

Progress Report: Strategic Planning

Glendale Community College

**Submitted to the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of
Colleges and Schools**

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Background

In March 2002, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (HLC-NCA) visited Glendale Community College (GCC) and conducted a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation. HLC-NCA awarded continued accreditation for the next 10 years, and identified as a challenge, the lack of a long-term strategic plan that linked facility master planning, institutional effectiveness, technology renewal, the future needs of GCC North, assessment, and budgeting. It further requested that the College submit a progress report on strategic planning by June 1, 2004.

One of the weaknesses identified during the HLC-NCA visit was the short-term nature of planning conducted by the College. The College's last Strategic Plan had not been updated since 1996, and the Maricopa County Community College District (Maricopa) was still in the process of developing strategic planning guidelines for the District as a whole. Compounding the problem further was the Maricopa practice of developing budgets on an annual basis.

In its accreditation Self Study, the College recognized the need to create a broader understanding of planning processes, simplify the budget process, strengthen ties to College and Maricopa strategic planning goals, link strategic planning to bond (capital or master) planning and improve on feedback processes. Work to correct weaknesses began in earnest following the HLC-NCA visit and incorporated the outcomes of planning activities in several areas closely related to strategic planning, specifically: the development of a College Master Plan, review of all occupational programs, development of a prioritized list of construction projects for GCC and GCC North in preparation for a proposed 2004 bond initiative, update of the College's Technology Plan, improving the campus climate, redesign of the budget development process, and further integration of academic assessment into the College culture. The following section of this document addresses these planning activities conducted by the College following the HLC-NCA accreditation visit, then describes improvements in strategic planning at the Maricopa and college levels, and concludes with a description of the College's latest Strategic plan and its linkage to internal and external planning processes

Glendale Community College Planning Activities – Post HLC-NCA Accreditation Visit

Development of the GCC Master Plan: In January 2002, Glendale Community College contracted DWL Architects + Planners, Inc. to develop a master plan for the College that would reorganize the College to best meet continuing growth and educational needs of the community. DWL developed the GCC Master Plan 2003-2023 based on an assessment of current facilities and through a series of listening sessions that surveyed future needs from many constituency groups. The plan was completed in April 2003 and represents the collective thinking of faculty, staff, students, and community members. When realized, the GCC Master Plan will provide 300,000 square feet of new space and renovate and reconfigure much of the remaining campus. It contains a mix of remodel, renovation and new

construction projects, addresses access and identity issues, and improves existing infrastructure. Unique to this plan is a concept defined by architects and planners as “re-densification.” Re-densification includes reorganizing the College into a cohesive system of academic, student service and administrative clusters, and the construction of multi-level structures to overcome the challenges of a fixed size site. The GCC Master Plan reflects a vision that supports service area growth and the academic and career-technical education needs of the North and West Valley for the next 20 years.

Review of Occupational Programs: During the Spring and Fall semesters 2002, Glendale Community College conducted a review of all occupational (now termed career-technical) programs. Seventy-three degree and certificate programs in a wide range of career and technical fields were examined. Each review was conducted by a department committee and reviewed by the Sr. Associate Dean of Instruction. The process included a review of the purpose of the program, how the program met College and District goals, courses included in each program, advisory committee/instructional council and articulation task force initiatives, enrollment data for the latest three years, core course retention rates for the latest five years, transfer data (to a four year institution) for the latest five years, and total number of students completing the program for a 10 year period. The review process also assessed how well program resources (faculty, adjunct faculty, staff, equipment, and facilities) were utilized, what business/industry/community partnerships existed, how they could be strengthened, analysis of risk assessment, and concluded with a SWOT analysis and recommendations. This review of occupational programs was completed in December 2002 and will be repeated every three years. The [Program Review process](#) provided invaluable data and information for developing the College’s Master Plan and prioritizing capital projects for an anticipated 2004 Bond Campaign.

Development of Prioritized Project Lists for GCC and GCC North: On April 29, 2003, Glendale Community College presented its Master Plan to the District-wide Capital Planning Advisory Committee, as part of a process to prepare for a possible Maricopa 2004 Bond Campaign and to develop a funding allocation formula for the Maricopa community colleges, skill centers and satellite sites. Following this presentation the College was requested to develop a list of [prioritized projects for both the GCC main campus and GCC North](#). A two-day retreat was held in June to discuss the GCC Master Plan and prioritize projects from the plan for construction between 2004 and 2014. The retreat included key administrators and faculty and provided the College and excellent opportunity to synthesize activities central to master and strategic planning. As part of the process, participants received presentations on, and considered: enrollment trends for all courses and programs, a summary of Program Review outcomes, condition report of all major facilities, projected major maintenance requirements, specialized program needs (e.g., automotive, biotechnology, nursing), future [technology requirements](#), and the projected operational resource requirements and costs following renovation or construction. A draft list of projects was prepared in July, presented to the faculty and staff at the August All Employee Convocation Program, and finalized in September 2003. The list prioritized and sequenced construction and renovation activities to address critical needs first, maintain “leading edge” technology throughout, maximize the efficient use of classrooms and labs, minimize construction disruption, and accomplish as much of Phase I of the [GCC Master Plan 2003-2023](#) as resources allowed. A

separate list of prioritized projects was prepared for the GCC North campus, though a master plan was not developed for this site due to an initial lack of funds. An official master plan for GCC North is anticipated to be completed in 2004.

Climate Survey and Listening Sessions: Another of the HLC-NCA challenges, and a strategic goal for Glendale Community College, is the promotion of a culture of opportunity and a climate of respect. At the recommendation of the HLC-NCA, the College conducted a climate survey in 2001-2002. The results of this study identified six areas of concern, which became the agenda for multiple listening sessions with nine employee-constituent groups. [Listening sessions](#) were facilitated by the President and results compiled by a respected, retired faculty member.

From these sessions, the College developed action plans to improve and monitor climate and communications processes. Numerous initiatives have resulted to improve both areas, to include: distribution of a biweekly President's Newsletter (in email and print format), conduct of several campus conversations (town halls) facilitated by the President, improved employee orientations and training, development of [adjunct faculty](#) orientations and supporting web site, revised recruiting and hiring practices, regular [construction and maintenance updates](#), and the development of a simplified budget development process.

Revision of the College Budget Process to Address Strategic Considerations: In preparation for the development of the Fiscal Year 2004-2005 budget, the College redesigned the process for submitting requests and allocating funds. Though the former process was very inclusive, and produced a substantial planning and budget database, it suffered several weaknesses:

- The budgeting process was annual, with undefined multi-year resources. This limited real strategic planning.
- The budgeting process, which included strategic goals, was viewed as overly complex and cumbersome. Department Chairs and managers often mixed operational and strategic issues with budget requests. All requests were evaluated by a specific subcommittee (e.g., instructional, student services, college-wide), each comprised of employee representatives from all of the College's employee groups. The evaluation process used a "need/plan" formula to prioritize budget requests. Though the process was objective and highly inclusive, the amount of input (narrative and data) required, and the reprioritization of department requests by "non-experts" on committees, ultimately disillusioned many of the stakeholders.
- Following final budget decisions, insufficient feedback was provided to the College.

During the spring and summer of 2003, the President led a team of faculty and staff to streamline the budget process. While the committee structure remained intact, the membership of the Instruction, Student Services and College-wide subcommittees was changed and the Budget Development Committee (BDC) was replaced with the President's Budget Advisory Committee (PBAC).

The College continued to use the Planning and Budgeting database designed by the College Research Services office (formerly known as the Institutional Effectiveness Office), but

developed a Multi-Year Planning component of the database for capturing department level strategic planning data, reducing confusion among department chairs and unit managers over strategic and operational requirements.

GCC's annual budget development process began with the College-wide dissemination of planning and budgeting information early in the Fall semester. Planning information was prepared by the Futures Committee and College Research Services, and included: environmental scanning data (e.g., [Futures Committee Executive Summary](#) – App. A), [enrollment management data](#), and [institutional effectiveness data](#). [Budget information](#) (e.g., estimated available funds and historical expenditure data) was prepared by College Business Services. A new component of the process was the [President's Budget Message](#), which provided an overview of strategic, educational and operational issues to be considered by all budgeting planners and budget committee members.

Budget decisions were prioritized by three planning area committees: Instruction, Student Services and Admin/Operations. These committees were comprised of experts in each area (e.g., Instruction was composed of six department chairpersons and the Dean of Instruction), and committees adjusted their procedures so that department/unit priorities were honored. Funding recommendations for computing resources were addressed by the Capital Review Subcommittee, construction and furniture requests by the Facilities Subcommittee, and faculty staffing by the Faculty Staffing Advisory Committee. Recommendations from these subcommittees were forwarded to the President's Budget Advisory Committee (PBAC). Each of the planning areas presented their funding recommendations to the PBAC as packages. This shifted the budget focus from competition among individual items, to coordinated groups of requests that satisfied the greatest needs. The PBAC then prioritized the budget for the President's review and approval.

Ultimately, only a fraction of the College's overall budget is available for allocation. Fixed and operational costs (e.g., salaries, benefits, utilities, etc.) consume a majority of the available funds. Yet the procedural changes were significant. The process was made less complex, decisions made at the department/unit level respected, and trust reinforced. All [budget decisions](#) were disseminated college-wide and posted on the College Research Services website

Though budgeting remains largely an annual process, several changes have allowed the College to begin to plan in a multi-year fashion. Hiring of new faculty is now programmed 18 months in advance, to leverage recruiting opportunities. The College also works closely with departments and units to plan phased acquisition of needed items (e.g., the purchase of one piano a year to expand Performing Arts music instruction programs and the timely replacement of equipment). The College continues to refine budget strategies to maximize the efficient use of resources, a strategic goal in its plan. The [Strategic Plan 2004-2007](#) will further the understanding of the budgeting process, providing department chairs and unit managers a clearer picture of the College's directions and priorities, so that they can tailor their plans to best serve students, the College and the community.

College-Wide to Course Level Assessment Activities: During the accreditation visit, the HLC-NCA team commented favorably on [College-wide assessment](#) activities, though it noted the need for greater participation in program and course level assessment and the expanded use of outcomes information to improve student learning. Since the HLC-NCA visit, the College has doubled the number of students assessed at the college-wide level, completed assessment models for almost all of its programs and engaged a majority of faculty in course level assessment. The College continues to work on improving assessment at all levels, to disseminate results to the faculty each year and to use emerging data in all planning and budget processes. It has developed an assessment budget under the Dean of Instruction and made utilizing assessment strategies to improve student learning a strategic goal in the College's plan.

Glendale Community College - Strategic Planning 1996 – 2002

The Interim Advisory Council and the Strategic Planning Committee developed the 1996 GCC Strategic Plan. This plan was implemented through 2001 under the direction of the College's Operational Planning Team (OPT), which consisted of College and community representatives. The OPT helped focus and direct annual planning efforts in support of broad strategic issues and goals.

In Spring 1997, department chairs, faculty representatives, unit managers, administrators and budget committee members met to discuss all organizational aspects related to planning and budgeting. This group examined the importance of incorporating results from student academic achievement and measures of institutional effectiveness, and affirmed the 1996 Strategic Plan.

In Fall 2001, an ad hoc working group of GCC faculty and staff explored how to improve upon the strategic planning process used in 1996. The revised process could be described as an "outside-in" approach. It employed listening sessions with stakeholders, examined the gap between stakeholder expectations and the College's capabilities, identified strategic goals and the implications of responses, and created action plans and internal monitoring processes. The process was closely linked to the annual budget process.

Maricopa Strategic Planning 2002 - 2004

Two committees at the District level coordinate strategic planning. The Strategic Planning Support Team (SPST) is comprised of representatives from the District and the colleges and focuses on strategic planning initiatives. SPST findings and recommendations are reported to the Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC), which serves to integrate strategic and other planning and budget initiatives across the District. The SPST and SPAC have achieved major successes with the support and leadership of the Chancellor's Executive Council (CEC) and the Governing Board. Significant among these is the publishing of the results of environmental scanning of data trends, the integration of emerging initiatives into an integrated core of six strategic directions for the District, and the development of a [Maricopa](#)

Strategic Planning Handbook. The first Strategic Planning Handbook – Fiscal Year 2002-2003 was published in June 2002 and has been updated and improved each year. Recognizing the tremendous variety in reports from the colleges, Maricopa standardized strategic planning reporting templates in the 2004-2005 handbook. Though standardized, these templates allow for the inclusion of the unique strategic goals and plan formats of the individual colleges, but link all of the colleges through the six strategic goals of Maricopa. This process allows for a better synthesis and exchange of information.

The development of a Strategic Planning Handbook and standardized report procedure for Maricopa was a crucial first step. Future initiatives will include: working toward aligning financial decisions and budget allocations with strategic initiatives and priorities, and to do so in a consistent, transparent way, and strengthening the linkages among planning, budgeting, and assessment.

The Strategic Planning Handbook – Fiscal Year 2004-2005 and strategic planning process will continue to evolve each year, with annual review and update of environmental trends as well as internal scanning of organizational initiatives, effectiveness and improvement. It will be a collaborative and integrated Maricopa-wide effort on behalf of the Maricopa district, with input needed from all groups.

Glendale Community College Strategic Planning 2002 - 2004

In addition to work on a series of planning-related initiatives, discussed earlier, the College also revised the strategic planning process. During the Spring semester 2002, the College formed a Futures Committee to investigate and improve on strategic planning. This multi-department faculty and staff committee considered the impact of external trends and public issues, and the strengths and weaknesses of each. Trends, issues, strengths and weaknesses, and their impact, became the focus for planning efforts. From the analyses of this information, the committee identified eight strategic goals, and selected two goals for immediate development of action plans.

The Futures Committee completed the planning process in Spring 2002. In Summer 2002, GCC received the official accreditation findings from the HLC-NCA consultant evaluators. Five challenges were identified, all requiring follow-up by the College. Shortly after, a District-wide Strategic Plan was distributed to the colleges, with the expectation that each college would respond to three of the six strategic directions by December 2002. Upon comparing HLC challenges and Maricopa strategic goals with the eight strategic goals identified by the Futures Committee, considerable overlap was noticed. This convergence was reviewed and three more goals were identified for development of action plans.

During the Fall semester Convocation 2002, the College discussed the Futures Committee strategic goals, HLC-NCA challenges, and Maricopa strategic goals with the faculty and staff. The President assigned champions to each of the five strategic goals, who worked with groups of faculty and staff to develop action plans. A Futures Plan (strategic plan) was published in January 2003 and actions plans were implemented.

With the development of the [Strategic Planning Handbook Fiscal Year 2004-2005](#), and standardized reporting templates, the College decided to revise both the charter of the Futures Committee and the [Futures Plan](#). The Strategic Plan revision effort was coordinated by the College's three deans. The College continued strategic planning efforts with the Futures Committee, but asked this group to augment the College Research Service's efforts on environmental scans. Simultaneously, the College conducted numerous planning sessions with department chairpersons, student services managers, and administrative services managers. Drafts of the new Strategic Plan were widely circulated to the faculty and staff. Action plans were updated at the same time. During the Spring semester 2004, the College completed a new Strategic Plan, one aligned with the Maricopa's six strategic goals. The plan includes 25 strategic goals, to be implemented and monitored by seven action plans over a three-year period. This new plan accommodates the move to standardize strategic planning across the District, and to further collaboration among Maricopa's ten colleges and two Skill Centers. The contents of the Strategic Plan and linkages to facilities master planning, program review, technology renewal and budget development are evident in the [Strategic Plan 2004-2007](#).

Glendale Community College Strategic Plan 2004-2007

The development of the current Strategic Plan at Glendale Community College has been an evolutionary process. The plan has remained dynamic, responding to parallel planning activities in master planning, bond planning, program review, budget development, while simultaneously responding to changes emanating from the District Office. At all stages, the College has attempted to involve all constituents, to provide sufficient time for discussion, feedback and validation, and to incorporate the unique culture of the campus and Maricopa. At Glendale Community College, process is as important as the product, and stakeholders must see themselves in the plan.

The attached Strategic Plan provides a comprehensive roadmap for the next three years, and contains the following elements:

- Supports the Maricopa and College vision, mission and values, and incorporates information from several long-term plans (e.g., [GCC Master Plan 2003-2023](#) and [Institutional Effectiveness Plan](#)). The plan responds to regional, state and local environmental forces and will be continually improved by other College plans and processes (Fig. 2, p. 4).
- Incorporates the results of environmental scans and other research conducted by the Maricopa Community Colleges District Office (national, regional and county-wide), College Research Services (service area-wide), the GCC Futures Committee, results of Program Review and College-wide, program and course level assessment activities (pp. 5-7, Appendix A, pp. 22-27 and Appendix K, pp. 71-73).
- Embraces the District's six strategic directions, expanding on each with 2-6 unique College strategic goals (Fig. 5, p. 8 and pp. 10-21).

- Implemented and monitored through seven action plans. A summary of action plan activities is provided for each strategic direction and further cross referenced to strategic goals, responsible College unit and time period (pp. 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, and 20). These action plans (Appendices B-H, pp. 28-66) bridge the strategic and operational levels of planning. Every department and unit can find itself in these action plans. The action plans are dynamic, allow the College to monitor outcomes by department/unit, by action plan, year, strategic goal and ultimately strategic direction.
- Links to the GCC Master Plan 2003-2023 and Prioritized Project Lists 2004-2014 for GCC and GCC North. The Master Plan and Prioritized Project List activities can be found in several strategic goals supporting the strategic direction: *Resources for Growth* (Fig. 5, p. 8 and p. 16-17). A *Link to Master Plan and Prioritized Projects Lists* is provided at Appendix I, pp. 67-69.
- Links to the College's Operating Budget and the budget process. Departments and units used multi-year planning guide and action plan input for developing requests for the 2004-2005 budget. A *Link Between Strategic Directions and the GCC Operating Budget 2004-2005* is provided at Appendix J, p. 70. Future budgets will benefit from the action plans, goals and directions articulated in the Strategic Plan 2004-2007.

Institutional Improvement

Strategic planning has undergone significant change since the 1996 Strategic Plan and the 2002 HLC-NCA Accreditation visit. Numerous planning, budget and review activities have been accomplished, and are reflected in the Strategic Plan 2004-2007. The plan will continue to evolve, responding to community growth and educational demands, to action plans maintained by the faculty and staff, assessment activities conducted annually, program review activities conducted every three years, and to the resource picture as it unfolds each year. Next year, Maricopa colleges will begin reporting outcomes as a part of the district-wide strategic planning process, adding a degree of accountability already found at the college level, especially in the monitoring of action reports by College units.

Much of what the College plans to accomplish depends upon a successful bond campaign in November 2004. A final decision to place a \$951 million initiative before the voters will not be made until June. Should Maricopa decide not to proceed with a November 2004 bond, or voters not support such an initiative, the College will adjust accordingly. Both the District and the College are exploring strategies for this eventuality.

Lastly, the College will continue to refine all of its plans and processes. Progressive organizations use strategic planning to adapt and grow. They, and their plans, evolve to fit the changing environment. The Strategic Plan 2004-2007 will be distributed to every department and unit. Copies will also be available in the John F. Prince Library and the College Research Services office, and on the College's web site. Glendale Community College will review the Strategic Plan each Fall. Results will be utilized to improve the annual budget process, adjust action plans, and improve other planning initiatives during the academic year.

E-Links Index

Adjunct Faculty:

www.gc.maricopa.edu/adjunct/

* Budget Information:

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/PlanningBudgeting/PlanningBudgeting.htm>

* Budget Outcomes-2004-2005:

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/PlanningBudgeting/BudgetInformation/FY0405Budget%20Decisions.htm>

* College-wide Assessment - Report to the Faculty:

www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/Assessment/SAA/SAA03/0203SAAResults.html

* Construction and Maintenance Updates:

http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/admin_services/index.cfm?date=Maintenance_and_Operations

Enrollment Management Data:

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/EnrollMgt/EnrollMgt.htm>

* Futures Committee Executive Summary:

www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/PlanningBudgeting/PlanningInformation/FuturesComExecSum.htm

* Institutional Effectiveness Indicators:

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/Assessment/IEIndicators/IEIndicators.htm>

* Institutional Effectiveness Plan:

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/Assessment/Assessment.htm>

* Listening Sessions:

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/Employees/Employees.htm>

Maricopa Strategic Planning:

www.maricopa.edu/stratplan/

Master Planning Updates:

http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/admin_services/index.cfm?date=Master_Planning_Updates

* President's Budget Message:

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/PlanningBudgeting/PresidentMessage/PresidentMessage.htm>

Prioritized Projects Lists for GCC and GCC North:

http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/admin_services/index.cfm?date=Master_Planning_Updates

* Program Review process:

www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/Assessment/Assessment.htm

* Strategic Plan 2004 - 2007:

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/PlanningBudgeting/PlanningInformation/StrategicPlan.pdf>

Technology Requirements / Plan:

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/ctc/>

* Asterisked reports are located on a secure part of the college's web server. All College employees have access to the secure server.