

Draft Analysis – 7/25/05

Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Core Component 1a: The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

Examples of evidence are in *italics*:

The board has adopted statements of mission, vision, values, goals, and organizational priorities that together clearly and broadly define the organization’s mission. (The governing board formally adopts the mission documents of the organization. Those documents contain the goals for which the organization is willing to be held accountable. p. 3.2.2)

MSCD has a mission statement approved in 1996 by all campus constituencies and by the Board of Trustees of State Colleges in Colorado (former board):

Role and Mission Approved in 1996

Metropolitan State College of Denver is a comprehensive, baccalaureate-degree granting, urban college that offers arts and sciences, professional, and business courses and programs to a diverse student population. Excellence in teaching and learning is MSCD’s primary objective.

The mission of MSCD is to provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, post-graduate education, and lifelong learning in a multicultural, global, and technological society. The college fulfills its mission by working in partnership with the community at large and by fostering an atmosphere of scholarly inquiry, creative activity, and mutual respect within a diverse campus community.

The Trustees of Metropolitan State College of Denver approved an Operational Mission Statement. The Trustees accepted comments from the college community, but campus constituencies were asked to vote on the statement. There is no conflict between the two documents, but the Operational Mission Statement includes more information about goals and priorities. .

Task:

- 1. Are we meeting all of our goals – especially those in the operational mission statement? No**
- 2. Are we sure we provide “high quality accessible education.” Need to be sure the online education and other distant learning activities are “high quality.”**

The mission documents include a strong commitment to high academic standards that sustain and advance excellence in higher learning

The role and mission statement includes “Excellence in teaching and learning is MSCD’s primary objective” and the OMS includes “The College is a teaching institution where excellence in teaching and learning is accorded the highest priority.” Do those suffice?

The statements do not mention “standards.” There is no indication that we value “academic excellence.”

Evidence that could be used to meet this standard:

1. The number of programs that are approved or accredited by recognized accrediting bodies.
2. Outside awards received by programs.
3. The number of honor societies.
4. The fact that teaching is 50% of Retention, Tenure, Promotion (RTP) evaluations.

Tasks:

- 1. Steering Committee members, especially Associate Deans, should start keeping a list of honors received by various academic programs.**
- 2. A statement about standards should be included in any revised mission statement.**

Some committee members continued to express concern about demonstrating a commitment to “high academic *standards*.” Evaluators often assume a relationship between a college’s admission standards and its exit standards. Since MSCD’s admission standards are “modified open,” assumptions may be made about its exit standards. The Trustees’ concern about grade inflation (or the high grades in some programs at MSCD) may be a flag about a commitment to standards. We should be prepared to address comments/concerns about grade inflation. Cheryl Norton did so with the Trustees. We should have that agenda item at our fingertips. In addition, we could try to determine if MSCD is different from any other peer institution, and/or we could ask whether grade inflation is truly a “real” phenomenon (see, for example, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article and various links:

<http://chronicle.com/prm/weekly/v49/i11/11b00701.htm>]

The mission documents state goals for the learning to be achieved by its students.

From the role and mission statement:

The mission of MSCD is to provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, post-graduate education, and lifelong learning in a multicultural, global, and technological society.

From the Operational Mission Statement

The College is committed to a liberal arts foundation for all students by which each graduate develops the ability to communicate and reason effectively as a culturally and economically literate citizen in a multicultural, global and technological society.

Tasks:

- 1. Make a list of questions and concerns about the operational mission statement:**
 - a. What does “economically literate” mean?**

- b. **Do we have documentation that “economically literate” does not mean that every student needs to take an economics course?**
- c. **What does “culturally literate” mean – knowledge of other cultures or knowledge of the arts?**
2. **Suggest the operational mission statement be redone when the new President arrives.**
 - a. **Suggest that any new mission statement contain a reference to “standards.”**

The organization makes the mission documents available to the public, particularly to prospective and enrolled students.

The role and mission statement is in the *Catalog* and is available on MSCD’s website.

Everyone on the Steering Committee found the short role and mission statement on the Website. There are several ways to find it: use the “Search” function on the website, search the online Catalog, and search the Welcome screen on the website.

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

From the role and mission statement:

Metropolitan State College of Denver is a comprehensive, baccalaureate-degree granting, urban college that offers arts and sciences, professional, and business courses and programs to a **diverse** student population.

The mission of MSCD is to provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, post-graduate education, and lifelong learning in a **multicultural**, global, and technological society.

From the Operational Mission Statement:

With its modified open admission policy, the College welcomes students from all walks of life and circumstances, including all levels of academic preparation consistent with statutory guidelines, all conditions of economic and income status, all ages and all ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The College is committed to a liberal arts foundation for all students by which each graduate develops the ability to communicate and reason effectively as a culturally and economically literate citizen in a multicultural, global and technological society. The College seeks to provide its programs and services to a diverse student body in an environment of quality, accessibility and affordability.

MSCD meets this core component.

Tasks:

1. **Gather data on the diversity of faculty, staff, students, and administrators.**
2. **Gather information on the steps taken or strategies used to increase diversity and the success of those steps and strategies.**

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

The board, administration, faculty, staff and students understand and support the organization's mission.

The role and mission statement was approved by all campus communities – but by a different board of trustees. The OMS was approved only by the Trustees but they did allow for public comment.

Some committee members have the impression that several Board members do not appreciate the role or importance of scholarly inquiry and professional development activities to faculty's ability to remain current in their disciplines. One piece of evidence is the Trustees' requirement of ten office hours per week, which reduces the time for PD.

Task: Inform and educate the Board about the importance of professional development. One approach might be to underscore the importance of professional development activities in accreditation.

Task: Be sure new employees are given copies of the "short" mission statement ~~and the operational mission statement~~ and/or that MSCD's mission is discussed. Also include the VP mission statement and the mission and goals statements of the unit.

The organization's planning and budgeting priorities flow from and support the mission.

Task forces and planning groups should tie their work to the mission and goals of the college.

There is a reference to *both* mission statements in the February 2005 Student Learning Assessment Task Force report.

Task: Task forces and other planning groups should refer to a role and mission statement in their reports.

The goals of the administrative and academic subunits of the organization are congruent with the organization's mission.

Do we have goals for various units? Some units have goals posted on MSCD's website and some do not. Some units, such as IT, have a vision statement, a values statement, and a purpose. Is a purpose or "unit description" sufficient?

Task: Collect the mission/goals of different units. Units should create goals if necessary.

The following offices should have mission statements and/or goals:

- **President**
 - **Communications** (*Has a description of what it does.*)
 - **Equal Opportunity Office** (*Could not find on Web site*)

- **Alumni Relations** (*Could not find mission, etc. of Alumni Office on Web site, the Alumni Association has a mission, core values, and a vision*)
- **Academic Affairs**
 - **School of Business** (*yes*) and appropriate subunits
 - **School of Letters, Arts and Sciences** (*yes*) and appropriate subunits
 - **School of Professional Studies** (*yes*) and appropriate subunits
 - **Office of Sponsored Programs**
 - **Cooperative Education Office**
 - **Center for Individualized Learning**
 - **Academic Advising**
 - **Honors Program**
 - **Metro Education Ventures/Extended Campus**
 - **Center for Academic Technology**
- **Administration and Finance**
 - **Human Resources**
 - **Budgets**
 - **Institutional Research**
 - **Intercollegiate Athletics**
- **Information Technology**
 - **Web Services and Development**
 - **Academic Computing and Service Administration**
 - **Application Services**
 - **Computer Desktop and Net Services**
- **Institutional Advancement**
 - **MSCD Foundation**
 - **Development**
- **Student Services (everything on the organization chart?)**
 - **Health Center**(*yes*)
 - **Counseling Center** (*yes*)
 - **Campus Recreation** (*yes*)
 - **Disability and Adaptive Technology Services (Access Center)** (*yes*)
 - **GLBT Services** (*yes*)
 - **Admissions** (*yes*)
 - **Registrar** (*yes*)
 - **Assessment and Testing** (*yes*)
 - **Financial Aid** (*yes*)
 - **New Student Orientation** (*yes*)
 - **High School Upward Bound** (*yes*)
 - **Veterans Upward Bound** (*yes*)
 - **Career Services** (*yes*)
 - **Student Life** (*yes*)
 - **Student Activities** (*yes*)
 - **Student Academic Success** (*yes*)
 - **Student Support Services**
 - **PaceSetters**
 - **Metro Bridge**

- **Tutoring Center**
- **Immigrant Student Services**
- **Student Intervention Services**
- **Student Media**
- **Student Travel**

Are the goals measurable? How are they measured?

Core Component 1d: The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

The governance and administrative structures need to be described. Most information is contained in the *Trustees Handbook* and the *Policy Manual*. We should also provide the constitution and bylaws of campus organizations, e.g., Faculty Senate, Student Government Assembly, Classified Staff Council, Council of Administrators, and Council of Chairs. The curriculum process and program review policies and process should also be made available.

[Shared governance has been a long-standing attribute of most colleges and universities in the United States. Whatever the governance and administrative structures, they need to enhance the organization's capacity to fulfill its mission. p. 3.2.4]

Note: The enlargement of the President's Cabinet is an indication of an increase in shared governance.

ADDRESSING SHARED GOVERNANCE AND THE CAMPUS CLIMATE

The OMS contains the following statement about shared governance “. . . faculty, staff and student participation through shared governance is encouraged and valued.”

The following concerns will need to be addressed in the Self-Study:

Past Concern (Challenge) #1 (2003): A not unexpected challenge faced by the institution and the board is the need to address the inevitable issues arising from the transition from a long-standing governance model to a new independent model. The issues and needs for sustained and deliberate communication, shared decision making involved faculty, staff, and students, for the building of a good working rapport between the board and the campus constituencies, and for a deliberate process that attends to the academic culture require sustained attention in this transition period.

Past Concern (Challenge) #3 (2003): A perception exists on the part of faculty and staff that the new board of trustees does not endorse or fully support the principles of shared governance and involvement of campus constituencies in decision-making processes. (p. 20).

Past Concern (Challenge) #4 (2003): The new board policies have created wide-spread concern about the lack of campus involvement in the processes developing the draft and about the impact the draft policies will have on faculty and staff. At the time of the Team visit, the board was compiling significant input solicited from faculty and staff on the draft in preparation for a campus-wide hearing and any subsequent revisions it chooses to make to the policies. A notable challenge for the board will be to demonstrate that the input from the constituencies has been taken into account in subsequent revisions and that concerted dialogue occurs about some of the more controversial policies affecting the work of faculty and staff.

Advice and Suggestion for Improvement #5 (2003): The team recommends that the administration and the board develop means by which the change to an independent board can be assessed and evaluated. The solicitation of campus responses to the revised board policy manual and the open meeting held on April 2, 2003, were important steps to assess one aspect of the change. *The College might consider using other strategies as well, such as focus group evaluations and surveys to assess further the campus perspectives about the board and the change in governance.* The board could consider hiring an independent evaluator to provide an objective assessment of the board and its relationship to the campus community. Through regular evaluations and assessments, the board will demonstrate to the campus a sincere interest in improving the board and its alliance with the campus constituencies. In this transition and in a time of a certain amount of anxiety about the role of the board, assessment and evaluation will be viewed positively and will provide the campus on-going opportunities for offering feedback and contributing to the strengthening of the independent board and its governance of the institution.

Concern was expressed about shared governance relative to the *Handbook for Professional Personnel*. The Trustees can change the *Handbook* without input from any campus constituencies. Faculty, staff, and students can only propose changes to the *Handbook*, but there is no guaranteed that the proposed changes will be discussed by the Trustees. The President can choose not to forward a recommended item. One possible *Handbook* change, the lowering of the requirements to teach at MSCD, was of concern to Steering Committee members. Since the number of part-time faculty who have just a bachelor's degree is an NCA concern, such a change was seen as exacerbating the problem.

The executive officers of the Faculty Senate, Student Government Assembly, Classified Staff Council, Council of Chairs, and the Council of Administrators should be asked to report if they believe they are appropriately involved in decision-making processes. That is, they need to be asked to comment on the above concerns. The officers may want to survey members of their group to determine their constituents' views about shared governance and other matters. If they do, help should be provided in choosing, creating, and conducting the survey. *(Institutional research will be able to provide some assistance if the surveys are a college priority. Psychology faculty and faculty in some other programs might also be willing to provide some assistance with creating surveys so they are unbiased and meet the needs of the group conducting the survey.)*

Alternatively, the leaders of the various groups could determine if they would like to organize a campus-wide "climate" survey in the spring of 2006.

If surveys are used, the representative from the group on the HLC-NCA Steering Committee should be involved in the creation of the survey so that there is some consistency and collaboration on the survey and the goals of the Steering Committee are met.

The groups might want to ask other questions, such as:

1. Describe the positive aspects of the MSCD environment for them.
2. Describe the challenges (concerns) they have about working at/attending MSCD.

Possible Tasks:

1. **The board should be asked to respond to the "Advice and Suggestion for Improvement #5" made in 2003. A survey of Board members might be conducted to determine their impressions of shared governance.**

2. **The Trustees should be encouraged to speak with one voice and not have individual Trustees advocating ideas/actions without the full support of the entire Board.**

Faculty and other academic leaders share responsibility for the coherence of the curriculum and the integrity of academic processes.

The Board of Trustees and the faculty may have conflicting educational goals, e.g., economics. In addition, CCHE and the faculty may have conflicting educational goals. How much has the guaranteed transfer policy reduced faculty's "responsibility" for the curriculum?

Other states, such as Florida, have proscriptive curricula. Existing legislation and CCHE activities may not be a concern to The HLC.

The organization evaluates its structures and processes regularly and strengthens them as needed.

With the change to a new board and new trustees, many structures and processes have been reviewed. We can provide the task force reports and other evidence.

Core Component 1e: The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

[Integrity is a concept with multiple interpretations. When applied to an organization, it can be understood to refer to]

- *the honesty of an organization in its operations*

Concerns have been raised about faculty not teaching as specified on the official syllabus for a course. There is evidence that faculty deviate from the syllabi. The School of Professional Studies is doing a curriculum audit. How should this concern be handled in the other schools?

The need for a curriculum audit by other schools was discussed, but no decision was made. LAS anticipated it would be too time consuming. Hal Tamblyn reported that some faculty refuse to share their classroom syllabi. Continued discussion is needed.

Task: MSCD needs to be able to support its claim that faculty teach what is described in the official syllabus by describing actions it takes to ensure this. Departments should be asked to verify that class syllabi match the official syllabi.

- *the fairness with which it interacts with internal and external constituencies*

This will include MSCD's interactions with CCD, UCD, CCHE, AHEC, various public schools and community organizations, e.g., the Professional Land Surveyors. This also includes information that is provided about transfer agreements.

Task: Can we provide evidence that we fulfill our grant responsibilities? Is there an easy way to show this? Betsy Zeller and others.

The board exercises its responsibility to the public to ensure that the organization operates legally, responsibly, and with fiscal honesty.

Last time we needed all our audit reports. Ellen Boswell reported that Lee Combs and Tamy Callahan stated that there are no lawsuits or other legal concerns that would make the above statement invalid.

All audit reports need to be made available.

The organization understands and abides by local, state, and federal laws and regulations applicable to it.

We should show that MSCD follows FERPA and other state and federal laws and mandates.

The organization consistently implements clear and fair policies regarding the rights and responsibilities of each of its internal constituencies.

Provide documentation about the number of suits and MSCD's success in winning suits that claim that policies have not been followed.

The organization documents timely response to complaints and grievances, particularly those of students.

This encompasses policies for faculty, staff, and students. We will need to have copies of all our policies for grievances and complaints and show that each forces a response in a certain time.

We may need to present evidence that the new grade change policy is working.

The Incomplete, NC, and Last Grade Stands policies are still under discussion.

Task: Collect information on different complaint and grievance policies and procedures: faculty complaints about students, student complaints about faculty, student complaints about students, safety concerns, grading concerns, etc. Is there an official policy/procedure for faculty to complain about students? Emilia Paul handles most complaints that go outside the academic department. Is the process clearly communicated to faculty and students? SPAN (Student Problem Action Network) seems prepared to handle most student complaints. Is SPAN effective? How is its effectiveness determined? How is the effectiveness of other processes determined? Can SPAN provide data on the number of complaints and grievances. Can we find out information on grade appeals, e.g., number and the number that were sustained?

~~**Task: Discuss if it is in our role and mission to use grant money to pay MSCD faculty to teach courses for non-MSCD students who receive graduate credit**~~

~~from Adams State College. The majority of the Steering Committee thought it did fit MSCD's mission.~~