Manchester Community College

Manchester, Connecticut

Fifth-Year Report to NEASC

March 1, 2007

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Statement of Report Preparation

Information for this report was gathered by teams composed of staff and faculty members of Manchester Community College. The teams were charged with interviewing stakeholders in the target areas as well as gathering printed materials and other institutional data. The information gathered by the teams was then turned over to the co-chairs to be written as a narrative. Drafts were made available to all members of the College community for comments and additions. The final version was reviewed by the President and the Deans of the College.

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Institutional Overview

MCC is the largest of Connecticut's community colleges, annually enrolling nearly 6,000 undergraduates in credit programs, and approximately 8,000 students in continuing education/credit-free courses, including workforce development programs. MCC has the largest percentage of traditional-aged college students among its sister schools. Founded in 1963, Manchester Community College is the only community college in the country nationally recognized for academic excellence by the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation.

MCC offers more than 90 degrees and certificates. Classes are held days, evenings, weekends, and online, and prepare students for entry into career fields or transfer to baccalaureate institutions. Articulation agreements with the state's universities provide ease of transfer and maximize credits awarded. Financial aid is available, and comprehensive packages of grants, loans, scholarships, and work-study opportunities help make an MCC education affordable for all.

The College is situated on 160 acres in suburban Manchester, only ten minutes from downtown Hartford, with easy access to interstates I-384, I-84 and I-291. The College's Learning Resource Center and Arts, Sciences, and Technologies Center provide leading edge educational facilities.

MCC has 17 active student clubs and organizations, including an award-winning newspaper, an international honor society, business organizations, professional clubs, social groups, cultural organizations, and a vibrant student government. The College hosts four NJCAA Division III sports teams, and its fitness center offers aerobic, weight-training facilities and health and wellness programs.

The Center for Student Development offers a broad spectrum of support services, including counseling, advising, tutoring, transitional programs, and services for international and minority students. Career services and cooperative education opportunities provide students with the guidance and resources they need to achieve their career goals—both while in school and after graduation.

MCC is very proud of the fact that it has students on its campus from more than 50 countries, speaking about 50 languages. It is dedicated to providing students with the opportunity for lifelong learning and assisting them in clarifying options, enlarging horizons, and building on strengths. The College's highly qualified faculty and staff members remain deeply committed to helping all individuals— regardless of race, religion, sex, cultural or ethnic differences, or physical abilities— achieve their potential.

Part I

Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis:

1. Advising at MCC

In its 2002 accreditation report for Manchester Community College, NEASC charged the College to create an effective system of advising. Since that report, the Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Divisions have focused first on creating a comprehensive system for student advising and then on developing a system for assessing the effectiveness of advising at MCC. The assessment of advising is an ongoing process that will lead to both expansion of advising services and to further refinement of the advising program.

Creation of Coordinator of Advising Position

In 2001 the College appointed a coordinator of advising, who subsequently implemented the Suggested Guidelines for an Advising Program, as recommended by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) model. The coordinator also helped to establish the community college system-wide Academic Advising Council, which works to establish consistent and effective advising across the 12-college system. In particular, the MCC Advising Program has taken steps to make sure that the mission of the academic advising program is consistent with the mission of the College, and to meet the following standard as set forth by the Suggested Guidelines in the CAS model:

> Through private, individual conferences with students, the academic advisors should provide assistance in refining goals and objectives, understanding available choices, and assessing the consequences of alternative courses of action. Course selection, understanding and meeting institutional requirements, and providing clear and accurate information regarding institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs may be carried out individually or in groups.

The following is a discussion of how MCC has implemented the CAS standards since the last NEASC comprehensive report.

Creation of the Advising Council

The Coordinator of Advising next established the College -wide Advising Council with a faculty member as co-chair and membership representing each academic division. The Advising Council developed policies for implementing advising systems and training faculty advisors.

Because primary responsibility for advising had previously rested in the Counseling Department and the Student Affairs Division, one of the primary missions of the Advising Council is advocating the importance of advising among faculty colleagues to increase faculty participation. The Council members also provide feedback to the coordinator of advising regarding advising materials developed for faculty use and other faculty concerns regarding advising.

Training Faculty and Staff to be Advisors

Although much "ad hoc" advising had been going on for years at MCC, the College recognized the need for further emphasis on training and coordination of advising. A standardized training session was developed for faculty to upgrade advising skills. This session includes an overview of Banner Web for Faculty, a review of how to interpret assessment test scores, and information about advising's mission, theory, and practice, as well as curriculum requirement updates and general transfer information. Training sessions are offered every semester. Nearly 60 full-time faculty and staff members have taken the training at least once, and many faculty members repeat training every few semesters to keep their advising skills fresh and to make sure their knowledge of program requirements is up-to-date.

Creating the New Student "Advising Weeks" Program

Under this program, new, first-time students are matched with trained faculty advisors in the students' field of study or interest. During a period of 3-4 weeks each semester, students receive letters and emails introducing them to their faculty advisors and asking them to make appointments for an advising session in the faculty member's office.

Creating the New Student Group Advising Program

Because the majority of new students enroll at the College just prior to the start of the semester, the College realized that the Advising Weeks Program, while very valuable, could not reach all new students. To make sure the needs of all students were met, the College established the New Student Group Advising Program, with comprehensive PowerPoint slide show and online registration in 2000.

After taking the assessment test upon being admitted to the College, students are immediately given a follow-up appointment for a New Student Advising Group Session. A comprehensive PowerPoint presentation ensures that all students receive consistent and pertinent information regarding enrollment and advisement at the College. The presentation includes:

- Catalog and schedule overview

- Explanation of program and curricula requirements

- Tuition and fees and payment plan or financial aid requirements

- Discussion of college workload expectations and proper time-management

- Explanation of assessment results and scheduling implications

- A how-to for scheduling classes

- Establishing and using Banner Web for Student account for online registration

Creating the Continuing Student "Advising Weeks" Program

Building on its success in advising new students, the College instituted a program to provide advising to continuing students. This was a particular need for students in the General Studies and Liberal Arts and Sciences degree programs. While students in other degree programs were likely to have ongoing contact with faculty members in their field of study who could provide advising, General Studies students and Liberal Arts and Sciences students often did not know whom to approach for academic advising.

To address these issues, the coordinator of academic advising, with input and assistance from the Academic Advising Committee, took several steps:

1) Identified and documented the advising that was already taking place in order to encompass advising into an overall, systematic approach

2) Investigated best practices for advising systems and implemented the Advising Liaison System within the Counseling/Advising Center. Under this system, each counselor is assigned to specific programs and meets regularly with faculty in the area, including attending Division Meetings.

3) Created a new advising guide. This guide is updated each semester and distributed to faculty along with user-friendly curriculum sheets with advising notes for students and that clearly identifies program coordinators and advisors.

4) Assigned advisors in Banner to program coordinators for most career-related programs. Banner-assignment allows advisors easier access to student records and facilitates the advising process.

5) Piloted and assigned advisor program for a sample of General Studies and Liberal Arts students during Fall 2005 semester. Under this program, faculty members teaching in the

general studies and liberal arts areas were assigned advisees through the Banner system. After a successful pilot, the program was continued and expanded in each subsequent semester.

6) Advising training was provided to instructors of SD 111 (Student Development 111: First Year Experience), and the instructors provided academic advising as part of the class activities.

Assessing Effectiveness of Student Advising

The College has just begun to assess the impact of the changes in advising described above. A study of the effectiveness of advising by assigned-advisors versus non–assigned advisors is currently underway.

Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis:

2. Strategic Planning at MCC

The strategic plan for the College was created from input from the College community in 2001. This plan was in existence for the NEASC visit in 2002, and included the mission statement and seven principal organizational areas: Academic Distinction, Accessibility, Campus Environment, Diversity, Private and Public Partnerships, Student-Centered Climate, and Technological Enrichment. At that time, the only area that had a well-developed action plan was Academic Distinction. There was also no clear link between planning and budgeting. This was noted as a concern in the NEASC Accreditation Report and MCC was asked to address this area specifically in its five-year report.

Summary of Actions Since the 2002 NEASC Accreditation Visit

The College now has a strategic planning cycle that includes a link between planning and budget; an update on strategic priorities at the start of each semester; input from disciplines, programs, and divisions; an annual strategic planning forum that is open to the entire College community. In addition, the Strategic Planning Council has worked with the deans to develop more formalized action plans, using the action plans created for the Academic Distinction organizational area as a model.

During 2002-2003, an annual strategic planning cycle was defined and implemented. The cycle is tied to the action plans of the Programs and Discipline Reviews for each academic area. In the spring of each year, the status of these five-year plans is reported to each of the supervisory Deans. Typically, the entire College gathers to discuss new initiatives at a strategic planning forum held in the spring.

During the summer, the management team meets to discuss priorities for the upcoming academic year. These priorities are attached to the budget and prioritized. Each project is assigned to an individual or group, and a timeline is created. During opening days in the fall semester, the

president and deans present the strategic priorities that were developed over the summer to the

College community. Progress on the strategic initiatives is reported on opening day in the spring.

Proposed Changes: Governance

Improving faculty and staff awareness of strategic initiatives is a top priority of the strategic

planning process. The Strategic Planning Council has hosted an open meeting each spring to present

the planning cycle and invite input from all stakeholders with the goal of increasing both

understanding of and participation in the strategic planning process. The newly revised governance

document (ratified on Jan. 22, 2007, and taking effect at the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester),

mandates that, in the future, the Strategic Planning Council will report to the College Senate. This

change is anticipated to increase awareness and participation.

New Initiatives: MCC 2020: Sharing the Vision

In the spring of 2006, a team from Manchester Community College was selected to attend

the AAC&U Greater Expectations Institute held in June in 2006. This group returned energized to

reinvigorate college-wide discussions of our mission, purpose and culture, with the ultimate goal of

shaping a vision of the campus community in 2020.

During the Fall 2006 semester, the original team led a group of about 50 faculty and staff

who volunteered for twice-monthly reading and discussion groups. During the Spring 2007

semester, additional reading and discussion groups are being formed to accommodate faculty and

staff who would like to join the process.   There is a great deal of enthusiasm on campus for MCC

2020, and it is hoped that within five years, participation will approach 100 percent.

The ultimate vision is for strategic planning, governance and MCC 2020 to converge in a

unified vision of the future supported by the organizational structures and planning systems best

suited for realizing that vision. The president of the College considers this to be a major initiative: as important as the new buildings.

Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis:

3. Learning Outcomes at MCC

MCC is assessing student outcomes at multiple levels and has made progress in implementing and supporting a systematic and broad-based approach to the assessment of student learning. In academic year 2000-2001, the College began listing learning outcomes for programs and degrees in its catalog. By academic year 2001-2002, these learning outcomes were expanded to precisely relate to the newly organized modes of general education. Thus, the College has clearly specified learning outcomes for each certificate, program, and degree that the college offers as well as learning outcomes for specific groupings (modes) of courses within general education.

Cooperation With External Boards and Agencies

Most of the College's programs have longstanding relationships with external boards and/or agencies that aid in the assessment process and in providing needed feedback for instituting curricular or other changes related to assessment outcomes. For this reason, the College's programs have longstanding assessment outcome methodology in place. In separate meetings with program coordinators, all were able to tell precisely how they measured the leaning outcomes listed in the College catalog. Many of the coordinators could identify multiple methodologies for assessing a single learning outcome, including traditional coursework, experiential outcomes, surveys from employers, and the survey of MCC graduates.   Most program coordinators also reported regular meetings with external governing boards. The key purpose of these meetings was to review learning outcomes of the program and assess how students were doing in the field.

One example is the Therapeutic Recreation program, within which all students are required to complete a course entitled "Professional Practicum." The sole purpose of this course is to ensure that students can apply their classroom knowledge to the field. Students are judged on their applied knowledge by both the MCC instructor and a field supervisor. Similarly, the Visual Fine Arts and

Graphic Design programs have capstone experiences and collect student portfolios as evidence of student outcomes. All program coordinators employed data from the Director of Planning, Research and Assessment in their assessment of learning outcomes.

Assessment by Disciplines and Departments

Disciplines and departments are also moving toward systematic student outcome assessment. While programs have external advisory boards and some have external accreditation boards specific to their program that require standardized assessment outcome (e.g. Surgical Technology), the historical lack of external certification boards, especially in the liberal arts and social sciences disciplines, has resulted in a more protracted adoption of systematic outcome assessment. However, all disciplines and departments are conducting student outcome assessment and the College has now introduced several procedures to ensure the adoption of systematic assessment procedures across all disciplines and programs.

Most faculty in departments use student grades, midterm and final exams, applied course projects, and semester-end student evaluation of instructor. A few faculty use service learning, internships, and cooperative work programs as part of their assessment. All departments use data from the Director of Planning and Assessment in their assessment of learning outcomes and/ or discipline reviews. Departmental assessment is directed at individual student achievement and to feedback about curriculum revisions. A few examples of the many assessment activities of departments appear below.

As one of the largest departments at MCC, the English Department has moved to significantly enhance the assessment of student outcomes in English courses. English competencies are assessed by portfolios, capstone courses, tests, and submitted writing. Professional development programs for part-time faculty were developed to address issues of standardized

assessment. This resulted in a mentoring program for part-time faculty. In May 2005, members of the department met for a norming session to assess how and why English faculty place prospective students into English courses. The activity necessitated revision and clarification of outcomes for the courses in the reading and writing sequence. The Department has agreed upon outcomes for each level of the sequence. Additionally, the English Department has collected final assignments for classes in the sequence from all instructors and is currently reviewing those in an effort toward aligning outcomes with class writing.

Members of the English department have also been instrumental in developing a common understanding of reading and writing outcomes among all on campus. In Fall 2005, the English department's work on norming and reading and writing course outcomes culminated in a professional day entitled "Writing Across the Curriculum." In these sessions, faculty and staff from across campus met to discuss both teaching strategies on writing as well as the best practices for assessing writing. One of the most beneficial results of the campus meeting was the movement toward developing a common and systematic understanding of the importance of writing as a student outcome and the process whereby all disciplines and programs might better assess student writing. In addition, a member of the MCC English Department co-edited a collection of essays entitled *What is College-Level Writing?* The collection, which contains contributions from others, including members of the MCC English Department, was published by the National Council of Teachers of English in 2006.

The Social Science and Hospitality Division also undertook a major assessment of developmental education students and their educational success in the division's courses. The SSH Division was the only remaining division in the College that did not have prerequisites for its entry-level courses (e.g., History 101, Sociology 101). Social science faculty had anecdotally noticed that students at the developmental level of English were having difficulty in their courses and were more

likely to fail. The concern was expressed especially in those courses where the coursework contained a significant conceptual or theoretical focus and/or the course was reading and/or writing intensive.

Working with the Director of Planning, Research and Assessment, Geography Professor Valerie Kier completed a quantitative analysis of the learning outcomes of students enrolled in social science courses by the students' placement in the various levels of developmental English. After presenting her research to the division and careful consideration and much discussion by faculty, faculty in the Social Science Department, which includes history, economics, geography and political science, made the decision to begin placing an English prerequisite on introductory-level courses. Thus, beginning in the fall of 2006, those students at the lowest level of English proficiency (English 43) were unable to enroll in courses offered by the Social Science Department.

In the Engineering, Science and Technology Department, faculty use outcome assessment folders. For each course, instructors would keep a folder that would include the syllabus and related course information as well as examinations, projects/laboratory work, and copies of any student work representing the lowest, average, and highest grade on each component in which the instructor assesses student performance. Further, the department is moving toward the requirement that each course have a "design component." This design component would serve as an assessment of the knowledge they gained by demonstrating to the instructor that they can apply this knowledge in an unstructured and real-world engineering and/or technology application. For example, as a final semester project, students might be asked to "Design a computer program that could be used in a rental car business that rents vans and compact cars."

College-wide Assessment Activities

In addition to the assessment activities in programs and departments/disciplines, the College is currently engaged in several major activities directly tied to student outcomes. The first major change is aimed directly at ensuring a more systematic and centralized assessment of student outcomes. The College has implemented changes in the review of departments/disciplines and programs. First, in September 2005, the Dean of Academic Affairs presented new program and discipline review instruments. The new instruments were initially reviewed by the College's Academic Standards Committee and were subsequently communicated to the faculty through meetings organized by the Dean of Academic Affairs in February 2006. As communicated by the Dean, one of the main shifts was to move from a "once every five years" review to an ongoing process tied to current and future actions and strategic planning. This method of review has been instrumental in triggering a systemwide change in the review process at all Connecticut Community Colleges.

One of the most significant revisions in the new review instruments is the inclusion of learning outcomes as a specific standard of review. In the new instrument, programs and disciplines are required to report on the process or method of learning outcomes assessment and to provide examples of student work as indications of assessment outcomes. Each program and department is then asked to explain how the process to ensure that learning outcomes are updated and to ensure that all faculty, including part-time faculty, are appropriately using these outcomes.

Because the new evaluation instrument was just implemented, at this time there have been no departments or programs that have completed an evaluation under the new instrument. However, there are currently departments and disciplines (e.g., Biology, Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology) that have begun organizing discipline reviews and will complete them in the next academic year.

A second advancement concerns the role of developmental education and retention and is related to actions from various parts of the College related to this subject (e.g., Struggling Students Project, Social Science prerequisite research, etc). In response to these concerns, President Daube established the Task Force on Developmental Education. Chaired by the Dean of Academic Affairs and comprised of faculty and staff in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, the Task Force began meeting in the spring of 2006. The charge of the Task Force is to examine the College's current developmental education strategy and program, to forge a consensus on issues surrounding developmental education on campus, to develop proposals for pilot projects and changes in developmental education and to implement initiatives. While task force members have covered a broad range of topics surrounding developmental education, one of the key factors recognized by the committee and others on campus is student engagement. The task force will report to the College community late in the Spring 2007 semester.

MCC has also moved to broaden the scope of measured learning outcomes. The College uses the Community College Survey on Student Engagement (CCSSE) to measure faculty and student perceptions of engagement at MCC. Because of the known correlation between student engagement and learning, CCSSE has the potential to greatly enhance student outcome assessment. Collected in the spring 2004 and spring 2006 semesters, CCSSE provides an instrument within which the College can measure overall student engagement. Further it allows MCC to compare student engagement against institutional and national benchmarks in five key areas of engagement. It can also be employed to measure the College's progress over successive years. The Director of Planning, Research and Assessment has presented the CCSSE results to varying planning and organizational units across campus. Similarly, as part of the sociology department's emphasis on student engagement and service learning, both full-time faculty members began collecting student outcome surveys measuring student engagement in the community.

Appraisal/Projection

While there were areas of concerns (addressed below), the College has made significant strides in student outcome assessment. The new program and discipline review instrument should work to institutionalize and standardize outcome assessment throughout the College. Further, student outcomes has become a key organizing principle and concern at the College, with multiple committees, initiatives, and a task force working on student outcome concerns.

The College is addressing the challenge of initiating and maintaining faculty agreement on how to assess learning outcomes. While faculty collectively agreed on the outcomes to be measured, there are still minor differences of opinion among faculty relating to how to best measure those outcomes across a wide range of courses, teaching styles, and assignments, without restricting academic freedom. One of the administrative goals of the new discipline review instrument is to ensure that faculty develop agreement of assessment methodology within each discipline and program and that assessment occurs across all teaching faculty (tenure-track and adjunct). Thus, as programs and disciplines conduct their reviews under the new instrument, faculty will need to spend considerable time developing consensus on the methodology they will use to assess outcomes.

The College is also examining the administrative tasks of ensuring assessment outcomes for adjunct faculty. Each department chair or program coordinator is responsible for evaluating adjunct faculty and for ensuring that they follow MCC academic standards and guidelines (including learning outcomes). In most cases, this includes the chair or coordinator conducting a face-to-face meeting with the adjunct, wherein they review the adjunct's syllabus and provide written handouts of course objectives and outcomes, policies, etc. However, outside of a few departments (e.g., English), full-time faculty rarely mentioned adjuncts in their discussions of developing assessment methodology. Department chairs and program coordinators currently evaluate adjuncts on their

teaching performance. The College is examining ways to develop a more comprehensive evaluation of part-time faculty that will include learning outcomes.

Part II: Narrative

Standard One
Mission and Purposes

The institution's mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education, consistent with its charter or other operating authority, and implemented in a manner that complies with the Standards of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The institution's mission gives direction to its activities and provides a basis for the assessment and enhancement of the institution's effectiveness.

Manchester Community College assesses its mission statement on an ongoing basis as part of its strategic planning process. The College is aware of the need to continually re-evaluate both the mission in regard to the strategic plan, and the strategic plan in regard to the mission statement. This results in a continual realignment of College goals that tends to be a gradual, reflective process rather than a sweeping change. It is almost certain that the MCC 2020 project will lead to a re-examination of the mission statement.

Planned Initiative:

As we approach the next strategic planning cycle, an area that will be discussed in relation to the College mission is Great Path Academy (GPA), the magnet high school housed on the MCC campus. Although GPA is an independent institution with its own mission, administration and faculty, it makes significant use of College facilities and personnel. The Strategic Planning Council will address whether GPA initiatives are already clearly defined by our mission, and if not, further discussion of both the initiatives and the mission will ensue.

Standard Two
Planning and Evaluation

The institution undertakes planning and evaluation appropriate to its needs to accomplish and improve the achievement of its mission and purposes. It identifies its planning and evaluation priorities and pursues them effectively.

At the time of MCC's last NEASC review, the College had been without the services of an institutional researcher for approximately 18 months. During this hiatus, the title of the position was changed from Director of Institutional Research to Director of Planning, Research, and Assessment to reflect the College's commitment to tying planning and outcomes assessment to research. The search process focused on finding a candidate who could help the College make great strides forward in the area of data-based decision-making.

The current Director of Planning, Research, and Assessment, a full-time, 12-month position had just joined the professional staff at the time of the team visit. His presence has made it possible for the College to adopt a data-driven decision making process and to make use of research in developing a strategic plan. For example, the College was able to add nine new faculty positions in one year based on research related to enrollments, the percentage of courses taught by adjuncts in each area compared to the College as a whole and changes in enrollment trends. In addition, planning for Developmental Task Force initiatives (see Standard Four) is largely informed by tracking data on student success outcomes generated by the Director of Planning, Research, and Assessment. For more information on how MCC meets Standard Two and the College's strategic planning process, please refer to pages 11-12, "Strategic Planning at MCC."

Standard Three
Organization and Governance

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The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity. Through its organizational design and governance structure, the institution creates and sustains an environment that encourages teaching, learning, service, scholarship, and where appropriate research and creative activity. It assures provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organizational component.

MCC creates and sustains a first-rate environment for higher education through careful nurturance of its system of governance and organizational design. In particular, the College encourages cooperative ventures that seek to allow the interchange of information and ideas among hierarchical levels of faculty, staff and administration, and to break down barriers among the College's five organizational divisions: Academic Affairs, Administrative Affairs, Continuing Education, Institutional Development and Student Affairs.

New Initiatives: Governance

MCC has just completed a four-year process of reviewing its Governance Document. The initial review was undertaken by a large committee with representation from the student body and all of the College's organizational divisions. The committee solicited input on the existing Governance Document, presented suggested revisions to the Campus in college-wide venues such as Professional Development forums, then solicited additional feedback in an ongoing cycle until consensus on many items, such as the size and make up (in terms of divisional and student representation) of the College Senate and the Faculty Senate, as well as other Governance committees, was reached. The revised Governance Document was ratified by all constituent bodies and officially approved by the President in Spring 2007, and the new Governance Document will take effect in Fall 2007.

New Initiatives: Organizational Design

MCC has instituted a restructuring of the organizational design over the past two academic years. Prior to the restructuring, MCC had six organizational divisions rather than five. The sixth division was the Information Resources and Technology Division. This was a relatively new division, created by the College in 1997 when a number of retirements made the reassignment of positions possible. At the time, the College was anticipating the completion of its Master Plan for two new buildings. The concentration of so much new technology in the new buildings created a need for leadership in facilitating not only the buying, installation and maintenance of the equipment, but also the training and nurturing of faculty to make sure that the technology was fully utilized. Realizing this need, the College created the position of Dean of Informational Resources and Technology. The dean was given authority for two departments formerly housed in the Academic Affairs Division, the Library and the Educational Resources and Distance Learning Department; and for the Information Technology Department, formerly part of the Administrative Affairs Division.

By 2004 the College was fully occupying the new buildings and the technology had been fully integrated into the day-to-day operations of the faculty and staff of the College. Furthermore, personnel issues began to point out some inefficiencies in the organizational design of the sixth division, which effectively was in service to the other divisions of the College. As a result, the College began a reorganization of departments within divisions, which eventually led to the dissolution of the Informational Resources and Technology Division and the absorption of its departments back into the five original divisions.

The reorganization began with the responsibility for web page design transferring from the Information Technology Department to the Institutional Development Division, which has

responsibility for all College marketing and public relations. The restructuring was based on acknowledging the purpose of the web page—to provide information to the public, which is part of the mission of the Institutional Resources and Development Division, rather than focusing on how that dissemination is carried out through technology.

The same focus on missions and purpose of individual departments led to further restructuring. The Information Technology Department, which is vital to the smooth running of all departments on campus, rejoined the Administrative Affairs Division. The Library and the Educational Resources and Distance Learning department moved back into the Academic Affairs Division to emphasize the educational missions of those departments rather than the delivery system (technology) for those missions. In addition, MCC anticipates an expanded role for the Library in developing and delivering new general education curricula in diversity and information literacy (see Standard Four), further supporting the reorganization. Finally, to assist the Dean of Academic Affairs in the administration of the expanded division, a new position, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, was created and filled in spring 2006.

Standard Four
The Academic Program

The institution's academic programs are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes. The institution works systematically and effectively to plan, provide, oversee, evaluate, improve, and assure the academic quality and integrity of its academic programs and the credits and degrees awarded. The institution develops the systematic means to understand how and what students are learning and to use the evidence obtained to improve the academic program.

Manchester Community College is well regarded for the quality and integrity of its academic offerings, programs and degrees. The College enjoys articulation agreements with many baccalaureate-granting institutions and participates in Guaranteed Admission Programs with the University of Connecticut (UConn) and the Connecticut State University (CSU) system.

The College has made the development of a systematic means of assessing student outcomes, particularly as a means of evaluating and improving the academic program, a priority. Much of this work is undertaken through a new program and discipline review process that focuses the attention of the faculty on relevant data, learning outcomes and strategically planning for program improvements. For more information on this initiative, please see Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis: Learning Outcomes at MCC (pages 13-20) for a discussion of MCC's progress in and planned initiatives for developing systematized outcomes assessments.

New Initiatives: Developmental Learners

Earlier this year MCC created the Developmental Task Force to investigate the needs of students who test into pre-college level math and English courses and to develop strategies for better meeting the needs of these students. The Task Force has completed a study of existing academic programs, faculty training and initiatives, support services and bridge programs and has developed the following goals for this academic year:

- to trigger campus conversations about developmental education

- to audit what we are currently doing for underprepared students

- to make recommendations to the college

- to identify best practices

- to trigger pilots for innovative ideas or programs for underprepared students

New Initiatives: Increasing Online Learning Opportunities

MCC provides an online teaching platform through WebCT Vista that many faculty use to enhance their classroom materials and pedagogy and to increase their interactions with students outside of the classroom. In addition, MCC currently offers 16 courses online. Although no degree programs are offered entirely online, it is possible for a student to earn 33 credits, or 50 percent of the credits required for a degree, online.

New Initiatives: Great Path Academy (GPA)

Since 2003, MCC has been host to Great Path Academy (GPA), a magnet middle college high school. The collaborations between the faculty of GPA and MCC have increased our understanding of the academic preparation provided by secondary schools. GPA is state funded as a magnet school to decrease racial and economic isolation. The high school was conceived to attract students from nontraditional (racial and economic) environments to college and to provide an avenue for dropout prevention. Students are chosen to attend through application lotteries held in nine cities and towns, including Hartford.

GPA has been the recipient of a $780,000 federal grant that is part of the Tech Prep Demonstration Project. This project, in part, has expanded the shared curriculum between GPA and

MCC. Together, MCC and GPA are developing a model project for smoothly articulated curricula and for preparing secondary students for the transition to college.

A building project is underway on campus to provide additional facilities for GPA. Ground breaking is projected to occur in 2007, and the new building will be occupied in the Fall of 2008.

New Initiatives: STRONG-CT

MCC is a leading participant in the Science and Technology Reaching Out to New Generations in Connecticut (STRONG-CT) program, a collaboration among MCC, the University of Connecticut (UConn), Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) and Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC). This 4-year project, funded by the National Science Foundation, was implemented in fall 2005. The mission of the program is to increase the diversity in the science field by targeting first generation and historically underrepresented student populations and helping those students achieve academic success.

Students accepted into the program are identified as STRONG-CT Scholars and are required to participate in a series of events and programs aimed at providing academic support for the core math and science classes. STRONG-CT Scholars also participate in leadership development and community outreach projects. They are paired with mentors will provide the scholars with opportunities to explore different career options in the life sciences.

Upon graduating with their Associate Degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences, STRONG-CT Scholars transfer to UConn to pursue one of thirteen bachelor degree programs in the life sciences under the STRONG-CT Alliance at UConn.

Planned Initiatives: General Education Requirements

MCC is responding to recent changes in General Education Requirements made by NEASC and the State of Connecticut Department of Higher Education. In addition to reviewing and

evaluating existing general education offerings, MCC anticipates establishing requirements in information literacy and diversity. The reorganization of the Academic Affairs Division to include the Library is part of the College's preparation for this initiative.

**Standard Five
Faculty**

The institution develops a faculty that is suited to the fulfillment of the institution's mission. Faculty qualifications, numbers, and performance are sufficient to accomplish the institution's mission and purposes. Faculty competently offer the institution's academic programs and fulfill those tasks appropriately assigned them.

The College continues to pride itself on the accomplishments and dedication of its faculty members. In addition to their teaching duties, all full-time faculty members are required by contract to contribute the equivalent of a fifth course to activities that help the College to fulfill its mission. These contributions cover a great range of activities and services, including special programs and events, outreach and retention activities, support services, and committee work for an array of special task forces and administrative and governance-related committees, to name just a few. When positions are vacated or new positions become available, candidates are recruited nationally and applicants are screened and interviewed through a very thorough search process. New faculty members are matched with senior faculty mentors and take part in a year-long orientation program.

Overall, 45 percent of the sections offered at MCC are covered by full-time faculty as part of their regular workload; however, the College is committed to meeting the Community College System goal of at least fifty percent coverage by full-time faculty. To this end, the Director of Planning, Research, and Assessment tracks the percentage of classes taught by full-time faculty for various course groupings within the College. The range of coverage varies quite a bit, from an average of 32 percent coverage by full-timers to 81 percent coverage by full-timers. These data are used for determining which areas are most in need of additional full-time faculty when funding for positions becomes available.

New Initiative: Orientation and Mentoring Programs for Adjunct Faculty

Just as it strives to ensure that its full-time faculty members are the best qualified applicants, the College works hard to make sure that adjunct faculty are not only fully qualified to teach the classes to which they are assigned, but are also fully familiar with the College and its mission and purposes. Each semester the College offers orientation sessions for part-time faculty to familiarize them with the College and its mission, and has created mentoring programs that pair part-time faculty members with full-time faculty members.

New Initiative: Increasing the Number of Full-time Faculty Positions

Over the last two years the College has been using data collection to aggressively lobby for additional full-time positions. This activity has resulted in the hiring of nine new faculty members, including two faculty positions specializing in developmental English education. These nine new positions represent a 10 percent increase in the number of full-time faculty.

New Initiative: Expansion of Professional Development Opportunities

The College encourages all staff to seek out and participate in professional development activities. In addition to providing a number of on-campus professional development activities each year, many designed and carried out by faculty and staff members themselves, the College encourages staff to travel to conferences and other professional development activities. Recently the College was able to increase the level of financial support available to faculty and staff to further encourage participation in professional development activities.

Standard Six
Students

Consistent with its mission, the institution defines the characteristics of the students it seeks to serve and provides an environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students. It recruits, admits, enrolls, and endeavors to ensure the success of its students, offering the resources and services that provide them the opportunity to achieve the goals of their program as specified in institutional publications. The institution's interactions with students and prospective students are characterized by integrity.

As an open-admission institution, MCC seeks to serve its student body by creating services, facilities, programs and opportunities that address a wide spectrum of interests and needs. In recent years, the College has seen a strong enrollment trend toward greater numbers of recent high school graduates who enroll as full-time students. This trend has created a need for more co-curricular activities on campus as well as placing more demand upon support services. The College has developed a number of ways to address these demands:

New Initiatives: Increasing Support Services

As discussed in Standard Four, the College has instituted the Developmental Task Force that is studying the current needs and use of services among students who are placed into the developmental sequence of courses. The Task Force will be making recommendations for improved support services during the upcoming year. However, the College has already taken steps to improve support services by providing additional funding for tutoring services and bridge programs for students making a transition from high school to college, and for students making a transition from the workforce and/or running a household to college.

New Initiatives: Increasing Co-Curricular Activities

In the past two years as the student population has shifted towards younger, full-time students, MCC has seen a great change in the number and types of activities that students want to participate in. The Student Affairs Division has responded to the changing demographics by increasing the opportunities for students to be involved on campus. In addition to the established athletic teams, the College offers physical recreation to students through its beautifully appointed fitness center. Students can use the equipment with a trainer or participate in classes that include a variety of forms of yoga, aerobic exercise from beginner to advanced levels, special interest classes such as cardio-kickboxing and weight training, and many others. Classes are offered Monday through Friday, from early morning to evening.

The College has also seen renewed interest in student clubs. While certain clubs and activities such as Phi Theta Kappa, the Student Senate and the student newspaper, have had a strong presence on campus for many years, new clubs are also making their voices heard. For example, the Manchester Political Union, a campus club, sponsored candidate visits during the 2006 campaign and hosted a multi-college student debate on the war on terrorism in 2007.

New Initiative: Creating Connections with Secondary Education

MCC is making advances in its services for students who interact with the College through its outreach to area high schools. Great Path Academy is the most significant of these efforts. The College is an integral part of the development of curricula at GPA, and the creation of fully articulated programs is one of the main goals of the collaboration.

The collaboration between GPA and MCC is the model for the College's interactions with other high schools in its service area. Tech-Prep is a long-standing program that facilitates interaction between MCC and high school faculty as they develop college curricula to be taught in

the high schools. In addition, MCC is embarking upon a Partnership in Teaching Program for its Tech-Prep partner schools. This program will bring College staff to the high schools to provide workshops aimed at closing the gap between high school aspirations and college expectations. The program, we hope, will encourage College and high school staff to engage in a dialogue that will ultimately result in greater collaboration between the institutions and more fluid transitions for all of our students.

Standard Seven
Library and Other Information Resources

The institution demonstrates sufficient and appropriate information resources and services and instructional and information technology and utilizes them to support the fulfillment of its mission.

The MCC Library continues to serve students, faculty, staff and the greater community with a collection of over 50,000 volumes, 500 periodicals, and large video and audio collections, all overseen by a professional library staff. In addition, the library houses an automated system that connects to over 30 public and academic libraries in the Greater Hartford area and 24 multi-library systems throughout the United States and offers access to thousands of full-text periodicals through a host of online databases.

New Initiatives: Changes in Library Reporting Lines

Please see Standard Three for information about the organizational restructuring that has moved the Library into the Academic Affairs Division.

Planned Initiatives: Involvement in General Education Requirements

The Library is very involved in the discussion of proposed changes to general education requirements to include standards in diversity and technology literacy. It is anticipated that the Library will play a key role in developing criteria and delivering pedagogy and support services to complement the academic program in these areas.

Standard Eight
Physical and Technological Resources

The institution has sufficient and appropriate physical and technological resources necessary for the achievement of its purposes. It manages and maintains these resources in a manner to sustain and enhance the realization of institutional purposes.

Since the last team visit, MCC has opened another new building and completely moved out of the "temporary" (used for 30 years) East Campus. With these accomplishments, the College can truly claim to be a state-of-the-art facility. The College's Learning Resource Center (LRC) and Arts, Sciences, and Technology (AST) Center provide leading edge educational spaces and include multimedia teacher stations, PC and Macintosh labs, a new library, a television studio, a 350-seat auditorium, science and allied health labs, a fine arts gallery and studios, and numerous study spaces. In planning for these new facilities, the College also budgeted for new positions in the areas of technology, maintenance, and security so that the new buildings will retain their "leading edge" well into the future.

The completion of the LRC and AST buildings are by no means the end of MCC's plans for growth and renewal. While the new buildings and equipment added substantially to the College's academic resources, and the new fitness center, auditorium and café provided much need resources for improving student life, it is still apparent that many of the facilities in the existing Lowe Building were becoming outdated. Consequently a number of capital and technological improvements are now underway or in the planning stages (see below for more information).

Students, faculty and staff were involved in the all stages of the planning and design for the two new buildings, and involving those who use the facilities in all phases of a building or renovation project has become the model at the College. Staff, faculty and students have been

involved as members of advisory committees not only for planned changes or additions to the physical campus, but also for planning for technological facilities and upgrades.

New Initiatives: Renovations to Registrar's and Admissions Offices

The College completed an upgrade of the Registrar's and Admissions area in 2006. The primary aim of the new design was to provide a much more visible presence for these services and to make them easier for students to find and to use. This was accomplished by the creation of curved glass walls that make a much more visible and inviting presence in the main lobby of the building. The new Admissions Office also includes a glass-walled conference room where prospective students can meet with staff without being cut off from the campus.

New Initiatives: Classroom Upgrades and Information System Upgrades

The new classrooms in the LRC and AST are equipped with multi-media teaching stations that allow faculty to make use of many teaching tools. The stations allow professors to project any information on their computer screens, whether from a software program, the Internet, DVD, CD-ROM or VHS tape. The stations also include a document camera and projector that can project not only textual material but also three-dimensional objects. MCC faculty quickly embraced the technology and wanted it to be available in all classrooms, not just the newest ones. As a result, the College has been upgrading all classrooms to include the new teaching technology. All classrooms will be fully equipped by the end of 2007.

In addition, the College has made a number of upgrades to its IT systems, including making wireless internet access available in a number of campus locations, upgrading the online teaching platforms from WebCT Classroom Edition to WebCT/Vista, and several upgrades of its server-based system.

New Initiatives: Culinary Arts Center Renovation

While the MCC Foodservice Management and Hotel-Tourism programs have the largest educational foodservice facilities in Connecticut, no substantial renovations to the facilities had been undertaken since the opening of the Lowe Building in 1984. A faculty/staff advisory committee recommended that, in particular, the dining room, needed to be upgraded. During the summer and fall of 2006, the existing dining room was reconfigured to better meet the needs of the program. In addition, a new entrance was designed for the dining room, once again creating a much more visible and inviting presence.

New Initiatives: Power Plant for the Lowe Building and Great Path Academy

The College received state funding to develop a new power plant on campus. This new plant, currently under construction, will not only replace outdated equipment now powering the Lowe Building, but will provide power for the Great Path Academy building when it is constructed, representing a very efficient use of state funds.

New Initiatives: Landscape Master Plan

MCC's landscape master plan is the first of its kind in Connecticut. The College hired a contractor to work with a committee of faculty and staff to produce a comprehensive analysis of the campus with recommendations for landscape improvements for twenty areas throughout the campus. The plan, which was completed in September 2006, suggests expanding on the College's environmentally friendly grounds management practices; creating welcoming outdoor spaces; adding trees, shrubs and other plantings; creating outdoor spaces for the display of art; and improving the overall aesthetic appeal of our surroundings.

Planned Initiatives: Great Path Academy

The new Great Path Academy facility will be attached to the east end of the existing Lowe Building via a two-story atrium and an indoor corridor. It will provide 19 classrooms in total, including an art studio and labs for graphic arts, biology, chemistry, culinary arts and foreign language. All classrooms will be equipped with the same teaching technology currently found in college classrooms. The projected cost of the 74,500 square-foot building is $30 million. Groundbreaking is projected to occur later this year.

Area of Concern: Center for Student Development Facilities

In the midst of the new buildings and the refurbishment and revitalization for many of the existing facilities, one area remains in need of new facilities: the Center for Student Development (CSD). The CSD houses many student support programs such as the College Learning Center (tutoring services), Services for Students with Disabilities, the Office of Transitional Programs, and Counseling and Academic Advising. While the CSD has benefited along with the rest of the College in terms of technological upgrades, it is located in an unrenovated section of the Lowe Building that is not easily located by students; students must actively seek the services rather than being exposed to them as part of their regular campus activities. As a result the services are under-utilized, and the "hidden" location of the offices also may seem to place a stigma on the services they offer, certainly not a perception the College wants to perpetrate to students. The CSD facility is an area of concern for the College and is currently being discussed by the Developmental Task Force (please see Standard Four above).

Standard Nine
Financial Resources

The institution's financial resources are sufficient to sustain the achievement of its educational objectives and to further institutional improvement now and in the foreseeable future. The institution demonstrates through verifiable internal and external factors its financial capacity to graduate its entering class. The institution administers its financial resources with integrity.

Manchester Community College continues to be a financially sound institution, albeit dependent on year-by-year legislative appropriations.

New Initiatives: Private Fundrasing

The role of private fundraising at the College, overseen by the Division of Institutional Development, continues to grow. Since December 31, 2002, the Manchester Community College Foundation's net assets have grown 135 percent. Last year, net assets grew 21 percent to $1,961,303. The MCC Foundation receives revenue from contributions (75%), from special events (16%) and from investments (9%). Scholarship and endowed funds are invested 62 percent in stocks, 32 percent in money market funds, and 6 percent in bonds. All MCC Foundation funds are held at Morgan Stanley. The Connecticut Investment Management Group, in Essex, holds the power of brokerage to trade these positions.

Standard Ten
Public Disclosure

In presenting itself to students, prospective students, and other members of the interested public, the institution provides information that is complete, accurate, accessible, clear and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions about the institution.

Manchester Community College continues to provide complete, accurate and abundant information to both its internal and external audiences. In addition to the many publications and cable-access television show described in the previous report to NEASC, the College maintains a website that has undergone a complete redesign since the last NEASC team visit.

New Initiatives: Web Master

Following the last NEASC team visit, the College re-evaluated its web presence and decided to upgrade its website to make it more attractive, more user-friendly and more informative. As part of the reorganization of the former Division of Information Resources and Technology (see Standard Three), responsibility for the web page was moved to the Division of Institutional Development, within the Marketing and Public Relations Department. A web master was hired to design the website and to create and manage web files for the College.

**Standard Eleven
Integrity**

The institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in all of its dealings with students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. Through its policies and practices, the institution endeavors to exemplify the values it articulates in its mission and related statements.

Since the last NEASC team visit, the State of Connecticut has enacted several new regulations for agency expenditures. These regulations are intended to ensure that no state funds are used inappropriately. While these new regulations have resulted in some new paper work for the College, they have had no substantive impact on day-to-day operations as the College has always maintained ethical practices and policies, as described in the last ten-year report to NEASC.

Part III

Plans

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MCC 2020: Sharing the Vision

Manchester Community College last completed a formal educational plan in 1992. That plan resulted in significant changes to the College, most evident in the physical space. In April 2006, President Daube asked 6 members of the College community, three deans, two faculty and one staff member, to attend AAC&U's June Institute, "Greater Expectations: Campus Leadership for Student Engagement, Inclusion and Achievement," in order to begin work on a new educational plan for the College. After the team's proposal was accepted, the team's members began the process of engaging the College community in May 2006, before the team left for Snow Bird, Utah. At that meeting, the team presented the proposal, both to inform the College and to get feedback. Attendance at the five-day institute in Utah led to a modification of the proposal to broaden its focus from its early concentration on improving student success for the most underprepared students. The team decided that in order to best help underprepared students, the institution had to look at itself and students as a whole. The team returned with the following vision statement:

> *MCC is a community of learners dedicated to continuous intentional renewal and responsive to our changing*
>
> *environment. We are committed to inclusive excellence, improving the quality of teaching and enhancing*
>
> *opportunities for engagement and learning for all our students. We have a shared vision of what constitutes a*
>
> *successful student, first in the sense of a student who is prepared to meet the challenges of being successful in*
>
> *his or her college studies and, second and ultimately, prepared to be successful in meeting his or her goals and*
>
> *in becoming a continuous learner. Each member of the community takes responsibility for contributing to*

students' success based upon this shared understanding. We take responsibility for understanding the assets students bring and the challenges that they may meet and for doing what we can to build on their strengths and to help them move beyond the challenges they face and to grow and thrive as students and human beings.

The vision can be broken down into two broad goals. The first is more focused on students, the second more focused on staff and faculty:

1. The College will develop a set of overall learning goals for students through full and open conversations based upon a consensus model. These goals will look at the whole student from the perspective of the total college experience, not only at the goals established within individual courses, disciplines and programs. These goals will serve as an overall guide – for the curriculum, for the co-curriculum, as well as for all the services that the College provides – and the College will develop specific outcomes and competencies based upon these learning goals. Ideally, these goals will anchor a shared sense of the prepared student (who is ready to meet the challenges of college level work) and the successful student (itself in need of careful and institution-specific definition). Everyone will have an understanding of these terms and will buy into them because everyone will have participated in the consensus-based conversations that develop the goals.

2. Each member of the College community will take responsibility for learning about the needs of the whole student, the nature of the institution as a whole and the "best practices" for providing students with the best opportunities for pursuing and achieving the agreed upon learning goals. Because of this shared sense of the prepared and the successful student, everyone will be able to target best practices to the needs and objectives for each student. Each will have a clear sense of what he or she contributes to student learning and success.

One corollary of this vision is shared leadership. To successfully engage shared leadership, everyone must be both a specialist and generalist. It does not mean that everyone is involved in every decision, but instead means that all decisions are based upon a common set of values and goals (those learning goals and definitions of the prepared and the successful student, for instance) that everyone had a voice in developing – those goals are reached through a campus wide process that aims at consensus. More decisions can be made at a local level, but at the same time those making those decisions are responsible to the institution, not just to their own disciplines or jobs. If members of the College are to ask for shared leadership, each needs to take some responsibility for this whole picture – and that means that there will be less competition and more cooperation and collaboration in ways that serve the best interests of students and learning based upon those very learning goals developed through the process of consensus.

Three key words that were introduced early in the process are *coherence, consensus* and *intentional*:

The process is committed to campus wide consensus.

The goal of this initiative is to improve coherence on campus, not only in terms of programs and services, but as well in terms of expectations for students, leading, ultimately, to more coherent experiences for students.

Decisions are intentionally based upon the consensus reached about these and other issues.

After a brief presentation at opening day workshops in August 2006, the College held a total of six conversations throughout the semester to discuss the action plan, a series of readings drawn mostly from the Greater Expectations Institute, and the future direction of the College. Those

conversations focused upon several topics, from campus culture and climate to the tensions felt between process and goal – some felt the need to assign and complete concrete tasks while others felt that the conversations themselves were an important part of the process. At the final meeting of the fall semester, people were asked to summarize the vision as they understood it. The responses combined with the general optimism that the process was worth pursuing and that it would move forward was encouraging. The next phase will continue the conversations, but begin to focus on the specific steps the College will take to advance the vision. As well, the process will continue to work to become increasingly more inclusive, expanding the number of people participating. As of the beginning of the Spring 2007 semester, approximately 75 are taking part in some way.

The Campus Action Plan can be found in the appendix.