Maricopa Community Colleges-Rio Salado Community College - AZ

HLC ID 1340

OPEN PATHWAY: Reaffirmation Review   Review Date: 2/28/2022

Ms. Kate Smith
President

Karen Solomon
HLC Liaison

Lisa Perez Miller
Review Team Chair

Cory Clasemann-Ryan
Federal Compliance Reviewer

Ashley Buchman
Team Member

Richard Bush
Team Member

Sylvia Gibson
Team Member

Anne Kamps
Team Member

Larry Sanderson
Team Member

Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

2/28/2022

Review Type:
Reaffirmation Review

Scope of Review

- Reaffirmation Review
- Federal Compliance (if applicable)
- On-site Visit
- Multi-campus Visit (if applicable)

- 2021–22 COVID-19 Response Form

Institutional Context

Established in 1978 by the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) to serve nontraditional students at a distance, Rio Salado College (RSC) is headquartered in Tempe, Arizona. Today, RSC is the largest of the 10 MCCCD colleges (headcount), serving 37,086 students in 2020-2021, including 23,147 online learners. Student demographics were: 60.1% female, 38.5% male, 37.7% ages 20-29, 50.4% white, 27.9% Hispanic/Latino, 8.5% not specified, 6.6% Black/African American, 4.7% Asian, 1.7% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 0.3% Native Hawaiian/South Pacific Island. Pell Eligible students represented 70.7% and 45.1% were first-generation students. The college offers more than 600 online classes and more than 135 degree and certificate programs through online learning, adult education, community-based learning, corporate and government partnerships, early college initiatives and university transfer. RSC provides flexible course scheduling and more than 40 start dates for classes. Since 1978, nearly 97,000 alumni earned more than 117,000 degrees and certificates.

RSC provides in-person services for online students at nine locations across Maricopa County where GED test preparation, English Language Instruction, and Career Training are also provided. Local partnerships include 48 Maricopa County high schools (dual enrollment), Cox Communications, Discover Financial Services, USAA (corporate), Arizona Department of Corrections, Arizona Department of Public Safety, Maricopa County Sheriff's Department, Phoenix Police Department (public safety), and Casino Arizona (ESL & GED). Incarcerated Re-entry Programs include electrical, automotive technology, trim plumbing, construction, workforce development and community re-entry, quality customer service, and small business start-up.

According to the 2020-2021 Institutional Update, the RSC workforce includes 25 full-time faculty, 691 part-time faculty, 415 full-time administration, nine part-time administration, 78 full-time staff, and 166 part-time staff. RSC was recognized in 2021 by "Great Colleges to Work For" with special acknowledgement for -- confidence in senior leadership, faculty experience, faculty and staff well-being, and shared governance. Also, in 2021, the current President received the Phi Theta Kappa Paragon Award for New Presidents. She is a 2020-2021 Rising Presidents Fellow of The Aspen Institution College Excellence Program.

The MCCCD is one of the nation's largest community college systems, serving nearly 100,000 students annually. The MCCCD Governing Board includes seven members, five elected positions from geographical districts within Maricopa County and two at-large positions representing the entire county. Each serve staggered four-year terms. As noted on the district website, a key role of the Governing Board is to identify outcomes for the purpose of better serving and being accountable to its constituencies, the people of Maricopa County, students, private and public sector employers, universities, and primary and secondary schools. The Chancellor's Executive Council provides district and college governance and leadership. The MCCCD mission is "the Maricopa Community Colleges provide access to higher education for diverse students and communities." The MCCCD focus on learning is through university transfer education, general education, developmental education, workforce development, student development services, continuing education, community education, civic responsibility, and global engagement accordingly.

RSC's leadership has stabilized, following considerable change in executive leadership and organizational structure beginning in 2018. The college President retired in August 2018 and the Vice President of Academic Affairs, was appointed by the Chancellor to serve as RSC Interim President. This created a vacancy in the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) position, which was filled on an interim basis. In 2019, the long-serving Vice President of Administrative Services retired and the position was filled in 2020. The Interim President was selected as RSC President following a nationwide search. The VPAA was filled in November 2021. The Public Service and Student Affairs Vice President positions, vacant in 2018, were filled in 2019. A Vice President of Strategy and Advancement was also hired in 2021; this division incorporates leadership of institutional strategic and integrated planning and was created in 2020.

RSC's mission statement is "We redefine the educational experience by anticipating the needs of our students and future workforce. We support learners where they are and provide high-quality, flexible, and accessible education to empower individual goal attainment, foster partnerships, and strengthen communities." Strategic Goals and Investment Priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 are: 1) Increase student goal attainment 23% by 2024 with innovative and world-class experiences, 2) Offer 23 new micro-credentials by 2024, and 3) Foster a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). RSC is placing emphasis on upskilling and reskilling local communities with short-form learning, due to the increased competition in digital education for online learners across the country due to the pandemic.

According to the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, RSC has been a pioneer in distance education since 1978 and serves numerous diverse student populations, including online, in-person, high school, adult basic education, degree-seeking, and many other students who are attending courses at RSC for degree completion at other colleges. As described in the Strategic Plan, RSC predominantly serves a non-credential seeking student population comprising roughly 75% of the population in a given academic year.

RSC's Quality Initiative purposes and goals, represented by the Strategic Pathways of the 2016-2020 RSC Strategic Plan align under three Core Pillars: 1) Students First, 2) Innovation and Partnership, and 3) Accountability, Assessment, and Quality Assurance. The Strategic Pathway work was completed and institutionalized in 2019-2020.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, RSC's continuation of operations and academic offerings were possible because of the variety of modalities that were already part of the college operation and in alignment with the college's mission to "support learners where they are and provide high-quality, flexible and accessible education." To fulfill its commitment to the public good during the COVID-19 pandemic, the college instituted a number of mitigations during 2020-21: Adult Education Program Grant; Laptop Checkout Program; Rio Central; a Google-based tool with a hub of college related information; virtual meetings with student success coaches and Workforce Development Coordinator; increased flexible options for registration; waived fees for synchronous online non-credit GED test preparation and English language classes; and a hybrid-virtual model of instruction for adult education. Prior to the

pandemic, RSC began discussing a new Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan initiative. The SEM Plan was formally published in early fall 2021, as work on the SEM plan continued through cross-collaboration among stakeholders.

The majority of revenues budgeted by MCCCD are based on property taxes in addition to tuition and fees. The real estate market was strong in 2021 and property valuations in Maricopa County have steadily increased. The 2020 passage of Proposition 207 in Arizona legalized recreational marijuana and directed a third of the related tax revenue to community colleges to support career and technical education programs. RSC received nearly $25 million from Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF). A 3% budget reduction for FY2021-22 was implemented at the district level. The Total Composite Financial Indicator Score was 1.09 compared to 1.91 in FY2019 and 2.29 in FY2018. Given the financial ambiguity and fluid environment that currently prevails, RSC remains intentional with its financial planning.

Interactions with Constituencies

MCCCD Governing Board

1. Board President
2. Board Secretary
3. Board Members (3)

District Leadership

1. Interim Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
2. Interim CFO/Vice Chancellor
3. Associate Vice Chancellor for Student and Employee Experience
4. Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services
5. Vice Chancellor for Government, Economic, Community Relations

College Leadership

1. President
2. VP of Academic Affairs
3. VP of Student Affairs
4. VP of Strategy and Advancement
5. VP of Administrative Services
6. VP of Technology and Infrastructure
7. VP of Public Service
8. Associate VP of Employee Services
9. Faculty Senate President

HLC Steering Committee

1. Dean of IE & ALO
2. Dean Academic Affairs
3. Faculty Chair, Social Sciences
4. Vice President of Academic Affairs
5. Faculty Co Chair, Library Services
6. Vice President of Strategy and Advancement

7. Associate Dean IR

President's Advisory Council

1. Mayor, City of Tempe, AZ
2. Chief Probation Officer, District of AZ U.S. Probation
3. VP of Human Resources, Freedom Financial Network
4. Superintendent, Tempe Union High School District
5. Vice President Strategic Partnerships, University of Arizona Global Campus
6. Director of Strategic Partnerships, University of Arizona Global Campus
7. Principal, Xavier College Preparatory
8. State Farm Insurance, Human Resources Director
9. City of Tempe, Mayoral Aide
10. AZ Department of Education, Deputy Associate Superintendent

Open Forum Criterion 1 & 2

1. National Brand and Marketing Director
2. Student Services Analyst Student Life
3. Student
4. Faculty Chair/Accounting, Entrepreneurship, Risk Management & Insurance, and Small Business
5. Director of Partnerships
6. Program Manager Incarcerated Re-Entry
7. Instructional Services Supervisor Community Development (3)
8. Program Manager Community Development (4)
9. PR Analyst Senior
10. Manager of Disability Resources
11. Director of Compliance
12. Program Analyst President's Office
13. Faculty Chair, Educator Preparation Programs
14. Faculty Chair Reading and ESL, Director of Honors
15. Faculty Chair Physical Science
16. Faculty Chair Library (2)
17. Arts and Endorsement Liaison EPP
18. Instructional Coordinator (5)
19. Dean, Community Development
20. Course Production Coordinator
21. Director Community Development
22. Faculty Chair Social Sciences
23. Office of the President
24. Program Analyst (2)
25. Counseling Faculty Co-Chair (2)
26. Faculty Chair - Psychology, Philosophy, and Religious Studies
27. Instructional Designer (6)
28. Software Developer Senior (2)
29. Director of Community Development
30. Dean of Instruction
31. Dean of Student Affairs (2)
32. Faculty Chair Business

33. Associate Dean Community Development (2)
34. Director Maintenance
35. Program Coordinator Partnerships (2)
36. Faculty Chair Biology
37. Program Coordinator
38. Director Testing
39. Faculty Chair Languages
40. Associate Dean IR
41. Program Manager EERC
42. Associate Dean Instructional Design
43. Dean IE
44. Instructional Services Manager (2)
45. Program Manager Strategy and Advancement
46. Student Services Manager Community Development
47. Software Developer
48. Instructional Services Coordinator (6)
49. Instructional Services Director Community Development
50. Navigator Partnerships
51. Marketing and PR Analyst Sr.
52. Director of Advisement
53. Grants Manager
54. Faculty Chair Criminal Justice Program
55. Director Course Production
56. Faculty Chair Math
57. Manager Dual Enrollment
58. Instructional Helpdesk
59. Program Supervisor Faculty Services
60. Instructional Supervisor Community Development
61. Course Production Specialist
62. Director Field and Student Teaching
63. HR Specialist Senior
64. Program Analyst Faculty Services (3)
65. Counseling and Career Services
66. HR Director
67. Faculty Chair English
68. Faculty Chair Communication
69. Program Director
70. Associate Dean OCCS and Title IX
71. Program Analyst DRS
72. Instructional Services Manager Community Development
73. Student Services Specialist (5)
74. Program Director Admin Services
75. IA Program Manager
76. Planning and Research Analyst IR
77. Instructional Services Supervisor Director
78. Senior Research Analyst
79. Human Resources Analyst
80. Program Manager
81. Administrative Specialist

82. Social Media Strategist
83. Director Financial Aid
84. Faculty Chair STEM
85. Faculty Chair Humanities
86. Operations Supervisor
87. Software Engineer
88. Library Supervisor
89. Resources Development
90. Student Life
91. Research Coordinator IR
92. IT Services
93. Instructional Liaison EPP
94. Project Manager Strategy and Advancement
95. Academic Integrity Coordinator
96. Elementary Liaison EPP
97. Instructor Senior (2)
98. Media Production Design Specialist Senior
99. Student Services Technician (4)
100. Business Systems Analyst
101. Faculty Chair Computer Technology
102. Library Assistant Senior
103. Interim Student Services Analyst Sr
104. Admin Secretary
105. AVP Public Service
106. HR Analyst
107. Library Specialist
108. Student Business Service
109. Student Services Director
110. Marketing and System Administrator
111. Student Services Supervisor
112. Video Producer
113. Fiscal Supervisor
114. Admin Specialist Sr
115. Course Production Coordinator
116. Assessment Coordinator
117. Fiscal Technician Senior (2)
118. Administrative Program Assistant
119. Human Resources Specialist
120. Program Analyst FS
121. Administrative Assistant
122. CP Specialist Sr
123. Senior Programmer IT
124. Course Production Specialist Senior (2)
125. Administrative Assistant Community Development

Open Forum Criterion 3 & 4

1. Faculty Chair Reading/ESL, Director of Honors
2. Faculty Chair Computer Technology

3. Office of the President
4. Instructional Coordinator HS&S
5. Instructional Services Supervisor Community Development
6. Associate Dean IR
7. Director of Advisement
8. Faculty Chair Library Services (2)
9. Faculty Chair Communication
10. Dean Student Affairs (2)
11. Adjunct Faculty Business
12. Course Production Specialist
13. Associate Dean Instruction and Workforce Partnerships
14. Administrative Assistant for Faculty
15. Faculty Chair PSY, PHI, REL
16. Dean of Instruction Academic Affairs
17. Faculty Chair Business
18. Director Community Development
19. Instructional Coordinator Physical Sciences
20. Associate Dean Instructional Design
21. Director of Marketing, Strategy and Advancement
22. Faculty Chair Languages
23. Faculty Chair Educator Preparation
24. IA PR Analyst
25. Instructional Designer (2)
26. Instructional Services Supervisor
27. Manager Instructional Media and Accessibility
28. Program Director Administrative Services
29. Manager of Disability Resources
30. Arts and Endorsements Liaison EPP
31. Instructional Services Coordinator (3)
32. Supervisor Curriculum Department
33. Software Developer
34. Faculty Chair Criminal Justice Program
35. Resource Development
36. Program Analyst Course Scheduling
37. Faculty Chair Physical Sciences
38. Program Analyst DRS
39. Program Manager Scheduling
40. Director of Early College/Dual Enrollment
41. Student Services Manager Community Development
42. PMO Director IS
43. Associate Dean Community Development (2)
44. Associate Dean Office of Community Standards and Conduct & Title IX
45. Production Coordinator Course Production
46. Faculty Chair Biology
47. Instructional Service Director Community Development
48. Grants Manager
49. Dean Community Development
50. Senior Instructional Coordinator
51. Program Manager Strategy and Advancement

52. Planning and Research Analyst IR
53. Program Manager Community Development (2)
54. Faculty Chair History, Humanities and Design
55. Student Service Specialist
56. Program Analyst Faculty Services
57. Manager Veterans Services
58. Program Coordinator Partnerships (3)
59. Faculty Chair English
60. Director Course Production
61. Faculty Chair Sociology
62. Student Life
63. Program Manager EERC
64. Library Specialist Supervisor
65. Program Manager IRE
66. Curriculum Department
67. Software Developer Senior
68. Instructional Designer (3)
69. Director Testing
70. Faculty Chair STEM
71. Student Services Specialist (2)
72. Supervisor Teacher Education
73. Director Partnerships
74. Program Analyst President's Office
75. Operations Supervisor Partnerships
76. Navigator Partnerships
77. Instructional Coordinator Library
78. Instructional Services Manager Math
79. Research Coordinator IR
80. Project Manager Strategy and Advancement
81. Instructional Support Supervisor
82. Fiscal Supervisor
83. Fiscal Technician
84. Software Engineer
85. Student Services Tech AR&R
86. Faculty Chair ACC, EPS, INS, SBS
87. Data Analyst IR
88. Administrative Program Assistant
89. Student Services Specialist Community Development (2)
90. Instructional Services Manager Computer Technology
91. Interim Student Services Analyst Senior
92. Instructional Services Supervisor
93. Program Analyst Faculty Services
94. Instructional Design ID & T
95. Student Services Supervisor (3)
96. HR Analyst EERC
97. Software Developer
98. Assessment Coordinator EPP
99. Supervisor Operation Maintenance
100. Instructional Helpdesk

101. Tech Support Coordinator
102. Library Assistance Senior
103. Instructor Senior (2)

Open Forum Criterion 5

1. Associate Dean Community Development (2)
2. Associate Dean Instruction and Workforce Partnerships
3. Dean Student Affairs (2)
4. Associate Dean Office of Community Standards & Conduct & Title IX
5. Associate Dean IR
6. Dean IE
7. Faculty Chair STEM
8. Faculty Chair PSY-PHI-REL
9. Program Director Adult ACE, Online GED, ESL & GED for Partners
10. Manager of Disability Resources
11. Fiscal Director
12. Student Services Specialist Student Life
13. Dean of Instruction Academic Affairs
14. Program Analyst President's Office
15. Instructional Services Coordinator (3)
16. IA PR Analyst
17. Fiscal Manager Business Services
18. Instructional Services Supervisor Community Development
19. Instructional Helpdesk
20. Faculty Library Services (2)
21. Faculty Communication
22. Director of Marketing, Strategy and Advancement
23. Instructional Coordinator Physical Sciences
24. Faculty Chair Physical Sciences
25. Course Production Specialist
26. Associate Dean Instructional Design
27. Faculty Chair Educator Preparation
28. Faculty Chair Reading/ESL and Director of Honors
29. Fiscal Manager Business Services
30. Director of Advisement
31. Program Director Administrative Services
32. Instructional Designer
33. Faculty Chair Sociology
34. Director Community Development
35. Program Manager Strategy and Advancement
36. Faculty Chair Computer Technology
37. Program Manager Community Development
38. Fiscal Specialist Senior
39. Manager Instructional Media
40. Research Analyst Sr IR
41. Program Analyst Faculty Services (2)
42. Fiscal Specialist Senior
43. Software Developer (2)

44. Student Services Manager Community Development
45. Financial Aid Director
46. Program Coordinator Partnerships (3)
47. Software Developer Sr
48. Faculty Chair Math
49. Program Manager EERC
50. Library Specialist Supervisor
51. Planning Research Analyst IR
52. Instructional Services Director Community Development
53. Program Analyst DRS
54. HR Director Employee Services
55. Program Analyst Course Support
56. Faculty Chair Biology
57. Dean Community Development
58. Navigator Partnerships
59. Fiscal Specialist Business Services
60. Instructional Services Manager Math
61. Instructional Designer (5)
62. Fiscal Service Specialist
63. Program Supervisor Faculty Services
64. Director Course Production
65. Senior Instructional Coordinator
66. Program Manager Community Development
67. Student Services Specialist (5)
68. Research Coordinator IR
69. Program Director
70. Faculty Chair Languages
71. Software Engineer IS
72. Human Resources Analyst
73. Instructional Liaison EPP
74. Faculty Co-Chair Counseling
75. Resource Development
76. IR Software Engineer
77. Student Services Supervisor
78. Fiscal Analyst
79. IA Program Manager
80. Software Developer Senior, Instruction and Design
81. Faculty Chair Criminal Justice Programs
82. Instructional Designer, ID & T
83. Director Maintenance
84. Program Analyst Faculty Services
85. Program Manager IRE
86. Arts and Endorsement Liaison EPP
87. Course Production Coordinator
88. Elementary Liaison EPP
89. Faculty Chair ACC, EPS, INS, SBS
90. Maintenance Operations Manager
91. Interim Student Services Analyst Sr
92. Director of Early College/Dual Enrollment

93. HR Specialist Sr
94. Student Life
95. Program Manager Course Scheduling
96. Operations Supervisor Partnerships
97. Administrative Secretary EDU
98. Grants Manager
99. Instructional Designer IP&T
100. Administrative Specialist Senior
101. Instructor Senior (2)
102. CP Specialist Senior
103. Administrative Program Assistant
104. HR Analyst, EERC
105. Assessment Coordinator EPP
106. Instructional Services Supervisor Computer Technology
107. Student Services Supervisor IA
108. Instructional Services Coordinator
109. Library Assistant Senior
110. Video Producer IA
111. Marketing System Administrator
112. Fiscal Technician Senior (2)
113. Academic Integrity Coordinator
114. Marketing and PR Analyst Senior
115. Fiscal Supervisor
116. Administrative Assistant IS
117. Interim Student Services Manager
118. Course Production Specialist Senior
119. Instructional Services Coordinator
120. Production Coordinator

Drop-In Session

1. Director Field and Student Teaching EPP
2. Manager Instructional Media
3. VP Infrastructure
4. IA PR Analyst
5. Coordinator Partnerships
6. Associate Dean Instructional Design
7. Faculty Physical Sciences
8. Instructional Services Supervisor
9. Adjunct Faculty Small Business
10. Director of Development, Scholarships, and Alumni Relations
11. Student Services Specialist
12. Program Manager Strategy and Advancement
13. Instructional Services Supervisor Community Development (2)
14. Instructional Services Director
15. Faculty Co-Chair Counseling (2)
16. Director of Marketing
17. Coordinator Partnerships (2)
18. Instructional Designer

19. Program Analyst Senior
20. Director Partnerships
21. AVP Employee Services
22. Director Maintenance
23. Supervisor Curriculum
24. Dean Student Affairs (2)
25. Director Testing
26. Program Analyst DRS
27. Administrative Specialist Senior
28. VP Strategy and Advancement
29. Instructional Liaison EPP
30. Administrative Specialist
31. Manager of DRS
32. Social Media Strategist
33. Administrative Specialist Senior Curriculum
34. Program Analyst Faculty Services
35. Program Supervisor Faculty Services
36. Software Engineer
37. Faculty Chair Reading/ESL, Director of Honors
38. Faculty Chair ACC, EPS, INS, SBS
39. Software Developer Senior
40. HR Specialist Senior
41. Academic Adviser
42. Instructor Senior (2)
43. Marketing and PR Analyst Sr.
44. Media Prod Design Analyst
45. Library Assistant Senior
46. Instructional Services Supervisor Computers
47. Administrative Assistant IS
48. Software Developer
49. Associate Dean OCCS & Title IX
50. Instructional Designer
51. Instructional Services Coordinator
52. Manager M&O
53. Student Services Specialist
54. Instructional Services Coordinator (3)
55. Instructional Services Coordinator
56. Assessment Coordinator Education
57. Student Services Specialist (2)
58. Operations Supervisor Partnerships
59. Fiscal Supervisor
60. Administrative Program Assistant
61. Admin Secretary EDU
62. Program Manager Strategy and Advancement
63. Student Services Specialist
64. Human Resources Specialist
65. Software Developer

Student Forum

1. 20 students, including
2. Alumni
3. General education students
4. Transfer students
5. Incarcerated Re-Entry (IRE)
6. Co-curricular: PTK, Honors, Adult ACE, NSLS

<u>Faculty Forum</u>

1. Faculty Co-Chair Counseling (2)
2. Adjunct Faculty Communications
3. Adjunct Faculty HIS/HUM
4. Associate Dean Instruction and Workforce Partnerships
5. Faculty Chair Criminal Justice Programs
6. Adjunct Faculty EPP
7. Adjunct Faculty Small Business
8. Adjunct Faculty Humanities
9. Adjunct Faculty Math (2)
10. Counseling and Career Services (2)
11. Adjunct Faculty Communication (2)
12. Adjunct Faculty Business and Management
13. Adjunct Faculty Humanities
14. Adjunct Faculty English (2)
15. Instructional Services Supervisor
16. Adjunct Faculty Biology
17. Adjunct Faculty (6)
18. Adjunct Faculty Accounting (4)
19. Faculty Library Services (2)
20. Adjunct Faculty Economics (2)
21. Adjunct Faculty Administration of Justice (2)
22. Adjunct Faculty Physical Sciences
23. Faculty Chair of Reading/ESL and Director of Honors
24. Faculty Chair Physical Sciences
25. Instructional Coordinator Physical Sciences
26. Faculty Chair Educator Preparation
27. Adjunct Faculty Computer Technology
28. Adjunct Faculty Social Sciences (2)
29. Faculty Chair Communication
30. Instructional Coordinator HS&S
31. Adjunct Faculty Business Management
32. Faculty Chair Computer Technology
33. Faculty Chair Sociology
34. Instructional Services Manager Math
35. Faculty Chair PSY/REL
36. Instructional Services Coordinator (2)
37. Faculty Chair English
38. Instructional Coordinator Library
39. Adjunct Faculty Psychology
40. Faculty Chair Math

41. Instructional Services Supervisor EPP
42. Instructional Services Manager
43. Faculty Chair Biology
44. Faculty Chair STEM
45. Faculty Chair Business
46. Faculty Chair Languages
47. Instructional Support Supervisor
48. Faculty Chair Dental
49. Instructional Coordinator Business
50. Instructional Helpdesk Coordinator
51. Faculty Chair Humanities, History and Design
52. Senior Instructional Coordinator (2)
53. Adjunct Faculty Dental Hygiene
54. Administrative Assistant for Faculty

Area of Focus Meeting: College Governance, Operations, and Decision Making

1. Program Manager Strategy and Advancement
2. Associate Dean Office of Community Standards & Conduct & Title IX
3. Dean IE
4. Dean of Student Affairs (2)
5. Software Developer Senior
6. Faculty Chair of Education
7. Associate Dean of Instruction and Workforce Partnerships
8. Adjunct Faculty Biology
9. Program Director
10. President
11. Director of Marketing and Strategy
12. VP Student Affairs
13. VP Strategy & Advancement
14. Dean Academic Affairs
15. Fiscal Director
16. Faculty Library
17. Instructional Services Coordinator
18. Dean Instructional Design
19. Faculty Chair PSY-PHI-REL
20. Associate Dean Community Development (2)
21. AVP Employee Services
22. Aux Services Supervisor
23. VP Infrastructure
24. Associate Dean IR
25. VP Academic Affairs
26. Dean Community Development
27. Student Service Specialist FA
28. Director of Resource Development and Alumni
29. Admin Asst for Faculty
30. VP Administrative Services
31. AVP Public Service

Area of Focus Meeting: Program Review and Curriculum Implementation

1. Faculty Chair Criminal Justice Program
2. Faculty Chair Computer Technology
3. Faculty Chair Sociology
4. Associate Dean IR
5. Adjunct Latin
6. Manager Instructional Design
7. Faculty Chair Reading/ESL Director of Honors
8. Adjunct Faculty Languages
9. AVP Employee Services
10. Dean Student Affairs
11. Faculty Chair English
12. Associate Dean Instruction and Workforce Partnerships
13. Instructional Services Manager
14. Faculty Chair Dental Programs
15. Dean Academic Affairs
16. Faculty Chair Languages
17. Director of Advisement
18. Faculty Chair Library Services
19. Faculty Chair Communication
20. Manager Veterans Services
21. Dean IE
22. Director of Compliance
23. Faculty Chair Business
24. Faculty Chair ACC,EPS, INS, SBS
25. Administrative Assistant for Faculty
26. Associate Dean Instructional Design and Technology
27. Supervisor Curriculum Department
28. Financial Aid Director
29. Planning Research Analyst IR
30. Student Services Specialist

Area of Focus Meeting: Dynamic Assessment Data Display(DADD) Committee

1. Faculty Chair Reading and ESL, Director of Honors
2. Faculty Chair STEM
3. Faculty Chair Business
4. Faculty Chair Languages
5. VP Infrastructure
6. Faculty Chair Communication
7. VP Strategy & Advancement
8. Faculty Chair Physical Science
9. Faculty Chair History, Humanities & Design
10. Associate Dean IR
11. Software Engineer
12. Dean IE

Exit Meeting

1. President
2. VP of Academic Affairs
3. VP of Student Affairs
4. VP of Strategy and Advancement
5. VP of Administrative Services
6. VP of Technology and Infrastructure
7. VP of Public Service
8. Associate VP of Employee Services
9. Faculty Senate President
10. Dean of IE & ALO
11. Dean Academic Affairs
12. Faculty Chair, Social Sciences
13. Vice President of Academic Affairs
14. Faculty Co Chair, Library Services
15. Vice President of Strategy and Advancement
16. Associate Dean IR

Additional Documents

During the site visit, 18 faculty files selected at random of RSC residential, adjunct, and dual credit faculty were reviewed to confirm qualifications

Assessment Webpage https://www.riosalado.edu/about/teaching-and-learning/assessment-student-learning#

Program Review Webpage https://www.riosalado.edu/about/teaching-and-learning/assessment-student-learning/program-review

Transfer Webpage https://www.riosalado.edu/students/transfer

https://www.riosalado.edu/early-college

https://www.riosalado.edu/early-college/ace

https://www.riosalado.edu/students/student-life-and-leadership/national-society-leadership-and-success

https://www.riosalado.edu/about/leadership-and-administration

https://www.riosalado.edu/students/student-life-and-leadership/national-society-leadership-and-success

https://www.riosalado.edu/community/division-public-service-community-outreach/division-public-service-community-outreach

https://www.maricopa.edu/about/governing-board

https://www.riosalado.edu/about/deib/about-us

https://www.riosalado.edu/about/deib/resources

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Rio Salado College (RSC) developed a mission that is relevant to its unique position within the district as confirmed by evidence provided and also communicated during the visit. Mission documents are re-examined as part of the strategic planning process, with input from college stakeholders. Conversations with faculty and staff verified there were various opportunities for feedback at each step of the development process. A series of retreats in 2019-2020 and a college-wide survey produced the revised mission, vision, and values statements currently in place. While only 100 faculty and staff completed the survey, multiple comments shared during the visit confirmed there is pride at RSC surrounding the mission and how it is operationalized every day.

RSC's mission statement guides its efforts to meet the students where they are in their educational journey. Through the current academic degrees and certificates offered, RSC is committed to providing diverse training and learning opportunities to students for degree completion or workplace advancement. As evidenced in the class schedule section of the website, RSC offers different modalities, course lengths, and flexible options to support student learning. On-site conversations with students, faculty, and staff verified the extent RSC goes to support learning and meet the needs of each student population. RSC was recognized for serving the diverse needs of each of its learner populations (e.g., adult education, dual enrollment, incarcerated, traditional, workforce, etc.) numerous times during the site visit.

As acknowledged on the website, RSC's various divisions are committed to providing public service to the communities they serve through public radio stations, Café at Rio, Dental Clinics, RISE Learning for Life, Fronteras Desk, DEIB events, and additional partnerships with external organizations.

During visit discussions with faculty and staff, it was evident that innovative ideas for meeting the mission and serving the public are thriving. Serving underserved groups through creating networks, preparing lunches, expanding support groups, creating micro-credentials for incarcerated students, were a few examples shared with the team. RSC is to be celebrated for diligently striving to meet the needs of not only its students but the public at large.

RSC makes available options and modalities for each of its target student markets. Comments from students during the visit support RSC's statements and actions regarding high-quality student support services for each population. RSC offers a diverse range of academic programs to meet the needs of students and the community. Academic programs vary in length and degree type to ensure that all student learners get the skills they need for the next steps in life.

The mission is also demonstrated by providing high-quality, flexible, and accessible education for individual goal attainment, the fostering of partnerships, and strengthening of communities. Throughout the visit, college stakeholders provided examples of how the college is successfully doing this. Also, during the visit, the team learned that RSC's marketing efforts were recognized by the district, a testament to the collaborative work being done between the RSC marketing team and the district.

RSC provides a well-organized website; content is clear and it is easy for prospective and current students to navigate. RSC clearly articulates its mission on the website and in the strategic plan, culture page, and other college publications. RSC's mission supports the district mission and the mission and vision webpage contains all of the required statements and documents (e.g., College Made Convenient). The website outlines a comprehensive list of student support services the college makes available to students; the "Find Information Quickly" section lists services available in an attractive, easy-to-use format. Student support services are offered in-person and virtually and were confirmed through conversations with students, faculty, and staff during the visit.

Conversations with faculty, staff, and students permitted the team to learn more about Guided Pathways and how important they are for students transferring to other colleges and within the district. Guided Pathways were referenced in several conversations and students believed the pathways helped RSC (and the district) communicate to students and stakeholders the various degree paths available to other institutions and/or careers. The college discontinued using the actual name Guided Pathway when promoting to students because student feedback indicated the name was confusing and misunderstood. Instead, a more organic format is used for students to better understand and minimize confusion.

From evidence provided in the Assurance Argument concerning RSC's enrollment profile, the college is intentional about supporting the different student populations. An example is the organization of the website, in terms of recruitment and retention information, which is formulated for each target audience. Student feedback during the visit confirmed they felt supported during their time at RSC.

RSC articulates the mission through various outlets, based on evidence provided, and the college leverages the mission to recruit students. As referenced in the Assurance Argument and verified in

visit conversations, RSC continuously collaborates with partners to offer academic programs to meet the needs of students and partners. Continuous and consistent exposure to the mission allows RSC faculty and staff to prioritize the interests of students when assessing, planning, and budgeting.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

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

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Actions and decisions evidenced at RSC reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution. Certificates, degrees, transfer partnerships, non-credit workforce development offerings, and adult education, also demonstrate that RSC provides active support for the communities it serves.

The Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) Governing Board Outcome Statement articulates "*As an educational institution devoted to learning, Maricopa Community Colleges exist in order that the diverse communities served have effective, innovative, learner-centered, flexible, and affordable life-long educational opportunities, with outcomes optimizing use of available resources.*" Evidence notes the educational responsibilities filter directly to the individual colleges as units of the district and this was confirmed during the visit conversations.

There are many ways in which RSC engages with its external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs. During the visit, faculty and staff provided numerous examples in which RSC contributes to the public good:

- Employees serving on local community committees and boards, providing affordable education to high school students through dual enrollment, providing Adult Education Programs to thousands of students annually, providing education to incarcerated students, etc.;
- Improving access to technology for students is supported by RSCs commitment to providing laptops and hotspots to students in need;
- Community engagement through 5K running/walking event, events centered around reducing food insecurities, RSC Dental Clinic, radio broadcasts from two public radio stations, and implementation of Café at Rio;
- College personnel volunteering for the Valley of the Sun United Way Campaign and participation in the Rio Gives Back initiative;
- Engagement of partners through the Educational Service Partnerships;
- Meeting students where they are is evident in the study of zip codes and establishment of the

RSC Northern location;
- Serving the diverse populations of students, e.g. veteran, incarcerated re-entry, military students, etc.; and
- Meeting the needs of academic program advisory committees was documented in the minutes and in conversations during the visit. (e.g., RSC looked at business programs and how to address the declining enrollment. The RSC faculty-directed students to other programs to allow them to close out the program and still meet the needs of the students.).

Conversations with the MCCCD Governing Board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students confirmed for the team that RSC's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes and the college lives its mission and clearly demonstrates a commitment to the common good.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Through its targeted programs, a broad menu of student support services, co-curricular activities, and operations, RSC understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society. Examples of curricular and co-curricular activities that prepare students for citizenship and workplace success were provided during the visit:

- Big Pitch Competition: Students and faculty shared experiences concerning how impactful the process of presenting their small business ideas through the competition helped the students prepare for the real world.
- Micro-Credentialing and Certificates: Community partners shared the importance of providing training to students (especially incarcerated students) that were relevant to their needs. A theme of responsiveness to employer needs was heard throughout the visit.
- Membership in the Shared Governance Process: Students, faculty, and staff shared examples of how being involved in the shared governance process allowed them to develop their leadership skills and be more connected to both RSC and the community at large.

Within its special programs, RSC supports its commitment to Strategic Plan Goal 1: Increase student goal attainment 23% by 2024 with innovative and world-class experiences and Goal 3: Foster a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion and belonging. The college seeks to measure student achievement through completers of the Adult ACE and Honors programs. The Adult ACE program received the 2019 First Generation Advocate Award for advancing student success. The Honors Program supports students' civic engagement. Data highlighted that RSC students involved in co-curricular activities were more successful in their educational goals. RSC provided examples of district-wide initiatives and institution-specific efforts to support diverse populations. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Adult Education Program (Largest provider in Arizona);
- Veterans (Recognition of Military Credit and Military & Veteran Success Centers);
- Incarcerated and Re-entry Students (Degrees and certificates to meet re-entry needs);

- Students with Disabilities (Accessibility Council and Office of Disability Resources & Services);
- Minority Students (Male Empowerment Network, Outreach to Hispanic Students through creating publications in English and Spanish); and
- Food insecurity (Full Cart Program provided over 13,500 food servings to students in 2019-2020).

With evidence provided in the Assurance Argument and also presented during a live demonstration during the visit, RSC confirmed they produce and make available a wide-range of data concerning student learning outcomes. The student learning outcome report for co-curricular assessment was well done. RSC identified four co-curricular student cohorts (Honors, Phi Theta Kappa, the National Honor Society for Leadership and Success, and Adult ACE) to determine academic performance in college-wide student learning outcomes. The report indicated during AY2019-20, course-level data from approximately 1.6 million student assessments were analyzed. A greater percentage of co-curricular students performed at college-level for all five cross-college learning outcomes as compared with the general student body, ranging from 84% to 87% of co-curricular students. It was unclear how co-curricular assessment was measured for students not involved in the selected groups (i.e. Honors, Phi Theta Kappa, the National Society for Leadership and Success, and Adult ACE). Conversations revealed that RSC makes improvements to co-curricular activities to improve the student experience as a result of the assessment data collected.

Student feedback received during the visit suggested the need to provide more student involvement activities to those who are not in-person and not a member of one of the existing student groups. The consensus shared by students during the visit was that additional opportunities for engagement would lead to higher retention of students. In the future, RSC may wish to incorporate other student groups into the co-curricular assessment process and report on their respective outcomes. The evidence and visit conversations confirm RSC's commitment to supporting and qualitatively measuring activities to prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

Resources and services for students with documented disabilities are administered by RSC's Office of Disability Resources and Services. An Accessibility Council provides employees with training, tools, and resources to design courses with equitable access. Sun Sounds of Arizona (part of RSC's Division of Public Service) provides information to a potential state-wide audience of over 650,000 people who cannot read.

An Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Civil Rights Review of Career and Technical Education (CTE) was conducted in 2020 and RSC met all requirements. Through evidence provided, the team confirmed that RSC's new employee onboarding process includes diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging topics. Additionally, employees are connected through book clubs, newsletters, bi-monthly all-employee meetings, and professional development opportunities at the college and district levels.

RSC initially created the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council as part of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. Recognizing the council was not enough to accomplish the goals of creating a culture of belonging, in summer 2020 RSC increased its focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging by expanding the task force to create a formal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council. In addition, a webpage dedicated to DEIB was created, a senior employee was designated to serve as a DEIB officer, and the RSC Library published DEIB Research Guides to provide educational resources and increase awareness around DEIB topics.

In fall 2020, RSC administered the PACE Survey to employees to assess campus climate. Questions

related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging were added to the survey. Survey results and conversations during the visit with employees, students, and external stakeholders confirmed that RSC is committed to creating a culture that is welcoming to people of all backgrounds. To sustain this focus, the college may consider conducting a follow-up campus climate survey to assess and track progress with diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging initiatives.

Although conversations during the visit allowed the team to verify RSC's commitment to creating a culture of inclusion and belonging for its employees, RSC noted in the Assurance Argument that the college could further institutionalize existing efforts to ensure an ongoing inclusive and equity-model environment for both students and employees. College stakeholders shared examples of numerous DEIB student events hosted by the college, but no data was available to indicate learning occurred. In the future, assessing participant learning from these events would provide another source in measuring the campus climate outside of an institutional survey (i.e., PACE).

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Rationale

RSC's mission is relevant to its unique position within the district. The team determined from materials and interviews that RSC autonomously and continually shows commitment, care, and attention to its mission and related public statements of vision and values. The mission, vision, and values are clear, shared publicly, published through several avenues including print and web-based materials, and reflect the college's interests on behalf of students. Interviews confirmed RSC's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes and the college lives its mission and demonstrates its commitment to the common good.

RSC is committed to creating a culture of inclusion and belonging for its employees, students, and college stakeholders, led by a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Council. The team commends the institution for the manner in which it lives its mission, which guides RSC's operations, planning, and the budgeting process. The mission is delivered through the services, academic and training programs provided to students and their community partners.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The Maricopa County Community College District's (MCCCD) mission and governing values serve as the foundation for establishing and following Rio Salado College's (RSC's) policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its Governing Board, administration, faculty and staff. RSC's mission and vision remain unique to the institution, while aligning with the district. RSC's recently revised and adopted vision and mission are evidence of its institutional planning and detailed process steps are found within the RSC Strategic Plan 2020-2024. The strategic plan (mission, vision, goals, etc.) is communicated through various means such as on RSC's Research and Planning webpage and within its academic catalog. A deep understanding of the college's vision and mission revision process was expressed throughout the visit sessions. Furthermore, multiple comments from participants confirmed a high-level of awareness and a strong understanding and commitment to RSC's mission in "redefine [ing] the educational experience by anticipating the needs of our [their] students and future workforce."

Faculty and staff expectations and guidelines related to job responsibilities, ethical behavior and grievances are addressed in their respective employee manual or agreement. For example, the Staff Policy Manual includes Policy A-4 Employment Standards and provides information on the rules of performance and conduct applicable to appointed, classified, and non-classified MCCCD employees. All employees are required to complete training in the areas of public stewardship and ethics learning plan during their initial probationary period and then every three years. In addition, a staff policy manual, maintained by the district, includes a section on public stewardship and Ethics (A-17). As with all mandatory training, FERPA training for faculty and staff is provided online. To support and maintain institutional integrity, employees are required to submit disclosure forms on an annual basis. RSC's Office of Institutional Integrity and Compliance serves as the institutional lead for meeting and maintaining compliance of district, local, state, and federal requirements. This office and the MCCCD Office of General Counsel collaborate to ensure policies comply with external

entities such as Title IX, the Department of Education, and Veterans Affairs. Policies and procedures follow an established approval process and are available via the MCCCD's website.

In addition to established policies and processes for addressing and resolving grievances to ensure fair and ethical behavior, the institution has legal counsel available to review policy revisions, provide the Board and staff with ethics guidance and compliance, and respond to reports of unethical behavior. Furthermore, MCCCD Admin Regulations 2.5 Students Rights and Responsibilities, 2.5.1 Disciplinary Standards, 2.5.2 Article IV Student Conduct Code Procedures, C-2 Grievance (Staff Policy Manual), MCCCD Admin Regulations 5.1.16 Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and MCCCD Admin Regulations 5 Nondiscrimination statements provide a sample of the institution's commitment to codes of conduct for students, faculty, and staff and are communicated on the institution's website, course syllabi, and catalog. Comments, responses, and provided examples during site visit sessions exhibited a strong culture of collaboration (regardless of college employee or student roles) and demonstrated a sincere respect among individuals and colleagues.

RSC follows state and federal guidelines in complying with its financial functions primarily through an annual audit conducted by the Arizona State Auditor General's Office. The district's Internal Audit & Management Advisory Services Department provides resources to RSC to "help ensure the efficient and effective use of resources, program operations, and stewardship over assets." Evidence of favorable MCCCD financial audits is found in the awarding of the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 26 consecutive years.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Rating

Met

Rationale

RSC's Institutional Advancement (IA) department is charged with publicly distributing and communicating information on behalf of the institution. The IA Department collaborates with the Office of Institutional Integrity and Compliance to ensure the accuracy of RSC information. Institutional information specific to course schedules, programs, admission requirements, faculty and staff, cost of attendance, and both institutional and program accreditation is maintained within traditional print media (such as the course catalog) and through a variety of social mediums (such as the college website). The institution recently (fall 2021) developed a Website Governance Guide to support the "accuracy and integrity" of web content and also requires webpage owners to complete an annual audit of web content. Overall positive feedback was expressed during the visit related to the Website Governance Guide with one participant stating the Guide reinforced efforts to be "mindful and deliberate." Another participant commented that the process encouraged "strong partnership management" between multiple RSC departments. There was consensus that this is an ongoing process and has become part of everyone's daily work to ensure the accuracy of information.

Furthermore, RSC's leadership structure is found on its Leadership and Administration webpage and provides contact information regarding the institution's leadership team. Governing Board information, such as meeting agendas and minutes are accessible via the MCCCD's designated webpage, providing transparency and following applicable public meeting laws. However, no reference is found on the RSC's 'About Us' or 'Leadership and Administration' webpages regarding its control structure (relationship to MCCCD) or Governing Board, which may prove confusing for a novice to higher education.

The course syllabus is one form of communicating institutional-level information related to students. All online course syllabi follow district standards to include key course information such as section information, required materials, description, competencies, attendance and grading. Statements such as MCCCD's academic misconduct policy (AR 2.3.11), civility policy Title IX and student resources (Honors Program, disability services, and student grievances) are also required in the standardized syllabus. Directory information is also located on the institution's website to include faculty/staff, programs, departments, and student resources such as the library, bookstore, and testing center.

Student related information such as transfer-in processes, compliance (i.e., FERPA) guidelines, etc. are also available on the website.

The primary source of institutional characteristics and data pertaining to enrollment, retention and graduation rates is available through RSC's Research and Planning Department's webpage. This data is used in an internal predictive overall student persistence tool, RioPACE, which assists in predicting the accuracy of customized student outcomes. Additional information such as economic impact and college statistical data is found on the Institutional Effectiveness webpage. RSC's website and online academic catalog are the primary resource for admission requirements and program information specific to course requirements, tuition and fees, including institutional and program accrediting bodies. Academic program webpages include a program overview, list of degrees and/or certificates, and eligible careers. Degree and certificate links provide applicable program admission requirements, program outcomes, and a pathway map of courses with courses linked to the current schedule. In maintaining transparency, the institution archives the previous year's program requirements and provides access via the website.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Rating

Met

Rationale

RSC's governance is represented through a district Governing Board of seven elected members and includes one student board member. The best interest of the institution is evidenced by five of the seven board members representing a geographical district within Maricopa County, thereby providing board representation for the student populations served by RSC locations across the county. The remaining two positions are at-large elected positions. Autonomy is supported through members serving a staggered four-year term.

Governing Board members follow established roles and authorities defined by Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) Board Policies and Administrative Regulations with decisions for day-to-day functions delegated to the district's Chancellor, who in turn provides direction to RSC's President and administrative leadership team. Following open meeting laws, Governing Board meeting agendas and approved minutes are published on the MCCCD Board Operations webpage. Constituents also have the opportunity to express concerns or comments during a meeting's 'Call to the Public'. The board, faculty and external consultants collaborated to develop the 2021-22 Faculty Agreement, which ensures academic matters (including faculty's role in shared governance, academic freedom, and curriculum, etc.) are the primary responsibility of residential faculty. This Agreement details the process for faculty recommendations and the opportunity for faculty representation at regular Governing Board meetings. The board recognizes the district faculty association as the primary owner and official representative for RSC (and MCCCD) residential faculty.

The MCCCD Board Policies and Administrative Regulations, accessible on the District's Maricopa Governance Process webpage, exhibits the expectations and guidelines for complying with Board policies and practices. The Governance Commitment states the board's primary responsibilities as

ensuring the district achieves results appropriate to the community's needs (per board policies) with a continuing commitment to its Vision and Mission. The board's Governing Values set a foundation for governance, observing policy governance principles as its framework and include policies related to public stewardship and ethics training, governing board code of conduct, and governance process.

New board members complete stewardship and ethics training within a year of election and every three years thereafter. Ethics, specifically adherence to federal, state, and local laws as well as professional standards, dictated by this role are expected and stated in the 4.3 Board Job Description and 4.10 Governing Board Code of Conduct. The board complies with the institution's commitment to integrity by abiding to 4.2 Manner of Governing in lawfully governing, supporting nonpartisan decisions, and emphasizing strategic leadership. As with other employees, the board discloses any 'conflict of interest' and acts in good faith regarding institutional assets and resources. In supporting continuous improvement, 4.2.13 Manner of Governing, the board will regularly self-evaluate its decision-making based on criteria listed in the Governance Process "to improve its process and performance."

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

RSC (and the district) base their understanding of and support for academic freedom and freedom of expression on AAUP's 1915 Declaration of Principles and the 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure, which emphasize higher education institutions' purpose for the "common good" and not for the individual faculty's or institution's best interests. These two documents establish four guiding principles for teaching and learning that include (1) freedom of instruction, (2) freedom of research and publication, (3) freedom of intramural expression, and (3) freedom of extramural expression.

RSC aligns with the district's 6.24 Public Access and Expression on District Property [Free Expression Policy] to support free expression and is available via the district's website. Item B of Section 2-Guiding Principles reiterates the importance of providing an environment that supports the exchange of ideas without fear of persecution as a means for distributing knowledge. Section C further details the expectations for free inquiry and expression in relation to varying views and opinions, while Section 3 of this Policy addresses expectations for freedom of speech and assembly. Additional RSC activities to support free expression are detailed in the submission of an annual *Free Expression Report* to the district and the availability of library materials promoting free and open access of literary materials.

Section 3.1 - Academic Freedom, within RSC's Faculty Agreement establishes a foundation for its' commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression. This commitment is evidenced in the statement's inclusion of the phrases, "All Faculty are entitled to instructional freedom…" and "...determine curriculum and relevant subject matter for courses..." The statement continues by acknowledging faculty speaking outside of their institutional role, "...shall be free from institutional censorship or discipline..." Faculty are also entitled to freely research and publish findings, while abiding to Article 4-Intellectual Property Rights.

In addition, this commitment is expressed in RSC's *Academic Freedom Philosophy Statement,* which emphasizes faculty's role and participation in developing, monitoring, and maintaining curriculum. RSC's *Academic Freedom Philosophy Statement* continues in supporting the idea of academic liberty with the first bulleted item stating faculty have the authority to change course content when appropriate. The second bulleted item of this Statement continues by expressly stating faculty have the freedom to provide recommendations for improvement to lesson and/or program assessments. Additional bulleted items address the faculty role specific to student/faculty relationship, department/program improvements and evaluation of student performance.

Further evidence of RSC's commitment to academic freedom is found with faculty representation on

the district's Committee on Academic Freedom. The committee's charge is to provide education and training in the area of academic freedom, serve as a "source of expertise for collegial dispute resolution" and serve as support for a culture of academic freedom and freedom of expression. Intentionally diverse committee membership in role, college representation, and discipline promotes multiple perspectives with the majority of membership being faculty. Four subcommittees: (1) Education and Training, (2) Dispute Resolution, (3) Faculty Discipline, and (4) Policy Review and Recommendation reinforce this Committee's charge of promoting a culture of academic freedom and freedom of expression

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Rating

Met

Rationale

An Institutional Review Board webpage (found on the district's website) provides documents, forms, and links needed for the application process and information related to research requirements and regulations. Individuals (faculty, staff, students) conducting research at RSC are held to professional standards by meeting the expectations found within the district's Institutional Review Board (IRB) Policy within Section 3 of Administrative Regulations on the MCCCD website. The IRB's primary purpose notes compliance with federal regulations as related to research and is "to identify, assess and manage any potential risks associated with conducting research with human subject participants." The roles and responsibilities section relate the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost of Academic and Student Affairs as having the primary responsibility of the district's IRB and process, which includes identifying the necessary training and procedures needed for federal regulation compliance and ensuring no harm comes to those conducting and/or participating in the research. Furthermore, the IRB ensures human subjects research activities follow established federal and state laws and regulations.

The Review Board's composition at RSC consists of a chair and co-chair (selected by the Vice President of Academic Affairs), faculty members, and a research director (serving as co-chair). Membership intentionally represents multiple areas (instructional, research, staff, and administration) to support inclusion and varying perspectives and align with federal guidelines for IRB composition. RSC's IRB chair serves as its representative on the district's IRB. Both the district and RSC IRB committees follow a district IRB Handbook, which includes information such as the IRB's purpose, basic principles, authority, functional relationships, membership, and detailed procedures for reviewing applications. This Policy continues by stating that an annual review of the IRB's activities is conducted, and results are shared with the CEC and Governing Board as a means for modeling continuous improvement.

RSC's learning outcome, Information Literacy, supports scholarly research through the assessment of student learning. Students understanding of the ethical use of information is woven within

instruction and is assessed at the college-, program-, and course levels. An example of support services provided by the institution are the variety of online tutorials via Library Services. Online tutorials provide guidance on topics such as evaluating sources for credibility and how to properly research material though the several databases (e.g. EBSCO, US Major Dailies, scholarly journals, etc.) enlisted by Library Services.

RSC provides a summary on academic honesty and integrity via its Academic Ethics and Integrity webpage that includes statements on plagiarism, course syllabi, tutorials, a college-wide civility process, and a review process for student concerns and complaints. In addition, information is available for students on maintaining online coursework integrity. District policy, Administrative Regulations (AR) Section 2, Students-2.3 Scholastic Standards provides information on the Academic Misconduct Policy to include definitions, academic consequences, disciplinary sanctions, and appeals of sanctions and consequences. Information related to this academic misconduct and integrity policy is included on all course syllabi. The institution's Office of Academic Integrity (OAI) ensures oversight for authenticating assignment submissions, employs a proprietary system to detect plagiarism within assignments, and also enforces plagiarism through the use of Turnitin, an anti-plagiarism subscription. The OAI has oversight of academic misconduct records and alerts faculty of students with a history of academic misconduct. The process for academic misconduct infractions includes interventions of an educational nature to address confirmed incidents of misconduct, which are led by RSC's Faculty Chairs. If applicable, incidents of academic misconduct are adjudicated by the Academic Integrity Council (including the Associate Dean of Community Standards) following district policy, 2.5.1 Disciplinary Standards. Recommendations for Disciplinary Probation, Suspension or Expulsion are referred to a student conduct board for adjudication. Should students disagree with the consequences of academic misconduct they may seek resolution through the institutional grievance process or appeal a conduct board finding.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Rationale

RSC demonstrated a strong commitment to institutional integrity through its materials and visit session responses, highlighting a level of collaboration within the institution that is to be commended. District policies and procedures establish expectations for a collegial environment and provide a foundation for individual accountability in conduct and professionalism. Materials and training for ethical behavior are evident and assist in meeting local, state, and federal compliance requirements. Employee and student handbooks set expectations for ethical and responsible performance that include a clear process for student and/or employee misconduct, complaints, and concerns. On-site interviews confirmed the *Website Statement of Governance* is continually applied in ensuring the accuracy of website information. RSC's Office of Institutional Integrity and Compliance is widely instrumental in leading efforts to ensure continual and consistent oversight.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

Faculty confirmed Rio Salado College (RSC) shares a district-wide curriculum approval process with nine other colleges within the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). RSC has designated Faculty Chairs who represent the institution on Instructional Councils in the process for the course and program development, coordination, and review of the college's curriculum. RSC's faculty are represented on many of the district-wide, discipline-specific committees that oversee the common course bank and shared programs offered across the district. RSC, along with all institutions in the district, began the transformation to Guided Pathways to achieve greater consistency across all institutions. The process started with Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) developed through the Instructional Councils of the district.

The RSC Curriculum Committee receives monthly updates from the Curriculum Department. Lesson outcomes are developed and aligned with official course competencies and assessed at the appropriate level. The relevancy and appropriateness of RSC's curriculum is best exemplified by the programs preparing students for state licensure.

The example provided demonstrates alignment with the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) descriptors through the overall design of the Early Childhood Education AAS and CCL. The Early Childhood Education AAS and CCL demonstrate how the learning outcomes for the AAS, and program competencies of the CCL are similar while the description and purpose for each are different.

There is a centrally developed, single version of a given course, with all of the content and

assessments included. Individual instructors have the freedom to enhance the lessons with additional information and resources. Print courses differ from online courses only in that copyright-cleared printed copies of all readings are provided to students, in lieu of being linked in the online version of the course.

The centralized model presents several advantages to RSC's instructors and students such as course materials having a consistent look, feel, and navigation. RSC leverages a rolling schedule where students can enroll in most of RSC's online courses on any of the 40+ Mondays per year. The college has a well-developed infrastructure for maintaining this model, including a block calendar system for degree- or certificate program seekers.

In distance education and hybrid courses, faculty are expected to provide personalized responses to electronic communications within 48 hours. In the meeting with faculty, examples were provided of regular and substantive interaction with students in distance education courses with timely and personalized feedback for all electronic communications from and with students, graded assignments, and final grades. Feedback shared in the student forum supported this action. Distance education courses are delivered primarily over the Internet through an institutionally developed Learning Management System, RioLearn, including one- or two-way video communications.

RSC has identified the benefit of the one course, many sections model is that student performance data can be collected more easily, assessments are uniform across all sections of a course. This results in the ability to implement solutions across all future sections of the course including updating course content, assessments, or recommendations for teaching strategies simultaneously. The Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD) enables assessment across all RSC course sections of student learning outcomes in thousands of online courses.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The district established curriculum and transfer articulation as the key factors in the development of general education programs. According to the MCCCD website, and Arizona General Education Curriculum flyer, the general studies for the district are aligned with the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) requirements that are a set of 35-37 credits accepted through statewide articulation agreements at Arizona State University (ASU), Northern Arizona University (NAU), and the University of Arizona (UA). The AGEC support RSC's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging values of its general education program. RSC delivers general education courses through a myriad of modalities including online, hybrid, face-to-face, print, dual enrollment, and partnership programs. RSC's general education chairs participate in a formal General Education Program Review including the analysis of student learning outcomes specific to general education across the district.

The framework for General Education used across the district incorporates elements across the curriculum with the intention to foster personal development and essential knowledge and skills. RSC has adopted the five student learning outcomes of Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, Oral Communications, Reading, and Writing as the focus of college-wide student learning assessment work. RSC uses its internal assessment tool, Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD), to track and respond to student learning outcomes across the five outcomes adopted by the institution. According to their website (https://www.riosalado.edu/about/teaching-and-learning/assessment-student-learning), 80% of students achieved college level in the areas of Writing, Information Literacy, and Oral Communications, compared to 83% of co-curricular students. Although Critical

Thinking and Reading fell just below the college level expectations the website demonstrated how the data is used in their dental assisting program to improve the outcomes from 57% to 100% for the program.

RSC has identified diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging as core values and vision statements. In FY2020-21, the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging Council sponsored a series of Equity Action Sessions and Forums geared towards students and employees. RSC offers an array of credit-bearing courses that focus on human and cultural diversity.

Although RSC faculty are not required to engage in scholarship or creative work, several faculty continue to publish and present in their fields through professional organizations as part of the professional development. Students contribute to scholarship and creative works through the Honors Program. The district annually recognizes students for their accomplishments academically, service to the community, and leadership beyond the classroom.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

RSC follows the district policies (MCCCD's Equal Employment Opportunity) in an effort to hire and maintain a diverse workforce and embrace the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Based on FY2020-21 demographic data, RSC faculty and staff closely reflect the student population they serve in terms of gender. Based on the RSC demographic comparisons Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American faculty and staff tend to be underrepresented when compared to the overall student body.

RSC maintains a nontraditional faculty structure. In general, RSC has one full-time faculty in residence in each academic department who serves as the Faculty Chair. This unique model differs from more traditional faculty chair models found elsewhere. To support this unique model RSC has a significant support organization to support faculty chairs. This structure allows RSC to maintain a compact, flexible leadership group with discipline expertise to manage programs, curriculum, student learning assessment, projects, initiatives, and services while supervising a large contingent of adjunct faculty. Faculty instructional support personnel are often experienced, fully credentialed adjunct faculty. RSC's nontraditional model leverages greater flexibility in staffing classes, including online classes with multiple annual start dates.

The district has established minimum faculty qualifications, approved through the appropriate

Instructional Council, and posted to their website to comply with the Higher Learning Commission's minimum faculty qualifications. A review of the website and sample minimum qualifications documents demonstrate the appropriate minimum qualification for hiring faculty. An on-site review of 18 faculty files selected at random of RSC residential, adjunct, and dual credit faculty confirmed the qualifications were appropriate for the disciplines and courses being taught.

Residential faculty, in probationary status, are reviewed annually through the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) process for the first five years of employment. Adjunct faculty are evaluated a minimum of one time each semester for the first three semesters of teaching, then annually or any time they have a new course to teach.

RSC residential faculty are provided faculty professional growth (FPG) funds through the district. The district supported RSC faculty with $115,498 for conference registration and travel in FPG funds from 2018 to 2020. RSC provides additional support for conferences and travel, as needed if residential faculty exhaust their district allocation and are representing RSC in an area of specialization. In addition to the financial support, the district provides leadership in teaching and learning, innovative instructional resources, and other forms of professional development

RSC requires adjunct faculty to attend a minimum of two professional development opportunities each academic year. RSC tracks this requirement through their Faculty Information System (FIS), and faculty chairs can identify those not meeting the requirement. All Faculty Meetings, held in both the Fall and Spring, provide sessions of general interest, workshops on assessment, and RioChats with colleagues as well as department meetings. Additional online workshops are provided on online teaching, student learning outcomes, course development, learning theory, and more.

The instructional support model and published department expectations outline that faculty must respond to student inquiries to ensure regular and substantive interaction with students. This provides opportunities for students to communicate with faculty on course content, instructional support, as well as other questions. Students receive an end-of-course survey that focuses on instructor communications and self-assessment by the student.

RSC's student support staff are hired according to the criteria established by the district. Regular in-service training is conducted for all departments under Student Affairs. The Quality Assurance (QA) & Training Team has created and implemented a system to provide pre-scheduled internal standardized training modules at set intervals including admissions, student information systems, enrollment, guided pathways, as well as others.

Approximately 70% of current tutors are drawn from the ranks of the RSC's credentialed adjunct faculty. The Adult Education program allocates a minimum of 10% of its annual grant funding to job-embedded professional learning for instructors and staff. Tutors are subject-matter experts, of whom over 90% have a master's degree in their subject areas. RSC Adult Education staff attend a wide variety of conferences and training events to ensure ongoing currency and accuracy of the content of the curriculum.

Financial Aid staff are required to complete a three-month training program at the start of their employment. Financial Aid staff participates in in-person and virtual webinars for state, regional, and national Financial Aid workshops and conferences.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

RSC supports students through their student support services infrastructure providing support across multiple modalities including in-person, online, live chat, telephone, and email. RSC utilizes the district's Admissions, Registration, and Records department for student registration, transcript requests, evaluation of transfer credit, determining residency status, and student identification.

The financial aid office provides students with assistance with the financial aid process including processing, awarding, authorization, and returns of financial aid, as well as Title IV programs. The district has outsourced its first-level inquiries to a third party staffed with trained agents to address these calls.

Counseling and career services are staffed by two of RSC's residential faculty, five adjunct faculty, career services manager, and student services specialists. RSC aids students with documented disabilities through their Office of Disability Resources and Services.

To better support online students and faculty, RSC has established its Instructional Helpdesk to support students with questions specific to their courses, facilitate interaction with adjunct instructors, and assist faculty chairs in mentoring, training, and evaluating adjunct faculty.

RSC provides in-person testing services across nine locations in the district to meet the needs for midterms and final exams, course placement options, prior learning exams, certification exams, adult education assessments, and proctoring services. The testing services are available with extended evening and weekend hours to accommodate student schedules.

Students have access to tutoring services covering nineteen subject areas, GED and placement exam preparation, and writing across the curriculum. Tutors are subject matter experts who are drawn from the adjunct faculty. RSC provides online tutoring through its outsourced contractor Brainfuse which

offers 24x7 access.

RSC conducts the Priorities Survey for Online Learners on regular basis to help identify and assess the effectiveness of their student services across a myriad of areas including registration for online courses, clarity of the financial aid process, online career services, and tutoring services for online courses.

RSC is an open enrollment school and uses multiple third-party assessments such as Accuplacer, EdReady, ACT, SAT, and High School GPA to determine where to place students. Students are provided a personalized study plan to help them identify and master the required concepts for course placement. All students have access to free tutoring on all campuses, including Brainfuse tutoring service, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Adult students returning to school also have resources available to them like a refresher course before entering as a college student.

Academic advisors work with students towards completing the programs that meet their career and university goals. During the visit, multiple examples communicated from students and advisors confirmed this work. RioCompass provides students, staff, and faculty with 24x7 access to resources designed to assist in facilitating student success and goal completion. Students and advisors are able to access and review the degree progress report and pathway planner in RSC's student information system to ensure the needed courses for the program are taken for completion. Academic advisors reach out to them through multiple modalities, including telephone, email, and text. Appointments are available in-person, via Zoom, or by telephone.

RSC supports student learning through resources like academic support, tutoring, library services, academic counseling, career, and disability resources. RSC supports a large online student population and has committed substantial financial resources to ensure online systems are dependable and accessible. This commitment includes sufficient resources needed to deliver as well as backup online systems. RSC maintains a customized in-house learning management system called RioLearn.

The RSC Science Lab provides assembled kits, sold through the bookstore, to meet the needs of online science students across13 courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physical Science and Physics. Biology students can simulate the operations of a microscope through RSCs virtual microscope. Students have access to computer labs at four locations in the district. Library Services are kept current through adequate resources.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Rationale

RSC programs and curriculum are approved at the district level through the Instructional Councils and implemented locally. RSC provides courses and programs that are relevant to the local market they serve by working with area employers to identify local needs delivering them through online, hybrid, face-to-face, dual enrollment, and correspondence modalities. Students are able to enroll and begin most of RSC's online courses on 40+ Mondays per year. The Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD) enables assessment of college-wide student learning outcomes across over a million assessments in thousands of online courses.

The framework of General Education at MCCCD includes specific elements across the curriculum designed to foster personal development and essential knowledge and skills. To facilitate the achievement of these characteristics. The institution demonstrates comprehensive, rigorous, and high-quality general education programs. The general education curriculum is highly sustainable and founded on procedures and processes that provide a platform for regular and on-going review.

As a two-year college, RSC does not directly engage in scholarship as one of its primary functions. RSC residential faculty are instructional leaders who remain current in their fields by participating actively in professional organizations, pursuing regular professional growth opportunities, academic publishing, and presenting at conferences. Students contribute to scholarly works through the Honors Program which provides intellectually stimulating learning opportunities for academically outstanding students. Students are recognized annually for their outstanding academic achievements, community service and leadership.

RSC works with the district leadership to ensure that faculty and support staff have the appropriate resources, facilities, and support to maintain a high level of relevancy and effectiveness. RSC's programs and activities contribute to the educational experience of students and their overall development. They also make certain that students have access to a wide variety of educational, social, and cultural activities throughout the year regardless of instructional location. The program is well suited to student success, and it is a good example of student success.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Rio Salado College's (RSC's) participation in the 2007 HLC Assessment of Student Learning Academy formed their program review model. Assurance Argument evidence and a review of RSC's public facing Program Review webpage demonstrates comprehensive program reviews take place every three-five years following a documented schedule. A report template is used by program and the final recommendations are submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for approval or additional action before being posted on the webpage. Open forum and visit focus session discussion confirmed that faculty, faculty chairs, staff, and leaders are engaged in the robust program review process and solid examples shared confirmed a culture of continuous improvement exists and that the college acts upon findings from its program review process. On-site discussions with program directors and faculty disclosed faculty and staff are intentionally integrated into the decisions and improvement strategies resulting from RSC's comprehensive program review structure.

RSC utilizes the District's Transfer of Credit Policy and procedure to direct institutional transfer of credits and awarding of credits transferred from other institutions of higher learning, including advanced placement, CLEP, and other forms of prior learning, to ensure the quality of all credits accepted. RSC provides students with detailed guidance regarding the transfer of credits through its public website and RSC's admission registration and records department evaluates transfer equivalency per the college policy guided by input and approval from faculty. The district's general education program relies on the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) to identify the set of 35-37 courses that satisfy general education requirements at Arizona State University (ASU), Northern Arizona University (NAU), and the University of Arizona (UA) through statewide articulation agreements. A review of RSC's webpage and onsite discussion confirmed that documented transfer steps, search opportunities, and student support exists for supporting seamless transfer of credits to other institutions.

RSC provides dual credit opportunities to area high schools under the guidance of the District's Dual Enrollment Catalog which governs which courses may be offered. All course sections follow a standardized course syllabus and use identical learning outcomes regardless of delivery mode or location. Course syllabi are developed using the college's proprietary Syllabus Builder tool. Syllabi submitted through the Assurance Argument and Federal Compliance Review confirmed consistency of required elements across delivery methods. During the visit, participants of the President's Advisory Council commended the institution for its long-standing and progressive work in supporting a robust dual credit program that is valued and respected by the community it serves.

Discussion with RSC confirmed the institution in collaboration with the faculty chairs oversee all aspect of program course creation, co-and pre-requisites, and course revisions. Faculty forum dialog highlighted several examples for communication and input opportunities including bi-annual faculty meetings and routine department team meetings to recommend curriculum modifications focused on student success. RSC evaluates the success of its graduates through the graduate alumni survey and a review of program review reports affirmed results are integrated into each report. Feedback provided during the visit provided evidence that transfer success of its students is routinely collected and reviewed. The college also works collaboratively with the Education Service Partnerships (ESP) to indirectly evaluate employment and workforce successes of ESP students who gain employment.

The college maintains specialized accreditation for four programs. A peer review of RSC's electronic catalog and webpages for each program confirm license disclosure information for students are publicly available and describe how programs prepare completers for licensure. A review of the college website and visit conversations revealed the college's specialized accreditation to be in good standing.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Rating

Met

Rationale

RSC has identified five college-wide learning outcomes supporting assessment of student learning across the curriculum. The college publicly states its philosophy of assessment on the assessment website and in the college catalog. Faculty visit forum discussions acknowledged assessments utilize standardized rubrics, which are posted on the RSC's assessment website. Standardized rubrics include outcome definitions and attributes to guide evaluation. Three of RSC's institutional outcomes use the ETS Proficiency Profile to compare academic competence for critical thinking, reading, writing, and mathematics achievement. Webpage reviews and faculty forum discussions revealed substantial data collection at the institutional level (core competencies) is routinely used to evaluate student performance at the institution. On-site conversations confirmed faculty routinely and continually integrate course level assessment data with institutional outcomes evidence to improve teaching and learning.

RSC shares annual assessment reports on the public webpage. The 2020-2021 Annual Assessment Report Summary, and subsequent prior year reports provided extensive evidence of assessment data aligned to college level outcome including: data on overall student outcomes associated with institutional outcomes, interventions and outcomes for course level assessment, and trends over time. Faculty chairs and part-time teaching faculty collaborate in monitoring student performance through an institution developed, real time, Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD) dashboard. In addition, the 2020-2021 annual report highlights a strategy for monitoring student outcomes using objective course assignments and an item analysis structure to assess the quality of assessment items. Dialog with multiple stakeholder groups during the site visit confirmed universal awareness and integrated use of student assessment data throughout the organization.

Guided by RSC's assessment philosophy, the Learning Assessment team coordinates all aspect of assessment of student learning. An annual Assessment of Learning Report provides results of student learning outcome attainment at the institution, program, and course level. Visit discussions routinely referenced course level measurement, supported by the institutions Total Quality Management philosophy, using the Plan Do Check Act (PDCA) cycle. Assessment professional

development for both fulltime and part-time faculty is supported through biannual and best-practice discussion meetings and RioLogs (Rio Learning Outcome grants). Faculty strongly endorsed the design as something that provides valuable opportunities for faculty chairs and adjunct to implement improvements in assessment. Faculty chairs report results of the PDCA cycle data annually to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and include information in the annual assessment report. The report is shared with RSC employees during institutional All Faculty Meetings and is available on the college public assessment website.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

RSC set a strategic enrollment management goal that is documented in Strategic Plan 2020-2024. To further focus their work, the college established a Strategic Management enrollment cross-functional team in 2020 and developed a set of goals aligned to the district's Wildly Important Goals (WIG) to increase equitable student completion and transfer results. Discussions during the visit provided testimony that the institution has aligned their goals with the district's goals through a bottom-up design which allowed departments to identify purposeful goals creating buy-in. Department staff shared examples during the visit of how each department holds each other accountable by routinely reviewing scoreboard data. The institution has embraced the 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX) model as a method for creating clear focus on critical deliverables using leading indicators. As part of this initiative, Microsoft Power BI visual data is being incorporated into the monitoring structure.

RSC's 2021 data shows increased persistence rate from 39.76% compared to a 2020 average of 30.48%. The most recent completion data shows a 2018 six-year graduation completion rate of 26.79%. Data and discussion indicated that an average of 75% of RSC students between 2016 and 2021 were considered guest students which have different completion goals than traditional students. Comments from visit forum discussions and budget staffing review provided evidence of robust student services to monitor and support this student group. Sufficient methods for collecting and analyzing data on student retention, persistence, and completion exists and data is easily accessible to faculty and staff. RSC employs a robust data set of measures in the Power BI tools including student intent, credits attempted and earned credits, persistence, and completion. Data is disaggregated by ethnicity, gender age, first generation and academic load. The College surveys students to examine

credential seeking status. The college also performs annual Program Reviews, which include measures of program completion. The processes and methodologies used by RSC are well-suited to the college's mission.

RSC's Institutional Research department prepares comprehensive reports regarding retention, persistence, and completion as part of the program review process and on-demand data is available to program chairs though the Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DAAD) system. An overview and demonstration of the DAAD system during the site visit showcased the breadth and depth of information available to academic and non-academic groups to improve results. In addition, Institutional Research provides a weekly key metrics' report to teams across the college and on-site conversations revealed a strong commitment to student retention, persistence, and completion exists among academic program and non- academic departments.

Evidence presented during the visit confirmed that RSC has a set of benchmarking initiatives to evaluate performance and student outcomes as compared to its peers. The institution has participated in the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP), Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) and Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) to collect national benchmarking data for comparisons to peer institutions. As a member of the Maricopa County Community College District, RSC has access for benchmarking institutional outcomes against its nine sister colleges.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Rationale

RSC has processes and systems in place to evaluate and monitor teaching and learning. The college supports its educational programs as it has partnered with area public schools to provide dual credit options.

RSC uses an appropriate program review process to ensure the viability and currency of its academic offerings. The college employs a variety of approaches to support its students and operates with a "students first" approach. RSC has used the results of its program review process, input from advisory boards, part-time faculty, and student feedback to continuously improve its course and program offerings to meet student needs.

The college has established a process to assess student learning at the course, program, and institutional levels and has a comprehensive approach to distribute data to faculty and staff at the institution as a means to improve teaching and learning.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Rio Salado College (RSC) operates within a district structure wherein the system-wide Governing Board and district leadership professionals share responsibility for management of RSC affairs with various leadership teams and groups indigenous to RSC. The college is represented on all major district-wide committees and councils.

RSC has established a range of operating groups in support of shared governance. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Executive Team, the President's Cabinet, the President's Advisory Council, the Dean's Council, Faculty Senate, Instructional Councils, the Curriculum Committee and others. It is significant that all major internal stakeholder groups (students, faculty, staff, and professional staff) enjoy membership on most of these committees.

Interviews with district leadership as well as members of the RSC campus indicate that processes of sharing responsibilities between the district and institution are clear and understood by all stakeholders. Faculty leadership at RSC reported that they have clear ability to establish unique courses on campus in support of their programs.

The district interim Executive Vice President described the nature of the relationship between district leadership and the RSC President. It is clear that the RSC president has authority to operate the institution and to share those responsibilities with campus stakeholders.

The college has developed a wide range of data tools and reporting in support of using data to inform planning and decision-making. It is worth noting that the dashboards established by the college report not only real time data but also include the goals establish by the strategic planning process. This better enables decision-makers to understand where the college is meeting expectations or, perhaps, falling short. RSC offers evidence to support the assertion that the data is actively conveyed to key groups such as the Executive Team and others. Enrollment data and reports on key metrics have informed specific actions described in prior sections of this argument. RSC documents how data was researched and analyzed leading to development of Strategic Plan Goal 1.

It is evident the college has a wide range of data, a plan for the development of key information, and systems for disseminating that information. Of perhaps more significance is the evidence documenting that data and information is widely available to decision-makers and that key decisions are informed by available data.

Academic requirements and policies are established at the district level. As described above, RSC is represented in all key groups responsible for setting requirements and establishing policies. Based on information presented, it is clear that RSC faculty (primarily full-time resident faculty), staff, and professional leadership are represented in these district policy bodies. What is less clear, is if RSC students have direct lines of communication with the groups responsible for academic requirements, policy, and processes. RSC described a new (2019) Student Senate composed of one student senator from each institution. The college indicates the RSC student senator engages with the President's Cabinet and co-curricular groups on campus. RSC students have representation within key policy groups at the institution. Students who were interviewed indicated that they felt they had access to information and pathways for their voices to be heard in the policy process.

RSC is highly dependent on adjunct faculty to carry a major portion of the teaching load. The college indicates that adjunct faculty "provide valuable feedback on policies and processes." RSC reports that "Faculty Focus Forums" are the vehicle for bringing adjunct faculty together to review policy changes, professional development, and findings from survey information. During interviews with full-time and adjunct faculty, forum participants offered evidence concerning these forums, the level of participation, the details concerning topics discussed, and how the views of adjunct faculty are used to inform decisions about academic requirements and policy, particularly as these decisions appear to be controlled at the district level. The evidence presented from the 2019 Adjunct Faculty Survey reported that adjunct faculty are "knowledgeable regarding policies and procedures in their departments." Forum participants confirmed this information.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Rating

Met

Rationale

As a unit of MCCCD, RSC operates, implements, and directs hiring and employment policies established at the district level. The college depends on administrators, managers, and faculty who chair selection committees to ensure that appropriate qualifications are set for new hires and that the new hires meet necessary credential and experience requirements.

RSC offers employees a variety of web-based resources to support effective onboarding as well as ongoing professional training and development. The revised Rio Wave orientation is an impressive multi-day effort to bring new employees onboard and provide substantial information as well as introducing the new employee to the institutional culture and expectations.

The college has established a new awards and recognition system. Although the system is too new to report substantial information, the process appears to be a meaningful method of recognizing employee service. RSC places a high value on employee wellness and offer clear evidence supporting the institutional commitment to employee health.

During conversation with the RSC's Vice President of Administrative Services, it was confirmed that the MCCCD Professional Development Program is open to all stakeholder groups. According to evidence presented and confirmed by the Vice President, RSC has expended $150,000+ annually for professional development training and activities.

The RSC budget allocates $1.26 million for technology. During conversation, the Vice President indicated that the institution expends significantly more than this figure and that the additional funds are located within other sections of the operating budget.

RSC outlines the three goals of the strategic plan and asserts that these goals are in keeping with available resources. Specifically, the plan targets increased investment in support services, investment in student technologies, modernizing the learning management system, increasing

resources to provide DEIB leadership, invest in instructional support, and more. The plan appears to require significant new resources or reallocation of existing resources. Yet, no direct evidence is provided to indicate how these initiatives will be funded. More to the point, in 5.B-3, RSC specifically describes financial shortfalls in a key area of funding (Fund 2).

These questions were addressed by the RSC Vice President of Administrative Services during a conversation concerning available resources and plans for addressing shortfalls. The Vice President indicated that the goals in the strategic plan are multi-year objectives and that the institution is setting aside additional funds for programs supporting those goals. The Vice President anticipates that the institution will be able to fully fund the programs and meet the objectives over a three to five year period. Additionally, the Vice President addressed the shortfall in Fund 2 and indicated that RSC has plans for reducing expenses and increasing revenues to bring that fund back to even. It was clear from the conversations that RSC leadership is well aware of finances, challenges, and that plans are in place to address all concerns.

RSC describes a clear process for coordinating budget planning between the institution and MCCCD. The district has a well-defined process that includes input and participation by all institutions. The RSC Executive Team holds an annual budget retreat for developing the institutional requests for the district. The team receives input from all divisions, which includes participation by staff, faculty, and professional staff.

The college underscores current concerns regarding recent shortfalls in one fund (Fund 2). RSC has funded shortfalls from reserves and has developed plans to eliminate shortfalls in future budgets.

It is clear from MCCCD budget documents that RSC has sufficient financial resources to serve existing programs and opportunities. Nevertheless, the concern raised in 5.B-2 related to plans for increased resource commitment and revenue shortfall raises questions about how the college plans to fund the new initiatives. The MCCCD financial report delineates the revenue shortfall for RSC on page 20. That budget further suggests that the RSC budget will show little increase for the year.

From conversation with RSC staff and district finance leaders, it is obvious that the institution has access to sufficient resources to meet all program needs. It is also clear that there are plans in place to manage any shortfalls that may occur in the near future (through sufficient reserves) and that plans are well in hand to ensure that future needs are met.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Rating

Met

Rationale

RSC operates as part of a district model for managing resources. Primary decisions concerning allocation of resources, in bulk, are made at the district level according to allocation formulas and unique needs of each institution. RSC maintains local control over decisions concerning allocation of resources and management of the annual budget. RSC along with other institutions in the MCCCD system use Performance Monitoring Reports to track and compare budgets, expenses, and revenues. RSC has access to a district-wide dashboard that reports aggregated financial information as well as individual results for institutions.

RSC links budget and resource planning to assessment of academic programs (and student learning) as well as institutional operations. As mentioned in 5.C.1., overall allocation of resources occurs at the district level according to pre-established formulas and processes. RSC has full opportunity to present requests for resources within this process. RSC maintains full authority over allocation of resources within the institution and is able to align resources with needs and opportunities using the annual budget process, the program review process, and review of non-instructional operations. RSC has noted challenges in coordination of district-level planning with institutional-level planning. RSC is collaborating with district office leadership to implement additional software tools that will support enhanced coordination and planning.

At the institutional level, RSC maintains a strong commitment to Total Quality Management and Continuous Improvement using the Plan-Do-Check-Act framework. It was obvious from meetings with faculty and staff that this commitment is deeply embedded within the institutional culture and that there is keen awareness of these principles and commitment to improvement.

RSC deploys a range of software tools for monitoring and tracking resources, outcomes, and operations. Institutional effectiveness staff and collaborative teams manage these tools.

Strategic planning occurs at the district level and at the institutional level. The MCCCD Governing Board sets the overall direction and broad objectives for the system while RSC has responsibility for developing an institutional plan aligned with district objectives. In 2020, RSC utilized benchmark data from CampusWorks to evaluate itself against 14 other institutions operating similar to RSC. A direct outcome of this effort was the creation of a new position: Vice President for Strategy and Advancement.

The new strategic plan was published in 2020 and is operated on a four-year cycle to enhance responsiveness. Implementation of the plan is institution-wide and involves development of Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) throughout the institution in support of the plan. The plan is monitored through dedicated 4DX scoreboards with close monitoring by the executive team.

The MCCCD system has developed robust tools for monitoring resources and expenditures on a district level and disaggregated to individual institutions. RSC professionals have access to near-real time data through the district system as well as through institution-based tools. RSC noted declines in revenue within Fund 2 (operations) and has already adjusted budgets and plans to compensate for this shortfall. The RSC team has established plans to re-align resources and build Fund 2 revenue back to normal levels post-pandemic. It is worth noting that RSC is open about challenges and issues and appears to have well-established processes in place for monitoring and adapting operations as necessary. RSC has developed a set of institution-based budget reports that offer timely data to all operating departments concerning revenue and expenses.

RSC has developed a custom-built LMS in support of its unique online learning model within the MCCCD system. This LMS allows for an increased number of course starts in support of non-traditional students. RSC devotes significant effort to managing technology and planning for changes in technology as student needs continue to adapt. MCCCD has a system-wide technology plan but RSC goes further in maintaining an institutional level plan. Members of the RSC executive team reported that the institution maintains significant commitment of resources to monitoring and maintaining technology in support of the virtual learning model.

RSC works with MCCCD staff and leadership to maintain an active monitoring of the external environment both in workforce and local economic needs. RSC has collaborated with McKinsey Group, Hanover Research, and CampusWorks to develop ongoing scanning and analysis of needs and opportunities. RSC maintains a well-staffed IR and IE function in support of college operations and evaluating both student and operational outcomes.

It is clear from information and evidence provided throughout this document that RSC is fully engaged and committed to the principles and concepts of continuous improvement. From the hiring of a Quality Assurance Manage in 2018 through broad understanding and commitment to the PDCA process, RSC is an institution that "walks-the-talk" of continuous improvement. Again, it was significant that so many RSC stakeholders attended meetings and uniformly espoused their commitment to the principles of improving process and operations on behalf of students. These stakeholders not only had the right words, they demonstrated a deep understanding of the college, the students, and their shared commitment to improving the institution operations in support of student success.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Rationale

Although RSC is a single institution, it operates within a strong system that includes nine other institutions. Throughout the reading of this Assurance Argument, questions arose concerning how RSC interfaced with MCCCD, whether or not RSC had sufficient independence and authority to operate, and how RSC operated with an entirely different form of course delivery. In the case of RSC and MCCCD, it took the information from documents, evidence, and personal interviews to develop a full picture of RSC and how the institution operates on behalf of students and in alignment with expectations of accreditation.

What emerged from the review process is a picture of a strong institution that is staffed by motivated professionals all of whom have deep knowledge and understanding of the institution, the students, and what it takes to help students succeed. Open forums were attended by literally hundreds of individuals who were more than willing to demonstrate that they are knowledgeable and committed to the institution and their students. Most impressive, in the open discussion was not the sheer number of participants, which was significant, it was the fact that so many participants were so knowledgeable and willing to express their views. If ever there was an example of an engaged faculty and staff, RSC is that example.

As in any district-based systems, there are questions of where the district stops and the institution begins. It was clear that MCCCD and RSC are fully engaged with each other yet sufficiently separate to allow for creation of the unique model that is RSC.

FC - Federal Compliance

Rating

Does not require monitoring

Federal Compliance Filing Form

- Rio_Salado_College_Federal_Compliance_Report_2021-2022_Plus_Appendix_A.1-A.6

Rationale

The peer review team, during the site visit, determined the Federal Compliance reviewer accurately represented the institution's compliance with all applicable requirements as outline below.

1. ASSIGNMENT OF CREDITS, PROGRAM LENGTH AND TUITION

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

Rio Salado College (RSC) has a clear policy related to the assignment of credit hours for all types of courses. This policy is set in accordance with Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) policies and procedures. This policy aligns with commonly accepted practice in this area and is available online. The college provided a collection of randomly selected syllabi to confirm course expectations align with policy, and contain a mixture of online and hybrid courses offered in Spring 2022. Each syllabi specifically spells out the class and study time for each class but is based on a 16-week format and includes a caveat to "be prepared to double your weekly class and study time if you choose an accelerated calendar." A review of individual course gradebooks and "Reading, Resources, and Assignments" indicate the amount of work required of students, after taking into account the overall length of the course, provides evidence that coursework expectations align with commonly accepted standards for credit assignment.

RSC also has a clear policy indicating how many credit hours must be completed at the institution before a certificate or degree can be awarded. The number of credits required to complete each degree and certificate are clearly noted in the institution's website. Tuition information is also found in policy and on RSC's website. This standard is met.

2. INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

The college has a clear process for students to submit complaints. This includes both grade disputes and general complaints. Links to submit complaints under either category are easy to locate on the

public website and the purpose of each one seem generally easy to understand.

Access to RSC's student complaint system is determined by user level. For example, the Director of Compliance and Institutional Integrity and ALO have administrative access. Students complete a complaint form via the appropriate webpage on RSC's website. The form requests student information such as name, student ID number, address, and phone number (optional), date of complaint, location of complaint, and requests students identify the type of complaint from a dropdown list that includes 'Other.'

The information is routed to the RSC's Office of Compliance & Institutional Integrity, where it is transferred by an administrative assistant into a centralized database. Complaints are reviewed at least once a week by the director. The director contacts those involved (individual/department/office) in the complaint to collect further research. Any time action is taken on the complaint, a message is forwarded to the student's college and personal (if provided) email communicating the progress taken and/or the resolution which has occurred. If a student needs to appeal the resolution, the student (or the director's office on behalf of the student) completes the form again, but it moves to a Tier 2 (requiring resolution within 10 business days) or Tier 3 (resolution within seven business days by a VP). Approximately 900 complaints have been collected since this system was implemented in 2016.

During the on-site visit, the director shared, as a quality improvement initiative, that the director's office is contacting former complainant's (from fall 2021) and requesting they complete a survey seeking their feedback for process improvement. This will continue each semester. As trends are tracked, the director noted that most complaints have been localized around customer service. The director is proactive in contacting the individual and/or department to schedule intentional professional development to address the customer service concerns. The director meets three times annually with RSC's call center to provide customer service training and has delivered ad hoc training to departments such as the Financial Aid call center. This standard is met.

3. PUBLICATION OF TRANSFER POLICIES

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

The college clearly disclosed articulation agreements that exist with partner institutions to facilitate transfer. This information is clear and easy to find on the website, emphasizing the importance of transfer to the college. RSC abides by MCCCD policy around the acceptance of transfer credit, which clearly specifies where the credit must have been awarded, acceptable grade range, and how the transcript must be delivered to the institution. There is also a clear policy around the awarding of prior learning assessment. This standard is met.

4. PRACTICES FOR VERIFICATION OF STUDENT IDENTITY

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

RSC utilizes methods to verify the identity of students that is consistent across all MCCCD institutions and students, as this is a policy that extends across the district. This applies to all students, and not just those in distance education courses. This documentation can be submitted in-person or electronically. Documentation must be government-issued, and applies to all courses

regardless of instructional modality. All employees are required to complete annual training on information security and privacy to ensure this information is protected and safeguarded. This standard is met.

5. PUBLICATION OF STUDENT OUTCOME DATA

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

RSC maintains required student outcome data public on its website. The website, titled "Consumer Information," aligns with generally accepted practices for displaying this information. To aid in understanding this information, the website also includes links to related offices should students want to obtain additional information or ask questions. This standard is met.

6. STANDING WITH STATE AND OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCIES

The institution meets HLC's requirements.

Rationale:

RSC has sought and secured programmatic accreditation for several programs. All of these appear on the college's website and are easy to find. None of the programs currently appear to be under sanctions. This standard is met.

APPENDIX A: TITLE IV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Complete this section only if the institution has submitted an Appendix A. Review any negative actions taken against the institution and identify any implications for the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or other HLC requirements. Provide a detailed rationale for any Core Components identified as Met with Concerns or Not Met.

Rationale:

MCCCD, of which RSC is a college, submits a single audit on behalf of the ten colleges within the district. The audit had five findings in 2019 and two additional findings in 2020. This includes inaccurate reporting to the National Student Loan Data System; the reporting of inaccurate Pell data on the Common Origination and Disbursement system; and no evidence it had performed the required risk assessment and documented safeguards of student financial aid information.

All five findings have since been resolved.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	
FC	Federal Compliance	Does not require monitoring

Review Summary

Conclusion

RSC embraces its values and is committed to honoring everyone's unique qualities with respect and dignity while serving students and the public good. The many college stakeholders the review team met during the visit portrayed a very professional organization with a highly engaged team of employees whose depth of knowledge regarding their programs, services, and partnerships was undeniable and commendable. The current president shared that "setting a strong culture allows us to serve our students." The strong campus culture repeatedly demonstrated throughout the visit, is a result of the team of professionals employed at RSC and the leadership embedded throughout the college, which allows RSC to make progress on their strategic goals and priorities.

RSC is committed to academic standards that promote continuous improvement in student learning. Their unique delivery model and programs, including 40+ Monday start dates a year and Rio National, allows RSC to serve students across the country, as well as in the Maricopa County community. Distance education courses are delivered through an institutionally developed Learning Management System, RioLearn, and faculty provide personalized interaction with students within 48 hours. As the largest provider of adult education courses in Arizona, RSC's award-winning programs prepare first-generation, underserved, and underprepared students for college and career success. RSC is the officially designated Arizona Veteran Supportive Campus, with a long-standing tradition of serving military communities in Maricopa County. Partnering with the Arizona Department of Corrections, RSC's Incarcerated Re-entry program provide skills training in high-demand occupations, certificate and degree completion, and job placement opportunities. The first in Arizona to offer dual enrollment partnerships, RSC is the largest provider of dual enrollment courses, which have a positive impact on students of color and provide cost savings for families of students completing their associate degrees as noted by a President's Advisory Council member during the visit. RSC has responded admirably to the demands and workforce needs of its community and industry partners and the college is respected for its spirit of collaboration and cooperation. During the visit, the college was recognized by community partners consistently for pro-actively seeking feedback from its partners and accommodating their needs.

The strength of RSC's strategic planning process was evident by feedback communicated to the team. Statements such as "strategic planning is in the hands of the users" was shared and echoed throughout. The Strategic Plan 2020-2024 is operationalized college-wide and the Franklin Covey 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX) is the framework used for action planning and goal achievement. Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) are incorporated into the planning process and ensure alignment of college resources with college-wide priorities.

The team heard from a variety of internal and external stakeholders during the visit and acknowledges the engagement of a large number of employees in each of the visit sessions. Good representation was also demonstrated in the student forum. Representation from the district leadership and Governing Board also provided excellent feedback. The Governing Board president acknowledged RSC's world class online programs, service to students, a culture of innovation, continuous improvement, diversity and inclusion, and community partnerships. During the visit, students, faculty, and staff were asked to share one word to describe RSC. Their words among others included: engaging, flexible, inclusive, diverse, caring, family, supportive, student centered, innovative, access, adaptable, fun, integrity, unique, friendly, respectful, and compassionate.

During the student forum, which included representatives from co-curricular clubs, general education programs, the Incarcerated Re-entry Program, transfer programs and alumni, students shared examples of how RSC's many support systems allowed them to stay grounded, build relationships, and that the Guided Pathways were beneficial

and flexible to use. Students acknowledged RSC's ability to recognize them individually and create a culture of family. Regardless of location, students have access to a variety of educational, social, and cultural activities throughout the year. RSC's programs and activities contribute to the educational experience of students and their overall success and development.

It was evident the college operates with a "students first" focus and that faculty and staff receive data to aid them with improving teaching and learning. The Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD), the college's internal assessment tool, is used to track and respond to college-wide student learning outcomes. The DADD is a tool, helping the institution demonstrate transparency and accountability in its assessment practices. During a live demonstration during the visit, the team observed how faculty can quickly and easily identify courses, assignments, and student learning outcomes where students are not performing at a college level. As shared by faculty in attendance, the DADD puts data directly into the hands of the faculty, who have on-demand access and can be filtered according to their needs. It is evident that RSC is data-rich and systematically using data for informed decisions which impact teaching, learning, and student success.

As one of 10 colleges within the MCCCD, the college operates within a district structure, while having the autonomy and authority to operate and create programs and services that best serve RSC's mission. The college acknowledges that the district provides a framework of valuable support, resources, and shared tools for students and employees. Strong collaboration, support, and collegial relationships among the district and college were acknowledged consistently throughout the visit by college employees and also the district leadership.

During the team visit, the team acknowledged the depth of professionalism, commitment, and knowledge shared by the faculty, staff, and administration. Throughout the visit, college stakeholders were highly engaged, responsive, and consistently communicated examples of how they live and operationalize the RSC mission, values, and vision in their respective job duties.

The team determined RSC demonstrated it has the structures, leadership, resources, and personnel in place to advance the mission of the college and meets the standards of quality expected of an institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The evidence provided through documentation, web/online resources, reports, and visit discussions support this determination. The team recommends that RSC is eligible to choose its next Accreditation Pathway.

Special notation: This Open Pathway: Comprehensive Evaluation was originally scheduled to be conducted with the full team visiting the campus in-person. However, in the midst of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and the significant rise in positivity rates across the country and in Arizona during January and February 2022, the visit was changed to a hybrid visit. Two members of the team conducted the visit in-person and four members of the team conducted the visit virtually. The extensive support, assistance, and flexibility extended from the RSC team and ALO, as well as the peer review team, provided a successful visit, considering the change to a hybrid format and the many logistical arrangements required.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation
Met

Sanctions Recommendation
No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Eligible to choose

Federal Compliance

Does not require monitoring

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE:	Maricopa Community Colleges-Rio Salado Community College,Arizona
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Open Pathway - Comprehensive Evaluation Visit
DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:	The institution was granted an extension to comply with HLC's faculty qualification requirement (Assumed Practice B.2.a) solely as applied to its dual credit faculty until September 1, 2023. HLC will suspend review of the institution's compliance with its faculty qualification requirement solely as applied to dual credit faculty until the first evaluation occurring on or after September 1, 2023 at which time the institution's compliance will be specifically examined.

Federal Compliance Reviewer: Cory Clasemann-Ryan

This visit will be conducted with a hybrid team structure. Team members Richard Bush and Sylvia Gibson will visit in-person, with the chair and the rest of the team participating virtually. |
| **DATES OF REVIEW:** | 02/28/2022   03/01/2022 |

☐ No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Control: Public

Recommended Change:

Degrees Awarded: Associates

Recommended Change:

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2011 - 2012

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2021 - 2022

Recommended Change: 2031-2032

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

The institution is approved at the following program level(s): Associate's

The institution is not approved at the following program level(s): Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, Doctoral

Recommended Change:

Additional Locations:

The institution has been approved for the Notification Program, allowing the institution to open new additional locations within the United States.

Recommended Change:

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. Approved for correspondence education courses and programs.

Recommended Change:

Accreditation:

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway: Open Pathway

Recommended Change: Eligible to Choose

Upcoming Events:

(No Upcoming Events)

Monitoring

Upcoming Events: NONE

(No Upcoming Events)

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Institutional Data

Educational Programs

Undergraduate

Recommended Change:

Associate Degrees	37	
Baccalaureate Degrees	0	

Graduate

Master's Degrees	0	
Specialist Degrees	0	
Doctoral Degrees	0	

Certificates 123

Extended Operations

Active Branch Campuses

(NONE)

Recommended Change:

Active Additional Locations

UNITED STATES, 40404 N Gavilan Peak Pkwy., Anthem, Arizona, 85086
UNITED STATES, 26700 South Highway 8, Buckeye, Arizona, 85236
UNITED STATES, 5530 W. Chandler Blvd, Suite 1, Chandler, Arizona, 85226
UNITED STATES, 1255 S Spectrum Blvd., Chandler, Arizona, 85286
UNITED STATES, 350 N McClintock Dr., Chandler, Arizona, 85226
UNITED STATES, 2700 W. Frye Road, Chandler, Arizona, 85224
UNITED STATES, 11425 N. Dysart Rd., El Mirage, Arizona, 85335
UNITED STATES, 2299 W Obispo Ave., Gilbert, Arizona, 85223
UNITED STATES, 56 MSS/DPE, Attn: Rio Salado College; 7383 N. Litchfield Rd. Ste. 3134, Glendale, Arizona, 85309-1555
UNITED STATES, 22800 N. 67th Ave., Glendale, Arizona, 85310
UNITED STATES, 18424 N. 51st Ave., Glendale, Arizona, 85308
UNITED STATES, 2014 N. Citrus Road, Goodyear, Arizona, 85395
UNITED STATES, 4275 W Baseline Road, Laveen Village, Arizona, 85339
UNITED STATES, 32 South Center, Mesa, Arizona, 85210
UNITED STATES, 7050 E. University Drive, Mesa, Arizona, 85207
UNITED STATES, 3160 S. Alma School Road, Mesa, Arizona, 85202

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

UNITED STATES, 1130 N. 22nd Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, 85034
UNITED STATES, 4636 E University Dr. Suite 150, Phoenix, Arizona, 85034
UNITED STATES, 2627 S 35th Ave., Phoenix, Arizona, 85009
UNITED STATES, 3402 W. Cocopah, Phoenix, Arizona, 85009
UNITED STATES, 2902 East Shea Blvd., Phoenix, Arizona, 85028
UNITED STATES, 3631 W. Thomas Road, Phoenix, Arizona, 85019
UNITED STATES, 1711 E. Grant Street, Phoenix, Arizona, 85034
UNITED STATES, 2402 W. Beardsley Road, Phoenix, Arizona, 85027
UNITED STATES, 16440 S. 32nd St., Phoenix, Arizona, 85048
UNITED STATES, 4000 N. Central Avenue, Suite 1820, Phoenix, Arizona, 85012
UNITED STATES, 4710 N. 5th St., Phoenix, Arizona, 85012
UNITED STATES, 1715 W. Northern Ave., Phoenix, Arizona, 85021
UNITED STATES, 2627 S. 35th Ave., Phoenix, Arizona, 85009
UNITED STATES, 2102 W. Encanto Blvd., Phoenix, Arizona, 85005
UNITED STATES, 2045 W Cheryl Drive, Phoenix, Arizona, 85021
UNITED STATES, 2839 E. Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona, 85034
UNITED STATES, 2800 W. Pinnacle Peak Road, Phoenix, Arizona, 85027
UNITED STATES, 10001 S. 15th Ave, Phoenix, Arizona, 85041
UNITED STATES, 1 N. Norterra Drive, Phoenix, Arizona, 85085
UNITED STATES, 20620 N. 19th Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, 85027
UNITED STATES, 25250 N. 35th Ave., Phoenix, Arizona, 85083
UNITED STATES, 4550 S. 44th Place, Phoenix, Arizona, 85040
UNITED STATES, 3950 E. Bell Road, Phoenix, Arizona, 85032
UNITED STATES, 8800 N. 22nd Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, 85021
UNITED STATES, 1140 E. Washington Street, Suite 203, Phoenix, Arizona, 85034
UNITED STATES, 4701 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, Arizona, 85012
UNITED STATES, 2444 W. Las Palmaritas Drive, Phoenix, Arizona, 85021
UNITED STATES, 8155 N. 24th Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, 85021
UNITED STATES, 100 E. Elwood Street, Phoenix, Arizona, 85040
UNITED STATES, 4201 E. Knox Road, Phoenix, Arizona, 85044
UNITED STATES, 502 S. 2nd Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, 85003
UNITED STATES, 1550 W. Deer Valley Road, Phoenix, Arizona, 85027
UNITED STATES, 4121 E. Cotton Center Blvd., Phoenix, Arizona, 85040
UNITED STATES, 19705 E. Germann Road, Queen Creek, Arizona, 85142
UNITED STATES, 3735 E. Combs Road, Queen Creek, Arizona, 85140
UNITED STATES, 5601 E. Greenway, Scottsdale, Arizona, 85254
UNITED STATES, 15550 North Parkview Pl., Surprise, Arizona, 85374
UNITED STATES, 14250 W Statler Plaza
Suite 103, Surprise, Arizona, 85374
UNITED STATES, 17901 W Lundberg St, Surprise, Arizona, 85388
UNITED STATES, 2114 E. Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe, Arizona, 85281
UNITED STATES, 2150 E Warner Rd., Tempe, Arizona, 85284
UNITED STATES, 1730 S Mill Ave, Tempe, Arizona, 85281
UNITED STATES, 1001 E. Knox Rd., Tempe, Arizona, 85284
UNITED STATES, 1251 E Southern Ave, Tempe, Arizona, 85282
UNITED STATES, 3320 S. Price Road, Tempe, Arizona, 85282
UNITED STATES, 1830 E. Del Rio, Tempe, Arizona, 85282
UNITED STATES, 1600 N. Priest Drive, Tempe, Arizona, 85281
UNITED STATES, 5005 S. Wendler Drive, Tempe, Arizona, 85281
UNITED STATES, 6000 Lakeshore Dr., Tempe, Arizona, 85283
UNITED STATES, 1521 N. Project Drive, Tempe, Arizona, 85281
UNITED STATES, 510 E. Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe, Arizona, 85281
UNITED STATES, 5601 W. Trails End Road, Tucson, Arizona, 85745

Recommended Change:

Contractual Arrangements

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

(NONE)

Recommended Change: