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.

Argument

1.A.1

The vision and mission statements of South Mountain Community College (SMCC) are the guide for all employees and the collaborative framework for all operations. The vision serves as the inspiration and future focus of the organization. The college vision states:

"*South Mountain Community College educates minds, transforms lives, touches hearts, and builds community.*"

The broad, yet focused mission of SMCC recognizes the multifaceted areas the institution must address in order to effectively respond to the various needs of the community. The mission states:

"*South Mountain Community College provides quality higher education for our diverse community. We create a caring teaching and learning environment that fosters student development and supports productive citizenship in an increasingly global and technological society. Our purpose is to meet these needs by offering: (1) General education courses; (2) Transfer programs; (3) Occupational education and career development; (4) Continuing education; (5) Developmental studies and English as a second language; (6) Cultural, civic and social events; and (6) Academic support and student services.*"

Additionally, SMCC has five values which guide program development, decision-making and employee actions. The values are:

COLLABORATION: We are inclusive in our relationships with colleagues, departments and community, and respectful of their ideas.

COMMUNITY: We serve our community by recognizing our interdependence, celebrating our history, honoring our diverse cultures, and building our future.

EXCELLENCE: We model exemplary teaching, learning, service and leadership through continuous improvement, creativity and innovation.

INTEGRITY: We are accountable to the communities we serve and are truthful, sincere, transparent and responsible for our actions.

WELLBEING: We are a college community that encourages and develops social, physical, career, community and financial wellbeing.

The current mission statement was developed in 2003 through a process inclusive of SMCC and the community. Using a shared governance model, the vision, mission and values were reviewed in 2012 and 2016 through an extensive process involving faculty, staff, students and the local community. Ultimately, the vision and mission statements created in 2003 were reaffirmed as they still reflected the commitment, purpose and direction of SMCC. However, the values were updated in 2012 to better reflect the current culture of the organization. For example, the addition of wellbeing as a value supported the need to take a more holistic approach to supporting employees. South Mountain Community College's vision, mission, and values are supported by the Maricopa County Community College Governing Board and align with the mission of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD).

1.A.2.

The academic programs, student support services and enrollment profile at SMCC are in alignment with our mission. The core of SMCC's mission includes a focus on providing quality higher education for our diverse community. This is evidenced through the signature academic and occupational programs such as the Storytelling Institute, Construction Trades Institute, and the new Bachelor's Degree in Behavioral Health Sciences. The quality of programs is also reflected by the successful course completion rates of students in college-level courses, and the increasing number of graduates and awards. This is also evidenced by the success students actualize after attending our college. SMCC's programs also align with the mission by reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve, which include Hispanic, African-American and Native American populations. Programs such as the Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program (BNFP), a program that continues to provide engaging learning experiences and allows students the ability to achieve their academic goals while honoring the diversity that is uniquely SMCC. The program was on hiatus for the last two years due to the pandemic, however the program will continue in the fall of 2024. SMCC will continue to partner with Phoenix College to offer this accelerated program for bilingual nursing students.

The college also supports the mission by creating caring teaching and learning environments that foster student development and support productive citizenship in an increasingly global and technological society. The strategic plan includes a direction that focuses exclusively on teaching and learning, ensuring that this remains a primary focus of the institution with a commitment to allocating the necessary resources to support these efforts. Within the strategic plan there is also an institutional priority (5.3) which focuses on "creating and sustaining a technological environment that fosters exemplary learning experiences." The mission is further supported by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) which provides support to faculty and staff to enhance the quality teaching and learning that occurs at all levels of the organization. Phi Theta Kappa and the Democracy Wall Project are examples of the co-curricular activities that aim to cultivate productive citizens in an increasingly global and technological society.

Completion of general education requirements and university transfer are integral to the mission. As part of the MCCCD, SMCC curriculum contains the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) which includes 35 to 37 credit hours that transfer seamlessly to the three Arizona public universities. Due to the close proximity, the vast majority of SMCC transfer and general education students attend Arizona State University (ASU). Students attending ASU also benefit from the Mypath2ASU Pathway which guarantees admissions and in-state tuition for our students. This program also tracks academic progress using a personalized online tracker. Likewise, SMCC has a partnership with Northern Arizona University (NAU) whereby students can complete one of the four-year bachelor degree requirements with SMCC and transfer to specific in-person or online degree programs. SMCC also has articulation agreements with numerous higher education institutions around the country, promoting transfer opportunities beyond Arizona.

In addition to general education and transfer opportunities, SMCC is committed to workforce development and entrepreneurship to support the mission. SMCC students can earn a degree, certificate or license in more than 80 different occupational programs which include CISCO Networking, Programming and Mobile Development, Network and Cybersecurity, Administration of Justice, Storytelling Institute, and Social Media Marketing. To further align with the mission, SMCC has a nationally recognized Collegiate DECA student club that prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management around the globe. The commitment to fulfilling the mission through occupational education is further supported by quality faculty, state-of-the-art classrooms, dynamic learning and career development opportunities.

In support of the mission, SMCC created the Community Entrepreneurship Center (CEC). SMCC students have several opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial skills and experience with the aid of the Community Entrepreneur Center, which includes coursework, Certificates of Completion, mentoring, and connection with resources such as the Small Business Development Center. In addition, students can apply and compete for start-up funding through the Everyday Entrepreneurship Venture Fund, and the "The Big Pitch," pitch contest; both are grant funded entrepreneurship programs for MCCCD students.

Recognizing the diverse needs of the communities we serve, *learning for personal enrichment* is also an important component of the institutional mission and offers a variety of courses to achieve this purpose. Previous and current courses aimed at developing the entire individual and their personal interests include exercise fitness, foreign languages, and music. *Learning for personal enrichment* also provides the necessary resources for individuals to remain current or develop new professional skills such as computing and small business management.

The model developed by SMCC to effectively serve developmental education and English as a Second Language (ESL) students is paramount to the mission. Faculty in English, Reading and Math replaced the former Foundations Academy with a new Redesign Implementation Team (RIT) that developed pathways for first-year students to complete college level English, Math, and Reading within their first two terms. This work included new placement charts, eliminating several of the developmental courses required before students could enroll in college level coursework, as well as additional classroom time with faculty in Math and English courses to bring all students up to the appropriate level to complete each course successfully. Evidence of this success is shown in the developmental course success rates (ENG100, MAT114/115), subsequent success rates in college level courses (ENG101, MAT14X, MAT15X), conference presentations, and national recognitions. The work of staff and faculty in this area was initially supported by a Title III Grant which largely focused on facilities, infrastructure and technology designed to improve the student experience and

success in developmental education. The outcomes from this grant further solidified the commitment to ensuring that all students succeed at SMCC. The Title III Grant officially concluded and the Foundations Academy disbanded in Spring 2020. However, the valuable work of the faculty and staff is showcased in the student outcomes in math, reading, and English.

Serving as a hub for the community, SMCC hosts cultural, civic and social events to achieve its mission. Events and experiences hosted by SMCC include Music Under the Stars, an afternoon of free music for the community; Stew and Stories, a cultural event honoring Native American Heritage Month; the Two Spirit PowWow, an event that brings our Native American and LGBTQ+ communities together for celebration, food, and dialog; and a partnership and collaboration with St. Mary's Food Bank to help provide free food to the community by stocking our pantry with fresh and frozen foods for students and their families; the college brings in nearly 3000 lbs. of food from St Mary's Food Bank weekly. South Mountain Community College also has a city of Phoenix Public Library located on the property. This unique partnership has expanded the college capacity to host events that leverage SMCC faculty, staff, students and the community. The various events hosted provide ongoing evidence of our steadfast commitment to the mission and include Celebrating Banned Books, Children Walk for Peace, and the Campus Vote Project.

Student support services are also abundant at SMCC, with a focus on achieving our mission by providing supplemental support to learning that occurs within the classroom and engaging learning experiences outside the classroom. The Learning Resource Center provides free, quality tutoring in a variety of academic disciplines. Having a public library on campus provides more academic resources and services than the traditional community college library. The college also offers a variety of volunteer and service-learning opportunities and encourages active student engagement in taking advantage of these opportunities. To demonstrate the commitment to serving students, Student Affairs recently developed, adopted, and maintains customer service standards and expedited enrollment services by using a system called QLess. This system helps communicate with students via text and phone calls to wait times in line. The mission is also supported by testing services (on and off site), robust student governance opportunities, an expanding veterans' services area, and Transfer Fair Support services are also evidenced through the extensive academic and need-based scholarships available to students each semester.

An important change that is helping shape a new streamlined student experience is the Guided Pathways model. The college has enhanced the advising structure to develop a new and improved model that is based on national best practices. Two additional components of this process will include the development of meta-majors, which we call Fields of Interest (FOI), which include areas such as Applied Technology, Computer and Information Technology, Culture and Society, Education, STEM, and Visual and Performing Arts. This initiative helps students match their interests and career goals into a range of classes that will complement each other even if the student's interest migrates from their original intended goal. The college's new First-Year Experience courses, developed and implemented in the Fall 2022, also help match student interest and career goals. At SMCC, the First-Year Experience is a strengths-based process that helps students identify their core strengths and career interests with the idea of matching those to programs where the student can succeed.

Finally, all of the programs, services and experiences align with our enrollment profile. South Mountain Community College is federally designated as both a Minority-Serving Institution and a Hispanic-Serving Institution, with significant gains being made toward securing Native American-Serving Institution status as well. Overall, 83% of the current student population of SMCC identify

as minority. Our percentage of first-generation college students is 62%. Our students are 60% females, 38% male with the largest age demographic ranging from 15-17 (29%). Most of our students are considered "in-county" and matriculate to SMCC from one of the three primary local high schools (Academies at South Mountain, Cesar Chavez and Betty Fairfax High Schools). Currently 73% of SMCC students attend part-time. This collective student profile reflects the community SMCC serves and the diversity that is core to the mission. (Fast Facts).

1.A.3.

Strategic planning at South Mountain Community College aligns with the mission of the organization. The Strategic Directions of the plan serve as broad areas of focus and are:

- Teaching and Learning
- Student Success and Completion
- Community Partnerships and Workforce Development
- Employee and Organizational Excellence
- Organizational Effectiveness

The integrated strategic planning and budgeting process has resulted in the development of action and strategic enrollment management (SEM) plans that focus on all aspects of the mission for the purpose of driving student and organizational success with demonstrated results. To ensure that planning and budgeting support the mission, SMCC has developed an annual integrated action planning and budget development process which is coordinated by the Planning, Research & Development and Budget departments. Each fall semester, employees attend workshops in which the goals for each department and division are assessed and updated. New annual action plans are then developed and financial resources to support the new action plans are requested. All action plans are required to include at least one strategy (e.g. continuous improvement, enrollment, retention) identified by the Executive Leadership each year. This area of focus is determined by reviewing internal and external data trends to identify important and impactful areas to SMCC. All strategies within the action plan must also directly align with one or more priorities of the strategic plan. This ensures direct and continuous alignment between planning, budgeting priorities and the mission.

As additional evidence that the planning and budget priorities align with the mission, the institution created the Students Transformed to Achieving Radiant Success (STARS) Scholarship Campaign. In 2014, the college embarked on the 4th STARS Scholarship Campaign. Over the course of several five- year campaigns, more than $500,000 has been pledged and contributed by our very own faculty and staff. To date, more than 300 students have been awarded $160,500 in scholarships since the funds reached maturity.

2.A.1.

South Mountain Community College clearly articulates its vision and mission through multiple public documents which are accessible to students, faculty, staff and the community. Vision and mission documents appear on the college website and are printed in the College Catalog, Strategic Plan and Annual Report. As part of the on-boarding process, vision and mission documents are provided to new employees in welcome packets distributed at mandatory orientation. Vision and mission documents are also included in materials such as the student handbook which is included in

the college catalog. These documents are also included on meeting agendas serving as a constant reminder of our purpose and commitment. In addition, the vision and mission are displayed in classrooms, workspaces, conference rooms, and a mural.

2.A.2.

As discussed in 1.A, the mission statement is current and reflects the institution's emphasis on providing quality teaching and learning, serving our diverse community, and preparing students for the global and technological society. While the mission itself has not changed since 2003, a formal process to review the mission as part of the integrated strategic planning and budgeting process has been adopted. The mission has been reviewed for currency and relevance in 2012, 2016, and 2020. These documents are scheduled to be reviewed again in 2024.

2.A.3.

SMCC mission documents are comprehensive and provide clarity regarding our identity, purpose, programs, services and the communities we serve. The mission clearly articulates our primary aim of providing quality teaching and learning to our diverse community. The mission also communicates the desire of all SMCC employees which is to create caring teaching and learning environments that develop holistic students. By design, the mission seeks to bridge SMCC and our intended constituents. The broad nature, scope, and intended constituents of the mission is also identified and supported by the vision and values statements which further articulate emphasis on transforming lives through collaboration, community, integrity, excellence and well-being.

Sources

- 1A1 - Maricopa County Community College Governing Board
- 1A1 - Mission Vision and Values
- 1A1- MCCD Strategic_Plan
- 1A2 - Academic and need-based scholarships
- 1A2 - Administration of Justice
- 1A2 - Arizona General Education Curriculum
- 1A2 - Articulation agreements
- 1A2 - Bachelor's Degree in Behavioral Health Sciences
- 1A2 - Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program
- 1A2 - Campus Vote Project
- 1A2 - CEC.pdf
- 1A2 - Celebrating Banned Books
- 1A2 - Center for Teaching and Learning
- 1A2 - CISCO Networking
- 1A2 - Collegiate DECA student club
- 1A2 - Construction Trades Institute
- 1A2 - Course completion rates of students in college-level courses
- 1A2 - Democracy Wall Project
- 1A2 - Developmental course success rates
- 1A2 - Enrollment Profile.pdf

- 1A2 - Everyday Entrepreneurship Venture Fund
- 1A2 - FastFacts
- 1A2 - Fields of Interest
- 1A2 - First-Year Experience courses
- 1A2 - Guided Pathways
- 1A2 - Learning Resource Center
- 1A2 - Network and Cybersecurity
- 1A2 - Online Tracker
- 1A2 - Phi Theta Kappa
- 1A2 - Phoenix Public Library
- 1A2 - Programming and Mobile Development
- 1A2 - QLess
- 1A2 - SMCC has a partnership with Northern Arizona University
- 1A2 - SMCC Pantry
- 1A2 - SMCC Strategic Plan
- 1A2 - Social Media Marketing
- 1A2 - St. Mary's Food Bank
- 1A2 - Stew and Stories
- 1A2 - Story Telling Institute
- 1A2 - Strategic Plan Poster
- 1A2 - Student governance
- 1A2 - Subsequent success rates in college level courses
- 1A2 - Testing services
- 1A2 - The Big Pitch
- 1A2 - Transfer Fairs
- 1A2- 2023 Transfer Fair.pdf
- 1A2- Community Entrepreneurship Center
- 1A2- Music Under the Stars
- 1A2- Mypath2ASU
- 1A3 - academic-plan-july2020
- 1A3 - Budget Recommendations and Approvals
- 1A3 - College Wide Goal Setting_ Convocation 2024
- 1A3 - Instructional and Non-Instructional Program Review
- 1A3 - SEM Plan 23-24
- 1A3 - SMCC Strategic Plan
- 1A3 - Students Transformed to Achieving Radiant Success (STARS)
- 1A3- Integrated strategic planning and budgeting process
- 2A1 - College website
- 2A1 - SMCC Onboarding
- 2A1 - SMCC Strategic Plan
- 2A1 Annualreport2022-2023.pdf

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.

Argument

1.B.1.

The actions and decisions of South Mountain Community College continually reflect an understanding that, in its educational role, the institution proudly embraces the important obligation of serving the public. For more than 40 years, SMCC has served as a hub for the community not only through its academic offerings, but also through its community events and activities. The college not only understands the duty to and role of serving the public, but also embraces the opportunity to be an open-access institution dedicated to providing learning experiences that transform the lives of our students and community.

The Shared Governance Model is responsible for ensuring that decisions and initiatives are communicated and supported throughout the organization. Comprised of representatives from all areas of the organization, this model ensures that all actions align with the strategic plan and reflect the public obligation that has been entrusted to SMCC. At a district level, policies have been developed and implemented to ensure public stewardship, organizational ethics and professional conduct for all employees. These policies are further expanded to maintain high levels of internal controls to ensure that we meet our obligations to our community and the public. Ultimately, the district's Administrative Regulations hold us to the standard of serving and protecting the public above and beyond the institution. Shared Governance Projects occur annually, however with the change in leadership in 2022-2023, the last academic year's projects have not been compiled in an institutional document. The institution does maintain meeting agendas and minutes.

1.B.2.

South Mountain Community College's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes. As an open-access institution, SMCC is committed to providing a quality education at an affordable tuition rate. The tuition rate for SMCC students is significantly less than neighboring public and private academic institutions. In addition, a majority of the college budget is allocated to the Academic and Student Affairs areas which reinforce our primary purpose of learning and support services. The college also offers reduced facility rental fees to support events that align with the mission and needs of the community.

As an entity of the Maricopa Community College District, SMCC is a political subdivision of the State of Arizona (Arizona Revised Statutes Title 15, Chapter 12, Article 1). In this structure, SMCC does not generate financial returns for investors, contribute to a related or parent organization, or support external interests. Governing Board members of the Maricopa County Community College District are elected officials representing the public. Their duty is to ensure that the actions of SMCC and district reflect the public interests.

1.B.3.

South Mountain Community College engages with its identified external constituencies and communities to assess and respond to their needs. The President's Community Advisory Council (PCAC), is a dedicated group of community members from various sectors who meet regularly to receive college updates, provide input on institutional priorities, and leverage community connections.

There is also deliberate alignment with local business, corporate workforce initiatives and Career and Technical Education needs. The college strategic plan reinforces this commitment with a direction dedicated to Community Partnerships and Workforce Development. Within this strategic direction there are three institutional priorities that guide the work of SMCC. This work has created a variety of unique partnerships that meet the communities' needs. In 2018, SMCC partnered with Galvanize, Inc., a Denver-based data science and engineering school on a Web Development Immersive program, which allows students to quickly earn both academic credits but also marketable skills for quick entry into the workforce. In the Summer of 2023, Torres Multicultural, a local communications and marketing firm focused on serving under-served communities in South Phoenix, hosted a Science Fair for 75 local high school students to engage community members in engineering opportunities and community college educational options. Many academic programs, including IT and Engineering, also have advisory boards which bring in area business people to provide insight and feedback into current trends and needs from the job market. In 2020-2021, the college partnered with several construction companies to create a new Construction Trades Institute at SMCC, implementing new credentials for the construction industry to include certificates and degrees in both Electrical and Carpentry trades.

The college is also deeply involved with numerous initiatives throughout the academic year, which generate wide-reaching community collaborations. The college is also a key supporter of the United Way Campaign. In addition, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services also hosts an annual event on campus which celebrates the annual Fiesta of Independence with a naturalization ceremony for the community. Another example of the institution's commitment to engaging with external constitutions is through Project Connect. This one-day event hosted more than 30 human service providers on campus to provide resources such as food, clothing, identification documents, vital records, haircuts, housing information and wellness checks. In the Fall of 2023, in partnership with Vessels of Opportunity, SMCC hosted its second annual Breast Cancer Awareness Event with specialists and doctors from the Mayo Clinic providing a day of free on site screenings and informational sessions for all communities in South Phoenix to benefit. Additionally, in the Spring 2024, SMCC was host to Valle Del Sol's annual Mental Health Expo.

South Mountain Community College also conducts visits to area high schools to hear from students and school leadership on what SMCC can do to serve families and communities. The college also has

a dedicated facility on campus which houses the Arizona Agribusiness & Equine Center (AAEC) Charter High School. This partnership provides educational learning for high schoolers from every grade level on the SMCC campus and creates opportunities to seamless transfer to the college upon graduation. Finally, SMCC has a second location in the Town of Guadalupe supporting the educational needs of our under-served Native and Hispanic populations. In support of the mission, this additional site offers courses that reflect the immediate needs of the community of Guadalupe. The site is embedded within the community and serves as a visual reminder of the SMCC presence and the support the college seeks to provide as a premier learning choice.

Sources

- 1B1 - Administrative Regulations 1.D.1
- 1B1 - Administrative Regulations 1.D.1
- 1B2 - ArizonaRevisedStatutesTitle 15Chapter12 Article 1
- 1B2 - tuition rate
- 1B3 - Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center
- 1B3 - Construction Trades Institute
- 1B3 - Numerous initiatives
- 1B3 - PCAC Agenda 2.8.24
- 1B3 - Second Location 1.D.3
- 1B3 - Torres Multicultural
- 1B3 - Vessels of Opportunity
- shared_governance_annual_report_2022_V12 (1).pdf

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.

Argument

1.C.1.

Recognizing the value multiculturalism adds to the higher education environment, SMCC addresses this role in several ways. First, the mission statement speaks directly to the necessity of serving our diverse community. In addition, SMCC has created an institutional priority (3.3) which focuses on serving the community by offering programs, services and resources that meet the community's needs. The college also offers a variety of programs that address our multicultural society such as Study Abroad Programs and International Education Services.

The institution also addresses this role by acknowledging and supporting the student population which represents diversity in disability status, race, ethnicity, age, international status, sexual orientation, veteran status, gender identities, religious affiliation, cultural background, and political orientation. These special populations and services include:

English as a Second Language: helps students improve in English language, literacy and academic skills.

Disability Resources and Services: coordinates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for qualifying students with disabilities for the purpose of providing a quality post-secondary educational experience.

TRiO Upward Bound: provides high school students with support and opportunities that will greatly increase their success in high school, as well as in post-secondary education.

Hoop of Learning: provides a high school to college bridge program tailored to meet the academic and cultural needs of American Indian students.

Achieving a College Education (ACE): represents a scholarship program helping high school students earn college credit and learn valuable academic, social and personal skills for current and future success.

Veterans Services: acts as a liaison between military-affiliated students and eligible dependents and the Department of Veteran Affairs for the purposes of certifying veteran educational benefits.

The college commitment to its multicultural role also extends to seeking external funding to support major initiatives. The college has been identified as a Hispanic Serving Institution, as determined by the Higher Education Act and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). These federal designations have allowed SMCC to apply for and receive Title III (Strengthening Institutions) and Title V (Hispanic Serving) grants which have expanded the institution's capacity to address its role in a multicultural society. The Bilingual Nursing Program reflects the commitment to serving the local community. This program ties the nationwide need for nursing with the additional need of a multilingual society.

1.C.2.

South Mountain Community College addresses its role in a multicultural society by having processes and activities that reflect attention to the human diversity of the constituencies it serves. The college includes a statement on [Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination](#) on all college collateral. This statement is inclusive of all staff and communicates the value of diversity to all internal and external stakeholders.

Faculty and staff also undergo regular training on outreach and diversity as well as inclusive instructional practices. For example, all SMCC faculty and staff are invited to participate in Disability Resources and Services training through the office of Disability Resources and Services to improve knowledge of the college's services by connecting instructors to student support services. As part of MCCCD, employees also are encouraged to participate in Maximizing Our Strengths as an Inclusive Community (MOSAIC), a 24-hour training that "creates service oriented, respectful, inclusive and equitable environments that engage students, staff and the Maricopa County Community." MOSAIC was sunsetted in the Fall of 2023 when the Maricopa Employee Growth and Development Office instituted a new [Performance Success](#) model (80 hours of training for staff, administration, and faculty leaders). The Performance Success Trainings support the equitable growth and development of all college stakeholders.

[SMCC Veterans Services](#) strives to ensure each student has adequate support from knowledgeable staff on what challenges they may face. Veterans Services also refers students to appropriate resources for housing and other living needs, and the office continues to grow its network of organizations to provide additional services. In addition, current students have the opportunity to speak to and get the perspective of current work study students that have graduated and transferred to 4 year colleges and universities.

As part of the AGEC curriculum, students are required to complete courses that meet the requirement for [Cultural Diversity in the U.S. (C), Global Awareness (G) or Historical Awareness (H)](#). The Cultural Diversity in the U.S. requirement is designed to promote awareness and appreciation for cultural diversity within the contemporary United States. The Global Awareness courses address the need to understand the values, perspectives, and social processes of cultures other than those of the United States. The Historical Awareness Area option in the requirements aims to develop a knowledge of the past that can be useful in shaping the present and future. At SMCC, more than 40 courses satisfy these requirements which provide students with a variety of options to engage with curriculum that focuses on diversity.

The [college recruitment and marketing efforts](#) also reflect attention to diversity. Recruitment efforts are targeted to ensure diverse representation in our overall student population. Marketing collateral is

developed using diverse representation, languages and target audiences. Located in a metropolitan, urban area, SMCC is also committed to attracting and retaining employees whose diversity reflects that of our students and community.

South Mountain Community College also has numerous [student organizations](#) that support our diverse campus and community needs. All of these organizations have SMCC employees as advisors which facilitates and strengthens the relationship between students and staff. The organizations and scope include:

Black Student Union: p*romotes activities of common interest, as well as cultural and educational benefits, for all students.*

Christian Challenge: *promotes a Christ-centered community that is concerned with your growth as an individual*

Male Empowerment Network (MEN): *intended to improve the retention and degree completion rates of its minority male students and a network formulated to empower the South Mountain Community College male students to succeed on all platforms of their lives such as academics, their career goals, and with their personal goals*

MEChA: *instills within Chicano students a sense of pride and awareness of their heritage and culture.*

Mental Health Well-Being: *strives to serve our community by participating in educational events. Students learn from guest speakers and leaders in the field of Behavioral Health and Psychology. As a club, students create a community and a sense of family while learning and supporting each other. As a B.H.S member students will have an opportunity to learn about jobs & career opportunities in Behavioral Health, Psychology, and Social Services.*

Native Student Union: supports American Indian students in reaching their educational goals; developing leadership skills; and promoting cultural awareness by fostering relationships among clubs, campuses, the Maricopa Community College District, and the college community.

Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE): Promotes a sense of gathering among students interested in engineering at SMCC by providing opportunities to interact with others of similar interests.

South Pride: supports gay, bisexual, lesbian, transgender, and questioning community along with their support systems while fostering a place where beliefs and values are welcomed and respected.

Veterans Club: welcomes veterans from all branches of the Armed Forces. The club supports veterans by encouraging lifestyle management principles that contribute to success with their academic, community, spiritual, and emotional needs.

Women Rising: dedicated to helping you succeed! WOMEN RISING is a student success and community based program for women of color. Students involved in the Women Rising program participate in activities that promote Empowerment, Engagement, Success, Leadership, and Sisterhood.

The office of Student Life and Leadership maintains a well-populated [calendar of events](#) hosted by and drawing attention to these diverse cohorts. It works with faculty, staff, and the PR and Marketing

department to advertise events to further integrate the community's diversity with the college's student and employee population. Many of these events are a series of activities that include cultural food, traditions and guest speakers to support heritage months such as Black History, Women's History, Native American History, and Hispanic Heritage.

As one of the five priorities of SMCC's 2020-2025 Academic Plan, SMCC is also working to create a formal structure to support work around equity. This proposal contains a plethora of strategies to understand and implement an equity initiative that will have a significant impact on students and employees. The research thus far was shared recently to obtain feedback from SMCC councils about how the college might work to support equitable outcomes for our students and to establish an approach to support this work moving forward. Ultimately, the goal of the Equity Initiative is to use a self-study to identify and remediate institutional barriers ensuring all students receive an equitable learning experience at South Mountain Community College.

In addition, the Office of Planning, Research and Development participates in a district-wide Guided Pathways Task-Force. The primary goal of this task force is to establish a framework for which future conversations, practices, and research that can inform the goal of enhancing existing efforts to close equity gaps throughout the District.

Sources

- 1C1 - Achieving a College Education (ACE)
- 1C1 - Disability Resources and Services
- 1C1 - English as a Second Language
- 1C1 - International Education Services
- 1C1 - SMCC Strategic Plan
- 1C1 - Study Abroad Programs
- 1C1 - TRiO Upward Bound
- 1C1 - Veterans Services
- 1C1 -Hoop of Learning
- 1C2 - Affirmative Action Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination
- 1C2 - Calendar of events
- 1C2 - College recruitment and marketing efforts
- 1C2 - Cultural Diversity in the US (C) Global Awareness (G) or Historical Awareness
- 1C2 - Performance Success
- 1C2 - Student organizations
- 1C2 - Veterans Services
- 1C2 -Academic-plan-july2020
- 1C2 -Guided Pathways Task Force

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

The vision, mission, and values of South Mountain Community College are collectively understood and guide long-term and daily operations. These documents drive the creation and maintenance of exemplary programs and services designed to meet the needs of the college's diverse constituencies. These guiding documents align with those of MCCCD and are approved by the Governing Board.

The programs and services of SMCC reflect the university transfer, workforce preparation, developmental education, ESL, student success, community and global engagement mission goals. The comprehensive offerings of university transfer degrees, partnerships, workforce certificates and degrees, support services, and co-curricular activities demonstrate the college's embodiment of the mission, vision and values.

The college's vision, mission, and values statements are clearly and publicly documented in official publications, but are also prominently displayed in public places, such as classrooms, offices and online. Most of all, they are demonstrated as part of the college culture through employee and student actions. South Mountain Community College programs and services reflect an understanding of its responsibility to human diversity and public good. Academic, service, and co-curricular programs as well as employee professional development opportunities include activities that develop an understanding of diversity and provide service to the local community.

Sources

There are no sources.

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.

Argument

2.A

South Mountain Community College operates with financial, academic, and personnel integrity in all the primary and auxiliary operations. In addition, SMCC complies with all federal, state, and local requirements that govern higher education institutions. The current policies, processes, and practices clearly demonstrate that all actions by SMCC are embedded in integrity. The Administrative Regulations, Governing Board Policies, and Personnel Policy Manuals serve as the primary sources of governance and ensure integrity in college functions as well as ethical behavior by employees. Procedures for review and revision are defined and managed by the Office of Public Stewardship. All policies are made available via the district and college websites.

Financial Integrity

The Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) is responsible for creating the fiscal policies for all ten colleges including SMCC. Operating with fiscal integrity is paramount to SMCC and is evidenced by being designated for excellence in financial reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association for the past 32 years. Financial governance includes regulatory processes for sales, services, official functions, acquisition of goods, property handling, cash handling, travel, gifts, grants, capital, and auxiliary funds. These areas of financial governance are included in Administrative Regulations Section 1.

The Vice President of Administrative Services is responsible for ensuring financial integrity at SMCC. In partnership with MCCCD, SMCC ensures accurate financial accounting by monitoring operational spending to ensure ethical and fiscal responsibility for the organization. Establishing and maintaining internal controls is also a key component of the commitment to financial integrity. The college has established comprehensive checks and balances which include an organizational structure that separates fiscal roles and responsibilities. Additionally, SMCC adheres to clearly defined cash-handling processes which maintain financial integrity for all monetary related transactions of SMCC. The college also has comprehensive business credit card (ProCard) policies within the district purchase guidelines which govern employee spending and supervisor approvals for spending college financial resources. Not only is SMCC committed to following policies that promote financial integrity, but the organization has adopted comprehensive training to ensure that all employees understand and comply with the regulations designed to safeguard the financial integrity of the organization.

Additional evidence of the commitment to financial integrity is demonstrated through the business operations related to students. As directed by the Higher Education Act and other regulations, SMCC

acts with financial integrity with regard to the distribution of financial aid. The college ensures that all eligibility documentation have been collected and thoroughly reviewed while following a rigorous verification process. In addition, SMCC has established internal controls which require confirmation of course enrollment prior to financial aid disbursement. Student performance is also continuously monitored to ensure that students receiving financial aid maintain grade point averages, attendance standards, and other measures of academic success.

Recognizing that financial integrity of the organization extends to students, SMCC is also dedicated to promoting student awareness of their financial responsibilities, particularly with regard to financial loans. Toward that end, SMCC has developed strategic efforts after two years of high default rates on student loans that have significantly reduced the SMCC default rate. In cohort year 2016, the draft rate was 20.6%, which represented a decrease from the previous two-year period (33.3%); additionally the 2018 cohort rate dropped to 10.15% and has continued to decrease since. This was accomplished through financial literacy workshops for students, and loan- entrance counseling at SMCC for all new students who choose to borrow, and by incorporating financial literacy information in curricula for English, reading, math, and First-Year-Experience courses. During the pandemic, federal financial aid repayment was delayed or forgiven for the majority of students nationally. This decreased SMCCs default rate to 6.4% for the 2020 cohort (current).

Academic Integrity

South Mountain Community College complies with all academic integrity policies and practices established for the colleges by the Governing Board. The Administrative Regulations Section 2 outline policies related to academic calendars, admissions requirements, scholastic standards, college environment, student rights and responsibilities, hazing prevention, and sign language interpreters. This section also provides regulations regarding students with disabilities, Veterans Services, and parking regulations.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring academic integrity throughout SMCC. The college monitors all aspects of the academic operations and has well-established processes to support academic integrity such as the reporting of enrollment irregularities (Administrative Regulations 3.7). Examples might include residential or adjunct faculty members enrolling in courses they instruct; employees enrolling in multiple courses taught at the same time that are not open-entry/open-exit courses; enrollment in multiple courses taught that overlap in time and that are not open-entry/open-exit courses; employees enrolling in a course taught by a relative; or employees enrolling in a course for the sole purpose of making it "go" (i.e., not be canceled)."

As an institution dedicated to "providing quality higher education that creates learning environments to foster student development," academic integrity is a fundamental framework of SMCC. The Center for Curriculum and Transfer Articulation ensures academic integrity in the development and revision of all curricula by creating clear program goals and ensuring that all students meet these goals. Academic integrity is operationalized at the college-level where faculty are the subject matter experts responsible for developing course content that engages students in dynamic learning experiences.

The college catalog is produced annually and also upholds the academic integrity of the institution. This document serves as an additional resource for employees, students and the community and clearly publishes the policies and practices that reinforce the academic standards of the institution. The College Catalog offers information about admission policies and procedures, graduation requirements, academic regulations, as well as detailed descriptions of academic majors, minors, and

course offerings. It is published every spring by the Scheduling Office

The most recent catalog is available in a digital format. Starting academic year 2023-2024, the College Catalog is being produced digitally.

The MCCCD Student Conduct Code holds students to the highest academic and conduct standards. The student conduct process at SMCC is administered through the Vice President of Student Affairs, and where applicable, through a Manager of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Manager, in conjunction with faculty leadership, addresses situations which may occur due to conduct violations, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct. These policies are available online at the MCCCD website and the SMCC website, This helps to ensure that the student population is well-informed of their rights and responsibilities.

With academic integrity at the forefront of SMCC operations, SMCC has established processes in place for early alert in the areas of academics and conduct. South Mountain Community College utilizes Symplicity student conduct software which allows instructors and administrators to recognize students needing additional support. The Symplicity student code-of-conduct referral system provides college staff with a software-based solution to identify and effectively respond to students who need support in the classroom or on the college campus. A cross-functional team is responsible for interacting with students for the purpose of promoting student success and adhering to academic standards.

The college also works diligently to serve the best interests of students with regard to scheduling of courses, offering of programs, and utilization of course materials. In support of Open Maricopa, the academic divisions have been active in the development of Online Educational Resources (OER) which are designed to save students millions of dollars in textbook costs while maintaining the highest academic integrity standards. The college is undertaking the implementation of Guided Pathways: course pathways designed to help students avoid taking courses that are not necessary to a degree or are not transferable. In addition, meta-majors, or Fields of Interest, serve as a way to structure degrees and certificates that pertain to related areas of study. Through this system, students can readily pinpoint their skills and passions, leading to a career path that suits them best. The academic integrity of the organization is further exemplified through the regulations governing copyright practices. All employees of SMCC are educated on the acceptable use of academic materials. These regulations are located on the MCCCD website, the SMCC website, and are posted in the public library.

Personnel Integrity

Employment Standards, the Staff Policy Manual and the Residential Faculty Agreement provided by the district address personnel integrity. In addition, Administrative Regulations 6.4 outline SMCC and district responsibilities regarding background checks. Through these policies, SMCC ensures that employment practices follow state and federal law. These policies govern standard processes for discrimination, sexual harassment, resolution of grievances, and conflict management. All policies are designed to promote responsible and ethical best practices in the work environment. The Human Resources Office, which reports directly to the Office of the President, works in partnership with MCCCD Human Resources to uphold integrity in all personnel matters.

SMCC observes EEO regulations in the hiring of all employees while following all MCCCD standards to ensure a qualified pool of candidates for each position, a diverse body for each hiring committee, and a fair assessment of each potential candidate. All permanent positions follow

standard hiring processes to ensure consistency and equity in the recruitment of new staff. For the hiring of adjunct faculty, division chairs utilize rubrics that fairly assess each candidate, and provide documentation of such assessment.

Beyond standard policies and regulations, SMCC has a robust system in place for employee evaluation articulated in each of the Employee Policy Manuals. The effective management of employee performance is essential in ensuring that all staff operate with the highest integrity standards guided by policies that uphold the organization while furthering the mission of the institution. The MCCCD provides performance management tools that allow for the development of professional growth plans, corrective action, and regular documentation of work performance. Employee performance reviews also include sections of the MCCCD Administrative Regulations to reinforce the required personnel integrity of the organization. Probationary Faculty document their Core work expertise, service to College and community, and professional development through a yearly Individual Development Plan (IDP) for five years after they are hired. Areas addressed in the IDP include work activity, service to the college, and professional development. Once a faculty member reaches appointive status, they are required to submit a Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP) every three years. The purpose of the FEP is to document and promote quality performance for appointive residential faculty within their discipline through a self-evaluation that aligns with the MCCCD mission and vision. In addition, adjunct faculty are evaluated every semester for their first three semesters.

The employee recognition program includes college-level recognition by coworkers (e.g., Pillar, Summit Award), as well as participation in MCCCD and national awards such as the Maricopa Community Colleges Innovation of the Year Award, the Aspen Award, and National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Award. The college has a long-standing tradition of receiving various recognition awards for employees who exemplify the integrity that stands as a core value of SMCC.

Auxiliary Integrity

At SMCC, the bookstore, food services, printing services, and receiving are outsourced to external vendors. These vendors are selected via a standardized bid process through the MCCCD purchasing department, usually on rolling ten-year contracts. The operations of these contracted vendors are managed in partnership with College Business Services. Regular communications with the managers of these areas are conducted to discuss issues and improve services to the community.

Fair and Ethical Behavior

As a member of MCCCD, the college adheres to the policies and regulations adopted for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. In 2006, the district developed new regulations designed to enhance internal controls and improve organizational efficiency. Currently, employees of SMCC are required to complete acknowledgments and disclosures, which include regulations on travel, drug and alcohol abuse, security, privacy, driver training and public stewardship. In addition, employees who have access to and maintain student information must participate in annual training modules outlining the federal requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Employees must also participate in comprehensive sexual harassment training to guarantee staff are acting in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

The Shared Governance Model provides further evidence of established processes that promote fair

and ethical behavior by administration, faculty and staff. In pursuit of academic excellence and student success, the SMCC Shared Governance identifies and explores various opportunities to advance the mission. This model comprises four councils: Shared Governance, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Administrative Services that are organized to ensure that administration, faculty, staff, and students are actively involved in the operational activities that support integrity such as planning, facilities, personnel and decision-making processes.

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year South Mountain Community College created and implemented a Facilities Reservation webpage, which contains information about the facilities scheduling processes for both internal and external users. The implementation of this enhanced process further underscores the ethical behavior that is paramount to SMCC. To further support integrity through facilities operations, SMCC adheres to the established facilities rental rates and guidelines established by the MCCCD Facilities Services department. In addition, SMCC is included in the system distribution list where the 25Live system administrators have ongoing communications related to the 25Live online scheduling system, processes, rental rates, and system updates to ensure that SMCC maintains alignment with policies and regulations governing the ethical use of public resources.

After resolving a complaint with the HLC in 2018 regarding the elimination of the faculty meet and confer process across the MCCCD, the MCCCD Governing Board approved a resolution on January 22, 2019 requesting the establishment of a group that would work together to create a new Residential Faculty Agreement (previously the Residential Faculty Policies). RFACT is that recognized body for faculty agreement development. Articulated in Article 25 of the Residential Faculty Agreement, the Residential Faculty Administration Collaboration Team (RFACT) is composed of four residential faculty members appointed by the Faculty Executive Council and four administrators appointed by the Chancellor.

The Governing Board recognizes its obligation to train new members and to ensure existing members keep in mind principles of law and good governance by which they must abide. All members of the Governing Board receive training in Arizona's Open Meeting and Public Records laws, principles of MCCCD governance, Policy Governance, avoiding conflicts of interest, and the Board members Code of Conduct. MCCCD recognizes the importance of ongoing training for Governing Board members to ensure they fulfill their responsibilities with integrity, fairness and within the law.

Sources

- 2A - Acknowledgments and disclosures 2A
- 2A - Administrative Regulations -2A
- 2A - Administrative Regulations 3.7 - 2A
- 2A - Administrative Regulations 6.4 2A
- 2A - Administrative Regulations Section 1 -2A
- 2A - Administrative Regulations Section 2 - 2A
- 2A - Article 25 of the Residential Faculty Agreement 2A
- 2A - Cohort Default Rate 2020 cohort SMCC 2A
- 2A - copyright practices 2A
- 2A - Distribution of financial aid - 2A
- 2A - EEO regulations 2A
- 2A - Employee Policy Manuals 2A

- 2A - Employment Standards 2A
- 2A - Entrance counseling 2A
- 2A - Fields of Interest 2A
- 2A - financial literacy workshops 2A
- 2A - Financial report january-2024 2A
- 2A - Governing Board Policies 2A
- 2A - Government Finance Officers Association 2A
- 2A - Guided Pathways 2A
- 2A - Higher Education Act 2A
- 2A - MCCCD purchasing department 2A
- 2A - MCCCD Student Condcut Code 2
- 2A - Office of Public Stewardship 2A
- 2A - Open Maricopa 2A
- 2A - Personnel Policy Manuals 2A
- 2A - Pillar Summit Award 2A
- 2A - Residential Faculty Agreement 2A
- 2A - SMCC website the Course Catalog and Student Handbook 2A
- 2A - SRR 1
- 2A - Staff Policy Manual 2A
- 2A - Student Code of Conduct 2A
- 2A - Symplicity 2A
- 2A - Training 2A
- 2A - Verification process 2A
- 2A Center for Curriculum and Transfer Art..pdf
- 2A- Hiring of adjunct faculty 2A
- 2A -Shared governance annual report 2022 V12
- 2A -SRR
- Procurement Card Policy and Procedures Manual.pdf

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.

Argument

2.B.

The college utilizes several methods to communicate information to students and the public that ensure transparency and a continued awareness of the functions core to the institution. The variety in approaches to communicate information about SMCC is purposeful and strives to reach our students and the public through their preferred communication method. The college website serves as the most comprehensive and accessible mechanism to communicate information. Recognizing that online technology has become an integral part of the higher education experience, SMCC works diligently to maintain a web presence that is both effective and accurate. Currently, students and the public can access information about academic programs, occupational certificates, and admission requirements. The college website also includes a personnel directory that identifies all employees and the corresponding contact information. This directory is accessible to students and the public and provides a means to communicate with all employees of SMCC.

The SMCC website also provides consistent and accurate information regarding program costs and fees. Information about student work opportunities and resources to pay for college is also included on the website. The Net Price Calculator is a tool designed to help students estimate costs to attend any of the MCCCD colleges. This broad estimate is based on the cost of attendance and the financial aid that would be provided to full-time, first-time degree and/or certificate seeking undergraduate students. Other federally required disclosures are displayed on the website, such as campus security reports, and student diversity, retention, graduation, and transfer rates reports. Detailed information on how programs relate to the job market is also provided via the degrees and certificates on the website.

Print media serves as another means to present information clearly to students and the public. The Annual Report is a document produced each year which is shared with the internal and external community to highlight the major accomplishments of the institution.

The college also uses social media channels, including Facebook, X, Instagram and YouTube to communicate directly with students and the community. Recently the district unveiled its mobile app, called MyMaricopa. This tool provides access to personalized information, including class schedules, books, grades, financial aid, and scholarships. This mobile-friendly application supplies the critical information needed for continued success and engagement on campus.

As an open access institution, SMCC utilizes in-person contact as an additional means to present

itself clearly to students and the public. Employees of SMCC conduct frequent campus tours which are designed to introduce prospective students to the campus and provide beneficial resources that inform their decision to attend SMCC. The college also hosts a variety of events that provide students with the opportunity to experience the SMCC campus and receive information about SMCC. An example of these types of events is that SMCC invites graduating seniors from area high schools to attend all-day events that inspires, motivates, and promotes college exploration. All employees and students undergo extensive training to ensure that the information presented is clear and consistent.

Effective communication plays a critical role in the college's ability to present itself clearly to students and the public. In 2018, SMCC hired a new PR and Marketing Manager to build a new college Communications department.

By 2020 Marketing became a fully functional department of five individuals who focus on both short-term and long-term strategic communications efforts, as well as responding to numerous project requests from nearly every office across the campus. To better support campus departments with their projects, the SMCC Communications department adopted Wrike, a cloud-based project management system offered by the District. This one-stop platform enabled departments to submit marketing requests efficiently through a centralized form. The utilization of Wrike has seen a consistent upward trend over the past three years, culminating in an unprecedented surge in activity during August 2023. This month emerged as the busiest ever for the department, with an average of four new external requests pouring in every workday throughout the entire month.

Real time communications efforts are continuously generated across the multiple college communications channels in print, electronic, and social media forms. The team takes advantage of video and animation as a communication form, and this is seen on the college's TV screens, digital marquee and YouTube channel. Communications efforts now also include both organic messaging and paid advertising in various external channels.

Expanded communications efforts have included both an internal weekly newsletter to staff, focused on stories, resources and links that help make internal employees aware of college activities and news, as well as a monthly student newsletter, featuring news and activities focused on student interest. Both of these digital documents have high open rates.

The communication department also meets and works with other departments on their own communication efforts, helping them strategize and hone their messages in both writing and style to ensure effective outreach to their constituencies.

The local department also works closely with the district communications teams, including strategizing on lead generation-focused ad placement and messaging, to ensure college messages and calls to action are continuously reaching our community, and to help drive enrollment.

The expertise and work of this team will be instrumental in further solidifying the institutional commitment to clear articulation. The college Planning, Research and Development (PRD) Department also supports the institution's efforts to present itself clearly to students and the public by providing data about college activities and student performance. This information includes student demographics, course performance, local high school information, and transfer data. This information is available to students and the public. Information about accreditation and status can be found on the website. This information is also included in other college documents such as the catalog and student handbook. The display of this information in a variety of formats is yet another example of SMCC efforts to present all relevant information to students and the public.

SMCC faculty and staff are actively engaged in creating an enriched educational environment in keeping with the college Mission Statement: "South Mountain Community College provides quality higher education for our diverse community. We create a caring teaching and learning environment that fosters student development and supports productive citizenship in an increasingly global and technological society."

The co-curricular activities, programs, and learning experiences that complement student learning are appropriate to the college's mission in terms of direct contributions toward student success. Strategic Priority 2: Student Success and Completion outlines five priorities to meet this goal. The Sustainability Program was founded in response to the Maricopa Priorities Program Review recommendations. The Sustainability Program addresses industry and student needs in the 21st century workforce, is interdisciplinary, and builds strong academic expertise along one of five significant pillars of sustainability. As students complete coursework toward the Sustainability Certificate, they develop critical thinking skills as they assess how to minimize unintended consequences and enhance mutually productive relationships between people and nature. The five pillars are organized into specialized tracks, including land use and human transformations of the Earth, competition for water and other natural resources from the Earth systems, political and economic treatment of the Earth, coupled human-environment interactions, and entrepreneurship for transforming ideas for sustainable products/services into viable businesses.

The athletic program at SMCC includes golf, baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, and volleyball. All athletic programs are governed by the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). Athletes at SMCC are provided with the opportunity to excel inside and outside of the classroom. The college has a history of strong athletic performance with multiple national titles and rankings. Student athletes also demonstrate excellence in the classroom with exemplary grade point averages. Recognizing the value of co-curricular activities, SMCC student athletes also participate in a variety of community service opportunities which further underscore the importance of learning through different experiences.

Although hampered by the pandemic from 2020-2022, additional co-curricular activities are focused on retention and Field of Interest engagement, including Cougar Day, University Transfer Fair, Engineering Day, STEAM Events, and the Sustainability Earth Week Symposium. In addition, many co-curricular activities are coordinated through the Student Life and Leadership Office where students are encouraged to maximize their college experience by enjoying activities outside the classroom. The Office of Student Life and Leadership supports programs that build community and develop leaders, such as Student Government.

The college mission and strategic priorities affirm our commitment to students' educational experience and community engagement. Our accomplished faculty and students participate in scholarly research; for example, the National Science Foundation (NSF) selected a South Mountain Community College Engineering student to attend a summer Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) at the Center for Sustainable Nanotechnology in New Haven, CT, to conduct research on how nano materials impact our agricultural systems. Honors program students contribute their project research to an online and/or in person showcase each semester. Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society students complete scholarly research for an annual Honors in Action project that is submitted to regional and international competitions annually. SMCC math faculty co-presented their research on techniques for higher mathematics with ASU math faculty and SMCC students at the Math National Conference in the Spring 2023.

SMCC fulfills its commitment to community engagement through ongoing community service

projects including the partnerships with St. Mary's Food Bank, and the United Way Project Connect, Make a Difference Day, and MLK Day of Service. Several student groups and organizations participate in community outreach activities through Student Life and through targeted outreach from student groups.

SMCC has a strong economic impact on the regional economy through contributions to local job formation as well as increased earning opportunities for graduates. Students and the community experience significant social benefits as a result of the educational experiences provided by SMCC. Furthermore, SMCC offers a variety of services to area employers and is an excellent source for diversity recruitment.

Sources

- 2B - 2023 Transfer Fair
- 2B - Annual Reports 2B
- 2B - Campus security reports
- 2B - College Website 2B
- 2B - Cougar Day
- 2B - Degrees and certificates 2B
- 2B - Grade point averages.pdf
- 2B - MyMaricopa 2B
- 2B - National Conference
- 2B - Net Price Calculator 2B
- 2B - Office of Student Life and Leadership
- 2B - Personnel directory 2B
- 2B - SMCC Digital Newsletters
- 2B - STEAM Events
- 2B - Sustainability Certificate
- 2B - Weekly Newsletter 2B
- 2B - YouTube channel 2B
- 2B- Accreditation 2B
- 2B -Campus tours 2B
- 2B -Costs and fees 2B.pdf
- 2B- FastFacts
- 2B- Mission Vision and Values
- 2B- The athletic program
- 2B -The Sustainability Program

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.

Argument

2.C.1

The MCCCD Governing Board consists of seven elected officials. Five members represent distinct geographical locations within Maricopa County and two members serve as at-large members, representing the entire county. The Board members each serve four-year staggered terms to ensure continuity in governance and operations for the MCCCD. Although the composition of the Governing Board consists of seven individuals, the Governing Board only acts as a collective body in accordance with state law. "As a public body, the board makes decisions only by taking legal action which is defined as a collective decision, commitment, or promise made by a public body pursuant to the constitution, the public body's charter, bylaws or specified scope of appointment and the laws of this state (ARS 38-431[9])." The Governing Board acts autonomously, represents residents of the county, upholds the vision, mission and values of the Maricopa County Community College District, and facilitates positive outcomes for the entire organization.

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) 15-1444 outline the general duties and powers of the Governing Board which provide the framework for autonomous decision making that enhances the MCCCD and SMCC. Board policies are regularly reviewed and updated as needed. In March 2018, the policies were modified with an amendment to 4.12 to ensure that the Board "will consciously invest in its ability to govern competently and wisely." The broad scope of work includes oversight of budget, bond issuance and curricula. Evidence to support the Board's commitment to make decisions in the best interest of the institution include the recent reduction in tuition despite national trends of increasing tuition within higher education. This decision reinforces the values of SMCC which is to maintain affordable tuition for residents within Maricopa County. Additional evidence of decisions reflecting priorities to preserve and enhance the institution is demonstrated through the Governing Board's approval of substantial expenditures to improve student success and enhancements to college facilities. More specifically, in 2018 the Board approved nearly 26 million dollars to support a transformation initiative which included the work of redesigning the student experience under Guided Pathways. To date the Board support provided SMCC additional funds for Pathway Mapping, increased advising access for students, the redesign of meta-majors (Fields of Interest), and an

overhaul of developmental education and how the college supports students in the completion of first-year English and math.

Public notice of meetings, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes provide transparency of operations and evidence that the Governing Board's actions consistently reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution. As required by law, notice of all public meetings are posted on the MCCCD website and distributed via email to all employees. In 2018-2019 some constituents were dismayed by standing meeting times being changed from month to month; however, these moves were conducted in accordance with policy statutes. Under the current 2019-2020 Board Chair, the meetings have returned to the regular schedule. This has remained true since 2020; however, from April 2020 through the end of 2022, as a result of the global pandemic, meetings were held exclusively virtually via WebEx with notice to the public for virtual access. Starting in 2023, the Board meetings have transitioned to a hybrid format, with in-person attendance permitted alongside the continuing option for virtual participation through WebEx to accommodate those preferring remote access.

2.C.2.

The Governing Board is committed to making decisions that reflect the best interests of the MCCCD and SMCC. As such, the Governing Board adheres to policies designed to ensure that all relevant interests are considered during decision-making processes. Board policy (4.2) encourages the diversity of viewpoints. This section also states that "the Board will keep well-informed about relevant global and local educational trends and other issues, by actively gathering information and attendance at appropriate workshops and conferences to fulfill its role." In addition, Board Policy (4.7) states that the Board will devote time and energy to hearing from a spectrum of residents."

This commitment is further exemplified in Board Policy (4.5) which encourages the public (Citizens Interim), students and employees to present to the Board. The protocol for constituents to address the Board is published on the District website and explained at each meeting prior to Citizen Interim. In accordance with Arizona Open Meeting Law, Arizona Revised Statute 38-431.02, the Board does not propose, deliberate or act on general issues raised during this portion of the agenda. Instead, issues requiring action are placed on subsequent agendas to allow the necessary time to collect and review all pertinent information prior to making an informed decision.

After approximately two years of uncertainty related to internal constituencies, in April of 2019 the Board initiated the Faculty Administration Collaboration Team (FACT), reinstating the Faculty Association as the official representative body for residential faculty and acknowledging the Adjunct Faculty Association's role in shared governance. The FACT is composed of three residential faculty members, three adjunct faculty members, and two college presidents tasked with reviewing current residential and adjunct faculty agreements and practices with the perspective of improving student success. The Board also contracted with Collaborative Brain Trust Consultancy to conduct employee feedback in support of reestablishing staff employee groups.

The Governing Board also approves the District Strategic Plan, which was recently completed and approved in 2023, and establishes key metrics to benchmark college and district success. These metrics are reviewed annually by the Governing Board through the Monitoring Report; however, given the recent completion of the Strategic Plan a new Monitoring Report is in development. The strategic plan and key metrics represent two critical internal resources that assist the Board with monitoring operations and outcomes to ensure that decisions are informed and benefit SMCC and the MCCCD.

There are a variety of other processes that aim to ensure that the Governing Board is well informed on constituencies' interests. Governing Board members attend community events to remain current on local demands. Members of the Board also periodically visit college campuses to better understand student needs and key college initiatives. In addition, the Governing Board members consult with various college and MCCCD councils (Financial Aid and Capital Development) to better understand operational activities. Maintaining a connection with operational Councils is an additional way the Governing Board considers pertinent interests in order to make decisions. Finally, every Board member has a biography and contact information available on the Governing Board page of the MCCCD website and constituents are encouraged to contact Board members to further promote the continued collection of information to aid the Governing Board in making well-informed decisions.

The college also provides the Governing Board with ongoing information regarding college activities. Students and staff frequently provide presentations at Governing Board meetings. In addition, SMCC completes an annual report which highlights accomplishments and future directions for the upcoming year. The college must also work with the Governing Board to obtain support for certain facilities and resource considerations in support of the mission and student success.

2.C.3.

As elected officials, the Governing Board exercises independence from undue influence that is not in the best interest of the institution. Sunsetted Board Policy (4.1) identified a governing value which is to "work collectively and responsibly" to benefit students and the community. It has since been replaced (in 2023) by the Governing Board Policy (4.2) provides additional evidence of how the Governing Board preserves independence from undue influence and will act in "harmonious pursuit of its obligations". Specifically, this section states, the Board will govern lawfully, in a manner that is nonpartisan with an emphasis on integrity and truthfulness in all its activities and practices. This section also states that the board will operate in all ways mindful of its civic trusteeship obligation to those who own the organization, the residents of Maricopa County. To further strengthen the importance of this aspect of Governing Board roles, the section also states that the Board will conduct itself in a manner that complies with all relevant laws and regulations.

Clear policy also exists outlining the balance between obtaining relevant information from stakeholders and preventing undue influence. The policy states that the Board may use the expertise of individual members to enhance the board's understanding of issues but will not substitute such expertise for the judgment of the Board. The expectations of the Governing Board are further clarified in Board Policy (4.2). This section speaks to the necessity of accountability and the importance of stewardship to uphold the trust of the Maricopa County residents. This section also details the comprehensive processes in the event of policy violations. Similar to all MCCCD employees, the Governing Board is also subject to all regulations related to the Gifts, Gratuities, and Unrelated Compensation.

2.C.4.

Upon adoption of the Maricopa Governance in 1996, the Governing Board transferred certain policies to the Chancellor. These former Board policies are now called Administrative Regulations and cover issues related to Students, Instruction, Fiscal Management, Auxiliary Services, Non-Discrimination, and Board Resources. Administrative Regulations are used by the Chancellor in managing the day to day operations of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). Administrative Regulations are amended, adopted or deleted as necessary and are subject to a formal approval process. The Governing Board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the

administration and expects faculty to oversee academic matters. Board Policy (4.2) establishes a "clear distinction between Board and Chancellor roles."

The President serves on the Chancellor's Executive Council which provides leadership for the operational activities of each college and the district office. The Chancellor of the MCCCD delegates authority to President, Dr. Richard Daniel, who is responsible for ensuring that all policies are appropriately followed and enforced. The SMCC president and administrators are responsible for oversight and day-to-day management of all college-related activities related to the success of students, staff, and faculty. This collaborative and collective work is evidenced through the various college councils, committees and task forces that champion the important work of the institution. This collaboration is also supported by regular community involvement in partnerships, councils, and development opportunities. At SMCC, the delegation of day-to-day management is further operationalized by faculty who oversee academic matters. The Faculty Association and the Faculty Senate are instrumental in ensuring the oversight of academic matters. The Residential Faculty Policies also provide guidance for faculty representation on academic matters. In addition, the Instructional Councils provide continuous communication among faculty regarding courses and instructional programs. This process ensures that faculty play an integral role in academic matters through input in organizational matters and the curriculum process. The college Shared Governance model also requires that faculty serve as council members to ensure faculty representation and oversight in academic matters.

Sources

- 2C1 - (ARS) 15-1444
- 2C1 - ARS 38-431[9]
- 2C1 - Governance Investment
- 2C1 - Guided Pathways Task Force
- 2C1 - MCCCD Governing Board
- 2C1 - Meeting agendas 2C
- 2C1 - Notice of meetings
- 2C2 - Board Policy 4.7
- 2C2 - 38-431.02 - Notice of meetings
- 2C2 - Board Policy 4.5
- 2C2 - Collaborative Brain Trust Consultancy
- 2C2 - Faculty Administration Collaboration Team (FACT)
- 2C2 - Key Metrics
- 2C2 - MCCCD Governing Board
- 2C2 - Monitoring Report
- 2C3 - Governing Board Policy 4.2
- 2C3 - Board Policy 4.1
- 2C3 - Gifts Gratuities and Unrelated Compensation
- 2C4 - Chancellor's Executive Council
- 2C4 - Maricopa Governance
- 2C4 - The Faculty Association
- 2C4 -Faculty Senate
- Instructional Council Handbook.pdf

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.

Argument

2.D

South Mountain Community College believes that faculty and intellectual expression are the cornerstones of higher education. As such, academic freedom is an essential principle in the SMCC community among faculty, administration and students. Within the Residential Faculty Agreement, Section 3.1, faculty are entitled to instructional freedom and exercise this freedom when determining course subjects, discussions, and delivery platforms. More specifically, this section clearly illustrates that "faculty will determine curriculum and relevant subject matter for courses, recommend the appropriate pedagogy, textbooks, and other materials relevant to teaching their subject." The college also recognizes that freedom of expression extends beyond the classroom. Faculty are encouraged to freedom of expression as citizens and public employees and this expression cannot be censored or subject to disciplinary actions. This freedom of expression includes all activities conducted by SMCC and the MCCCD. Academic freedom is also evidenced by faculty involvement in independent research, publications, presentations, and sabbaticals.

To further support the importance of academic freedom within SMCC, all faculty adhere to additional regulations outlined in the Residential Faculty Policy (Article 2) that have been adopted from the American Association of University Professors. These guidelines reinforce the instrumental role that faculty play in the pursuit of higher education and detail the accountability measures associated with this position within the organization. Students' responsibilities regarding academic freedom are also made available to the students in the Student Rights and Responsibilities webpage, the college and district websites, and in the classroom.

The institution's commitment to academic freedom is evidenced in additional policies within the administrative regulations. The section Gifts, Gratuities and Unrelated Compensation specifically states that the policy cannot be interpreted in a way that conflicts with academic freedom. Policies governing sexual harassment also contain language that these regulations are subject to constitutionally protected speech and the principles of academic freedom. Additional evidence is provided within the Technology Resource Standards section which "recognizes that the free exchange of opinions and ideas is essential to academic freedom, and the advancement of educational, research, service, operational, and management purposes, is furthered by making these resources accessible." The tenants of academic freedom also extend to social media.

South Mountain Community College encourages open dialogue and forums for faculty, staff, students, and community members. Some examples include: Honors Forums, Banned Books Celebrations, Student Workshops, President's Community Advisory Council (PCAC) and Election-Related Events. These events are actively promoted and encourage staff, students and community participation to demonstrate the commitment to academic freedom.

The college also puts great effort and resources in promoting opportunities and events that encourage free expression; such promotion includes flyers and posters for diversity events on campus,

membership in various student clubs and celebration of cultures (LGBTQ, Black History, Hispanic Heritage, Native American, and the Lunar New Year. Freedom of expression is also strongly expressed by student leaders who serve on shared Governance Councils.

Sources

- 2D - Faculty_agreement
- 2D - Gifts Gratuities and Unrelated Compensation
- 2D - PCAC Agenda
- 2D - Policies governing sexual harassment
- 2D - Sexual Harrassment
- 2D - SRR 1
- 2D - Student Rights and Responsibilities
- 2D - Technology Resource Standards 2D

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.

Argument

2.E.1

South Mountain Community College provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students. To ensure that this practice is upheld throughout the institution, SMCC adheres to the Administrative Regulations governing Institutional Review Board. Section 3.8 states the value that the MCCCD and SMCC places on research and grant projects as an institution of higher education. This section also provides information regarding the Institutional Review Board which follows administrative regulations to protect the organization while conducting research with human subject participants. The Institutional Review Board is operationalized at SMCC with dedicated staff to oversee the research activities occurring at SMCC.

The South Mountain Community Library – created in partnership with the City of Phoenix – is available for use by students, staff, faculty, and the community seven days a week. All stakeholders are informed of this accessibility through the library website, first year experience courses, and course syllabi. The library has four librarians on site to assist students and faculty with information resources. Additionally, librarians partner with the Counseling Division to speak on research methods to first-year students in student success courses. Guidelines and procedures for the Computer Commons help students navigate technology and systems as they apply to research. For example, the Computer Lab provides assistance with course work and lab equipment. All SMCC computers require a unique login to ensure that SMCC resources are being used only for work and research related to college business as part of the technology usage standards.

2.E.2

Course syllabi provide statements regarding academic misconduct and plagiarism as well as identify possible sanctioning opportunities for faculty. The courses – through Canvas, SMCC's Learning Management System – regularly utilize the Turnitin tool to identify possible instances of plagiarism. The college uses the Respondus Lockdown + Monitoring tool to protect against online academic misconduct.

The college Writing Center also provides support to SMCC students. This academic resource assists students with mastery of written assignments. A key component of this mastery is the ability to

uphold academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification. Students are also provided with extensive resources to facilitate appropriate citation using MLA, APA, and other required literary documentation.

2.E.3

The Student Conduct Code, available on the college website, and MCCCD regulations all inform students of their rights and responsibilities. These documents and processes clarify disciplinary probation/suspension and disciplinary removal from class, due to academic misconduct such as plagiarizing, threatening actions or verbal threatening, violation of college regulations/policies, and use of college computers in violation of Technology Resource Standards. The above-cited documents and processes also guide students on the academic grievance process.

Sources

- 2E - 2.5 Student Rights and Responsibilities
- 2E - Library Website
- 2E - Operationalized at SMCC
- 2E - RLDB-Quick-Start-Guide-Bb-Student
- 2E - Turnitin tool
- 2E - Writing Center
- 2E1 - IRB.pdf

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

South Mountain Community College operates with integrity in financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. SMCC is committed to academic, professional, and personal integrity and conduct, freedom of expression, and teaching and learning.

The Governing Board purpose and function aligns with SMCC. Board policy, processes, and decisions demonstrate accountability to its constituencies. Further, all processes and policies ensure stakeholders are considered in decision making.

Presenting complete and accurate information is crucial to SMCC; transparency is paramount in both print and online formats. Communication occurs through a variety of publicly available resources, and processes exist to ensure accurate information is presented to the community along with evidence of public stewardship, accountability and ethical and responsible conduct.

Sources

There are no sources.

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).

Argument

3.A.1.

Over the course of a six-month period, internal and external stakeholders participated in a series of planning and steering sessions designed to provide both direction and focus to our academic enterprise. The result of this process was the creation of a 4 year academic plan with three guiding principles: student-centered, faculty-focused, and community-conscious. This plan is one of the ways in which SMCC ensures that courses and programs are current and require appropriate levels of performance by students in alignment with the degrees and certificates awarded by the institution.

South Mountain Community College (SMCC) is an award-winning institution that provides an exceptional community college education. The first institutional priority of the college strategic plan is to "enhance and sustain a campus community conducive to quality teaching and learning." To that end, SMCC awards 19 different Associate in Arts degrees, 10 different Associates in Science degrees, 22 different Associate Applied in Science degrees, 3 transfer pathways (Arizona General Education Curriculum or AGEC A, B, S), 6 academic certificates, 53 occupational certificates of completion, and most recently a Bachelors of Science degree in Behavioral Science.

Student achievement is monitored to ensure that appropriate levels of performance exist for the degree or certificate awarded. More specifically, students engage in a variety of pedagogical modalities appropriate to the discipline designed to provide experiential learning and opportunities for discovery. For example, all programs require students to analyze and evaluate problems, works, or texts and to apply and synthesize their developing knowledge and skills through assignments, design projects, and other assessment measures. Students who have completed degrees and certificates at SMCC graduate with various awards and recognitions and are prepared for further education or immediate employment.

The Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) Curriculum Handbook is a primary source of information regarding approved curriculum, transfer, and general studies standards, and processes. This handbook serves as the curriculum framework for all faculty and staff and ensures that all programs are current and adhere to the highest possible quality standards. The handbook provides specific information about the development of curriculum proposals, the processes that move the proposal through various approval stages, and other related procedures.

All courses and programs are developed and monitored to ensure content is current and reflects academic rigor and community needs. This process occurs through Instructional Councils (ICs) which are discipline-specific faculty groups that are responsible for creating and revising curriculum as well as ensuring continuity of programs and alignment with transfer partners. The work of Instructional Councils fosters quality academic programs through a faculty-initiated process. As such, this work is instrumental to the diversity and relevancy of curriculum at SMCC and the entire MCCCD. The commitment to ensuring the relevancy and quality of academic programs is also evidenced through community advisory boards. These advisory boards also ensure that the courses and programs offered at SMCC are current and reflect the highest academic standards.

3.A.2.

SMCC offers a variety of Associate Degree and certificate programs, and it has recently added (Fall 2023) a four-year Bachelor of Science Degree program in Behavioral Sciences.

The Associate Degrees awarded at SMCC require between 60-68 credit hours. The college currently offers an Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Applied Science (AAS), Associate in Arts-Elementary Education (AAEE), Associate in Fine Arts (AAFA), Associate in Science (AS), Associate in General Studies (AGS), an Associate in Business, General Requirements (ABUS-GR), and an Associate in Business, Special Requirements (ABUS-SR). In our last academic year (2022-2023) SMCC awarded 569 degrees.

In the Fall 2023, SMCC began offering a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Sciences; this four-year degree is a "stand-alone" program, requiring 120 credit hours. It is designed to provide affordable and accessible access to a bachelor's program that will prepare students for mental health and social services careers above and beyond entry-level positions. Graduating students will be able to meet a significant need for mental health services in the South Phoenix community, and research has projected an increasing demand for behavioral science professionals. In the May 2024 commencement ceremonies, SMCC recognized 4 Bachelors degree recipients, one of whom completed the requirements for the degree this Spring (2024), and three of whom will be completing their bachelor's degrees at SMCC this summer (2024).

In addition to Associate and Bachelor degree options, SMCC also offers a variety of certificate programs. Academic Certificates and Certificates of Completion credit requirements range from 6.5 credit hours for a Real Estate Pre-License to 16-45 credit hours for Mobile App Development, and 16-27 credit hours for Construction Trades certification. The certificate offerings at SMCC are regularly enhanced and expanded to reflect the changing community demands. In our last academic year, SMCC awarded 405 certificates.

In addition, SMCC offers the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) requirements which ensures the seamless transfer to the in-state public universities. Students attending ASU also benefit from the MyPath2ASU Program which guarantees admissions and in-state tuition for our students. Likewise, SMCC has a partnership with Northern Arizona University (NAU) whereby students can complete bachelor's degree requirements with SMCC and transfer to specific in-person or online degree programs. The college has a NAU site on campus to better facilitate the transition of SMCC students to the university. SMCC also has articulation agreements with more than 22 local institutions of higher education, and more than 60 from higher education institutions around the country, promoting transfer opportunities beyond the state of Arizona. In the last academic year

(2022-2023) SMCC awarded 260 AGEC certificates.

The requirements and descriptions of all programs are available to the public on the MCCCD website, the SMCC college website, and the SMCC annual catalog. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are articulated by the MCCCD and developed by the MCCCD Instructional Councils which include representatives from all ten sister colleges. The PLOs establish consistency and quality in academic standards for the entire MCCCD. This information also clearly communicates to the public the requirements and expectations for all courses and programs at SMCC.

3.A.3.

SMCC offers courses at two separate campus locations: Main and Guadalupe. SMCC also offers dual credit courses at designated area high schools. Regardless of location or modality, all courses offered by SMCC share competencies, requirements, credit hours, and grading standards.

Campus Locations
The main campus of SMCC on 24th Street in South Phoenix hosts most of the institution's in-person courses. SMCC offers a selection of general education and certificate courses at the Guadalupe Center, located 4.2 miles from the main campus within the limits of the Pascua Yaqui Indian Reservation.

Program consistency for all locations and modalities is evidenced by standard course competencies. In addition, faculty hiring qualifications align with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidelines for both academic and occupational teaching positions. All faculty are hired utilizing the same criteria and must meet district (MCCCD) and Instructional Council approved qualifications such as education level and number of discipline-specific credits earned to teach which are verified through background checks and transcript analysis.

eLearning Offerings
SMCC offers a variety of hybrid and online courses. The number of classes offered in alternative modalities has been increasing in response to community demands for dynamic learning environments. The college provides eLearning offerings each academic year, including college level General Education requirements as well as specialized electives and occupational courses. Hybrid offerings at SMCC meet face-to-face a predetermined number of times, depending on the course competencies, and all eLearning offerings require that students use the Canvas Learning Management System or discipline specific tools such as the Maricopa Open Educational Resource Learning System (MOER).

Recognizing the potential challenges of online and hybrid teaching, faculty who teach in these modalities participate in additional training to ensure quality across all modes of delivery. The SMCC Online Learning Module is a training course that engages instructors in self-evaluations and assessment by a team of highly-trained eLearning faculty. Prior to the pandemic all eLearning courses were assessed using an online assessment tool; today our faculty use the Regular and Substantive Interaction guide to support online learning at SMCC. However, the SMCC assessment team, which includes representative administrators and faculty from every division, developed the SMCC Assessment Handbook to support course assessment regardless of modality. This work ensures that eLearning offerings are optimized to meet the same academic and curricular standards as traditional face-to-face classes.

Dual Credit

SMCC has been offering Dual Enrollment courses for more than fifteen years. These transferable college- level courses are offered at local high schools and taught by qualified high school instructors. Current in-county tuition is only $97 per credit hour which is more affordable than public or private colleges and universities. Qualifying students may also receive tuition assistance based on financial need. Currently, there are 6 high schools in dual enrollment partnerships with SMCC offering 79 sections for dual credit. In the current academic year, there are 38 unique dual enrollment classes from freshman composition and college level algebra to exercise science and marketing.

Sources

- 3A1 - Academic-plan
- 3A1 - Awards
- 3A1 - Bachelors of Science degree in Behavioral Science
- 3A1 - Curriculum Handbook
- 3A1 - FIrst institutional priority
- 3A1 Instructional Council Handbook.pdf
- 3A1-A2 - Articulation agreements
- 3A2 2023-2024-smcc-academic-catalog-archivesm
- 3A2 - Construction Trades.pdf
- 3A2 - Degrees and Certificates _ SMCC
- 3A2 - MCCCD website
- 3A2 - MyPath2ASU Program
- 3A2 -AGEC
- 3A2 -Partnership with Northern Arizona University (NAU) 3A
- 3A2 -Real Estate Pre-License
- 3A2 -SMCC academic-catalog-archivesm
- 3A3 - Canvas Learning Management System
- 3A3 - Dual Enrollment
- 3A3 - eLearning-Faculty-Handbook.pdf
- 3A3 - In county tuition
- 3A3 - Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance learning
- 3A3 - SMCC-Assessment-Handbook
- 3A3 -eLearning
- Mobile App Dev..pdf

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.

Argument

3.B.1.

General Education is represented in the South Mountain Community College (SMCC) Mission Statement. The general education program at MCCCD – contained in the Arizona General Education Certificate (AGEC) – is fully aligned with the university general studies requirements of the three public universities in Arizona.

Current AGEC degree options consist of 35 to 37 credit hours that seamlessly transfer to any in-state public university. SMCC continues to offer three different AGEC options for students planning to transfer: (1) AGEC A satisfies liberal arts degree requirements and a portion of the Associate of Arts degree; (2) AGEC B satisfies Business degree requirements and a portion of the Associates of Business degree offered at SMCC and (3) AGEC C satisfies Mathematics and Mathematics-based science degree requirements. A slight modification to the AGEC C is the AGEC S, which fulfills much of the Associates of Science degree. Collectively, these credentials provide students with a variety of general educational options. All degree and certificate options and requirements are available via the MCCCD website.

AGEC course requirements are identified by general studies designations. The general studies designations are aligned with ASU's model and are governed by the ASU General Studies Council. These designations include Literacy and Critical Inquiry (L), Mathematical Studies (MA, CS), Humanities and Fine Arts (HU), Social and Behavioral Sciences (SB), Natural Sciences (SQ, SG), Cultural Diversity in the United States, Global Awareness (G), and Historical Awareness (H). The various course designations support the college philosophy and practice that general education must be inclusive of a diverse and liberal education.

In cooperation and collaboration with transfer partners, MCCCD is currently working with AZ Transfer and the General Education Transfer Articulation Task Force (GEATF) on a redesign process in order to update and streamline alignment of AGEC courses with our transfer partners. The proposed redesign will go into effect in the Fall of 2025.

3.B.2.

The purpose and content of general education are clearly communicated via the college website and catalog. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to work with college advisors to ensure that both purpose and content are clearly understood. Intended learning outcomes for general education are coordinated by the college iTeachSMART. iTeachSMART is a campus initiative that was created to foster assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels. Faculty-driven and faculty-chaired, iTeachSMART helps academic divisions, departments, and faculty define and assess student learning outcomes (SLOs). The seven institutional (general education) outcomes for the college are:

Critical and Creative Thinking: Students will be able to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives that are unique and effective, reflect, and solve problems. Students will:

Examine possibilities carefully, fairly, and constructively.

Focus thoughts and actions by organizing and analyzing possibilities, refine and develop the most promising possibilities, rank the options, and choose certain options.

Search for meaningful new connections by generating many unusual, original, and varied possibilities, as well as details that expand or enrich possibilities.

Synthesize diverse sources of information to design original work that shows evaluation of evidence and creative problem solving skills.

Information Literacy: Students will be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and effectively communicate the needed information in various formats. Students will:

Assess information efficiently and effectively using a wide variety of sources. Evaluate information critically and competently (relevance, quality, authoritativeness, and credibility).

Use information accurately and creatively for the issue at hand. Access and use information ethically and legally.

Oral Communication: Students will be able to develop and deliver oral presentations using appropriate technology to engage and inform target audiences.

- Organizational pattern is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful.
- Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation.
- Delivery techniques make the presentation compelling, and the speaker appears polished and confident.

- A variety of types of supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation.
- Central message is compelling.

Written Communication: Students will be able to develop and deliver presentations, both in the written and oral format, using appropriate technology to engage and inform target audiences. Students will:

Create presentations that are clear, well-organized, straightforward, and concise. Use appropriate vocabulary, grammar and tone of voice for the audience.

Present oneself professionally in person using nonverbal signals such as eye contact, body language and appropriate dress.

Quantitative Analysis: Students will be able to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. Students will:

Understand and create arguments supported by quantitative evidence.

Model a real-life situation mathematically and recognize the limits of that model. Communicate reasoning clearly in a variety of formats using words, mathematical equations, tables, and graphs as appropriate.

Interpret mathematical models and draw inferences from them.

Diversity and Global Awareness: Students will be able to interact effectively in a diverse and multicultural society and explore multiple perspectives.

- Describes how culture is influenced by aspects of society (i.e. arts, literature, institutions, or behavior).
- Identifies strategies for creating equitable conditions.
- Explains with precision the impact of culture and worldview on self-concept, thoughts, behaviors, and values.
- Explains the significance of multiple perspectives for understanding.
- Explains concept(s) related to diversity and illustrates the concept(s) through the use of specific examples.
- Collaborates with others and considers their beliefs and perspectives.

SMCC Experience: Students will strive to make healthy choices and commit to continual improvement. They work to identify and achieve their personal, educational and career goals.

- Demonstrates self-direction
- Determines a clear purpose, measurable goals with precise steps and timeframe.
- Identifies and practices self-care.
- Communicates effectively in order to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships.
- Identifies and makes decisions based on self-concept, personal interests, skills, limitations, and values.

3.B.3.

All SMCC course, certificate, and degree offerings align with our Mission, Vision, and Values, which provide the framework for our philosophy of "educating minds." Quality and rigor standards are established by the AGEC and maintained through ongoing assessment.

All degree programs at SMCC engage students in developing a variety of skill sets that fully prepare them for dynamic and changing environments. Not only is SMCC committed to providing this skill set to students, faculty utilize innovative teaching and learning experiences to accomplish this goal. The iTeachSmart team also assists with creating or obtaining assessment instruments to measure the students' achievement of the outcomes, and then using the resulting data to develop and implement a plan for improving student success. The guiding team reports to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and invites active participation from all employee groups as well as student representatives. This initiative is explained in more detail in Criterion Four.

Pathways Quality Initiative

At SMCC, the Pathways Quality Initiative is an additional project focused on ensuring that students leave the campus more knowledgeable and prepared for employment or higher-level learning. The Pathways Quality Initiative has merged with the MCCCD Guided Pathways Transformation Project. The Pathways Quality Initiative was the SMCC selected HLC QI project designed with three goals:

- Development of clear program pathways to completion for all programs at the college
- Development of strategic schedules
- Alignment of the instructional budget to schedule production

The project has evolved over three years. Alignment of the budget to schedule production has been completed, and work on pathways and strategic schedules continues. The latter projects are now continuing in coordination with the Maricopa Guided Pathways work. Ultimately the Pathways Quality Initiative further demonstrated the college's commitment to general education by increasing completion rates, providing enhanced scheduling, and optimizing college resources. In 2019, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accepted the college's Quality Initiative Report Guiding Pathways and Strategic Scheduling and confirmed SMCC's "genuine effort" on this project. The continuation of this work is evidenced in the progress of system-wide Guided Pathways, Fields of Interest (FOI), Maricopa Pipeline AZ, and First-Year Experience (FYE) curriculum. Collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs has been essential to the success of these endeavors which ultimately impact student engagement, retention, persistence, and completion.

MCCCD began the redesign of its programs to support student success in 2017. Guided Pathways is an evidence-based, comprehensive redesign informed by Completion by Design, Complete College America, Community College Research Center, and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Guided Pathways promotes early career exploration through meta-majors (Fields of Interest), provides opportunities for self-fulfillment, ensures carefully sequenced courses and predictable schedules, formulates recognizable milestones, and provides ongoing integrated support services for all students, especially the most under-representing student populations. The CCRC identifies four essential practices to support Guided Pathways:

1. Clarify the path
2. Help students get on a path
3. Help students stay on the path
4. Ensure students are learning

To clarify the path, SMCC faculty along with MCCCD collaborated in the Guided Pathways

curriculum mapping process that detailed the scope and sequence of course requirements for each degree path to a transfer path or career path. These teams created Program Maps for more than 200 degree programs that unified the Maricopa District's degree offerings. Those programs can now be found on the MCCCD website and SMCC website.

To help students get on a path, SMCC successfully implemented changes in course placement and strategically embedded student supports using multiple measures of placement. To help students stay on a path, the college is providing proactive advising and experiential, co-curricular learning experiences to help students engage in their chosen degree paths. To ensure students are learning, the college is engaging in a course-by-course, program-by-program, student learning outcome assessment activities through iTeachSmart. SMCC also uses nationally normed studies, including Ruffalo Noel Levitz, CCSSE and SENSE.

3.B.4.

As a Hispanic and minority serving institution, SMCC is one of the most demographically and culturally diverse institutions in the state. It reflects and celebrates this diversity by way of course offerings such as PSY132 - Psychology and Culture, HIS109 - Mexican-American History and Culture, and ENH112 - Chicano Literature. Students seeking degrees and most certificates are required to take at least one course that satisfies the AGEC core requirement of Cultural Diversity in the United States and one course that satisfies either Historical or Global Awareness.

Performances, showcases, and presentations are always designed to appeal to people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. For example, both past and current theatrical productions aim to practice multicultural and gender-neutral casting, and plays are chosen to represent a cross-section of topics each semester, such as immigration, identity, sexual orientation, and veteran affairs. The music department showcases a diverse array of musical talents through its annual performances and the open-air festival, Concert Under the Stars. These events cater to a wide range of audiences, celebrating the rich tapestry of musical genres and cultures.

This commitment extends beyond the classroom and is reflected in student club organizations, community partnerships, and co-curricular activities. As such, students and staff participate in diverse and cultural events at SMCC, the nine sister colleges, and the District Office. The college is also an integral part of the diverse cultural landscape of the area. In 2023, Intelligent.com ranked SMCC 7th among the top community colleges in Arizona; Niche ranked SMCC in the 10 top in Arizona. Across the institution, human and cultural diversity are widely celebrated, and a diverse education is particularly accessible. The following programs provide additional support to the value that SMCC places on human and cultural diversity.

Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program (BNFP): After being put on hold during the pandemic, the Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program (BNFP) is set to resume in Fall 2024, emerging from its temporary moratorium. This vital program aims to alleviate the critical shortage of Registered Nurses in Arizona who can effectively communicate with Spanish-speaking patients, bridging the language gap and improving healthcare access for this significant demographic.

Selection into the program is through a competitive process. Once accepted, fellows complete their General Education coursework toward the completion of an Associate in Applied Science degree in Nursing and then transfer to one of our sister colleges to complete their nursing coursework. The program offers each fellow extensive academic support and mentoring, and fellows must pass the

HESI exam, which indicates their academic preparation, before beginning their nursing coursework.

Storytelling: Founded by SMCC faculty in 1994, the [Storytelling Institute](#) is a unique program offering an academic curriculum in oral tradition college coursework, academic certificates in storytelling, and an annual calendar of innovative events for the community. With more than 45 Storytelling courses, including The Art of Storytelling and Multicultural Folktales, program participants gain a deep understanding of and extensive experience in applying the elements of effective storytelling. Great storytellers are great communicators and effective leaders. For many years, the Storytelling program has been working with the charter high school on campus, the Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center (AAEC), to incorporate storytelling into a student's repertoire as early as their freshman year of high school. More than 100 AAEC students take HUM 292: The Art of Storytelling each year.

[Achieving a College Education (ACE) Program:](#) ACE is a nationally recognized program designed to support high school students' pathway to the university. Successful ACE students earn 24 college credits by the time they graduate high school. Program students also qualify for scholarships and achievement awards, take part in special events, and receive special recognition upon graduation.

[American Indian Student Center:](#) The American Indian Student Center is a multicultural program that encompasses a culturally-relevant approach to foster outreach and retention of American Indian students by establishing and coordinating programs/activities including: Outreach, Support Services, and Student-Centered Programs.

[Honors Program:](#) The MCCCD Honors Program was established in 1981 and provides opportunities for all recent high school graduates and continuing students who meet the eligibility criteria to engage in stimulating and challenging classes and intellectual activities throughout the semester. Honors Program students also qualify for scholarships and achievement awards, take part in special events, and receive special recognition upon graduation.

[Hoop of Learning:](#) The Hoop of Learning is a scholarship based, high school-to-college bridge program for American Indian students in high school. It gives students the opportunity to earn college credits while still attending high school. The Hoop program helps students navigate the college enrollment processes and provides them with support services to ensure academic success.

International Education: Every educator knows the value students from all over the globe bring to campus. The students become the heart and soul of the campus. SMCC is home to an active international student population and offers international student support services, through our Student Enrollment Services DSO, providing full guidance with visas and other paperwork requirements for maintaining eligibility to study in the US. The college continues to work on updating the webpages for International Student Admission and opportunities. The International Friends Club brings in students opportunities to support each other and share their diverse cultures with the wider college community. International students have abundant opportunities to partake in special celebrations, such as IE Week in the fall, Lunar New Year in the spring among others. Workshops are also organized for students to apply for Gilman Study Abroad Scholarships and internships.

One of our goals is to help rekindle interest in study abroad experiences, by finding ways to make international education an essential part of the educational experience offered by the campus. These programs can –improve student confidence; enhance international functional knowledge; increase an understanding of global interdependence; increase interest in working in a foreign country; enhance

interest in further study abroad; and kindle interest in interdisciplinary studies. A Study Abroad program in Ghana is in the works, in partnership with Rio. Faculty also continue to take an active part in incorporating COIL exchanges in the curriculum, attending IE Council meetings as well as F1 student visa meetings to keep abreast of any changes to policies and procedures. Due to the pandemic, SMCC and the other 9 colleges in MCCCD did not participate in Study Abroad for several years; however, prior to the pandemic, there were 8 programs traveling to 7 different countries and those 8 programs remain consistent across the 10 colleges, today. SMCC has a scholarship program to support students who are interested in this experience.

Additionally, annually SMCC students, faculty and staff participate in the MCCCD Global Leadership Retreat (MCGLR), which brings together 100 students from all ten colleges to develop global leadership skills. While this program was in hiatus from 2020-2022, SMCC students attended in 2023.

TRiO STEP: This program was established at SMCC in 2005 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. STEP provides an academic support system for at-risk students who aspire to transfer to university. Each year, the program supports 160 students who are of limited income, first- generation, and/or disabled by providing access to tutoring, one-on-one academic advising, workshops (career, transfer, and personal development), and other resources. The TRiO STEP grant concluded in 2020 and SMCC was not selected for another round in 2020. SMCC intends to reapply for TRiO-SSS in the next cycle.

Upward Bound: SMCC's Upward Bound Program was established in 2007 through a grant from the

U.S. Department of Education's TRIO program for first-generation, low-income high school students. This program supports at-risk high school students' transition to college. SMCC was awarded another TRiO Upward Bound grant in 2022 and has successfully supported hundreds of local high school students in developing their college-going skills and opportunities.

Veterans Services: SMCC is a Veteran's Partner Organization and a Military Advanced Education and Transition Top College. The mission of Veterans Services at South Mountain Community College is to act as a liaison between veteran students and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The office serves as the primary contact in assisting veterans with completing the necessary paperwork to ensure proper VA educational entitlements, registration assistance, educational benefits information, academic advisement, and referrals to campus resources such as tutoring, personal and career counseling, disability services and financial aid. There is also a Veterans Club on campus, which supports veterans with lifestyle management to promote professional and civic achievement.

Diversity Committee: The SMCC Diversity Committee supports student-focused diversity programming, such as Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Native American Heritage Month, Women's History Month, the Lunar New Year, which was covered by our local news in 2023, and several other shorter observances for Pride Week. This group serves as a resource to "diversity across the curriculum" projects, works with librarians to develop diversity-related collections, and coordinates with the District Office to bring cultural heritage workshops and events, featured speakers, performances, cuisine, and mentoring opportunities to SMCC.

MCCCD Diversity Professional Development Opportunities: Through the Maricopa Center for Learning and Innovation (MCLI), the faculty, administrators, staff, and students of SMCC participate in districtwide educational programming that provides intellectually stimulating learning opportunities. Professional development experiences throughout the year include global forums, safe

space training, Mosaic, and symposiums. These provide an interactive and dynamic opportunity for faculty, students, and community members to converse about issues relative to diversity and global perspectives.

3.B.5.

SMCC faculty and students participate in scholarship and creative work to discover and promote knowledge. Many of our faculty engage in research, publish in scholarly journals, and present at national and international conferences. In 2023 math faculty at SMCC led a group of students in mathematical research and presented with colleagues from Arizona State University at the 2023 MAA Southwestern Section conference. Students have frequent opportunities to participate in internships, performing arts productions, and academic competitions. In addition, students from SMCC win competitive achievement awards during their participation in on-campus groups and clubs, such as DECA Collegiate and PTK.

Performing Arts: The Performing Arts at SMCC provides students and faculty many opportunities to showcase the application and synthesis of skills as demonstrated during performances. Some of these opportunities have included the annual SMCC Concert Under the Stars and Return to the African Village, part of the work of SMCC Storytelling faculty, theater productions, and the Elemental Cultural Arts Festival, held at the Phoenix Art Museum. The performing arts provide a rich variety of experiences that support the college mission and are led by exemplary faculty/staff committed to serving the community.

Community Entrepreneur Center: SMCC students have several opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial acumen with the aid of the Community Entrepreneur Center, which includes coursework, mentoring, and "The Big Pitch," which allows students to compete for outside sponsorships, and support the ASU Poder Program, a grant funded entrepreneurship program for MCCCD students.

Student Showcases: Each year, SMCC students have a wide range of opportunities to contribute in the form of Honors, clubs, and artistic competitions. symposiums, and showcases, including Phi Theta Kappa; Hermanas STEM workshops; Artists of Promise Art Show; The MCCCD Creative Writing Competition; DECA; and other club- based competitions.

Sources

- 3B1 - ASU General Studies Council
- 3B1 - General studies designations
- 3B1 - MCCCD website
- 3B1 - Mission Statement
- 3B1 -AGEC-A_B_S
- 3B2 - Institution learning outcomes
- 3B2 - iTeachSMART
- 3B3 - American Association of Community Colleges
- 3B3 - Assessment-Handbook
- 3B3 - CCSSE

- 3B3 - Community College Research Center
- 3B3 - Complete College America
- 3B3 - Completion by Design
- 3B3 - Course placement
- 3B3 - Degree Programs
- 3B3 - Fields of Interest
- 3B3 - First-Year Experience
- 3B3 - Maricopa Pipeline AZ
- 3B3 - RNL Data
- 3B3 - SENSE
- 3B4 - Achieving a College Education
- 3B4 - American Indian Student Center
- 3B4 - BNFP
- 3B4 - Diversity Committee
- 3B4 - ENH112 - Chicano Literature
- 3B4 - HIS109 - Mexican-American History
- 3B4 - Honors Program
- 3B4 - Hoop of Learning
- 3B4 - Local News
- 3B4 - Maricopa Center for Learning and Innovation
- 3B4 - MOSAICDevPlan
- 3B4 - NICHE
- 3B4 - Storytelling Institute
- 3B4 - Top community colleges
- 3B4 - Upward Bound
- 3B4 - Veterans Services
- 3B5 - 2023 MAA Southwestern Section
- 3B5 - Concert Under the Stars
- 3B5 - DECA Collegiate
- 3B5 - Theater productions
- 3B5- PTK
- CEC.pdf
- PSY132A.pdf
- Return to the African Village.pdf

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.

Argument

3.C.1.

Teaching and Learning is one of the five priorities included in the college strategic plan. When developing the current strategic plan, the college was purposeful to include teaching and learning as a core areas of focus. In 2023-2024, SMCC employed 52 full-time residential faculty and 206 adjunct faculty members. The student to faculty ratio is 17:1 (IPEDS). The low student-to-faculty ratio allows SMCC faculty to provide students with personalized education and individual attention.

Oversight of curriculum and expectations for student performance are determined at the district level by the MCCCD Instructional Councils for each discipline. However, representation on each of these councils requires participation from each college, thus ensuring that the mission of SMCC is fully included in the development of all curriculum. At the college level, faculty serve on the Academic Affairs Shared Governance Council, which is the starting point to develop, modify or eliminate programs before progressing to the District Instructional Council. The AA Shared Governance Council replaced the SMCC Curriculum Committee in 2020. The new structure provides discipline specific faculty to provide input in all programs and all aspects of the student experience, not limiting their scope to solely curriculum. The Council provided input on the new Bachelors of Science in Behavioral Science that launched in the Fall of 2023.

Residential faculty also serve as faculty coordinators, which ensure the effectiveness of programs, courses, and curriculum. Faculty coordinators also engage adjunct faculty and ensure that best practices are shared and adopted across programs. Additionally, each division chair at SMCC

engages in oversight of faculty and faculty within each discipline are involved in the assessment of student learning using shared SLOs.

In addition, faculty also participate in critical work beyond the classroom. Faculty are widely represented in various college committees that are instrumental to daily operations such as the SMCC Shared Governance Council and the Institutional Review Board. The quality of SMCC faculty is also evidenced by their participation in district-wide initiatives such as Guided Pathways. Faculty also serve as club advisors for student organizations, mentor students, and coordinate a variety of activities that support learning opportunities.

3.C.2.

Faculty qualifications are set by the MCCCD Instructional Councils, taking into consideration the HLC and other accrediting body requirements. All SMCC instructors must meet those qualifications which include both degree level and minimum graduate credit hours. As a result of new credential requirements, all faculty were assessed by the division chairs and the Vice President of Academic Affairs during the 2014-2015 Academic Year. In addition, in 2022-2023 all full-time and adjunct faculty were required to provide current transcripts to their Department Chairs, Deans, and Vice Presidents, to ensure qualifications for each subject area were met; those who do not currently meet their subject qualifications are required to do so by the end of the 2023-2024 academic year or are at risk of not teaching in the Fall 2024. Faculty who do not meet the subject requirements are being supported in the process of earning additional graduate credits to meet those standards. The credentials of all subsequent (new) hires are carefully screened for requirements. Faculty are also required to complete *EDU250 Teaching and Learning in the Community College* or a course equivalent within the first two years of teaching. This course is currently being re-evaluated and redesigned to ensure alignment with the new HLC and programmatic requirements.

3.C.3.

There are well established institutional and MCCCD policies in place for evaluating both residential and adjunct faculty. Residential (full-time) faculty are probationary for their first five years. As outlined in the Residential Faculty Agreement, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the respective division chairs evaluate probationary faculty in the classroom each semester for the first three years, then annually for the final two years. Adjunct (part-time) faculty are at-will employees. The respective division chairs evaluate adjunct faculty in the classroom each semester for the first three semesters using the same criteria as is used to evaluate residential faculty. The evaluations focus on learning environment, delivery of content, and student feedback. Faculty review these evaluations with their chairs and then sign them. Signed evaluation forms are filed with Human Resources.

Articulated in the Residential Faculty Agreement, probationary faculty must complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for their first five years. The IDP includes normal job duties; accomplishments; professional growth; service; Vice President of Academic Affairs, chair, and student evaluations; peer mentor observations; and assessment. The IDPs are evaluated by the PAR/PARC committee using a detailed rubric, and then the committee makes recommendations for renewals. Following the fifth year, the probationary faculty member becomes "appointive" faculty. Appointive faculty complete a self-study called a Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP) every three years.

FEPs are reviewed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Additionally, all SMCC faculty are invited to participate in formative and summative assessments of their teaching each semester through the iTeachSMART initiative. During the fifth week of instruction, faculty are encouraged to distribute surveys in class to assess the students' experiences and make modifications as needed. Similarly, at the end of the semester, faculty survey students and draft a summative assessment report indicating their plan to improve the courses each faculty member teaches.

3.C.4.

Professional development is a priority at SMCC and is listed among our Institutional Priorities: "1.2 Enhance teaching and learning through faculty and staff development" and 4.1 "Promote orientation, training, and learning opportunities through innovation, diversity and inclusion." Peer mentors and the faculty developer help faculty identify opportunities for professional development to advance both the institution and the individual. Conference attendance is encouraged through funding provided by both the District Office and the SMCC President's Office.

The college also has a number of resources available to faculty to help in their professional development including:

South Mountain Community Library: The SMCL houses a professional development collection of more than 300 items covering topics from curriculum design to organizational leadership skills. All faculty members have access to scholarly subscription databases and library services including interlibrary loan and research support. Faculty can request library materials purchases.

Center for Teaching and Learning: Collaborating with the SMCL, the CTL provides professional development for both faculty and staff through assistance and training on a variety of tools and resources, including the LMS, Adobe Connect, and other programs. Faculty Developers organize workshops on a wide range of topics such as Cooperative Learning to Grant Writing. Faculty from the CTL also host a monthly podcast "In the Service of Teaching".

Faculty Professional Growth: Residential Faculty are encouraged to engage in ongoing professional development to foster instructional excellence and expertise with a generous stipend per academic year to fund professional growth. Faculty must apply for FPG funds through their campus FPG representative, division chairs, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the College President. Additionally, faculty are encouraged to participate in a variety of growth programs including Maricopa Excellence in Teaching, Learning Grants, Maricopa Summer Institute, Maricopa Institute for Learning Research Fellowship and Maricopa Study Abroad.

Adjunct Faculty Professional: Growth: Adjunct Faculty Professional Growth is administered by the Maricopa Center for Learning and Innovation. Adjunct faculty have access to professional growth stipends based upon the number of credits taught. Faculty apply for AFPG funds through their campus AFPG representative and the MCLI. In addition, outstanding adjunct faculty are nominated by division chairs to attend the Adjunct Faculty Academy, hosted by GateWay Community College, and attended by faculty district wide. The Adjunct Faculty Academy is a partnership between Phoenix College, South Mountain Community College, and GateWay Community College faculty and faculty developers. Expert faculty and instructional designers lead one of five training sessions:

- Class organization strategies
- Classroom management
- Active learning
- Engagement Assessment
- Evaluation
- Technology and innovation Micro-Teaches/Mini Lectures

Participants are awarded a stipend for their contributions to the five sessions and are also introduced to a variety of educational tools.

Sabbaticals: Funded through the District Office, a sabbatical leave is an opportunity for residential faculty members who have worked seven years or longer to broaden or deepen educational interests, to explore new areas, or examine instructional methods to enhance the mission of the college. A sabbatical leave gives faculty a respite from their normal duties to provide them an opportunity to grow professionally. The goal of a sabbatical leave project is to engage faculty in the areas of study, research, travel, work experience, or other creative activity, and to contribute to the institution upon his/her return to the college.

3.C.5.

SMCC faculty are highly accessible for student engagement and inquiry as evidenced by the CCSSE reports over the past ten years, which indicate that SMCC consistently exceeds the National Benchmark in student-faculty engagement.

Residential faculty are responsible for holding a minimum of five scheduled academic support hours, whether virtually or in-person, and most are available to students for many more hours each week. Faculty post their schedules on syllabi, online, and at their doors so that the information is publicly accessible. Adjunct faculty are not required to hold office hours; however, most of them do. Many divisions and buildings have space dedicated to adjunct faculty so they can provide students with one-on-one support. Additionally, adjunct faculty provide students with contact information and assist students directly before and after their scheduled classes. In addition to face-to-face interaction, students can access faculty virtually through phone, email, Learning Management Systems (LMS), and tools such as Adobe Connect.

3.C.6.

All SMCC staff members are qualified within their positions and participate in ongoing professional development through annual staff retreats, workshops, and attendance at local and national conferences. Staff members must adhere to position-specific qualifications outlined by the MCCCD hiring guidelines. In addition, many positions require skills testing and/or work samples to demonstrate qualifications.

As part of the Maricopa County Community College District, SMCC staff are provided a variety of professional development opportunities at the college and district level. The leadership of SMCC is committed to maintaining a diverse and qualified staff, and the college invests in staff by paying for professional development in areas that support leadership, college initiatives, and job performance. In addition, staff may apply for professional development financial resources to further education or

attend job-relevant training opportunities. Currently, staff may apply for $4,000 each fiscal year.

Sources

- 3C1 - Strategic plan 2023
- 3C1 - Academic Affairs Shared Governance Council
- 3C1 - SMCC Shared Governance Council
- 3C1 - Student organizations
- 3C3 - iTeachSMART
- 3C3 - PAR-PARC
- 3C3 - Residential Faculty Agreement
- 3C4 - Adjunct Faculty Professional Growth(2)
- 3C4 - CEC.pdf
- 3C4 - Faculty Professional Growth
- 3C4 - In the Service of Teachin
- 3C4 - SMCC Strategic Plan
- 3C4 - South Mountain Community Library
- 3C5 - CCSSE
- 3C5 - Sabbatical Leave
- IRB.pdf

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).

Argument

3.D.1.

The Cougar Kick-Start new student orientation (NSO) provides support for learning by ensuring that new students are prepared to successfully navigate higher education. NSO is designed to provide students with the information, resources, and tools necessary to make a successful transition to college. This includes recognizing departments and services that can assist students in achieving success, identifying best practices for success in the classroom, explaining the importance of setting and monitoring educational, personal, and career goals, articulating how to establish connections with other students, faculty, and staff at the college, recognizing financial literacy as an important component of current and future success, and identifying technology applications and resources essential to your experience as a new and continuing student.

A key building block for students at SMCC is the new First Year Experience Course (FYE101 and FYE103), implemented as a graduation requirement starting in the Fall 2022. This course essentially replaced the former CPD150, College Success Course - a course designed for students who were less "college-ready" than others. The new FYE courses are designed for all degree-seeking students and are either a one- or three- credit course taught by faculty across all disciplines. The course focuses on the SMCC and MCCCD student experience, as well as student success, personal growth, financial literacy, career inquiry and development, and education planning. Recognizing the important role that these factors play in the support for students, a cross-divisional team has developed a highly coordinated student experience integrated into all FYE courses. In addition to students engaging in a counseling session for career exploration, all FYE101 and FYE103 students have a required advising assignment to co-create an educational plan with an Academic Advisor.

South Mountain Community College is committed to ensuring that all students are provided with equal access to learning. The Disability Resources and Services (DRS) Office is an important part of this effort. The mission of our DRS Office is to provide qualified, self-identifying students with disabilities equal access to a quality post-secondary educational experience by administering reasonable accommodations as needed; foster and establish linkages, disability awareness, and collaboration between students, faculty/staff, and other college and community resources/services;

and develop potential campus and community resources that will provide opportunities to strengthen student academic and vocational success.

Student support is a key element of the student experience and is also reflected through academic support. Tutoring at South Mountain consists of 28 staff members and is offered Monday through Friday around campus in varying subjects and disciplines to better meet the academic needs of our student population. Tutoring is a drop-in service to offer greater flexibility for those seeking support while also maximizing tutor availability. Multiple subjects (math, chemistry, biology, accountancy, English, reading etc.) at our college are accommodated in the tutoring centers with a concerted effort in supporting our developmental courses in math and English. Using research on best practices for assisting learning in higher education, tutors at SMCC are a mixture of peer (current students), near peer (students attending another college or local university), staff, and faculty. Each tutor is trained and certified through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), which requires eight hours of initial instruction and guidance followed by ongoing coaching, and review in content area. Staff are encouraged to attend and present at the CRLA, National Tutoring Association, Association of Colleges for Tutoring & Learning Assistance, and Association for the Tutoring Profession conferences.

The college also provides a variety of specialized services to support the diverse and unique needs of students. These include:

MEChA: MEChA encourages Chicano/students (and all ethnicities) to continue and pursue their education through involvement in cultural and social issues affecting the Hispanic community and participation in social activities.

Male Empowerment Network (M.E.N.): The Male Empowerment Network (MEN) is designed to improve the retention and degree completion rates of its male students of color, through mentoring and participation in social activities.

Women Rising: The Women Rising Program is designed to support female students with opportunities and connections to leadership, empowerment, and sisterhood.

Financial Literacy: SMCC supports students in their journey to learn money management. The college offers Financial Literacy support services to students, including FAFSA Workshops, Scholarship Workshops, and a four-week series of Financial Literacy Workshops taught by financial professionals to help students develop the tools to avoid incurring student loan debt and improve their financial futures. The new FYE courses have also integrated financial literacy and planning into each of the courses.

Counseling Center: The SMCC Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to help students, faculty, and staff overcome problems, past or present, and gain self- understanding and direction. These services include individual and group counseling, educational programs, consultations, and referrals. Additionally, counseling faculty teach a number of the FYE Courses, a course focused on increasing student success through college orientation and personal growth, and educational and career planning. This course is mandatory for all new-to-Maricopa degree-seeking students.

Testing Services: The SMCC Testing Services offers placement testing and support for all students. Placement test preparation services are available free of charge, including WritePlacer and Accuplacer practice exams, "Boot Camps," online access to EdReady resource materials, and tutoring

access.

St. Mary's Food Bank / The Village: To address the food insecurity many students experience, SMCC provides fresh meats and produce in The Village on a bi-weekly basis through a partnership with St. Mary's Food Bank; the Village provides all students and their families access to groceries multiple times each month. Additionally, registered students have daily access to Gabriel's Pantry. Supported by the donations of faculty and staff, Gabriel's Pantry provides non-perishable food items to students free of charge. Recognizing the increasing role that food and housing insecurities play in learning, the college has recently established a taskforce to enhance the services provided to students to support the successful navigation of challenges hindering academic success and personal development.

3.D.2.

SMCC is committed to the success of all students, regardless of their income level or academic preparedness. To meet their needs, SMCC offers Multiple Measures for placement, and numerous developmental instructional offerings, embedded tutors, and other support services.

Recognized as a Bellwether finalist in 2015, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2023, and 2024, SMCC has been recognized for Redesigning Developmental Education, Reversing Student Loan Default Rates (from 33% to 16% in one year), the SMCC student endowment program (STARS), and twice for the work in the Storytelling Institute. Additionally, some of the work includes focusing on assessment, engagement, alternative formats for instruction, OERs (Open Educational Resources), academic support services, student development and Learning Environments.

3.D.3.

Currently, there are 7 full-time academic advisors that support SMCC students. Academic advisors assist students with creating an educational plan that meets degree requirements, encourage students to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP), provide general college policy information and resources related to credit transferability to universities, and refer students to other resources on campus including financial aid, counseling, enrollment services, and tutoring.The advisors attend weekly team meetings and trainings. They participate in professional development opportunities, which include national conferences, such as the annual NACADA Conference, to remain current and deliver timely information to students, faculty, and staff. They are actively involved in campus task forces and committees to receive updates and gain knowledge beneficial to student success, retention, and completion. The Manager of Advising is a member of the Maricopa District Academic Advising Council (DAAC).

3.D.4.

SMCC has an extensive infrastructure to support effective teaching and learning as part of our Strategic Priority 5.3 "Create and sustain a technological environment that fosters exemplary learning experiences in all learning environments and modalities." Student learning is supported by modern classrooms configured with instructor workstation computers, document cameras, and overhead projectors. Classrooms are designed with the needs of the discipline in mind. Most

classrooms are configured with student computers and other technology to facilitate dynamic learning.

Every building on campus provides WiFi internet access for staff and students through the use of 120 wireless access points. This wireless access throughout campus provides the necessary connectivity to support student owned devices or BYOD resources. The college also loans out laptops and Wifi hotspots to students so they are additionally supported outside the college and classroom, a need that became prevalent during the pandemic.

The campus operates various open computer labs to support student needs outside of the classroom environment. A Computer Commons is available six days a week with 91 Windows-based PC computers and six iMac systems. The South Mountain Community Library also provides 105 Windows-based PC computers, which are available six days a week. Additional computers are available to students in the Learning Resource Center and the MyCareer lab.

Students studying computer and information technology learn in discipline specific state-of-the art spaces, such as the Multimedia Programming Lab, which hosts 16 PCs and 16 Mac computers organized into quads that link to four HDTVs to allow for student collaboration.

The Engineering program has a new, state-of-the-art lab facility supporting concepts that have been taught in class, as well as providing opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to design, fabricate, and test innovative projects in a supportive environment. Electrical and Mechanical concepts are supported in the lecture/lab space, which houses full electrical, electronic, and a growing inventory of mechanical test equipment. Design, fabrication and testing is done through access to equipment used for 3D printing design and scanning, laser cutting and etching, vinyl cutting, full electrical and electronics testing, composite material mixing, casting and molding, industrial sewing, programmable CNC milling including precision milling, and a full inventory of industrial grade hand and power tools. Students have the freedom to design, fabricate, and test practically anything they imagine creating for their personal interests and course applications.

In the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023, SMCC completed a multi-year process to update all lab classrooms. The updates included laboratory classroom spaces in the Physical Science building, Life Sciences building, and the North Campus Complex (NCC) building. The Life Sciences and Physical Sciences buildings were redesigned to build a new state-of-the-art Science Complex which celebrated its grand opening in the Spring of 2023. This new facility addressed the needs of a growing STEM program and updated lab classrooms to better reflect 21st century equipment, resources, and compliance with safety standards for a better working and learning environment.

[The Performing Arts Center (PAC)](#) is divided into three major buildings that join to create an outdoor arts amphitheater. The facility houses the college's art, music, dance, and storytelling classes. The 43,000 square foot performance hall contains a 350-seat theater, 100-seat studio theater, 75-seat dance studio, scenery and costume shops, dressing room, make-up room, and green room, as well as faculty offices and multipurpose classrooms, and the landscaped amphitheater is fully functional and able to accommodate outdoor gatherings, performances, and special events. This community landmark offers the community an opportunity to share the remarkable talents of our students and cultivate a love for the arts.

Similarly, the [South Mountain Community Library](#) is a beautiful community landmark, winning ten design awards between 2012 and 2013. The library is the result of a partnership between the Phoenix Public Library and the South Mountain Community College. Funded by a Citizens Bond 2006 and a

MCCCD Bond 2004, the library opened in 2011. It features a children's story room, teen space, patio space, group study rooms, and more than 100 public access computers. The joint library has a collection of resources for both academic research and general interest.

3.D.5.

The [South Mountain Community Library](#) provides information literacy and library instruction appropriate to SMCC faculty research, student research, and community needs. Library instruction can be customized to include How to Use OneSearch (Discovery tool), How to Use Citation Management Tools, How to Use Databases, How to Find Digital Content (Images, videos, audio files, etc.), How to Find Library Items (Books, DVDs, Journals, etc.), Avoiding Plagiarism, Evaluating Sources & Search Strategies, Library Tours, and Specialized Instruction. For example, library staff discussed the art, production, and impact of children's picture books with the Children's Literature Class. The session was a precursor to a project where students select and evaluate picture books from the SMCC/City of Phoenix library collection. Prior to the pandemic, the library offered a program called *Paws 4 a Study Break*, with the Library's canine study buddies (therapy dogs) every semester right before Finals Week to help students minimize stress; including healthy snacks and last-minute research and citation help.

Sources

- 3D1 - College Reading and Learning Association
- 3D1 - Cougar Kick Start
- 3D1 - Counseling Center
- 3d1 - Disability Resources and Services
- 3D1 - Financial Literacy
- 3D1 - First-Year Experience
- 3D1 - Male Empowerment Network (M.E.N.)
- 3D1 - MEChA
- 3D1 - Testing services
- 3D1 - The Village
- 3D1 - Tutoring
- 3D1 - Women Rising
- 3D2 - Bellwether finalist
- 3D2 - Multiple Measures
- 3D2 - STARS
- 3D4 - Performing Arts Center (PAC)
- 3D4 - South Mountain Community Library
- 3D5 - South Mountain Community Library

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

South Mountain Community College continues to provide a high-quality postsecondary education. Our culture of continuous assessment and improvement is coupled with attention to community and student needs. Our general education programs focus on core competencies and we assure the quality of our programs and courses through internal self-study as well as adherence to MCCCD policies and Articulation Agreements. Our occupational programs are designed in conjunction with industry input and expertise.

We provide students with appropriate, challenging courses to help prepare them personally and professionally for the futures they envision for themselves. We offer and require courses to help them develop 21st century skills (such as information literacy and critical thinking) with appropriate technology infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, and performing arts spaces. We support student learning through wrap-around services including tutoring, counseling, and need-based services.

Professional credentials for all faculty and staff are clearly articulated and integral to hiring. Faculty and Staff are engaged in ongoing professional development through a variety of modalities. Faculty and staff are evaluated with established institutional and district procedures. Faculty are involved in the development of curriculum and the assessment of student learning in the classroom and Classified Staff are engaged in the development and assessment of student experiences through the annual Strategic Planning Activities. We actively promote enriching learning experiences through International and Intercultural experiences, internship experiences, and community collaboration projects.

Sources

There are no sources.

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.

Argument

4.A.1.

The SMCC Program Review model reflects a commitment to continuous improvement, aligns with the college mission and supports the strategic goals of the organization. The current program review model has been in place since the 2016-2017 academic year and is inclusive of instructional/non-instructional programs and services. However, the current model is an adapted version of the MCCCD Program Review which included all programs and services throughout the district in 2013-2014. To date, all programs and services at SMCC have completed three program review cycles since the college implemented the most recent program review process, to include instructional and non-instructional areas of the college.

The revised program review process clearly identifies a cycle of evaluation for all college programs and services. Participation in a program review/self-assessment every three years allows an examination of instructional programs as well as our non-instructional programs and services to include areas like program demand, workforce opportunities, equity, quality of outcomes, stewardship of public resources, organizational analysis, and opportunity analysis.

The areas participating in program review for a designated cycle identify program review authors for each program or service. Authors use program review templates, program review rubrics, SMCC data and or other benchmark information to complete a review of their instructional, non-instructional programs and/or services. Authors collaborate with their respective division chair, departmental manager, dean, associate vice presidents and/or vice presidents for feedback. Revised program reviews are reviewed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Student

Affairs, or the Vice President of Administrative Services before submitting the program reviews to their identified Program Review Board for evaluation and recommendations. Many of these resources will be migrated to the college's Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) Assessment module by the end of 2024.

A program review panel for each program and/or service is established which may include vice presidents, Deans, faculty, staff, and external subject matter experts to assess the program reviews and make recommendations. As part of the continuous improvement process, all applicable recommendations are included in the annual action planning process to ensure alignment with the college strategic plan.

4.A.2.

The Maricopa District maintains and exercises authority over the colleges' approach to Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) via Administrative Regulation 2.2.4. The Admissions and Records area at SMCC enacts those guidelines for all students wishing to have experiential learning activities assessed for possible inclusion in their transcripts. The guidelines and process are included in the catalog. That said, students may not be awarded more than 30 credit hours for prior learning, which may be reached by a combination of Articulated Programs, Credit by Evaluation, College-level Equivalency Exams, military training, and International Baccalaureate diplomas or certificates. Depending on the type of credit the student is seeking, the relevant program director or academic chair is designated as the administrator and assessor. Assessments of equivalency and competency may take the form of exams, performance-based testing, or a portfolio of the student's work. In all cases, credit for prior learning is reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that all credits granted by SMCC are of high value and standardized quality.

4.A.3.

The Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) has uniform policies for all of the colleges governing the acceptance and use of transfer credits. Official transcripts may be required for admittance to some programs, of which it is the student's responsibility to ensure the college receives the necessary documentation. The District-wide regulation regarding transfer credit is part of the SMCC catalog for all students to review and consider. Information is also available to students via the District-wide portal called MyMaricopa where all student information and self-service functions are housed.

Once received, the SMCC Admissions and Records staff, which is highly experienced and knowledgeable about both the District's regulations and transfer practices, evaluates the credits in collaboration with department chairs, program directors, academic administrators, and Instructional Councils to ensure the process is comprehensive and thorough, especially as it relates to the various articulation and transfer agreements SMCC holds with in-state universities and dozens of other four-year institutions.

4.A.4.

Every college in the MCCCD including SMCC follows an established process for curriculum

development, assessment, articulation, and review. While the way courses are taught is up to the instructor, the prerequisites and competencies for all courses have numerous layers of external and internal audits. First, courses are proposed by an individual faculty member or a team of faculty in a given discipline. There is a District Curriculum Committee made up of representatives from every college – both faculty and administrative. Upon proposing a new course, the faculty member presents the proposal first to the division chair and the Curriculum Development Facilitator (CDF) for review. The CDF requests to have the course and/or program added to the Campus Curriculum Committee agenda (meets the second Wednesday of each month) to discuss and obtain the committee's approval to move forward with the proposal. Once the faculty content lead provides a draft of the proposal, the Curriculum Technician enters the proposal into Academic Curriculum Review and Evaluation System (ACRES). New course proposals must also be reviewed and vetted by the relevant Instructional Council, which often reviews that prerequisites, if any, are appropriate, that competencies are suitable given the level of the course, that core content designations are accurate, and even that a need exists in the current climate for the course. After revisions and review among faculty and administrative experts, the proposal progresses to the Dean of Academic Affairs and then to the Vice President of Academic Affairs to determine the new course's position in the college's schedule and program. All of this is outlined in the Curriculum Procedures Handbook, which explains the process, standards, and contains the forms and steps required by the District. The competencies and suggested outline for every course offered by SMCC can be found on the district's CCTA website.

One of the ways SMCC ensures course rigor is universal and consistent is through the use of common syllabi, common exams, and assessment activities. This information is available to faculty via departmental and program sites in Canvas (SMCC's Learning Management System). There, instructors are also expected to find course Student Learning Outcomes and assessment activities that have been vetted by the college's Program Review and Assessment committee known as iTeachSMART. This committee has worked with faculty on creating course student learning outcomes (cSLOs) for all courses offered by the college. These cSLOs have been connected to one or more of the college's institutional learning outcomes as well. Assessment and the development of learning outcomes was so important to SMCC this initiative was included as Priority 1.4 in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan to ensure institution-wide focus and support. Efforts are now underway to align course student learning outcomes with program outcomes, as defined by the Maricopa Guided Pathways project. It is hoped that these outcomes and their assessment data will be migrated to SPOL over the next several years.

Some of the services SMCC provides to guarantee student learning include online tutoring in select courses, face-to-face on-site tutoring four days per week, an on-campus Computer Commons lab, online tutoring and Library resources that are available in person, via phone, and online. The South Mountain Community Library is unique in that it is a partnership between the college and the City of Phoenix, co- managed and staffed by both entities. The result is greater resources, extended operation hours, and diverse events that cater to all generations.

As of the Fall 2022 semester, all MCCCD new degree seeking and transfer students are required to enroll in a First Year Experience (FYE) course. Students self-enroll into an FYE101 or FYE103 class using MCCCD's FYE decision tree.

FYE101 is a 1-credit course focused "on student success through exploration of academic, career and life skills. Includes study of goal-setting/success strategies, academic mindset and financial literacy. Develop an education/career plan utilizing career assessments and other college resources."

FYE103 is a 3-credit course that is similar to FYE101 but focused "on student success through exploration of academic, career, and life skills. Includes study of goal-setting/success strategies, academic mindset, interpersonal skills, financial literacy, self-care strategies, diverse perspectives, and campus tools and resources. Develop an education/career plan utilizing career assessments and other college resources."

SMCC students who successfully completed the FYE course have a 35% greater likelihood of persisting in subsequent semesters than SMCC students who did not take or successfully complete FYE.

Furthermore, as detailed in the Residential Faculty Agreement, all full-time faculty at SMCC are required to hold at least five hours of office hours (whether virtually or in person) each week in order to be available to students, and adjunct faculty, while not required to hold a set number of office hours, have several private office spaces across the main campus where they are encouraged to meet with students, conduct college business, and work privately to support the learning environment.

South Mountain offers various cohort learning opportunities in the course schedule. The Dev Ed RIT provides coordination with the District Developmental Education Committee and support for first-time college students. Organized cohort programs include TRiO Upward Bound, Male Empowerment Network (M.E.N.), Women Rising, Achieving a College Education (ACE), and Hoop of Learning. Some occupational programs also offer cohort experiences.

Faculty Qualifications Resources that support student learning are maintained at the college level, both in terms of physical resources and support services. Support services include Advising, Academic and Career Counseling, Financial Aid, Counseling services, Library services, Testing and Placement services, and both in-person and online tutoring services. Physical resources such as up-to-date science and Engineering labs, current technology in all classrooms, accessible classrooms, leisure spaces and study spaces are all overseen and maintained by the Administrative Services area of the college.

Faculty qualifications at SMCC and across the MCCCD are aligned with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements for accredited institutions. In some programs and disciplines, additional qualifications are required, such as licensures, continuing education credit, and secondary areas of expertise and qualifications. All of these guidelines are available for public and employee review on the SMCC website as well as the MCCCD website. Faculty are encouraged to complete an e-learning training course and self-assess their course design prior to teaching online or in a hybrid format. Likewise, any faculty providing instruction in our "Achieving a College Education" (ACE) program are encouraged to first participate in the ACE Faculty Academy training. This training was suspended during the pandemic, but the ACE/Early College Program would like to start it up again.

In addition, all high school faculty who teach courses that earn dual credit (usually referred to as Dual Enrollment by SMCC and the MCCCD) are required to meet the same minimum and additional qualifications as SMCC faculty. Dual enrollment is addressed more fully in Criterion 3, but a quick summary reiterates that while taught by high school instructors in a high school setting, SMCC and the MCCCD adhere to strict standards related to the course competencies, core content areas, expectations for rigor, and production of student work. College officials from both the faculty and administrative areas conduct regular reviews of teaching materials and the classroom setting itself to ensure the quality of instruction is on par with typical collegiate teaching and learning.Courses which may be offered for Dual Enrollment are decided by the Instructional Councils.

4.A.5.

Specialized accreditation is not required for programs at SMCC. However, the institution monitors all programs to ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal requirements.

4.A.6.

For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs.

As one of the colleges in the MCCCD, SMCC tracks and assesses graduate indicators as set forth by the Governing Board Outcomes and Metrics. The main categories therein include University Transfer and General Education, Workforce and Economic Development, Developmental Education, and Community Development and Civic and Global Engagement. The data provided by each college, including SMCC, to prove adherence to these outcomes include course completion rates, number of certificates and awards, licensure/certification rates, transfer data, student demographics, and college environmental scans distributed to both students and employees.

Sources

- 4A1 - Academic Program Review 2.pdf
- 4A1 - SPOL Planning
- 4A2 - Admission Registration Enrollment
- 4A3 - MyMaricopa App
- 4A3- Articulation agreements
- 4A4 - Guidelines
- 4A4 - Academic Curriculum Review and Evaluation System
- 4A4 - CCTA website
- 4A4 - College RIT Role
- 4A4 - course Studnet Learning Outcomes
- 4A4 - Curriculum Development Facilitator
- 4A4 - Curriculum Processing Calendar 2023-24
- 4A4 - Faculty_agreement
- 4A4 - FYE 101
- 4A4 - FYE 103
- 4A4 - FYE Dashboard
- 4A4 - FYE Decision Tree
- 4A4 - iTeachSMART
- 4A4 - MCCD Curriculum Handbook
- 4A4 - Online tutoring
- 4A4 - SLOS Liberal-Arts
- 4A4 - South Mountain Community Library
- 4A6 - 2021 Performance Monitoring

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.

Argument

4.B.1

Course Outcome Assessment
Assessment is evidenced by a variety of activities. Faculty ensure that syllabi clearly outline course competencies and cSLOS. Academic Program Review examines cSLOs and pLOs. Faculty reiterate cSLO projects along with assessment activities and analysis of results to support continuous improvement. General education (Institutional) iLOs include Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Oral Communication, Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, Diversity and Global Awareness and SMCC Experience. Each is connected to an AAC&U rubric. Course student learning outcomes are mapped to iLOs. Finally, the iTeachSMART team is focusing on one iLO each year with the goal of conducting assessment activities and evaluating student achievement.

Faculty have developed course student learning outcomes for each course using the iTeachSMART guidelines. Faculty design an assessment activity for one or more of the SLO's and implement the activity to assess the mastery of each student based on the outcome. Based on the results of the assessment activity faculty may respond by improving the next assessment activity (revising of curriculum material or projects) in order to achieve better student understanding of the SLO. Faculty have mapped each SLO in their course to one or more of the institutional general Education Outcomes on the college's. Assessment webpage.

The program review is utilized to make improvements in each program. Programs at SMCC are a sequence of prescribed courses that lead to an officially recognized associate degree or certificate. An example of this would be our AS degree with an emphasis in Biological Science. Upon successfully completing the courses (curriculum) and meeting other graduation requirements, a student will be awarded an associate's degree.

SMCC has made the deliberate choice to make academic assessment a faculty developed and faculty driven initiative. The goal is to create a positive, productive culture of assessment at the college that supports faculty teaching and student learning- to that end faculty engage in formative and summative assessment. During the 5th week of the semester a notice is sent out to all faculty to capture the data regarding student success. Faculty are asked to do a quick survey with students to find out what is helping them to be successful and what changes, if any, would help them be more successful in the course. Faculty then review the responses and make any adjustments if necessary.

iTeachSMART sends out a summative assessment email at the start of final exam week each semester. Faculty are asked to describe what they learned and how they will use that information to improve their course. General education courses tend to utilize common summative assessment techniques such as a common question on the final exam. In several English courses students complete a writing final and English faculty utilize a common rubric to analyze students' performance. Student performance data is collected and analyzed for improvement. Other programs utilize a variety of summative assessment techniques such as final projects, final exams, portfolios or reflection pieces which showcases students' cumulative experiences in a course.

Academic Program Review: SMCC continues to progress in the area of program review. Program review at SMCC is a sequence of prescribed courses that leads to an officially recognized associate degree or certificate. An example of this would be our AAS degree in Biology. Upon successfully completing the courses (curriculum) and meeting other graduation requirements, a student will be awarded an associate degree.

The program review is utilized to make improvements in each program. The program review is a cyclical process that began in 2016 and continues today; all programs participate in a three-year cycle of review. Program review reflects SMCC commitment to continuous improvement and the alignment of our instructional and non-instructional programs and services to our mission and strategic plan. More specifically, recommendations from program reviews are incorporated into the annual action (operational) planning process to ensure that activities are monitored, completed, and provided the necessary resources.

A program review rubric was designed to review the elements of institutional measures such as alignment with college mission, demand for the programs, completion rates, quality outcomes, equity measures, goals and objectives of the program, program resources and plans for growth and improvement. Workforce trends were designed as an element of assessment for our occupational programs. The final component of the review is an action plan which helps guide the next three years of the program.

4.B.2

Achievement of Curricular Programs: Each division provides a matrix of SLO by course in order for each class within the division to then develop and implement the assessment activity or common final project to analyze the results of the assessment activity and develop a response (revise curriculum, revise pedagogical approach, revise assessment activity or celebrate student success). The faculty work together to develop the next assessment activity designed to improve student learning (may be a new activity or a revision of the previous activity).

The most recent evolution of the assessment cycle resulted in a shift to the examination of student's ability to apply what they learned about revision and peer review through development of a common revision assignment in the English classes. This became the assessment tool for both ENG 101 and ENG102, addressing the cSLOs corresponding to students' ability to self-evaluate and revise their own work. Initial evaluation of this assessment tool suggested that it was a successful assignment; the English faculty will continue evaluating and testing the rubric.

Every summer, the math faculty analyze student performance on common final exam questions to determine how well students are achieving the course learning outcomes. These analyses are discussed during the subsequent fall semester, and decisions are made based on the results. Decisions made include revising the common final exam questions, assessing an entirely different course

learning outcome, and developing common Canvas course shells for most of the math courses. A more detailed discussion of the math department's process is provided below.

Co-Curricular and Student Life: The goal of Student Life & Leadership is to motivate students to enhance their learning experiences through participation in leadership, service, recreational, wellness and cultural activities. SMCC builds connections between academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular programs to enhance student learning and development. Student Life and Leadership is committed to creating quality opportunities for learning; we continually evaluate and assess our learning outcomes effectiveness at the end of each academic year.

At SMCC Student Life components are reflected in areas such as Service Learning, Enrollment Services - Deans office, New Student Orientation, Honors, the M.E.N. program, and Women Rising. Student Life also hosts multiple internal & external outreach events and programs that are tailored to the individual populations as well as the total student groups.

Collaborating with faculty, staff, and students in the planning, marketing, and financing of campus student engagement activities provides inclusiveness, lifelong learning opportunities, dialogue among students, cultural awareness and the free exchange of ideas.

The external demands of the community we serve are as diverse as our student population. In addition to the external demands of our surrounding community are the needs of other stakeholders which include government and state entities, employers, vendors, solicitors, elementary and high schools, alumni, visiting dignitaries from other colleges, and universities (both within and outside the borders of the United States).

The South Phoenix Community, Tempe, and Central Phoenix are identified as external users and key stakeholders of services provided by SMCC. Many families within the community are economically vulnerable. As such, SMCC has partnered with St. Mary's for 15 plus years of service to the South Mountain, Tempe, Central Phoenix, and Laveen. This partnership has resulted in nearly 100,000 community members served, 1,120 volunteers (staff, faculty and students), and well over 1 million pounds of produce distributed. SMCC has also established the Village at South Mountain to address food insecurities and other challenges that impede student success.

The goal of providing these initiatives supports South Mountain Community College's Mission for "fostering student development and supporting productive citizenship in an increasingly global and technological society." Through participation in these Student Life volunteer and service learning programs, SMCC students, staff and faculty have volunteered for several activities on and off campus.

4.B.3 The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

SMCC uses the information gained from our assessment practices to improve student learning in a variety of ways. All cSLO assessment work is developed and implemented to improve student learning. Upon completing the cSLO assessment activity, faculty are encouraged to:

- Reflect on how the assessment findings may inform pedagogical practice and/or curricular planning.
- Determine the effectiveness and limitations of the assessment process.
- Communicate the findings and associated implications with those who are involved with the course/program.

- Determine the impact of the results of the assessment.
- Report the results of the assessment and plans for action to the iTeachSMART team.
- Identify the next cSLO assessment project for this course/program (which could mean a repetition of the same assessment activity or a completely new assessment activity for the same or different cSLO).

An example of this process occurred in 2017-2018 when the developmental English faculty met to discuss the cSLO's results. The faculty discussed and evaluated class sets of end-of semester student papers for achievement of the first SLO for ENG071, ENG081, and ENG091. As a result of the improvement in student work, faculty were able to begin evaluating student work for higher level skills, such as analysis. For the first time, a group of student papers was developed that had been assessed using this platform which produced multiple benefits regarding professional development. Ultimately it was recommended that we continue to review the competencies, student learning, and the assessment strategy with all current faculty. The team further recommended that the program schedule professional development workshops to help build resources around organization, particularly transitions, and critical thinking skills, particularly analysis, and continue to promote using the librarians for information literacy sessions in all classes.

In 2020, as a result of the Guided Pathways efforts and the redesign of Developmental Education, all ENG classes below 100 level were eliminated from the student's programs. Additional support for faculty professional development allowed for continued success for students at the ENG101 level, as well as ENG100LL which provides support for students who need the additional instruction time with composition faculty. The prior work in 2017-2018 around professional development for ENG faculty aided in a seamless process for SMCC.

The Math faculty uses common final exams in all developmental courses. SMCC also has common final exam questions that are linked to specific course learning outcomes for all other math courses for which more than one section is offered. These include assessment of the Course Competencies as well as the cSLO's. As Course Competencies have changed through the years, these final exams are updated. All instructors are required to administer the common final, but can grade it and use the grades in their final course grade calculations as they see fit. Each instructor provides data at the question level. For each question they report:

- the number of students who got the question correct
- the number of students who got the question incorrect
- the number of students who did not try the question at all.

Each summer an analysis of the data is conducted and a summary report is produced. Suggestions for changes in pedagogy, supplemental material, text books, and curriculum are made. The department then discusses the results and decides what changes to make, or what to keep doing. This has led to various changes such as:

- re-ordering of course content
- sharing of supplemental material with adjuncts to address text-book deficiencies rewriting of common final questions for greater clarity and focus recommending adding more time in schedules to address weak areas'
- Providing common Canvas course shells for all faculty teaching a given course

In some CIS courses, a common e-portfolio assessment analysis is conducted. In our Survey of Computer Information Systems course (CIS105) the results of comparing the e-portfolio assessments

to final grades resulted in a discussion of future improvements. For example the CIS105 instructional team decided that vertical integration of the portfolio should be continued moving forward with the added benefit of comparing semesters with a goal to increase percentages of student success.

SMCC uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning. As evidenced not only by cSLO assessment activities and analysis but also includes Faculty classroom observations and student evaluations, PARc evaluations, division discussions with Math and English.

4.B.4

At SMCC we have made a deliberate choice to make academic assessment a faculty developed and faculty driven initiative. Our goal was to create a positive, productive culture of assessment at the College that supports faculty teaching and student learning. We want a process that values teaching and learning and starts where faculty and students live—in the classroom. Thus, our approach to assessment in this project relies heavily on faculty involvement and input.

Sources

- 4B1 - AACAU rubrIc
- 4B1 - Academic Program Review
- 4B1 - AS degree with an emphasis in Biological Science
- 4B1 - Assessment webpage
- 4B1 - Course Student Learning Outcomes
- 4B1 - Program review
- 4B1 - Program-Review-ACADEMIC-rubric
- 4B1 - SMCC-Assessment-Handbook
- 4B2 - Matrix of SLO
- 4B2 - Student Life and Leadership
- 4B2 - Village at South Mountain

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.)

Argument

4.C.1

SMCC has established defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion rates by the use of a Shared Governance Model. The purpose of the model is to focus on advancing organizational strategies with alignment and priority established from the South Mountain Community College (SMCC) Strategic Plan and strategic initiatives in pursuit of improving the institution's key results. The Council assesses a variety of operations at the college while encouraging the advancement of innovative changes.

The Planning, Research and Development (PRD) department provides guidance to the college in defining goals for student success. Not only does the department help to define these goals but SMCC is committed to data literacy and ensuring that all employees understand the goals related to student retention, persistence, and completion. Although these goals are fundamental to the organization, SMCC has identified several metrics that serve as additional measures and markers of student and organizational success. The college also participates in the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, and Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE).

4.C.2.

The strongest evidence of collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion are apparent in the Strategic Plan and recent goal setting efforts. The most recent plan was developed in 2021 and is scheduled to be revised in 2025. The plan was developed with input from faculty, staff, and community. The Strategic Directions and Priorities established by the institution in 2021 recognizes five areas: teaching and learning, student success and completion,

community partnerships & workforce development, employee organizational excellence and organizational effectiveness. These five areas demonstrate a commitment to student success at SMCC.

In addition, SMCC utilizes the MCCCD Governing Board Metrics as an annual reporting mechanism for data metrics of student success. This data is provided each year via Tableau dashboards and allows the college to benchmark college progress and make comparisons to other MCCCD colleges. This data is also shared each year with the Governing Board, MCCCD leaders, and college stakeholders. A subset of these metrics are placed in conference rooms to remind employees of our current progress, purpose and commitment to students. The Planning, Research, and Development department has also developed a comprehensive set of dashboards which allows employees to review data at all times as a key component of dialogue and decision-making across the college.

4.C.3.

All divisions and departments participate in action (operational) planning through the use of a strategic planning online tool (SPOL). All activities are linked to the strategic plan and integrated with the college budgeting process. In addition, all activities are developed and monitored with student success at the forefront. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data. This plan serves as the guiding framework for all activities on campus and is directly linked to the key performance measures identified by the Governing Board Metrics. Key data trends regarding student retention, persistence, and completion are available via dashboards and are posted in all conference rooms to aid in decision making at all levels of the institution. SMCC web reports on the data center nationally normed studies, including Noel Levitz, CCSSE, and SENSE. This data is utilized by faculty and staff to make improvements.

In the Fall of 2023, MCCCD began developing a District-wide Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan that will be completed in the summer of 2024 and implemented for 2024-2027. Achievement of the associated metrics will be reported each year by all colleges and each division of the college. The three areas of priority that were established are 1) Streamlining the Experience, 2) Optimizing Student Success and 3) Committing to Completion. The plan will establish a metric with the targeted goal for each activity. The institution will collect and analyze information on student enrollment, engagement, success, graduation, completion, and transfer.

Program Review is another tool that has been utilized by SMCC to track and improve programming based on data. Program Review is a cyclical process that reflects our commitment to continuous improvement and the alignment of our academic programs to our mission and goals. Participation in program review every three years allows us to examine our programs with a critical eye, review our methods for and results of assessment, including any improvements made as of those assessments, review trends in enrollment, completion, success and resources, and outline a plan for improvement or change that are suggested by the review. A key part of the program review process is the inclusion of data metrics related to student success.

The Dev Ed RIT brings together math, reading and English faculty and support services which focus on three key strategies: placement, innovative teaching and learning, and integration of support services. Students persistence and completion trends for all developmental classes were tracked and

each instructional team assessed materials and practices for continuous improvement. The practice of sharing data and becoming data informed with the developmental staff continues even after the ending of the Foundations academy.

In pursuit of academic excellence and student success, the SMCC Shared Governance process identifies, reviews, and explores ideas, initiatives, and opportunities to advance the college vision.

SMCC's Shared Governance comprises four councils, the Shared Governance Council, the Academic Affairs Council, the Student Affairs Council, and the Administrative Services Council. They are organized to ensure that Administration, Faculty, and Staff are actively involved in SMCC planning and decision-making processes. All councils utilize data to make informed decisions regarding proposals.

4.C.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). SMCC practices for collecting data responsibility includes transparency, speaking in a language regarding data that everyone understands, making data exchange mutual, safeguarding the data, and knowing relevant laws, regulations or administrative procedures that may affect data collection.

Sources

- 4C1 - CCSSE
- 4C1 - RNL Data
- 4C1 - SENSE
- 4C1 - Shared_governance_annual_report_2022
- 4C1 - SMCC Strategic Plan - Copy
- 4C2 - 2021 Performance Monitoring
- 4C2 - College Wide Goal Setting_ Convocation 2024
- 4C3 - College RIT Role
- 4C3 - Dashboards
- 4C3 - Program review

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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

Summary

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. Core to this practice and in support of the mission, the college has adopted and follows a rigorous process for curriculum development and modification. This is further supported by a variety of aspects within the organization including the college strategic plan, enrollment management plan, shared governance model, and other institutional frameworks.

Within each of these areas, quality data is provided to support data-informed decision-making. The college utilizes a variety of data sources to support these efforts and reports this information via a multiple mediums to ensure that all information is applicable and relevant.

Students from SMCC benefit from quality programs and effective program review processes to ensure that this quality remains paramount to the college mission. Program review is continuous and included in the annual action plans to ensure that activities are constantly monitored and tracked. In addition, the college adheres to processes to ensure that all transfer credits are appropriately designated to benefit the student and uphold the integrity of the organization. Faculty credentials are also assessed to maintain quality teaching regardless of location or modality.

Sources

There are no sources.

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.

Argument

5.A.1.

The Governing Board of the MCCCD is made up of seven publicly-elected members: five from geographical districts across the county and two at-large representatives from any geographic area within the county. Meeting on the fourth Tuesday of each month, the board acts on behalf of the residents of Maricopa County, directing the activities of MCCCD according to Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §15-1444.

According to Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §38-431.02, public notices of board meetings are posted at the District Support Services Center (outside the Governing Board Room). Board Books, PDF files of current action items, agendas and minutes, are provided on the Governing Board website. As of January 2019, all Board Meeting Notices, Agendas, Meeting Minutes, and Action Items are archived and available on Board Docs, to which anyone can access.

The Governing Board is knowledgeable about the institution, institutional operations, and the unique aspects of the 10 colleges it oversees. The Governing Board considers and votes on outcomes appropriate to the community it serves; follows and enforces board outcomes and policies; complies with Open Meeting Laws (ARS §38-431.02) and is committed to fulfilling the vision, mission, and values of MCCCD.

The Governing Board is also responsible for reviewing and approving the annual budget which ensures knowledge about the financials of SMCC. The Governing Board annually reviews the tuition rate and has the authority to implement changes in the best interest of the organization. The Governing Board also reviews and approves all course fees assessed to students for enrollment into courses. The Governing Board is additionally required to abide by Arizona statutes and requirements in the areas of expenditure limitation, property tax levy limits, truth and taxation, debt, financial stability and capital reserve. Oversight and approval in the financial aspects of the college ensures that the Governing Board has appropriate knowledge to ensure the college adheres to the fiduciary responsibilities bestowed upon the organization.

The Governing Board completes trainings that included the importance of having principles or rules

of engagement to ensure the board understands the impact of its decisions and a review of its duty of care, loyalty, and obedience noted in the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges 2015 statement on Fiduciary Duties of Governing Board Members. The Governing Board will continue to engage in regular training to ensure its deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

5.A.2.

The college employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies (governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students) in the institution's governance. This includes regular communication and reports to the college, MCCCD, Chancellor, and the Governing Board. This also includes a college leadership structure, grounded in a Shared Governance Model that includes representation from administration, faculty, staff, and students.

SMCC provides regular communication and reports to district leadership, including weekly snapshots, and annual reports that are shared with the Chancellor and Governing Board. For example, the MCCCD and Governing Board receive periodic and annual reports on adopted budgets, Governing Board Metrics, student success and achievement, programs and initiatives, college and student accolades and achievements that are presented at Governing Board meetings.

The college maximizes stakeholder involvement to help ensure accountability and proper resource allocation. This is achieved through the Shared Governance Model. Developed in 2014 and updated annually, the Shared Governance Handbook outlines the structure and purpose of Shared Governance at SMCC, identifies the four primary councils, and establishes the domains and areas of governance for each council. The Shared Governance Councils (Shared Governance, Academic Affairs, Administrative Services, and Student Affairs) have been established as a means of engaging and involving all stakeholders across the college in dialogue pertaining to campus-wide initiatives and proposals. Using the practice of Interest-Based Negotiation, each of the four councils is charged with ensuring that administration, faculty, staff, and students are able to actively participate in policy making and decision processes within their respective domains that have campus-wide impact. Proposals submitted to the Shared Governance Councils are reviewed and prioritized in an online portal, enabling data informed recommendations from cross-functional constituents of the college. Proposals that the Shared Governance Councils have considered are available on the Shared Governance page. Examples of proposals and actions of the councils include: continuous improvement of the Shared Governance model, multiple measures placement initiative, centralization of tutoring services, and commencement keynote speakers. Minutes from meetings are posted and emailed campus-wide to ensure transparency of communication and the ability of all stakeholders to engage in this process.

The SMCC Faculty Senate plays a vital role in the operations of the college, and its involvement in shared governance has recently been incorporated into the SMCC College Plan, a college-level shared governance agreement that acknowledges and provides for a Faculty Senate. As specified in sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the College Plan (Updated 2024), the faculty senate regularly meets with the College President and Vice President of Academic Affairs, and senate officers and members are actively involved in college councils and committees. This collaborative engagement between administration and faculty ensures transparency of communication and reinforces the college's commitment to partner with SMCC faculty in planning and decision-making processes.

Students are an essential part of the ongoing governance, leadership, and decision-making processes at SMCC. At every level of campus leadership, students are involved, with opportunities to represent the student perspective while serving on Shared Governance Councils, participating in College Forums, Student Life and Leadership Council, and presenting their accomplishments at the President's Advisory Council and at our College Celebrations events. From their involvement in campus clubs and organizations to their deep involvement in academic programs, students are at the heart of the decisions we make as a college.

For decades, the MCCCD Governing Board engaged in Collaborative Policy Development (CPD) with staff and faculty through a shared governance structure across the colleges and district office. The MCCCD Governing Board ended these practices in 2017 (staff) and 2018 (faculty).

In September of 2017, the Governing Board approved a resolution to remove the CPD process and dissolve the Classified Staff Council (CSC). In spring 2019, MCCCD administration contracted with Collaborative Brain Trust Consultancy to provide staff the support needed to reestablish some form of staff organization. In July 2019, the Employee Groups Organizing Council had their initial meeting. This council was charged with making recommendations on the number and composition of employee groups, duties and responsibilities, and operational guidelines in accordance with the requirements set by the Governing Board. The Employee Groups became "Staff Representation" in 2020 and have functioned as a collaborative employee advocacy group with representation from all 10 colleges and the district office, since.

The Faculty Executive Council (FEC), consists of college level faculty senate presidents and president-elects from each of the 10 MCCCD colleges. FEC serves as the primary constituency group to represent the interests of faculty in district level decisions and policy development. In February of 2018, the Governing Board approved a resolution to terminate the meet and confer as defined in the Residential Faculty Policy Manual.

The MCCCD Chancellor initiated a task force in March 2018 to develop a faculty policy development process and in January 2019, the Governing Board rescinded the resolutions, extended the current RFP to July 2020, and initiated the Faculty Administration Collaboration Team (FACT), reinstating the FEC as the official representative body for residential faculty and acknowledging the Adjunct Faculty Association's role in shared governance. Originally, FACT was composed of two residential faculty members, two adjunct faculty members, two administrators (the Provost and a college president), and tasked with reviewing current residential and adjunct faculty agreements and practices with the perspective of improving student success. The team has now revised membership to include three administrators (two college presidents and a college Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA).

After multiple extensions to the RFP, the Governing Board approved the first iteration of the new Residential Faculty Agreement on April 1, 2021. There have been two subsequent revisions, the newest version was approved on July 1, 2023.

5.A.3.

With collaboration as a core value of the college, administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in establishing requirements, policies and processes for the various structures within the organization. This guiding principle influences college interactions and operations at all levels. South Mountain Community College adheres to the academic policies established by the MCCCD as

it relates to the development, enhancement and elimination of all curriculum. The current process is facilitated by Instructional Councils which consists of membership district-wide.

At the district-level, SMCC employees participate in a variety of committees and task forces to ensure involvement in establishing processes. For example, there are established councils that support the leadership functions of the MCCCD and SMCC. These include the Chancellor's Executive Council, Vice President of Administrative Services Council, Vice President of Student Affairs Council, Vice President of Academic Affairs Council, Academic Deans Council, Deans of Student Affairs Council, and Institutional Research Council. Each of these councils has a long-established history and works collectively to influence academic requirements, policy and processes. The college staff also provides key leadership in district-wide initiatives such as System-wide Strategic Enrollment Management, Guided Pathways, and the Bachelor's Degree Task Force to ensure representation in the development of new initiatives.

At the college level, employees at all levels have opportunities to participate in matters concerning the organization. A fundamental guiding principle of SMCC is to include all necessary stakeholders in decision-making as it relates to college operations and learning. As such, the college is both diligent and purposeful in the council, committee, and task force composition to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the participatory decision-making that influences all aspects of the college. This practice is evidenced through the Executive Team, Shared Governance, and adhoc task forces.

Other forms of collaboration include college listening sessions, brown bag events, town halls, convocation exercises, and College Celebrations and Updates twice per semester. Listening sessions and brown bag events establish opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators to communicate about important changes or updates in policy, to troubleshoot or solve problems in a collective and collaborative frame, and to foster transparent and cooperative communication across the college.

Sources

- 5A1 - 15-1444 - General powers and duties of district boards
- 5A1 - 38-431.02 - Notice of meetings
- 5A1 - 38-431.02 - Open Meeting Laws (ARS §38-431.02)
- 5A1 - Board Docs
- 5A1 - Fiduciary Duties
- 5A2 - 2021 Performance Monitoring (final) (3)
- 5A2 - Shared Governance Model
- 5A2 - Collaborative Brain Trust Consultancy
- 5A2 - College leadership structure
- 5A2 - College leadership structure(2)
- 5A2 - Faculty Senate
- 5A2 - Interest-Based Negotiation
- 5A2 - Residential Faculty Agreement
- 5A2 - Shared Governance Handbook 2023-24
- 5A2 - SMCC College Plan 2024
- Annual Reports
- SMCC Strategic Plan

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.

Argument

5.B.1.

Fiscal Resources
South Mountain Community College (SMCC) is part of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). Budgets for the MCCCD are established by the Chancellor of the district in consultation with the Vice Chancellor of Business Services and the Advisory Budget Committee (ABC). The budget is subsequently reviewed and adopted by the MCCCD Governing Board (the Board) each year. Through this process of budget development and approval, SMCC has the fiscal resources needed to support the operations of the college.

Historically, funding for SMCC included three key sources: (1) Maricopa County property taxes, (2) tuition and fees, and (3) funds provided by the State of Arizona. In 2015 all state aid was eliminated to the MCCCD. In the last year (2023-2024), the MCCCD Governing Board approved a $12 increase per credit hour to in-state tuition, thereby providing some additional relief to SMCC. The loss of enrollment during the pandemic did cause all of the MCCCD colleges to reduce expenditures and find ways to cut outgoing resources. Despite budget and climate changes, SMCC has maintained the essential operations core to the mission by applying a philosophy of public stewardship and cost containment to all expenditures.

Fortunately, in 2022-2023, the State of Arizona began appropriating funds to MCCCD for STEM studies and research. For the last two years, the state has provided an additional $8.6 million to MCCCD. In addition, in November 2020, the state of Arizona passed Proposition 207 which also appropriated 33% of the funds from the sale of medical marijuana to the community colleges across the state.

Currently, the budget operates on a fiscal calendar beginning July 1st and ending June 30th. During fiscal year 2018-2019, the total budget was $40,314,213. The most significant portion of the budget ($28,010,494) is allocated to the General Fund. In the last fiscal year (2022-2023), the General Fund was $41,395,730. Budget allocation at SMCC is influenced by a Full Time Student Equivalency (FTSE) model. The collective financial resources which also include auxiliary, restricted, and capital funds are evidence of the college's ability to support programs and services now and in the future.

As a result of Federal HEERF and CARES funding between 2021-2023, SMCC awarded $7,341,164 directly to students during the pandemic. Additionally, SMCC was provided HEERF and CARES related funding in the amount of $6,832,537 to support technology enhancements, staffing related needs, and institutional supplies.

The financial needs of the institution are also addressed with alternative financial resources such as carry-forward funds, remaining General Obligation Bonds, and limited property tax increases enacted by the Governing Board (for fiscal year 2023-2024 $1.1388 is rate per $100.00 of assessed valuation). The college is committed to effectively managing these resources to maintain financial stability to support operations and ensure that the mission of SMCC is upheld. As a federally designated Hispanic- serving institution and a minority-serving institution, several local, state, and federal grants also supplement the resource allocations to SMCC. These include Hoop of Learning (HOOP), Achieving a College Education (ACE), TRIO, Proposition 301, Prop 207, and Carl-Perkins. The college has developed a formal grants process to facilitate the completion of grant proposals. All grant proposals are developed by a district-supported designated grants coordinator in collaboration with faculty, staff, and administration. Ultimately, grant proposals are reviewed by Executive Leadership, Shared Governance and the MCCCD Grants Department prior to final submission.

The College also pursues opportunities for alternative revenue sources through the MCCCD. For fiscal year 2019-2020, the MCCCD advanced a new budget development initiative. This new structure provided SMCC with the opportunity to apply for additional permanent and temporary resources. The categories of funding included financial resources to support SMCC's general operating funds; capital resources to off-set student course fees for capital equipment in the classroom; and grant funds from Propositions 207 and 301, both support initiatives to enhance workforce opportunities within the state of Arizona.

Human Resources

As of fiscal year 2018-19, SMCC had 140 staff and administrators employed on campus; last academic year (2023-2024) SMCC employed 142 staff and administrators. These employee groups are funded primarily by the General Fund. However, a small number of employees are funded by grants such as TRIO and Propositions 207 and 301. The college also has 52 full-time residential faculty and 206 adjunct faculty (in the 2018-2019 the college had 67 full-time faculty and over 350 adjuncts). As a result of the decline in enrollment during the pandemic (2020-2022), providing courses for adjunct faculty became increasingly difficult, so the ratio of FT faculty increased. The MCCCD evaluates the overall district needs by college and may appropriate new faculty lines to the colleges.

Physical Resources and Infrastructure

The college also allocates the necessary physical and infrastructure resources to maintain college operations. SMCC's main campus is located in the metropolitan area of South Phoenix and it also has an extended campus in the nearby Town of Guadalupe. There is also a public charter high school located on the main SMCC campus (Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center (AAEC)) and the Tree of Life preschool. AAEC participates in a concurrent enrollment program whereby students attend classes at SMCC for a portion of the day which results in significant credits toward an Associate's Degree at the completion of high school.

Over the years, SMCC has achieved necessary infrastructure expansions and improvements despite inconsistent funding from the state government. There have also been a number of college facility

improvements and expansions, such as an innovative community hub known as the [Community Entrepreneurship Center](). A newly renovated [Construction Trades]() area provides support for the larger Carpentry programs and Electrical wiring classrooms. These improvements provide evidence of the commitment to exemplary learning spaces. The college has also utilized remaining capital funding to build a new [Science Complex]() to meet the growing demands of STEM programs of study. Additional attention has been given to improvements crucial to establishing a well-functioning learning environment for students. For example, SMCC has remodeled the vacated IS Building to develop an [Engineering Lab](). This alteration to physical infrastructures addressed an emerging need and demand for hands-on experience that would accommodate and support innovations such as 3-D printing, an industrial wind-tunnel lab, and exposure to fabrication and computer numerical controlled (CNC) equipment needed for the competitive job market. Within one semester, this expansion significantly increased enrollment in the Engineering program. The Engineering Lab was made possible through a combination of General Obligation Bond funds and grants.

Additional evidence of the commitment to ensuring physical facilities support operations include chiller plant improvements, cafeteria upgrades, and restroom remodeling throughout SMCC. The strategic allocation of financial resources from the 2004 bond has funded many projects that support college operations. Although the next bond will not likely be approved until 2024 or 2028, SMCC remains committed to the continued enhancement of the physical structures that support the mission.

In addition, the [South Mountain Community Library]() (SMCL) is both a college and public library. It serves the surrounding South Mountain community while simultaneously providing quality college-level resources to SMCC students. This partnership has enabled collaboration between SMCC and the City of Phoenix to maintain the functional and physical needs of the library. The collaboration also delivers tremendous benefit by providing greater access, resources, and quality of service to both public and academic programs.

The college is also dedicated to sustainability. The MCCCD energy initiative which funded installation of a [solar grid]()on campus, and an LEED lighting project for all parking lot lights on the main campus are examples of this dedication. The implementation of these sustainability measures have provided the campus with clean energy, created operational savings, and reduced maintenance costs. Second Nature (formerly the President's Climate Commitment) provides a national forum for universities and community colleges to learn, work toward, and develop sustainable practices and use sustainable resources. SMCC is a member of [Second Nature]() and submits an annual report on the progress of sustainability efforts. The college also participates in the state's [travel reduction program]() which polls all students and employees. Based on this data, strategies for improving the carbon footprint by reducing the reliance on individual vehicles are developed.

The college also recognizes the need to assess facilities in an effort to maintain appropriate levels for operations. The Facilities Assessment, Analysis, and Benchmarking study began with a plan to evaluate outcomes over a three-year period. In the first iterations (2017 and 2022), the college contracted with Gordian to perform audits of the following areas:

- [Facilities Assessment and Benchmarking]() – Assessed the facilities backlog for deferred maintenance, facilities deficiencies, mitigated risk of future failures, and coordinated repairs, modernization, and new spaces to optimize finite capital dollars. It also provided data to incorporate into the plan to protect the buildings and infrastructure, aligning building needs to financial capacity.
- Sustainability – Examined prospective opportunities to increase energy savings and reduce the

campus carbon footprint.
- Space Utilization – Evaluated the utilization of teaching spaces and classroom condition assessment.

The results of these audits inform master planning for the institution and assists in the development of capital investment strategies to sustain the campus facilities. In addition, building systems and deferred maintenance requirements to protect SMCC's physical assets will be further developed, in the effort to ultimately improve the overall state of facilities. The next audit will be performed in 2025.

Technology Infrastructure

The extensive IT infrastructure of SMCC was designed to support learning and meet the needs, expectations, and requirements of students, faculty, and staff alike. These college resources are managed by the Technology Support Services (TSS) department, and guided by an annual Strategic Plan, Technology Obsolescence Plan, and Technology Customer Service Satisfaction Survey. Historically, the college has allocated both General Obligation Bond funds and operational funding to maintain and upgrade existing technology hardware and software in accordance with the Technology Obsolescence Plan. A new Title V grant (October 2023) in support of a new Career Hub for students allocated $180,000 in technology resources for students.

College operations, college archives, and college processes are supported via an Inside South web portal. This is a secure, accessible employee-only intranet portal. Inside South provides a convenient solution for employees to have easy access to operational processes, resource links, and auxiliary support services to work effectively and efficiently. Other resources include the bookstore, calendars, work order systems, and the campus directory.

Student learning is supported by approximately 74 classrooms, all configured with an instructor workstation computer, document camera and overhead projector. Within the classrooms there are approximately 1020 student computers. Password-protected Wi-Fi access is available campus-wide to staff and students as well as guest-accessible Wi-Fi network throughout the campus and library. The wireless access throughout campus provides the necessary connectivity to support staff, student and community owned devices. The main campus bandwidth is built on dual/redundant service providers serving 1,000Mbps of internet connection speed. Each building is connected to a main data center via fiber channel on a complete Cisco architecture of layer 3 switches, routers and firewalls.

Technology Support Services (TSS) also supports the academic, student and administrative needs of the institution. Examples include customized solutions such as a tutor, advisor, and counseling tracking system that support students. The programmers within the department have also developed a portal that supports the college Shared Governance processes and archives. The department also assists with specialized data reporting tools (Tableau and Power BI) reports which provide college information to assist in informed decision making at all levels of the institution.

Maintaining the instructional learning spaces and classroom technologies is also a key function, including maintaining two large computer labs on campus. Additionally, TSS supports the technology in the Engineering Lab, Community Entrepreneurial Center, Tutoring Center, Learning Resource Center, Music Business Lab, and the new Science Complex. To improve technology accessibility, TSS also supports laptop carts which can be delivered to any facility throughout the college.

Security is a primary focus, and IT professionals are dedicated to sustaining and protecting the infrastructure of servers, routers and data storage, as well as maintaining cyber security measures in alignment with MCCCD Directives, guidelines, and best practices. The college Technology Obsolescence Plan tracks units and year of replacement for all technology equipment and audio video/media in classrooms, conference rooms, public locations, offices, and the SMCL to ensure the units are replaced on an appropriate schedule. As part of this plan, the Technology Utilization Proposal has been implemented to annually review opportunities to maximize technology while considering limited resources.

The college also utilizes technology to enhance the safety of staff, students and the community. SMCC has incorporated surveillance cameras as a key method to monitor the campus and maintain safety. The cameras are installed internally and externally in strategic locations and are monitored by the College Police department. The college has also incorporated a multi-modal system for emergency notification across the campus. This allows multiple options to notify the college community in the event of an emergency. The equipment installed includes VOIP telephones, Emergency call boxes, and emergency call towers in the parking lots. In addition, the college utilizes RAVE, which is a third-party notification system widely used by colleges and universities across the nation. Finally, the Alertus Emergency Management System, (funded by a district 2004 General Obligations Bond) rounds out the multi-modal system, by adding beacons in each building on campus.

5.B.2.

As a non-profit institution, the budget undergoes a participatory proposal process that encourages transparency and collaboration among numerous stakeholders. This process ensures the appropriate allocation of resources to educational purposes. Approximately 82% of the budget is allocated to human resources. SMCC develops the General Operating Budget utilizing an integrated planning and budgeting process. This process aligns the college strategic plan, action plans (operational) and budget. The process is a product of participatory engagement of faculty, staff, and administrators who develop divisional or department strategies linked to the SMCC Strategic Plan that may have single or multiple budget requests. These strategies and budget requests are vetted by the respective Division Chairs, Departmental Managers and the college Leadership Team for prioritization and approval. The electronic system the college uses to advance the Integrated Planning and Budgeting process is Strategic Planning Online (SPOL), which captures strategies, activities, accomplishments and budget linked to the college strategic plan.

5.B.3.

The mission statement reflects the core of the institution where the focus is learning that will develop the skills needed to contribute to the increasingly global and technological world. By offering programs that meet community needs for general education, transfer, occupational, continuing and developmental learning, the college ensures that the mission is realistic and reflective of all aspects of the organization.

The college strategic plan serves as the organizational infrastructure influenced by the mission and provides direction for all college activities. The current strategic plan contains five directions. Each direction reflects the broad area of focus and scope of work important to the college. Within each

strategic direction, institutional priorities have been established to further refine the work of the college to ensure streamlined and targeted efforts for all members of the college community.

Within the strategic planning process, goals, benchmarks, action plans and assessment tools are created collaboratively by all members of each division. This ensures that activities and goals are realistic. Each strategic direction includes a "key result" which is developed using trend data to ensure that metrics are both measurable and attainable. Key results are also monitored to ensure institutional progress in meeting stated goals. In addition to the five key results, SMCC has adopted Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which serve as an additional performance measure directly linked to the strategic plan. The establishment of KPIs represent another practice used by the institution to ensure that goals within mission statements are realistic in light of the organization's resources.

5.B.4.

Qualified Staff
SMCC ensures that all employees meet the necessary hiring qualifications. The hiring process for all job types is managed by the Human Resources department, which reports directly to the Vice President of Administrative Services. The HR Director and the Director's team ensures that all SMCC hiring procedures align with MCCCD as well as all applicable laws. All full-time positions are hired through a process that starts with a posted job announcement, a district-centralized application portal, and a screening committee reflective of the college demographics which includes subject matter experts. At the conclusion of interviews, a hiring rubric is used to score applicants based on qualifications and the most qualified candidates are sent forward to the college president. Final hiring decisions are made by the college president (in consultation with the hiring manager who will be overseeing the employee). Classified staff have documented job descriptions that list minimum required qualifications, desired qualifications, and specific job duties. In 2021, a job classification and compensation study was completed at the district level in order to ensure that all employees were qualified according to market payroll rates. In addition, policy groups were combined to form one classified staff employment status with new classification and compensation structures developed.

Training
All new employees are required to complete comprehensive orientation and training provided by the MCCCD. Prior to the pandemic, the MCCCD District HR hosted an Employee District Training Day introducing new employees to the community college mission and values, policies and procedures, benefits and opportunities for professional growth, expectations for employee conduct, and more. However, because of the limitations of the pandemic, and travel restrictions for some of our employees, a new Onboarding Site was designed to orient new employees to MCCCD. In addition to MCCCD training, all SMCC employees complete an introduction to Gallup Strengths as part of a strategic employee development initiative that identifies and leverages the talents of each employee to benefit the college. Professional growth opportunities for faculty and staff are also available from a variety of resources which include:

Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI)offers professional growth opportunities in the form of workshops, training sessions, and competitive grants for innovative projects that contribute to the continuous improvement of college and district programs and services.

The MCCCD Employee Learning Center is an online resource that provides a variety of training

opportunities and resources in the areas of diversity and inclusion, performance management, learning and instruction, technology training, CEUs for classified staff, and training in particular operating systems such as FMS, HCM, etc.

Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides training and support to faculty and staff at the college level.

Online and hybrid instructor mentoring and training provides training and mentoring to instructors teaching in online and hybrid modalities based on best practices and discipline specific academic standards.

The MCCCD requires all SMCC leaders, supervisors, and employees to attend training in public stewardship, cost containment and administrative regulations. Additionally, all employees must complete the annual disclosures that include acknowledgement of the rules and requirements for travel, conflict of interest, cash handling, cash controls, employee codes of conduct, information and privacy security, legal issues, and Title IX. Employees must read the Employee Policy Manual and undergo required training before participating in employee recruitment and hiring procedures. These include the Hiring Knowledge Sequence – screener, manager, interviewers. The training ensures appropriate knowledge in the areas of rights and responsibilities to help employees successfully navigate SMCC and the district.

5.B.5.

Budgeting for SMCC occurs via an integrated planning and budgeting process. This process was developed to prevent planning and resource allocation from occurring in isolation. The process aligns departmental and institutional efforts with the college strategic plan and key performance indicators. All funding including discretionary funding at SMCC is based upon this comprehensive process.

The Business Services Department annually publishes and distributes the SMCC Fiscal Year Adopted Budget college-wide. To ensure the college monitors expenses appropriately, the College Business Services department provides quarterly financial reports, such as trending data, salary savings, budget approvals, payroll, and capital expense reports. The college also utilizes financial reports and other ad hoc reports that can be specialized for specific needs or to monitor the college's spending (burn reports). Additionally, the MCCCD Budget Office requires data from the colleges relative to expenditures, revenues or the Governing Board metrics (not necessarily financial) that may impact the prioritization of any MCCCD level funding opportunities. This information is also provided to the district to maintain budgetary integrity of financial resources.

At SMCC, the campus Shared Governance model is designed to incorporate review and discussion of proposed budgetary spending outside of the normal operating budget. The Administrative Services Council serves as the budget committee for the college, reviewing and forwarding recommendations for allocations of funding. Depending on the domain and issue, the Shared Governance Council may also provide budget related input.

Internal Audit and Management Advisory Services (IAMAS) is also a key resource used by SMCC to monitor budget and other key operations of the college. IAMAS conducts specific audits based on the evaluation of risk which are arranged on a three-year audit plan cycle. The IAMAS, college administrators and the Auditor General's Office assist in the development of the plan for annual audits district-wide. South Mountain Community College has participated in the following audits the

last several years: Civil Rights Compliance Review, Emergency Preparedness, Employee Separations, Fraud Audit, Network Administration, Fiscal Internal Controls, Open File Shares, and Travel. Progress on any recommendations are reported back to the IAMAS quarterly until resolutions are completed. This process has provided improvements and reductions of risk, which has enhanced collective operations at the institution.

Sources

- 5B - AAEC
- 5B - ACE
- 5B - Prop 301
- 5B - Tree of Life
- 5B - Trio
- 5B- Hoop of Learning
- 5B1 - Second Nature
- 5B1 - Alertus
- 5B1 - Carl Perkins
- 5B1 - CEC.pdf
- 5B1 - Eng. Lab
- 5B1 - FY23 South Mountain IFP Presentation
- 5B1 - Inside South
- 5B1 - Portal
- 5B1 - Prop 207
- 5B1 - RAVE
- 5B1 - Science Complex
- 5B1 - SMCC Strategic Plan
- 5B1 - Solar grid on campus
- 5B1 - South Mountain Community Library
- 5B1 - Travel reduction program
- 5B1 - TSS
- 5B2 - SMCC Strategic Plan
- 5B2 - SPOL Planning
- 5B4 - District-centralized application portal
- 5B4 - Job classification and compensation study
- 5B4 - Center for Teaching and Learning
- 5B4 - Disclosures
- 5B4 - Employee Policy Manuals
- 5B4 - Gallup
- 5B4 - Hiring process
- 5B4 - Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI)
- 5B4 - Maricopa Job Family and Job Series Definitions
- 5B4 - New classification and compensation structures
- 5B4 - Onboarding Site
- 5B4 - Online and hybrid instructor mentoring and training
- 5B4 - The MCCCD Employee Learning Center
- 5B5 - Administrative Services Council
- 5B5 - Internal Audit and Management Advisory Services (IAMAS)
- Constr. Trades.pdf

- SMCC Strategic Plan

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.

Argument

5.C.1.

The campus vision statement guides and informs the inherent dedication of faculty and staff to serving students and the surrounding community. The vision, mission, values, and strategic plan documents serve as the foundation for long-term planning and resource allocation. Connecting the vision, mission, and values to strategic planning, the college has developed an integrated planning and budget process which intersects with the college academic plan, divisional action plans, and (where appropriate) annual Governing Board metrics by having a shared development process and is guided by the vision, mission, and values of the organization.

South Mountain Community College also has a very strong academic culture that fully supports the mission as evidenced by the exemplary programs, cross-functional collaborations, and connections to the community. As such, the institution's human and financial resources are dedicated to the priorities of fulfilling the mission and allocating resources accordingly. The primary processes that support this culture include: a) Strategic Plan b) Instructional and Non-Instructional Program Review, and c) the Integrated Planning and Budgeting process. Through these three processes the college provides for effectiveness and efficiencies in meeting the mission and aligning all activities with the institutional mission and the resources of the institution.

5.C.2.

The iTeachSMART is a campus committee focused on assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs) at the course, program, and institutional levels. The iTeachSMART team helps academic divisions, departments, and faculty define SLOs that are suitable, measurable, and broad enough to cover lifelong impact. The team also assists with creating or obtaining assessment instruments to measure the students' achievement of the outcomes, and to then use the resulting data to develop and

implement a plan for improving student success. The five institutional (general education) outcomes for the college include: Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Quantitative Literacy, Written Communications, Oral Communication, Diversity and Global Awareness, and SMCC Experience. The assessment of student learning prevails throughout the organization and is embedded in key operations, planning, and budget.

The college is committed to continuous improvement and evaluates operations in a variety of ways. Recently, the entire SMCC and all of MCCCD have been participating in the 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX) as a mechanism for goal setting and improving student outcomes. In 2022, SMCC embarked on a 4DX pilot, with the primary goal of increasing the number of graduates to 500 by 2025. Every department, program, and individual contributor developed small, achievable ways they would change behaviors to help SMCC students achieve their goals. In its pilot year, SMCC went from 364 graduates to 400 graduates. The second iteration of 4DX, called College Goal Setting, was implemented in 2023, with an anticipated completion of 2027. SMCC's new Wildly Important Goal (WIG) is to Increase 4-Year completion and transfer from 27% to 35% by October 2027 (beginning with the 2022-2023 cohort). In January 2024, all individuals, programs, and departments initiated new goals in alignment with the college WIG.

The college Academic Plan is presently undergoing review, revision, and development as the college seeks new ways to meet the needs of the diverse community it serves. Economic and residential growth in some parts of our community along with economic and sociocultural challenges in other areas continue to impact the diversity of our student population. Responding to these needs, the college has continued to focus on workforce development and outreach to community and industry leaders as well as improving overall guidance to students seeking a pathway to completion, whether by certificate, associate degree, and/or transfer preparation. Guided Pathways is one initiative that is informing our academic planning and development for the college. Action planning within campus divisions and departments establishes budgetary and allocation needs in relation to continuous improvement goals. These division and departmental goals are tied to specific parts of the college Strategic Plan, which then informs and ties into the overall Academic Planning for the college. Finally, the Shared Governance model of councils enables members of the campus community--faculty, staff, students, administrators--to forward new proposals and initiatives for consideration.

5.C.3.

The college views strategic planning as a vision-focused process that results in major, long-range and far-reaching directions for an organization. Effective strategic planning allows organizations to define their future direction and determine the allocation of resources, including capital and people. The process takes long-range planning into account, emphasizes actions to be accomplished in three years, results in anticipatory decision making, and is integrated throughout the organization.

During the strategic planning process, strategic conversations were conducted with faculty, staff, students and community members to identify new institutional priorities for the organization. During these sessions, participants were guided through a visionary process which focused on future planning for the college. Information from these sessions was summarized and grouped into thematic categories. The thematic categories were used to draft institutional priorities, which were reviewed and revised by various stakeholders throughout the organization. The college-wide participant feedback resulted in enhanced strategic directions and finalized institutional priorities.

The plan clearly communicates the future direction of the organization, aligns with Maricopa Community College District planning, and supports the college's long-range and operational plans. In an effort to ensure that the strategic plan is inclusive of internal and external groups, the electronic versions of the annual reports immediately preceding the new planning process included short videos for each strategic direction that were designed to reflect the many voices that ultimately developed the guiding framework for SMCC. The Strategic Plan is a cyclical process in which the college reassess the strategic directions every four years within the framework of the mission and educational environment during the planning cycle. This period of time provides clear guidance to the college community on the strategic directions for the institution and the key results the college is seeking to successfully attain. More importantly, the current strategic plan and process integrates feedback from all areas of the college and community.

In the Spring and Summer 2023, SMCC underwent an Organizational Assessment conducted by Thunderbird Consulting. In the assessment, Thunderbird conducted over 220 interviews with members of the college community, to include staff, faculty, students, community leaders, community members, and district-wide colleagues. The final report from the assessment was shared with the college community at the college's Fall 2023 all-employee Convocation. The outcomes of the assessment included ensuring that students continue to be at the center of everything SMCC does, maximizing human capital to enhance the student experience, engaging the community in program offerings, and diversifying resources to ensure good stewardship of fiscal resources. Additionally, as a result of the assessment, SMCC put together a Task Force of college leaders to ensure the college commits to the needs identified by Thunderbird and the constituents of SMCC.

5.C.4.

SMCC's institutional planning is based upon understanding of its current capacity and it anticipates potential fluctuations in revenue sources, based upon enrollment, the economy, and state support. These factors inform the decisions made at the district and college levels to fund ongoing programs and initiatives. Out of the data received from a variety of sources, the Adopted Budget for SMCC is determined by allocations from the District's Annual Adopted Budget for each year as well as the District Strategic Plan and College Strategic Plan.

Instructional and Non-Instructional Program Review are the next impactful processes that inform the operational efficiencies of the academic divisions, as well as the student support and administrative services departments of the college.

The most recent SMCC cycle for program review was completed in 2023. The Program Review Cycle is completed every three years and informs the college in continuous improvement opportunities to maximize organizational performance. The program review outcomes are based on a rubric established by the college task forces for each area. The scores from the rubric and feedback from Program Review assist in evaluating college instructional and support services with opportunities for enhancement, maintaining, sustaining, or discontinuing services at the institution.

The outcomes of program review and the associated recommendations are evaluated and if feasible incorporated in the subsequent Integrated Planning and Budgeting cycle as part of the action planning and accomplishments. Budgeting and monitoring of expenses is also integrated with academic planning and strategic planning. During the action planning process departments and divisions provide updates to goals to demonstrate accountability. To facilitate gathering this data, a

planning, budgeting and assessment tool, Strategic Planning Online (SPOL), provides an interface for connecting divisional academic and action planning goals with the Strategic Plan.

The college has anticipated and responded to institutional needs such as a Default Management Plan, a debt reduction plan intended to inform and educate students receiving financial aid.

Ultimately, the program was intended to reduce student default rates by educating students about student loan debt and helping them to understand proactive measures they could take to avoid default after they graduated from college. This proved to be a significantly successful program, enacted by a cross-campus task force and ultimately involving the entire campus in establishing a solution. To support efforts in Student Services, faculty members incorporated information about student loan debt into their curriculum, teaching lessons appropriate to their disciplines. In cohort year 2016, the default rate was 20.6%, which represented a decrease from the previous two-year period (33.3%). The 2017 default rate was 18.2%. This was accomplished through financial literacy workshops for students, face to face loan-entrance counseling for all new students who choose to borrow, and by incorporating financial literacy information in curricula for the First Year Experience, Math, Reading and English courses. As a result of the pandemic, student loan payments were halted from June 2020 through September 2023 which brought all default rates across the country to below 10%. However, the college committed to loan counseling, exit counseling, and literacy workshops aware that payments (and therefore default) would resume at some point. The college was selected as a top 10 Bellwether finalist in the area of Governance and Finance for this work.

Additional evidence that the institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity is seen through the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan. In 2022, SMCC participated in a MCCCD district-wide short-term SEM planning process, designed for short-term SEM wins, post-pandemic. This plan in conjunction with additional recruitment and outreach efforts resulted in a double-digit percentage increase in enrollment for SMCC for 2023-2024. A longer-term system-wide SEM plan is in development with representation from SMCC Student Affairs. The new SEM plan is expected to be implemented in the Fall 2024.

5.C.5

Among several initiatives and ongoing programs designed to address the needs of students and the surrounding community, SMCC has turned its attention to emerging trends such as student loan education and debt prevention; Guided Pathways initiatives; the redesign of developmental education in Reading, Math, and English; community partnerships and workforce development task forces that enhance student access to service learning, internships, and practicums, and a new Career Hub supported by a Title V grant acquired in the Fall 2023. These areas of focus serve to anticipate and inform the institution's future planning and development. With a lens of continuous improvement infused into all initiatives, SMCC continues to plan, anticipate, and address the emerging needs of its community.

The college is inherently interested in assessing and reassessing employer workforce needs to provide a steady workforce and pipeline of qualified students and talent to meet the demands of the existing forecasted job openings. With the recent Covid-19 Pandemic, in addition to changes in the nation, the state, and the local community, the data from the environmental scan provides the college with information indicating significant changes in the environment and providing the college with sufficient time to respond proactively to emerging trends. This allows the college to design and

implement strategies that would benefit the students and surrounding community.

Information from the organizational assessment will impact future planning, enabling the college to take advantage of external and internal opportunities for expansion and improvement. Consequently, the information from the organizational assessment will additionally inform the development of the Academic Plan and the development of career and technical education program enhancements at the institution.

South Mountain Community College has incorporated the process of Integrated Planning and Budgeting to assist in the monitoring of progress of the SMCC Strategic Plan and the identified key results. Through the process the college is able to document the annual accomplishments of the college and of the individual departments of the institution. Budget allocations are then linked to the advancement of the Strategic Plan. Participating in this process, departments annually reflect upon their prior year accomplishments, incorporate the outcomes of the program review feedback and recommendations and begin action plans for the upcoming academic year. This provides a way to continuously improve instruction and support services and to archive the information and sustain the information for future measurement of success.

Program Review is linked to the above dynamic Integrated Planning and Budgeting cycle by providing a self-assessment of all instructional divisions and non-instructional departments of the college. The program review cycle is completed every three years. Through the self-assessments and the recommendations from reviewers, consisting of a group of subject matter experts and cross-college constituents, the departments receive feedback and recommendations on their academic quality and support services provided at the institution. The outcomes are then incorporated into the action planning and advancement of key results again by way of the above Integrated Planning and Budgeting process.

Similarly, the college's Strategic Plan is aligned with the District's Strategic Plan. The college annually submits an Accomplishments Report to demonstrate accountability. The three key District Strategic Commitments are "Student Outreach and Success," "Economic Resources and Sustainability," and "A Cohesive Identity." This report is submitted to the District to ensure alignment and advancement of the Maricopa County Community College District as a whole as accountable to the state, the taxpayers, and the local community served. The college also conducted a cross-walk of the college priorities with the system priorities to ensure appropriate alignment across all levels of the organization.

The MCCCD Governing Board also requires an Annual Monitoring Report with the key metrics and outcomes system-wide in relation to their Governing Boards Outcome Statements. These statements include University Transfer Education and General Education, Workforce and Economic Development, Developmental Education, Community Development and Civic and Global Engagement. South Mountain Community College data is incorporated into the metrics and key performance indicators relative to the District. The college also participates in a variety of institutional assessments. The National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) provides data that measures institutional effectiveness. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) examines the level of student engagement in key areas linked to student success. The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Indicator (SSI) measures what is important to students as it relates to their academic experiences and the extent to which students are satisfied with the services received from the college. Finally, the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) focuses on first year students and identifies distinct characteristics related to persistence, completion and success. Recognizing that student success is multi-faceted, the college uses these assessments to

improve student performance.

At South Mountain Community College, Tableau Dashboards are a self-serve repository of institutional data. A data dashboard is a collection of visual data views (tables, graphs, infographics) that can be arranged and customized using a predetermined set of filters and parameters created by staff within the Institutional Research division. Dashboards are created by linking these visuals to the Institutional Research Information System (IRIS) data warehouse, which is a subset of the Student Information System (SIS) data warehouse. Dashboards are typically refreshed each semester with new data from. Current dashboards reflect SMCC data for a variety of metrics, including: student demographics, student completions, course scheduling and profiles, and faculty staffing. Through a variety of administrator created parameters, staff and faculty are able to shape institutional data to meet their needs for reporting purposes. The dashboards continue to serve as an integral link between staff, institutional data and evidence of college performance.

South Mountain Community College has been highlighted as the district college that has the highest number of employee performance evaluations completed. The employee performance evaluations are completed annually with varying deadline dates during the year for the various employee groups. The college has an institutional goal of 100% participation annually. The supervisors, people leaders, of the institution are contacted and divisional completion is tracked for their progress. Each supervisor has completed performance evaluations and/or performance plans as part of their own performance evaluations from the College President. This process has shown a positive effect on alerting employees to their progress and successes in addition to any needed improvements documented in the required performance plans. The monitoring of the performance evaluations is done by the College Human Resources Divisions and is reviewed by the college leadership team until all are completed.

South Mountain Community College faculty also have had to document their performance in their Individual Development Plans (IDPs). The IDPs provide evidence of the faculty members' progress during the academic year in the classroom, with instruction, with service to the institution, and in initiatives that they participate in. Additionally, they are monitored and provided feedback by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and their respective Academic Dean as well as from their mentors, until the tenure process in year five. Beyond year five, faculty complete a Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP) for Instructional Improvement every three years, again to provide evidence of their continued professional growth, service to the institution, and dedication to continuous improvement. In developing the FEP, faculty are expected to address the following key areas:

- Teaching, Learning, and/or Service
- Course Assessment and/or Program Development/Revision
- Governance and/or Committee Participation at the College and/or District levels

SMCC recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety and security of its students, faculty, staff and extended community. In 2013-14, a critical incident management team (CIMT) was established. The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) is a cross functional leadership group responsible for planning and coordination of emergency preparedness activities under the guidelines of the National Incident Management System-Incident Command System (NIMS-ICS). The Incident Command System (ICS) provides a structured model for managing emergency operations and coordinating response activities within our organization and with external agencies. The CIMT group will align our strategic planning and operational activities with the Maricopa Emergency Management System (MEMS) that provides guidance and support for all Maricopa colleges. For more information on MEMS direction and compliance scope.

South Mountain Community College maintains the following [institutional pillars](#) as indicators of its success and as a means of honoring the achievements of faculty and staff: learning college continuous improvement, and student success. Keeping to the pillars of the institution, the focus of the college's work is to improve the institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability to advance student success and completion. SMCC has participated in advancing the operational process to enhance the student experience with varied initiatives in instruction, student development, and operational effectiveness and technology.

The institution's previous Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Quality Initiative was used as a critical advancement to sustain the institution by focusing on improving the distribution and allocations for the academic load. This project has been a Quality Initiative designed to suit the college's present concerns for load and schedule costs that were escalating and that is one of the largest costs for the institution, the academic schedule.

The MCCCD district provides a platform for best practices to be shared district-wide by hosting the annual [Student Success Conference](#). All the MCCCD colleges participate and share the new knowledge and new practices and their outcomes across colleges. The best practices are often adopted in enrollment services, academics, and other areas of the college.

Student Learning outside of the classroom is also continuing to be monitored and tracked in our Student Life and Leadership (Clubs) and Student Learning Outcomes throughout the Student Enrollment Services areas and Counseling. These outcomes assist the college in ensuring that learning occurs in all aspects of the student experience. In addition, this information is used to make critical changes to programs and services to provide quality experiences for students.

Sources

- 5C1 - Instructional
- 5C1 - Non Instructional
- 5C2 - academic-plan-july2020
- 5C2 - iTeachSMART
- 5C2- College Wide Goal Setting_ Convocation 2024
- 5C3 - College Wide Goal Setting_ Convocation 2024
- 5C3 - SMCC Organizational Assessment
- 5C4 - Cycle for program review
- 5C4 - financial literacy workshops
- 5C4 - Governance and Finance
- 5C4 - Instructional and Non-Instructional Program Review
- 5C4 - Loan entrance
- 5C4 - Short-term SEM
- 5C5 - College Wide Goal Setting_ Convocation 2024
- 5C5 - 2021 Performance Monitoring
- 5C5 - Academic-plan
- 5C5 - Critical incident management team
- 5C5 - faculty_agreement

- 5C5 - FY 20-21 Year End Strategic Accomplishments Report FINAL
- 5C5 - MCC College Plan 2023.docx (1)
- 5C5 - MCCCD strategic_plan
- 5C5 - Monitoring Report
- 5C5 - Pillar Awards
- 5C5 - SMCC Organizational Assessment
- 5C5 - SMCC_College (Specific) SP Crosswalk (2)
- 5C5 - Student Success Conference
- 5C5 - Tableau Dashboards
- 5C5- Cycle for program review
- SMCC Strategic Plan
- Spring 2024 Convocation_Org Task Force PP (1)

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.

Summary

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The college is committed to continuing its mission of service to students and the surrounding community, focusing on continuous improvement strategies that align with the college mission, vision, and values, as well as the strategic plan. Through its grounding in shared governance, the college will continue to support programs as it seeks innovative ways to achieve and sustain its goals. The physical resources and budgetary planning are sound, anticipating and addressing the crucial operational and educational needs of the college. The college plans are future-facing and seek alternative sources of revenue while maintaining a high quality of educational service to the community. Furthermore, the college continues to maintain a high standard of excellence in the hiring process, seeking the best qualified candidates for faculty and staff positions while also providing opportunities for students to gain employment experience through work-study positions on campus.

The Governing Board of the Maricopa Community College District (MCCCD) is knowledgeable about the institution, institutional operations, and the unique aspects of the ten colleges it oversees. It is responsible for adhering to Arizona law and statutes relevant to community college governance and operations. SMCC continues to break boundaries and barriers by anticipating and addressing the future needs of its students as they prepare for and enter the workforce of the 21st century. In the future, SMCC will continue to meet the above criteria, focusing on continuous improvement of student services and support, monitoring and expansion of programs according to community needs, and seeking additional community outreach and workforce opportunities for students in the form of internships, service learning, experiential learning, and other collaborative efforts with the surrounding community.

Sources

There are no sources.