Web

  • Individual meetings were held with 17 Faculty Chairs during spring 2011 to develop course-level PDCA plans and implement this step. Interventions were designed for 31 courses and implemented during spring and summer 2011, impacting approximately 1,000 students.

The effectiveness of these strategies will be measured by administering the RRSA at the College level again in spring 2012, after these interventions have been in place for one year, to allow for comparison with the 2010 baseline data and in keeping with Rio Salado’s biennial assessment cycle. Any specific courses which have incorporated a research assignment requiring library use will be included in the 2012 survey administration. The intervention cohort will be compared against the non-intervention cohort as part of the data analysis.

Reading
College-wide Assessment Report
The Reading assessment instrument was originally developed in-house and has been administered over several cycles. The Reading Competency Assessment was completed by 411 students in 2011. Distance learning students accounted for a majority (82.73%, N = 340) of the
students who participated on this assessment, with the remaining 17.27% (N=71) enrolled in dual enrollment courses.

Overall, students had a total score of 3.03 on this assessment. A large majority of students (89.05%, N = 366) scored at or above college level (70% or higher) on the Reading assessment. Students had the highest average score on the Analysis Skills section (3.44, 86.00%) and the lowest score on the Independent Reading Skills section (2.38, 59.50%). In general, scores on the Reading assessment declined fractionally during the most recent assessment year (2009 Avg = 3.04, 76.00%; 2011 Avg = 3.03, 75.75%).

Course-Level PDCA Data
The reading PDCA process began in the spring of 2011. The initial focus was to assess the areas of need in relation to reading skills. Based on the past College-wide assessments, it was determined that the focus would be on reading comprehension skills for the initial PDCA process. At the end of the second cycles, the team will meet, assess the process to date, and make recommendations for improvement.

To date, seven cycles have ended because the initial (baseline) data showed that students were already performing at or above the college level. In these cases, faculty within the discipline have started new cycles, either with different assignments or different classes. The initial progress on the reading cycles is displayed below.

3a 4: Reading Cycle Progress for FY 2010-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle Progress Update</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs that have improvement cycles</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles completed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles ended (as baseline students met college level)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles ended (for other reasons)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDCA cycles in progress</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses involved</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students impacted during PDCA cycle</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future College-wide Student Learning Outcomes
While it is evident that Rio’s measurement of these four student learning outcomes is extremely deep, the Faculty Chairs are aware that outcomes measuring student learning need to be broadened, and investigation is underway to make decisions for adding additional College-level student learning outcomes to this slate. Exploratory work was conducted investigating Sustainability as an outcome in 2010 as part of a RioLog Assessment Grant (see below). Faculty members from five disciplines collaborated to design an assessment and rubric, and pre- and post-test surveys were conducted to evaluate the knowledge of sustainability that students gained after completion of the designated courses. Results showed that respondents became more aware of sustainability practices, with an average score increase from 4.08 to 4.37. Respondents’ view of sustainability practices as an important skill was unchanged, with an average of 4.18. In fall 2011, the Faculty Chairs voted to adopt Sustainability as a College-wide student learning outcome, with implementation slated for spring, 2012. In addition,
other foundational student learning outcomes, such as oral communications/public speaking, and civic and global engagement, will be considered in 2012, to make a determination for integrating further formal student learning outcomes into Rio's instructional processes.

**Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress/Educational Testing Service (MAPP/ETS)**

The MAPP/ETS Proficiency Profile is a standardized assessment that measures student knowledge in the areas of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, college-level reading, college-level writing, critical thinking, and mathematics. This test is administered biennially at Rio Salado (in alternating years with the student learning outcomes College-wide surveys detailed above), and the results are compared across years, against national learners, and, occasionally, against the previously mentioned assessments. In 2010, Rio Salado students (N=200) scored higher, on average, on all sections of the Proficiency Profile than the national comparison sample (454.16 vs. 437.13).

Longitudinal analysis showed that students had a higher total score in 2010 (454.16, N = 200) than they did in 2008 (450.03, N = 210).

**Program Review**

Rio Salado's Program Review model and processes allow the College to make an in-depth examination of its programs, including both curricular and co-curricular components, to ensure that the program is effective, relevant, and transforms the learning of Rio Salado students.

As mentioned previously, Rio Salado College elected to join The Higher Learning Commission Academy for Assessment of Student Learning in 2007. The College's Academy project was to design and implement a formal, comprehensive, and College-wide program review model and process that was also sustainable. As stated in the College's Program Review Model document, “Program review is an essential process at Rio Salado. It helps us ensure the currency and effectiveness of all programs, curricular and co-curricular. In addition, Program Review enables us to use systems thinking to focus on responding to internal and external customers as well as be accountable to all stakeholders.”

A program at Rio Salado College is defined as “a set of college-level courses resulting in a certificate or degree.” General Education is included in this definition. Faculty Chairs of their respective College programs are responsible for conducting program reviews. All program reviews contain the same foundational components, such as the goals and learning outcomes for the program, assessment of College-wide student learning outcomes and strategies used to increase student learning, and program resources. Depending on the program, additional components may also be included, such as external accreditations. A list of 36 foundational questions was created as a Program Review template to guide the review process. The questions align with available College data which support the foundational components. Beginning with programs to be reviewed during the 2010-11 academic year, the questions and available program data are compiled into a document which is then given to the Faculty Chair of the program for completion. Once the document is finalized, the final Program Review Model/Process Report is generated and disseminated for review and feedback by the Learning Assessment Team.
In addition to the Faculty Chairs, a number of College employees are also involved in the program review process. The Faculty Chair of Curriculum Development is the Program Review Coordinator who facilitates the Program Review process. In addition, the Institutional Research Department provides program-specific data and data analysis. The Learning Assessment Team is responsible for evaluating each program review.

Program reviews are conducted every five years. If modifications occur to the curriculum in the program, then a review will be completed again in three years. In addition, the Learning Assessment Team may recommend a Focus or Spotlight report within one or three years from the conclusion of the program review. New programs have an initial program review after three years, to allow for baseline data to be established. Program review data are posted on the College's public website.

**Evaluation**

Data from the PSOL surveys of 2008 and 2010 showed that the item “There are sufficient offerings within my program of study” had higher rates of both importance and satisfaction reported by Rio Salado students when compared with national online learners.

Feedback from a number of College-developed surveys indicates that the Program Review Model/Process is considered effective and is valued by College Administration and Faculty leadership, College partners, and Community members, with all response data well above the 80% target for quality assurance:

### 3a 5: Program Review Survey Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Type</th>
<th>Spring 2010, N=28</th>
<th>Spring 2011, N=29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Council Survey</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The College effectively utilizes the program review process to increase student learning and program effectiveness.</td>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree: <strong>96.3%</strong></td>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree: <strong>86.36%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnership Survey</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Salado College provides useful and engaging programs for students.</td>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree: <strong>92.59%</strong></td>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree: <strong>94%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Survey</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Salado College provides useful and engaging programs for students.</td>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree: <strong>89.66%</strong></td>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree: <strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part of the Program Review Model/Process includes an evaluation of the completed program review. As referenced above, members of the Learning Assessment Team are convened to perform this evaluation, along with ad hoc members who might include students, community members, and other College employees. Living the College’s Core Value of Relentless Improvement, the evaluation process has evolved and improved since first implemented in 2008.
The purposes of the evaluation process, now known as the Examination and Feedback phase, are to:

- Evaluate current goals and determine future goals of the program through quality assurance and relentless improvement indicators, which may assist the Faculty Chair, faculty, administrators, and staff involved with the program.
- Evaluate current goals and determine future goals for the system-wide components of the College through quality assurance and relentless improvement indicators, which may assist all faculty chairs, faculty, administrators, and staff involved with College programs and co-curricular services.
- Share and learn from best practices.
- Increase the effectiveness of the College’s Program Review model.

The Examination and Feedback phase includes an electronic Program Review Examination and Feedback Form which the Learning Assessment Team subcommittee members complete and submit to the Program Review Coordinator. Feedback is then compiled into a Program Review Examination Summary Report which is shared electronically and discussed at a meeting with the program’s Faculty Chair, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the College Dean responsible for the program, and members of the Learning Assessment Team subcommittee. From the Program Review Examination Summary Report, the team identifies Best Practices and Process Improvements, which are compiled by the Program Review Coordinator into a Program Review Executive Summary. The Executive Summary is then shared with the College’s stakeholders, including College employees, the program’s Advisory Committee, and students.

It is notable that General Education Program Review was completed during the 2010-2011 year. A detailed schedule of the timeline for reviews of all programs at Rio Salado, along with the review documents, minutes, and data collected for reviews completed to date are compiled on the College’s Assessment Team SharePoint site.

A poster session on Rio’s HLC Assessment Academy project was presented at the 2011 Higher Learning Commission annual conference. The College’s membership in the Academy was set to end in 2011, but has been extended for an additional year. Members of the Self-Study Planning Team, who are also members of the Learning Assessment Team, will attend the Assessment Academy Results Forum in June 2012 and will participate in a panel discussion.

**Mini Program Review (Transparency by Design: College Choices for Adults)**

Rio Salado College conducts mini program reviews through its participation in Transparency by Design/College Choices for Adults, a national accountability initiative that publishes student learning outcomes at the program level. Annual collection and reporting of program data for Transparency by Design ensures that the College actively evaluates each of the featured programs between regularly scheduled comprehensive Program Review cycles.

**Assessment of Academic Co-Curricular Services (Program Review Process)**

Assessment of academic co-curricular services was undertaken as part of the comprehensive HLC Assessment Academy Program Review project. For the pilot project in fall 2008, a general customer satisfaction question was asked of students who had used any of the College’s co-curricular services, with a follow-up student survey and a satisfaction survey of internal customers conducted in fall 2009. After reviewing the data, it was decided that this was not the most valuable means of assessing co-curricular services for Program Review, since each of
these departments already has its own data measures based on the College's service standards of Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.

An Academic Co-Curricular Services committee was then convened, incorporating co-curricular services deemed to have a direct contribution to student learning outside of the formal classroom. These included Academic Advisement, Library Services, Counseling Services, Tutoring Services, Instructional Helpdesk, Technology Helpdesk, Computer Labs, and RioLounge. A one-question survey was administered to students both online (at the website of each department) and in-person in fall 2010, asking whether the particular service department helped with their learning. Overall, (N=590) 74.40% of students agreed with the statement. This was slightly below the target of 80% agreement for Quality Assurance. The students were also asked about their program of study so that the data could be disaggregated by program for the Program Review process.

In spring 2011, the same survey question was asked, but the online component was administered from a survey on the RioLearn portal rather than from department websites to assess whether students would consider this question differently within the context of their online learning environment. Once again, the students were asked about their program of study. The spring 2011 online survey included a "have not used" response option, since students were not surveyed at the departmental level as in fall 2010. Five of the eight services increased in average from fall, 2010 to spring, 2011. These included Advisement Services, Instructional Helpdesk, Library Services, RioLounge, and Technology Helpdesk. Averages declined for Computer Lab Services, Counseling Services, and Tutoring Services. However, the highest frequencies were of those students who have not used the services surveyed. It was determined that the fall 2010 methodology, which surveyed students at point of use of the co-curricular services, was the more useful method, but that it could be concluded that, in general, the contribution of academic co-curricular services to student learning had been established.

**Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Assessment Award**

Rio Salado's Adjunct Faculty model and the value placed on effective teaching, along with strategies to ensure effective teaching, will be discussed in Criterion 3b. To further demonstrate the College's culture of assessment, adjunct faculty members are recognized on an annual basis for contributions to assessment of student learning, as well as for excellence in teaching and learning in general. Criteria for recognition of excellence in assessment include the following:

1. Writing and revision of course assessments
2. Review of assessments for effectiveness and improvement
3. Participation in RioLogs
4. Student Learning Outcomes work at the departmental level
5. Contributions to development of assessment interventions, rubrics, or customized grading tools at the departmental level

Generally, between five and seven adjunct faculty are recognized each year for their assessment efforts, out of a total of approximately 30-35 awardees.

**RioLogs**

RioLog projects are grant-funded assessment initiatives that are designed to incorporate Adjunct Faculty in the College's course, program, and/or college-level student learning
outcomes work. Faculty Chairs write the grant proposals which are then considered for approval according to a list of criteria by a representative committee made up of members of the Learning Assessment Team.

The following is a representative list of projects and dollar amounts expended on RioLog proposals between 2009 and spring, 2011.

- **RioLog Title: Creating Interventions for Faculty to use for Writing Interventions**
  
  **Abstract:** The purpose of this grant is to work individually with each Faculty Chair to tailor some writing improvement interventions to the various disciplines, and offer tangible, practical, and helpful strategies for instructors to embed within their courses.
  
  **Grant funded: $3,224.00**

- **RioLog Title: Creating and Improving Math Exams to Increase Student Success**
  
  **Abstract:** Creating a practice exam in MyMathLab allows the student to take a different practice exam as many times as they choose, to better prepare for their actual exam. This project will provide the funding needed to create the exams inside of MyMathLab for MAT092, MAT122, MAT142, MAT172, and MAT187. This project will also fund needed revisions in MyMathLab tests for MAT092, as part of the Student Success Initiative.
  
  **Grant funded: $2,886.00**

- **RioLog Title: Collecting and Analyzing Baseline Data for the Departmental Assessment Plan for Languages**
  
  **Abstract:** This project will provide funding for our dual enrollment instructors to apply the departmental critical thinking grading rubric to 3 sections of in-person SPH245, for a total of approximately 75 assignments, as part of the PLAN phase of work on the PDCA cycle.
  
  **Grant funded: $520.00**

- **RioLog Title: Piloting Sustainability as a Learning Outcome across Several Disciplines**
  
  **Abstract:** A team of adjunct faculty focused on the Sustainability learning outcome by developing, implementing and completing work in online course materials and assessments. All adjunct faculty involved in the Rio Log believed that their assignments would provide awareness, knowledge, and decision making skills on the topic. Students indicated they would prefer all designated assignments be planned within the course rather than be optional.
  
  **Grant funded: $6,730.00**

- **RioLog Title: Sociology and Communication Assessments**
  
  **Abstract:** Analysis of course assessments in SOC140, SOC212, COM100, and COM110 shows a very similar assessment structure for assignments within each of these courses. Assessment of these courses needs to be evaluated for improvement and determination needs to be made as to which assignments need to be assessed differently.
  
  **Grant funded: $3,627.00**

The Learning Assessment Team determined that the resources invested in RioLogs were effective in incorporating Adjunct Faculty in the College's course, program, and/or college-level learning outcomes work, and in designing interventions to improve student learning.
Core Component – 3b

The organization values and supports effective teaching.

The Rio Salado Faculty Model

Since it was founded in 1978, Rio Salado College has maintained a nontraditional faculty structure. A small Faculty Chair cohort (20 in fall 2011) serve as department and/or program heads and instructional leaders, while over 1,380 adjunct faculty, most of whom are practitioners in their fields, teach the vast majority of courses at the College to an enrollment of almost 70,000 students. As indicated in Criterion 1d, this small number of full-time faculty facilitates greater communication and interaction between the Faculty and Administration. It also allows for considerable flexibility in positioning the College to embark on new and innovative instructional initiatives, such as the Paralegal Program, eLearning Design, Sustainable Food Systems, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), which have been developed in the recent past. Also, the College’s focus on distance learning is better served by the use of adjunct faculty because of the large number of faculty required, allowing for more flexibility in staffing classes that start every week. This dual approach to faculty allows for quality control and consistency in both course development and instruction. A “one course, many sections” online content model ensures high quality in course design and delivery, while extensive processes are in place to evaluate and to support adjunct faculty teaching efforts.

Residential Faculty

There is generally one full-time Residential Faculty member per academic discipline or department who also serves as the Faculty Chair. Many of the Faculty Chairs’ responsibilities differ from roles at traditional campuses. The Rio Salado College Faculty 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. The College has support systems to assist Faculty Chairs with operational responsibilities such as recruiting, hiring and training Adjunct Faculty, staffing, and textbook orders, which will be described below. At the District level, Faculty Chairs represent the College through service on District-wide Instructional Councils and curriculum committees, and participate in Statewide Articulation Task Forces to ensure that the College is meeting the needs of its university partners and transfer students. More details are provided in the Curriculum process description below.

All Rio Salado residential faculty must meet the certification requirements of the Maricopa District, whose basic qualifications for teaching academic courses include a Master’s degree, plus, at a minimum, 24 semester hours of upper division and/or graduate courses, or 18 graduate hours in the fields to be taught. Certain disciplines have additional requirements, and the qualifications for some occupational fields reflect a combination of academic qualifications and related work experience. Residential faculty, who are initially employed in a probationary status, 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.
The College Faculty Staffing Committee performs the function of determining new faculty positions. This Committee consists of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Faculty Senate President, Faculty Senate President-elect, and Faculty Senate past-presidents (currently three members). Recommendations are forwarded to the College President for approval.

Residential Faculty are hired through a rigorous screening and interview process which includes a national search as described in Criterion 2b, interview by committee for candidates who meet the minimum and desired qualifications and emerge as the most qualified, and a second interview in a micro-teach format, attended by administration and faculty.

New Faculty Chair positions will be filled in strategic areas to support innovation and expand the College’s expertise in disciplines beyond its current offerings. This will also help provide a more robust platform for participating in national initiatives. An example of this is the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Faculty Chair position which was hired in fall 2011. The comprehensive mentoring process for Faculty Chair hires was described in Criterion 2a.

As academic and instructional leaders, Rio Salado’s residential faculty are diligent in keeping current in their fields and attending and presenting at conferences.

Instructional Support Model
In 2009, the Rio Faculty Chairs and Administration collaborated to create a sustainable Instructional Support Model that would enable the College to maintain its long-time practice of a small cohort of Faculty Chairs, and yet continue to meet enrollment growth while also delivering high-quality instruction. This unbundling of Faculty Chair responsibilities allowed for the hiring of an Instructional Coordinator position to assist the chair with such matters as refinement of department policies and procedures, overseeing the tracking of Adjunct Faculty, student, and course issues, and coordination of assessment efforts, among others. Other options, at the tier below Instructional Coordinator, are Discipline Specialist and Lead Faculty, each of whom may have responsibilities related to ensuring the smooth functioning of the department. Several Faculty Chairs have taken advantage of this model, and anecdotal evidence shows that it has been extremely successful. All Instructional Coordinators, Discipline Specialists, and Lead Faculty were hired from the ranks of expert adjunct faculty members.

Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP)
Rio’s Residential Faculty are evaluated according to the Faculty Evaluation Plan as defined in the MCCCD Residential Faculty Policies (RFP):

3.5. Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP) for Instructional Improvement

Inasmuch as the Faculty is committed to quality teaching and instruction and is contracted to provide professional services to students, colleagues, and the District, the Faculty do hereby agree to adhere to, support, and implement the following self-evaluation policies and procedures.

Residential Faculty are required to complete an FEP annually for the first five years of employment, and every third year thereafter. Faculty Evaluation Plans for all Rio Salado residential faculty are up to date, and are maintained in the faculty files at the District Office.
Faculty Professional Growth (FPG)
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 that are intended to enhance their professional growth, maintain currency in their fields, connect with colleagues, and in general, engage in activities that stimulate the faculty member intellectually and improve faculty competency.

The following chart shows the professional growth funds expended by the MCCCD for Rio Salado Residential Faculty over the past five fiscal years. These numbers should be considered in the context of the College's small residential faculty cohort (23 in fall 2011).

3b 1: MCCCD FPG Funds Expended by Rio Salado Residential Faculty Five Years: 2006-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$14,814.00</td>
<td>$26,314.20</td>
<td>$24,894.98</td>
<td>$18,084.15</td>
<td>$42,777.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is notable that use of faculty professional growth funds more than doubled in the 2010-11 year. This can partially be ascribed to the fact that for the first time, additional professional growth funds were made available for the Chair Academy, and two cohorts were established. Several Rio Faculty Chairs took advantage of this opportunity.

In addition to these District-supplied funds, Rio Salado College supports faculty attendance at conferences and workshops as needed. For example, residential faculty and staff were paid by the College in both 2010 and 2011 during their attendance at the Maricopa Summer institute, where they worked on initiatives to support student success in developmental education. The residential faculty are appreciative of and acknowledge this College support. In a Residential Faculty Survey (N=24) in spring 2010, 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Rio Salado College encourages and provides support for professional growth opportunities for faculty.”

In prior years, FPG Summer projects have supported faculty professional growth by encouraging participation in summer conferences, workshops, classes, special training, and custom designed work experiences. Awards were granted through a competitive process and complied with stringent FPG requirements. Once granted, individuals completed the professional growth experience and were required to file a final report which accounted for the outcomes and impact of the experience on teaching and learning. Summer projects were discontinued by the Governing Board in FY 2009-10 because of the economic downturn, but faculty can still take advantage of general professional growth dollars to attend conferences, workshops or classes during the summer.

The MCCCD has a rigorous sabbatical application and review process for a very limited number of Sabbatical Leave awards. Proposals are reviewed by the Advancement/Sabbatical committee and two Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs (from Colleges other than those of the applicants). After individual scoring and discussion, the top applicants are determined and forwarded to the Associate Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who reviews all proposals and then...
forwards the recommended candidates to the Governing Board, which has final approval. Awarded candidates are required to file two specific reports: A Performance Report is due within 30 days of the start of each semester of the sabbatical, and a final report is due within 60 days of the faculty member’s return to his or her campus at the completion of the sabbatical.

**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. A Faculty Development Committee incorporating representation from the Faculty Development Coordinators of the 10 Maricopa Colleges, MCLI personnel, and a representative Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) meets monthly to discuss issues related to faculty development. Rio Salado’s VPAA has been the liaison to this committee for the past three years, along with the College’s two Faculty Development Coordinators. An annual retreat is held at which College teams gather to plan for initiatives around teaching and learning, and student success. “Dialogue Days” are workshops on topics across the spectrum related to teaching and learning. In addition, multiple events are held that relate to the effective use of technology in the classroom.

The MCLI is also the Arizona lead agency for Quality Matters™, which is a peer review process whereby faculty assess and certify the quality of online courses. Nine Faculty Chairs at Rio Salado have undergone Quality Matters training to become certified reviewers, and the goal at the College is to have all Chairs participate within the next two years.

**Adjunct Faculty**

**The Rio Salado Adjunct Faculty Model**

As indicated above, since the College’s inception, a small cohort of residential faculty have served as department chairs and provided instructional leadership for a growing cohort of Adjunct Faculty (1,383 in late fall, 2011) who teach most of the College’s courses. As a result, Rio Salado has a very well-developed adjunct faculty hiring, orientation, development, and support model. The College takes the responsibility of Quality Assurance very seriously in this regard, and has multiple processes and measures in place to demonstrate the success of this model.

**Adjunct Faculty Hiring Process**

**Faculty Services**

Adjunct Faculty are required by the Maricopa Community Colleges District to meet the same credentialing requirements as residential, Board-approved 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 has shown remarkable stability over many years, with an approximate attrition rate of only 3 to 5%. Eighty percent of the Adjunct Faculty cohort has been with the College over five years, with the remaining 20% accounted for by growth necessitating new hires.

In 2010, Faculty Services received and processed 2,277 applications. In 2011, the department had received and processed 1,602 applications though mid-August.
The following chart shows the numbers of Adjunct Faculty interviewed and hired over each of the past four years. Faculty Chairs hire 90% of potential adjunct faculty selected for an interview due to the stringent review and credentialing processes performed by Faculty Services. This rigorous pre-hire screening process ensures highly-qualified adjunct faculty.

3b 2: Adjunct Faculty interviewed and hired

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Interviewed</th>
<th>Hired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 (as of 11.22.11)</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty Services continually monitors enrollment numbers and teaching load to determine when new adjuncts need to be hired. The department maintains complete adjunct faculty files, including official transcripts and course assignment history.

The following charts show the credential and demographic breakdown of adjunct faculty at the beginning of fall term 2011. Because of the ongoing hiring process to meet weekly starts, the numbers of Adjunct Faculty generally increase during the semester. By the beginning of December 2011, the College had a total of 1,383 adjunct faculty members.

3b 3: Rio Salado Adjunct Faculty Highest Degree Earned, Fall 2011

- **Total:** 1,030 (100%)
  - 80% Bachelor's degree
  - 6% Master's degree
  - 4% Doctorate
  - 4% Associates
  - 2% No Degree
  - 2% Unspecified
Because one third of Adjunct Faculty demographic data were unspecified or not available, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about Adjunct Faculty diversity. While these data do show that the Adjunct Faculty at Rio Salado do not represent the demographics of Maricopa County and the Rio Salado student body as evenly as the College’s full-time employees do, the demographics of the Adjunct Faculty have remained stable since 2002, with a slight increase in the number of Asian faculty.

**Ensuring Excellence with Adjunct Faculty: a Case Study**

**Orientation**

Once hired, adjunct faculty are required to take an online orientation course, AFD (Adjunct Faculty Development) 101. This course provides information about the College and its instructional practices, and covers the following topics:

- Introduction to Rio Salado College, including its history and culture
- The College’s educational philosophy, including the *Four Keys to Instruction*:
  - **Introduction**: introduces students to the lesson content, connects the current lesson to previous learning in the course, serves as a bridge to lesson objectives
  - **Focusing Your Learning**: includes the lesson objectives, the main instructional content, and practice activities/resources to help facilitate content integration and retention
  - **Assessing Your Learning**: contains required assessments
  - **Summarizing Your Learning**: contains additional practice questions to encourage reflection and to help students prepare for future lessons
- Navigating *RioLearn*, Rio Salado’s customized Learning Management System
- Effective teaching practices, including communication strategies and tips for teaching online
- Grading assignments
- Contact information for issues that might arise

New adjunct faculty hires also meet with the department Faculty Chair or designee for orientation and training on Department-specific expectations, policies, and procedures.

Additionally, all new instructors teaching online or hybrid courses are assigned mentors to provide ongoing support and training. These mentors are employees of Rio Salado’s Instructional Helpdesk, who are all experienced online adjunct faculty, and they provide one-on-one interaction and training in such areas as preparation, facilitation, and communication. They monitor the teaching practices of new Adjunct Faculty, and reinforce policies and procedures specific to the department for which the instructor is teaching. The Instructional Helpdesk will be covered in more detail in Criterion 3d.
Faculty Chairs report that after completing AFD101, their new Adjunct Faculty members are well-prepared to start teaching within the RioLearn course management system, which allows Chairs to focus on mentoring rather than on the operational aspects of navigating the system. In adjunct faculty surveys administered in 2009 and 2011, the following data, which were well above the 80% Quality Assurance target, indicated that Adjunct Faculty feel well-prepared regarding their knowledge of policies and procedures.

3b 5: Adjunct Faculty Preparedness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree/ Agree Fall 2009 (N=685)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree/ Agree Spring 2011 (N=681)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am knowledgeable regarding MCCCD and Rio Salado's policies and procedures.</td>
<td>.85%</td>
<td>93.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am knowledgeable regarding Departmental policies and procedures.</td>
<td>92.61%</td>
<td>95.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjunct Faculty Evaluation

Rio Salado College Adjunct Faculty members are evaluated pursuant to the requirements as defined in the MCCCD Adjunct Faculty Board Policies:

5.1. Adjunct faculty will be evaluated at least once during each of the first three (3) semesters employed, excluding the summer. The appropriate staff assigned at the college/center will conduct this evaluation. A course that meets three weeks or less does not require an adjunct faculty evaluation.

5.2. The college/center administrative staff will determine the appropriate evaluation procedure, which will include a student evaluation and any additional evaluation requirements.

5.3. A copy of each adjunct faculty evaluation will be placed in his/her personnel file maintained at each college/center.

For ongoing professional development of online Adjunct Faculty at Rio Salado College, formal evaluation is conducted once each semester during the first three semesters of teaching, in accordance with this MCCCD policy. After the first three evaluations, all Adjunct Faculty are evaluated every three to five years. Each of these evaluations is based on the following elements:

- **Preparation**: Familiarity with course materials, policies and procedures, and technologies as well as College resources and services
- **Facilitation**: Course management: record keeping, timely response, student retention, problem solving
- **Communication**: Interaction and Feedback that is specific, detailed, fair, consistent, and supports improvement

Evaluations follow criteria established by the department Faculty Chair, and are conducted by the Faculty Chair, Instructional Helpdesk personnel, or a Faculty Chair designee. The chair reviews each evaluation and recommends interventions, if indicated, for required ongoing professional development and improvement.
In the Adjunct Faculty survey of fall 2009 (N=685), 76.91% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “Rio Salado has an evaluation process that helps improve teaching skills.” This was slightly below the 80% Quality Assurance target. In spring 2011, the question was clarified, and 86.67% of Adjunct Faculty members agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Rio Salado has a peer/faculty chair/designee evaluation process that helps improve teaching skills,” which met Quality Assurance.

**Student Evaluations**

Student evaluations of instructor performance are collected at the completion of each course, compiled by the Institutional Research Department, and graded according to a Likert scale. Copies of these evaluations are then forwarded to the Faculty Chair for approval and to the faculty member. If ratings for any category fall below the recommended threshold of 4 on a 5-point scale, interventions for further training and development to increase instructor effectiveness may be implemented.

In FYE 2010-11, 31,606 online evaluations and 14,216 in-person evaluations were processed.

**Adjunct Faculty Professional Development**

**Adjunct Faculty Development Workshops**

Rio Salado has developed a comprehensive slate of online Adjunct Faculty Development workshops. Participation in these workshops may be mandated 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 the College’s customized Course Management System, RioLearn, thereby providing adjunct faculty with an opportunity to experience the system from the student viewpoint. Between 2007 and October, 2011, 700 adjunct faculty members had completed AFD101, and 421 had completed one or more of the remaining AFD offerings.

All Adjunct Faculty completing the AFD courses are requested to answer the following two questions evaluating their learning. Feedback from these evaluations is used by the Faculty Chair to reinforce learning concepts, and by the course designers to make improvements in the courses, when indicated.

- How will what you learned in this workshop help you as a Rio Salado Faculty Member?
- Name two concepts you will take back to your teaching experience. Explain.

**All Faculty Learning Experiences**

These in-person gatherings are held twice a year for Adjunct Faculty from all departments and disciplines, and include a component of formal faculty development. The College holds an All Faculty Learning Experience every spring, and an All Faculty Assessment and Learning Experience every fall. The fall meeting always includes updates on the College’s work with assessment of student learning, and distribution of an executive summary of the annual Student Learning Assessment Report. The fall event also includes a “State of the College” keynote by the College President, and an update on the College’s assessment of student learning initiatives by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Attendance at these events is consistently in the range of 500+...
participants. In fall 2011, total attendance included 548 Adjunct Faculty members. The spring event generally includes a keynote by an outside speaker on a topic related to teaching and learning, and student success. Survey data show that Adjunct Faculty value these meetings. Data from the fall 2011 meeting were particularly strong:

### 3b 7: Value of All Faculty Learning Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjunct Faculty Survey Fall 2009 (N=685)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree /Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rio Salado provides me with important information at the All Faculty meetings.</td>
<td>82.49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Faculty Assessment and Learning Experience Fall 2010 (N=291)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree /Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, what I learned at today’s All Faculty Meeting contributed to my effectiveness as a Rio Salado faculty member.</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Faculty Learning Experience Spring 2011 (N=410—two sessions)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree /Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The agenda met the purpose of increasing communication and professional growth.</td>
<td>84.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Faculty Learning Experience Fall 2011 (N=401—two sessions)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree /Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The President’s remarks at the general session enhanced my understanding of Rio Salado College’s accomplishments and directions.</td>
<td>95.99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Faculty Learning Experience Fall 2011 (N=401—two sessions)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree /Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Vice President of Academic Affairs’ assessment update contained valuable information that I can use in my role as a Rio Salado faculty member.</td>
<td>93.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Faculty Learning Experience Fall 2011 (N=401—two sessions)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree /Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, attending today’s event makes me feel valued as a member of the Rio Salado College teaching community.</td>
<td>92.44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### In-person Department Meetings

Department meetings follow the All-Faculty Learning Experience meetings, and some of the larger departments have as many as 50-60 attendees. Over 95% of Adjunct Faculty indicated in post-meeting surveys in fall 2010, spring 2011, and fall 2011 that their department meetings contained valuable information that they could use in the roles as Rio Salado faculty members. In addition to these collective meetings, teleconferences, meetings with smaller groups of Adjunct Faculty, and one-on-one meetings take place continually.

### In-person Workshops and Development Sessions

Some departments hold annual in-person workshops that are mini-conferences, including general sessions of interest to all Adjunct Faculty in the department, along with breakout sessions on topics related to professional development. Evaluations are conducted at the end of each workshop, and these data are used to plan future programs and make improvements.

### Adjunct Faculty SharePoint Sites

**General site:** A comprehensive online community for Adjunct Faculty is maintained via a SharePoint portal. The general site includes information pertaining to all College Adjunct Faculty, including:

- Rio Salado’s Academic Freedom Statement
- Rio Salado’s Academic Integrity Statement and Philosophy
- Registration access to the slate of AFD courses described above
- How Do I? modules
- Information pertaining to All Faculty Learning Experiences and links to content shared at the sessions, including streamed access to keynotes.
- Links to quarterly Adjunct Faculty newsletters
- Opportunities to provide input or feedback to the Faculty Development Coordinators
Department-specific sites: Each department at Rio Salado maintains a site specific to the programs and/or courses taught within the department. Content varies by department, but may include:

- Detailed department policies and procedures
- Templates, answer keys, FAQs, and student “kudos”
- Opportunities for interaction and feedback with the Faculty Chair

Survey data show that Adjunct Faculty members value the information provided through the portal, and also that they feel well supported with departmental resources and the necessary technologies to teach successfully. All data were above the Quality Assurance target of 80%:

3b 8: Value of Adjunct Faculty Support Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjunct Faculty Survey Fall 2009 (N=685)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>84.70%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>91.16%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>89.51%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>80.09%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjunct Faculty Survey Spring 2011 (N=681)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>83.46%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>91.22%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>89.97%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>91.30%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>84.64%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication and Integration of Adjunct Faculty into Departmental Planning Processes

Data from the Adjunct Faculty survey of 2009 showed that, although 92.61% of Adjunct Faculty strongly agreed or agreed that they were knowledgeable regarding departmental policies and procedures, only 58.83% of Adjunct Faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I have opportunities to participate in the Department/Program planning process.” (Target=80%). As a result of these data, two interventions were put in place to improve communication and elicit input from Adjunct Faculty at the end of 2010: a quarterly online newsletter, and the establishment of an Adjunct Faculty Focus Forum process. Survey data from spring 2011 showed an immediate improvement, with 69.35% of Adjunct Faculty in agreement. Although this is still short of the target of 80%, the trend is upward.

Newsletter

Rio Salado sends out a quarterly Adjunct Faculty Newsletter via email to all Adjunct Faculty, containing practical information related to teaching strategies, updates on College policies, departmental issues, College events, etc. The newsletter is valued as a communication tool, as evidenced by feedback received.

Adjunct Faculty Focus Forums

Selected Adjunct Faculty meet at least twice a year for Faculty Forums, where they participate
in identifying strategies to support and assist fellow Adjunct Faculty and their students. These focus group sessions provide an opportunity for interested Rio Salado Adjunct Faculty to contribute their unique perspectives for the benefit of their colleagues and their departments. Additionally, the groups brainstorm ways to enhance communication strategies between Adjunct Faculty, along with departmental and College-wide communication. 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 student learning and student success. Different areas of importance to adjunct faculty (e.g., new faculty orientation, veteran faculty issues, continuing education, assessment initiatives, the RioLearn LMS, etc.) are covered each time. A varied group of Adjunct Faculty is identified for each of these discussions, so that more specific information relating to improving the adjunct faculty experience can be elicited. Two Faculty Focus Forum sessions were held during 2011, and a third is planned for January 2012 as part of this ongoing series. Topics of discussion included the following:

- Ideas for improving the AFD Orientation process (a completely revised AFD101 is due to launch in January 2012 based on this feedback)
- Strategies for increasing student engagement
- Ideas for integrating Adjunct Faculty into the culture of the College
- Feedback on the Adjunct Faculty SharePoint Site
- Ideas and feedback (extremely positive) on the Adjunct Faculty Newsletter

Although the process of working to enhance the adjunct faculty experience to improve teaching and student learning is always ongoing, in general, Rio Salado’s Adjunct Faculty are highly integrated into the College culture and feel well-supported. Survey data consistently demonstrate that Adjunct Faculty feel valued and respected as part of the College community:

### 3b 9: Adjunct Faculty Respect and Communication Feedback

#### Adjunct Faculty Survey Fall 2009 (N=685)

- **90.72%** The College respects my role as an adjunct faculty member at Rio Salado.
- **93.13%** The College values the quality of my work.
- **90.31%** In general, communication between Rio Salado and adjunct faculty is effective.

#### Adjunct Faculty Survey Spring 2011 (N=681)

- **93.28%** Rio Salado respects my role as an adjunct faculty member.
- **92.55%** Rio Salado values the quality of my work.
- **91.27%** Communication between Rio Salado and adjunct faculty is effective.

### Adjunct Faculty Professional Growth

The Adjunct Faculty Professional Growth Program for MCCCd is administered by the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI). The program provides funding assistance on a reimbursement basis to adjunct faculty employees to attend conferences, seminars, workshops, and professional meetings that are directly related to the applicant’s field, or that will enhance/update the applicant’s teaching skills and thereby enhance the learning of students in the class taught by the applicant. Funding is based on the amount of credits taught per fiscal year (maximum $750 per applicant). Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis according to availability of funds. In FY 2010-11, $6,843.79 in Professional Growth funds was awarded by the MCCCd to Rio Salado Adjunct Faculty.
Adjunct Faculty Recognition
The Faculty Chairs of Rio Salado College recognize approximately 30-35 Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Members on an annual basis in the category of Teaching and Learning. The criteria for recognition are excellence in one or more of the following:

- Course development
- Innovative practice
- Contribution to departmental goals or initiatives
- Recommendations for improvements in curriculum
- Exemplary attitude
- Exemplary communications with students
- Commitment to student success and motivation
- Passion for teaching
- Willingness and ability to teach in multiple modalities (online, hybrid, in-person)
- Specific, detailed, constructive feedback on student assignments
- Retention efforts
- Feedback from student evaluations

In a spring 2011 survey of prior year outstanding adjunct faculty awardees (N=43), 90.69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “Winning the Outstanding Adjunct Faculty award was valuable to me as a professional.”

Survey data of the larger adjunct faculty community regarding the goals of the award were slightly below the Quality Assurance target of 80% in fall 2009 and spring 2011:

3b 10: Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Awards recognize significant contributions by adjunct faculty.</th>
<th>Adjunct Faculty Survey Fall 2009 (N=685) Strongly Agree/Agree</th>
<th>Adjunct Faculty Survey Spring 2011 (N=681) Strongly Agree/Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.66%</td>
<td>77.27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| The Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Awards highlight Rio Salado’s expectations for highly effective teaching. | 76.73% | 77.07% |

As a result of this feedback, details of the nomination process and the criteria for the award were published in the March, 2011 Adjunct Faculty newsletter, and included in a flyer distributed at the fall 2011 All Faculty Meeting. Adjunct Faculty will be surveyed again in 2012 to gauge whether these interventions were successful.

Curriculum
The Maricopa Community Colleges share a common course bank and follow a District-wide curriculum approval process, as defined in the Curriculum Procedures Handbook located at the District’s Center for Curriculum and Transfer Articulation (CCTA) website. The CCTA supports
the MCCCD 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 College Process

Each Maricopa Community College has a Faculty Representative/Curriculum Development Facilitator who serves on the District Curriculum Committee (DCC). At Rio Salado, Curriculum development is a faculty-driven process, and the Faculty Chair for Curriculum Development serves on the DCC. This Faculty Chair is responsible for the development, coordination, and review of the College's curriculum, as well as the review of curriculum proposals from other colleges in the District. Prior to 2007, the Department was managed by a Coordinator of College Curriculum, and a residential faculty member served as the College's Faculty Representative/Curriculum Development Facilitator. The realignment 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 recently formed Institutional Integrity Department on compliance and regulations. This will be explained more fully in the Compliance chapter.

Rio Salado's curriculum is reviewed regularly by the College's Faculty Chairs, the College Curriculum Committee, the Advisory Committees, the College's Curriculum Department members, and the College's partners in business and industry. For example, if one of the College's partners modifies its industry training (e.g., reduces or increases the amount of time in training, or adds/removes training content) the revised materials are submitted to the Rio Salado Curriculum Office for review. Based on this review, modifications are made as necessary and are sent back to the partner (who is considered the Content Expert or Subject Matter Expert) for review and approval. In addition, new curriculum is vetted through a rigorous internal College process before being submitted to the District Curriculum process. 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.

District Curriculum Processes

Instructional Councils (ICs) and Articulation Task Forces (ATFs)

Instructional Councils are discipline-specific, recommending bodies comprised of faculty representatives from each of the ten Maricopa Community Colleges, and are a significant part of the MCCCD Curriculum process. According to the Instructional Council Handbook: “The general purpose of each Instructional Council (IC) is to improve communication and coordination among faculty working in common discipline areas in the Maricopa Community Colleges and other Arizona postsecondary educational institutions. The ICs recommend improvements to the teaching-learning process and the quality of the instructional program of the colleges.”

Instructional Council members also have the opportunity to participate in a statewide Articulation Task Force (ATF) to ensure that the colleges are meeting the needs of university partners and transfer students. In addition, each Instructional Council chooses a member to serve as the Articulation Task Force Lead for their discipline. At minimum, the various Articulation Task Forces meet annually to discuss topics such as curriculum articulation and transfer guides.
District Approval Process

The MCCCD curriculum approval process has multiple stages for new program development. The first stage is the creation of an Early Alert, which is sent District-wide to administrators and faculty as a means to alert all MCCCD colleges of the plan to develop a new program. Colleges have 10 days to respond with any concerns, objections, requests to share, or their approval. At the conclusion of the 10-day alert period, the College requests permission from the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs to proceed with development of the proposed program. Once permission is received, the College develops the certificate and/or degree program, and then sends the proposal to the appropriate Instructional Council (IC) for its review and recommendation. Instructional Councils have 10 faculty accountability days to respond with their recommendation to approve the proposed curriculum, approve the proposed curriculum with specified changes, or fail to approve the proposed curriculum.

The next stage in the process is approval of the curriculum by the College’s internal Curriculum Committee, which can occur simultaneously with the Instructional Council’s review. The College Curriculum Committee is chaired by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and includes Faculty Chairs and administrators as voting members. Once the Curriculum Office receives a recommendation from the Instructional Council and approval from the College’s Curriculum Committee, the curriculum proposals are submitted electronically to the District’s CCTA for processing. The final two stages of approval occur at the District level. The District Curriculum Committee, chaired by the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and comprised of one faculty member and one administrator from each of the 10 Maricopa Colleges, either approves or disapproves the proposed curriculum. If the curriculum is approved, the final approval stage is the MCCCD Governing Board. A modified form of this comprehensive process is in place for new course curriculum, or changes to existing course curriculum.

Evaluation

In the Leadership Council Survey (N=29) of spring 2011, 85.71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “Rio Salado College has a well-developed process for curriculum approval,” while 100% of residential faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the same statement in a spring 2010 survey. In surveys of Rio Salado’s partners in spring 2010 (N=52) and spring 2011 (N=51), 88.37% and 90.48% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “Rio Salado College effectively customizes Partnership education and training for employees.” These results were well above the Quality Assurance target of 80%.

In fall 2010 the Curriculum Department surveyed internal customers regarding responsiveness and satisfaction in accordance with its Service Standards. Survey data were extremely positive, with most responses eliciting 100% agreement.

General Education Learning Outcomes

District Level

The General Education Program at Rio Salado College is aligned with the mission and purposes of the Maricopa County Community College District General Education Curriculum.

MCCCD General Education Statement

The general education core of the program of study for an associate degree or a certificate helps students develop a greater understanding of themselves, of their relationship with others, and
of the richly diverse world in which they live. The general education experience provides students with opportunities to explore broad areas of commonly held knowledge and prepares them to contribute to society through personal, social, and professional interactions with others. General education fosters students’ personal development by opening them to new directions, perspectives, and processes. Through its general education requirements, the Maricopa County Community College District is committed to helping students develop qualities and skills that will serve them throughout their lives. General education opportunities encourage students to:

- Build self-awareness, self-respect, and self-confidence
- Recognize and respect the beliefs, traditions, abilities, and customs of all people and all cultures
- Consider the local, global, and environmental impacts of personal, professional, and social decisions and actions
- Access, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, and use information wisely
- Communicate effectively personally, socially, and professionally
- Think critically, make informed decisions, solve problems, and implement decisions
- Consider the ethical implications of their choices
- Value the learning process throughout their lives
- Integrate and connect ideas and events in a historical perspective, and see relationships among the past, the present, and the future
- Develop a personal sense of aesthetics
- Use technological resources appropriately and productively
- Work cooperatively and respectfully with others to serve their communities

The general education experience at MCCCD is composed of specific elements across the curriculum designed to provide the learner with essential knowledge and skills:

- Communication
- Arts and Humanities
- Numeracy
- Scientific Inquiry in the Natural and Social Sciences
- Information Literacy
- Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking
- Cultural Diversity

College and Program Level
The General Education Program at Rio Salado College consists of the following departments: Biology, Counseling, English/Reading, Humanities/History, Languages, Library Science, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Psychology/Philosophy/Religious Studies, and Social Sciences. The College’s General Education Program is aligned with the mission and purposes of the MCCCD General Education Statement referenced above. Every associate’s degree at Rio Salado College contains a general education core, ranging from 25-35 credits. Certificate programs may also contain general education courses. In addition, the College’s General Education program provides cultural enrichment, continuing education, and lifelong learning opportunities for students.

A best practice of the College’s General Education program is the interdisciplinary collaboration on common learning outcomes. The General Education Faculty Chairs agree on program-
level learning outcomes, which align with the College-wide learning outcomes. Course-level learning outcomes work informs program-level learning outcomes, which also then supports the College-level learning outcomes.

Course Design
One Course, Many Sections Model
Rio Salado College offers online, hybrid, and mixed media courses in 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 Faculty Chair or a designated content expert, often an experienced adjunct faculty member. That one set of course content is published by the College and then serves as the basis for any adjunct faculty member who teaches that particular course. The one-course, many-sections model contrasts with the unique-course model used by most colleges and universities in the country, where every faculty member creates a unique version of the course they teach.

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.
• Courses contain only permissible or licensed materials that do not violate copyright laws.
• Instructors are free from the work of creating and updating content and assessments each semester.
• Instructors are more able to focus on interacting and engaging with individual students

Furthermore, as noted in Criterion 3a in the discussion of College-wide student learning outcomes, student performance data can be collected easily, because assessments are common among sections. As a result, interventions can readily be implemented regarding course content, assessments, or teaching strategies that will affect a larger number of students simultaneously.

Multiple Start Dates
Rio Salado initially implemented three start dates per year for distance learning courses, following a traditional semester model (fall, spring, and summer). In the early 1990s, this was expanded to six starts for increased student convenience, after which the Development Team explored the creation of a systems-based implementation of 16 annual start dates. In spring 1997, the Development Team once again spearheaded the expansion that allowed students to start a course every other week, or 26 times per year. The move from 26 to 48 starts was achieved after a number of years, once it was determined that students would value this additional flexibility, and that the infrastructure required for weekly starts was not substantially different than what was already in place.

Course Development: Instructional Design
In implementing the one-course, many sections model, Instructional Design Services (IDS) assists Faculty Chairs in the course design and project management of more than 300 courses each year. Instructional Design Services has two primary responsibilities: designing all course materials in collaboration with the Faculty Chair or designee and staff, and researching and implementing new programs for the College. The Program Development process will be described in Criterion 5a. The department was established in 2004 in response to the need for greater consistency in course design, quality assurance, timeliness of delivery, and sharing of
innovations across academic and occupational disciplines. Initially, the department consisted of one instructional designer who moved from a faculty role into the design role, and one part-time administrator. Design services were limited and optional at that time, but the value added by instructional design to the course development process was soon recognized by Faculty Chairs and administrators.

IDS staff has been greatly expanded to meet the internal demand for these services. The department currently employs one associate dean, a director, five instructional designers, two project coordinators (one of whom is dedicated to the research and development of new programs and implementing new course initiatives), a multimedia manager, three graphic designers, two office coordinators, and several part-time editors and designers. Additionally, the Library Instructional Coordinator (assistant to the Faculty Chair for Library Services, as described in the Faculty Support model above) is assigned to spend part of his/her time as a member of the IDS team. In this capacity, the Coordinator provides the instructional designers and course developers with research services to identify and insert authoritative, validated content into Rio’s courses, thereby also enabling seamless integration of library resources into online courses.

Instructional designers in the department have formal training and advanced academic credentials in learning design. Most have also been trained as Quality Matters™ Certified Course Reviewers for online courses. Each instructional designer is assigned to work with specific Faculty Chairs. Designers get to know the needs of the chairs and their disciplines in order to better anticipate and serve these needs. Instructional designers assist adjunct faculty members, who are generally hired as course writers, in the design and development of course content and assessments following established course templates and models.

Evaluation
Anecdotal Feedback
Most feedback about IDS performance comes back to the department via Faculty Chairs and Adjunct Faculty, who have the most interaction with the content and with students. Feedback may also come to IDS through the Technology and Instructional Helpdesks. When comments are received, designers work with appropriate faculty and staff to improve problem areas. For example, once a course is implemented, the instructor (usually an Adjunct Faculty member) may find that he or she is receiving the same request for clarification about a portion of instruction or requirements for an assignment from multiple students. The instructor then discusses this with his or her Faculty Chair, who works with the designated instructional designer to enhance instruction or clarify directions. If a Chair recognizes that students are performing below expectations on a particular assessment, the designer assists with investigating the issue and making appropriate adjustments. These might include changes to the assessment instrument or enhancement of the instruction and/or student practice within the lesson. Again, Rio’s centralized “one course” model makes these kinds of improvements easy to implement rapidly and efficiently across all sections of a course.

Survey Feedback
In fall 2010 Instructional Design Services and Course Production (see Criterion 3c) implemented a Course Development Project Survey that is administered to all process constituents after a new or updated course goes live. The survey measures service standards and performance along every step of the process. Data for each “start” since implementation of the survey are as follows:
### 3b 11: Course Development Project Survey-Instructional Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I received timely communication throughout the dev/prod process.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was provided all documents needed to complete the course.</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I met due dates for milestones we established throughout process.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline for course development (from project start to documents due) was realistic.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The media for the course was produced in a timely manner.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Design Averages</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.50</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.50</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.42</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.54</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While responses for all questions are well above the target of 4.0 on the 5.0 point scale and the average for the most recent start is extremely high, it has been noted that the survey response rate has dropped since the survey was first implemented. Attempts are underway to improve the feedback rate from process constituents.

The 2008 and 2010 Noel-Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL) noted both of the following elements related to course design as Strengths:

- Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus. (This item also had a higher satisfaction benchmark vs. national online learners, both in 2008 and 2010).
- Assessment and evaluation procedures are clear and reasonable.

### Core Component – 3c

The organization creates effective learning environments.

**Course Production**

Once Rio Salado’s online, hybrid and mixed media courses have been designed and developed as described under Criterion 3b, they are produced by a centralized Course Production (CP) department. Course Production operates via a standardized production process model whereby course documents are moved from one team to another until the entire course has been produced. After the course files are received from Instructional Design, Course Production employees code the files using HTML for production into RioLearn, the College’s customized course management system (described below), and also produce the assessments using the online assessment tool embedded within RioLearn.

Over the past 10 years, Course Production has expanded from eight to 21 employees to address a 30% growth in production each semester, and produces an average of 50-60 courses every two months. To manage this growth, Course Production implemented a Course Lifecycle
SharePoint tracking system in 2006. The Course Lifecycle 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. For example, the department tracks the progress of courses in a daily report that is dynamically updated. Additionally, after a start date has passed, reports are run to track all pertinent details related to the courses from the prior start date, such as course information, milestone dates, media details, content, assessment, data team details, and survey responses.

**Evaluation**

Lifecycle data allow customer surveys and reports to be generated which provide the department with data to consistently monitor and improve the development and production process as a whole. These reports and survey data are reviewed at regular intervals to identify issues that need to be evaluated. For example, Team Leads and the Production Manager take note of areas in which the production process has been delayed due to gaps in a specific technician’s skill set. When a pattern is noted, additional training is conducted to bridge those knowledge gaps, and a continually-updated set of standardized training materials has been developed that technicians can access at any time. This has become a “just-in-time” training knowledge base for many standard tasks.

The Course Development Project Survey referenced above showed the following results for Course Production for each start date since implementation:

### 3c 1: Course Development Project Survey-Course Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I received timely communication throughout the development and production process.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was provided all documents needed to complete the course.</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I met due dates for milestones we established throughout the process.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Production was timely in processing the course.</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was allowed enough time to review the course for the approval process.</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final review changes I asked for were accurately accomplished the first time.</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Production Averages</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.68</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.57</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.43</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.61</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.93</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted for the Instructional Design Services questions on the same survey, responses for all questions are well above the target of 4.0 on the 5.0 point scale, and the average for the most recent start is extremely high. Again, it has been noted that the survey response rate has
dropped since the survey was first implemented, and attempts are underway to improve the feedback rate from process constituents.

3c 2: Rio Salado College Instructional Design and Production Model

Rio Salado Learning Environments: Online
RioLearn
In FY 2010-11, 43,093 of the College’s 57,746 credit students were taking their coursework online. RioLearn, the College’s customized, scalable Course Management System, is the environment within which the College provides this instruction. Development of an in-house and customized system was initiated in 2003, when it became clear that the systems the College had used up to that time were no longer capable of accommodating the College’s unique online instruction model and continuing growth. An extensive search revealed that existing systems were not designed to accommodate the College’s specific needs: the College’s frequent “start” dates as described in Criterion 3b, 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. As an example, the following chart shows the number of sections for fall 2010 for just the top 10 enrollment courses. When RioLearn was initially deployed, the College migrated over 450 courses into the new system, and that number had grown to just under 1,000 currently active courses by fall 2011.

3c 3: Top 10 Enrollment Courses Number of Sections Fall 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>ENG101</th>
<th>BIO160</th>
<th>BIO201</th>
<th>BIO156</th>
<th>MAT082</th>
<th>COM100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>177</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>133</td>
<td>SPA101</td>
<td>PSY101</td>
<td>CIS105</td>
<td>ENG102</td>
<td>SOC101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 943

Rio Salado partnered with Microsoft and Dell Corporation to address these issues, and designed and deployed the RioLearn system in 2003. The advantage to a customized system is that improvements can be implemented based on stakeholder feedback. Thus, faculty and student input is solicited on an ongoing basis and, in the years since the original implementation, RioLearn has been substantially modified seven times to improve functionality, ease of use, and effectiveness as a system for teaching and learning.
In spring 2011, a major process was initiated for envisioning RioLearn, Version 8. The College embarked on this project following environmental scanning of LMS systems on the market, and an initial investigation into student and faculty LMS needs. Also, PSOL survey data from both 2008 and 2010 identified the following item among those listed as Challenges, indicating the need to update the instructional capabilities of the system: *The quality of online instruction is excellent.*

The vision of RioLearn v8 is to increase student success by creating a more personalized and social learning experience that will adapt to the diverse preferences, learning styles, and academic needs of the College’s students. In order to achieve these goals, RioLearn v8 must include easily accessible, robust analytics that facilitate data-driven decision-making for the students and the faculty. RioLearn has been on the cutting edge of LMS technology for most of its seven versions; however, recent advancements in technology and innovations in teaching and learning methodologies have necessitated a major update to the system. Three key characteristics were identified to help the College create a user experience designed to increase student success. These characteristics are: Teaching, Learning, and System Architecture:

**Teaching**
- Simple integration of multimedia to address different modalities
- Support for sharable, open educational resources, and student/faculty generated content
- E-textbook and audio textbook integration

**Learning**
- Adaptive to diverse student preferences, learning styles, and academic needs
- Competency based content and assessments at a granular level
- Supplemental Student resources based on previous success/failure
- Ranking System for content modules ("Like" Button)
- E-student competency portfolio/profile

**System Architecture**
- ADA Compliance
- Support credit, non-credit, and in-person/hybrid modalities (course shell)
- Allow open access to course content for future opportunities (e.g., grants and partnerships)
- Provide integrated analytics that predict and enhance student success
- Integrate communication and learning tools:
  - Social Tools
  - Co-Curricular Student Support Services
  - Student Information/Profile—Information gathered from analytics
  - Personalized Learning Network—Student selected learning resources and interest groups
  - Synchronous learning tools
- Accessible via mobile devices with ability to work offline
- Customization of interface for students, faculty, and partners (iGoogle model)

A tri-chair structure, comprised of one dean, one associate dean, and a Faculty Chair under the sponsorship of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Information Services, led the visioning process which included focus groups of students, adjunct faculty, national technology experts, residential faculty, and others. In fall 2011, Subject Matter Expert Groups (SMEGs) were convened to begin the process of developing functional specifications.
based on the findings identified in the visioning process. SMEGs are led by co- and tri-chair leads including Faculty Chairs and administrators, with cross-functional membership from multiple departments.

Data from the 2010 Noel Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL) highlighted the following items related to RioLearn as Strengths:

- Information on getting started for my online class is adequate.
- RioLearn is easy to navigate.

**RioPASS**

**RioPASS** (Rio’s Pathway for Achieving Student Success) is an accelerated online degree track program, designed to facilitate the path to an associates degree in keeping with the national completion agenda. Students are admitted as a cohort and complete two courses at a time in an accelerated eight-week format. The courses for RioPASS are all specifically designed for this program to enable optimal integration between the paired courses so that some assignments can serve a dual purpose. The curriculum and dates are mapped out clearly in advance, and support systems are in place to enable students to succeed. The first cohort commenced in August 2011 and is expected to graduate in May 2013.

Because the program is new, no completion data are available yet, but it is believed that the following features of the program will promote degree completion:

- Clear goals and timelines are provided for the entire program, allowing students to plan for completion from the outset.
- RioPASS begins with a required student success orientation.
- The cohort structure allows students the opportunity for mutual support and reinforcement.
- A RioPASS Success Coach checks in with students periodically to monitor progress, and assists instructors to provide indicated interventions such as personal coaching or referrals.
- Ongoing, targeted Advisement and Counseling services are provided.
- The accelerated eight-week format with paired classes enables students to focus more closely on fewer subjects at one time.
- The online model allows for flexibility, so that students can participate while working around work and family obligations.

**Rio Salado Learning Environments: in-Person**

**Rio Salado Locations**

Rio Salado provides in-person instruction at locations throughout Maricopa County, some of which are owned by the College as described in Criterion 2b, and other learning spaces leased by the College. The following learning environment locations are owned by the College:

- **Communiversity@Surprise.** This ground breaking facility, hosted by Rio Salado College, will be described in detail in Criterion 5a.
- **Rio@Avondale.** This location serves the communities of the far West Valley (Avondale, Tolleson, Litchfield Park, Goodyear, and El Mirage). The 13,000 square foot facility houses a Testing Center, Computer Lab for online students, and Adult Basic Education (ABE/GED/ELAA) classes. Additionally, services such as Advisement and Counseling are available on a part-time basis. Adult ACE cohorts and EDU Master Teacher Seminar students regularly hold classes on-site. Annually, approximately 1,000 students enroll in the ABE program, and hundreds more are served by Testing and the Computer Lab.
• **Rio@Northern** is located centrally in the greater Phoenix area. The 35,000 square feet facility houses a Testing Center, Computer Lab for online students, ABE/GED/ELAA classes, and the WestMEC clinical dental assisting partnership program (which will be described in Criterion 5c). Advisement and Counseling services are available by appointment, and a small in-person library collection contains materials targeted to the student population.

• **The Rio Salado Dental Hygiene Clinic** is currently housed in a downtown Phoenix location, but a state-of-the-art facility is planned for one of the College's new locations and will be built in 2012.

• **East Valley Veterans Education Center.** This facility will be described in Criterion 5c.

• **Rio Salado College Lifelong Learning Center.** The Lifelong Learning Center is located in Surprise, Arizona, and contains state-of-the-art classrooms, a Computer Lab, and a Community Meeting Room. ABE/GED/ELAA classes are offered, and Advisement services are available on a limited basis. Additionally, the Lifelong Learning Center hosts a number of community partnerships and the RISE Learning for Life organization, which will be described in more detail in Criterion 4b.

**Café@Rio Lab Program**

As explained in Criterion 2b, the Café@Rio is a sustainable teaching kitchen that serves students, faculty, staff and the local community. The Sustainable Food Systems program began offering its first online courses in the fall of 2009, followed by organic gardening classes in the College garden. The Café@Rio opened in August 2010 to provide a healthy dining experience for its students and staff, along with creating a living laboratory to teach students the principles of sustainability in the food industry. Hybrid classes utilizing the Café kitchen for baking and cooking classes began in September, 2010. As students progress through the program, they complete fundamental culinary coursework, focus on real food, and prepare for hands-on learning experiences in the Café. Students meet with the program director to chart out internships that will be most beneficial to the industry. This program helps the College meet its core value of sustainability, as described in Criterion 1b.

**RioLounge**

Established in 2006, **RioLounge** is an online student union, designed to allow online students to participate in academic and social engagement activities such as chatting with fellow students, faculty and staff, learning about Rio Salado news and activities, participating in education and activity groups, establishing personal and educational goals, buying and selling items, and overall establish a connection with the Rio Salado College experience. RioLounge students are also introduced to College's co-curricular services, including academic advisement, career counseling, library services, tutoring, financial aid, and helpdesks. Additionally, the College sought to increase retention and persistence (tracking retention by whether a student completes a course, and persistence by whether a student signs up for another course). Access is seamless via a single sign-on within RioLearn, and
content is regularly updated to ensure currency and relevancy. As of fall 2011, over 24,500 students had registered in RioLounge.

As part of the Student Success Pilot Project (SSPP) initiative that will be described below, data were collected to measure the impact of RioLounge participation on online student success in FY 2009-10. Findings were impressive, showing that RioLounge students had an initial attrition rate of 34.07%, as compared with the initial attrition rate of non-RioLounge students (44.34%). Also, RioLounge students had a higher overall retention rate (89.10%), compared with the retention rate of non-RioLounge students (85.18%). Additional survey and effectiveness data are available in the FY 2009-10 SSPP report.

International Education
The Rio Salado International Education office provides students with opportunities for study-abroad programs, leadership retreats, international student admissions/services, and co-curricular international learning activities. The program provides international students with the opportunity of online learning, thereby creating the possibility for students to immerse themselves in an educational system different from their own. The staff provide a number of personalized services, such as individual help in selecting and registering for classes, assistance with completing the online tutorial, guidance with the MEID process, information about required course materials, and financial requirement information. The International Center serves approximately 700 walk-in students per year, and responds to approximately 27,000 email inquiries and 1,700 telephone inquiries annually. In 2009, the department registered 1,697 students, with six full-time F-1 Visa students and the remainder part-time. This included students from 52 countries studying in the United States and approximately 17 students studying online from countries outside the U.S.

Accommodating Diverse Learning Styles in Rio Salado Programs and Courses
As demonstrated, Rio Salado College provides environments for all types of learners and respects their diverse needs. In addition, the College has a number of mechanisms in its online courses to accommodate diverse learning styles. Content is presented in different modalities: reading text, watching video, listening to audio, visual aids, screen recordings, graphics, and graphic organizers. As examples, some courses in the languages and math use specialized software that gives immediate feedback and assistance to students as they work their way through course material. Also, some education courses include virtual practicum activities, where students observe a recorded classroom and interviews with teachers. Each section of the video that students view prompts them to reflect and respond to questions they would answer in a typical class observation. Furthermore, science courses often have laboratory components that require students to perform hands-on experiments, gather data and submit findings. Course assignments are varied as well, including multiple-choice assessments, short answers, essays, projects, and requirements for recording audio or creating multimedia presentations. For example, in any given week of Spanish courses, students may complete a multiple choice assignment, write a short essay about a cultural topic, or record answers to oral questions. Likewise, in an Information Studies course, students have the option of submitting a research paper, PowerPoint presentation, audio file, or video as a final project. Many courses naturally require students to produce a project in the software or tools they are learning. This is the case in many CIS and BPC courses, where students submit actual files that they have built in
the software required for the course. Each of these strategies for content presentation and assessment is matched to the course and lesson objectives of a given course.

College Readiness and Student Success
Adult Basic Education Programs
Rio Salado College offers classes in Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development high school equivalency test preparation (GED), and English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA) at multiple venues, such as community centers, churches, shopping malls, public schools, and Rio Salado locations. This integrated adult literacy system offers classes that are self-paced, with instructors addressing the needs of these diverse learners by working with individual students to meet specific learning goals. Books and materials are provided, and classes meet during daytime and evening hours to allow for maximum flexibility, with the additional option of online GED preparation classes.

The ABE program was established in 1979, enrolling 700 students in its first year. For many years, the program maintained a fairly stable growth pattern. This changed dramatically in 2007-2008, when attendance hours decreased by 316,277, or 31.3%.

There were three major causes of this:

1. The Arizona Legislature implemented Proposition 300, which prevented students who lacked proper documentation establishing their legal presence in the United States from attending classes.
2. Funding from the Arizona Department of Education was unexpectedly reduced by $825,000 or 23.1% from the year before, causing the program to close many class locations.
3. The College lost a contract with the Arizona Department of Corrections to provide literacy services in a state prison.

The continuation of ABE Programs in Arizona faced a significant challenge when all funding was eliminated from the State budget as of FY 2010-11. To continue to qualify for federal funding to keep ABE programs intact, the State Director of Adult Education Services contacted ABE providers across the state with a proposal to form a partnership, whereby participating colleges would contribute funds (according to a ratio based on the size of their programs) in order to raise enough capital to equal the required state match. Rio Salado College and Pima Community College were major contributors to this successful effort, which ensured federal funding for the following two years.

Currently, the ABE program has a stable enrollment of approximately 7,600 students. The focus is on retention, completion, and meeting student learning outcomes, rather than on growth. In 2008-09 the program implemented a formal, comprehensive, and standardized new student orientation with the goal of improving student persistence. Research had shown that such an orientation would increase student understanding of the program's expectations, and also enable students to make more informed decisions regarding their ability to attend the program on a regular basis. The result of this intervention was immediately notable, with attendance hours increasing by 36% in 2008-2009, and by a further 10% in 2009-2010. Additionally, in a spring 2010 survey of ABE students across nine of the College's locations (N=1,263), 90.34% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “The new student orientation was effective in communicating policies, rules and student responsibilities.”
Evaluation
The ABE Student Survey of fall 2010 elicited further positive data about the quality of the teaching and learning that the students experienced in the program. Ninety-five percent of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement: “My instructor was prepared for each class,” while 93.4% of students agreed or strongly agreed that “The quality of instruction helped me learn.” All data met quality assurance targets. Additionally, the question: “What is the likelihood that you would recommend this program to a relative or friend?” elicited an 82% positive response.

The ABE Program receives a “report card” every year from The Arizona Department of Education reflecting how well the Program achieved state targets for federal core goals, and served the planned number of students. Most importantly, the Program tries to meet or exceed the State targets for “Educational Gains” Outcomes for the 12 levels of instruction offered, since these correlate positively with instructional quality and adult learner persistence. In FY 2007-08, this goal was reached for only one of the levels. This poor outcome was attributed to the implementation of Proposition 300 by the State Legislature mentioned above, a 23% budget decrease by the Arizona Department of Education, and the implementation of a new required standardized test for ELAA students without enough time to properly train the program’s instructors. However, there was considerable improvement in FY 2008-09, and by FY 2009-10 State targets were met or exceeded in 11 of the 12 levels. This turnaround was considered to be a result of additional staff training on both standardized tests, a stronger program focus on helping the students achieve their goals, and the standardized, comprehensive new student orientation that was developed and implemented program-wide as an intervention in FY 2008-09.

Also notable was that the Rio Salado ABE Program had higher median student hours than the State average each year from 2005 through 2010. The data were not as good for Core Goals Outcomes, although the Program did show improvement from year to year. To continue this upward trend, ongoing efforts to improve follow-up processes to better document student achievement of these goals are in place.

ABE Grants
Rio Salado College obtained an IBEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) grant from the Arizona Department of Education for the first time in FY 2010-11. This unique program contextualizes GED and Workforce Development instruction in the same classroom. In fall 2011, the ABE Program again secured grant funding from the Arizona Department of Education for the IBEST program, as well as for three other ABE programs, as follows:

- **Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Grant** (21 months, with $69,000 awarded for the first year)
  Contextualized instruction will be provided to student cohorts at Rio’s Northern location to enable them to prepare for the GED tests at the same time they are enrolled in Dental Assisting Technology classes. Student success coaches will be assigned to specific students and given the task of helping them overcome traditional barriers to program completion, as they track the students’ participation and success in the program.
• **Transforming Education Through Technology Grant** (21 months, with $50,000 awarded for the first year)
  Pilot cohorts of students at Rio’s Avondale and Northern locations will study for their GED diploma in class one day per week on computers using PLATO instructional software. The students will be given netbook computers so they can complete additional study hours outside of class, for an average of 14 more hours a week. This pilot will help determine ABE Program students’ readiness and willingness to make use of technology in their GED studies.

• **College and Career Pathways Grant** (21 months, with $55,000 awarded for the first year)
  Students will be offered tiers one and two of Rio STAR-PATH, a model designed to move ABE students through GED and ELAA into certificate and degree programs at the community college level. They will take a personal development module covering areas such as professionalism, adaptability, reliability, and motivation, as well as computer basics and study skills. The academic foundations of reading, writing, and math will be provided in a curriculum that is contextualized to the world of work. Assessments will be used to gauge student job readiness.

• **Civics Standards Grant** (One year, $35,000 award)
  Teachers at Rio’s Avondale and Northern locations will expand on the ABE Program’s ABE Congress which was initiated in 2010. In this program, classes study the three branches of the United States government. Then, students decide if they want to run for ABE Congress. Campaign speeches are given and elections held. The hope is to identify student leaders at all locations and to develop a type of student council. Besides working on the ABE Congress, grant team members will research additional strategies to integrate the new statewide Civics Standards into all classes.

**Adult ACE and Transition**
Rio Salado offers at-risk, financially disadvantaged, and/or first generation college students the ability to complete their GED and make a smooth transition to higher education through the Adults Achieving a College Education (ACE) Program. This scholarship-based 18-month college preparation program is for adults, aged 16 or older, and is a service of the ABE Transition Program. Depending on their eligibility, students can choose between ACE with its fixed schedule and sequence of classes, or Transition with more flexibility to attend any of the MCCCD colleges for morning, afternoon, or evening classes. The program allows students the opportunity to work concurrently on GED preparation and post secondary technology, personal development, and developmental education courses. Students who commit to this option are afforded scholarship opportunities. A similar option is available for students who have earned their GED diploma to transition to post-secondary courses anywhere within the Maricopa District with scholarships of up to six credits, as another avenue to encourage continued educational involvement. Class schedules are flexible to meet the needs of students, and where post secondary programs are offered, different modalities are available (in-person, hybrid, on-line) as needed, and when budget and space allow.

ACE classes demonstrate adaptation to diverse learning styles. Classes are created by a highly qualified team of Faculty Chairs. The format is customized to fit the students’ need for an accelerated schedule (8-week blocks), and additional support is built into the developmental
ENG and MAT classes by incorporating a tutoring element. ACE and Transition provide a team of advisors dedicated to these two programs, and these advisors develop a relationship with each student they serve and use a “case management” approach to providing services.

The programs consistently meet their enrollment targets. Over the last three years Adult ACE (a four-semester program) has enrolled an average of 79 new students in for-credit college classes each year and served an additional 50 continuing students for an average of 130 students a year; over the last three years 90% of new Adult ACE students successfully completed their first semester and went on to take a second semester. ABE Transition has enrolled an average of 146 new students each year and served an additional 200 students who continue on after their first semester (approaching or meeting the goal of 350 students enrolled in credit-bearing college classes each year).

Agencies and organizations in the community (for example, Helping Hands for Single Moms and the Gila Crossing Community School in the Gila River Indian Community) have sought out opportunities to collaborate with the Adult ACE Program.

In 2006, the Adult ACE program received the College's Innovation of the Year award for incorporating elements such as seamless transition from GED to postsecondary education, use of the cohort model, on-demand wrap-around services, built-in support, and customized student services.

**ACE Puente**

ACE (Achieving a College Education) Puente is Rio Salado College's 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 was renamed the Rio Salado ACE Puente Program, and extended to include all underserved high school student populations. The first ACE Puente formal cohort was enrolled in 2010 and will graduate in 2012.

ACE Puente participants are recruited in their sophomore year of high school. Students take hybrid and online college courses while in their junior and senior years, allowing them to graduate with up to 24 college credits. While simultaneously attending Rio Salado College and high school, students in the program are assigned a mentor and an academic advisor who work with students to keep them on track and to provide encouragement. They also become members of a cohort, giving them an opportunity to socialize with their peers and be part of an eLearning community, communicating via email, text, and social networking sites with their mentors and other students.

To be eligible for the program, students must be high school sophomores with a GPA of at least 2.5, and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- First generation to attend college
- Living in single parent home, foster care, or temporary housing
• Economic hardship
• Underrepresented group
• Legacy-sibling or relative of an ACE participant
• Work 10-30 hours per week
• Teen parent
• Voluntarily disclose physical/mental disabilities

The program has served 103 students since its inception in 2007.

**Evaluation**

Internally, the ACE Puente staff maintains data on credits hours attempted, credit hours earned, average grade point average, and total number of credits earned at the completion of participation in the ACE Puente Program. As indicated, the first cohort to be tracked as part of the District ACE program will graduate in 2012. After that time (in 2013), extensive data tracking of these students will be available as part of the MCCCD ACE Progress Report.

In FY 2010-2011, the College's total Adult Basic Education/General Education Degree (ABE/GED) non-credit headcount was 9,547.

**Student Success**

**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. The Advisement office also handles admissions to programs that require formal admissions, and processes transcript evaluations. The department has 20 advisors and provides in-person service Monday-Saturday, including evening hours. Additionally, advisors are available via telephone, chat, or email. The department's three managers can provide advisement services as well, when necessary. Advisors are divided into the following teams for maximum efficiency, but all staff members are cross-trained and can assist fellow teams as needed:

• Offline Team – phone calls and in-person students
• Online Team – chat, emails, and prerequisite approvals
• Program Admissions – handling of applications and information for programs requiring formal application
• Evaluation Team – evaluation of student transcripts
• Front Desk – front desk reception, prerequisite approvals, and special projects
• Management

**Electronic Student File System (ESF)**

Rio Salado College has developed an in-house online Electronic Student File system (ESF) that provides students and staff with resources for student success and goal completion. Students are able to access this system online 24x7 with a valid username and password. Staff can create checksheets that show how prior student coursework has been applied to the program of study. The checksheets also show remaining program requirements. Students and staff can then use these checksheets and a semester-by-semester planning tool to track progress toward program completion. Staff can make notes for internal purposes, create “to do” lists for students, and add a program status that tracks interest or completion of application
requirements. Students can also use ESF to contact their advisors, see general announcements, and access links for various resources.

Academic Advisors also use ESF to run various reports for student recruiting and tracking. Examples are:

- **Advisor Work at a Glance:** This report shows an advisor how many transcript evaluations he or she has pending, to ensure that students are served in a timely manner.

- **Contact Type/Reason Report:** This report shows the various reasons a student contacted the College. These data can be used to evaluate staffing levels and office workload.

- **Partner Transfer Plan:** This report shows which university or college a student is planning to transfer to. These data can be used to see trends for transfer and help to determine training needs. Also, partners can access data to identify those students that will be transferring to their institution to aid in the transition.

- **Program Report:** This report lists students who are interested in a certain program or who have applied to a certain program. For example, a student may be working on prerequisites for the Dental Hygiene program, but not yet have applied. Once a student applies, application information can be tracked.

In addition to generating these reports, ESF is compatible with other systems. For example, the CRM system used by the Outreach Center can pull information from ESF to conduct various outreach campaigns. Student success or recruiting campaigns could check for certain criteria in ESF. For example, the CRM system could check if students had checksheets in ESF, and then Outreach staff could contact students that did not.

**Evaluation**

Data from the *Noel Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL) administered in 2008 and again in 2010 showed that importance of and satisfaction with Advisement Services at Rio Salado lined up fairly well with the national data.

As detailed in Criterion 3a, Academic Advisement services formed part of the Academic Co-Curricular cohort that was assessed as part of the formal Program Review process.

Along with Rio’s other service departments, Academic Advisement measures internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.

**Student Success Pilot Project (SSPP)**

In 2008, the Maricopa District offered funding to the MCCCd colleges for a Student Success Initiative intended “To develop, implement and sustain systemic student success strategies across Maricopa Colleges to positively impact student retention, persistence and goal completion” to be implemented beginning in 2009. Rio Salado’s proposal for this initiative was customized to the College’s mission documents and its dispersed student population. Examples of projects identified in the initial proposal were:

- Building a predictive modeling program to identify at-risk students in online courses. The results of this effort, which is unique to Rio Salado in the community college environment, will be described in more detail below (RioPACE).

- Item analysis (correlation between exam questions with course content and competencies) in MAT082, MAT092 and MAT102 resulting in recommendations for action, as needed.
• Training for adjunct faculty in effective use of WIMBA (audio technology), to assist students in online courses

• Development of CPD115 (Creating College Success) and CPD150 (Strategies for College Success) in an online format

The initial Student Success Pilot Project proposal and annual reports for FY 2009-10 and FY 2010-11, contain details of progress and outcomes in these and other student success initiatives underway at the College.

To integrate and better institutionalize these efforts, a Student Success Team was established in spring 2011, as a result of the reconfiguration of the SLOT team that was detailed in Criterion 3a. This team will be responsible for embedding the student success initiatives into the ongoing Strategic Planning process. Currently, the Strategic Plan Goal 3 Student Success Committee is meeting regularly. Once the Departmental Action Plans are rolled out, the larger Student Success team will be reconvened. There is also discussion of shifting the focus of the Student Success Pilot Program to initiatives identified in the Strategic Plan, for more direct alignment of these processes.

**RioPACE: Eighth Day At-Risk Model**

As mentioned in the Student Success Pilot Project information above, Rio Salado College first built the **RioPACE (Progress and Course Engagement) predictive model** in 2009. This early warning system uses learner analytics to identify students who may be at risk of not being successful (with success defined as achieving a grade of “C” or better) by the eighth day of an online class. Following successful accuracy tests for the eighth day at-risk model, a new approach was developed in 2010 to provide a continuous evaluation of student at-risk levels beyond the eighth day of instruction, on a weekly basis. The objective was to provide an automated, systematic early-alert system that would allow faculty to launch proactive interventions at any point in the course to assist students who may show signs of struggle (slipping to a higher warning level). **RioPACE** was designed to determine appropriate warning levels on a weekly basis using updated activity and grade information. It was also intended to provide instructors with information surrounding specific student performance data in areas that predict behaviors such as log-in activity, site engagement, and pace.

**RioPACE** was then built to run automatically within the College’s RioLearn LMS. Piloted in April 2010, warning levels are displayed next to each student’s information on the course roster, allowing an instructor to hover his or her cursor over an indicator, which then generates a small pop-up box showing the performance metrics for three critical areas: log-in frequency, site engagement, and pace. Contact with the student for interventions can then be implemented by the instructor according to the specific need area. The full deployment of the **RioPACE** model throughout all courses is scheduled for January, 2012.

Rio Salado is currently the only community college participating in the Predictive Analytics Reporting (PAR) Framework. This is a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded grant for which six WCET (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies) member institutions will investigate research questions addressing the factors influencing student retention and completion.
Core Component – 3d
The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Co-Curricular Services
Rio Salado College defines academic co-curricular services as those directly contributing to student learning: Academic Advising, Library Services, Counseling Services, Tutoring Services, Instructional and Technology Helpdesks, and Computer Labs. Operational co-curricular services include student services that are provided in support of student learning: Enrollment Services, Course Support, Financial Aid, Testing Services, Disability Services, and Veterans Services.

In keeping with the College's commitment to Customer Astonishment and Relentless Improvement, all of these departments provide services in multiple modalities. While all have a physical presence at the Rio Tempe site and in some of the College's locations, the focus is on reaching the dispersed student body in the most effective and convenient ways possible. In addition, the College identifies only a few days throughout the year that students can’t be serviced, with policy ensuring that frontline services are never closed more than two days in a row (including weekends), even at holiday times.

Academic Co-Curricular Services
Library Services
The Rio Salado Library focuses on providing access to materials in person, online, and via live chat and text, so that the resources and services needed by students, faculty, and employees can be retrieved as effectively and efficiently as possible in the format most convenient to them. In addition to providing traditional College library services to all students, faculty, and staff, Rio library processes are integrated throughout the teaching and learning infrastructure of the College through the seamless embedding of library resources in online courses.

Personnel
The Faculty Chair for Library Services serves as the program chair, library director, student learning outcome coordinator for Information Literacy, and College copyright officer. In addition, Rio has two Residential Faculty Librarians and a Library Instructional Coordinator, each with unique areas of responsibility. The Reference and Instruction Librarian provides instruction sessions to all in-person classes offered via the College's Dual Enrollment program, as well as classes offered at the College's locations. The Virtual Reference Librarian oversees the comprehensive 24x7 Ask a Librarian service that is a joint project of all MCCCD college libraries. The responsibilities of the Instructional Coordinator, which include identifying and integrating library resources seamlessly into online courses, were detailed in Criterion 3c. The library has a Manager of Access Services who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the library, and three support staff whose responsibilities include circulation, acquisitions, and periodicals orders.

In-person Services
The College has a small physical library at the Rio Tempe location, which contains a collection of 18,340 books and media items. Rio Salado students have access to the collections of all libraries within the MCCCD through a shared online catalog and inter-district loan services, totaling
620,464 items. Interlibrary loan services are provided for retrieval of items from the MCCCD libraries, or from libraries throughout the United States. Checkout statistics for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 are as follows:

3d 1: Library Circulation Statistics

![Library Circulation Statistics](image)

The number of items checked out are fairly low, since the vast majority of library resource use occurs online, as will be described below. Distance Learning DVD item checkout has been almost phased out in the current year owing to the transition to streaming film content, licensed by the library, which is embedded directly into online lessons. This creates an improved experience for online students.

Since the College’s last Self-Study visit in 2002, the library space has been purpose-built and enlarged twice, in 2003 and 2009, to accommodate an increase in traffic to the Rio Tempe location. A planned Knowledge Commons, which will include Library Services, a Computer Lab, and Tutoring Services in one learning space, is currently in development. Construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2012.

Online Services

Because of the College’s nontraditional structure, the library provides the majority of services through its comprehensive Web presence. From this portal, students have access to the library catalog of 620,464 items, approximately 70 databases of journal, magazine and newspaper articles and media collections, six collections of ebooks containing approximately 55,000-60,000 volumes, and instructional video tutorials. As evidence of student usage of these resources, the library website was the fifth most-visited site of the 1,046 pages on the entire College website as demonstrated by FY 2010-11 analytics data, with over 463,000 pageviews. This showed improvement over the already impressive usage in FY 2009-10, when the library was in sixth place out of 801 pages, with over 407,000 views. The following 2010-2011 library analytics data are noteworthy:

- Articles main page: 116,560 pageviews
- eBooks main page: 20,009 pageviews
- Online Writing Lab: 21,341 pageviews
**Library Database Article Usage**

It is notable that by far the single most-used area of the library website was the “Articles” page. This is appropriate as the subscription library databases are all accessed from this page, and these data indicate that students are making most use of these paid resources vs. open Web information. In addition to measuring traffic to the library site, the Rio library also tracks data on the “clicks” whereby students exit to search the subscription databases provided from the articles main page. These data, used in tandem with usage statistics provided by the vendors, allow for a clear picture of the extent to which students are making use of library-purchased resources and also provide a mechanism for data-driven budget decisions. Analytics tracking of database exit data for 2010-2011 show that the most used are the CQ Researcher with 52,303 exits from the library website, and the various EBSCOhost databases with a combined 33,322 exits. Also, the eBrary ebook collection had 12,619 exits. These figures, while impressive, do not account for the large number of database articles that are integrated into online courses, and are therefore accessed directly from the course content and not through the library website. Overall, therefore, it can be concluded that student usage of library database content is extremely high.

**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 service. In 2010-2011, there were 974 in-person and telephone reference questions answered.

**Ask a Librarian**

The Virtual Reference Librarian tracks usage of the 24x7 virtual reference service, *Ask a Librarian*. This service has been in place for several years, and is supported by the MCCCD for all the Maricopa Colleges. As the table below demonstrates, the number of Rio student chats over the past four years has risen steadily, and has almost doubled during this time period.

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<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chats</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>1346</td>
<td>1590</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to measuring usage, the chat transcripts are monitored for quality control and mechanisms are also in place to measure timeliness of response, as well as exit survey data to gauge the effectiveness and value of the service. A description of the process used to investigate the percentage of instruction that takes place in *Ask a Librarian* sessions is provided below.

**Library Text Service**

The *Txt a Librarian* service was piloted in February, 2011 as a cooperative initiative among the 10 Maricopa Community College libraries. Usage has been fairly low, with a total of 235 texts received District-wide in the first eight months of the pilot. Texted questions focus on the availability of certain books, reference questions, and directional questions. It is likely that Rio Salado will continue to offer text service even if the MCCCD libraries decide not to proceed after the pilot, since it is an easy and inexpensive means of providing access, and has the potential to reach a segment of the student body that is most comfortable communicating in this medium.
Collection Development
Collection Development is spearheaded by the Library Chair, and focuses on providing books, media, and electronic resources that are relevant to College curriculum, as well as initiatives that align with the elements of the College mission and culture. Additionally, a leisure collection of books and films is maintained for College and District Office employees. A small collection of books and media was established for the Rio@Northern location in fall 2011, targeted to the specific needs of the local population. Similar collections are planned for the College’s remaining locations.

Information Literacy
The library has a robust Information Literacy instruction program. The College- and course-level elements which measure student learning in information literacy, as well as the program-level integration into Co-curricular Program Review, were described in Criterion 3a.

Department-level information literacy practices include the following:

• As mentioned above, Rio’s Reference and Instruction Librarian provides in-person instruction to classes in the College’s Dual Enrollment program, as well as classes offered at Rio Salado’s locations. In 2010-2011, instruction was provided to 2,363 students in 119 classes. Measurement of the impact of these sessions on student learning is being investigated as the 2011-2012 assessment of library value initiative, described below.

• Over a period of approximately 12 years, the library provided an orientation and instruction product that was designed to provide information and learning for distant students. It was mailed to all ENG101 students and available upon request from the library website. This unit evolved from VHS to CD, and has now been converted to streaming video that is available from the How Do I? section of the library website along with additional content that is developed on an ongoing basis. In 2010-2011, there were close to 1,400 requests for the CD from the library website request form, so it was decided to maintain the CD product for request-only availability, and to re-evaluate after the streaming content had been available for one year. In 2010-2011, the How Do I? section of the library website, containing the video tutorials, received 1,276 hits. Content is being added continually, so it is expected that this figure will increase.

• As described in Criterion 3c, high-quality library-provided resources in the form of articles and media are embedded seamlessly in online courses.

Assessing Library Value: Evidence of the Library’s Contribution to Student Learning
Each year, the College librarians investigate and provide evidence that the library has a direct impact on student learning. Three initiatives from the past two academic years are as follows:

2009-2010: Assessment of Learning from the Library Orientation/instruction CD
An analysis of 64 student responses to an assignment in LBS101 (Library Resource Concepts and Skills) was conducted, to investigate three questions related to what students had learned from the CD. Overall, 90.6% of students reported learning something new from the CD. Responses as to why the learning was valuable had 90% of students indicating that their research skills had improved, which is the basic tenet of Information Literacy. Thus, it was concluded that the Library Orientation/Instruction CD was a valid Information Literacy tool providing a direct contribution to student learning.
2010-2011: Pre- and Post-test Assessment of the Impact of Library Instruction on Research Skills and Library Awareness in a Dual Enrollment Cohort

In addition to the College-wide administration of the Research Readiness Self-Assessment (RRSA) described in Criterion 3a, a pilot study was conducted to measure the effect of library instruction and requirement for college-level research on student learning, using a cohort of dual enrollment students. The RRSA was administered as a pre-test on October 1, 2010, to ENG101 students who had not yet commenced the research process (N= 89), and as a post-test the following semester (N=77). While the RRSA Comparison Report shows that there is still much room for improvement, students performed better in every category, proving that library instruction and the requirement for college-level research had a direct impact on student learning.

2010-2011: Measure Percentage of Instruction in Ask a Librarian Sessions

A sample of 80 chat transcripts was reviewed to determine what percentage of Ask a Librarian chats warranted instruction, and of those, how many received it. Data showed that 68 of the 80 chats warranted instruction, and that 66 of the 68 received it, for a quality assurance percentage of 97%. Also, 92% of students agreed that the librarians fully understood their questions. Therefore, it was concluded that the instruction provided met student learning needs.

Evaluation

Along with Rio’s other service departments, the library measures internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.

Data from the Noel Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL) administered in 2008 and again in 2010 showed that importance of and satisfaction with Library Services at Rio Salado lined up fairly well with the national data.

In the RioLounge Program Engagement Survey (May, 2008-Feb, 2010), in response to the question: “How do you feel the RioLounge program has helped you at Rio Salado,” 22% of students (the highest percentage of all categories) indicated that they had visited the library.

Counseling Services

Rio Salado’s Counseling and Career Services department provides services in multiple modalities, including face to face, online via Ask a Counselor email service, telephone, and live chat. Counseling services are offered at Rio’s locations throughout Maricopa County, with special arrangements available for evening and weekend appointments based on student needs. Additionally, the department offers student success, career exploration, and job preparation courses in both online and print-based formats. Details of several initiatives that have been spearheaded by the Counseling department as part of the Student Success Pilot Project are available in the SSPP annual reports as referenced in Criterion 3c.

Personnel

In addition to the Faculty Chair for Counseling who heads the department and is the co-chair of the College’s Student Success initiative described above, the department has one full-time MAT employee who is responsible for career services, as well as four part-time counselors providing career guidance and job search preparation services to students and recent graduates. The
The following table shows the numbers of counseling sessions provided by the available modalities over the past two years. It is notable that interactions by telephone have more than doubled, and email transactions have increased 25%.

### 3d 3: Counseling Services 2009-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modality</th>
<th>FY 2009-10</th>
<th>FY 2010-11</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>140%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>1,663</td>
<td>2,091</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Chat</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Counseling and Career Center website provides links to extensive resources for students, as well as opportunities to request counseling services via email or live chat. Analytics data for the 2010-2011 year show Counseling in 29th place of the 1,046 pages on the College website, with 25,500 pageviews. This was slightly below the 2009-2010 year, which ranked Counseling in 25th place of the 801 pages, with 28,243 pageviews. Although these figures are fairly low, providing counseling services is focused more towards individualized student interactions. Also, the most-used area of the Counseling website was the Career and Job Preparation Center page, which is appropriate as the core of the counseling services and counseling course content is on career exploration and job search.

Data from the *Noel Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL) administered in 2008 and again in 2010 showed that importance of and satisfaction with Counseling Services at Rio Salado lined up fairly well with the national data.

Along with Rio’s other service departments, Counseling Services measures internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.

### Tutoring Services

Tutoring services are offered to Rio Salado students in 19 subject areas, as well as in writing across the curriculum. As with all of Rio’s co-curricular services, tutoring is offered in multiple modalities, including in-person, online, 24x7 live chat, email, and via telephone. 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 chart showing the subjects tutored and the modalities and hours offered is provided on the Tutoring website.

Tutoring services are run by a full-time MAT Tutoring Coordinator, currently coordinating a group of approximately 25-30 in-person tutors. These are subject-matter experts, of whom over 88% have a PhD or 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.
Usage of the Rio Salado tutoring services is as follows:

**Rio Tutors:**
- In the 2009-2010 year, Rio Tutors helped 1,152 students in 4,783 tutoring sessions and provided 7,989 hours of tutoring.
- In 2010-2011, numbers of students served dropped slightly to 1,100, but the number of sessions increased to 5,084, for a total of 8,958 hours—an increase of almost 1,000 hours of in-person tutoring time.

**Smarthinking Online Tutoring:**
- 2009-2010: 1,016 students; 6,522 sessions; 3,226 hours.
- 2010-2011: 1,197 students; 6,663 sessions; 3,578 hours.

Analytics data for the 2010-2011 year show Tutoring in 25th place of the 1,046 pages on the College website, with 36,784 pageviews. This was slightly below the 2009-2010 year, which had Tutoring in 23rd place of the 801 pages, with 39,668 pageviews.

Data from the *Noel Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL) administered in 2008 and again in 2010 showed that importance of and satisfaction with Tutoring Services at Rio Salado lined up fairly well with the national data.

Along with Rio's other service departments, Tutoring Services measures internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.

While survey data are positive and service standards are being met, the department is striving to do even better by improving teamwork and cooperation among tutors to provide “seamless” tutoring. For example, Accounting and Statistics tutors can help students with some lower level MAT and CIS courses, while CIS tutors can assist students with lower level Math, and ENG tutors can tutor students enrolled in some CIS courses, such as MS Word.

**Instructional Helpdesk**
Because of the non-traditional 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 traditional Technology Helpdesk which is discussed below, Rio Salado has an **Instructional Helpdesk** (IHD) to help students with course-related questions, and to assist the Faculty Chairs in the mentoring, training, and evaluation of Adjunct Faculty. Additionally, the Instructional Helpdesk gathers data for the centralized student complaint tracking process described in Criterion 1e. As with other College support services, the Instructional Helpdesk is available via telephone (24x7, outsourced to Perceptis after hours, as described in Criterion 2b), email, live chat, and in-person.

**Personnel**
The Instructional Helpdesk is headed by an Associate Dean of Instruction, assisted by a full-time Coordinator of Instructional Services. Six to eight part-time employees, all of whom are experienced adjunct faculty, provide a broad, cross-disciplinary knowledge base in assisting students and adjunct faculty with issues related to teaching and learning.
As detailed in Criterion 3b, training and mentoring of many new adjunct faculty members is conducted through this department in tandem with the Faculty Chairs. They also assist with evaluations of online and mixed-media Adjunct Faculty for some disciplines, using a two-month data collection process that correlates with the Maricopa District’s evaluation policies. Additionally, IHD staff serve as instructors for all of the College’s AFD (Adjunct Faculty Development) courses described in Criterion 3b.

The Instructional Helpdesk answers student questions relating to College policies and procedures, course procedures, and course content. This assists online Adjunct Faculty in their course facilitation, since they can focus on responding to student instructional questions and grading student work, while the more operational issues can be referred to the Instructional Helpdesk. Typical assistance for students includes:

- Providing information (especially useful for first-time online learners) to students on successfully starting and managing an online course
- Answering general questions about online courses and how to navigate them
- Providing tutoring information
- Assisting students with contacting their instructors
- Assisting students with questions about grades and grade-posting timelines
- Working through course-related issues that may arise during their online experience (e.g., resetting assessments)
- Assisting students in understanding important course and College policies and procedures
- Providing basic technical assistance, or a referral to Technology Helpdesk

Evaluation
As indicated in Criterion 1e, the College created a comprehensive Helpdesk system to house data related to student and employee issues and requests. This Rio-developed system was subsequently adopted by the District Office and is used across the Maricopa colleges. Within Rio’s larger Helpdesk system, all issues addressed via telephone, email, chat, and in person are documented in one database that is used as a reference for student issues.

During FY 2009–10 the IHD team created 14,161 helpdesk requests which resulted from chats, phone calls, and emails. During this period, 19,710 phone calls were logged, with an abandonment rate of 7.26%. This is somewhat higher than the goal and industry standard of 5.0%. During this same period, the outsourced Perceptis service answered 3,712 calls with an abandonment rate of 10.99%, which is more than double the industry standard.

Numbers served increased across the board during FY 2010-11. Helpdesk requests generated by chats, phone calls, and emails increased to 18,699. Phone calls numbered 23,728 with an abandonment rate of 7.34%, which increased slightly from the prior year. Perceptis answered 4,125 calls with a slightly improved abandonment rate of 10.44%, which was still double the industry standard, and is being addressed.

Along with Rio’s other service departments, the Instructional Helpdesk measures internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.
Technology Helpdesk
The Technology Helpdesk (THD) is part of the comprehensive technology infrastructure that the College provides, as described in Criterion 2b. They provide assistance to students by troubleshooting any technology-related course issues, such as login problems and RioLearn access issues. Also, the Technology Helpdesk supports employees by installing and updating hardware and software as well as addressing any technology-related problems. As with Rio's other support services, 24x7 telephone service is provided (outsourced to Perceptis after hours), along with email, live chat, and in-person service.

Personnel
The Technology Helpdesk is managed by the Director of College Technology, and staffed by seven full-time employees and two part-timers.

During FY 2009–10, the Technology Helpdesk team created 15,114 helpdesk requests which resulted from chats, phone calls, and emails. During this period, 38,073 phone calls were logged, with an abandonment rate of 4.48%, which conformed well to the industry standard of 5%, particularly considering the large volume of calls. The average number of agents available for the THD during this time was 2.5. During this same period, the outsourced Perceptis service answered 9,098 calls with a 13.72% abandonment rate.

During FY 2010-11, Technology Helpdesk requests generated by chats, phone calls, and emails increased to 17,116. Phone calls numbered a lower 36,098, handled by an average 2.53 agents with an abandonment rate of 6.2%, which had increased slightly from the prior year, and which is being monitored. Perceptis answered 8,959 calls, with an increased abandonment rate of 16.22%. The Director of College Technology is in constant communication with Perceptis personnel and is reviewing the Service Level Agreements that were established, in an ongoing attempt to improve the responsiveness of the outsourced service.

Along with Rio’s other service departments, the Technology Helpdesk measures internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c. On average, it takes less than 24 hours after initiation to close a helpdesk request.

Computer Labs
Rio Salado provides Computer Labs at five of the College’s locations in Maricopa County. Labs are open to all enrolled students at no additional cost, six days a week, with hours varying by location. Computer Lab staff members assist students in-person, online via email or chat, and by telephone.

Personnel
The Computer Labs are managed by a full-time Coordinator, assisted by a full-time Helpdesk analyst. Thirty-eight part-time lab technicians staff the Labs, of whom 16 are certified CIS instructors. These personnel are divided into grading teams and assist with grading CIS online assignments while they are on duty in the labs.

Usage Data:
- In-person students:
  - In 2010, the Computer Labs supported student learning in 54 different disciplines/ categories, with a duplicated login count of 13,295.
- Online Students:
The Lab Grading Teams were directly responsible for 10 online courses, which represented 3,675 students and literally thousands of assignments.

Along with Rio's other service departments, the Computer Labs measure internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.

### Operational Co-Curricular Services

#### Enrollment Services

Because of the College's rapid student growth, Enrollment Services has scaled up to meet the demands of increasing numbers of student contacts, admissions, registrations, and records requests. Currently, the department has 47 employees. Additionally, as described in Criterion 2b, Peak and Lateral service initiatives have been adopted to ensure excellent service during high-demand times. Employees also educate students on how to use the MCCCD online student center for self-service with these processes. PSOL data from both 2008 and 2010 showed the following item as a strength: Registration for online courses is convenient. In addition, NCCBP data showed “Registration Effectiveness Satisfaction” as a strength in both 2010 and 2011 as compared with national benchmarks, and also showed an upward trend over these two years.

#### Course Support

Course Support provides a number of behind-the-scenes functions to facilitate the smooth operation of Rio Salado’s weekly course starts. As examples, the department monitors live enrollment data and opens new sections as required, mails any required course materials automatically to students upon registration, mails or couriers assignments to Adjunct Faculty for print-based courses, and calculates worksheets for the Adjunct Faculty payroll process. Additionally, Course Support assists Student Enrollment Services with registration as part of the lateral service process during peak enrollment times, as described in Criterion 2b.

In March 2011 Course Support surveyed Adjunct Faculty regarding satisfaction with their services. Data were extremely positive and met or exceeded the 90% target in most categories.

Course Support also measures internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.

#### Financial Aid

The Financial Aid Office (FAO) 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 financial aid technicians also encourage responsible borrowing and developing financial literacy among students, by proactively discussing the attendant responsibility when loan debt is incurred.

#### Personnel

The Rio Salado College Financial Aid Office has transformed from a small business into one of the largest in the Maricopa Community College District. To meet this need, the office was reorganized under an Associate Dean of Student Finance and Compliance, who is responsible
for all aspects of departmental evaluation, planning, and performance. An Assistant Director of Financial Aid is responsible for working with the Associate Dean of Students to handle student complaints, serving as a resource for staff, and oversight of the Scholarship Processing Office. The financial aid technicians have been divided into teams with areas of specialization, such as scholarships, Title IV assistance, customer service, etc. As described in Criterion 2b, in fall 2011 the College began outsourcing tier 1 Financial Aid calls to Perceptis FA, which is a new Perceptis division staffed with agents trained in financial aid. This will enable the Financial Aid staff to focus on providing service to students with more in-depth needs. The overall call volume to Financial Aid has increased, which is attributed to the College's increase in enrollment and the general increase in the need for Financial Aid, given the current economic downturn.

As of August 25, 2011 approximately 20,973 applicants had submitted a Federal Application for Student Aid (FASFA) to the College for the current fiscal year. As the MCCCD Financial Aid Comparison Chart indicates, this is an increase of over 300% in the number of financial aid applicants from the same point in time in 2008, and the largest increase in applicants in the Maricopa Community College District.

In keeping with this increase in activity, the Financial Aid website received 441,292 pageviews, placing it fourth of the 878 pages on the College's site in 2009-10, and in 2010-2011, the site generated 614,567 pageviews, remaining in fourth place of 1,046 pages.

PSOL data showed the increasing importance of financial aid to students. The statement “I receive timely information on the availability of financial aid” increased in level of importance from 5.93 in 2008 to 6.36 in 2010 (Diff = .43). The statement “Adequate financial aid is available” increased in level of importance from 5.87 in 2008 to 6.30 in 2010 (Diff = .43). Additionally, NCCBP data showed “Admissions and Financial Aid” satisfaction as a strength in each year for 2009, 2010, and 2011 as compared with national benchmarks, and also showed an upward trend during these three years.

Financial Aid measures internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c. These standards had shown evidence that students experienced significant confusion regarding financial aid process. As a result, the Financial Aid office initiated a complete redesign of the department website in order to provide students with a comprehensive resource related to financial aid policies and processes, judged to be particularly important because of the extremely high volume of traffic that the Financial Aid website receives.

**Testing Services**
Rio Salado provides in-person testing services at six of its locations across Maricopa County, offering college course placement, distance learning testing, and credit by examination. The College is a member of the National College Testing Association, and adheres to the NCTS Testing Standards and Guidelines. Students are served on a walk-in basis with no required appointments, and extended evening and weekend hours accommodate the schedules of Rio's nontraditional students. Testing center activity for the past three years is as follows:
3d 4: Testing Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008 - 09</th>
<th>2009 - 10</th>
<th>2010 - 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams administered</td>
<td>65,643</td>
<td>78,467</td>
<td>78,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper exams graded</td>
<td>unavailable</td>
<td>10,054</td>
<td>9,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National exams administered</td>
<td>1471</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams proctored for other colleges</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>1751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Testing Center has developed a Test Tracker database for in person testing sign in. These records allow the department to produce reports on how many students were tested, what exams they took, 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. This process was described in detail in Criterion 1e.

The Testing Center Web presence is well-used. Testing received 147,643 views on the College's website in 2009-10, placing it 13th of 878 pages, and 614,567 pageviews in 2011, placing it 14th of 1,046.

The Testing Center measures internal Service Standards based on Accuracy, Consistency and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.

Veteran’s Affairs

Rio Salado’s Veteran’s Affairs (VA) Department assists veterans with achieving their educational goals as they transition from military to civilian life. The College’s 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 managing the registration process, completing educational benefits applications, and referrals to College services such as Disability Services, Counseling, or Tutoring, as well as community services. Details are available on the Department’s website, as well on Rio’s Military Central website.

Veteran’s services are provided to students (approximately 600 in spring 2011) and potential students at the College’s primary Tempe location, as well as at the East Valley Veterans Education Center (EVVEC), which opened in 2011. The EVVEC is hosted by Rio Salado and is a partnership between the College, four MCCC sister colleges, and a number of community partners, and will be discussed more fully in Criterion 5c.

Rio’s Veteran’s Affairs office is audited by both the Phoenix Veteran’s 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 Veteran’s Affairs rules and regulations.
Website traffic to the College’s military and Veteran’s Affairs sites indicates that in 2009-2010 the military and Veteran’s sites had a combined total of 17,768 views, while in 2010-2011 the combined total was 19,439 views. Given that these sites serve a specific, niche population, many of whom might be more comfortable with in-person services, these data were considered satisfactory.

**Disability Services**

Rio Salado’s Disability Resources and Services (DRS) assists students with documented disabilities by providing appropriate accommodations in strict conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the MCCCD Policy Manual Section 2.8: Students with Disabilities.

At the time of the College’s last Self-Study team visit in 2002, there were approximately 28 registered students with disabilities. In 2005, the position of Disability Services Manager was created to address the needs of this population, and the office currently serves approximately 500 disability-registered students. Referrals are provided to College services such as Counseling Services for personal development issues, study and test taking skills, and career counseling, Tutoring Services, and other departments such as Advisement, Financial Aid, and Registration for information and guidance.

The office tracks all student information (disability needs, accommodations, correspondence, interaction with faculty/staff, etc.), in an Access Database, allowing staff to run reports to review how many students are registered with specific disabilities in a given semester/year. Details of services offered are available at the department’s website.

**Evaluative Summary**

In reviewing the patterns of evidence, the Planning Team has determined that Rio Salado College demonstrates significant evidence in support of the Core Components of Criterion 3, and that the Organization has provided evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

**Strengths (Q.A.):**

- Rio Salado has strong evidence of student learning outcomes at the College, program, and course levels.
- Rio Salado College publicly and transparently reports program-level student learning outcomes data through the Transparency by Design (College Choices for Adults) process.
- Rio Salado has built a formal, scalable and sustainable comprehensive Program Review process as its HLC Assessment Academy project.
- General Education has undergone a formal Program Review.
- Rio Salado has a comprehensive adjunct faculty hiring, training, development, and evaluation model.
- RioLearn, the College’s customized learning management system, meets the needs of the College’s 48-start, one-course, many sections model, and is continually scaled up to incorporate new technologies and meet emerging teaching and learning needs.
- The College provides comprehensive student support services in multiple modalities for both academic and operational co-curricular services.
• Rio Salado College has engaged in data mining and predictive modeling research since 2008, and is a national leader in this emerging field, having built early alert systems for online at-risk students.

**Challenges (R.I.):**

• As an open-door Institution, the College continues to serve large numbers of underprepared students, and seeks to more effectively transition these students through developmental education into college-level coursework.
• Cuts at the state level may continue to cause challenges with base funding of Adult Basic Education programs.

**Planning for the Future:**

• The College will continue to support faculty participation in quality online teaching and learning initiatives, such as *Quality Matters™*.
• The Faculty Chairs will continue to add College-wide student learning outcomes for assessment across disciplines, beginning with Sustainability in spring 2012.
• Rio Salado will continue to perform educational needs assessments as new locations are established, to provide the appropriate programs and curriculum for local community needs.
• The College is in the final planning and design stage of a student learning/knowledge center, which will combine library, tutoring, and computer lab services in one state-of-the-art facility to create seamless support access for in-person students.
• As technologies advance, Rio Salado will continue to seek additional mechanisms for serving students with disabilities.
Criterion Four – Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Criterion Statement: The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.
Core Component – 4a
The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

**MCCCD Support for Freedom of Inquiry**
As detailed in Criterion 1a, the Governing Board of the Maricopa Community Colleges includes among its values a commitment to academic, professional and personal excellence, the notions of honesty and integrity as essential components of the learning environment, a commitment to the creation of lifelong learning opportunities in the context of the freedom to dialogue and openly exchange ideas, and responsibility for personal and professional actions. These value statements provide the basis for a commitment to freedom of inquiry for students and employees of the MCCCD.

These values are further expressed in the [Guiding Principles of the Maricopa Community Colleges](http://example.com), which include Respect, Honesty, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Freedom.

**Rio Salado College Employee Academic Credentials**
As an institution of higher education within the MCCCD, Rio Salado fosters a learning environment for its students and employees that aligns with its mission, values, and core practices. In keeping with its academic mission, the College places primary importance on the attainment and maintenance of academic credentials and continuing education for employees, commensurate with their responsibilities.

4a 1: Academic Credentials of Rio Salado Employees by Employee Group Fall 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Group</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>Bachelors</th>
<th>Associates</th>
<th>No Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chancellor’s Executive Council</td>
<td>100% (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td>34% (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>65% (15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management, Administration, and Technology (MAT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100% (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Staff Association (PSA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100% (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and Operations (M&amp;O)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100% (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4a 2: Academic Credentials of Rio Salado Employees All Employee Groups Combined Fall 2011

- Doctorate (15)
- Masters (147)
- Bachelors (126)
- Associates (49)
- No Degree (126)
4a 3: Degrees and Certificates Earned While Employed at Rio Salado, 2002-11 (Self-Reported)

Detailed information on the degrees held by senior administrators and residential faculty are available in the College Catalog, and on the College's website.

Governing Board and District Support for Employee Learning

The Governing Board of the MCCCD amended its broadest outcomes statement in February, 2011, as follows: As an educational institution devoted to learning, Maricopa Community Colleges exist in order that the communities served have effective, innovative, learner-centered, flexible, and affordable life-long educational opportunities, with outcomes optimizing use of available resources.

Tuition Waivers

In keeping with the Board’s outcomes statement and focus on learning, the MCCCD supports employee use of tuition waivers for employees. Eligibility for tuition waivers, affidavits, or exemptions is established via state statute and Governing Board policy. The Handbook for Tuition Waivers, Affidavits and Exemptions contains full details of the program.

Rio Salado employees have taken considerable advantage of this educational benefit. Tuition waivers utilized for the past three fiscal years by College employees and by Rio Salado adjunct faculty are as follows:

4a 4: Tuition Waivers: Rio Salado College Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Duplicated Waivers</th>
<th>Unduplicated Employees</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 - 09</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>$ (30,635.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 - 10</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>$ (36,169.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 - 11</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>$ (52,663.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>$ (119,467.50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4a 5: Tuition Waivers: Rio Salado College Adjunct Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Duplicated Waivers</th>
<th>Unduplicated Adjunct Faculty</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 - 09</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>$ (39,478.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 - 10</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>$ (35,116.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 - 11</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>$ (42,671.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>$ (117,265.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Renewal Funding
The District provides renewal funding to support creative employee professional development and growth opportunities that enable re-engagement within the organization.

Rio Salado applied for and received $5,000 in renewal funds in FY 2009-10 for the StrengthsQuest training initiative that was described in detail in Criterion 2b. The College's entire workforce underwent this training. Feedback from many employees indicates that StrengthsQuest has proven extremely useful and relevant to help them understand both their own work styles and those of their colleagues, and has greatly reinforced Rio Salado's team-driven and collaborative culture.

4a 6: Employees Trained in StrengthsQuest through Renewal Funding, 2009-10

Creative Pathways Internships
Creative Pathways internships are available to all full-time Governing Board-approved employees in good standing after at least two full years of employment. A Creative Pathway is a work project intended to further personal and professional development goals. Up to $4,000 in funds are available per applicant to backfill positions during the internship. A small number of Rio employees have participated in Creative Pathways over the past few years, and the College has provided institutional funds to cover the cost of temporary replacement employees in those cases where the District funds were insufficient to cover backfill costs.

Maricopa Summer Institute
The Maricopa Summer Institute enables small, cross-curricular teams to participate in studying theory and practical applications for improving the success, retention, and persistence rates of diverse students. This institute was held in summer 2010 and summer 2011, with costs covered by the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI), which was described in Criterion 3b. Rio Salado's cross-functional team included Faculty Chairs and representatives from Student Affairs.

Professional Growth Funding
The Maricopa Community College District supports professional growth opportunities for all employee groups, as demonstrated by the information available in each group's policy manual. Policy manuals were addressed in Criterion 1e.

Faculty Professional Growth
Faculty Professional Growth funds were addressed in Criterion 3b.

MAT Professional Growth
The following chart shows the professional growth funds applied for and expended by the MCCCD for Rio Salado MAT (Management, Administration, and Technology) employees in the categories of Activity (conferences, workshops, etc.) and Tuition (coursework) over the past three fiscal years.
4a 7: MCCCD MAT Professional Growth Funds Expended 2009-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Number of Requests</th>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2009</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>$68,782.05</td>
<td>$60,206.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2009</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>$45,945.50</td>
<td>$44,433.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FY2009 Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td><strong>$115,630.65</strong></td>
<td><strong>$104,639.71</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2010</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>$35,956.79</td>
<td>$35,944.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2010</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$24,215.55</td>
<td>$23,381.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FY2010 Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td><strong>$60,172.34</strong></td>
<td><strong>$59,326.54</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2011</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>$73,985.93</td>
<td>$72,688.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2011</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>$34,126.38</td>
<td>$29,495.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FY2011 Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td><strong>$108,112.31</strong></td>
<td><strong>$102,183.86</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>208</td>
<td><strong>$283,915.30</strong></td>
<td><strong>$266,150.11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lower amount funded in FY 2009-10 can partially be explained by the withdrawal of sabbatical funding in that year.

PSA Professional Growth

The following chart shows the professional growth funds applied for and expended by the MCCCD for Rio Salado Professional Staff Association (PSA) employees in the categories of Activity (conferences, workshops, etc.) and Tuition (coursework) over the past three fiscal years.

4a 8: MCCCD PSA Professional Growth Funds Expended 2009-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Number of Requests</th>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2009</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$13,355.08</td>
<td>$10,880.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2009</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>$31,198.00</td>
<td>$25,976.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FY2009 Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td><strong>$44,553.08</strong></td>
<td><strong>$36,856.87</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2010</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$4,467.90</td>
<td>$3,880.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2010</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>$36,773.00</td>
<td>$31,957.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FY2010 Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td><strong>$41,240.90</strong></td>
<td><strong>$35,837.92</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2011</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$23,643.37</td>
<td>$21,535.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2011</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$35,922.03</td>
<td>$31,866.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FY2011 Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td><strong>$59,565.40</strong></td>
<td><strong>$53,401.73</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>147</td>
<td><strong>$145,359.38</strong></td>
<td><strong>$126,096.52</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District Employee and Organizational Learning Opportunities

The District Employee and Organizational Learning Team (EOLT) and the programs that the department offers to support personal and professional learning opportunities were discussed in Criterion 2b.
Rio Salado College Faculty Learning
Residential Faculty

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, and review current research to put theory into practice. Each of Rio Salado’s residential faculty is able to provide substantial evidence of professional activities that he or she has completed.

As indicated in Criterion 3b, the College supports attendance at conferences and workshops for residential faculty beyond the professional growth funding available from the MCCCD, if needed.

In a spring 2010 Residential Faculty survey (N=24), the statement “Rio Salado College’s investment in resources for Residential Faculty over the past five years shows a forward-looking concern for ensuring educational quality” elicited a quality assurance response of 91.67% agree/strongly agree, well above the Q.A. target of 80%.

Adjunct Faculty
Adjunct Faculty Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

CEUs are awarded for attendance at the biannual All Faculty Learning experiences. Upon verification, the units are granted and the adjunct faculty member receives a letter of notification and a certificate. Adjunct Faculty take advantage of these continuing education opportunities, as evidenced by the following data:

4a 9: Rio Salado College Adjunct Faculty Continuing Education Units, 2008-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>CEUs Awarded</th>
<th>Number of Individuals Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2008 All Faculty Meeting (AFM)</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 AFM</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2009 AFM</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009 AFM</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2010 AFM</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010 AFM</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 AFM</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 AFM</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,241</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjunct Faculty CEUs are also awarded for completion of the online Adjunct Faculty Development workshops. The following table shows the total number of successful completers since the inception of each workshop.
### 4a 10: Adjunct Faculty Development (AFD) Course Totals, Fall 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Course Initial Start Date</th>
<th>Total of successful completers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFD101/NAO101</td>
<td>Adjunct Faculty Orientation</td>
<td>9/24/07</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFD102/NAO102</td>
<td>Relentless Improvement in Quality Online Instruction</td>
<td>11/5/07</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFD205</td>
<td>Find it Fast: Successful Online Research</td>
<td>1/18/10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFD210</td>
<td>Online Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>1/11/10</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFD215</td>
<td>Online Teaching and Learning II</td>
<td>1/11/10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFD220</td>
<td>Managing Instruction</td>
<td>1/11/10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFD225</td>
<td>Rio’s Critical Thinking Rubric</td>
<td>8/16/10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFD230</td>
<td>Rio’s Writing Rubric</td>
<td>8/16/10</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Workshops Completed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,121</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award**

Rio Salado Adjunct Faculty awards are presented each year to a small number of outstanding recipients judged to exemplify excellence in the categories of Assessment, and Teaching and Learning. The criteria for the award were provided in Criterion 3b.

**College Support for Employee Learning**

**Employee Development**

Rio Salado's extensive employee development program was described in Criterion 2b.

**Employee Rewards & Recognition Program (R&R)**

The Rio Salado Rewards & Recognition Program provides a means for employees to recognize their coworkers for an exemplary effort. The program was developed at Rio Salado in the early 1990s when the College first explored and implemented the principles of Total Quality Management, and was established by employees, for employees. Employees were surveyed to determine what they wanted to be rewarded for, and how they wanted to be rewarded. Over the years, the categories have been amended slightly to remain aligned with the College’s core values. The six categories in the R&R program are **Sustainability, Customer Focus, Relentless Improvement, Inclusiveness, Professionalism, and Teamwork**. Recipients are personally congratulated by the College President or designee, and the nominations are published in the employee bulletin, *The Wave*. A letter of commendation is placed in employees’ personnel files, and they receive award-appropriate icons for their employee plaques.
### Rio Salado College Employee Rewards & Recognition Program Awards by Fiscal Year, 2007-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Focus</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relentless Improvement</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Awards</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Details of the Inclusiveness and Sustainability totals were discussed in Criterion 2b.

### Rio Salado College/District Office Wellness Program

Rio Salado College and the MCCCD Office (whose facilities are geographically adjacent) have combined to provide a Wellness Program for employees of the College and the District Office, in keeping with both the District and College commitment to employee development. The philosophy behind this program is based on **seven dimensions of wellness**, as follows:

- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Physical
- Environmental
- Social
- Occupational
- Intellectual

Wellness programs and activities are tied directly to one or more of these concepts, supporting the belief that staying grounded in these wellness principles produces well-rounded, balanced employees, able to mirror these qualities in their work, home, and community environments.

The Wellness Program, established in 2002, was conceived as a basic program to provide wellness education and health-related opportunities to employees of Rio Salado and the District Office. Based on the specific needs of these diverse partners, and with the realization that a nontraditional approach to wellness would better serve both these communities more fully, the Rio/District Office Wellness Program subsequently adopted a more corporate model for its delivery of wellness programming and activities.

In 2007 the Fitness Center was moved from the District Office Building to the Rio Salado Tempe location, and several employee options for Fitness Center usage were added. These include a credit Fitness Center class, PED115 (Lifetime Fitness), which incorporates personalized instruction with a certified trainer and the option to develop an individualized wellness plan. Wellness also offers events such as health risk assessments, health screenings, mobile mammography, prostate screenings, brown bag lectures, flu shots, and wellness fairs.

The following chart shows employee participation in wellness activities held over the past three years.
4a 12: Wellness Program Events, 2008-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Participation 2008</th>
<th>Participation 2009</th>
<th>Participation 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wellness Fair</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness Events</td>
<td>992 (47 events)</td>
<td>298 (38 events)</td>
<td>799 (44 events)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness Center Employee Membership</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Risk Assessment Participation</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Screening Employee Participation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates combined Rio and District Office

**Evaluation**

It was noted that Fitness Center membership has declined over this three-year period. In a fall 2009 Employee Survey (N=213), the statement “As a Rio Salado Employee, I find the following services valuable: Fitness Center” had 70% of employees agree/strongly agree, but in fall 2010 (N=419), only 64% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with this same statement. Anecdotal data indicate that employees who use the Fitness Center find it of enormous benefit, so this low response indicates an opportunity for Relentless Improvement in promoting and thereby increasing Fitness Center use.

The data in response to the question “As a Rio Salado Employee, I find the following services valuable: Wellness Programs” were slightly better. In the 2009 survey this item rated 75.37% agree/strongly agree, and in 2010, 73%. The Wellness Program was without a coordinator for a 16-month period in 2009-2010, and the scope of the program has been greatly expanded with the hiring of a highly-qualified Wellness Coordinator in late 2010. A resurgence of the Wellness Program has taken place since the Coordinator was hired, and it is anticipated that these data will improve in the next cycle. As part of the Coordinator’s attempts to ensure that the Wellness Program meets employee needs, a Wellness Committee consisting of employees from Rio Salado and the District Office, drawn from all employee groups, was reestablished in 2010-2011. This committee meets twice a year to discuss Wellness goals and programming.

Rio Salado College won the Phoenix Business Journal’s “Valley’s Healthiest Employer” award in the medium-sized company range (250-1499 employees) in February 2011. This award recognizes companies that are committed to creating a healthy workplace based on six key categories:

- Culture and Leadership Commitment
- Foundational Components
- Strategic Planning
- Communication and Marketing
- Programming and Interventions
- Reporting and Analysis
**Student Academic Achievement Recognition**  
**Honors Program**

Since its inception in 1981-1982, the Honors Program at Rio Salado College has provided intellectually stimulating learning opportunities for academically outstanding students. The program includes scholarships, distinguished multidisciplinary classes, the Honors Forum Lecture Series, and cultural opportunities including Symphony Connections and free admission to the Phoenix Art Museum.

The stated goals of the Honors Program at the Maricopa Community Colleges are:

- To encourage, foster, and contribute to a climate of excellence both in the colleges and in the surrounding community
- To encourage students to strive to achieve the maximum benefit from the educational services provided by the Maricopa Community Colleges
- To recognize and reward the talent and motivation of outstanding community college students and faculty
- To promote a sense of scholarship and community among program participants and with the colleges
- To serve as a source of innovation and testing for new methodologies and services that may be extended to a greater number of students
- To raise awareness of the high quality and variety of educational services offered by the Maricopa Community Colleges

Students who have completed 12 or more credits of 100- or 200-level college work at Rio Salado College or another MCCCD college with a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher are eligible to receive the Honors Achievement Award (a partial fee waiver) as a member of the Honors Program. Honors membership is also available to students as a Presidents' Scholar if they are within one year after their high school graduation, and either graduated in the top 15% of their class, or have excellent scores on all three placement tests. Presidents' Scholars receive a scholarship dollar amount equal to 15 credits of tuition, plus the $15 registration fee. All Honors students enroll in specified honors courses which are designed to challenge the high achiever. Rio Salado currently offers honors program courses online (with most limited to specific start dates each semester), and at six of the College's locations throughout Maricopa County. A list of the Rio Salado College 2011-2012 Honors Courses is available on the College website.

The College has tripled its numbers of honors students since its last Self-Study visit in 2002, and the program has grown substantially over the past two years in particular, as evidenced by the chart below.

**4a 13: Rio Salado College Honors Program 2006-11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Successful Honors Student Completers</th>
<th>Scholarship and Stipend Amounts Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 07</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>$64,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 - 08</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>$64,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 - 09</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>$62,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 -10</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>$106,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 -11</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>$148,169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Phi Theta Kappa**

Phi Theta Kappa is the international honor society for two-year colleges, and is the biggest honor society in the United States, with over 2 million members. Students who have completed 12 or more credits of 100- or 200-level college work at Rio Salado College or another MCCCD college, with a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher, are eligible for membership in Rio Salado's Alpha Theta Omicron chapter as long as they are enrolled in a course at Rio Salado during the semester in which they join. On average, 1 in approximately 100 eligible students becomes an active member.

The award-winning Alpha Theta Omicron chapter had 151 reported members in calendar year 2009 and 223 in 2010, representing a 47% increase.

### 4a 14: Alpha Theta Omicron Chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phi Theta Kappa International Convention Awards</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Excellence Advisor Award</td>
<td>Top 100 Chapter (for 14th consecutive year)</td>
<td>Top 100 Chapter (for 13th consecutive year)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished Chapter Member Award</td>
<td>Distinguished Chapter Member Award</td>
<td>Administrator Award of Distinction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished Chapter President/Officer</td>
<td>Service Hallmark Winner (5th win in the last 6 years)</td>
<td>Service Hallmark Winner (4th win in the last 5 years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phi Theta Kappa Regional Convention Awards</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Excellence Advisor Award</td>
<td>Service Hallmark Winner</td>
<td>Service Hallmark Winner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished Chapter President/Officer</td>
<td>Scholarship Hallmark Runner-Up</td>
<td>Leadership Hallmark Runner-Up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished Chapter Member Award</td>
<td>Distinguished Chapter Member Award</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five-Star Award</td>
<td>Five-Star Award</td>
<td>Five-Star Award</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011 Pinnacle Award</td>
<td></td>
<td>2008-09 Pinnacle Award (Increasing inducted members by at least 10% over previous year)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All-Arizona Academic Team Members</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coca-Cola Gold Scholar (one of top 50 community college students, nationally)</td>
<td>Coca-Cola Bronze Scholar (one of the top 150 community college students, nationally)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st State Team</td>
<td>1st State Team</td>
<td>1st State Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd State Team</td>
<td>2nd State Team</td>
<td>2nd State Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Scholarship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*First year program was offered*
President’s and Dean’s Honor Rolls
The President’s Honor Roll is comprised of students who achieve a grade point average (GPA) of 3.75 or higher in 12 or more credits during the preceding academic term. The Dean’s Honor Roll is comprised of students who achieve a grade point average of 3.75 or higher in 6 to 11 credits during the preceding academic term. Both are determined each fall and spring semester. Honor Roll students receive a letter of congratulations from the College President or the Dean of Instruction, as appropriate.

Commencement Student Speakers
Rio Salado College features two or three student speakers at its graduation ceremonies in lieu of an official keynote speaker, in a conscious effort to highlight the value that the College places on outstanding student achievement. Student speakers audition and are selected by a committee headed by the Honors Coordinator. Speeches from the three student speakers who addressed the graduating class of May 2011 may be viewed at the following URLs:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEwDiRULen08
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZzES7m1qCU
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIX6-XnUqbo

Core Component – 4b
The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

General Education
As described in detail in Criterion 3b, the Maricopa Community College District has disseminated a District-wide General Education statement and General Education requirements, and has defined the specific elements which are designed to provide students with essential knowledge and skills. Rio Salado’s General Education Program, which aligns with the mission and purposes of the District requirements, was also detailed in Criterion 3b.

Degree and Certificate Programs
Rio Salado College offers a number of academic and occupational programs, each designed to meet student needs.

Academic Programs
Academic programs are designed to help students transfer to a baccalaureate-granting institution, while the College’s occupational programs are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for employment in their chosen fields. Rio Salado students planning to transfer to a four-year institution can choose a number of Associate degrees that are available District-wide to students of the Maricopa Community Colleges. Degrees such as an Associate in Arts, an Associate in Science, an Associate in Business, General Requirements, or an Associate in General Studies are designed for the transfer student. 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.
Occupational Programs
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.

Partnership Programs
Rio Salado has partnered with a number of corporations, government agencies, and industry leaders to offer customized training leading to certificates and degrees. Enrollment in these certificate and degree programs is restricted to the employees of the partner organization. These programs are noted in College literature as being Partnership programs with limited enrollment opportunity. These partnership programs (known as Educational Service Partnerships) will be discussed fully in Criterion 5c.

Academic Certificates
Rio Salado also offers Academic Certificates for students who want to earn additional credits for professional certifications, gain additional knowledge in an academic field, or have a special interest. The College offers seven Academic Certificates in a variety of areas, including sustainability, languages, and education.

All programs available at Rio Salado College are described in the College Catalog, and on the College website.

4b 1: Rio Salado Associate Degrees and Certificates of Completion Awarded, 2007-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Type</th>
<th>FY 2007</th>
<th>FY 2008</th>
<th>FY 2009</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
<th>FY 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Certificates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificates of Completion</td>
<td>3854</td>
<td>3476</td>
<td>3024</td>
<td>1679</td>
<td>3027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Awards Posted for Fiscal Year</td>
<td>4207</td>
<td>3825</td>
<td>3403</td>
<td>2,107</td>
<td>3513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be noted that the number of Certificates of Completion declined dramatically in FY 2009-10. The downward trend between 2007-2010 related primarily to the Arizona economy, and the fact that the College's business and industry partners were less able to subsidize educational opportunities for their employees. The trend appeared to be reversing in 2010-2011, although the economic outlook for the State of Arizona remains grim.

Despite this downward trend, Rio Salado remains at the forefront of certificate providers in the United States, and has been ranked in the top 10 of one-year certificate providers nationally by Community College Week in seven of the last eight years. Also, over the past five years, Rio Salado certificates of completion have comprised 42% of all certificates awarded in the MCCCCD.
Co-Curricular Activities
Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)
The activities and requirements for membership of Rio Salado’s Alpha Theta Omicron chapter of Phi Theta Kappa were detailed in Criterion 4a. An annual PTK recognition event is held to honor the achievements of PTK members.

RISE Learning for Life
RISE Learning for Life is one of over 200 institutes for Learning in Retirement in the United States. Hosted by Rio Salado College and housed at the Lifelong Learning Center (described in Criterion 3c), RISE offers personal interest courses to retirement-age individuals covering a wide scope of topics, including history, science, art, travel, wellness, religion, and others designed to provide academic enrichment. The organization has its own constitution and governance structure, and curriculum is determined by a RISE-appointed curriculum committee with input from members. RISE offers close to 300 non-credit classes per year, taught by member facilitators or local community experts on a volunteer basis. In 2010-2011 RISE Learning for Life had 1,146 members, with 13,042 duplicated attendance at classes, and comprised the largest student association in the Maricopa County Community College District.

The Democracy Commitment
Launched in 2011, the Democracy Commitment is a national initiative for the development and expansion of programs and projects related to civic learning and democratic engagement among United States community college students. The program is modeled after the American Democracy Project for four-year colleges. Rio Salado signed on to the commitment in fall 2011, and will be developing initiatives in keeping with the actions requested of signatories, as follows:

• A public commitment to the central role of civic education
• Intentional support for both curricular and extra-curricular programs that build civic skills among students, especially focusing on projects that support students in doing public work;
• Faculty and staff development in civic engagement
• Partnerships with local civic, non-profit and governmental agencies whose primary work is the social and economic development of local communities
• Participation in a national clearinghouse of program designs, curricula and project development strategies for community colleges
• Participation in an annual meeting that brings together faculty, staff, administrators and partners
• Development of joint regional and national programs with partner universities, and with national higher education associations

Core Component – 4c
The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

Program Review
As detailed in Criterion 3a, Rio Salado has established a comprehensive, systemic and sustainable program review process, which includes review of both academic and occupational
programs. Reviews completed to date include the College's Post Baccalaureate Education program in 2009-2010, and General Education, Organizational Management, and Law Enforcement Technology in 2010-2011. The program review process established the validity, currency, and relevancy of these programs, and executive summaries of the reviews are available for public viewing on the College's Assessment website.

**Instructional Councils and Articulation Task Forces**

*Instructional Councils* are discipline-specific committees comprised of faculty representatives from each of the 10 Maricopa Community Colleges, responsible for evaluating the quality and content-appropriateness of curriculum proposals, and other functions as described in Criterion 3b. As indicated, Instructional Council members have the opportunity to serve on statewide *Articulation Task Forces* to ensure that the Maricopa colleges are meeting the needs of university partners and transfer students. Transfer and articulation processes will be described in more detail below.

**Program Advisory Committees**

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. Advisory Committee members work with Faculty Chairs in program development, serving as content experts and practicing specialists. To maintain currency, program-specific Advisory Committees review programs and their related courses on an annual basis, to ensure that the learning outcomes meet industry needs and are relevant to current students. In addition, members serve as a “pulse” on current market practices and future field developments that guide program development. Specific questions posed at Advisory Committee meetings determine whether the program is addressing industry needs, and if any modifications are indicated.

In surveys of College partners conducted in fall 2010 (N=52) and fall 2011 (N=51), the statement: “Advisory Councils effectively provide Rio Salado College with information to understand its constituents’ changing needs” elicited 85% and 90.24% agreement/strong agreement respectively, well above the quality assurance target of 80%. Further data from these surveys will be discussed in Criterion 5.

**External Program Certifications**

Rio Salado programs that have met the criteria for certification or accreditation by subject-specific bodies were mentioned in Criterion 1e. These include *Dental Hygiene* and *Clinical Dental Assisting, Teacher Education Programs*, and the College's *Dual Enrollment Program*, which is the only NACEP (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships) accredited dual enrollment program in the state of Arizona. The Dual Enrollment program will be discussed fully in Criterion 5c.

**Transfer and University Articulation**

Rio Salado College students can choose from a number of *transfer partners* when transferring credits to continue their education. 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 MCCCD 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. The *partner list*
is available on the College's website. These agreements provide Rio Salado's students with a seamless transfer experience. Also, the College's Advisement Services personnel specialize in assisting students with the transfer process.

**MCCCD Transfer Student Profile**

A total of 27,668 former MCCCD students were enrolled in Arizona public universities as undergraduates in academic year 2009-10. Almost 80%, or 21,610, students attended Arizona State University, 3,484 attended Northern Arizona University, and 2,574 attended the University of Arizona.

Demographic information about these students is as follows:

- Fifty five percent of the transfer students were female
- Sixty two percent had transferred at least 32 credits
- Twenty three percent had earned an associate's degree from MCCCD
- Twenty nine percent identified themselves as members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups:
  - American Indian/Alaska Native, 2%
  - Asian/Pacific Islander, 6%
  - Black, Non-Hispanic, 5%
  - Hispanic, 16%
  - Unknown/Other, 5%
  - White, Non-Hispanic, 66%

A briefing paper released in spring 2011 by the CCTA contains extensive trends and outcomes data about MCCCD transfer students.

Rio Salado College transfer data for fall 2009 are the latest available. These show that 2,867 Rio Salado students transferred to a public Arizona university. Of the three state universities, the largest proportion (65.2%) of Rio Salado College students transferred to Arizona State University (ASU). Specific details of Rio Salado's transfer data are available in the College's University Transfer Summary, prepared by the Institutional Research Department from information provided in the statewide ASSIST (Arizona Statewide System for Information on Student Transfer) data warehouse.

**Alliance and MAPP**

The Alliance is a partnership between the Maricopa Community Colleges and Arizona State University (ASU) to facilitate a successful student transfer experience. Alliance goals are as follows:

- Double the number of Maricopa students transferring to ASU over the next five years
- Double the percentage of Maricopa students transferring to ASU with an associate degree
- Increase the success rate of Maricopa transfer students at ASU in terms of earning a bachelor's degree
- Ensure seamless transition of students between Maricopa and ASU
- Expand opportunities for direct transfer to specified ASU degree programs

The primary Alliance program established to reach these goals is the Maricopa-ASU Pathway Program (MAPP).
MAPP allows a student to declare a program of study at ASU but begin his or her coursework at one of the Maricopa Community Colleges. Students must maintain a designated grade point average and complete the MAPP within three years in order to be guaranteed admission to the chosen ASU program. Upon completion of the MAPP, students will have earned both an Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) certificate and an associate's degree, as both are included in every MAPP. Additional benefits of choosing a MAPP are:

- Guaranteed admission to ASU degree programs when all MAPP requirements are met
- Eligibility for the ASU Tuition Commitment which provides limits on tuition increases during enrollment at ASU
- Specific scholarships available for meritorious students who complete an associate's degree
- Access to Transfer Advising and other pre-enrollment services on-site at the Maricopa Community Colleges
- Cost-effective pathway ensuring all courses transfer and apply to an ASU degree

MAPPs are available in a number of discipline areas, including many of ASU's high demand degrees such as Business, Communication, Computers, Early Childhood Education, Economics, Engineering, and Psychology.

Northern Arizona University (NAU) Connection

In addition to partnering with ASU, the Maricopa Community Colleges have partnered with another of the Arizona state universities, Northern Arizona University (NAU). Located in Flagstaff, Arizona, NAU has offices and holds classes at locations throughout the state (including several of the MCCCD colleges), and is therefore known as the statewide university. Through the NAU Connection, Rio Salado students can complete their baccalaureate degree online, onsite at the Communiversity@Surprise, or on the campuses of sister MCCCD colleges. NAU offers a variety of areas of study through their Extended Campus, including two that allow Rio Salado students to transfer up to 90 credits towards their Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies.

Student Preparation for the Workplace

Employer surveys have been conducted periodically to assess the level of preparation of Rio Salado students in the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Program and the Dental Hygiene Program. In a summer 2007 survey of principals whose schools had employed Rio Salado graduates as teachers (N=45), responses to indicators of teaching and learning, communication and interpersonal relationships, school engagement, and professionalism and growth were overwhelmingly judged to be proficient or commendable, with all data well above the 80% quality assurance target.

Employers of dental hygiene graduates are surveyed every three years.
The Dental Hygiene Program prepared the graduate to be competent in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>2004 (N=9)</th>
<th>2007 (N=5)</th>
<th>2010 (N=5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>communication skills</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current infection control and patient safety</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exposing and interpreting diagnostic radiographs</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessing the health of a patient</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obtaining patient consent and treatment planning</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practicing comprehensive dental hygiene therapy</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involving the patient in his/her treatment</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>properly evaluating and referring patients</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practicing ethics</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing professional services that address the oral</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health needs of a diverse community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practicing as a team member in professional settings</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is notable that the averages have decreased over each survey administration. The Dental Hygiene Program is currently undergoing changes that will incorporate this employer feedback under the leadership of a new director, who was hired in 2011.

**Core Component – 4d**
The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

**College Catalog**
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. The online format offers content search and emailing options, a user-friendly tool bar, and live links. Data from the Noel Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL) in 2010 clearly showed that Rio Salado’s online students preferred an online catalog format over print, above the national average. Students rated the importance of an online catalog as a source of information at 6.21 on a 7 point scale (with the national average at 5.94), as compared with 4.37 on a 7 point scale for the importance of a printed catalog as a source of information (the national average was 4.79). These data support the steps the College has taken to create an enhanced online format for the catalog. In addition to the current catalog, archived college catalogs for the past 10 years are available on the College website.
Course Syllabi
In an effort to meet the needs of Rio Salado students and provide consistency and clarity in the learning experience, all Rio Salado course syllabi contain District-approved course competencies/outcomes, and a well-defined assessment methodology. In addition, 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 the following elements, which are not course-specific:

- Library Services
- Academic Misconduct (as detailed in Criterion 1e)
- Civility Policy (as detailed in Criterion 1e)
- RioLearn Tech Check
- Requirement for Active Class Participation
- Change of Address
- Disability Statement
- Copyright Statement

MCCCDD Intellectual Property Policies
The MCCCDD Office of General Counsel has published a Copyright Policy for the Maricopa colleges, as well as copyright guidelines, a copyright tutorial, information for students and employees, and templates for licensing MCCCDD intellectual property.

Promoting Ethical Use of Information at Rio Salado College
Because of Rio Salado’s considerable footprint as a nontraditional institution serving over 43,000 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 and employees. Several of Rio Salado’s innovative practices were described in Criterion 1e, including the peer-to-peer plagiarism detector, subscription to Turnitin.com, Academic Integrity Team, and Academic Misconduct and Civility Statement verbiage in all course syllabi.

Information Literacy as a Student Learning Outcome
As detailed in Criterion 3a, Rio Salado has established information literacy as a College-wide student learning outcome that is measured at the College, program, and course levels. This further demonstrates the College’s commitment to ensuring that ethical information practices are incorporated and assessed in the teaching and learning environment.

Copyright Processes
In addition to these practices, the College has a centralized copyright department housed within the library, whose function is to provide assistance and guidance during the Instructional Design and Course Production processes regarding use of third party content provided in online courses, secure copyright and/or licensing permission where necessary, and track permissioned items by course in an internal copyright database. This constitutes a comprehensive and centralized process which involves library copyright personnel at all levels of course development, design, and production, and is unique within the Maricopa Community Colleges. The copyright department eliminates the need for individual course developers to
secure permission for copyrighted content, while simultaneously ensuring that the College’s practices 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.

**Evaluation**

In the spring 2010 (N=24) Residential Faculty Survey, 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “the copyright policies at Rio Salado College are clear and well publicized,” and the same statement elicited a 95.45% quality assurance response in the Leadership Council survey of spring 2011 (N=29).

A survey of employees who interact most closely with copyright processes (Instructional Design, Course Production, Residential Faculty, Copy Center, etc.) was conducted in spring 2011 (N=37) to determine the level of employee awareness and satisfaction with the centralized copyright processes at Rio Salado. The statement “I know who to ask for information if Copyright issues arise in the course of my work at Rio” had an agree/strongly agree response of 97.3%, while 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “Rio’s Copyright personnel provide expert assistance regarding Copyright Law.”

**Faculty Rights**

**Instructional Rights/Academic Freedom**

**Residential Faculty Policies**

The rights of Maricopa Community College residential faculty are delineated in the Residential Faculty Policy Manual (RFP) as follows:

3.1. **Instructional Rights/Academic Freedom**

- Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, and they should exercise their best effort to ensure topics are relevant to their subject. Faculty will determine curriculum and relevant subject matter for courses, recommend the appropriate pedagogy, textbooks, and other materials relevant to teaching their subject.
- Faculty shall maintain the right and responsibility to determine grades and other evaluations of student performance.
- Outside the classroom, when Faculty express themselves as citizens, they shall be free from institutional censorship or discipline. When acting as citizens, Faculty will exercise their best efforts to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution, and endeavor to conduct themselves as scholars and representatives of higher education.
- Faculty are entitled to freedom in research and in the publication of the results consistent with the provisions of Section 3.2. Intellectual Property Rights.

**Adjunct Faculty Policies**

The Adjunct Faculty Policy Manual contains the following language:

14. **Instructional Rights/Academic Freedom**

- Adjunct Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, and they should exercise their best effort to ensure topics are relevant to their subject.
- Adjunct Faculty shall maintain the right and responsibility to determine grades and other evaluations of student performance.
• When speaking as citizens, Adjunct Faculty will exercise their best efforts to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution, and endeavor to conduct themselves as scholars and representatives of higher education.
• Adjunct Faculty are entitled to freedom in research and in the publication of the results.

Rio Salado College Academic Freedom Philosophy Statement
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. The statement is posted on both the residential and adjunct faculty SharePoint sites, and reads as follows:

Rio Salado College transforms the learning experience through:
• Choice, Access and Flexibility
• Customized, High Quality Learning Design
• Personalized Service and Organizational Responsiveness

Within the framework of this mission, Rio Salado College is committed to the principles of Academic Freedom as stated in the Residential Faculty Policies Manual and the Adjunct Faculty Board Policies of the Maricopa County Community College District. Furthermore, the curriculum at Rio Salado College is built upon competencies that are established by the Maricopa County Community College District and affirmed by Instructional Councils in the academic disciplines taught at MCCCD. Academic Freedom at Rio Salado College is manifested through an environment supporting freedom of inquiry for all faculty members, as exemplified by the following activities:
• The opportunity to develop and/or make relevant additions to course content as appropriate
• The opportunity to suggest improvements for lessons and/or assessments to the Program/Department
• The opportunity to personalize the relationship between teacher and student
• The opportunity to individualize communication and feedback
• The opportunity to contribute towards improvement in the department or program
• The opportunity to determine grades and other evaluations of student performance

Survey data from the 2009 (N=685) and 2011 (N=681) Adjunct Faculty Surveys indicated that the Faculty Chairs need to do more to create awareness of and familiarity with this statement for their Adjunct Faculty members. In 2009, 52% of respondents indicated that they were aware of the Academic Freedom statement. Of that number, 97% understood how the statement supports Rio Salado’s mission. In 2011, the number of Adjunct Faculty members who were aware of the Academic Freedom statement dropped to slightly below half, or 48.31%. Again, of those who were aware of the statement, an overwhelming 95.44% understood how it supports the College’s mission. In order to raise the level of awareness, the academic freedom statement has been posted more prominently on the Adjunct Faculty portal and highlighted in the Adjunct Faculty Newsletter. Also, Faculty Chairs will continue to discuss the tenets of this statement in department meetings with their Adjunct Faculty members.

Residential Faculty Intellectual Property Rights
The Residential Faculty Policy (RFP) Manual provides recognition for the academic exception of the Works Made for Hire Doctrine for residential faculty. Details of these rights are provided in Section 3.2 of the RFP.
Institutional Review Board
As mentioned Criterion 1e, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews all proposed research within MCCCD involving human subjects, to ensure that the subjects are treated ethically and that their rights and welfare are adequately protected, as detailed in the MCCCD IRB Handbook.

Authentication Procedures
Rio Salado College has instituted extensive student authentication procedures. These will be explained in detail in Appendix B: Government Compliance.

Evaluative Summary
In reviewing the patterns of evidence, the Planning Team has determined that Rio Salado College demonstrates significant evidence in support of the Core Components of Criterion 4, and that the Organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Strengths:
• Rio Salado effectively uses program advisory committees to make improvements in the relevance and usefulness of curricula, especially in its partnership programs.
• The College has a comprehensive, systemic, and centralized process for management of copyright and intellectual property in its courses.
• The Alpha Theta Omicron chapter of Phi Theta Kappa has garnered numerous awards at the state and national levels.
• Rio Salado has established Information Literacy as a College-wide student learning outcome, thereby showing a strong commitment to the ethical use of information by its students.
• Rio Salado is heavily invested in the well-being of its employees, as evidenced by its award-winning Wellness Program, highlighting the seven dimensions of wellness.

Challenges:
• Adjunct Faculty awareness of the tenets of the College's Academic Freedom statement needs to be promoted.
• Tracking workplace success of former students needs to be increased through the expanded collection of relevant data from alumni and employers.
• Although the College is at the forefront of certificate completion among the MCCCCD institutions, the number of completers needs to be increased in accordance with the national completion agenda.

Planning for the Future:
• The College plans to develop related curriculum and programming in keeping with becoming a signatory to the Democracy Commitment.
• Rio Salado will strengthen its current transfer partnerships and actively seek out new opportunities for online transfer pathways.
• The Rio Salado Honors Program will be expanded to attract additional participants and provide enhanced activities.
Criterion Five – Engagement and Service

Criterion Statement: As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.
Core Component – 5a
The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Partnering with the Community
In keeping with its nontraditional structure, Río Salado College has operated in a dispersed community context since its inception 34 years ago. In earlier years, the College’s locations were service sites offering classes and basic College services throughout Maricopa County. In recent times, this approach has evolved to incorporate the establishment of stronger relationships with local communities as the College’s locations are planned and developed. The process of environmental scanning, resource development, and implementation of projects will be described in this section. Funding for these locations was discussed in Criterion 2b, and the learning spaces provided within them were detailed in Criterion 3c.

Resource Development
In order to develop resources and extend educational opportunities to those who need them the most, Río 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 Communiversity@Surprise location, which will be described in detail below. 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.

When working with constituents who request specific programs and services under contractual agreement or grant funding, the College engages in a similar fact-finding process, initially through meetings and dialogue. The research process may vary considerably at that juncture based on the constituent’s request. For instance, the ABE/ASE/ELAA programs detailed in Criterion 3c 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.

Communiversity@Surprise: a Case Study
In summer 2009, Río Salado and the City of Surprise completed construction of a 26,000 square-foot Communiversity in the new Surprise Civic City Center complex. In addition to state-of-the-art technology-equipped classrooms, a public meeting room and a separate theater-style room can host gatherings, cultural and art exhibits, and presentations for 100 or more attendees at a time. The City of Surprise, located in the far West Valley of the greater Phoenix metropolitan area, has a population of approximately 117,000, and has seen explosive population growth over the past decade.
Environmental Scanning

The ground-breaking Communiversity@Surprise project was the outcome of an extensive process of environmental scanning and needs assessment. In 2008, Rio Salado College commissioned the Hanover Research Group to conduct a study of the academic and occupational needs of the City of Surprise, as well as the largest employers in the Northwest Valley. In addition to the Hanover study, Rio Salado joined with the City of Surprise and WESTMARC (Western Maricopa Coalition; an organization whose purpose is to promote the West Valley and advocate on its behalf) in commissioning a workforce study of the City of Surprise and the greater West Valley, defined by WESTMARC as all cities located adjacent to or west of the I-17 freeway. The workforce study was conducted by ERISS, a national research organization specializing in business intelligence collection technologies and methodologies. This West Valley Workforce Study was the first analysis of its kind produced for the region, and the findings enabled the College and its partners to tailor the proposed offerings at the Communiversity to meet specific needs.

Study data indicated that 4 of 12, or 33%, of industries reported growth, including Business, Education, Government, and Health Services. Therefore, each degree pathway offered at the Communiversity was identified as an educational program that would benefit Surprise. While employers in the WESTMARC region appeared to be largely satisfied with their workforces, there were opportunities for improvement. Twenty percent of employers reported that using technology tools and information systems was a common deficiency among their employees. Additionally, 25% of respondents stated that workplace literacy affected productivity amongst workers. Of these 25%, the most common deficiency was communicating effectively in English (50%), followed by thinking critically and acting logically to solve problems (30%), and working in teams (20%). These opportunities for improvement provided specific data for training solutions that could be offered to employers in the region.

In addition to data gathered via the Hanover and ERISS studies, Rio Salado used data provided by Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI), a third-party vendor that provides a web-based suite for regional workforce and economic research. EMSI data indicated that workforce needs would continue to increase in the West Valley. Specifically, the numbers of jobs in Healthcare/Social Assistance and Education were projected to increase by 29% and 44%, respectively.

Armed with these data and the solid evidence that they provided, Rio Salado College and the City of Surprise established the Communiversity@Surprise to meet specifically identified needs. Rio operates the facility and is the primary provider of nontraditional programming, including online delivery and customized workforce training. Other educational partners include Glendale Community College (MCCCD), Phoenix College (MCCCD), Ottawa University, Northern Arizona University (NAU), and West-MEC, a public high school district that focuses on Career and Technical Education.
Benefit to the Community
The Communiversity offers over 40 programs through six educational pathways, both in-person and online, from college certificates through associate, bachelor’s, post-baccalaureate, and master’s degrees, in flexible 8-week formats. Pathways include Business/Management, Education, Healthcare, Information Systems, Liberal Arts, and Public Safety. Students may also access Rio’s complete roster of online classes, academic advising and counseling services, as well as Rio’s 24/7 academic support services. Library services for Rio-enrolled students have been provided to date via the Rio online library, with a small in-person library facility slated for inclusion in 2012.

The Communiversity model, offering higher educational programming in alliance with other colleges and universities, has enabled residents of the far West Valley to meet their educational needs locally through a variety of degree pathways. Students also can save money on tuition by taking up to 90 credits through the community college partners before transferring to a university partner for the remaining credits.

In November 2009, the Communiversity received the WESTMARC Best of the West Award for Higher Education. This award is presented annually in several categories and recognizes "outstanding contributions to the image, lifestyle and economic development in Western Maricopa County."

The Communiversity@Queen Creek, currently in the planning stages for a 2013 opening, will be the second higher education center of its kind hosted by Rio Salado College. The new location will be a partnership between the Town of Queen Creek in the far East Valley, and the Maricopa County Community College District. Additional partners will be added as the center expands.

In keeping with this deliberate approach to partnering with stakeholders, Rio Salado periodically commissions Hanover Research to conduct environmental scanning projects to assist with strategic decision making, as indicated in the Communiversity@Surprise case study. Other recent examples have included “Tracking Student Goals and Intent at Community Colleges,” “Effectiveness, Standards, and Examples of Dual Enrollment Programs through Postsecondary Institutions—Rio Salado College,” and “Certificate Programs in Adult Education and Coaching.”

MCCCD Environmental Scans
Each year, the District Office releases an environmental scan that reviews such issues as workforce trends, higher education partnership trends, social and technological trends, trends in teaching and learning, technological innovations, and the outlook for Arizona and the United States. The MCCCD District Office and its member colleges use these scans as a part of their planning processes.
Program Advisory Committees
The process whereby community members and industry leaders are invited to serve on Program Advisory Committees, and provide input that helps to shape the College's curriculum for occupational programs, was described in Criterion 4c.

Online Program Development Process
The process for determining whether to develop a new program varies depending upon the project; however, there are some steps that are typically undertaken in these efforts, as illustrated in the New Program/Partnership/Course Flowchart.

A feasibility study is conducted to determine how viable the program would be if created, and how valuable it would be to the community. This study involves several aspects, including an environmental scan, which seeks to answer numerous questions, including:
- Is there a market for this idea?
- Are other institutions offering the program, or something similar?
- If so, how popular is it?
- Is the program subject matter poised for growth in the future?
- What are the job projections for this area per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and other sources?

At this point, if the research determines that the program could be successful if offered, and once a reasonable timeline for the College to break even on the venture is established, an Advisory Committee is assembled and their input considered in the formation of the program. Consultation with the Advisory Committee continues after the program is in place to determine whether changes are needed.

After the program has begun, enrollments are monitored with data from Institutional Research in order to assess the success of the program and assist with identifying needed changes.

Rio Salado Online Paralegal Program: a Case Study
An excellent example of this program development process is the Rio Salado online Paralegal Program, which was launched in fall 2009, and which incorporates both a Certificate of Completion and an Associate in Applied Science Degree. The program was developed with broad-based support from a sister MCCCD college (Phoenix College) and the legal community. When Rio Salado initially explored the idea of establishing a second paralegal program in the District, the College consulted with the Director of the Paralegal Studies program at Phoenix College. The Director was instrumental in helping Rio to determine community needs and the direction the Rio Salado program should take, differentiating it from the well-established and well-respected program at Phoenix College.

The College also interviewed several lawyers and paralegals in the community, comprising representation from large and small law firms. They were asked what an ideal paralegal program should include, and which core competencies to focus on. Several of those
interviewees became part of the Paralegal Program Advisory Council and helped the College to validate the courses, competencies, and outlines of the courses in the program. This Advisory Board is still consulted regularly as updates to the program are considered and implemented.

The following chart shows duplicated enrollments and completion figures in the Paralegal Program since its inception. While numbers of certificate and degree completers are still small (17 for the Certificate of Completion in Paralegal and eight for the AAS in Paralegal), they are expected to increase as students progress through the required coursework.

**Sa 1: Paralegal Course Duplicated Enrollments Fall 2009-Fall 2011**

**President’s Advisory Council**

The purpose of the President’s Advisory Council is to create a mutually beneficial relationship between Rio Salado and the business and community leaders who, as advisory council members, serve as advocates of the college. Members share their insights concerning trends, opportunities, collaborative partnerships, and Rio’s strategic initiatives. Council members network with peers, become connected with the College, and increase their awareness of the value of Rio and its programs.

As leaders in the community, **Advisory Council members** share their knowledge and experience, bringing a unique perspective to the President’s Advisory Council, and to the issues concerning Rio Salado College and the role it plays both locally and nationally. Members’ candid thoughts are critical to strengthening the relationships between and among Rio’s diverse business and community constituents and student populations.

Advisory Council 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 related to the College’s strategic priorities, helps identify new opportunities and markets, and provides advice and assistance related to external challenges and political issues.

The Advisory Council meets twice a year. Each meeting agenda includes a College update presented by the President, features a College initiative or partnership program presented by a member of the Rio Executive Team or an Advisory Council Member, and is followed by a focused question and answer discussion.
Meetings include a wide range of topics related to increasing Rio’s ability to meet the educational needs of the communities it serves. Topics have included:

- Rio’s mission to serve diverse communities both locally and nationally
- Rio’s role in the national completion agenda to increase the number of college certificate and degree completers by 5 million by the year 2020
- Rio Salado and national college enrollment trends
- Ways in which Rio can increase capacity while maintaining quality, productivity, and efficiency
- Rio’s innovations to increase access, flexibility, and affordability for students
- Rio’s customized higher education models and learning formats, designed to meet the unique needs of the communities they serve
- The needs of and challenges faced by nontraditional students
- The use of technology to break down barriers and obstacles for students, and to increase certificate and degree completion
- Educational and career pathways to help students achieve educational and career goals
- Rio’s participation in Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded initiatives, including the use of predictive analytics to enhance student success, and online student data mining and analysis projects that will better inform Rio and the national higher education community on trends and best practices for increasing student achievement
- Ways in which Rio can leverage federal and state funding
- Partnerships with the community, business, industry, and government
- Bond-funded capital projects
- Awards, recognitions, and grant funding received

Core Component – 5b
The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

Community Engagement
Non-credit Workforce Development
Rio Salado College fills community needs by providing non-credit workforce development and continuing education opportunities. The Rio Institute of Employee Development provides customized training on a contract basis to the business and industry sector in flexible formats that are designed to meet the specific needs of organizations. In-person programs include Business Culture, Computer Applications, Customer Service, Languages, Leadership, Management and Supervision, among others.

During the past three fiscal years, Rio Salado has delivered 111 customized non-credit classes to 19 different organizations, serving 2,114 non-credit workforce students. Data from surveys conducted after the training sessions were extremely positive, with “above average” and “excellent” combined scores producing Quality Assurance percentages above 83% in all categories, along with an overall satisfaction rating of just under 90%.
### Workforce Development Survey Evaluation Responses (FY2009-FY2011)  
**N=1635**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Quality Assurance Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1: Your understanding of the information as presented in the training?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>1,630</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2: Its relevance to your job function, responsibilities, and interests?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3: Its value in your job function, responsibilities, and interests?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1,625</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4a: The presentation delivery by the instructor?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>1,601</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4b: Engagement, activities, manuals, etc.?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>1,415</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5a: How well did the instructor handle audience questions?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>1,608</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5b: Know the subject matter?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>95.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6: Your overall level of satisfaction with the training?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>1,607</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Crew Member Self Defense Training**

Since 2005, Rio Salado has been a provider of Crew Member Self Defense Training (CMSDT), and has trained hundreds of flight crew members. Administered through the American Association of Community Colleges in partnership with the TSA Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service, the CMSDT program is available to all U.S. carrier crew members at no cost to them.

**Continuing Education**

In addition to in-person programs, a number of customer-focused, non-credit online programs have been developed, to meet the needs of a specific business or industry, through professional development and skills enhancement. Training programs include:

- **Certified Professional in Learning and Performance** (CPLP) Exam Preparation
- Communication Improvement for Law Enforcement Officers. This report-writing class for current officers who need to improve their skills is offered in partnership with the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (AZPOST), who pays the instructor and all associated costs.
• Coronal Polishing for Dental Assistants. This program is offered in partnership with the Arizona Dental Foundation. Proceeds are shared between Rio Salado College and the Foundation.
• Teacher Education Professional Development
• Chemical Dependency Seminars

In Community Surveys of 2010 (N=29) and 2011 (N=11), respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the following statement: “Rio Salado College effectively serves the community through the continuing education opportunities it provides.” In 2010, the Quality Assurance percentage was 85.71%, while in 2011 it was 100%.

RISE Learning for Life
The non-credit programs offered for RISE Learning for Life members at the Rio Salado College Lifelong Learning Center were described in Criterion 4b.

Community Education Computer Classes (in Spanish)
In areas of the Valley with large Latino communities, low-cost classes teaching computer skills in Spanish are highly sought after by members of underserved communities, who need to acquire the technology skills required for employability and for adult basic education. Rio Salado has created several Spanish-language Community Education classes in a classroom-based, non-credit format. These introductory computer classes (teaching the basics of word processing, email, and PowerPoint) are offered in an eight-week format at several community-based locations, with six hours of classroom seat-time per week. Additionally, partnerships with local public libraries, which also serve at-risk populations and teach the same skill sets, have been established.

Adult Basic Education
Rio Salado’s ABE/GED/ELAA non-credit programs were described in detail in Criterion 3b.

Social Sustainability (Pay 30 Forward)
In July 2009, Rio Salado launched Pay 30 Forward to promote social sustainability among the College’s employees. The program honors Rio’s more than 30 years of service to the communities that the College serves, sponsors College-wide volunteer service campaigns, and also encourages all Rio employees to volunteer at least 30 hours in their local communities with activities tied to Learning and Partnering—two of the College’s three core values. Employees have the autonomy to select a volunteer organization that best fits their talents and abilities, and sustainability awards are presented to employees based on the level of their service.

In the inaugural year, Rio’s employees recorded almost 1,500 individual service hours and also conducted numerous College-wide community service campaigns. For example, when the Arizona State Legislature announced devastating K-12 budgets cuts, Rio’s employees responded by organizing a teacher supply drive that provided essential classroom materials for teachers in Title I schools. Rio also raised funds for the purchase of reusable water bottles to be distributed to those in need on extreme heat advisory days.
Rio Salado employees have logged over 4,343 service hours as of fall 2011, receiving bronze, silver, or gold status as appropriate. Also, all qualifying employees receive the College’s Sustainability Icon through the Rewards & Recognition program for their contributions to Social Sustainability.

**Grant Development**
As part of its resource development efforts, Rio Salado has focused within the past two years on applying for grant funding to benefit the College’s programs across the spectrum. Grants awarded by the Arizona Department of Education for the Adult Basic Education program were described in Criterion 3c.

Since summer 2010, the College has been awarded $5,087,287.75 in grants.

**5b 2: Rio Salado College Grant Proposals Funded 7/1/2010-10/31/2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Amount Funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JP Morgan Chase Bank Expansion of ELAA Programming at Golden Gate &amp; Addition of a Central City South Site</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIPSE Grant for East Valley Veterans Education Center</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helios Education Foundation – two proposals submitted:</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Student Scholarships with focus in STEM &amp; Reading</td>
<td>$142,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Arizona’s Model for Systemic Engagement in Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Department of Education: Rio Partnership with the Arizona Department of Education for 2011 Transition to Teaching Grant</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Science Foundation: Planning grant for Science &amp; Math in Arizona Rural Teaching (SMART) Fellows</td>
<td>$68,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Stewart Mott Foundation: Virtual Business Incubator @ Rio</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona Department of Education Transition to Teaching (TTT) Grant for students with RSC degree transferring to University to obtain baccalaureate degree in teacher education</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Science Foundation: Science and Math Innovative Learning Environments (SMILE) for Encore Careers in Education</td>
<td>$1,199,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Department of Labor TAACCCT – RSC is a partner in the National Information, Security, &amp; Geospatial Technology Consortium</td>
<td>$2,772,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona Department of Education – four proposals:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Adult Education Civics Standards Pilot</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (IBEST) Initiative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. College and Career Pathways Pilot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Transforming Education through Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 funded $69,000 Year 2 funded $78,858</td>
<td>$53,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 funded $35,000 Year 2 funded $53,538</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Amount Funded</td>
<td>$5,087,287.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Partner
Rio Salado College was invited to become a partner in initiatives spearheaded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, relating to the national completion agenda and open courseware projects. The College submitted two proposals which were accepted and funded by the Foundation.

Convenings to Address the National Completion Agenda
Rio Salado organized and facilitated two convenings of leaders from high-quality, affordable, and scalable public and non-profit two-and four-year colleges, to identify shared opportunities and challenges related to expanding their impact on the national completion agenda, particularly for low-income young adults. The convenings were held on February 28 and April 29, 2011, respectively, with representatives from 37 institutions in attendance.

- Convening Session One brought innovative, nonprofit, online community college and university thought-leaders with proven successful track records together for the first time, to identify higher education policies, best practices, innovations, barriers, challenges, and opportunities of an online learning approach that will have a significant positive impact on the goals of the national completion agenda.
- Convening Session Two brought emerging online community college and university leaders to share in the learning from Convening Session One, and included interactive collaboration on how to maximize the use of online learning to enhance and improve successful college and university programs by making them highly scalable, cost effective, and high quality.

Open-Source Course Pilot
Rio Salado partnered with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and its consultant, BrandEd, to prototype and test two online/blended courses, Physics 101 and Psychology 101. Using existing, open-source video lectures and other materials, both courses were piloted in the RioLearn Course Management System.

These course development projects were intended to explore the feasibility and scalability of using open-source course materials that are freely available on the Internet to develop high-quality, effective college courses.

Rio Salado received $178,000 in funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to complete these projects, both of which enabled the College to pursue quality-related expansion opportunities.

Institutional Advancement
Rio Salado’s Institutional Advancement (IA) Department handles all aspects of creating and disseminating information about the College to current and prospective students and community stakeholders. The department works to increase enrollments, foster partnerships, and enhance Rio's public image, and encompasses the functions of advertising, graphic design, the College Copy Center, media relations, outreach, recruiting, and Web design and development. IA has a full-service graphics design department responsible for the creation of all design content for the College's publications and website.
The College Website
Because of the Institution’s significant online education profile, the design and organization of the Rio Salado College website are of primary importance. Institutional Advancement is responsible for the creation and management of the website, and this centralized process ensures a consistent “look and feel” and also eliminates redundancy. IA works with personnel from each College department in the design and updating of department-specific pages, and assists process owners in the analyzing of current initiatives and trends, so that the usability and accessibility of each page can be optimized. Additionally, IA focuses on the strategic placement of website information so that students can quickly find the most commonly-sought content. Analytics data, such as reports showing activity for the top 50 pages on the College website for FY 2009-10 and FY 2010-11, are used extensively to determine website usage and trends and to make adjustments as indicated. These data have been evaluated in the context of specific departments in this Self-Study document, primarily in Criterion 3d.

Media Relations
Media Relations disseminates information from and about the College as appropriate. For high profile stories, information is released over Marketwire to alert geo-targeted and topic-targeted media outlets. Extensive video content is highlighted on the RioMedia Channel on YouTube. The College’s weekly online employee newsletter, The Wave, is managed by Media Relations and provides information to College employees, the Chancellor, Governing Board members, and the President’s Advisory Council. Archived issues of “The Wave” and its predecessor, the President’s Bulletin, are posted on the newsletter website.

Evaluation
In addition to website analytics, Institutional Advancement uses a variety of mechanisms and sources to evaluate its effectiveness from a student recruitment perspective, such as public relations data banks, tracking of advertising, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools. The Outreach Center campaigns, which are housed in Institutional Advancement, were described in Criterion 2a.

Institutional Advancement also outsources marketing research tools and companies for further effectiveness review. For example, Media Relations results are tracked through metrics provided by BurrellesLuce and Marketwire, who provide data regarding website pageviews and the outlets that distribute the information.

Rio Salado has a considerable Social Media presence. During 2011, Rio’s Facebook fan base has increased by 58%, and active users have increased by more than 900%. YouTube views increased by 265%, and page views on the RioNews blog have steadily increased by 283% from 3,000 in January to 8,500 in August. The exhibit below shows the extent and scope of Institutional Advancement promotional efforts for FY 2010-11:
Institutional Advancement also measures its performance according to the College-wide Service Standards of Accuracy, Consistency, and Timeliness, as described in Criterion 2c.

Core Component – 5c
The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Business, Industry, and Government Partnerships
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.
Rio Salado entered into its first ESP in 1990, with the intention of developing a long-range partnership focused upon meeting the specific educational and training needs of a major employer within the community, on a continuing basis. This partnership, with America West Airlines (now US Airways) has endured for over two decades and served as a pilot program that evolved into an effective model for the many partnerships that followed. The employer defines the need and the critical elements of the program. Following extensive need-based conversation and exploration, the College then builds the program and offers academic courses which round out the student’s educational experience.

In order to qualify as a potential candidate for an Educational Service Partnership with Rio Salado College, the training provided by a corporation or governmental agency must meet the following eight criteria:

- **Body of Knowledge**: Training that has sufficient breadth and depth to develop a new skill or prepare for a higher position in the organization.
- **Program Based**: Training that has sufficient potential to become a new credit-based degree or certificate program, or training that can be incorporated into the requirements of an existing program.
- **Professional Quality**: The training must have several characteristics related to the academic quality criteria: professional curriculum design, college-level breadth and depth of content, assessment of learning outcomes, and professional instruction.
- **Assessment**: Access must be provided to all curriculum and course materials including texts, handouts, and instructor aids for purposes of determining their acceptability for college credit.
- **Substantial**: A training program must exhibit a need demonstrated by substantial existing enrollment, or documentable potential based on growth trends in the industry.
- **Continuing**: A training program must have a demonstrated or documentable potential for continued enrollment.
- **Resource Efficiency**: Training programs must have both qualified adjunct faculty and instructional facilities in place, and be supported by the organization. Adjunct faculty are required to meet all MCCCD hiring criteria.
- **Adherence to Policy**: The organization must agree to follow all applicable policies and procedures of the College and the Maricopa County Community College District related to the delivery of credit instruction.

Employees earning college credit through ESPs can also apply those credits towards a certificate or degree in a variety of areas. Rio currently has 29 Certificates of Completion that are restricted to students employed within specific industries and professions through Educational Service Partnerships. The following degrees are available for employees of Educational Partners:

- Organizational Management
- Public Administration
- General Business (With Faculty Chair Approval)
- Quality Customer Service
- Airline Operations (Exclusive to Airline Partners)
- Broadband Telecommunications (Exclusive to Cox Communications)
- Emergency Response & Operations (Exclusive to Mesa Fire Academy)
The College also provides online degree pathways where credit earned in the workplace may be applicable to other degree programs offered.

As indicated in Criterion 4b, the number of Certificates of Completion awarded has declined in recent years because of the correlation of ESP enrollment with ebbs and flows in the state of the economy and workforce hiring. At this time, employers in the State of Arizona are hiring far less often than before the current economic downturn, and organizations are less able to invest in contract training. However, as demonstrated in Criterion 4b, Rio Salado remains at the forefront of certificate completion nationally.

In surveys of partners conducted in spring 2010 (N=52) and spring 2011 (N=51), the statement “Rio Salado College effectively customizes Partnership education and training for employees” elicited 90.48% and 88.37% agreement/strong agreement respectively from respondents, indicating a high degree of Quality Assurance.

Community Partners
Rio Salado is responsive in working with local communities to provide programming in high-need areas. The following locations are examples of this practice, with each tailored to meet the specific needs of an underserved population.

Ann Ott Adult Learning Center
The Rio Salado College Ann Ott Adult Learning Center is located in South Phoenix and features basic education classes that provide community members with opportunities to earn their General Education Diploma (GED) and improve their English skills. The center offers ABE, GED, and ELAA classes.

East Valley Veterans Education Center (EVVEC)
As mentioned in Criterion 3d, Rio Salado hosts the East Valley Veterans Education Center, which opened in 2011 and is a partnership between the College, four MCCCD sister colleges, and a number of community partners. The Center enables veterans and their families to access all college services needed to enroll and succeed in higher education, while utilizing veteran's benefits, including those provided by the Post-9/11 GI-Bill.

EVVEC offers the following services for veterans and their families:

- Information on veterans’ benefits and services
- Needs assessment (referral to appropriate community resources)
- Career exploration
- Counseling
- Academic advising: short term training, degree, and certificate programs
- Academic assessment, enrollment, and registration
- Transfer from community college to university
- Remediation (GED, ELAA, Basic Skills)
- Financial aid
- Campus tours and orientation
- Success Strategy workshops
- Program evaluation and assessment
Rio Salado was recognized as a **2012 Military Friendly School** by G.I. Jobs Magazine in October 2011, the third consecutive year for such recognition. Student veterans participated in the survey for the first time, and Rio is noted as a student-veteran-rated school. Rio has nearly 2,600 active military service members and over 2,500 veterans, representing all five service branches, enrolled at the College.

**Rio Salado College Downtown**

Rio Salado's Downtown facility, which will incorporate sustainable (“green”) initiatives with Adult Basic Education opportunities under the slogan “Sustaining Learning,” is currently in the process of phased development. The first phase, slated to open in January 2012, will house ABE/ELAA programming, including basic skills, GED preparation, and English language acquisition. For the second phase, the intent is to provide post-secondary curriculum and training opportunities in the areas of sustainability and green technology.

Two schoolhouse buildings are slated for donation by the nonprofit organization Brighten a Life. Discussions are underway with the Phoenix Union High School District whereby students in grades 11 and 12 will have the opportunity to learn a sustainability curriculum to be taught in the schoolhouses. The third phase incorporates remodeling of the existing south building to establish a green learning laboratory, which would provide post-secondary training focused on green jobs, alternative energy, and coursework in Rio Salado's Sustainable Food Systems Program.

Once fully developed, Rio Downtown will address specific community needs for Adult Basic Education, high school, postsecondary, and special interest educational and support services, as well as green workforce training.

**Rio@Northern**

Rio Salado's Northern location, opened in November 2011, was described in Criterion 3c. The facility fills a specific community need in providing large numbers of underprepared students with ABE/GED/ELAA classes, as well as a closed Dental Assisting Technology program in partnership with WestMEC. Student Services include advisement, counseling, computer lab, and library services.

**Youth Media**

As referenced in Criterion 1b, Rio Salado and KJZZ 91.5 FM, the College's public radio station, are collaborating to launch a new after-school program designed to train and mentor students aged 14-24 in digital media skills. Called SPOT 127.0.0.1—Internet code for “home”—the program will be located at a former Phoenix Union High School District facility in west-central Phoenix. The 12,000 square-foot center is already wired for digital interfaces, and has ample space for students to work on and showcase their multimedia productions. SPOT 127 is scheduled to open its doors in the first quarter of 2012, with the goal of working with up to 60 students in its inaugural year. To enroll in the program, students will be required to have or be working toward attaining a high school diploma or GED certificate, and they will need to commit to SPOT 127 program requirements. After completing the core curriculum, students will become specialists in a specific skill area and will assist with mentoring incoming students in that skill set. Rio faculty and staff will also provide curriculum development support to help
train students in all aspects of digital media production. Additional support for SPOT 127 will be provided by the Carstens Family Fund, Friends of Public Radio Arizona, Electrolux, FITCH, and the Phoenix Union High School District.

More information about KJZZ is provided in Criterion 5d.

**Incarcerated Programs**

Since 1983, Rio Salado College has provided educational services to Arizona’s incarcerated population in partnership with the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC). Educational programs are designed to provide skills training in high-demand occupations that promote employability upon release. On-site classes are offered at Arizona State Prison Complex-Perryville and Arizona State Prison Complex-Lewis, and include the following:

- Automotive Technology
- Computer Technology
- Carpentry
- Electrical
- Graphic Arts
- Horticulture
- Furniture Construction/Refinishing
- Landscape Technology
- Workforce Development + Community Re-Entry

To complement this coursework, Rio Salado trains students who may then be placed in jobs through the Arizona Department of Corrections. 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 incarcerated re-entry program provides the inmate population with access to distance learning classes in print-based or mixed media formats that provide an opportunity for earning college credit, which may lead to Certificates of Completion and the opportunity to earn a degree.

Rio Salado personnel meet periodically with the Education Administrator for the ADC to discuss and review services offered, in order to ensure that the specific needs of this partner and the community are being met.

**Luke Air Force Base**

Rio Salado has been a long-time partner with Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Arizona, and offers in-person classes for military personnel at the installation. Access to the location is restricted to Department of Defense-affiliated individuals and U.S. citizens who have been issued individual base-access passes. Classes are offered through an accelerated eight-week format, and the College also has a Testing Center on site. Customized library services are provided by Rio’s Reference and Instruction Librarian, who teaches in-person library instruction and an orientation to the College’s online library resources to all ENG102 classes, and others upon instructor request.
Rio Salado personnel meet periodically with the Education Services Officer at the Base to discuss and review services offered, in order to ensure that needs of this partner and the community are being met.

Dual Enrollment

Dual Enrollment provides the opportunity for able and ambitious high school students to earn college and high school credit simultaneously, providing access to college-level general education classes for university transfer and/or classes for workforce development. Almost every respondent to the 2011 annual Dual Enrollment Survey (98.66%) indicated that they planned on attending college after graduation.

Rio Salado established its Dual Enrollment program in 1987, and through spring 2011, had the largest Dual Enrollment program in the State of Arizona, with a comprehensive infrastructure in place to support it. This infrastructure includes a Site Coordinator assigned to each partnering high school who supplies information regarding the dual classes via the College website, brochures, newsletters, face-to-face meetings, classroom visits, and parent nights. The Site Coordinator meets regularly with a designated dual liaison at each high school to collect registration paperwork, disseminate information, resolve student issues, and discuss potential new Dual courses and instructors. Additionally, students have access to services such as advising and tutoring, and a comprehensive program of in-person library instruction is in place, whereby the College’s Reference and Instruction Librarian visits each Dual Enrollment ENG101 class to provide an orientation and research instruction session. Eighty-three library instruction sessions were provided to 2,156 dual enrollment students in FY 2010-11. The Rio Salado Dual Enrollment office maintains a telephone hotline that students, parents, and high school staff members can call whenever they have 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.

Rio Salado’s Dual Enrollment instructors are comprehensively supported by the Faculty Chairs of the relevant disciplines. The College follows the identical model for evaluating and mentoring Dual Enrollment faculty as for adjunct faculty. Dual faculty are evaluated during their first three semesters of teaching (one of the three can be a student evaluation), and thereafter as appropriate. Most departments hold workshops for Dual instructors at least once or twice a year. In addition, Faculty Chairs review syllabi for dual enrollment classes, ensuring that they meet the required standards, and approve the textbooks used.

Dual instructors are invited to attend the biannual All-Faculty Learning Experiences, and many do so. In 2010, an annual Dual Enrollment Conference was instituted for Dual Enrollment faculty across all disciplines. The 2010 and 2011 events featured a keynote by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and breakout sessions of interest by discipline and/or pertinent to teaching and learning topics. The events were well attended, with 70 Dual instructors attending the inaugural conference in 2010, and 116 in 2011.

In May 2011, the Maricopa Community College District began the implementation of a new model for dual enrollment. The goal of this initiative was to better serve partnering high
schools across all school districts with a systemic and more efficient approach to service, and to streamline dual enrollment processes and procedures. The most significant change was that a designated coordinating college was named for each partner high school, with a second college named as the supporting college for supplemental services as necessary. The 10 Maricopa Community Colleges all signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Dual Enrollment, which clearly defined service standards and responsibilities.

Under this new arrangement, Rio Salado College lost almost 40% of its enrollment. The College still remains the coordinating college for the Tempe Union High School District, Paradise Valley Unified School District, Dysart Unified School District, and the Deer Valley Unified School District, with some charter and private schools included.

In the face of this significant enrollment loss, Rio Salado is exploring opportunities within the new paradigm. As the coordinating college for the districts listed above, the College has the ability to greatly expand dual enrollment opportunities and increase the amount of time spent at each of its partnering high schools. As more and more students realize the benefits of taking college classes while still in high school, early college opportunities are also increasing. During the past year, the College piloted a concurrent mentor model, which allows students to take Rio's online classes at the high school. This model seems to be well-positioned for expansion. Also, Rio Salado has made plans to increase the number of dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment classes available to students in the Tempe Union High School District, which would allow them to complete an associate degree while still in high school.

**Evaluation**

Dual Enrollment students are surveyed each year to assess their experiences in the Dual Enrollment program, as well as their future academic plans. The results from the October 2011 survey (N=422) indicate that the Dual Enrollment program is considered appropriately rigorous, and allows students opportunities to grow and to be positioned for success in their planned future higher education endeavors. Significant findings were as follows:

- More than four-fifths of respondents (82.63%) agreed or strongly agreed that their instructor’s expectations were higher in their Dual Enrollment class [than in their other high school classes].
- Over four-fifths of the students (82.01%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “As a result of my Dual Enrollment experience, I am confident that I am prepared for my future college experience.”
- Over three-quarters of the students (79.68%) agreed or strongly agreed that the assignments were comprehensive in Dual Enrollment classes.
- In response to a question as to whether they would recommend Dual Enrollment to their friends, 93.73% of students indicated that they would.

In addition to this annual survey, a Five-Year Post-Dual Enrollment Student Survey is conducted each year, and the results provide overwhelming evidence of the efficacy of this program. In the most recent survey (October, 2009, N=369), the following data were reported:

- Number of students who had earned nine or more college credits through dual enrollment: 49.5%
- Number of students who had earned 25 or more college credits through dual enrollment: 14.3%
- Number of students who had earned bachelor’s degrees: 65.7%
- Number of students who were attending graduate school: 31.9%
- Number of students who had successfully transferred their dual enrollment credits: 96.1%
- Number of students who agreed that taking dual enrollment courses better prepared them academically for college: 70.1%
- Almost 100% (99.8%) would recommend dual enrollment to current high school students.

As described in Criterion 1e and Criterion 4c, Rio Salado has the only National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP)-accredited Dual Enrollment Program in the State of Arizona. After being the first program nationwide to be originally accredited by NACEP, Rio Salado helped to pilot the new accreditation standards during its recent reaccreditation, and is one of four programs in the country to be accredited under the new standards.

**New York Times Knowledge Network Partnership**

Rio Salado College’s state-approved Teacher Preparation Program is the fifth largest producer of certified teachers in the state of Arizona. The program began a little over a decade ago and was the genesis for bringing post-baccalaureate teacher certification programs to a community college level in the state. In an effort to ensure that pre-service teacher candidates maintain their edge in the classroom with the most up-to-date information about teaching strategies, resources, and technology integration for the 21st century, the program entered into a partnership with the New York Times Knowledge Network in 2011. The partnership between the two organizations has blended Rio Salado’s course registration system and assessment program with the New York Times-owned Epsilen learning environment, integrating a seamless interaction between the two programs for student use. The model allows Rio students to continue operating within their established learning platform, with the added benefits of access to additional resources and collaboration with other communities of learners.

The **Rio Salado College/New York Times Knowledge Network consortial agreement application** was submitted to and approved by the Higher Learning Commission in 2011.

**Transfer and University Articulation**

The Maricopa Community College District’s transfer and articulation agreements were covered in detail in Criterion 4c.

**Core Component – 5d**

Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

**Division of Public Service**

Rio Salado College’s Division of Public Service provides local, national and international news, information, and culturally-enriching programming for the citizens of Maricopa County. The Division includes three radio stations and a television station.
KJZZ 91.5FM
KJZZ 91.5FM is a listener-supported public radio station featuring a mix of local, national and international news, jazz, and blues. As mentioned in Criterion 1b, KJZZ co-leads (with KPBS San Diego) Fronteras: the Changing America Desk, a multimedia collaboration among seven public radio stations funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as part of its Local Journalism Center initiative. The mandate of Fronteras is to broadcast and publish stories from throughout the Southwest that “go beyond breaking news and the sensational to find the people and stories that are real, relevant and alive.”

Arbitron ratings data show that from January-September 2011, KJZZ broadcast to 140,400 listeners every day and to 297,900 listeners every week. Over that same period, KJZZ distributed its signal via streaming to computers and mobile devices an average of 130,000 hours per month. In an August 2010 survey of listeners randomly selected from the Division’s email list (N=2,020), 98.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “KJZZ 91.5FM is an effective community service.”

KBAQ 89.5FM
KBAQ 89.5FM is a public radio station that broadcasts classical music and arts information 24 hours per day. Arbitron ratings data show that through the first nine months of 2011 (January-September) KBAQ broadcast to 54,900 listeners every day, and to 156,400 listeners every week. Over that same period, KBAQ distributed its signal via streaming to computers and mobile devices an average of 124,000 hours per month.

In an August 2010 survey of listeners randomly selected from the Division’s email list (N=533), 96.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “KBAQ 89.5FM is an effective community service.”

KJZZ and KBAQ pledge drives are held periodically throughout the year, and generate nearly $3 million annually in listener contributions, along with an additional $2.3 million in corporate underwriting support.

Sun Sounds of Arizona
Sun Sounds is a reading service that provides no-fee audio information access for listeners who are unable to read printed material because of a disability in a number of different delivery formats. The service is available via a “conditional access” radio signal directed to registered listeners throughout the State of Arizona. The service is also available via the Web, telephone, podcast, and in selected hospitals and assisted living facilities. Sun Sounds currently has 49,000 registered listeners. This service enables community members who have lost their ability to read an opportunity for continued access printed matter such as books, daily newspapers, popular magazines, and even grocery ads, thereby reducing the sense of isolation that the loss of sight can bring. College employees are actively involved as volunteers, assisting the Division with on-air reading of print materials. Currently, nearly 500 members of the local community volunteer annually to support the work of Sun Sounds in both programming and fundraising.

In an August 2010 survey of Sun Sounds volunteers (N=137), 92.9% of respondents agreed with the statement “Sun Sounds of Arizona is an effective community service providing lifelong learning and access to information to Arizona’s blind and otherwise print impaired people.”
Maricopa Colleges Television (MCTV)

MCTV, the primary television media outlet for MCCCD, is a digital channel made available through a partnership between MCCCD and Cox Communications, the local cable television provider. MCTV is accessible to over 500,000 households in Maricopa County who currently subscribe to Cox Digital TV. Programming includes news and events about the Maricopa Community Colleges.

The Division of Public Service garners information from and about its constituents as a strategic component in its program planning process. The systems used to obtain this information include:

- **Public Relations** - Constituents contact the Division's public relations personnel to ask questions and to voice concerns about community issues. This public contact is logged and periodically reviewed by management. Trends are identified, and appropriate measures are taken as necessary to better serve these constituents.

- **Third Party Audience Ratings Services** - The Division purchases audience research data from Arbitron (as indicated above), the Radio Research Consortium, AudiGraphics, and the Nielsen Company. These data allow the Division to identify audience trends, strategic opportunities for enhanced audience service, audience demographics, and opportunities for audience growth and development.

The Division employs a full-time Director of Audience Research to conduct analysis of audience research data. This department, combined with the Division's Public Relations staff, has the capacity to analyze any audience research metric and to identify opportunities for audience engagement. The Division's Development staff then works with key Division staff members to engage the audience through correspondence, discussion, electronic communication, and small group meetings held at various locations throughout the Division's service areas, primarily at public events and private receptions hosted by listeners and supporters. Programming is tailored, adjusted, and placed on a broadcast schedule in order to achieve the highest level of audience acceptance possible.

**Sponsorship of Community Events**

Another means whereby Rio Salado responds to its constituencies is by sponsoring and co-sponsoring special events hosted by organizations that share a common goal with the College, or depend on it for service. College personnel representing the many programs and services offered at Rio Salado College locations throughout the Valley attend these special events that regionally target the communities they serve, e.g., the West Valley, the City of Phoenix, the City of Tempe, or the East Valley. Other events might include constituencies mutually served by the host organization and Rio, such as business and industry, veterans, high school students, incarcerated re-entry, low-income, and minority populations. Additionally, when the event program relates to the College mission and provides educational opportunities for College employees and/or students, Rio co-sponsors events at the College's Conference Center in partnership with such organizations as the Tempe Chamber of Commerce, the East Valley Think Tank, and the East Valley Partnership (business, education, and community leaders from the cities of Tempe, Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert, and Queen Creek).
Rio’s participation in special events is coordinated by the President’s Office to ensure that sponsorships and co-sponsorships with the Maricopa College District, sister colleges, and external organizations align with the College’s mission, and that invitees include an appropriate blend of internal Rio staff and external constituents. Frequently, Rio representatives serve on Boards of Directors or as members of the external organization and, reciprocally, representatives of the external organization serve as members of Rio’s program advisory committees (discussed in Criterion 4c), or the President’s Advisory Council (discussed above in Criterion 5a).

The College has spent just over $100,000 on community sponsorships in the past three years, as follows:

- **FY 2009-10:** $21,590.00
- **FY 2010-11:** $34,900.00
- **FY 2011-12:** $45,100.00 (to date)

**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. For example, the Conference Center at Rio Tempe, in addition to being used frequently by the MCCCDD District Office and sister colleges for large events, has also hosted citizenship swearing-in ceremonies for new U.S. citizens, hosted by the Department of Homeland Security. The Community Room at the Communiversity@Surprise is used extensively for local community events, which in 2010-2011 included the AARP, the City of Surprise, the Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce, the West Valley Arts Council, and others. Rio@Avondale has hosted the Girl Scouts, Westside Head Start, City of Avondale, Southwest Chamber of Commerce, and Maricopa County Elections Commission. As mentioned in Criterion 4b, the Rio Salado College Lifelong Learning Center hosts the RISE Learning for Life community organization.

**Evidence of Value to the Community**

**Partner Surveys**

In addition to the evidence of value embedded within the narrative of this Criterion, surveys of partners conducted in spring 2010 (N=52) and spring 2011 (N=51) indicate that Rio Salado’s partnering practices within the community are considered effective and are highly valued, as the following examples demonstrate. All percentages indicate agree/strongly agree responses:

- “Rio Salado College looks for opportunities to collaborate with external organizations to address the educational needs of the community.”
  - 2011=95.92%; 2010=93.88%
- “Rio Salado College demonstrates a dedication to shared educational, economic, and social goals with its Partners.”
  - 2011=95.74%; 2010=91.84%
- “Rio Salado College provides valuable services to meet Partnership needs through education.”
  - 2011=91.84%; 2010=88.24%
- “Rio Salado College effectively positions its Locations/Centers in areas that meet Partner needs.”
  - 2011=93.48%; 2010=85%
“Rio Salado College's programs and services offered at Locations/Centers are aligned to meet Partner needs.”
  2011=88.10%; 2010=93.02%

“Rio Salado College is responsive to our needs as an Educational Partner.”
  2011=94%; 2010=85.42%

With a Quality Assurance Target set at 80%, all statements on the entire 2011 survey garnered an agree/strongly agree response rate of above 88%.

Community Surveys
Community member surveys in spring 2010 (N=29) and spring 2011 (N=11) indicate that Rio Salado is succeeding in its efforts to promote an atmosphere of community inclusiveness and responsiveness by engaging external constituencies. The following statements elicited agree/strongly agree responses that were mostly well above the 80% Quality Assurance target.

• “Rio Salado College looks for opportunities to collaborate with external organizations to address the educational needs of the community.”
  2011=100%; 2010=92.59%

• “Rio Salado College demonstrates a dedication to shared educational, economic, and social goals with its community.”
  2011=100%; 2010=89.66%

• “Rio Salado College provides valuable services to meet community needs through education.”
  2011=100%; 2010=93.10%

• “Rio Salado College is adapting to the changing needs of a diverse population for education, public service, and community outreach.”
  2011=88.89%; 2010=79.17%

• “External community groups utilize Rio Salado College facilities and create opportunities for student/staff participation and interaction.”
  2011=71.43%; 2010=85.72%

• “Rio Salado College effectively positions its Locations/Centers in areas that meet community needs.”
  2011=100%; 2010=88.89%

• “Rio Salado College's programs and services offered at Locations/Centers are aligned to meet community needs.”
  2011=85.71%; 2010=84.61%

Evaluative Summary
Strengths (Q.A.):
• Rio Salado has leveraged community resources to partner in the building of additional locations that serve the needs of local populations, such as the Communiversity@Surprise, and the East Valley Veterans Education Center.
• The College has been awarded over $5 million in grant funding within the past 18 months.
• The College's award-winning radio stations continue to provide news and information services to an increasingly wide and diverse audience.
• Rio Salado has the only NACEP-accredited dual enrollment program in the State of Arizona, and just went through a successful NACEP reaccreditation process.
• The Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Preparation program has attracted a national partner in the New York Times Knowledge Network.

Challenges (R.I.):
• Rio Salado College will need to strengthen and build new and existing Dual Enrollment partnerships, in keeping with the revised alignment model established by the MCCCD.
• With the College's ever-increasing national profile, Rio Salado will need to strategically assess partnership opportunities, and grow incrementally in keeping with its mission.

Planning for the Future:
• Rio Salado will continue to develop a systemic infrastructure for maximizing the development of grant revenues.
• The College will continue to explore new partnerships and programs in keeping with its mission.
• Rio Salado will continue to reach out to nontraditional learners to provide accessible, convenient, and flexible learning opportunities.

Conclusion
This Self-Study document represents a point-in-time snapshot of what many consider to be a remarkable institution. Innovation and Improvement, the hallmarks of Rio Salado College, are by their very nature, relentless and ongoing. The evidence within each Criterion amply demonstrate the themes of the Self-Study, and the achievement of its goals. The Planning Team believes that this Self-Study document more than validates that the College meets the Criteria for reaffirmation of accreditation. Rio Salado College eagerly anticipates sharing the enthusiasm and pervasiveness of its dynamic culture, and “telling our story” to the Visiting Team on March 5-7, 2012.
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