Rio Salado College
Self-Study Plan
Spring 2011 Update

Table of Contents

Preface: Letter from the Rio Salado College Self-Study Planning Committee to College Faculty, Staff, and Students .............................................1

Mission and Purposes ....................................................................................................2

Purpose and Goals of the Rio Salado College Self-Study in Preparation for the 2011-2012 Accreditation Visit .........................................................3

The Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle for Continuous Improvement ................................4

Committee Roles and Responsibilities ....................................................................5

Committee Structure .....................................................................................................6

Calendar of Events ..........................................................................................................8

Communication Plan .....................................................................................................9

Addressing of 2002 HLC Team References to Evidence Needing Strengthening .......................................................... 10

Preliminary Outline of the Rio Salado College Self-Study Report .............. 11,12
Preface

Dear Rio Salado College Faculty, Staff, Partners and Students:

Rio Salado College is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, a commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC). The accreditation process has two purposes: 1) quality assurance as evidenced by how the College accomplishes its mission and purposes and 2) institutional and program improvement which aligns with Rio Salado College’s culture of relentless improvement, one of our Core Organizational Values. As such, the Self-Study process for accreditation is an opportunity to formally evaluate our students’ learning outcomes, the services we provide, the work that we do, and how we use these data to improve the College.

Rio Salado College’s next comprehensive evaluation takes place during the 2011-2012 academic year. This Self-Study Plan moves our ongoing relentless improvement processes to a more formal stage in order to maximize the benefits from the time and resources that we devote to the process. The outcome will be a Self-Study Report that will be submitted to HLC in January, 2012. We will share the results of this Self-Study Report publicly with our stakeholders, including students, adjunct faculty, partners and communities, in the spirit of transparency and accountability.

Wide involvement in the Self-Study Process is the Rio Way, and very important to the College. Therefore, we ask for your engagement and participation by: 1) reading this Self-Study Plan and other executive summaries of work being done, 2) reading more extensive reports in areas of interest to you, 3) participating in committees where needed, 4) completing surveys as directed, and 5) providing your commentary and insights along the way. We want to hear from you because your feedback will help ensure that we are successfully accomplishing our Self-Study goals.

Sincerely,

The Rio Salado College Self-Study Planning Committee

- Chris Bustamante, College President
- Vernon Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs
- Hazel Davis, Faculty Chair, Library Services
- Sharon Koberna, Dean of Administrative and Employee Services
- Nicole Albo, Associate Dean of Instruction and Institutional Integrity
- Jennifer Shantz, Faculty Chair, Curriculum
- Genevieve Winters, Director of Research Planning & Development
Mission and Purposes

Mission Statement
Rio Salado College transforms the learning experience through: Choice, Access and Flexibility; Customized, High Quality Learning Design; Personalized Service and Organizational Responsiveness.

Purposes
Serving our local, national, and international communities through online learning and collaborative partnerships, we provide:

1. General education and courses for university transfer.
2. Programs for workforce development in business, industry and government.
3. Adult basic education.
4. Comprehensive student services.
5. Cultural enrichment and community service.
6. Continuing education and lifetime learning opportunities.
Purpose and Goals of the Rio Salado College Self-Study

Why is Rio Salado College working on a Self-Study?

The purpose of the Rio Salado College Self-Study is for the institution to formally examine itself and assess its strengths and challenges in accomplishing its mission. Therefore, the Self-Study Process is based on the College's foundation of continuous improvement. This foundation is not simply implied in the culture, but is institutionalized in the College's Core Values which include the words “Relentless Improvement.”

What will this Self-Study accomplish?

Through an evaluative self-study and ongoing quality assurance efforts, Rio Salado College will increase:

- Student Learning
- Efficiency and Effectiveness of Programs
- Student and Partner Success
- Involvement of Key Stakeholders

Based on Rio's culture of relentless improvement, the final accreditation report will document our current successes and future opportunities for change.

The measurable outcomes of the Self-Study are as follows:

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 our next accreditation cycle.
The Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle for Continuous Improvement

How will the College proceed in the Self-Study Process?

The Individual Criterion Committees will meet these goals by using the philosophy of continuous improvement, and following the steps in the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Cycle. Each committee will discuss its individual Criterion and patterns of evidence, work with Institutional Research to implement surveys and other data collection methodologies, analyze the data, discuss improvements with the process owners, and give feedback to the rest of the organization.
Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Self-Study Co-Chairs
Vernon C. Smith, Chief Academic Officer
Hazel Davis, Faculty Chair

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 of Academic Affairs
Hazel Davis, Faculty Chair
Genevieve Winters, Director of Research Planning & Development
Jennifer Shantz, Faculty Chair
Sharon Koberna, Dean of Administrative and Employee Services
Nicole Albo, Associate Dean of Instruction & Institutional Integrity

Roles:
• to develop the Self-Study timeline
• to assist with and provide a Systems view of the findings of the Self-Study Process
• 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
Criterion Chairs

CRITERION 1
Chris Bustamante, College President
Angela Felix, Faculty Chair
Sharon Koberna, Dean

CRITERION 2
Todd Simmons, Vice President
Dana Reid, Dean
Kerrie Specker, Faculty Chair

CRITERION 3
Pat Case, Faculty Chair
Jo Jorgenson, Dean
Kishia Brock, Vice President

CRITERION 4
Rick Kemp, Dean
Kirk Bowden, Faculty Chair
John Jensen, Faculty Chair

CRITERION 5
Edward Kelty, Vice President
Ron Burns, Faculty Chair
Melanie Abts, Faculty Chair

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
Committee Structure

Self-Study Co-Chairs

Self-Study Planning Committee

Self-Study Steering Committee

Criterion I

Criterion II

Criterion III

Criterion IV

Criterion V

All Employees, Adjunct Faculty, Students

Partners and Communities
## Calendar Of Self-Study Work

### MAY 2008 - AUGUST 2008
- Conduct initial College HLC Steering Committee meeting 5/1/08
- Conduct Self-Study Planning Committee meetings
- Form Criterion Committees
- Complete 2007-08 Student Learning Outcomes Executive Summary Report and distribute to Adjunct Faculty
- Conduct 10th Fall All Faculty Assessment and Learning Experience

### SEPTEMBER 2008 - MAY 2009
- Conduct Planning Committee meetings
- Review 2002 Self-Study documents
- Conduct meetings of Criterion Committees to discuss Core Competencies and Patterns of Evidence
- Conduct Self-Study Planning Committee meetings
- Review 2002 Self-Study documents
- Conduct Self-Study Planning Committee meetings
- Conduct Planning Committee meetings

### JUNE 2009 - AUGUST 2009
- Conduct Self-Study Planning Committee meetings
- Conduct 11th Fall All Faculty Assessment and Learning Experience
- Complete 2008-09 Student Learning Outcomes Executive Summary Report and distribute to Adjunct Faculty

### SEPTEMBER 2009 - MAY 2010
- Conduct Self-Study Planning Committee meetings, Steering Team meetings and Criterion Committee meetings
- Conduct HLC Steering Team meetings (9/14/09, 9/29/09, 10/13/09, 11/10/09, 12/8/09, etc.)
- Share Self-Study Plan at College Wide Meetings on 10/27/09
- Conduct monthly Learning Assessment Team meetings
- Conduct scheduled Program Review work

### JUNE 2010 - AUGUST 2010
- Conduct Self-Study Planning Committee meetings
- Criterion Committees draft outlines of Criterion chapters based on quality assurance and improvement work to date
- Complete 2009 – 10 Student Learning Outcomes Executive Summary Report and distribute to Adjunct Faculty
- Conduct 12th Fall All Faculty Assessment and Learning Experience and share Self-Study update

### SEPTEMBER 2010 - MAY 2011
- Conduct Self-Study Planning Committee meetings, Steering Team meetings and Criterion Committee meetings
- Share Self-Study Update at College Wide Meetings in October 2010
- Conduct monthly Learning Assessment Team meetings
- Conduct scheduled Program Review work
- Conduct HLC liaison visit with Dr. Karen Solomon, January 20 - 21

### JUNE 2011 - AUGUST 2011
- Compile first draft of Self-Study Report
- Complete 2010-11 Student Learning Outcomes Executive Summary Report and distribute to Adjunct Faculty
- Conduct 13th Fall All Faculty Assessment and Learning Experience
- Circulate and receive feedback on draft Self-Study Report
- Integrate feedback into chapters and update data collection

### SEPTEMBER 2011 - MAY 2012 AND BEYOND
- Complete final Self-Study Report
- Distribute Self-Study Report to Rio Salado College staff and community
- Submit Self-Study Report to HLC. Build the Resource Room
- March 2012 Host HLC Evaluation visit
- July 1, 2012 Begin year 1 of Accreditation process
- Submit AIDU documentation annually

Share Self-Study Plan at All Faculty Learning Experience, January 2010
Share Self-Study Update at College Wide Meetings in October 2010
Share Self-Study Update at All Faculty Learning Experience, January 2011
Attend Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference, April 2011
Communication Plan

**Goal:** To create awareness and provide continuing communication with College employees and the College community regarding the Self-Study Process.

**Rationale:** Communication with College employees and the College community is an essential characteristic of the Self-Study Process. Each of the steps in the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle depends on input, feedback, and a good flow of information. Therefore, there will be clearly-identified opportunities for participation of stakeholders.

**Stakeholders include:**
- College employees
  - Full-time
  - Part-time
  - Adjunct Faculty
- Educational and Community Partners
- Students
- The Governing Board
- The Higher Learning Commission

Numerous activities will be targeted towards these specific groups and a detailed Communication Plan can be viewed at the Self-Study SharePoint site. Some examples of planned communication activities are:
- All Self-Study materials disseminated will use the designated Rio Self-Study logo and format for recognition and visibility
- An Executive Summary of the Self-Study Plan will be distributed in Fall 2009
- The Rio Salado College Self-Study Executive Summary and Self-Study Plan will be provided as links on the College portal
- The Self-Study “Kickoff” for Staff will be part of the College-Wide meeting on October 27, 2009, and regular updates will be provided at all College-Wide meetings thereafter
- A Self-Study update for Adjunct Faculty will be a focus of the January 2010 All-Faculty Meeting, and regular updates will be provided at the All-Faculty meetings thereafter
- A series of Self-Study workshops will be offered to all employees
- The annual Student Learning Outcomes Report will be distributed each Fall
- The Self-Study Co-Chairs will give updates to the College Executive Council
- The College President will give updates to the President’s Advisory Council
- The Criterion Co-Chairs and Institutional Research staff will conduct surveys and focus groups as appropriate
- Rio Salado College employees will have opportunities for input and will receive updated information via the weekly President’s Bulletins and the College Employee Portal
- The HLC Staff Liaison will receive a copy of the Self-Study Plan for review and feedback, and the Plan will be updated based on feedback received
- The Vice-President of Academic Affairs will provide a monthly update via email to the HLC Staff Liaison, beginning in August 2010
- Public notice of the Self-Study Process will be posted in multiple formats
- The College President will give regular updates to the Governing Board at Governing Board meetings
Addressing of 2002 HLC Evaluation Team’s References to Evidence Needing Strengthening

In 2002, the HLC Evaluation Team listed seven strengths and no concerns. There were ten references to evidence that needed strengthening. The College has grown and evolved in the intervening period while being mindful of these suggestions. These patterns of evidence will be addressed as appropriate in the 2011-2012 Self-Study document.
Preliminary Outline of the Rio Salado College Self-Study Report

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter I. Introduction</th>
<th>Chapter III. Criterion II: Preparing for the Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Profile of the College</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summary of accreditation history</td>
<td>Patterns of Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Purposes of the Report</td>
<td>• Quality Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The organization of the Report</td>
<td>• Relentless Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review of the plan and the process</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter II. Criterion I: Mission and Integrity</th>
<th>Chapter IV. Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Patterns of Evidence
• Quality Assurance
• Relentless Improvement

Conclusions
• Strengths
• Challenges
• Planning for the Future

Patterns of Evidence
• Quality Assurance
• Relentless Improvement

Conclusions
• Strengths
• Challenges
• Planning for the future
Chapter V.  Criterion IV: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge
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.

Patterns of Evidence
• Quality Assurance
• Relentless Improvement

Conclusions
• Strengths
• Challenges
• Planning for the future

Chapter VI.  Criterion V: Engagement and Service
As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Patterns of Evidence
• Quality Assurance
• Relentless Improvement

Conclusions
• Strengths
• Challenges
• Planning for the future

Chapter VII.  Federal Compliance

Chapter VIII.  Summary and Request for Continued Accreditation
• Approach to Self-Study Process
• Requesting status sought

Appendix.
• Institutional data forms
A note about the Self-Study logo: The logo maintains Rio Salado’s branding by incorporating the Rio wave, but the Self-Study logo is set apart from the College’s traditional branding by flipping the wave and adding the color yellow. The wave is moving into an object, symbolizing the progress of Rio’s Self-Study as the College moves through the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle.

The Rio Salado College Self-Study Plan is a living document, and changes made to this 3rd update reflect Rio Salado College’s commitment to Relentless Improvement after receiving feedback. Changes include additions to the proposed timeline, and personnel updates.