ECC’s Accreditation Reaffirmed by MSCHE

The College has received official notification from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) on March 7, and on April 2, we celebrated...together.

“Today is a celebration of you,” said Interim President Dr. Gale E. Gibson at the College-wide Middle States Celebration. “I would like to thank everyone who participated. We will continue to move to the next level.”

The official word from MSCHE ends for the College a more than two-year process toward reaffirmation of accreditation. It was a total College team effort, spearheaded by Interim President Gibson, who served as Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs for more than a year during the process, and Executive Dean of Institutional Assessment Susan Mulligan.

“I like Middle States,” added Dr. Gibson. “It’s like taking a test with a few simple questions: Are you doing what you say you are doing? If so, please provide the details. What were the challenges and obstacles and how did you overcome them?”

In April 2012, MSCHE found the College in compliance with Standard 7. In January 2013, the Middle States peer visit team reported they were recommending that the College be found in compliance with Standard 14.

“As we move forward, we will be in front sharing best practices happening on our campus,” said Calvin W. Souder, Esq., Chair, ECC Board of Trustees.

Throughout the process, ECC received numerous commendations from each visit team. MSCHE is requesting the College submit a progress report by October 1, 2014 and a periodic review by June 1, 2018.
Faculty looking for the latest technology for their classes attended the Technology Open House held March 26. Co-sponsored by the College’s Institutional Computing Advisory Council (ICAC) and Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC), the event attracted more than 50 full and part-time faculty and adjuncts.

"This event (another was held last year) is ideal for one stop shopping by our faculty," said ICAC Chairperson Ines Figueiras, a Mathematics instructor. Biology Instructor Lynn Wilson chairs the College’s PDAC.

Faculty perused each company’s wares set up in the 4th Level Multi-Purpose Room. The open house featured current and new technologies at both ECC and other colleges.

Participating publishing companies included Cengage, Hawkes Learning Systems, Macmillan, McGraw Hill, Norton and Pearson. Information was also available from the College’s Media Production & Technology, Faculty Assessment Center and Faculty Technology Resource Center.

The College is expected to have a new Learning Management System (LMS) in place for use by faculty by the end of the Spring 2013 semester for implementation in Fall 2013. The new system would replace the current Sakai LMS.

LMS is used by faculty to post online course content, grade books, assignments and class syllabi, all of which help in overall student assessment. It can even be the home for student messaging.

The information is being gathered and reviewed by the Institutional Computing Advisory Council (ICAC), under Mathematic Instructor Ines Figueiras, who is Chair. ICAC also received input from student representatives of ECC’s Honors Program, Phi Theta Kappa honor society and Student Government Association.

The current LMS has been considered underused by faculty, a situation which prompted the search for a new company for software that would be more user-friendly.

Ms. Figueiras said she anticipates the new LMS to foster more use in the College’s hybrid and distance learning classes, in addition to the traditional classes. Interim President Gale E. Gibson and Mohamed Seddiki, Executive Dean/CIO of Administrative & Learning Technologies are conducting a final review.

Since opening its doors in December of 2011, the Faculty Resource Center (FAC) in the 2nd Level Blue Area (Room 2176) has proven to be a popular destination for faculty, particularly adjuncts.

In the Fall 2012 semester, 1,300 student exams were processed in the FAC, and in the first eight weeks of Spring 2013, 2,500 exams were handled.

"One reason for the growth is that the Center now offers full-service for formatting exams, processing answer sheets, and analyzing data, all of which makes the process faster and easier for faculty," said Director of Academic Assessment Dr. Douglas Walcerz.

The student learning data collected by using Scantron machines from their course exams is an important component in ECC’s Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment. FAC provides specialized software, resources and operational support to faculty to assist in the SLO assessment efforts. The Center is particularly popular with adjuncts who are assisted with formatting and data analysis.

"All they have to do is write the assessment report, we do all the mechanics," said Dr. Walcerz.

Once the student exams are submitted for processing, the FAC team is able to complete its work within 24 hours, not including weekends or holidays.

In addition to Dr. Walcerz, the staff includes Assessment Specialist Ciara Quinnones and part-time assistant Wertley Dotson.