ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE
MIDDLE STATES 2011 SELF-STUDY
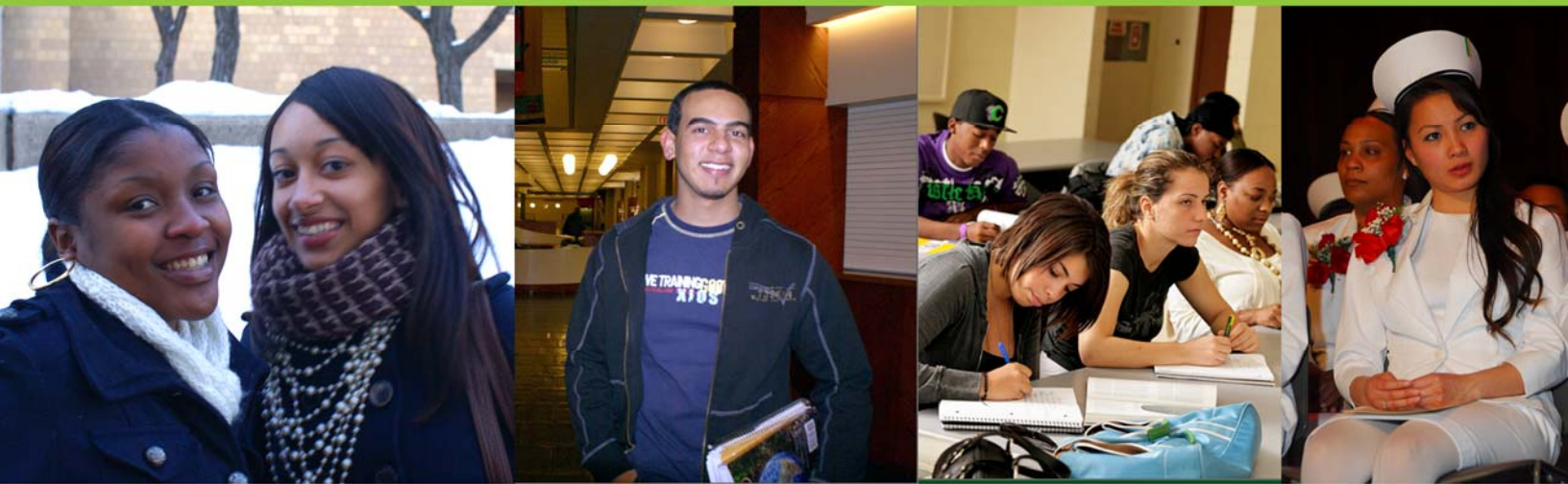
MISSION

Essex County College, an open access community college dedicated to academic excellence, serves the dynamic needs of diverse constituencies through comprehensive educational programs and services.

VALUE STATEMENTS

Essex County College reaffirms the following principles, values, and beliefs:

• **Teaching and Learning** : We affirm teaching and learning as our primary purpose. The College seeks to instill in students general and specialized knowledge, an ability to think critically, a commitment to civic responsibility, and an appreciation of complex, ethical, and scholarly traditions. We value academic freedom and support the open exchange of ideas and experiences.

• **Excellence and Accountability** : We believe in creating a learning environment that fosters high expectations for achievement. The College is committed to rigorous academic standards, faculty excellence, and responsive support services that enable students to reach their full potential. We provide excellent programs that utilize technology, demonstrate innovation, and undergo evaluation to ensure consistent and outstanding performance.

• **Community** : We support programs that enhance the economic and social development of Essex County. The College welcomes its role as a vital community resource and is dedicated to forging effective linkages with its many constituencies. We take pride in our outreach and continually strive to enhance life-long learning opportunities for personal and professional growth.

• **Diversity and Access** : We embrace the rich diversity of our student population and our employees. We recognize the historical, intellectual, and artistic contributions of all people, and promote an atmosphere in which distinct cultural viewpoints are accepted and encouraged. We believe all people should have access to affordable, quality higher education that will prepare them to succeed in an ever-changing world.

• **Legacy** : We honor our history and valued traditions. We also welcome progress and change. Building upon our past achievements, we eagerly embrace the future by pursuing innovations in teaching, administration, and student services.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

    This Self-Study by Essex County College (www.essex.edu) for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education represents two years of work for 80 faculty, staff, and students representing constituent groups and various organizational divisions (see Note 1 on p. vii). The College chose a comprehensive study to highlight changes in broad areas made since the 2006 Periodic Review Report. These changes include: (1) new executive leadership; (2) the integration of planning and budgeting; (3) the more effective and efficient use of resources; (4) the expansion of student support services; and (5) the accelerated development of assessment of student learning at the institutional, departmental, general education, and classroom levels.

    The Steering Committee began its activities in January 2009 by working weekly, then daily in selected instances, to study, discuss, reach consensus on, and complete the work of eight task forces. The tri-chairpersons worked daily during Fall 2010 to edit the document; the self-study was then further edited by Professor Enid Friedman, a senior member of the Division of Humanities (English).

    On April 1, 2010, the current President replaced the outgoing President. She immediately instituted a more data and assessment driven style of management; some of this emphasis is reflected in the Self-Study document. Indeed, the Self-Study process itself is complementary to current efforts to improve course and program goal setting, student learning outcomes, and institutional accountability.

Overview of Self-Study Findings

Mission, Planning, and Integrity (Standards 1 and 6)

    ECC's mission, values statement, and goals are integrated, recognized among employees, and consistent with College programs and services. The mission, the values statement, and the six goals included in the current *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* demonstrate a commitment to overall excellence, superior teaching, accountability, access, diversity, and assessment.

    With reference to integrity, the institution adheres to high ethical standards. Trustees and College employees are held to federal, State, and institutional standards of integrity. In order to explicitly conform to federal and State guidelines, the College's trustees unanimously adopted a new board policy regarding conflict of interest in September 2010.

    Student complaints, concerns, grade disputes, and academic integrity are addressed by longstanding and well-tested procedures. It is rare that such student issues are unresolved. Similarly, hiring, promotion, and dismissal practices are well-tested, being undertaken according to federal and State legislation, bargaining unit agreements, and Board of Trustee policies.

Planning, Resource Allocation, Institutional Renewal, and Institutional Resources (Standards 2 and 3)

    In Fall 2009, every full-time employee at the College had an opportunity to submit objectives for the period 2009-2012. Many substantive recommendations were made and incorporated into the Strategic Plan 2009-2012. It was thus hoped that all employees would develop a kind of planning literacy by virtue of their involvement and commitment.

Despite the fact that forecasting what State and County governments will provide from one year to the next is so much educated guesswork, ECC continues to demonstrate financial integrity in its annual audits.

The integration of planning and budgeting provides important direction from year-to-year. Careful planning has not only allowed the College to maintain the status quo, it has in fact helped the College to selectively renew itself. The dramatic increase in student tuition and fee income has helped the College to undertake many important projects, both operating and capital in nature.

Although the College had five consecutive years in which it had to dip into reserves to balance the budget, the College has run a sizable surplus the last two years; it is anticipated that it will accumulate further reserves during the current annual year. The primary reason for having to dip into reserves was multi-year buy-outs of senior retiring faculty.

In September 2010 Dr. Abdullah, the new President, intensified the planning and budgeting process. *The Strategic Plan 2009-2012* is now augmented by a new document, *Departmental Objectives Plan FY 2011,* which contains extremely detailed departmental objectives (developed in a bottom-up approach), which in turn drive budgeting. An analysis of the data indicates that ECC's planning process is directly tied to the attainment of objectives and budget priorities. In every instance each area head is expected to link budgeting to approved objectives. Persons working on the plan are also expected to link departmental objectives to Strategic Plan 2009-2012 institutional objectives and indicate activities/strategies, responsible administrators, a timetable, and measurable outcomes.

This is an intensive and time consuming task. However, compared to the previous planning and budgeting process, this approach enables the College to more effectively, efficiently, and fairly distribute scarce human, technical and physical resources. This approach has galvanized members of the President's Cabinet, who now see a more systematic approach at work. Despite fiscal challenges, this approach assures that ECC will both strengthen key initiatives and continue to grow as an organization.

Leadership, Governance, and Administration (Standards 4 and 5)

ECC's Board of Trustees is comprised of dedicated and experienced men and women who take their responsibilities very seriously. The Board chairperson has stated on numerous occasions that he values accountability and autonomy, and that he believes other members of the Board think and act similarly. The trustees work closely with the President on numerous governance issues; since the President is new it is an evolving relationship. Thus far it appears that the relationship is a sound one and that trust between the various parties is being established.

Faculty, senior administrators and staff have appropriate credentials and work experience to carry out their responsibilities. All parties administer the College's programs consistent with its mission and values. Implicit in all facets of institutional operations is the ideal of shared governance. The College has six standing councils which make recommendations to the Instructional Affairs Council and the President's Cabinet. The effectiveness of these councils has been continually demonstrated by virtue of the many recommendations it has forwarded to the administration to adopt.

Institutional Assessment and Assessment of Student Learning (Standards 7 and 14)

Essex County College has developed and implemented its *Institutional Assessment Plan* that reflects its mission and goals. Institutional assessment is ongoing and involves: (1) an annual review of the degree to which the College has met its strategic plan objectives; and (2) using surveys, participation

in IPEDS, and the State's Student Unit Record Enrollment (SURE) system. The College's program evaluation process has been recognized by the State as a best practice. Information gathered, both at the institution and program evaluation level, needs to be used more effectively to improve programs and procedures, modify goals and objectives as needed. A concerted effort is being made to create a broader based culture of assessment at Essex County College. The use of College-wide surveys such as the *Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)* and the *Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)* will help accomplish this goal.

Student learning assessment is maturing with training provided in order to sustain the assessment initiative. The College is committed to making assessment more relevant to all faculty members by developing a more structured culture of assessment. The College's executive leadership has endorsed the importance of assessment and strongly supports its Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Team (SLOAT). Efforts are continuing to be made to document that student assessment outcomes are used for improvement at the course, program, and institutional level.

Student Admissions, Retention, and Student Support Services (Standards 8 and 9)

The College's Enrollment Management Team (EMT), which has college-wide representation, is key to the institution's growth and welfare. The team's centerpiece is *Options Magazine*, which provides easy-to-understand information for prospective students. *Options* is sent to 300,000 residences throughout the County twice a year. The EMT not only helps to develop *Options*, it also works with Enrollment Services staff to visit high schools, college fairs, churches, and other venues throughout the County. The fruits of the College's endeavors in this respect are undeniable. In the last five years enrollment has increased by 27.6%, far outdistancing other community colleges in northern New Jersey.

Students can learn all about the College on its website. Information about admissions, financial aid, payment options, registration, curricula and other items can be found on-line.

A current thrust of Enrollment Services and the EMT is to increase the Hispanic population to 25%. In recent years, it has increased from 19% to 23%. Similarly, the emphasis on recruiting recent high school graduates has also been successful; in the last 10 years, students in the 17-22 age category have increased by 16%.

The Financial Aid Office communicates with students through the ECC web portal, e-mail, Twitter, and individual mailings. Award information is provided on the portal, giving students 24-hour access to their financial aid information.

Faculty (Standard 10)

The faculty of Essex County College have for the most part been at the College for many years. For Fall 2009, of 132 full-time faculty, 99 are tenured, 27 are on tenure track, and six are not on tenure track. In Fall 2009, full-time faculty taught 467 sections and adjunct faculty taught 1,431 sections.

Curriculum development begins with the College Curriculum Advisory Council, which is comprised of faculty and administrators from throughout the institution. When the CCAC approves a course or program proposal, it is forwarded to the chief academic officer, who, if he or she approves it, forwards it to the President for final action (new courses must be approved by the President, new programs by the Board).

Excellence in teaching is anticipated and both full-time and adjunct faculty are helped by evaluations and in-service training. Teaching workshops are offered during the day, evening and weekend.

Some faculty continue to have low morale after the College had the faculty contract "scoped" by the State's Administrative Office of the Courts in 2007. On the one hand, while the administration believed that prior administrations had ceded administrative authority over parts of the contract to the faculty, on the other hand some faculty believe that their prerogatives, duties and responsibilities were unjustly taken away. The reservations of some full-time faculty concerning the scoping of the contract were evident in the *Employee Attitude Survey*.

Educational Offerings and General Education (Standards 11 and 12)

ECC faculty are at the very heart of the institution in developing and delivering the curriculum. Even though some 30 faculty retired in recent years, there remains a large cadre of experienced faculty to carry on in the classroom and in governance bodies. Faculty hired at ECC have appropriate credentials and teaching experience. The College currently offers approximately 70 majors and 467 courses.

Students may take courses at various locations and in several formats throughout the County – during days, evenings, and on weekends – traditional class settings, online, and hybrid. To ensure the quality of every course and academic program, the College has established procedures for the ongoing assessment of programs and revising courses. All programs evaluated in a five-year cycle are judged on the extent to which they accomplish the College's mission. As a result of regular assessment and program evaluations, between Fall 2007 and Spring 2010, there were five program and approximately 90 course changes (revisions, additions, and course deactivations). In the past some program evaluations were academic exercises, performed every five years. For the good of programs and their students, in recent years a conscious effort to "close the feedback loop" has been undertaken to ensure that prescriptions and suggestions were followed.

In order to maintain program and course consistency, faculty at all sites and in all divisions follow the same course outlines. The course outlines list comprehensive, measurable course goals and objectives that are aligned with ECC's general education goals, as well as with the goals of the program. Although course outlines state precise goals and objectives, the process of collecting assessment data to determine the extent to which learning outcomes are achieved is an ongoing challenge.

In 2007, the State of New Jersey passed the *Lampitt Bill* guaranteeing the transfer of credits from community colleges to state four-year institutions. In order to standardize and facilitate the transfer of credits, New Jersey community colleges were asked to define general education categories and to determine which courses should transfer. The nine categories that were agreed upon were: (1) oral and written communication; (2) quantitative reasoning; (3) scientific knowledge; (4) technological competency; (5) society and human behavior; (6) aesthetic perspective; (7) historical perspective; (8) diversity and global perspective; and (9) ethics.

Faculty and administrators have worked with individual faculty to ensure that students met the student learning outcomes contained in course outlines and syllabi. Direct evidence of student learning is documented through such activities as tests, written reports, and course portfolios. Faculty are using rubrics far more frequently than ever before to determine how well students have mastered competencies such as writing effectively, understanding the scientific method, or thinking critically.

ECC students are taught that learning takes place best when they view general education courses not as discrete and unrelated, but rather as a coherent set of general education and program required

courses. The faculty perspective is also undergoing change to view how the class learned as a group, where they succeeded and failed. Such analysis is a primary way to upgrade teaching and learning within a given discipline.

Related Educational Activities (Standard 13)

Essex County College offers comprehensive programming to a diverse clientele. Over 90% of new students require remediation with the College providing special, intensive instruction for these students. Students in the College's ESL program also take course-work in basic English. This area has two tracks – one for more advanced students, the other one for more elementary students. Students requiring ESL training are normally placed into one of three English courses: English AFE 083; College Language Studies 085; or English Foundations 096. ESL students have their own language labs and various activities that promote fluency in English.

The West Essex branch campus, which enrolls about 4,000 credit and non-credit students annually, has students from all 21 Essex County municipalities. Degrees are offered, as well as remedial course-work in English, reading, and mathematics. Enrollment is increasing dramatically at West Essex. Fall 2007 to Fall 2008 enrollment increased by 12% and Fall 2008 to Fall 2009 enrollment increased 18%. West Essex graduates comprise about 10% of total graduates from one year to the next. Recently, its six-year graduation rate was 22.8%.

Each year about 20,000 students participate in Community and Continuing Education programs. These include, but are not limited to basic skills instruction, ESL instruction, job readiness instruction and placement, customized short-term training, computer literacy, and cultural and recreational activities.

The Essex County College Police Academy enrolls nearly 5,000 persons each year – police officers, security guards, and other law enforcement personnel. New and upgraded facilities at the Academy have made it much sought after for police and security training of all kinds.

The WISE Women's Center provides educational and other services to women and men from throughout the County. Programs include women's support groups, fathership workshops, employee clinics, construction career programs, and other programs geared toward making women and men self-sufficient. WISE also had the honor of hosting the Female Offender Re-entry Group Effort (FORGE) program, the first of its kind in the nation. The FORGE program offers re-entry programming for female offenders on parole.

Training Inc., the College's career training institute, enrolls unemployed and underemployed persons in short and intermediate training programs. Recent emphasis has been on computerized business office skills and allied health programs such as nurse aide, certified clinical medical assistant and medical technician.

For the past six years, ECC has worked with area school districts to enroll high school seniors in college courses. The program has helped to allay student fears of college and has given them an opportunity to enter college with credits. All credits earned by high school students are transferable to both State and private colleges and universities. During the AY 2008-2009, 727 students participated in the program by taking approximately 40 different courses. In AY 2009-2010, 73.9% of students passed their courses; efforts are currently underway to increase the passing rate.

ECC awards credit for experiential learning, internships, and clinical course work. To a lesser extent, it offers distance learning and hybrid courses. In Fall 2010, 18 sections of distance or hybrid courses were offered. In Spring 2011, this nearly doubled to 30 sections.

During FY 2009, 279 students participated in cooperative educational programs in areas consistent with their major programs of study. Students in degree programs can earn as many as eight credits, while students in college certificate programs can earn as many as four credits.

By majoring in Technical Studies, students can earn a college degree by transferring credits from corporate, industrial, or military training programs.

In summary, the 2011 Middle States Self-Study was an excellent opportunity to commemorate what ECC does well while charting a course to meet its challenges and opportunities.

NOTE 1: Please be aware that some of the Exhibits are hyperlinked and can be accessed from the list of Exhibits (see Appendix H) by clicking here. The Exhibits that are hyperlinked are in green. By clicking on the link, the document can be assessed.

INTRODUCTION

Since Essex County College opened its doors to the public 43 years ago, it has been dedicated to providing access, opportunity, and excellence in higher education. Founded in 1966, the College is governed by a twelve member Board of Trustees committed to carrying out the institution's mission and values.

In 1968, approximately 3,400 students began their studies at ECC in temporary quarters in downtown Newark. In 1976, the College moved to its current location in the University Heights District. Today, the main campus is comprised of a two block long megastructure, a gymnasium/child care center, the Center for Technology, a new Center for Health Sciences, and the Clara E. Dasher Student Center. The College also operates a thriving West Essex Campus in West Caldwell, the Essex County Police Academy in Cedar Grove, and extension centers throughout Essex County. The two largest extension centers, Ironbound and FOCUS, serve predominantly Spanish speaking populations.

In Fall 2009, Essex County College served 13,314 students in its credit programs, a 27.6% increase over the last five years. In AY 2009-2010, the unduplicated headcount of students in credit programs was 18,132, which includes Fall 2009, Spring 2010, a winter intersession, and two summer sessions (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Unduplicated Head Count Credit Enrollment, 2004-05 to 2009-10
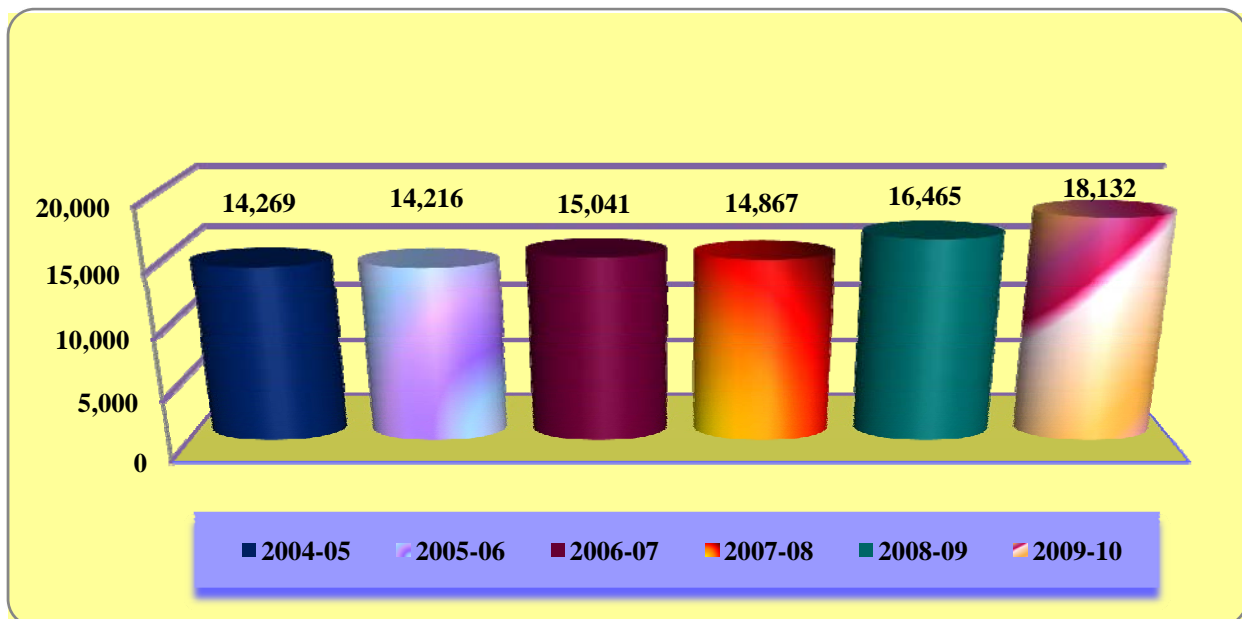
In addition to students in credit programs, nearly 20,000 students enroll each year in Continuing Education programs – satisfying a wide range of student needs, from basic literacy and ESL, to short-term career programs and corporate training programs. As an open admissions institution, ECC has established a learning environment that enables all students to develop their abilities and to enrich their personal and professional lives.

Essex County College has gained local and regional recognition for the quality of its programs by offering 467 credit courses in a wide range of transfer and credit programs. It offers 70 major areas of study in disciplines ranging from the liberal arts to early childhood education, nursing engineering, and

computer science. The College's largest programs are general science (pre-nursing and pre-allied health students are placed in this curriculum), liberal arts, criminal justice, education, business administration (A.S.), social sciences, and biology/pre-med.

Essex County College is one of only two community colleges nationally to have had five students named to the All-USA Community College Academic First Team in a four-year span. Between 2006 and 2008, three of ECC's top graduates earned prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Foundation scholarships, the nation's highest honor for community college students. Scholarship recipients subsequently enrolled at Georgia Tech, Cornell, and Stanford. ECC graduates transfer to highly respected institutions, including Rutgers, Amherst, Columbia, Cornell, Carnegie-Mellon, and Brown, to name just a few.

Essex County College is the most diverse college in New Jersey. As shown in Figure 2, African-Americans comprise over half the student body, Hispanics comprise 23.3%, with the remainder divided among whites, Asians, and unknowns. The College is 59.1% female, increasingly full-time (56%), and younger than ever before. Forty-nine percent (49%) of the student population is between the ages of 17 and 22; this represents a 61% increase from Fall 2004.

Figure 2: Fall 2009 Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity
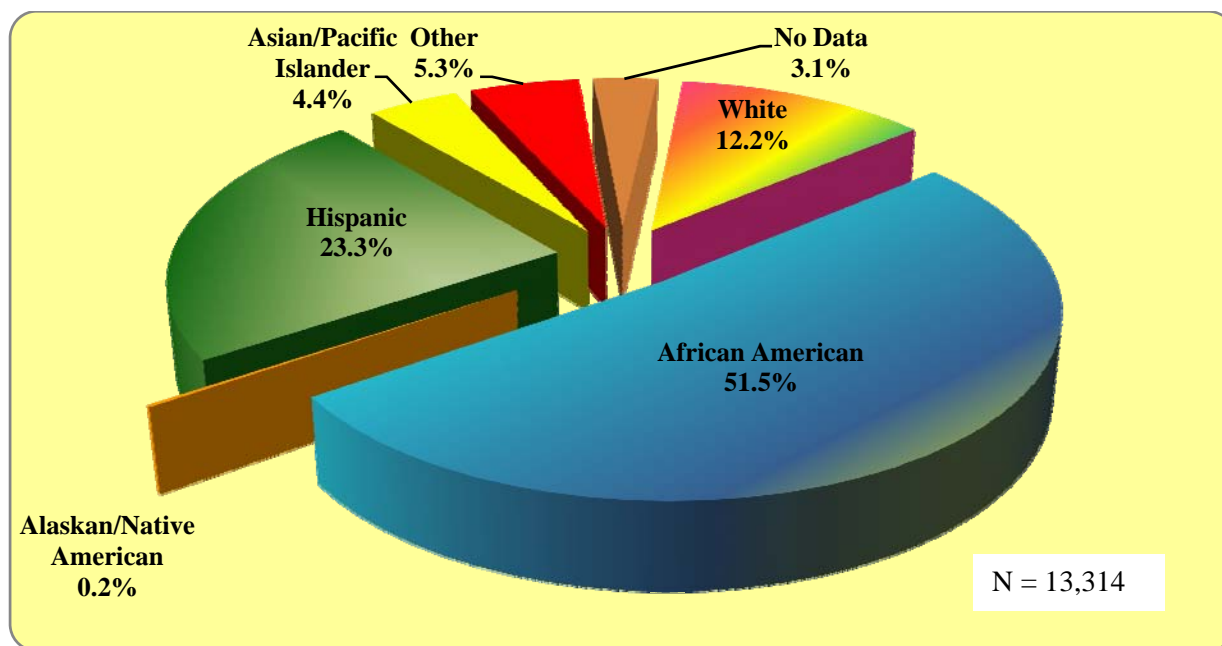
Essex County College is recognized for its programs to assist the educationally disadvantaged. Each year 90% of new students are required to take basic skills and transitional developmental courses to prepare them for the rigor of college-level programs. The College also has a sizable ESL department to help ease students into English language course-work.

The institution remains a leading contributor to the revitalization of the greater Newark area workforce through its Division of Community and Continuing Education. This area of college operations has especially distinguished itself through its programs for the unemployed and underemployed. These initiatives are extended to individuals who are referred by the City of Newark and Essex County workforce development programs in order to receive basic skills assessment, GED preparation, job counseling, and related services. The College is also a training center for the county's business

community. It routinely develops customized and short-term training programs in such areas as ESL, business management, statistical quality control, computer programming, and engineering technology.

Whether it is in credit or non-credit programs, assessment in its various forms has become part of how Essex County College functions. In the last 10 years, institutional assessment and program assessment have been refined, with ECC's program assessment process garnering praise in New Jersey as a best practice by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. During this same period, general education and classroom-based assessment have been developing, with the College now fully dedicated to assessment in these areas as well. Faculty and administrators alike now view assessment as an integrated, collaborative learning experience. Faculty using assessment know that students learn better when courses are not isolated learning experiences, but are integrated and coherent. Thus, through general education and subject-specific courses, students learn how learning fits together for greater understanding through use of student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels. For instructors, terms such as learning outcomes, assessment, institutional effectiveness, and accountability are not nightmarish words, rather concepts that help clarify and promote learning. As one faculty member said, "If I knew that assessment was a simple, four part process [establish learning outcomes, provide learning opportunities, assess student learning, and use the results], I would have used some such form of assessment years ago." Others realize they have used assessment techniques without knowing it. For example, some faculty who have used rubrics have been using a powerful form of assessment without knowing it is a mainstream assessment technique.

Self-Study Process

In November and December of 2008, the task forces were populated with volunteers. The first order of business was to develop the self-study design, which took place during the Spring 2009 semester. In July 2009, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education approved the self-study design; after that, conversation, debate, and writing began in earnest. First drafts were due in March 2010 and in April 2010, the steering committee prepared the first draft of the self-study. During Summer 2010, the second draft was written and submitted. This was followed by a third draft submitted in November 2010. The fourth and final draft was prepared in January 2011.

Essex County College's President and task force members consider this self-study to be part of an ongoing process to improve College services to students. The self-study's considerations and commitments will become part of the College's goals and objectives, guiding College personnel in their daily operations on behalf of the residents of Essex County.

The self-study is the product of nearly 80 individuals – trustees, faculty, administrators, professionals, students, and others who have worked diligently through task forces to look objectively at all aspects of college operations. Each task force was formed to address one or two Middle States standards, and countless hours were collectively dedicated to critically examine all aspects of institutional operations as related to the 14 standards described in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*. While assessing each standard, the task forces often found much that is commendable at ECC, but also found that there are various areas that require improvement. To commend one's own organization is easy; to be honest in pointing out concerns is not as easy, but necessary if improvement is to take place.

Additionally, through a comprehensive self-study, Steering Committee members acknowledged that during the past decade, the College has experienced significant changes in teaching and learning requirements, an evolution of evaluation and outcomes requirements, increases in the usage of technology, and constraints in resource availability. Some of these changes, such as the use of technology

and the improvement of assessment, have accelerated dramatically with the transition of the institution to a new President. The College's previous President of 29 years retired in March 2010, with Dr. Edythe M. Abdullah becoming President on April 1, 2010.

As the foregoing indicates, the College President, staff, faculty, the Self-Study Steering Committee and task force members are interested in more than reaffirmation. They are committed to making Essex County College a better and more responsive institution with improved instruction, outcomes, and services for the thousands of students who avail themselves of its programs every year. As a result, the College expects to: (1) Assess the extent to which ECC's mission and values are evident in its programs and operations; (2) Develop a document that reflects the input of all major stakeholders in evaluating the current and future direction of the College; (3) Develop a document that will be valuable for future planning, operations, and growth; (4) Evaluate assessment processes and findings that are essential for planning and resource allocation; (5) Identify data needs that are currently not being met; and (6) Develop recommendations to address challenges identified by the self-study process.

The Steering Committee provided overall direction for the self-study process. It developed the Self-Study design during Spring 2009, provided leadership for the various task forces, wrote all self-study chapters, approved the final self-study draft, and will help to organize the team visit (see Appendix A for a full listing of task force members). Each chapter underwent several draft stages, where, at each stage, task force members critiqued the text. These members were responsible for bringing draft chapters to the entire Steering Committee for final editing.

CHAPTER 1
STANDARDS 1 AND 6

Standard 1

Mission and Goals

The institution's mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates who the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are used to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.

Standard 6

Integrity

In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies its serves, the institution demonstrates adherences to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.

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STANDARD 1: MISSION AND GOALS

> **THE COLLEGE'S MISSION:** *Essex County College, an open access community college dedicated to academic excellence, serves the dynamic needs of diverse constituencies through comprehensive educational programs and services.*

OVERVIEW

Members of this subcommittee conducted interviews, examined written documents, evaluated the College website, and analyzed survey data to determine if ECC's mission and values were developed by a broad constituency and subsequently used to shape College policies and programs. The analysis determined that the College has a strong and coherent sense of identity, and that its mission and goals are intrinsic to its strategic planning and its day-to-day operation. This central ideal provides the cornerstone for an integrated planning process developing goals and objectives that actively involves the College community. It is also consistent with the overall belief of the board, administration, faculty, students and staff that the College's actions fully support its mission.

The mission statement is exhibited in a variety of venues. It is stated on the Essex County College website, and at the beginning of the *College Catalog* (Exhibit 1). It is displayed throughout the College, and is cited as the guiding planning principle in all key institutional documents, including: the *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 2); the *Academic Master Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 3); and the *Institutional Assessment Plan* (Exhibit 4).

Evolution of the Mission. The original "Philosophy of Purpose" was in effect from 1968 until 1985. In 1985, this mission was refined to more clearly articulate the College's goals and objectives. In 2001, the College responded to a suggestion from former President A. Zachary Yamba to develop a more abbreviated mission statement. As a result, the College developed a one sentence declaration of the mission accompanied by a separate value statement. The mission statement was subsequently updated, inserting the phrase "diverse constituencies" to reflect the varied demographics of the College population. In March 2002, the Board of Trustees approved this newly crafted Mission Statement and Statement of Values. In 2009, trustees expanded the 2002 statement to include the words "dedication to academic excellence*."*

Analysis and Findings

The institutional mission is clear to the faculty, staff, students, and the public. The Board of Trustees periodically reexamines and reaffirms the validity of the mission statement. Members of the College community unanimously acknowledge they are aware of the College mission. In fact, in the 2009 *Employee Attitude Survey* (Exhibit 5), "the goals of the College are generally known" ranked sixth (6 out of 52) in importance among the top 10 College strengths. Employees also believe the College's actions are congruent with its mission. In the same survey, "ECC lives up to its mission," ranked fifth (5 out of 52) among the top five strengths of the College. Similarly, in a 2009 self-evaluative survey, the Board of Trustee members indicated that "Trustees are familiar with the College's mission and the core values that guide academic programming and other aspects of College operations," ranking it 4.45 out of 5 (*Board of Trustee Survey,* Exhibit 6).

The College actively promotes open access. The College prides itself on being an open access community college. Standard 8 states that admissions and recruitment procedures actively encourage

applications from a diverse population. Also, the College's qualification for admission statement M encourages open access, stating that it admits any person who is at least 18 years of age or who has earned a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) certificate.

As explained in Standards 2 and 3, the College has enhanced its capacity to meet the needs of its students and community through more effective planning for campus expansion, renovation and resource allocation. Several improvements to the College's physical plant have been made. Using our mission-based objectives as a guide for planning, allocating strategic resources and budgeting, the College was able to direct resources appropriately despite fiscal constraints.

Essex County College is aware that an open access policy can be thwarted by the constraints of excessive tuition. The College has consistently worked to balance the increasing financial burden of its students with the growing budgetary constraints of the State and the County. The decreased funding has forced the College to increase its tuition, but raise tuition in relatively small yearly increments, thus avoiding more drastic intermittent increases that could be more harmful to students (see Table 1).

Table 1: Increase in Tuition, Per Year

	Fall 05	Fall 06	Fall 07	Fall 08	Fall 09
Total Tuition & Fees	$1239	$1338	$1416	$1506	$1632

Despite a rise in overall tuition, the College has managed to maintain relatively affordable in-county tuition. As detailed in Standard 9, the College awarded over $7,000,000 in financial aid in AY 2009-2010, an increase of 31% from AY 2008-2009.

For students ineligible for financial aid, the College offers several alternatives, including a payment plan that allows students to divide tuition into three manageable payments each semester. Financial aid and payment policies are explained to each new student prior to, during, and after registration. Payment plans are stipulated on the College website, posted throughout the College, and payment policies are highlighted in *Options* magazine (Exhibit 7), the College's primary recruitment and marketing vehicle distributed to over 300,000 Essex County households. Students indicate that College tuition policies are clear and well publicized in the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory* (Exhibit 8). Students also rated "convenient ways of paying my school bill" among the College's top strengths. The College has a tuition waiver/scholarship program for students demonstrating good scholarship and/or financial need.

The College embraces diverse constituencies. *Community College Week* (2009) named Essex County College as one of the top fifty fastest growing community colleges in the country, having increased 29.9% in the past five years (2005 – 2009) and 8.1% from 2008 to 2009, outstripping similar community colleges in New Jersey during the same time period (see Table 2).

Table 2: Comparative 5 Year Enrollment Trend (2005-2009)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	1 yr chg	5 yr chg
Essex	10,435	10,972	10,995	12,318	13,314	8.1%	29.9%
Bergen	14,762	14,608	15,057	15,283	16,469	7.8%	15.0%
Brookdale	13,279	13,745	14,025	14,642	15,639	6.8%	19.5%
Camden	14,737	14,587	14,741	15,198	15,670	3.1%	3.7%
Middlesex	11,898	11,990	12,097	12,381	13,356	7.9%	2.9%
Union	10,976	11,166	11,672	11,866	12,751	7.5%	15.3%

Most importantly, the College continues to expand in key demographics. The College's Latino population has grown 57.7% in the past six years, from 1,996 students (19.5% of the total population) in 2004 to 3,101 students (23.3% of the total population) in 2009, qualifying the College as an associate member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU). Essex County College ranked 29rd nationally in the total number of Associate Degrees awarded to African Americans in 2008-2009 and 13th in the total number of Associate Degrees in Education (*Community College Week*, June 14, 2010). The College is also first in the State in the number of associate degrees awarded to African-Americans.

In addition to the wide range of races and ethnicities represented at the College, the College hosts 324 international students from 67 countries, up 23% from Fall 2005 (263 students). According to the *Survey of Entering Student Engagement - 2009 (SENSE)* (Exhibit 9), 31% of the new student population also reports English as their second language.

In regard to student goals, according to 2009 *SENSE* data, 78.5% of entering freshman indicate that their goal is to obtain an Associate's degree. Similarly, the entering students for Fall 2009 echo this sentiment with 79.9% of the new students indicating they plan to obtain an associate degree or a certificate. Some 59.5% of the students attend full-time, up from 54.5% in 2005. Overall, the number of full-time students at the college has grown 39.3% in the past five years.

In AY 2009-2010, 49% of the total college population was between the ages of 17 and 22. This represents a 61% increase from Fall 2004, where 40% of the population (4,075) fell within this age range. The Instant Admit recruitment program generated 2,008 applications from high school students in 2009 (up 9.7% from the previous year). This program is largely responsible for shifting the College's demographic to serving a younger population.

Students embrace the College's diversity, often describing the College as "a family." Seventy-two percent (72%) of students surveyed indicated they "felt welcome at the College" (*Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory,* Exhibit 8). Incoming students echo these sentiments. Eighty-one percent (81%) of students surveyed during new student registration stated that their experience with the College had been "pleasant" to "very pleasant" (*New Student Intake Survey,* Exhibit 10). The College is working to assure continued satisfaction through an increased emphasis on customer service and improved student communication.

In addition to providing a welcoming atmosphere and meeting the immediate needs of entering students, the College actively seeks to assist non-traditional students. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the credit population is over 30 years old. The Office of Recruitment & Marketing also provides ongoing services to over 300 enrolled veterans, making the College the second largest educational service provider for veterans in the region.

As explained in Standards 8, 9, 11, and 13, having access to the proper courses and support services available at times when students can attend is paramount. Flexible class schedules were listed as the number one college strength during the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory*, with 69% of students stating, "The courses I needed to take are convenient." The College is looking to move this percentage to a minimum benchmark of 85% by 2015 with the addition of on-line and hybrid course options, as well as implementing alternative advisement methods.

There is a culture of academic excellence. Students agree that "I am able to experience intellectual growth here" and "The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent" as two of their top ten satisfaction items (*Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory*). Students also affirmed that the institution has a "commitment to older, returning learners" (in the top 20 satisfaction items), and that "tutoring services are readily available." Eighty-seven percent (87%) of students surveyed for the 2009 *SENSE* also believe that "instructors at this College want me to succeed." On the College's *Graduate Follow-up Questionnaire* (Exhibit 11), 81% of graduate respondents indicated that the quality of major course instruction at Essex was "good" or "excellent" (*Fact Book and Outcomes 2009-2010*, Exhibit 12).

More than 60% of the College's graduates transfer to four-year colleges and universities, providing the highest rate of transfers to specific universities (Rutgers University-Newark, New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Bloomfield College) than any other two-year college in New Jersey. In fact, Essex employees ranked preparation of students for transfer to a four-year college among the College's top 10 strengths (*2009 Employee Attitude Survey*). Over 85% of students surveyed agreed that they are prepared academically to succeed in college" (*SENSE*).

The internationally ranked and multiple award winning Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society (200+ members in Fall 2009), the Honors Program (50+ members in Fall 2009), and the Dean's List (500 outstanding students listed for Fall 2009) further supports the College's dedication to academic excellence. The College also boasts three consecutive Jack Kent Cooke scholar recipients. The election of five students in four consecutive years to the All-USA Community College Academic First Team from 2005 to 2008 shows that external stakeholders recognize that Essex County College students receive a quality education.

The College provides comprehensive educational programs. The College's mission to provide "comprehensive programs" is evident in the various degrees, certificates, and continuing education courses it offers. The curriculum includes seventy areas of study. According to the 2009-2010 *Fact Book and Outcomes*, the top five largest offerings for Fall 2009 are general science, liberal arts, criminal justice, education and business administration (see Table 3). These offerings are designed and revamped to respond to the changing educational needs of Essex County residents, as explained in Standards 9, 11, and 13.

Table 3: Five Largest College Programs – Fall 2009

PROGRAM	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	TOTAL
General Science (AS)	1,111	966	2,077
Liberal Arts (AA)	1,533	621	2,154
Non-Matriculated	260	1,092	1,352
Criminal Justice (AS)	582	190	772
Education (AA)	553	209	762
Business Administration (AS)	465	295	760

The College strives to ensure that each student's education ensures self-knowledge, self-reflection, critical awareness and life-long learning. Therefore, the College has endorsed the State recommended general education requirements for all degree-seeking students (see Standard 12). Finally, the College is working to widen its internet offerings through partnerships with Project Delta, Cengage, and other on-line course providers.

The College provides comprehensive support services. The College's stated mission to provide "comprehensive support services" is evident in its diversified academic, social and student support services. The Office of Student Affairs, Student Support Services, and the Division of Community and Continuing Education (CCE) are organizationally structured to serve and enrich both the students and the community. In accordance with Standards 9 and 13, these areas house a multiplicity of programs designed specifically to meet the needs of the College's constituencies. The Learning Center, the Wise Women's Center, the Martin Luther King Jr. Library, over 20 student clubs and organizations, the academic counselors, Career Resource Center, the One Stop Workforce Development Center, and the Equal Opportunity Fund Program (EOF) are a few examples of the diversity of services the College offers. Recognizing the need to develop a complete student, the College also offers a wide range of cultural, recreational, and social activities, as well as intramural athletic programs.

The College's programs are well-received by its students. Over 20,000 students in credit and non-credit courses have used the services of community-oriented programs such as One Stop, Wise Women, Youth Build, or Corporate and Business Training.

THE COLLEGE'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The College developed its *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* in a way fundamentally different from its preceding plans. The historical process entailed a carefully selected steering committee and subcommittees charged with developing four-year goals. In AY 2009-2010, the Dean of Faculty suggested that all College employees be given an opportunity to share in developing objectives. The new process began with a large group of faculty and administrative leaders who met several times in July and August 2009 to delineate institutional goals.

College goals became the focus of college-wide discussions and several drafts evolved, culminating in the August 31, 2009 Convocation, with its prevailing theme of "Putting College Goals into Action." Under the direction of senior administrators, every segment of the College was responsible for a session to develop objectives in their area based on the revised College goals. That day, 515 employees in 20 working sessions generated objectives and strategies to fulfill the mission. Finally, departments submitted recommendations to be incorporated into the final plan. In addition, various stakeholders and College advisory boards were encouraged to share their perspectives on relevant strategies and objectives. The College, as a member of several councils, including Newark's Council for Higher Education in Newark (CHEN), the Regional Business Partnership, the City of Newark Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and the Essex County WIB, solicited their input to help keep the College abreast of the community's needs.

With this rich variety of perspectives in mind, the College community agreed to promote the following strategic goals for AY 2009-2012:

Goal 1. Develop new credit and non-credit programs and community offerings that meet emerging needs while ensuring that all current programs and offerings are of superior quality and responsive to academic and labor market demands and community interests.

Goal 2. Implement and upgrade academic and student support programs and services to improve students' access, recruitment, retention, and success.

Goal 3. Recruit, retain, develop, and promote high quality faculty and staff.

Goal 4. Develop resources to support effective programs and align the College's budget with the strategic plan.

Goal 5. Advance all areas of the College by applying emerging technologies and upgrading the physical environment.

Goal 6. Promote a culture of assessment throughout the College.

Analysis and Findings

The College's mission and goals are explicitly embedded in the planning, program development, curriculum development, and definition of program outcomes. Specifically, the *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* delineated six goals the collective college community deemed necessary to fulfill its mission over the next four years. The six goals were tied directly to the achievement of the mission. Therefore, the College community is working individually and collectively towards achieving its mission on a day-to-day basis. Outcomes from 2009-2010 (*Strategic Plan Outcomes 2009-2010,* Exhibit 13) emanating from the *2009-2012 Strategic Plan* demonstrate that the 2009-2010 planning process has been effective in generating activity that supported the mission of the College. The new President implemented a more rigorous planning process for AY 2010-2011. A template was created for this new planning process which allows for bottom-up input. This process looks at goals, objectives, activities, timelines, and responsible parties for each objective. This ties broad goal planning to specific objectives, activities, and accountable administrators.

The College's energy, attention, resources and programs are structurally focused on the achievement of the overall mission. The general mission and values are translated into multi-year planning objectives, called the *Strategic Plan* 2009-2012. Each year the Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment (OPRA) collects outcomes information from all areas and prepares a strategic plan outcomes report. In addition, specific accountability for achieving the goals, objectives, and suggested strategies of the long-term strategic plan is further defined in the following organizational blueprints: 1) the *Academic Master Plan* (Exhibit 3); 2) the *Institutional Assessment Plan* (Exhibit 4); 3) the *Marketing Plan 2008* (Exhibit 14); 4) the *Marketing Plan 2009* (Exhibit 15); 5) the *Information Technology Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 16); and 6) the *Facilities Master Plan* (Exhibit 17). These plans delineate the specific goals, objectives, measurements and progress towards achieving both long and short term institutional goals and objectives. The mission is additionally reinforced through the budgeting process, during which the College uses these various plans to establish priorities to disburse funds. Dr. Abdullah's revision to the strategic planning process ties all these documents into one concise, coherent, and congruent strategic document in which all leaders know their role and how it integrates with the plans of other departments.

The planning process promotes collective input and individual accountability to the College's mission and goals. A greater number of individuals have been encouraged to participate in developing the strategic priorities thus increasing the level of active support within the College community for accomplishing the mission and objectives.

As noted in Standard 7, the College uses the resulting strategic plan outcomes as guidelines for constant improvement. The Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment has established an on-line system which provides a mechanism for institutional assessment of overall annual goals and objectives (*Strategic Plan Outcomes 2009 – 2010*). This system allows the College to track, measure, and evaluate the degree to which all areas have met institutional goals. The system will be revised to include the President's iterative institutional planning process.

THE COLLEGE'S VALUES

The College has a value statement which outlines five philosophies that reaffirm and complement the mission (see inside front cover). These values were reviewed after the mission was revised in 2009. It was determined that the values still provided clear, realistic objectives that are in line with the newly stated mission. The value statement can also be found on the Essex County College website, in the opening page of the *College Catalog*, and displayed throughout the College.

Analysis and Findings

By adhering to the Mission and Values, the College experienced a sustained period of growth and renewal under immediate past President, A. Zachary Yamba, the longest serving president in New Jersey's history. Dr. Yamba's leadership was acknowledged in survey results. According to the *Employee Attitude Survey,* "the President of the College provides effective leadership" was among the College's top 10 strengths. The Board recognized Dr. Yamba's long-standing service to the College by naming him President Emeritus in 2009. All three levels of government also acknowledged both the President and the College's lasting impact on the community. The Mayor of Newark and the Newark City Council renamed a portion of University Avenue the A. Zachary Yamba Plaza, thus changing the official college address to One Yamba Plaza. And, at the request of Congressman Bill Payne, the College's accomplishments during Dr. Yamba's tenure were read into the Congressional Record.

The College continues to pursue innovation under the new President, Dr. Edythe M. Abdullah, who joined the College on April 1, 2010. Dr. Abdullah shows tremendous support of the mission and values, encouraging the College to personalize these statements so that they "resonate with your workday actions."

Based on a review of the College's mission, goals and objectives, Dr. Abdullah augmented the strategic plan in August 2010 by suggesting the use of "Actionable Foresights." For academic years 2010-2012, the following Actionable Foresights have been established:

> **Actionable Foresight #1: The Economy**
> 1. Enhance student access;
> 2. Re-engineer adjunct and full-time faculty professional development and accountability;
> 3. Increase student persistence; and
> 4. Improve customer service and relationship management.

Actionable Foresight #2: Accreditation
1. Enhance academic and career programs;
2. Expand institutional performance and accountability;
3. Create iterative process improvement strategies; and
4. Address major issues identified in last reaffirmation document.

Actionable Foresight #3: Cost Burden on Students
1. Restructure Essex County College Foundation; and
2. Review and improve financial aid practices.

Actionable Foresight #4: Leadership and Accountability
1. Restructure the organization for greater efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability; and
2. Create a culture where "Every Employee" is empowered and integral to our environment of excellence in teaching and learning.

The addition of the 2010-2012 Actionable Foresights will enhance the College's strategic focus and substantially improve future outcomes.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► The College mission is clear and consistent, and has been appropriately modified over time.
- ► There is overwhelming agreement among constituencies that the College supports its overall mission and goals.
- ► The mission is recognized and clearly informs both the long and the short term goals of the College, influencing formal planning, input and evaluation at all levels of the organization.
- ► The College has shown that it aggressively pursues all aspects of its mission and successfully delivers on its promise, particularly in the areas of open access, academic excellence, providing for diverse constituencies, and offering comprehensive educational programs.
- ► The planning process is well integrated with the mission of the institution.
- ► All major planning documents are directly tied to the institutional goals, which are directly related to the mission statement.

Considerations

- ► Monitor the threat of uncertain State and County funding on the College's ability to successfully fulfill its mission.

Commitments

- ► Ensure that the College has sufficient fiscal resources to provide the appropriate financial and support services to accomplish its mission.
- ► Review mission and goals to ensure they meet the needs of the community and its students.

STANDARD 6: INTEGRITY

OVERVIEW

The College adheres to high ethical standards. These standards ensure that policies and procedures are in place to address the concerns of students, employees, and the community at large. Task Force members reviewed New Jersey laws governing the operation of community colleges, the College website, and various survey data from the Board of Trustees and employees. Integrity analysis focused on the Board of Trustees, finances, student academic issues, employee hiring, promotion, dismissal procedures, and academic freedom. Subcommittee members conducted interviews and examined the following documents: the *Essex County College Regulations Manual* (Exhibit 18); the *College Catalog* (Exhibit 1); the *Student Code of Conduct* (Exhibit 19); and the *Board of Trustees Policy Manual* (Exhibit 20).

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

According to State statute, the County and State Executive branches of government appoint members to the Board of Trustees. The County appointing authority (the County Executive and freeholders) makes eight appointments, the Governor appoints two Trustees, and the County Superintendent of Schools serves by statute. Furthermore, the statute stipulates that at least two appointed trustees shall be female (see *Annual Institutional Profile*, Exhibit 21, for Board members' profiles). The statute also provides for a member of the alumni elected from each year's graduating class to serve on the Board of Trustee. The College complies with all these requirements.

Analysis and Findings

The New Jersey Commission on Higher Education approved an Institutional Code of Ethics promulgating general standards which every college and university in the State must observe. Essex County College scrupulously observes this law. It also observes the New Jersey Conflict of Interest Law and the Local Government Ethics Law. In September 2010, the College's Board of Trustees unanimously adopted a new board policy regarding conflict of interest (*Board of Trustees Minutes,* Exhibit 22). The standards of the code of ethics ensure that officers and employees of public institutions of higher education shall avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest. Trustees are prohibited by state regulation from "having an interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or engaging in any business or transaction or professional activity which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of their duties." The College and Board of Trustees adhere to this conflict of interest policy. According to the *Board of Trustees Survey* (Exhibit 6), they agreed that, "The Board's decisions are made independent of partisan bias" (with a rating of 4.36 out of 5.00).

FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

The College adheres to State law which ensures that employees have no conflict of interest "between the interest of the College and the interest of either a member of the College community or a non-College entity with which the member has an association." The College has a strong conflict of interest policy.

Internally, the comptroller directs various internal audits of the divisions. The College maintains its financial integrity through an annual audit by Wiss and Company, an–independent audit firm. The State also conducts periodic audits of the College's finances. In all cases, the College is in full compliance.

Analysis and Findings

The State of New Jersey Office of Management and Budget defines standards for auditing and accounting. The State Department of Treasury recommended that the New Jersey Council of County Colleges use the Statement of Auditing and Accounting Standards for County Colleges. The Standards: (1) establish accounting and finance procedures and develops guidelines for appropriating resources; (2) establish standards for the eligibility of State support; (3) identify the appropriate method for calculating full-time equivalent enrollments; (4) identify the appropriate method for calculating enrollment data; and (5) establish audit rules to evaluate these approved procedures.

With a 4.73/5.00 rating on the *Board of Trustees Survey*, Board of Trustee members rated the statement that "Sound fiscal management is employed by College management," as one of its highest categories. "Annual audits provide evidence that College finances are in order," also scored high, receiving a 4.82/5.00 survey rating.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS, GRADE DISPUTES, AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The student handbook, *Lifeline* (Exhibit 56) and Essex County College Student Grade Appeal Regulation 6-13 clearly state the policies and procedures governing the process for student complaints and grade disputes. The Office of Student Affairs provides *Lifeline* to all entering students. It is readily available in written form upon request and on the College website.

Students can file complaints, dispute grades, or register concerns. The process for grade disputes is delineated in the "Academic Appeal" Section of *Lifeline* and in Essex County College Student Grade Appeal Regulation 6-13.

The Academic Advisory Council (AAC), the Standards and Assessment Advisory Council (SAAC), and the Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC)—the governance bodies— aggressively addressed the issue of academic integrity during AY 2008-2009. SAAC formed a subcommittee and made recommendations to AAC, with several significant outcomes: (1) the AAC affirmed recommendations regarding academic integrity, made suggestions for implementing policy, and presented them to the Deans' Council (precursor to the Instructional Affairs Council); (2) the PDAC convened a college-wide forum on plagiarism for faculty; (3) the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library provided ongoing workshops on plagiarism and information literacy; (4) the Division of Humanities adopted and incorporated standards for information literacy, including plagiarism, into its developmental English (ENG 096) courses in Fall 2006; (5) the revitalized College Success Seminar (CSS 101) devoted an entire chapter to plagiarism, and the entire book reinforced the importance of academic integrity; (6) the Learning Center provided training on how to properly cite and review various research paper formats (e.g., MLA, APA, and Turabian); (7) the College's nationally affiliated honor society, Phi Theta Kappa, offered workshops on academic integrity each semester; (8) the Teaching and Learning value statement of the College Mission Statement affirmed the importance of "ethical and scholarly traditions;" (9) the English Department's general education course offerings and curriculum focused on the importance of

academic integrity as stated in its departmental syllabi and grading rubrics; and (10) the Fall 2010 course outline initiative incorporated the same language used in *Lifeline* and included examples of plagiarism.

The definition of Sexual Harassment and procedures for filing complaints are also described in *Lifeline.* Students can confidentially file complaints against members of the College community with the Dean of Student Affairs, the Title IX coordinator for students. The Title IX coordinator for faculty and staff is the Director of Human Resources. The College's policies and procedures for filing complaints related to sexual harassment and discrimination are available on the College website. In summary, the College conforms to all federal and State statutes, executive orders, regulations, guidelines, and amendments including, but not limited to, New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, Title VI & VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The College will also conform to the new anti-bulling recommendations.

Analysis and Findings

As long as the College has existed, it has had shared governance. It has six faculty-lead governance councils to ensure that faculty and administrators comprehensively focus on issues pertaining to curricula, academic policies, computing, faculty development, developmental instruction, and standards and assessment. In AY 2008-2009, the academic governance councils examined academic integrity. The Academic Integrity Subcommittee of the Standards and Assessment Advisory Council (SAAC) reviewed the regulations regarding academic integrity and recommended that the regulations remain unchanged, but that new strategies focus on clarifying the existing policy by providing students with examples of plagiarism. Academic Affairs Council (AAC) approved this recommendation. In addition, AAC recommended that the academic integrity policy and examples of plagiarism be included on all syllabi, and forwarded its recommendations to the Deans' Council. During Spring 2009, the Dean of Faculty directed that each division develop a standard definition of academic integrity for faculty to include in their syllabi. This is now a mandatory component of every syllabus throughout the institution.

Grade appeals are also subject to rigorous guidelines. The student appeals process begins at the divisional level. Division chairpersons report formal and informal mechanisms for handling student grade complaints. Initially, chairpersons attempt to resolve disputes between faculty and students by facilitating communication between the parties. The Division of Mathematics and Physics, for example, reports that 35 of the 40 potential grade disputes were resolved informally. If the student is still not satisfied, a formal grade appeal may be filed. Each division establishes a division-wide Grade Appeal Committee to adjudicate the appeals. Full-time faculty members within the division serve on these committees. Students appear before this committee, and the faculty member in question must provide justification for the disputed grade. The student may then appeal the decision before the College-wide Committee where the final judgment is made.

Data collected from each of the Divisions during academic years 2006-2010 showed that 251 grade appeals were filed during the period of review, approximately 50 appeals per academic year. This represents less than 0.0013% of the total 38,000 grades assigned in an academic year. An average of 10 out of 50 students who file a formal complaint failed to appear before the Division Grade Appeal Committee or withdraw their appeal; over 35 appeared before the Division Committee; 24 appeals resulted in a recommendation of no grade change; 10 resulted in a change of grade based on the Committee recommendation or the professor's decision to change the grade; and four were referred to the College-wide Grade Appeals Committee. Of the four students referred to the College-wide Committee,

one of the students failed to appear before the College-wide Committee or withdrew his or her appeal, two resulted in a recommendation of no grade change by the College-wide Committee, and one resulted in a change of grade based on the College-wide Committee recommendation.

HIRING, PROMOTION, AND DISMISSAL PRACTICES

In accordance with Federal and State legislation, bargaining unit agreements, and Board of Trustee requirements, the College President recommends candidates for all administrative, professional, and faculty appointments, reappointments, and other related status changes to the Board of Trustees. All of these nominations require Board of Trustees approval. These contracts specify the process and procedure for promotion. These procedures are carefully monitored by the Human Resources Department. A Department Head must also submit a recommendation. The *Essex County College Regulations Manual* delineates the specific procedures for these employment policies, and the Board of Trustees acts as an independent arbiter of the process. The 2009 *Board of Trustees Survey* statement that "Trustees are committed to equal opportunity in hiring and promotion" was listed as one of its higher priorities, receiving a 4.55/5.0 rating.

The dismissal procedure is stated in every contract. The Director of Human Resources disseminates "Disciplinary Guidelines" to all Managerial and Supervisory Personnel. The guidelines provide that the management practices governing effective discipline include: (1) fairness to employees; (2) consistency in administering discipline; (3) concentration on the offense rather than the personality of the offender; and (4) recourse to appeal through the collective bargaining grievance process. Grievance procedures are identified in the bargaining unit contracts. The *2009 Board of Trustees Survey* notes that one of the College's achievements is that it "…has and utilizes good guidelines with reference to due process and grievance procedures."

Analysis and Findings

Information concerning the College's hiring, promotion, and dismissal practices and its compliance with procedures and guidelines are available in the Department of Human Resources. Task Force interviews with the Human Resources Director indicated that the Department of Human Resources adheres to the policies and procedures stated in the College Regulations and posted on the College website. Human Resources independently certifies the qualification of all hires and promotions. The College's administrative personnel also evaluate personnel decisions. The Board of Trustees acts as an impartial arbiter of all personnel decisions and must approve all recommendations to hire, promote, and/or dismiss College employees.

Human Resources prepared a demographic breakdown of all hires, promotions, and separations for AY 2009-2010 as part of this self-study. The analysis evaluated all of the data concerning hires, promotions, and retention in response to a concern highlighted in the results of the Employee Attitude Survey. In AY 2009-2010, the College had 518 full-time employees, 63.3% female and 36.7% male. Of 518 employees, 4.1% were Asian/Pacific Islanders, 50.6% were African-Americans, 21% were Hispanics, 22% were Caucasians, and 1.7% were "Other." Of 22 new full-time hires, 54.6% were females, 45.6% were males; 36.4% were African-Americans, 31.8% were Hispanic, and 20% were Caucasians. Of the promotions, 78.8% were female, 21.3% were male; 42.9% were African-American, 14.3% were Caucasians, and 10.7 were classified as "Other." There were no non-renewals and five expirations of

contract, 40% female and 60% male, 60% African-American and 40% Hispanic during that academic year.

An analysis from 2005-2006 to 2009-2010 showed that new hires represented 3.4% of the full-time employees, approximately 3% of the full-time employees were promoted, non-retention represented 0.4% of the total full-time employees; and dismissals represented less than 1% of the total full-time employees. Total separations, including retirements, resignations, and other reasons represent 6.7% of the workforce annually.

The work force is relatively stable. Over 75% of the staff have been employed by the College for more than 15 years. The small number of new hires indicates that the College boasts a considerable number of employees with longevity. However, only a small number of promotions were given every year which may explain the low ratings in response to the employee survey question asking employees whether there was the opportunity for advancement and promotion.

Essex County College employees are ethnically diverse with approximately 75% identified as people of color. An analysis of the demographic breakdown of the full time staff showed evidence of this diversity in hiring, promotion, and retention of staff (*Fact Book and Outcomes 2009-2010*, Exhibit 12). In fact, "I feel that minority groups are well represented throughout the college" was in the top ten responses on the *Employee Attitude Survey*, receiving a 3.15/4.0 rating for all respondents. However, the employee survey results indicate that there may be an inconsistency between the reality of the promotion process and its perception among College employees. Both statements, "The hiring, retention and promotion practices at ECC are equitable" and "There is opportunity for advancement and promotion at ECC," ranked very low in the 2009 *Employee Attitude Survey*, with both statements receiving a 2.72/4.0 and 2.61/4.0 rating respectively (Exhibit 5). The statement, "I am relatively satisfied with my salary" ranked the lowest for all respondents, receiving a 2.42/4.0 rating. It is likely that all three responses were targeted to the issue of promotion, rather than equity in hiring, retention, or dismissal practices. However, the survey instrument asked about hiring, promotion, and dismissal in one question which made it very difficult to identify the specific employee concern(s). Also, the term "equitable" can be interpreted in various ways. In addition, combining all three terms conflates the responses to the survey. Additional research is needed to determine the specific employee concerns in this area.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND COMPLAINTS

The "Teaching and Learning" value statement of the College's mission statement expressly identifies academic freedom as one of the College's core principles. "We value academic freedom and support the open exchange of ideas and experiences" is a college value endorsed by faculty, administrators and the trustees. This value statement is prominently displayed on the College website and in its catalog. Furthermore, Regulation 6-15 in the *Essex County College Regulations Manual* addresses academic freedom, thereby affirming the College's commitment to this principle. The Board of Trustees also affirms its commitment to the principles of academic freedom in Article 4 of the *Faculty Association Contract* (Exhibit 23) and Article C of the *Adjunct Faculty Contract* (Exhibit 24). Faculty also participates in the governance process through the academic advisory councils. The councils are integral in the development of academic policies related to academic freedom.

Analysis and Findings

Essex County College and its administrators and trustees have never been accused of abridging or attempting to abridge academic freedom. Indeed, the administration feels so strongly about the need for academic freedom that it formulated a regulation to memorialize its sentiments in writing in the *Essex County College Regulations Manual.*

The Office of the President handles complaints from members of the community and entities outside the institution. The procedure for filing complaints by employees and students is articulated in the Human Resources section of the College's website. The College's policies and procedures for filing complaints related to Sexual Harassment and Discrimination are explained on the College website. The definition of Sexual Harassment and procedures for filing a complaint are also described in materials distributed to every new employee and in *Lifeline.* In addition, each new employee is required to attend training sessions and/or workshops which foster good employee relations and the general lack of problems of inappropriate behavior at the College.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATION, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► The Board of Trustees fulfills its role with integrity.
- ► External evaluators consistently award Essex County College a "clean" audit.
- ► Policies, procedures, and other methods for resolving student complaints, concerns, and grade appeals are documented in The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Regulations, as well as the College's mission and goals.
- ► The Code of Student Conduct, Academic Regulations, College publications, and the College website identify the process and procedures for student and employee complaints; they are readily accessible through various sources.
- ► Students are given the opportunity to register complaints and concerns through many different avenues.
- ► The College developed and continues to distribute to all incoming students *Lifeline*, a simply written and comprehensive handbook containing all of the policies and procedures that govern students.
- ► The College adheres to detailed procedures and written standards for hiring, promoting, sanctioning, and dismissing employees.
- ► The principles of academic freedom are an integral part of the College's core values; they support the College's mission and goals.

Considerations

- ► Address the concerns raised in the employee survey results. These results indicate a concern by College employees regarding advancement and promotion, as well as the equitability of the hiring, retention, and promotion practices.
- ► Continue to address the issue of plagiarism with students and faculty through training and reinforcing academic integrity.

Commitments

- ► Continue ongoing assessment and review of the College's policies and procedures to ensure the College complies with previously articulated standards and engages in best practices**.**
- ► Utilize technology and other disruptive technologies to increase effective and effectiveness in operations.

CHAPTER 2

STANDARDS 2 AND 3

Standard 2

Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

An institution conducts ongoing An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.

Standard 3

Institutional Resources

The human, financial, technical, physical facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution's mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution's mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution's resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.

STANDARD 2: PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

OVERVIEW

A strong planning program enables Essex County College to achieve and maintain excellence in the face of internal and external challenges. The College has the leadership needed to link outcomes to budgeting in order to meet current and future goals and objectives. It also has an institution-wide commitment to effective planning, maintaining, and improving College operations. Major documents reviewed include: *Strategic Plan 2009–2012* (Exhibit 2); *Academic Master Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 3); *Educational Services Plan* (Exhibit 25); *Institutional Assessment Plan* (Exhibit 4); *Facilities Master Plan* (Exhibit 17); *Information Technology Master Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 16); *Community and Continuing Education Annual Report 2008-2009* (Exhibit 26); *Departmental Objectives 2011* (Exhibit 64) and *Marketing Plan 2009* (Exhibit 15).

PLANNING

Since the 1990s, Essex County College has used its mission to develop strategies for planning and budgeting. Updating the strategic plan has remained a decentralized process. Major budgetary decisions, however, are made by the President's Cabinet.

As of April 2010, Dr. Edythe Abdullah, the College's sixth President, modified the decision process by ensuring that input regarding proposed operating and capital allocations and expenditures would be from the bottom up. She also expanded the number and types of planning documents and data used to inform budgetary decisions. Resource allocation proceeds in a logical manner. Despite financial limitations, budgetary planning enables the College to renew itself. Although constrained, resources remain adequate to meet obligations because of enrollment growth and judicious cost cutting measures.

Essex County College uses an integrated planning process which in turn drives resource allocations and institutional development and renewal. The eight plans that inform the budgeting and resource allocation process are noted in the Overview. Specific outcomes concerning all these plans (through AY 2009-2010) were entered into the College's *Strategic Plan Outcomes* Access database (Exhibit 13). Information Technology plans to develop forms for FY 2012 and make them available through the BANNER management information system which will replace the system that has been used for several years. The new system requires that the user fill in eight types of data that relate to institutional and departmental goals and objectives, as well as anticipated measurable outcomes.

The Strategic Plan. Critical to the well-being of the institution is its strategic plan. The planning process emanates from reviewing the institution's mission and value statements. Goals and objectives are designed to support and advance the mission and values statement. Outcomes from units, programs, and offices linked to the goals and objectives are reviewed annually. Annual area reports are aggregated into a single document that is disseminated to the Instructional Affairs Council and Cabinet members.

Budget priority is given to the institution's strongest programs and those that require additional resources for further development. Budgetary discussions and decision-making occur at the Cabinet level emphasize programs and operations that demonstrate innovation, effectiveness, and efficiency in outcomes. The *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* and *Academic Master Plan 2009-2012* outcomes form the primary basis for planning.

Developing the *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* involved all full-time faculty and staff. Goals and objectives were discussed in meetings in August 2009 according to each area's perceived needs and purposes, thereby encouraging a form of "planning literacy" at the College. The last four College convocations focused on planning and assessment, which helped to educate all employees about the College's day-to-day operations. In 2010 Cabinet members modified and expanded the 2009-2012 plan in order to emphasize student retention through counseling, advisement, student orientation, and emphasis on student success at the remedial level. The 2009-2012 plan was then modified and expanded once again, resulting in modest changes and reorganizing plan specifics. Cabinet members must ensure that objectives in their areas are attained. During 2005-2009, several objectives outlined in the previous strategic plan were deemed unattainable due to budget constraints. One example was attaining a teaching ratio of 60% full-time to 40% part-time faculty. Since the College knew in advance that critical fiscal constraints would not support such objectives, the *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* was adjusted to reflect objectives that could be accomplished without the infusion of significant new funding. The new *Departmental Objectives - 2011* combine the eight plans and create measurable objectives and activities for each area. These include areas omitted in planning before and create timelines and accountability through assigning responsible parties.

The Academic Master Plan. The *Academic Master Plan 2009-2012* describes not only current program efforts, but also new programs which are consistent with the College's mission and values, such as programs that respond to changed demographics. As with the *Strategic Plan,* the development of the *Academic Master Plan* had broad participation, with chairpersons and faculty providing input. Since assessment is key to future resource allocations, all programs and operations are evaluated according to their ability to meet their goals and objectives, or their ability to identify and suggest ways to improve areas of weakness. One weak program in terms of demonstrated outcomes was Criminal Justice. In the last decade, Criminal Justice has justified itself in terms of outcomes that make budgeting decisions easy. After a recent and comprehensive self-study and action plan, the number of Criminal Justice majors increased from 362 in 2001 to 772 in 2009.

Just as the *Strategic Plan* and *Academic Master Plan* identify disciplines in which new investments should be made, they also detect programs that require critical attention. An example is the Radiography Program, which a decade ago, was in danger of losing its accreditation. After administrative intervention and a strong faculty initiative, radiography now enjoys high rates of retention and student licensure. Another example is our revamped engineering program, which is now accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and has increased the numbers of students after years of low enrollment and lack of visibility.

The success of the *Academic Master Plan* is closely linked to program evaluations. Program evaluations are rotated every five years and entail a self-study and external evaluation. While it is easy to reward strong programs, ECC is equally committed to strengthening programs which are weaker but potentially viable. Administrative intervention based on assessment outcomes ensures that academic programs remain viable so that students may enroll and succeed in them. The College reserves the right to close programs that are persistently weak and unresponsive to student needs.

The Educational Services Plan. The *Educational Services Plan* complements the *Academic Master Plan* by establishing goals and objectives for academic support services such as the library, the Tutoring Center, Media Production and Technology, and the recently founded Center for Academic Foundations (CAF). The Center for Academic Foundations serves students who test (via Accuplacer) into the lowest level of remediation. These educational support services are essential for retention.

The Institutional Assessment Plan. The *Institutional Assessment Plan* identifies and implements assessment/evaluation activities to ensure institutional accountability and improvement. The President's Cabinet and the Instructional Affairs Council use this document to review assessment outcomes of various activities undertaken throughout the institution. The plan is now being modified to reflect the new direction and emphasis on course outcomes assessment.

The Facilities Master Plan. The *Facilities Master Plan* traditionally has been the foundation for the College's capital requests to the State and County. The current plan emphasizes the need for new buildings to accommodate an ever-increasing student population. However, scarce capital resources have shifted the emphasis to finding ways to create additional classroom space within the existing footprint. The *Facilities Master Plan* aids in that process.

The Information Technology Plan. The *Information Technology Plan* provides for the replacement of computers and related equipment for the entire institution. It includes upgrades of BANNER system capabilities, software, programming, and distance education. The plan is updated annually based on recommendations from the Academic Computing Advisory Council, the Instructional Affairs Council, the President's Cabinet, and other academic and administrative bodies at the College.

The Community and Continuing Education (CCE) Annual Report with Objectives. The *Community and Continuing Education Annual Report with Objectives* establishes the goals and objectives of this crucial area of College operations. Non-credit enrollment headcount typically meets and exceeds that of credit enrollment. In the past decade of economic downturn, the demand for CCE offerings has increased. Also, this area has increased the number of programs that award college credit.

The Marketing Plan. The *Marketing Plan 2009* sets forth goals and objectives regarding student recruitment. Although enrollment has recently risen, marketing's greatest challenge will be keeping enrollment just as high when good economic times return. Greater efforts have been made to increase student enrollment from the underrepresented Hispanic community. This plan will be revised in Spring 2011.

Analysis and Findings

Since the College opened in 1968, it has continued to educate its employees about strategic planning. The College emphasizes that strategic planning: (1) links mission and values to goals and objectives; (2) matches institutional strengths with external opportunities (e.g., provides quality academic and continuing education programs to meet existing and nascent workplace needs of employers); (3) looks broadly at the organization's needs and obligations; (4) emphasizes major issues to be addressed expeditiously by unit heads; (5) employs leadership from the top which includes the active involvement of many employees; (6) uses outcomes data to support decision-making and resource allocation; and (7) keeps planning flexible so that it may respond to new challenges and opportunities. In Fall 2010, the College conducted professional development in planning and budgeting related to the College's needs as reflected in their *Department Objectives - 2011*.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The various plans mentioned in the previous section become the foundation for developing the operating and capital budgets. With reference to the operating budget, the Comptroller consults with the President and members of her Cabinet to estimate revenue from the County, the State, tuition and fees, and "other" income (e.g., grants, development, and auxiliary services). According to *New Jersey Statutes*

Annotated (NJSA) 18A:64A-22 & 29 (Exhibit 27), expenditures must not exceed appropriated resources (see also Exhibit 28, *Statement of Auditing and Accounting Standards for County Colleges* for use by the State's Department of Treasury). Therefore, the President, Cabinet and the Comptroller consider budgetary changes based on strategic priorities. For example, despite financial hardships, the College nearly doubled the size of its Registered Nursing Program during the AY 2007-2008 and implemented LPN and LPN-to-RN programs in response to the urgent need for registered nurses. However, since the local supply of nurses now exceeds the demand, this program has been reduced. Since allocations from the State and County have been fairly level, economies were identified elsewhere within the institution in order to realize strategic priorities and balance income and expense.

Planning is also integral to developing the capital budget. The President and her Cabinet widely solicits and evaluates capital requests, with priority given to projects that reflect the mission and goals. Such requests may originate from any of the major plans identified through outcomes assessment, or may arise to meet some unanticipated institutional need.

With reference to the capital budget, New Jersey community colleges receive capital support from two sources – the State's Chapter XII program and their county governments. Funds available for capital projects vary from year-to-year. In recent years, facing a fiscal crisis, the State began to decrease the availability of such funds. Meanwhile, the County of Essex generously supported the construction of the Center for Health Sciences (opened October 2008), a new parking deck (opened August 2008), and subsequent construction, such as new science labs, new chillers, and the renovated Media Production Technology Center. The process of determining the operating and capital budgets is outlined in the following flow charts in Figures 3 and 4.
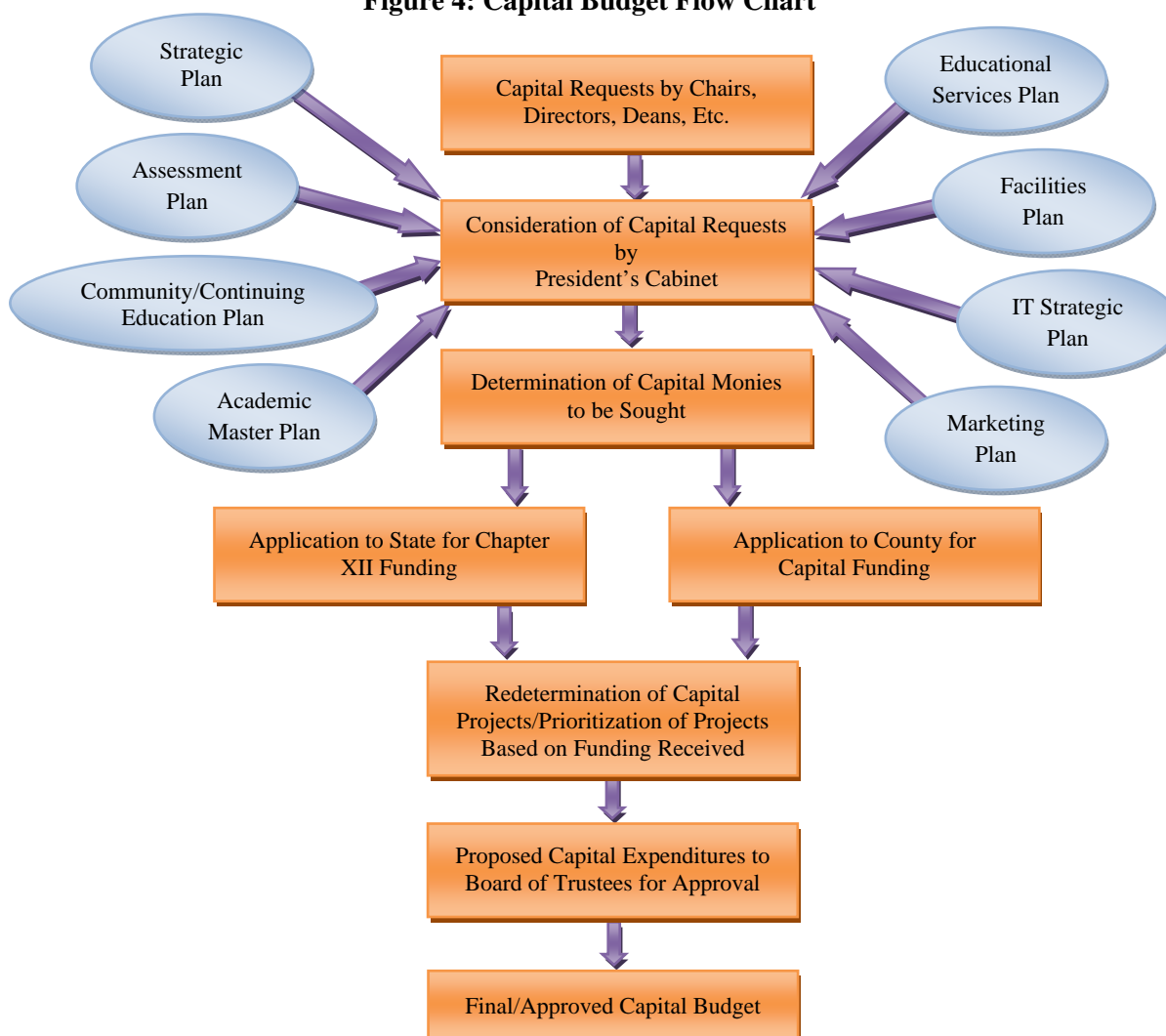
Figure 3: Operating Budget Flow Chart
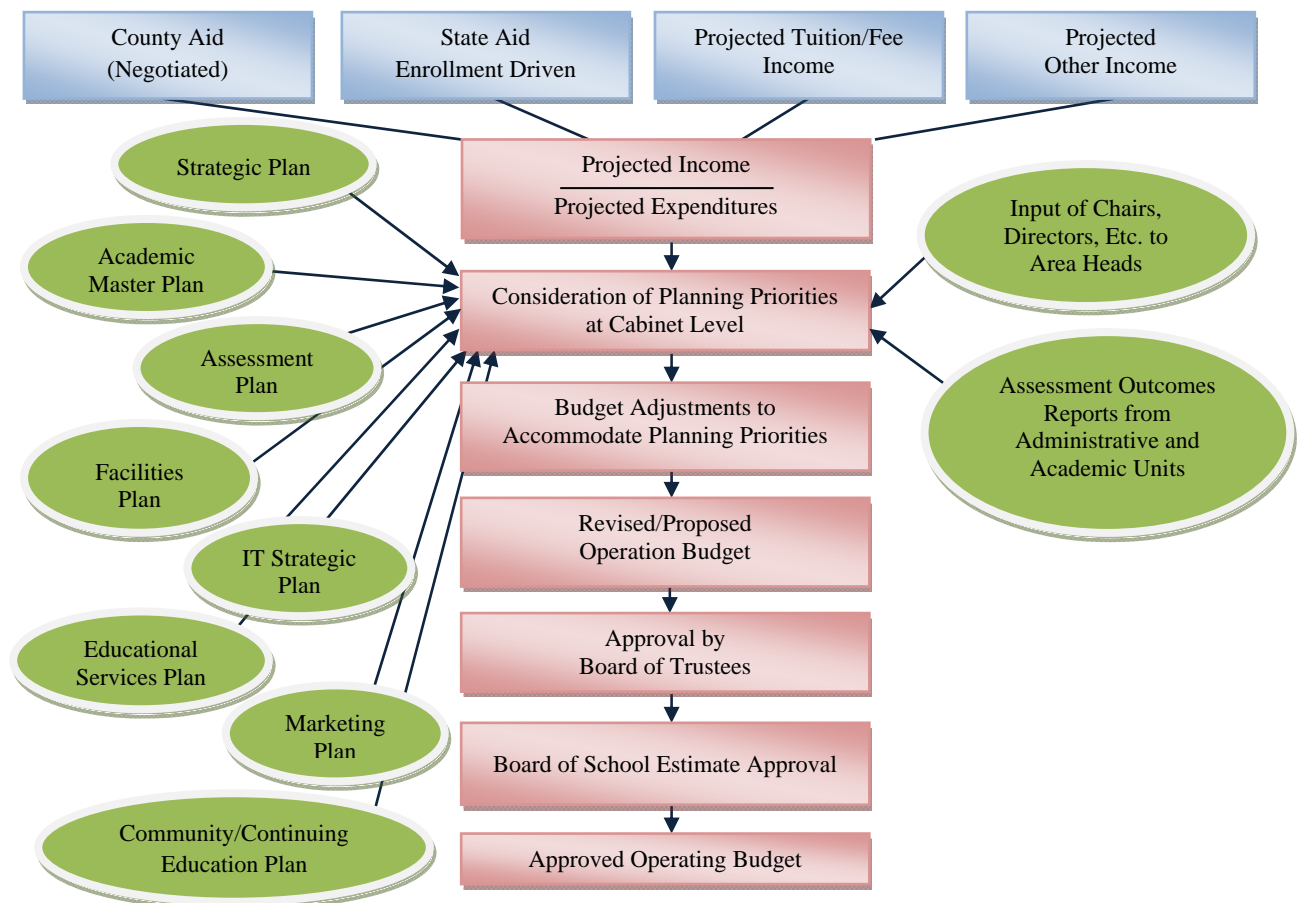
The budgeting process, less cumbersome than it may appear, is linked securely to the planning process. Each Fall, the President and her Cabinet holds intensive meetings which integrate planning priorities and the budget process. For the operating budget, the President, together with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Comptroller and deans develop new strategies based on estimated State and County funding for the coming year. This data, along with tuition fee increases, is factored into the operating budget. Each Spring, the President reports to the College community concerning potential State and County funding. Also, the Dean of Student Affairs and the Comptroller meet with students to explain any tuition and fee increases, based on the planning process that has taken place.

The President is the final arbiter for the disbursal of funds. She makes her decisions based on the amount of funds available, the relative merit of proposed expenditures, and the strength of individual requests in response to institutional goals and objectives.

Figure 4: Capital Budget Flow Chart

Strategic Plan

Assessment Plan

Community/Continuing Education Plan

Academic Master Plan

Educational Services Plan

Facilities Plan

IT Strategic Plan

Marketing Plan

Capital Requests by Chairs, Directors, Deans, Etc.

Consideration of Capital Requests by President's Cabinet

Determination of Capital Monies to be Sought

Application to State for Chapter XII Funding

Application to County for Capital Funding

Redetermination of Capital Projects/Prioritization of Projects Based on Funding Received

Proposed Capital Expenditures to Board of Trustees for Approval

Final/Approved Capital Budget

Analysis and Findings

In addition to adhering to the established process for determining allocation of funds, College administrators also respond to changes in special needs. Each recommendation is considered and, if budgetary changes are warranted, they are factored into the overall institutional budget. Examples of recent changes include responses to reductions in the demand for nurses and the replacement of retired full-time faculty in general education areas.

INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

Senior administrators are responsible for ensuring that division chairpersons and directors adhere to Strategic Plan and goals and objectives. The Associate Dean of Planning, Institutional Research and Assessment submits outcomes annually; it is anticipated that each area will build upon a particular year's success and work to improve areas where difficulties were identified.

Although the College has received level funding for operating purposes in recent years from the State and the County, the President and senior administrators are committed to continuing institutional renewal. Examples of institutional renewal based on the *Strategic Plan 2005-2009* (Exhibit 29) include: a Summer Bridge program to increase representation of minorities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; the Center for Academic Foundations to provide enhanced tutoring for students at the lowest level of remediation; the "Gateway to College" program for returning young adults who want to simultaneously earn their associate degrees and high school diplomas; the Learning Center for students seeking assistance in any discipline; expanding the Multilanguage Resource Center to assist ESL students seeking to increase their proficiency in English; and the High School Initiative to increase outreach to both urban and suburban high schools, a program that now enrolls hundreds of qualified high school seniors in college-level courses.

Analysis and Findings

The *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* provided for several important changes in institutional renewal. For example, the Police Academy developed and implemented 15 new non-credit courses; the Center for Academic Foundations increased the number of sections serving incoming students (e.g., in Fall 2008 to Fall 2009, mathematics sections increased from 21 to 27, serving 593 students, up from 452); Training Inc. (the College's career training institute) initiated a 600-hour Certified Clinical Medical Assistant program. Also, the College enhanced counseling, guidance and support by assigning two counseling contacts per semester for each student, establishing a referral system with support groups to assist students identified as at-risk, and fine tuning the early detection system to track students' progress and provide academic assistance. The Instant Admit applications from high school seniors were up 9.7% in one year. New faculty and staff at various stages of their academic careers were hired, filling full-time, tenure-track positions in English, communications, and history. Part-time professionals were hired in the areas of the High School Initiative, Media Production & Technology, counseling and the Career Resource Center. The College also used AlumniFinder to obtain up-to-date contact information for 1,000 alumni.

As new projects are incorporated into College operations, they must be properly budgeted, often with adjustments elsewhere within the system to offset increased costs. Consequently, an initiative in one area may not only impact the budget for that area, but the entire budget as a whole. For the College to undertak**e** any given initiative, the Cabinet must first consider cost and value. Some programs pay for

themselves. The High School Initiative, for example, is a program in which high school students take college courses supported by formula funding from the State.

The College's commitment to institutional renewal is amply demonstrated in its use of planning outcomes to make decisions regarding assessment and operations. "Continuous improvement" is the President's watchword; decision-making in the Instructional Affairs Council, Cabinet, academic councils and other meetings reflects this commitment. Many of the College's most important discussions and deliberations have centered on bringing planning goals and objectives to fruition and have thus informed budgetary decisions.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING EFFECTIVENESS

The Dean and the Associate Dean for Planning and Institutional Research are responsible for the assessment of planning effectiveness by soliciting feedback from all stakeholders. Members of the Instructional Affairs Council and Cabinet also make recommendations to streamline the procedure and to use the data in a more profitable manner. Currently, the College is advertising for an Assistant Director of Institutional Research to assist the Dean for Planning and Institutional Research and the Associate Dean for Planning, Research, and Assessment in making the forms easier to use and making the overall planning and assessment process more efficient and effective.

The College uses a common database for collecting new data on planning. The Instructional Affairs Council continually reevaluates adequacy of data, goal and objective attainment, and suggests ways to better facilitate the process. In each instance, the assessment is based on: (1) goals (What should our students be able to do when they complete their course of study?); (2) information (How well are students achieving these goals?); and (3) action (How can we use the information to improve student learning?).

Analysis and Findings

Senior administrators effectively supervise the input of data relating to goals and objectives. They develop ways to attain goals and objectives and communicate their ideas to divisional chairpersons and other administrators, soliciting input in both formal and informal settings. Data from strategic plan outcomes and other information from the previous year are reviewed at the Cabinet level and help to set an agenda for the current and subsequent years. The College continues to identify more formal methods of assessing the effectiveness of planning to ensure that decisions are data-driven and fully reflect the mission and goals of the College.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► The new President emphasizes use of data driven decision-making by fully utilizing data generating capabilities of both Institutional Research and Information Technology.
- ► Developing and designing the *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* involved the entire College, which fostered a widespread appreciation for the importance of planning in general and institutional strategic planning in particular.
- ► While financial support for *operating* purposes from the State and County has been constrained during the past decade, support for *capital* purposes was strong through FY 2010. This enabled the College to expand its buildings and infrastructure to meet the demands of an increasing student population.
- ► Increasing enrollment demonstrates that Essex County residents' perception of the College is positive.
- ► Despite financial hardships, the College has still taken institutional renewal and accountability seriously; it has developed various initiatives derived from relevant planning documents.

Considerations

- ► Seek more formal, technological, and data-driven ways to assess the effectiveness of planning.

Commitments

- ► Further improve marketing, course offerings format, and development operations to prepare for the possibility of lost income.
- ► Match program development and offerings to the critical employment and community needs of the area.

STANDARD 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

Effective planning enables an institution to maintain excellence, especially during a period of prolonged financial difficulty. In the past decade, Essex County College has instituted a planning cycle in all areas to ensure that institutional resources are distributed in efficient and effective ways. Such planning enables the College to maintain goals and critical objectives despite constraints in income. The sources used for this standard include: *Fact Book and Outcomes 2009-2010* (Exhibit 12); *Financial Report of County Community Colleges of the State of New Jersey for the Fiscal Years 2006-2009* (Exhibit 30); *Facilities Master Plan* (Exhibit 17); *Information Technology Master Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 16); as well as financial audit reports (Exhibit 31).

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

The major resources of ECC are the students, faculty, staff and facilities. The use and implementation of resources of the College depend on the College's budget. The College uses its resources effectively and efficiently in support of its mission.

Analysis and Findings

Enrollment. The College continues to grow, with a Fall 2009 credit enrollment of 13,314 students. With nearly 8,000 full-time students and over 5,400 part-time students, ECC ranks sixth among New Jersey's 19 community colleges in headcount enrollment and fifth in FTE enrollment and credit hours generated. In the past five years, full-time enrollment has increased by over 40%, while part-time enrollment has increased by over 20%. Further growth is anticipated, especially among Latino students, who currently comprise over 23% of the overall student population (see *Financial Report of the County Community Colleges of the State of New Jersey for the Fiscal Years 2006-2009*). This publication is issued every year, covering the three previous years.

Faculty. The number of full-time faculty has declined in recent years. In Fall 2000, the College had 160 full-time faculty. The number was reduced to 132 full-time faculty in Fall 2009. In Fall 2000, the full-time to part-time faculty ratio was about 50:50; it now stands at less than 40:60. One of the College's primary goals is to find ways to hire more full-time faculty, to be available for advisement, tutoring, and student mentoring; this is now happening slowly, with between five and ten new full-time faculty in FY 2010 and FY 2011.

Adjunct faculty are comparable in qualifications to full-time faculty, bringing with them valuable working world expertise. In order to ensure the pedagogical skills of both full-time and part-time faculty, the College offers workshops and seminars at various times during the day, evenings, and weekends. Still, more can be done to fine-tune the teaching proficiency of faculty, particularly the adjunct faculty (see also Standard 10 for a more in-depth discussion of this area). The lack of available adjunct faculty in some disciplines causes scheduling problems. In the Division of Business, for example, the lack of qualified adjunct faculty in economics and computer information systems seriously impacts day and evening course scheduling, as well as the scheduling of accounting and business administration courses during the day.

Facilities. The College continues to expand its facilities to meet the needs of academic programs and its increasing student population. In AY 2005-2006, the Police Academy was extensively renovated.

It now has a new roof, a remodeled interior, and a new firing range making it a state-of-the-art facility for County police agencies, the FBI, and other law enforcement organizations to use.

A new Learning Center was constructed on the main campus in Newark during the same period (2005). The 5,800 square foot center consolidated tutoring into one location. The Center includes open spaces where tutors work with students, a computer lab, a seminar room, and a resource unit where students have access to copies of class lessons and textbooks. Centralization of tutoring has led to increased student use of tutoring which now averages about 800 tutoring sessions per month, an appreciable increase over the previously decentralized system.

In September 2008, the College opened its new Center for the Health Sciences. The three-level, 30,000 square foot building houses classrooms and state-of-the-art laboratories for the institution's programs in nursing, physical therapist assistant, and radiography. Moving these programs to the new Center freed up five existing classrooms and six laboratories. The new space was converted into classrooms for general use. These projects were funded by State Chapter XII and County monies.

A new five-level parking deck was opened at the main campus in Fall 2008. The deck, with 742 spaces, serves students, employees, and visitors. For the first time ever, all students who drive to the main campus can be accommodated. Additional surface and garage parking is made available to staff and students elsewhere on campus. The College also plans to expand parking at the West Essex campus by 60 spaces in 2011.

Currently all science laboratories (where most basic equipment dates back to 1976) are being upgraded at a total estimated cost of $6.18 million. It was originally thought that this project would have to proceed in stages. However, thanks to a State of New Jersey Chapter XII award of $5 million and a County of Essex award of $1.5 million, the project will be completed all within a year.

Information Technology. Limited resources have reduced the rate at which computers are being replaced. Consequently, the *Information Technology Plan* has become more conservative, by spreading computer upgrades over a period of five years. However, the BANNER information management system continues to be upgraded annually, as well as equipment needed to develop new hybrid and distance learning courses.

Budget. The College has changed significantly since the 2000-2001 self-study process was completed. The College's operating budget in FY 2010 (July 2009-June 2010) was $60,100,000, and net assets at June 2010 were $126,000,000 (*Certified Audit Report, FY 2010*) (Exhibit 31). Operating revenues increased from $42,531,000 in FY 2001 to more than $60,000,000 in FY 2010, mostly due to enrollment and tuition/fee increases. Enrollment for credit fundable hours (funded using the State formula) has also grown from 210,525 hours in FY 2001 to 317,751 in FY 2010 (*State Credit Hour Enrollment Report,* Exhibit 32*)*. The Fall 2000 headcount was 8,868 with full-time students at 49% and part-time students at 51%. The Fall 2009 headcount was 13,314 with full-time students at 59% and part-time students at 41%.

The College's operating budget consists of two components. The first is the "personnel services" budget; the second is "other than personnel services." Since the College is labor intensive, personnel services (i.e., salaries and fringe benefits) consume 84% of the operating budget. The remaining 16% covers costs of all non-personnel expenditures.

While the overall budget has increased, in recent years the College has experienced fluctuating levels of funding from public sources. The increase in student enrollment, coupled with tuition and fee increases, accounts for almost two-thirds (60%) of the total operating income and has kept the College solvent.

Budget and Planning. Despite relatively level funding from State and County sources, the College has been able to manage because of increased student enrollment. But enrollment alone cannot be relied upon to make the College solvent. Consequently, senior administrators worked with the College's Board of Trustees to enforce economy measures to enable the institution to end each year "in the black."

In New Jersey, the State, County, and tuition/fees were originally supposed to each contribute 33 1/3% of institutional revenue. It was clear, however, that the State and County government would not be able to maintain such a level of support. In FY 1999 for example, State, County, and tuition and fees accounted for 26.8%, 31.5%, and 38%, respectively, of the revenues. By FY 2010, those percentages had changed dramatically for the State, County, and tuition and fees. While tuition and fee income had risen to 60% of revenues, the State had dropped to 19.2% and the County to 18.3% (with miscellaneous revenues counting for 1.6%).

This raises an ongoing concern: How much can we increase tuition and still keep an open door policy? Thousands of our students are among the working poor; they earn too much for financial aid yet too little to afford their tuition, fees, and books. Thus, a large percentage of our students register for one term, then "stop out" to earn money, re-register, then once again stop out. The more the College is forced to increase tuition and fees, the more working poor enroll for a semester, then stop out to raise money for tuition, fees, and books.

Members of the President's Cabinet met in extraordinary sessions in recent years to find ways to save money wherever possible—savings that would admittedly be painful, but would not jeopardize the institutional mission and values, in particular, its mission as an open admissions institution. Enrollment and cost analysis have been undertaken by program and course section as part of the College's resource allocation and performance assessment efforts. The Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment (OPRA), using BANNER (the College's management information system) and other sources, generates numerous reports each year to provide evidence of productivity, capacity, and costs.

Sound management has enabled the College to curb costs. Some of the measures and the attendant cost savings for FY 2009 and FY 2010 are presented in Table 4. Other cost containment measures taken in the three prior fiscal years (i.e., 2006-2008) resulted in sustainable reductions in annual expenditures of $2,852,740. Even with reductions in expenditures, the College had to dip into reserves to sustain its operating budget for several years. In the fiscal years 2004-2008, ECC had to appropriate funds from reserves to balance the budget, as shown by financial audits. However, through good planning in FY 2009 and FY 2010, each fiscal year has ended in the black without having to resort to appropriations from reserves. Good planning has even allowed the College to hire small numbers of faculty.

For two decades, College employees received annual increments at or in excess of the cost of living. However, this is no longer the case. The immediate future is extremely uncertain as the State confronts a multi-billion dollar deficit. In addition to scaling back on increments, the College faces significant increases in costs of health benefits, increased costs of goods and services, and increases in costs of expenditures for insurance, printing, postage, and utilities. To compensate, the College has been successful in constantly exploring other less expensive ways of doing business. The College continues to find ways to economize, and in ways that do not fundamentally compromise its mission and values, the integrity of its instruction, its academic programs, and student support services.

Table 4: Cost Savings – FY 2009 and 2010

Description	FY 2009 Savings	FY 2010 Savings
Cost savings in personnel and fringe benefits achieved through budget reduction initiatives incl. staff separations, hiring restrictions, elimination of positions, layoffs, overtime reductions and consolidation of departmental functions.	$1,541,874	$ 1,595,840
Utility savings resulting from HVAC motor upgrade	$ 175,864	$ 186,415
Reduction in printing cost of course book schedules	$ 4,500	$ 4,000
Telecommunications savings by moving to a new phone Provider	$ 48,000	$ 40,000
Continued efforts of ECC's Bursar's Office to increase tuition receivable payments thereby reducing bad debts.	$ 75,000	$ 50,000
All other (rebid services, renegotiated dental contract, general office supplies, travel cuts, etc.)	$ 15,000	$ 12,000
Total Cost Savings	**$1,860,238**	**$1,888,255**

Budget and Planning Audits. Essex County College is required to submit an annual audit to the Education and Local Government Section of the Office of Management and Budget analyzing accounts and transactions for the previous fiscal year. From 1985 to 2008, the College employed Ernst & Young to conduct this audit. As of FY 2009 fiscal year, the College changed auditing firms for accountability purposes and now uses Wiss and Company of Iselin, NJ, effective FY 2009-2010. The change in auditors has remained seamless.

Based on longstanding experience with the College's internal control and accounting practices, Ernst & Young identified ECC as a low risk organization. The College has received unqualified audit opinions since 1981. In addition, the firm did not find it necessary to issue a management letter listing recommendations for improvement for the fiscal year period 2005 to 2008. This attests to the strong internal control mechanisms and insight of Financial Affairs to identify weaknesses and correct them expeditiously.

For FY 2008-2009, the College also received a clean evaluation, along with a management letter that Wiss and Company "did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that we consider to be material weaknesses…" However, the auditors did make specific recommendations to strengthen operating efficiency…"that merit the College's consideration" regarding outstanding student financial aid checks, accrued expenses, and retainage payable, consistency of return of Title IV funds calculations, financial reporting of Pell payment data, and financial reporting of the Perkins budgetary expenditure report (*2008-2009 Audit,* Exhibit 31). In each case, the College implemented corrective actions and procedures to conform to the auditors' recommendations. The College will continue to use Wiss and Company, whose competency and thoroughness are documented in its work.

A *Five-Year Budget Projection* may be found in Appendix B. It reflects the State's continuing fiscal crisis while also reflecting the County's positive contingency of roughly $20 million. We anticipate

that while appropriations from the State will remain constrained, the College should yield sufficient operating and capital aid from the County.

As for the College, fiscal years 2009 and 2010 produced substantial surpluses from increased enrollments and employer retirement initiatives given to employees in 2008 and 2009. As a result, the College has a substantial amount of unrestricted reserves that can be transferred to the operating fund. These reserves will be more than sufficient to cover any shortfalls in funding and incurred deficits.

Capital Budget. Ordinarily, the State and the County equally fund capital projects through a Chapter XII program for major construction and renovation which includes cost of equipment. In previous years, the allocated awards have been generous, and the College completed numerous major projects. The good news is that new funding has become available. The County, after advising the College that it has nearly reached a debt ceiling that precludes awards to the College, made ECC a priority and awarded the College $550,000 for FY 2011 and $1.5 million for FY 2012 to be used primarily for science laboratory renovations. The County of Essex Treasurer has verbally notified the College that it can expect $1,250,000 in capital awards for the 2012 fiscal year. The College is grateful to the County for these capital awards.

In summary, despite funding shortfalls from both the State and County, the College's finances are currently in order. The President and her Cabinet, which includes the Comptroller, has used planning and assessment documents to reduce spending across-the-board to make certain that no one area has had to absorb the majority of cutbacks. As indicated previously in Standard 2, the Instructional Affairs Council and Cabinet will continue to ensure that the strategic planning process informs budgeting throughout the institution.

There are reasons for optimism. The promise of distance and hybrid courses, which are currently running experimentally, bodes well for the future. The fact that the College ended FY 2009 and FY 2010 without having to dip into reserves is also evidence of good planning. ECC's student recruitment is on strong footing, and the College's new first-time, full-time population has far outdistanced other New Jersey community colleges in recent years. The College's reputation is also sound. Workforce development students regularly transfer to standard credit-bearing programs (one out of every three ECC graduates started in a Community and Continuing Education program). High school seniors who have taken ECC courses for credit are much more likely to enroll at the institution. And the College continues to advertise for new faculty to teach on a full-time basis.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► Despite financial hardships, the College remains committed to institutional renewal and has supported various initiatives that emanated from relevant planning documents.
- ► Sound management has enabled the College to weather the current financial storm without resulting to draconian measures.
- ► Data driven outcomes analysis and accountability measures have been increased during the tenure of Dr. Abdullah.

Considerations

- ► Apprise the County that its support is essential to the College's ability to effectively meet its mission.
- ► Seek non-traditional external sources of funding through creative leveraging of mutually beneficial needs assessment to fund projects that increase student success.

Commitments

- ► Implement cost saving initiatives while exploring new funding opportunities (e.g., grants and foundation efforts).
- ► Work with Wiss & Company to implement additional ways to strengthen operating efficiency.

CHAPTER 3
STANDARDS 4 AND 5

Standard 4

Leadership and Governance

The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resources development, consistent with the mission of the institution.

Standard 5

Administration

The institution's administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution's organization and governance.

STANDARD 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

OVERVIEW

The mission of Essex County College is to provide "an open access community college dedicated to academic excellence" which "serves the dynamic needs of diverse constituencies through comprehensive educational programs and services." In order to be worthy of its mission, Essex County College has established a structure of governance which reflects the expectations, experience, and diverse perspectives of the community it serves. To achieve this mission and to realize the related goals, a system of governance has been established consisting of the Board of Trustees, the President, the President's Cabinet, the Instructional Affairs Council, and six college-wide governance councils.

Since the College first opened, trustees and senior administrators have believed that a system of shared governance is the most effective approach to formulate and implement policy. Therefore, sharing information, suggestions, and proposed policy changes is a long-honored practice. Students, faculty, professionals, administrators, and trustees all reinforce the shared governance system by their active participation. Major sources for this standard include: *New Jersey Statutes Annotated* (Exhibit 27); *ECC Employee Attitude Survey* (Exhibit 5); *Essex County College Regulations Manual,* (Exhibit 18); *College Catalog* (Exhibit 1); *Update* (Exhibit 33); the *ECC e-newsletter* (Exhibit 34); and the *Board of Trustees Survey* (Exhibit 6).

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is composed of local business and community residents who voluntarily offer their service. In accordance with *New Jersey Statutes Annotated (NJSA) 18A:64a-8*, membership consists of the County Superintendent of Schools with 11 other unpaid individuals. Essex County College Board of Trustees members are entrusted to provide ethical and responsible leadership in balancing current and emerging needs of diverse constituencies. Board responsibilities are specified in *NJSA 18A:64a-12*. By law, at least two of the members must be female. The Governor of the State of New Jersey appoints two of the members while the County Executive as the appointing authority of the County of Essex, selects eight members with the advice and consent of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Appointed trustees serve a four-year term of office and remain active until their respective successors are nominated and qualified. Trustees must be residents of Essex County for at least four years in order to serve. Additionally, one graduating student is elected annually by his or her peers to serve a one year term on the Board, with the same rights and responsibilities as other trustees. Neither elected officials nor College employees can serve on the Board. The College President serves in an ex officio capacity.

Each year the Board reorganizes, electing a chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer, and secretary, who comprise the Board Executive Committee. This group may meet separately to discuss pertinent issues. The most active trustee committees are the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, and the Academic & Student Affairs Committee. Other committees meet on an intermittent or as-needed basis. They include the Board of School Estimate that meets annually to determine the amount of County aid that will be allocated to the College, the Board Policy/Bylaws Review Committee, the Community Relations Committee, the Labor Liaison Committee, and the Site/Facilities Committee, and the Affirmative Action Committee. Other appointees serve as liaisons to the ECC Foundation Board, the Police Academy, and the West Essex Campus Board.

Once appointed, the trustees participate in an orientation session conducted by the trustee chairperson, President, and designated staff. Topics include the general nature of trusteeship, the powers of the Board, and the College's expectations of trustees. Also, the College's budget, organizational structure, and current and emerging issues are reviewed. Each new trustee receives a copy of the *NJSA Title 18A Education Administrative Regulations*, Board by-laws and policies, and collateral materials explaining the College's mission, organization, collective bargaining agreements, and academic programs.

The Board of Trustees is distinguished and active members of the community who represent the diverse composition and different perspectives of College constituencies (see Appendix C for biographical information on current Board of Trustee members and Board membership terms).

The Board of Trustees meets monthly, except in July and August when the Board Executive Committee reviews proposed purchases, personnel actions, and other decisions that require immediate action. Additionally, periodic Board retreats provide a forum to discuss educational programs, finances and strategic planning efforts, student affairs, continuing education programs, and other College-related issues. Prior to each Board meeting, trustees receive a written report from the President (*President's Report to the Board of Trustees*) in which she overviews monthly accomplishments and discusses issues of importance to both the trustees and the administration (Exhibit 35). The Executive Council of the Board of Trustees also meets independently or meets with the President, to discuss items that require immediate attention.

At each Board of Trustees meeting, representatives from the Student Government Association, union leadership and the Alumni Association have the opportunity to formally report or comment on their concerns about various facets of college operations, suggested policies, and other College issues. Trustees thus gain a broader perspective from key institutional stakeholders.

Analysis and Findings

The Trustees operate in a climate of mutual respect and with a clear understanding of legislative mandates. They envision themselves as a policy-making body whose role is to maintain strong financial control of the College by holding the President accountable for internal operations. The Board of Trustees' legal counsel provides guidance and independent financial auditors ensure the adequacy of the College's internal fiscal controls.

The Board of Trustees maintains high ethical standards. Each year, individual Trustees file a Local Government Ethics Law-Financial Disclosure Statement with the State of New Jersey which describes all material facts and relationships. They also abstain from Board actions that may be perceived as a conflict of interest. Trustees also value self-assessment as demonstrated by 100% of trustee responses to a 39 item self-evaluation document (2009). In this self-assessment, they gave all evaluative categories a 4.0 rating or above on a 5-point scale with a mean score of 4.82 in seven key items (see *Board of Trustees Survey,* Exhibit 6). The results of this survey demonstrate the Board's commitment to the role of the Trustees in fulfilling the College mission.

THE PRESIDENT

The President is the chief executive officer of the College responsible to the Board of Trustees for all matters regarding College operations. The President formulates policies for Board consideration and is charged with implementing approved policies and practices consistent with the College's mission,

values, and goals. The President uses institutional planning and assessment efforts to attain goals and objectives consistent with Board expectations, and maintains an administrative structure that enables the President to effectively manage institutional resources.

The President's two primary advisory bodies are the President's Cabinet and the Instructional Affairs Council. Current members of the Cabinet include: the President; the Acting Senior Vice President/Chief Academic Officer; the Dean of Faculty; the Dean of Educational Services; the Comptroller; the Dean of Community and Continuing Education; the Dean of Student Affairs; the Dean of Information Technology; the Dean for Planning and Institutional Research; the Director of Human Resources; the Director for Marketing and Communications; and the Assistant to the President/Director of Board Affairs (see Appendix D, *Interim Organizational Chart 2010-2011*).

Members of the current Instructional Affairs Council include the Dean of Faculty; the Dean of Educational Services; the Dean of Information Technology; the Dean of Student Affairs; the Dean for Planning & Institutional Research; the Dean for Community and Continuing Education; the Associate Dean for Planning, Institutional Research, and Assessment; and the Director of Grants. The Instructional Affairs Council is the body composed of higher echelon administrators which advises the President's Cabinet on issues, concerns and policies crucial to the well-being of the College. All recommendations from the College governance councils are reviewed for action by the Instructional Affairs Council.

As President Abdullah became more acclimated to Essex County College, she analyzed the structure and proposed changes in order to focus more fully on student success. In September 2010, she appointed Dr. Donald Green as Acting Senior Vice President/Chief Academic Officer. Dr. Green has extensive experience in program development and academic planning as well as a reputation for introducing innovation in order to assist students to succeed. In November 2010, the Board of Trustees approved Dr. Abdullah's overall plan for administrative reorganization. Under the new structure, which will be fully operational in late Spring or early Summer 2011, the members of the reorganized Cabinet will include: the President; the Senior Vice President/Chief Academic Officer; the Senior Executive Director, Finance (the Comptroller will be retiring this June); the Executive Dean, Student Success and Educational Services (currently the Dean of Educational Services); the Executive Dean, West Essex Campus and Continuing Education (currently the Dean of Community and Continuing Education); the Executive Dean/Chief Information Officer, Administrative and Learning Technologies (currently the Dean of Information Technology); the Executive Dean, Special Initiatives (currently the Dean of Student Affairs); the Director of Human Resources; the Director of Marketing and Communications; and the Special Assistant to the President/Dean of Board Affairs (see Appendix E, *Proposed Organizational Chart*).

Members of the new Instructional Affairs Council will include: the Senior Vice President/Chief Academic Officer; the Executive Dean, Educational Success and Educational Services; the Executive Dean, West Essex Campus and Continuing Education; the Executive Dean, Chief Information Officer, Administrative and Learning Technologies; the Executive Dean, Special Initiatives; the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences; the Dean of Workforce Development; the Dean for Planning & Institutional Research; the Associate Dean of Planning, Institutional Research, and Assessment; and the Director of Grants.

Shared Governance. Implicit in all facets of institutional operation is the ideal of shared governance and decision making. The College advisory councils (see Appendix F for organizational structure) provide recommendations to the Instructional Affairs Council and the President's Cabinet. The councils are:

- The Academic Advisory Council (AAC) which addresses academic policy issues.
- The Academic Foundations Advisory Council (AFAC) which develops and evaluates remedial and developmental courses and programs, including those in English, reading, mathematics and English as a Second language.
- The Standards and Assessment Advisory Council (SAAC) which reviews issues pertaining to academic integrity and the grading policy, establishes program assessment criteria, and assists in program assessment review.
- The Institutional Computing Advisory Council (ICAC) which focuses on computer-related policies and procedures affecting academic programs, computer classrooms and labs.
- The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) which focuses on college employee scholarship and continuing professional development for faculty. Each year, PDAC sponsors various seminars and workshops to help faculty members increase their instructional effectiveness, their technical literacy, and their effectiveness as student mentors.
- The College Curriculum Advisory Council (CCAC) which reviews all proposed changes in curricula, including proposed changes in the core curriculum and program graduation requirements, and the addition or elimination of courses and programs.

The councils are comprised of faculty and staff representing departments or academic areas of the College, divisional chairpersons, representatives from the administration, student government, and the West Essex campus (see Appendix F for organizational structure of each council). College regulations and the bylaws of each council determine the actual numbers of faculty on each council and which departments or academic areas are represented. In all cases administrators who serve on the councils are non-voting.

With input from the academic deans, these councils identify goals and projects for each academic year. The councils meet monthly to implement goals, initiate projects, discuss new ideas, and bring resolution to outstanding proposals. Minutes of the meetings are distributed to all academic leaders and recommendations are then forwarded to the Instructional Affairs Council, the President's Cabinet, and finally to the Board of Trustees.

Analysis and Findings

The effectiveness of these advisory councils is uneven. While several advisory councils regularly send a number of staff and faculty generated proposals to the Instructional Affairs Council, others send few proposals forward for administrative consideration. Having pointed this out, the performance of the governance councils has improved. Under the previous structure, few proposals worked their way up to the Deans' Council and the President's Cabinet. A review of the performance of the councils is conducted annually by the Academic Affairs office.

A survey of the members of the College councils demonstrated a strong approval rating of the work of the councils (*Governance Council Survey*, Exhibit 36). The central council is the Academic Advisory Council (AAC). When the members were asked if they understood the role of the councils, 100% of the 15 employee respondents replied that they did. Ninety-three percent (93%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the council "completed projects that furthered the academic

goals of the College." Separate surveys were presented to each council and the results were similarly strong.

A collegial relationship exists among the governance councils of Essex County College. Each council is mandated to cooperate with other college-wide committees on matters of mutual interest. The *ECC Employee Attitude Survey* of 2009 (Exhibit 5) found "a spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit" highly rated by administrators, faculty, and members of the Professional Association. These groups strongly felt "the administration provides me with adequate information about what is going on at ECC."

THE PRESIDENT, PLANNING, AND BUDGETING

Dr. Abdullah brought with her a strong tradition of planning and budgeting. She quickly implemented an institutional effectiveness calendar. The *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* area accomplishments are placed in an outcomes document and are reviewed each year. The accomplishments (outcomes) are used for decision-making each Spring term. Area plans are then reconfigured based on Cabinet review of the outcomes.

Dr. Abdullah and her Cabinet staff have already completed one cycle of the budgeting process. The budgeting process starts at the director/coordinator/chair level and works its way up through area heads and the Cabinet and Board. The budgeting process works together with the FY 2011 planning process; departmental budget objectives are reviewed at mid-year, together with the budget, and again in the Summer.

ESTABLISHED COMMUNICATION POLICY

The College uses traditional media to communicate issues, practices, procedures and newsworthy information with internal and external constituents. The College President maintains open communication with the Board of Trustees. Periodic retreats and scheduled monthly meetings with members of the Board provide the means to address concerns and make decisions on internal procedures, practices, and activities. In the *President's Report to the Board of Trustees* the President gives a monthly update on internal funding, activities, accomplishments, and newsworthy events. Then, in their monthly public meetings, the Board of Trustees informs both internal and external constituents of actions taken.

At the annual Convocation, held at the start of the academic year, the President reports to the College community on changes in staff and other newsworthy institutional developments. Throughout the year, the President relies on the Executive Officers of the President's Cabinet to disseminate relevant information to their respective areas. Departmental, divisional, and bi-monthly area meetings are major avenues of internal communication for faculty and staff. E-mail, interoffice mail, departmental bulletin boards, and the College website are also used to disseminate information. This includes information regarding changes in laws, regulations, and programmatic requirements.

New employees are apprised of relevant practices and procedures immediately upon appointment. Adjunct faculty receive appointment, logistic, departmental, and job-related information during their departmental Adjunct Faculty Orientation at the beginning of each term. All new permanent full-time employees must attend an orientation conducted by the Human Resources Department to review practices and procedures regarding job descriptions, benefits, and time and attendance. At the Orientation, new College administrators receive a copy of the College Regulations (Exhibit 18) and new permanent employees receive a copy of the following regulations and policies: Institutional Code of Ethics,

Computer and E-Mail Usage, Drug-Free Workplace, and Sexual Harassment Policy. Bargaining Unit Contracts are disseminated to all employees through the College website. The Human Resources Department posts employment vacancies on the Job Opportunities Bulletin, a weekly listing of employment vacancies on the College website. The employee payroll stub is used to alert employees of date sensitive payroll and benefits issues.

Technology has played a major role in the success of today's competitive educational environment. Using emerging technology, the College has improved means of communication over the last decade. In 2006, a new and improved telephone service was installed that joined all campuses in the same phone network with improved caller ID and voicemail services. Also, significant improvements have been made to both the design and content of the College website. The ECCPortal now serves as the College's Intranet site. Content on College practices, procedures, events, and news is continually being added to both the Internet and Intranet sites. A considerable amount of Human Resources information is now available on the Internet. The WebServices system, on the College's intranet site, provides employees with direct access to salary, payroll, job history and personal information. WebServices also maintains scheduling, availability, grading, and other course-related information for faculty, existing, and incoming students.

ECC This Month (Exhibit 37), a monthly schedule of College events, closings and major holidays, is published by the Auxiliary Services Department and posted throughout the College campuses and on the College website. *Eye on Essex* (Exhibit 65), which debuted January 2011, celebrates the College's core values which are "Teaching and Learning," "Excellence and Accountability," "Community," "Diversity and Access," and "Legacy." Information on the College's academic programs, practices, procedures and schedule are described in the Essex *County College Catalog*, *Options* magazine (Exhibit 7), *Community and Continuing Education Course Schedule Book* (Exhibit 38), and other publications prepared and distributed by various areas, divisions and departments of the College.

Information of newsworthy College developments is made available through regular press releases and feature stories appearing in local publications, such as *The Star Ledger*, local TV stations, such as *New Jersey 12*, and through the periodic *Update*, and *E-Newsletter* prepared by the College. The *E-Newsletter* is an electronic newsletter published monthly on the College website. Both newsletters discuss faculty and administrative staff achievements, alumni and student news, special events, success stories, and academic, grant and program initiatives. Various areas, divisions, and departments of the College, for example The *Center for Technology News* (Exhibit 39), *EOF Matters* (Exhibit 40) and other publications provide department-specific news. Marketing materials used for student recruitment are developed and distributed to the local high schools and other recruitment centers. The periodic publication, *Observer* (Exhibit 41), serves as 'the student voice' and presents College news and concerns from the students' perspective. The *Observer* is available at various locations throughout the College.

Analysis and Findings

The results of College-wide surveys make it clear that the communications system established at Essex County College is effective. In a survey of ECC employees, 75% of the respondents reported that the administration provides them with adequate information regarding on-campus activities. Seventy-one percent (71%) agree or somewhat agree that the policies, procedures, and operations of the college are well-communicated. Additionally, 70% at least somewhat agree that the lines of communication are open and sufficient. The College will continue to improve communication even further as it strives for openness and transparency at all levels.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► The Board of Trustees fulfills its role in the governance structure of the College in accordance with statutory requirements and guidelines. The Board reflects the diversity of the College and the community it serves and includes representation from the student population.
- ► The Board of Trustees discloses relationships and adheres to clearly stated guidelines regarding conflict of interest.
- ► College-wide governance committees effectively respond to input from various constituencies and interest groups.
- ► The College will continue to improve communication even further with initiatives that strive for openness and transparency at all levels.
- ► Based on the results of the 2009 *Employee Attitude Survey*, most employees agree that the lines of communication are open and sufficient, and are provided with adequate information about what is happening at the College.

Considerations

- ► Expand the scope of the e-newsletter (and other media), providing internal constituencies with updates on enrollment, activities, achievements, practices, and procedures.

- ► Strengthen the governance councils by fine-tuning roles and responsibilities and providing a structured timeline for recommendations from council to come up through the higher chains of command for consideration and implementation.

Commitments

- ► Establish mechanisms to further strengthen two-way communication between the Board of Trustees, the President's Cabinet, the various councils, and the College community.
- ► To supplement the self-evaluation process, periodically engage the services of a governing Board expert to evaluate the performance of ECC's Board of Trustees and make recommendations for improvement.
- ► Establish a 360 degree evaluation system for all departments in the College to determine both internal and external satisfaction with services and identify areas for improvement.
- ► Strengthen governance council attendance and communication with the Instructional Affairs Council and Cabinet.

STANDARD 5: ADMINISTRATION

OVERVIEW

Essex County College has an administrative structure in place to promote learning and to ensure efficient operations. The system of shared governance described in Standard 4 enhances operations on behalf of students, faculty, and staff. The institution-wide commitment to leadership and governance in turn supports continuous improvement in the quality of the College administration. This is proven in its commitment to affirmative action and academic freedom when personnel are hired, evaluated, and promoted. It also assures the institution's dedication to equality, excellence in the workplace, and its commitment to effective administration. Individuals in higher administration enforce policy and aid the President in the day-to-day efforts to ensure an effective and accountable administrative structure. Major sources for this standard include: *Employee Attitude Survey* (Exhibit 5); *Organizational Chart 2008-2009* (Appendix D); *Organizational Chart 2011* (Appendix E); and *Governance Council Survey* (Exhibit 36).

PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION

In April 2009, after 29 years as President of Essex County College, Dr. A. Zachary Yamba announced his retirement. As the longest serving president of any New Jersey college or university, President Yamba and Essex County College were seen as one and the same. Immediately after Dr. Yamba announced his retirement, the Board of Trustees established a Board of Trustees Presidential Search Committee comprised of five Board members, as well as an Advisory Committee consisting of the Alumni Association President, Bargaining Unit Representatives, Deans' Council Chairperson, and the Student Government Association President. To ensure structure and transparency, the Board hired the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to conduct a nationwide search to recruit appropriate candidates. The Presidential Search process was explained on the College website and periodic progress reports from the Board's Presidential Search Committee and ACCT were posted.

On January 26, 2010, the Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Edythe M. Abdullah as the sixth President of Essex County College and the first woman to occupy this position. Dr. Abdullah, who assumed the presidency on April 1, 2010, is the former President of the Downtown Campus of Florida State College in Jacksonville. She brings a wealth of experience and an impressive record of achievement to Essex County College. Dr. Abdullah earned her bachelor's degree from Valparaiso University in Indiana and was awarded a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Florida. She also holds a Leadership Certificate in the Management of Lifelong Education from Harvard University and was a Kellogg Fellow with the League for Innovation in Community Colleges. Recognized for her expertise in workforce training and adult education, the College's new President has long championed student success in community colleges.

Presidential Accountability. The President reports directly to the Board of Trustees, and is required to submit a detailed annual self-assessment. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, as chairperson of the evaluation committee, meets with the President to discuss the Board's response to the self-evaluation.

Analysis and Findings

The College's Board of Trustees acted responsibly throughout the presidential search process. Although the Board made the final selection, they sought input from every major internal constituency,

including students, faculty, collective bargaining heads, and alumni. The College's website kept the College community informed of the progress of the search and the Board of Trustee's Chairperson provided updates at each Board meeting.

Dr. Edythe Abdullah, has already proven her proficiency in higher education governance and administration. She has quickly apprised herself of Middle States' expectations and institutional operations with particular interest in planning, administrative and academic organization, institutional resource allocations, assessment, and innovative and unique programs that promise superior outcomes.

PENDING ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

After analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the administrative structure under Dr. Yamba, Dr. Abdullah moved to reestablish the President's Cabinet (see Standard 4 for details). She is confident that the members of the Cabinet will provide wise counsel on: (1) academic and administrative activities in their own areas; and (2) College-wide developments. Emphasis has been placed on research and development of the academic area to improve the College's graduation rate which is well below national standards.

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Essex County College periodically reviews the efficiency and effectiveness of its administrative structure. The last major reorganization occurred in AY 2007-2008. At that time, Dr. Zachary Yamba created the position of Executive Vice President and Provost. The rationale was to give greater direction to Academic Affairs and to afford the President greater opportunity to focus on special assignments and external relations. Before the realignment, all members of President's Cabinet reported to the President; after the realignment, only the Executive Vice President/Provost, Director of Public Relations and the Assistant to the President reported directly to the President.

As demonstrated by the proposed organizational chart (see Appendix E), Dr. Abdullah plans to administer the College in different manner. Dr. Abdullah has chosen to have a Senior Vice President/Chief Academic Officer, four Executive Deans, the Director of Human Resources, the Special Assistant to the President and Director of Board Affairs, the Senior Executive Director of Finance, the Director of Marketing and Communication and the Executive Director for Administrative Services report directly to her. Dr. Abdullah believes that this arrangement will keep her better informed about College operations and help her become more fully acclimated to ECC programs and procedures.

Analysis and Findings

To function well, the College's administrative structure depends upon open lines of communication. According to the *Employee Attitude Survey,* while 75% of employees believe the administration provides adequate information about what is going on at the College, 73% indicate that the administrative structure works effectively and efficiently.

From the College's earliest years, establishing faculty-led councils was central to improved communication throughout the College. The College councils have fulfilled the goal of creating inclusive governance at the College (see Standard 4 for a more detailed description).

In the College-wide satisfaction survey, responses were strong to questions regarding council leadership, the involvement of the individual members in the councils, the appropriateness of the matters considered, and the effectiveness of the councils at pursuing and completing the tasks. The Academic

Advisory Council (ACC), the central council, seats the Chairpersons of the other councils, the academic Chairpersons, and other highly involved representatives from every sector of the College. One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents to the satisfaction survey reported that they understand the role of ACC and that they were presented with clear goals and objectives for the academic year. The respondents also agreed that the meetings were informative and inclusive. Nearly 94% of the respondents agreed that ACC receives support from the administration. Seventy-two percent (72%) felt that the administration "responded expeditiously to [ACC] recommendations." Members of other academic governance councils responded similarly regarding administrative support.

PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Board of Trustees, the President, and senior staff all recognize the importance of equal opportunity in hiring and promoting individuals throughout the institution. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, disability, gender, liability for military service, or any other category protected by applicable law. The Director of Human Resources, the College's Affirmative Action Officer, ensures that personnel decisions are consistent with College policies regarding hiring, evaluation, and dismissal.

The College's workforce is nearly as diverse as its student body. Employees at the College represent and celebrate different cultures and origins. The College is proud of its commitment to academic freedom and integrity in the classroom. Both are consistent with the College's values statement (see *Fact Book and Outcomes 2009-2010*, p. 16).

Analysis and Findings

Essex County College does an exemplary job of ensuring compliance with all Federal and State laws regarding employment. Since the College opened its doors in 1968, it has never been found guilty of discrimination of any kind. The *Diversity and Access* principle of the institution's values statement asserts: "We embrace the rich diversity of our student population and our employees. We recognize the historical, intellectual, and artistic contributions of all people, and promote an atmosphere in which distinct cultural viewpoints are accepted and encouraged."

ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFF EVALUATIONS

Each year all administrators are evaluated by their immediate supervisors concerning the extent to which they meet their goals and objectives. They are also evaluated on their job knowledge, level of cooperation, financial management skills, and other key indicators. Evaluation forms have been revised and approved by the College and the Administrative Association, the bargaining unit for all non-confidential administrative personnel. If needed, supervisors work with the employee in question to develop an improvement plan. Occasionally, as a result of weak evaluations, an employee will be reassigned to maximize productivity or terminated.

Non-administrative personnel are also evaluated annually. Forms used for evaluations have been approved by the College administration and several bargaining units. Copies of evaluations for administrative and non-administrative personnel are placed in the employee's permanent personnel file in the Department of Human Resources (see Standard 10 for a discussion of faculty evaluations).

ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION MAKING

Although administrative decision-making and planning at the College is guided by the institutional mission and value statements, because of the need to plan priorities and follow legal requirements, accurate data is essential. The Associate Dean for Planning, Research, and Assessment and the Dean of Information Technology provide data to make decisions on various aspects of institutional operations to help compare current and past performance, compare present to previous goals and objectives, and to benchmark data from other institutions.

Analysis and Findings

At Essex County College, change is necessary to maintain institutional effectiveness. Overall, both faculty members and administrators have done their best to retain relevant policies where they exist, but also welcome informed change to meet new and emerging needs when the argument is compelling. In making changes, maturity of judgment should transcend territoriality and personal interests. As an example, full-time faculty differed with the administration about compensation for teaching on-line courses. In recent months, both sides have acquiesced and an agreement has been reached.

Another example is the Academic Foundations Advisory Council (AFAC) that deals with proposals and recommendations regarding developmental education. Since a large number of Essex County College students are required to enroll in developmental courses, strong communication is essential between areas that focus directly on remediation and central administration. Therefore, the advice provided by a Governance Council, composed of all aspects of the College and in direct communication with the Administration, is vital. Its effectiveness is clearly demonstrated since, in the governance survey, 91% of respondents agreed that the council received support from the administration, while 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the administration responds quickly to all council recommendations.

At Essex County College, one will seldom hear "That's not in the faculty contract" or "That's not in my job description." There is widespread agreement that most problems can be addressed through concerted efforts between the administrators, faculty, students and other constituent groups.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► Former President Yamba developed a strong system of communication within the institution.
- ► Restructuring the governance councils has provided a more inclusive system of College governance through wider participation from constituents within the College community.
- ► A more inclusive procedure was developed to select the new President, Dr. Edythe Abdullah.
- ► As the new president, Dr. Abdullah has brought to the College continued stability in leadership and a fresh perspective.

Considerations

- ► Continue to improve communications between the administration and the College community.

Commitments

- ► Restructure the College to create a more "streamlined" and efficient administration.
- ► Improve employee perceived participation in shared governance.
- ► Ensure yearly governance council objectives are submitted timely and align with the College Strategic Plan.

CHAPTER 4

STANDARDS 7 AND 14

Standard 7

Institutional Assessment

The institution has developed and implemented and assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.
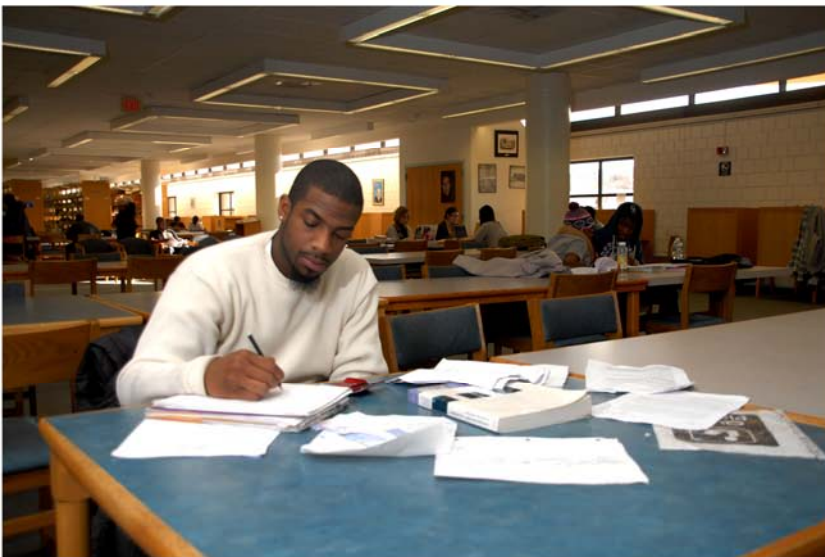
Standard 14

Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

STANDARD 7: INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW

This chapter assesses the College's ability to achieve its mission and goals and answers the question of whether the College collectively does what it says it is doing. Standard 1 states that the College has a clearly defined mission and its goals were derived from and support that mission. This chapter reviews the College's assessment strategies to determine exactly how successful we have been in achieving those goals by emphasizing institution-wide assessment outcomes, as well as program evaluation outcomes. Also included in this chapter is a discussion of student learning outcomes (Standard 14) in specific courses including general education courses. Major documents referenced for this chapter include: the *Institutional Assessment Plan* (Exhibit 4)*; Strategic Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 2); *Academic Master Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 3); *Facilities Master Plan* (Exhibit 17); *Information Technology Master Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 16); *Community College Survey of Student Engagement - CCSSE* (Exhibit 42); and *Survey of Entering Student Engagement - SENSE* (Exhibit 9) results; *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory – SSI* (Exhibit 8) results; *Employee Attitude Survey* (Exhibit 5); *Board of Trustees Survey* (Exhibit 6); *Governance Council Survey* (Exhibit 36); *Fact Book and Outcomes – 2009-2010* (Exhibit 12)*;* and the *Annual Institutional Profile* (Exhibit 21)*.*

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLAN

The first *Institutional Assessment Plan* was written in 2006 and revised in 2009. Both plans were based on college-wide input from the Institutional Assessment Committee. The plan guides the College in gathering and using information for assessing the institution's effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals. The plan contains four primary assessment processes that work synergistically—institutional assessment, program assessment, general education assessment, and student learning outcomes assessment. Specifically, the strategic plan drives the planning documents in each area. In turn, achievements in each area are recorded in the College's *Strategic Plan Outcomes* document and reviewed at the end of each Spring semester. These outcomes are reviewed and are used during the summer to revise area wide plans as necessary. An institutional effectiveness calendar has been implemented for AY 2010-2011 that coordinates reporting from the four primary assessment processes. The calendar provides a mechanism for periodic reviews and status updates.

Institutional assessment and program assessment are the two sections of the Assessment Plan which directly pertain to Standard 7. The College uses a simple schematic to guide the process (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Assessment Process at Essex County College
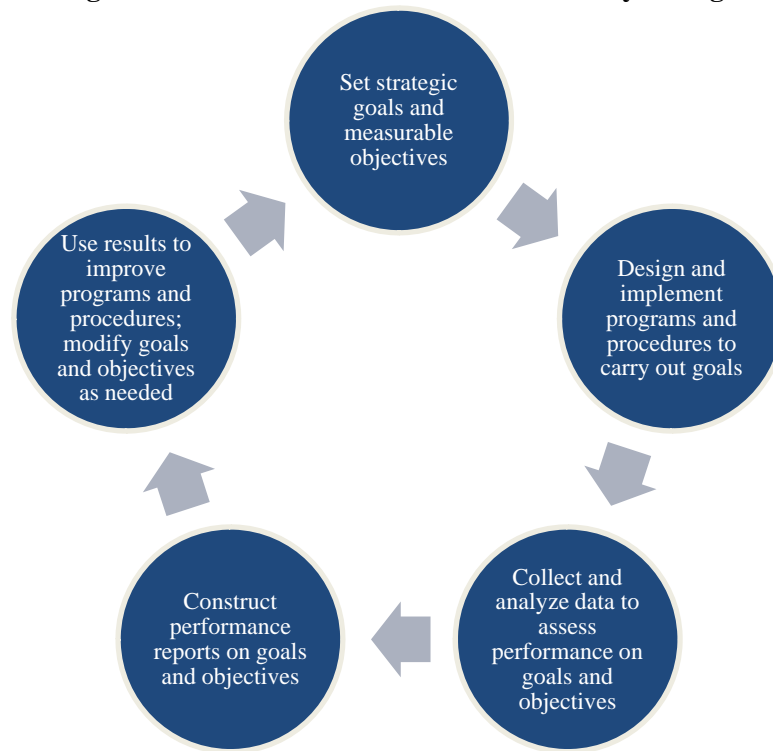
Analysis and Findings

Figure 5 shows that after data are collected and analyzed, they are used to improve programs and procedures. For example, an evaluation of the *2006 Institutional Assessment Plan* led to the rejection of the Nichols five-column plan which was found to be unwieldy and was not endorsed by the faculty. The Nichols plan is not in the new *Institutional Assessment Plan*.

The Institutional Assessment Plan model serves as a basic guide to evaluate most of the College's evaluation efforts. In other words, goals are set, programs are implemented, data are collected, evaluation occurs, and results are used to effect change. Overall, a review of this iterative process has identified the College's weakest point in the process. As evident in the institutional assessment and program assessment sections that follow, it was found that at times data are collected and reviewed, yet not always used effectively for change. The College, under the guidance of its new president, is committed to improving this process.

As the College focused on preparing for the Middle States Self-Study, nearly all of the Institutional Assessment Committee members were appointed to the Steering Committee. Consequently, assessment issues are discussed at the Steering Committee and with the Task Force on Standards 7 and 14. These committees have assumed some of the roles previously under the purview of the Institutional Assessment Committee, which will be reformed in 2011.
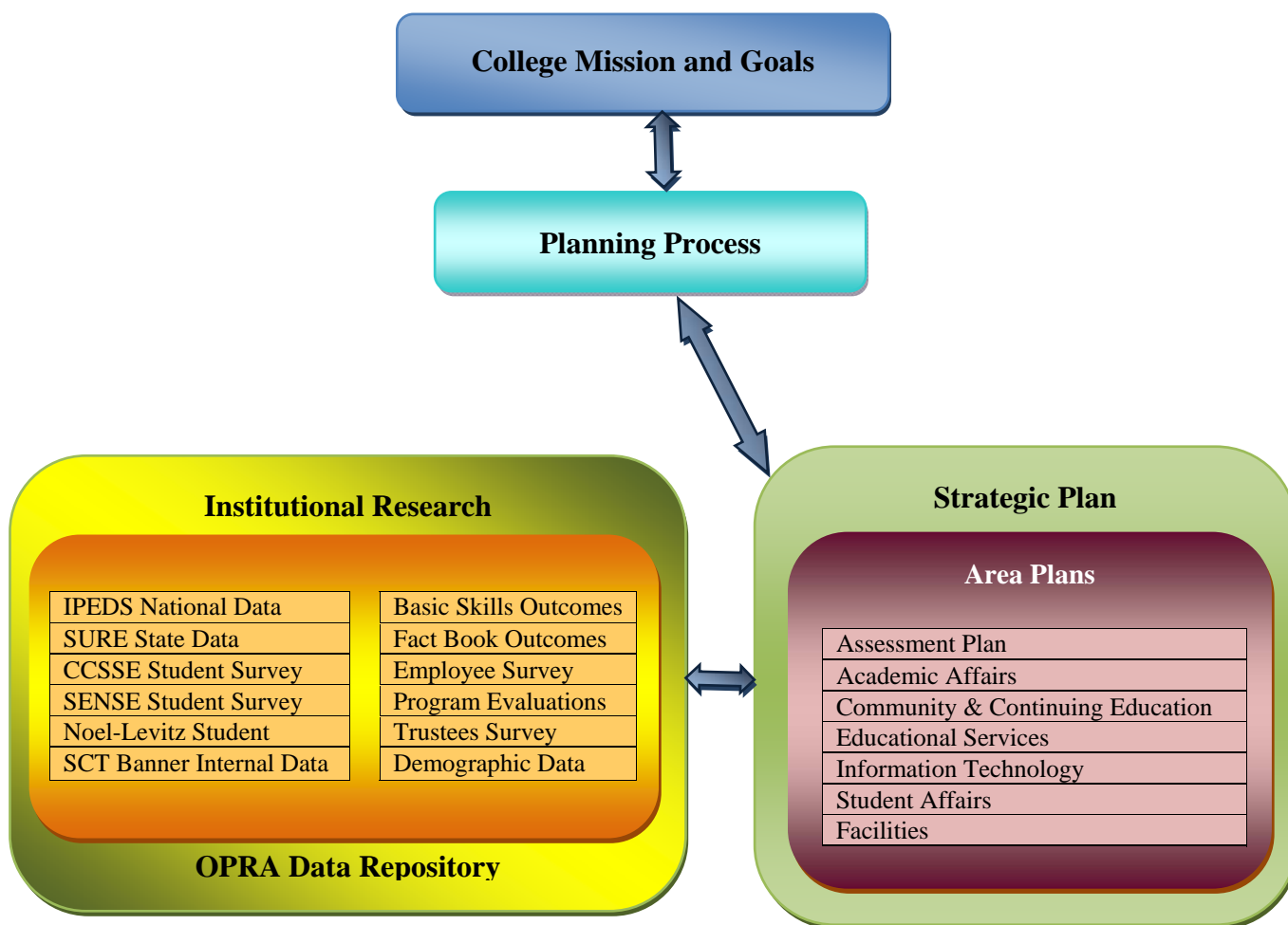
INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

The purpose of institutional assessment is to determine if the institution is achieving its mission and goals. Institutional assessment is holistic by nature to provide for a more global analysis of the College's effectiveness. Assessment information is the basis for analyzing whether or not the College has

achieved its stated goals, for implementing administrative services, managing its administrative divisions, monitoring and improving the environment for student learning, providing appropriate support services for students, and for enhancing overall student success.

Essex County College meets the fundamental elements of institutional assessment. The process is documented and derives out of College's mission and goals. Moreover, the data are designed to be useful and shared with stakeholders and used to improve programs and services.

The Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment (OPRA) is a data repository that forms the foundation of the *Strategic Plan* and other area-level plans. The schematic below (Figure 6) represents a developing process reflecting the constant exchange of information from OPRA to the major stakeholders in the College. These stakeholders have developed plans for their specific areas which are in concert with the College's mission and strategic plan (e.g., Academic Affairs, Educational Services, and Community and Continuing Education)

Figure 6: Institutional Assessment Data Flow

As noted, some of the major sources of data used for institutional assessment are the College's *Strategic Plan Outcomes 2009-2010* (Exhibit 13), surveys, and national and state data. A new Strategic Plan Outcomes template is under development by Information Technology that clearly delineates not only objectives and activities, but the timelines and responsible parties for each (see *Departmental Objectives, 2011,* Exhibit 64).

Strategic Plan Outcomes. OPRA has developed an Access system that permits Deans, Chairpersons, and other designated individuals to access the system and enter outcomes (descriptive and statistical) for each goal and objective (*Strategic Plan Outcomes 2009-2010*). Throughout the year, OPRA downloads the information placed into the outcomes program and shares the outcomes information with senior administrators. During the first two years of the program, a summary report was prepared for these administrators. Currently, the system allows for each area to produce interim reports on a formative basis rather than waiting for a summative report. This change accelerates intervention where warranted.

In addition to the College's *Strategic Plan*, many of its administrative areas have their own plans, all of which are consistent with the College's mission and goals. The major plans are: the *Academic Master Plan*; *Facilities Master Plan*; *Technology Master Plan*; *Educational Services Plan* (Exhibit 25); *Marketing Plan* 2009 (Exhibit 15); and the *Program Assessment Plan* (Exhibit 44). Each plan includes measurable performance objectives to use as a guide for evaluation (see Standard 2 for descriptions).

Surveys. During the last three years, the College has conducted several surveys of students, faculty, administrators, and staff. The *Employee Attitude Survey*, for example, was administered to all employees in March 2009. Data from this survey were shared with the President's Cabinet and all Middle States Task Forces. Other surveys administered in 2009 were the *Board of Trustees Survey* and a *Governance Council Survey*. In Spring 2006, students participated in the *CCSSE* and in Fall 2009, were administered *SENSE* and the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory*. In addition, a *Graduate Follow-Up Questionnaire* (Exhibit 11) is sent to all graduates each year.

National and State Data. The College participates in the New Jersey Student Unit Record Enrollment (SURE) system which provides the State with demographic and outcomes information pertaining to its credit and non-credit students. In addition, as with all colleges, the College provides data to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Each year the College is also required to submit an *Institutional Profile* (Exhibits 21, 43, & 46) to the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and Middle States. An analysis of the demographic and outcomes information submitted to these various groups may be found in the College's annually produced *Fact Book and Outcomes*.

Analysis and Findings

This section demonstrates through specific examples how institutional assessment data have been used to effect change within the institution. The institutional data considered below includes information from the *Strategic Plan Outcomes 2009-2010,* various surveys, national and state data.

Information from the *Strategic Plan Outcomes 2009-2010* has been used to improve College services and programs. Two examples follow:

> **Example 1 - Goal to be fulfilled (Goal 1):**
> Develop new credit and non-credit programs, courses and community offerings that meet emerging needs while ensuring that all current programs and offerings are of superior quality and responsive to academic and labor market demands and community interests.

Relation to College Mission:
The dynamic needs of diverse constituencies are served through comprehensive educational programs and services.
Assessment Methods:
Review occupational demand data and program evaluation data and establish new programs and/or update current programs with a goal of three new programs by Fall 2011.
Results (some examples):
The Division of Business developed a Retail Sales Certificate; the Police Academy developed and implemented 15 new non-credit courses; a 600-hour Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) program was initiated for 35 trainees; and an internship program with Continental Airlines (facilitated by the Stay-in-Step Academy) was implemented with qualifying students.

Example 2 - Goal to be fulfilled (Goal 2):
Implement and upgrade academic and student support programs and services to improve students' access, recruitment, retention and success.
Relation to College Mission:
Essex County College is an open access college and provides comprehensive educational programs and services.
Assessment Methods:
Review marketing penetration rates of recent high school graduates with a goal to increase the penetration rate five percent from Fall 2008 to Fall 2009.
Results:
The Division of Student Affairs created an Instant Admit program. The program grew from 975 admitted in Fall 2008 to 1,071 in Fall 2009 (a 10.3% increase).

The information in the Strategic Plan Outcomes system is used for planning and establishing action items in each College area. At times, however, the outcomes are entered into the database too late to effect change. That is, College administrators are occupied with accomplishing goals and often do not take the time to enter their accomplishments into the system in a timely manner. The College is committed to improving the system. For example, the number of areas that were required to enter outcomes information into the 2009-2010 database are more than tripled from the previous year from 12 to 45 providing a greatly enriched data set to drive planning.

Data from *CCSSE* in 2006 were used to effect changes in several areas. By comparing the responses of 1,651 students from Essex County College to those of other large member colleges (LMC), College decision-makers were able to identify areas that needed improvement. In order to further engage Essex County College students, the College:

- Established more short-term certificate programs in January 2007 such as Office Assistant Program, Biotechnology Program, and Internetworking Technology Program;
- Encouraged adjuncts, through the College's adjunct mentoring program, to help students spend more time studying and to refer students for tutoring;
- Encouraged faculty to provide more student group projects in their classes;
- Provided new students with an orientation to college that made them more aware of the responsibilities involved in a college education. The CSS 101 College Student Success Seminar is an example of this; and
- Increased student and adjunct access to college e-mail accounts.

A major concern is the time between receiving data and implementing decisions for change. For example, although the *CCSSE* data indicated in November 2006 the need for further student orientation to college, the CSS 101 course was not revised until Fall 2008. Although the process was slow, the course is now successful with 40 sections offered in Fall 2010.

The recently administered *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory* and *SENSE* have provided insight into the effectiveness of student services and the College's ability to engage entering students. According to the *Noel-Levitz,* students believe the <u>major strengths</u> at the institution are: "classes are scheduled at times that are convenient," "on-line services are adequate and easily accessible," and "the quality of instruction received in most classes is excellent." The <u>identified challenges</u> are: the enrollment and registration process is neither clear nor well-publicized; students are not notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in class; and, their academic advisor is not knowledgeable about their program requirements.

The major concerns for the College are the challenges identified on the *Noel-Levitz* that relate to academic advisement (statements that were ranked low include: "My academic advisor is approachable," "My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward" and "My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual"). Furthermore, 45% of the *SENSE* respondents "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statement "An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them." In addition, *Employee Attitude Survey* respondents involved in Academic Affairs indicated they did not believe academic advisement worked well, nor did they believe the orientation for entering students was thorough and effective.

The College has made great efforts to address and remedy the concerns that students identified. The results from the 2009 questionnaires have been discussed at the Instructional Affairs Council. Academic Affairs is implementing College-wide in late Spring the use of the College's early warning system by faculty to notify students who are falling behind by week four and encourage those are doing well. With regard to advisement, the following are a few of 41 specific recommendations students have made the College has implemented or will implement for Spring 2011 advisement:

- Hire student ambassadors to assist and direct students during the peak registration period and provide space and access to computers and telephones for these ambassadors;
- Develop a training manual and conduct training for student ambassadors;
- Develop FAQs and answers for prospects, students, and staff, and post them on the website;
- Activate self-service and student e-mail for new students. Create an online demo that can illustrate self-service (e.g., log in to MyECC);
- Require new students to report for intake and their first advisement session;
- Continue to block schedule developmental courses; and
- Implement a "what if" scenario for the College degree audit program in April, 2011.

The *Employee Attitude Survey* results have also been shared with all College stakeholders. Most employees believe the prior College President provided effective leadership, like their job and the kind of work they do, believe the College lives up to its mission, believe their job makes good use of their skills, and believe their immediate supervisor does a good job. The respondents are less satisfied with their opportunity for advancement and promotion, less likely to believe the hiring, retention, and promotion

practices at the College are equitable, and are less satisfied with their salaries. The President's Cabinet will address these personnel concerns during the current academic year.

As noted, the College uses the State's Student Unit Record Enrollment (SURE) and IPEDS demographic and outcomes information as benchmarking data. Each year OPRA shares the *IPEDS Data Feedback Report* (Exhibit 45) with senior administrators. Our custom comparison group includes 16 large, urban institutions serving a predominately Black student population. Based on the most recent 2010 benchmarking data for full-time, first-time, degree and/or certificate seeking students, the following are noteworthy:

Table 5: Example of IPEDS Benchmarking Data
2010

Criteria	*ECC*	*Benchmark Institutions*
Academic tuition and fees	$ 3,264	$2,812
Average grant award all undergraduates	$ 4,320	$3,823
Retention rate Fall to Fall full-time	48%	57%
Retention rate Fall to Fall part-time	34%	44%
150% Graduation Rate	6%	8%
Transfer Out Rate	14%	17%
200% Rate (4-Year)	9%	12%
Degrees awarded	922	479
Cost of instruction per FTE	$2,789	$4,101

These data are shared with appropriate College stakeholders and have been used to effect change. For example, Academic Affairs has used the SURE and IPEDS benchmarking data as an impetus to strengthen student persistence and to improve student success within disciplines through increased grant support of effective programs such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), National Science Foundation Grant, as well as our Equal Opportunity Fund (EOF) program. In addition, the College has increased the number of tutors from 15 to 35. Simultaneously, ECC has increased aid to students to offset tuition and fees expenses. Recently a subcommittee of the Academic Advisory Council was established to research and formulate new methods to improve student retention and increase the student graduation rate.

Information in the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education *Annual Institutional Profile* (Exhibit 21), as well as the data in the *Middle States Annual Profile* (Exhibit 46), highlight demographic and outcomes data. These documents each provide transparency regarding the College's demographic profile and outcomes. One outcome of which the College is particularly proud is that Essex County College ranked 29th nationally in the total number of Associate Degrees awarded to African-Americans in 2008-2009 and 13th in the total number of Associate Degrees in Education (*Community College Week*, June 14, 2010).

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The program assessment process, last revised in Spring 2003, is currently being revised again to place more emphasis on Student Learning Outcomes (see Standard 14 for further discussion). The process is a periodic, systematic, and comprehensive review of the College's academic programs using

multiple indicators. The assessment results are used to improve programs and to help inform decision-makers regarding resource allocation and planning. The program assessment process is directly linked to the College mission and goals, requires college-wide participation, and is faculty-driven. While Goal 6.0 of the *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* is to promote a culture of assessment, Objective 6.3 is to improve the College's methodology to assess program effectiveness. The Standards and Assessment Advisory Council (SAAC) works with OPRA and the Dean of Faculty/Academic Affairs to accomplish program assessment.

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges officially recognized Essex County College's program evaluation efforts as a best practice in 2003. In March 2010, the National Council on Black American Affairs of AACC invited ECC to give a presentation on program evaluation, program assessment guidelines, and standards at its annual conference. The current assessment guidelines at the College are: (1) Program assessment should be consistent with the mission of the college; (2) The purpose of program assessment is to improve student learning and development; (3) Measurable performance objectives (MPO) should be well-defined and identify both the quantity (result-oriented approach) and the quality (process-oriented approach) of learning; (4) Criterion-referenced instruments should be used whenever possible; (5) Assessment should be multidimensional and student cognitive development should be one component; (6) Program assessment should be continuous and on-going; (7) Faculty members should choose and develop valid and reliable assessment instruments and procedures; and (8) Assessment results should be used solely for program improvement and educational research.

The program assessment standards adopted by SAAC require that programs: (1) Have an identified plan for evaluation and feedback to strengthen its outcomes; (2) Have the appropriate number of qualified faculty to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness; (3) Have available and use the resources necessary to accomplish its goals; and (4) Assure a teaching and learning environment conducive to student achievement.

Criteria for each of the standards have been established (*Program Assessment Plan,* Exhibit 44). For example:

For the first standard (this standard has four criteria – two are presented as examples):

Standard 1: The program has an identified plan for evaluation and feedback to strengthen its outcomes:
Criterion 1: A written plan for the systematic evaluation of all components of the program is developed and implemented by the faculty.
Evaluator: Faculty
Documentation: Describe the program's master plan for evaluation of all program components, methods of evaluation, time frame for data collection, individuals responsible and expected outcomes including the impact of developmental and core courses.
Criterion 2: The evaluation plan shall articulate the goals of the program.
Evaluator: Faculty
Documentation: Program goals and corresponding objectives are clearly defined. Attributes (such as knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, etc.) that students should acquire and/or develop in their course of study are identified in course outlines and program objectives.

The Chairperson of SAAC, along with other council members, conducts an annual workshop on how to prepare a Program Assessment Report (PAR). This workshop is held for faculty whose programs are scheduled to be evaluated in the coming one or two years. For example, a workshop was held in March 2010 for programs whose evaluations are due in January 2011 and January 2012. At these

workshops, OPRA provides to all participants program-specific demographic and outcomes information. Specifically, the OPRA data include: (1) five-year enrollment figures; (2) degrees conferred during the past five years; (3) tracking by program for first-time full-time degree-seeking students for five cohort years; (4) a list of all currently registered majors; (5) grade distributions for all major courses; (6) a list of most recent graduates; (7) a copy of the completed Graduate Follow-up Questionnaires from their majors; and (8) projected occupational demand for the program.

All degree and certificate programs, except those evaluated by external licensing agencies, are evaluated on a rotating five-year cycle outlined in the *Institutional Assessment Plan*. SAAC members advise departmental faculty, who in turn generate a program assessment report according to the SAAC standard and criteria. The Office of Planning, Research and Assessment then hires an external evaluator to review the program. The external evaluator must: (1) Review the written PAR; (2) Visit with the chairperson, faculty and students in the program; (3) Write an external evaluation report; and (4) Meet with the Dean of Faculty, Division Chairperson, and faculty to discuss the outcomes and recommendations made in the external evaluation report.

Then a SAAC subcommittee of peers reviews all program evaluation documents and meets with the Division chairperson and faculty to consider all documented outcomes and recommendations and write a summative report. The process is designed to ensure that the research results become the driving force to improve the program.

Analysis and Findings

The College's program assessment process is evaluated regularly and modified when necessary. Members of SAAC review the program assessment reports and the external evaluator's report, and meet with faculty to discuss their program evaluation results. Overall, the change in the annual membership of SAAC has also helped to ensure that a fresh perspective on the evaluation process exist. Recently, SAAC recommended to increase the number of participants in the annual program evaluation workshop to include departments whose evaluations were as many as two years away. This was done to encourage faculty to begin the evaluation process earlier and to avoid having to ask for a time extension.

The President's actionable foresight analysis emphasizes the importance of assessment. Consequently, the program assessment process is now being evaluated and the entire College community is working to improve this process with more emphasis on using program evaluation outcomes to improve teaching and learning, as well as degree completion. A series of College-wide workshops have also helped faculty and program directors to write and evaluation Student Learning Objectives more effectively (See Standard 14). The Division of Mathematics and Physics, for example, used student learning outcome data as a major criterion used in their recent program evaluation (Exhibit 47).

An examination of recent program evaluations demonstrates how the Divisions responded to the program assessment guidelines. All program evaluations now contain the Department's own recommendations for improvement. In addition, the external evaluator's reports and the SAAC PAR-review reports also make specific recommendations.

To date the process has worked well in some cases and less so in others. For example, in the most recent Division of Business's Accounting Program evaluation all standards were addressed and met. The program evaluation related its philosophy to the College's mission and an expanded discussion of the mission and goals led to a discussion exploring the purpose of an Accounting major in an AS degree program. As a result, the Division reviewed the curriculum and program outcomes data. The departmental program recommendations include:

- The Accounting faculty should review course goals and corresponding objectives annually to make sure they reflect current practice;
- The Department should improve the development of measures of student learning outcomes that are empirical in nature; and
- The Department should work cooperatively with others in the College to develop better methods to track their graduates from first contact to degree completion.

The external evaluator also recommended that the Accounting Department:

- Expand coverage of Principles of Accounting II (ACC 102) and Intermediate Accounting II (ACC 202) to include International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS); and
- Use the publisher's test bank which allows for blueprinting of questions to course objectives to assess student learning outcomes.

To date, the Accounting Department has reviewed all student learning outcomes and is working to include IFRS in appropriate courses.

In 2009, the Division of Social Sciences completed its evaluation of the Human and Social Services program. The program evaluation was aligned with SAAC standards as well as with the standards of the Council for Standards in Human Services Education (CSHSE). The departmental program recommendations indicate that the program needs to:

- Reconstitute its Advisory Board;
- Develop a student handbook; and
- Develop a "life-span development" course and determine how to integrate it as a "Major Course Requirement" into its curriculum.

Other program evaluations have not been as positive. The Education program evaluation (2007), for example, was returned for revisions. Other program evaluations have been postponed because no full-time faculty were teaching in the program (e.g., environmental science, architectural technology, and massage therapy).

Facilitating the assessment process is challenging and remains a work in progress. Other problems include the tendency to produce superficial compliance in some areas and to miss stated deadlines. For example, none of the reports due in January 2010 were submitted on time. The Biology program assessment, due in AY 2008-2009 was just completed in October 2010.

The importance of program evaluation has been reemphasized by the new College President and more support has been given to Academic Affairs in the form of a full-time Coordinator of Planning for Institutional, Program, and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment. The person chosen for this full-time position that started in Spring 2011 was Dr. Susan Gaulden, mathematics faculty and chairperson of SAAC.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► The College is establishing a culture of assessment and receives support from the College President, Board of Trustees, and Administration.
- ► The College *Institutional Assessment Plan* was created with college-wide input and is designed to be a practical guide for assessment activities.
- ► The College recognizes the importance of benchmarking and participates in national assessment surveys such as *CCSSE, Noel-Levitz*, and *SENSE.*
- ► The State has recognized the College's program evaluation model as a best practice.

Considerations

- ► Conduct program evaluations in a timely manner.
- ► Hire additional staff to help with institutional and program assessment.

Commitments

- ► Ensure that the results of program evaluations are used to effect change and to better monitor outcomes**.**
- ► Ensure program evaluations are based on national and local assessments (when available).
- ► Assess changes for demonstrated effectiveness (i.e., close the assessment loop).

STANDARD 14: Assessment of Student Learning

OVERVIEW

Assessment of student learning and using the results of the assessments to improve teaching and learning has become the key focus for the College. The emphasis is on providing resources and training to institutionalize assessment. In October 2008, Academic Affairs sponsored a faculty workshop "How to Write Measurable Student Learning Outcomes for the Course(s) You Teach" presented by Dr. Virginia Anderson. The Dr. Anderson's suggestions were not fully implemented. In July 2010, a workshop for Chairpersons and Administrators was given by Dr. Lynn Crosby, an assessment specialist from Florida State College. Also in Fall 2010, Academic Affairs appointed a part-time Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Coordinator. As of Spring 2011, with the strong support of the College President and the Board of Trustees, this position was made a full-time position (Coordinator of Planning for Institutional, Program, and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment). As a result, a common ECC Course Outline Template was established and training was completed for 90% of the College's full-time faculty. The template and course outlines are on the ECC SLO assessment website http://sloat.mathography.org. The assessment of student learning includes assessment of general education goals, as well as outcomes at the course level. Major sources for this standard include: the *Lampitt Bill* (Exhibit 48); and *Course Outlines* containing student learning outcomes (Exhibit 49).

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

General education goals for ECC students have existed since the College opened in 1968. Heretofore, the goal statements, such as those written in 1983, have been broadly defined. These broad objectives have now been replaced with more specific and measurable objectives. The most recent 2007 general education goals and objectives follow the recommendations of the statewide General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC).   These changes ensure that the general education courses of all community colleges in New Jersey are consistent and transfer in-full to state public four-year colleges and universities.   The general education goals that have been established address nine foundation goal categories. Broad course criteria for each category were adopted by all two-year colleges in New Jersey. The foundation categories and corresponding course criteria are as follows:

- *Written and Oral Communication* – Arrays of courses which prepare students to speak, read, and write effectively.
- *Quantitative Knowledge and Skills* – Any college-level mathematics course that builds upon a demonstrated proficiency in basic algebra.
- *Scientific Knowledge and Reasoning* – Any course(s) in the biological or physical sciences. At least one must have a laboratory component.
- *Technological Competency/Information Literacy* – Any course that emphasizes common computer technology skills (e.g., computer science and information technology) that helps students to access, process and present information.
- *Society and Human Behavior* – Any introductory course(s) from among anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology or sociology.
- *Humanistic Perspective* – Any broad-based course(s) in the appreciation of art, music or theater; literature, foreign language, history; philosophy and/or religious studies.

- *Historical Perspective* – Any broad-based course(s) or sequence of courses in world, Western, non-Western, or American History.
- *Diversity* – Any course whose primary purpose is to expose students to a multicultural society.
- *Ethical Reasoning and Action* – This goal may be infused in any of the above categories. The course should include the ethical implication of issues and situations.

All New Jersey community colleges were encouraged to adopt the above goals to assure the seamless transferability of their general education courses to the State's public four-year colleges and universities (*Lampitt Bill*). The GECC also reviewed and approved specific general education courses at every New Jersey community college. The committee approved 98% of the proposed general education courses ECC offers with ECC removing the remaining 2% from its general education core.

The College's goal is for all general education courses to conform to a common outline format. The format will contain Student Learning Outcomes, which include course goals and corresponding measurable performance objectives (*Course Outlines*). These course-level performance objectives will provide guidance for formative and summative assessment in all general education courses. To facilitate college-wide evaluation of general education, a cyclical evaluation schedule was established by which each general education goal will be formally evaluated every three years. The goals that were evaluated in AY 2009-2010 were: Written and Oral Communication; Quantitative Knowledge and Skills; and Technical Competency/Information Literacy. The General Education Subcommittee of Task Force 7 and 14 is responsible for overseeing the most recent general education assessment efforts.

Analysis and Findings

The GECC reviewed and approved the general education goals for all New Jersey two-year colleges. Assessing the extent to which ECC graduates have met general education goals and course objectives is an ongoing area of exploration. A decision was made not to use nationally standardized assessment instruments (e.g., the Measure of Academic Proficiency – MAPP or the Collegiate Learning Assessment – CLA for several reasons. One, previous attempts using standardized summative evaluation did not provide reliable and valid information. Two, when volunteer students were tested, the results appeared to be inflated because better students tended to volunteer to take the test. Furthermore, when students were required to take the test, there was little motivation to perform optimally as the test was not used towards a course grade nor did it serve as a graduation requirement. Three, the normative sample of most nationally standardized instruments does not accurately reflect the urban, minority population the College serves. Nevertheless, the College is actively reviewing the rapidly changing assessment possibilities and continues to discuss a methodology that may work for the students at this institution.

Reviewing the general education evaluation schedule in the Institutional Assessment Plan led to a slight change in the goals to be evaluated. During AY 2009-2010, the general education goals scheduled for evaluation were: (1) Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing; (2) Students will use appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and solve problems; and (3) Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

In Spring 2010, each of these goals was evaluated. Examples of evaluations follow:

General Education Goal: Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

How documented: Each semester all professors teaching ENG 102 evaluate a final research paper according to 18 assessment areas. The criteria include: use of a thesis statement, use of primary and secondary sources, parenthetical citations and paraphrasing. Thirty-five essays from Fall 2009 were randomly chosen from a sample of 350 essays for a detailed statistical review of the 18 assessment areas.

Findings: The lowest mean scores indicate that students had difficulty using parenthetical citations, paraphrasing, writing mechanics and citing works.

Action taken: More emphasis has been placed on teaching the technical aspects of MLA.

Need for further action: The sample size for data collection needs to be increased. Also, some method of evaluating whether or not students communicate effectively orally should be in place for 2010 – 2011.

Subsequent assessment: Evaluate the ENG 102 final research paper according to previously established criteria.   Implement a method for the evaluation of oral communication.

General Education Goal: Students will use appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and solve problems.

How documented: A major challenge is to ensure that students use mathematical operations to solve problems. Final examination data were collected from a sample of 77 students in MTH 100 in Spring 2010. From an analysis of the data collected, it was determined to what extent students met defined program outcomes for MTH 100.

Findings: Seventy-four percent (74%) of the sampled students achieved the measurable performance outcome 4.1, "Write/explain solutions to problems using appropriate mathematical terminology and notation"; however, only 48 % of the sampled students achieved the average score for measurable performance outcome 1.6, "Solve a linear inequality'

Action taken: It was decided to spend more class time on certain topics, including solving linear inequalities (MPO 1.6).

Need for further action: The sample size was small and needs to be increased to include more sections in the Fall 2010.   A follow-up of a student sample including 450 MTH 100 students is underway in Fall 2010.

Subsequent assessment: Continue to use same assessment instrument (i.e. blueprinting tests and the final exam).

General Education Goal: Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

How documented: The College focused on evaluating student learning outcomes related to information literacy.   The assessment instrument used was the Tool for Real-Time Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (TRAILS).   The TRAILS assessment was administered to 650 ENG 096 students (42% of the total number enrolled in the course in Spring 2010).

Findings: Students were most successful on questions that called for the reiteration of terms identified in the lecture. They were least successful on questions that required the application of knowledge or asked students what should "not" be considered.

Action taken: The College created an ad hoc committee to explore how to integrate information literacy skills into other courses and not be a standalone component of a course. In Fall 2010, twenty sections of various courses included an explication and citation assignment embedded within the subject.

Need for further action: This approach for Fall 2010 is being evaluated. The assignment in the future will include the imbedded assessment of other information literacy skills.

Subsequent assessment: Continue to assess using TRAILS.

See *General Education Course Outcomes - Results* (Exhibit 50) for information on these three examples.

These three examples document that the College is assessing Student Learning Outcomes for each general education goal within the three-year cycle.

During AY 2010-2011, the College will continue its efforts to assess the first set of three general education goals. In addition, it will begin to evaluate the second set of three general education goals which are:

1. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens;
2. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; and philosophy and or religious studies; and will gain competence in the use of a foreign language; and
3. Students will understand ethical issues and situations.

In October 2010, the General Education Subcommittee of Task Force 7 and 14 met to continue discussions regarding general education assessment. In order to evaluate the first goal listed above, a rubric was developed to grade SOC 101 (Introduction to Sociology) papers to focus on criteria related to using social science theories.

With regard to the second goal, the subcommittee pointed out that the ENG 102 essay is essentially an analysis of literary works, and samples are already available relating to this goal. In addition, art course goals and student learning objectives will be reviewed as they relate to this general education goal.

With regard to goal three, an ethical reasoning test item was included in an examination given to all CSS 101 (College Success Seminar) students. The data are currently being reviewed.

The analysis and findings indicate that methods are in place to assess ECC's general education outcomes. The College is committed to improving its assessment of general education outcomes.

STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Outcomes assessment, particularly student learning, is a major goal of the new College President. These assessment efforts provide information that will lead to change and demonstrate that assessment is

an integral component of the College's mission and goals. The assessment methods vary widely across disciplines. Approximately eight years ago, the College conducted faculty workshops on classroom assessment techniques using *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* by Angelo and Cross. These workshops emphasized that many assessment tools are already available to teachers in their day-to-day classroom experiences. Some of the more traditional approaches include objective and subjective questions, analytical essays, research papers, oral presentations, portfolios, and interpretations of statistical problems. Some less traditional methods include one-sentence summaries, word journals, applications cards, minute papers, and focused listings. Although some faculty endorsed several assessment methods, a college-wide emphasis on student learning outcomes assessment was not fully endorsed.

More recently, the new College President made a commitment to improve assessment. In July 2010, a workshop for Chairpersons and Administrators given by Dr. Lynn Crosby, an assessment specialist from Florida State College and consultant to the College, emphasized the importance of using a unified method of developing and writing student learning outcomes. She helped design a universal template to assess student learning outcomes (SLOs) (see Exhibit 51 for general education courses and non-general education courses templates). She also emphasized the importance of using rubrics to improve the reliability of assessment. The Dean of Faculty took on another initiative. Specifically, the Dean of Faculty/Academic Affairs, with approval from the President and Board of Trustees, appointed Dr. Susan Gaulden, Chairperson of Standards and Assessment Advisory Council (SAAC), as the Coordinator of Planning for Institutional, Program, and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment. Her mandate was to initiate a faculty Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Team (SLOAT).

The purpose of SLOAT is to train and support faculty as they learn how to plan, write, collect, and analyze SLO data. The training also emphasizes how to use data to effect changes in curricula and pedagogy. The first step in this process was to revise all course outlines using a common format so that they would include measurable performance objectives and outcome assessment methods.

Since Fall 2010, SLOAT has been successful in addressing the College's concerns regarding student learning outcomes. Its goals may be found on the web at http://sloat.mathography.org/. For effective assessment, evaluators must: (1) Establish clear, measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) – evidence of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students acquire once they successfully complete a course; (2) Ensure that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve these outcomes; (3) Gather, analyze, and interpret evidence to determine how well student learning matches expectations; and (4) Use the results to understand and improve students' learning (i.e., implement needed changes and conduct subsequent assessments to determine if improvements in student learning have been achieved).

To accomplish the first goal and ensure that all full-time faculty were aware of this initiative, faculty workshops were held during Fall 2010 semester. As of mid-November, 90% of the full-time faculty were trained and had revised more than half of ECC course outlines so that they were uniform in format and wording.

In Fall 2010, 10 SLOAT-designated courses were thoroughly evaluated for student performance of at least two course goals and all relevant Measurable Performance Objectives. These selected high enrollment courses were: AFE 083, AFM 083, ART 100, BIO 121, BUS 101, ENG 096, ENG 101, MTH 092, MTH 100, and SOC 101. Final SLOAT reports and results will be shared college-wide at the ECC SLO assessment symposium scheduled in February.

In summary, fundamental assessment of student learning now takes place at the course level. Most course outlines now contain explicit, measurable, student learning outcomes. Faculty measure these

outcomes using various classroom assessment techniques that will vary by discipline. Where appropriate, rubrics are used to improve the reliability of grading essays for placement and summative assessment (i.e., ENG 102). Currently, the College is exploring how using WayPoint or Weave will provide the College with ready-made rubrics to help them evaluate several course outcomes.

Analysis and Findings

Individual departments and Academic Affairs share the responsibility for assessing student learning at the course level with the Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment (OPRA) providing technical and logistical support. The College's goal is for student learning assessment to take place in every course. Today, the College must be responsible and openly demonstrate how it assesses individual student learning outcomes and how the results are used to effect change. While some assessment of student learning outcomes took place in the past, the importance of documenting such activities was not stressed, and record keeping tended to be lax.

Essex County College is rapidly increasing the number of courses for which outcomes data is reviewed and used. The student learning outcomes can now be related directly to the College's mission and goals. Two examples will demonstrate how student learning outcomes are linked to program outcomes, and ultimately, to the College mission.

Example 1 from BUS 101 Introduction to Business – 2010 Summer Session

Mission:
Essex County College, an open access community college dedicated to academic excellence, serves the dynamic needs of diverse constituencies through comprehensive education programs and services.
College Goal:
1.0 Develop new credit and non-credit programs, courses and community offerings that meet emerging needs while ensuring that all current programs and offerings are of superior quality and responsive to academic and labor market demands and community interests.
6.0 Promote a culture of assessment.
Program Goal:
To demonstrate knowledge of the world of business.
Course Goal:
Identify various types of business ownership
Measurable Performance Objective:
1.1 Identify major characteristics of sole proprietorship, partnership and corporations.
Assessment Strategy:
Conduct an item-analysis of the final examination to determine if students could identify the major characteristics of sole proprietorship, partnership and corporations.
Assessment Result:
60% of the students could not identify that a stockholder is an owner of a corporation.
Action Taken:
In Fall 2010 faculty will emphasize that the owner of a corporation is a stockholder.
Subsequent Assessment:
Follow up with a similar item and conduct an item-analysis. A successful benchmark of 75% correctly identifying that a stockholder is an owner of a corporation has been established.

Example 2 from BIO 121 – Anatomy and Physiology I Fall 2010

Mission:
Essex County College, an open access community college dedicated to academic excellence, serves the dynamic needs of diverse constituencies through comprehensive education programs and services.
College Goal:
1.0 Develop new credit and non-credit programs, courses and community offerings that meet emerging needs while ensuring that all current programs and offerings are of superior quality and responsive to academic and labor market demands and community interests
6.0 Promote a culture of assessment.
General Education Goal:
Students will use the scientific method of inquiry through the acquisition of scientific knowledge.
Program Goal:
Demonstrate a mastery of the fundamental concepts of biology at the genetic, molecular, cellular, tissue, organ, and organismal level.
Course Goal:
Explain some of the fundamental concepts and theories that are basic to biochemistry, cell biology and histology.
Measurable Performance Objective:
1.1 Explain the concepts of atoms and molecules.
Assessment Strategy:
Conduct an item-analysis of Test 1 examination to determine if students could identify the concepts of atoms and molecules
Assessment Result:
68.7% of the students could identify certain concepts of atoms and molecules.
Action Taken:
Students will be encouraged to work together in study groups to discuss the items they missed on the test concerning atoms and molecules.
Subsequent Assessment:
 Repeat item-analysis of Exam 1 and compare results to previous test results. It is expected that 75% will be able to identify certain concepts of atoms and molecules.
See Exhibit 52 for more information on these course outlines.

Another way assessment outcome is use to improve teaching and learning is when evidence indicates the need for a new approach to help students to succeed. For example, as an open-access institution, an important part of the mission of the College is to provide educational opportunities for all students. For approximately 90% of our entering student body, their college career begins with mandatory placement in developmental English and mathematic courses. OPRA monitors the success rate in these courses and provides comparative grade distribution reports to those offering developmental education courses (*Grade Distribution Reports*, Exhibit 53). Specifically, the success rate (ABC/All Grades) in the College's developmental mathematics courses has consistently been around 50% to 55%. This information was used to establish an AFM 083 course for those students scoring in the bottom 10 percentile on the College's placement test. To date, unfortunately, students in AFM 083, even with special assistance, are still not as successful as desired (Fall 2009 success rate was 51%). This type of summative information is consistently used to support the College's grant applications. Additionally, plans for faculty teaching developmental courses are under way to develop and assess new disruptive technologies and strategies in Fall 2011.

In addition to the above use of student learning outcomes findings, the Career Resource Center has a Student Learning Agreement for students who have been enrolled in cooperative education. These students are required to write their own student learning outcomes (Exhibit 54). The employer/supervisor refers to the student's learning objectives to provide meaningful assignments that will aid students to meet the learning outcomes specified. Although in AY 2009-2010 the College enrolled only 20 cooperative education students, it is a useful model which involves our students and faculty.

These examples demonstrate that student learning assessment is a priority. The College is committed to improving student learning assessment and the use of the results to improve teaching and learning.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► The College receives strong support from its President and administration to sustain and improve its assessment initiative.
- ► The College has appointed a faculty member to serve as a full-time Coordinator of Planning for Institutional, Program, and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment to facilitate the work of the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Team (SLOAT).
- ► Ninety percent (90%) of the faculty members have received training on writing student learning outcomes for ECC courses.
- ► All course outlines contain Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in the form of general education goals, course goals, and measurable performance objectives and may be found on the College's SLO Assessment website http://sloat.mathography.org

Consideration

- ► Demonstrate more consistently how assessment outcomes are used to drive decision making.
- ► Continue to ensure that all faculty are involved in the assessment process and define the importance of assessment in the new syllabi.
- ► Continue to explore the use of WayPoint or Weave as a source of course objectives and rubrics and a means to improve the ability to provide students with criteria-based feedback.

Commitments

- ► Continue to develop a more structured culture of assessment throughout the College.
- ► Continue SLO Assessment training for all full-time faculty and expand the training to part-time faculty.
- ► Ensure that faculty and administrators keep a record of how outcomes measures are used to drive budget decisions and effect change in the teaching and learning process.

CHAPTER 5
STANDARDS 8 AND 9

Standard 8

Student Admissions and Retention

The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals, and abilities are congruent with its mission and seeks to retain them through the pursuit of the students' educational goals.

Standard 9

Student Support Services

The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.

STANDARD 8: STUDENT ADMISSIONS AND RETENTION

OVERVIEW

At Essex County College, enrollment is strongly aligned with the College mission and related institutional goals. Sources of data used to determine the effectiveness of College policies, procedures, and plans related to marketing, recruitment, admissions, advisement, registration, financial aid, and retention include: *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory – SSI* (Exhibit 8); *Survey of Entering Student Engagement – SENSE* (Exhibit 9); *Options Magazine* (Exhibit 7); and *Student Affairs Annual Report 2009-2010* (Exhibit 55).

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

The Enrollment Management Team (EMT) was established over 10 years ago to develop a comprehensive approach to enrollment planning. The team, comprised of a cross-section of the College community, developed an integrated marketing and recruitment plan. Its major focus was to revise *Options Magazine*, a mailer that describes College programs, costs, and course schedule. The new "slicker" version includes more features to interest potential students, such as articles on financial aid, money management, dual, and joint admissions information. In addition, an Instant Admit Program was introduced in area high schools, which increased the enrollment of recent high school graduates by approximately 10% for Fall 2008 to Fall 2009.

In general, enrollment has increased over the last five years. From Fall 2005 to Fall 2009, enrollment grew 27.6%. During Fall 2009, headcount increased 7% from the previous year and credit hours rose by 10%, far exceeding the 3% institutional goal. Fueled by the popularity of the Late Start program (compressed courses starting shortly after the beginning of each semester), the College experienced record enrollments over the last two years (see Table 6).

Table 6: Enrollment Change - Fall 2005 to Fall 2009

Fall Semester Enrollment 2005 – 2009					
	05	*06*	*07*	*08*	*09*	*05 to 09 % Change*
FT	5683	6244	6133	6963	7915	39.30%
PT	4752	4728	4862	5356	5399	13.60%
Total	10435	10972	10995	12319	13314	27.60%
Credit Hours	114,226	123,633	121,811	137,912	151,746	32.80%
Census Date	10th day	10th day	10th day	15-Oct	15-Oct	

Enrollment is expected to continue growing by increasing efforts to recruit more Latino students and to attract more adult students who left the College without completing their degrees. Also, hybrid and on-line courses will provide greater flexibility for students and increase the availability of classroom space to accommodate an increased student population.

Analysis and Findings

The College has been successful in increasing enrollment of new and returning students over the last five years. The College administration and Enrollment Management Team continue to monitor trends and remain sensitive to the changing needs of students. To meet student demands for greater flexibility,

the College has increased the number of courses offered at various times during the day, evenings, and weekends at different locations. This has served the student population well. On the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory* (*SSI*), for example, the item "Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient to me," emerged as a major strength of the College.

According to the *SSI,* students view on-line services as another strength of the College. At present, while students can apply, register, and pay on-line, over 60% registered for classes in this manner. The College is committed to expanding students' self-service options. New students and those on probation, however, will continue to register in-person with a counselor or faculty advisor.

The College evaluates how well enrollment policies and procedures support the College's mission through ongoing research on student demographics, majors, and student support services. Data are gathered from annual reports including the *Graduate Follow-up Questionnaires, SSI*, and *SENSE*. Surveys reported student dissatisfaction with advisement and financial aid. These concerns are being addressed at the departmental, area, and administrative level, and discussed in College-wide councils. The new College restructuring is designed to bring new life and innovations to this area. Also, the Financial Aid Office reorganized and an Assistant Director has been assigned to handle student concerns. Similarly, the Instructional Affairs Council is considering implementing changes in the advisement process the EMT Advisement/Registration Subcommittee recommended.

RECRUITMENT, ADMISSIONS, REGISTRATION, AND FINANCIAL AID

Consistent with its mission, the College has various services to assist students through the admissions process. According to the *Graduate Follow-Up Questionnaire,* entering students believe they "have a sense of belonging" at Essex College and that College is "like a second home." They are "grateful for the opportunities," and the College was "crucial to their development as a student and person."

Recruitment. The College also successfully increased its marketing efforts to help student dropouts decide if they should return to college by opening its Gateway to College program. The newly revised *Options Magazine* provides over 300,000 Essex County households with accurate and timely information prior to the Fall and Spring semesters. It also features articles on topics of interest to potential returning students such as high-demand career opportunities, an accelerated Business degree option, and the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Rewards Scholarships (NJ Stars) program that offers scholarships to students graduating in the top 15% of their high school class. *Options* has been highly successful in increasing enrollment and interest in the College.

Active recruitment at high schools, churches, parades, and other County venues has been another effective marketing approach. High school visits and college fairs have accounted for more than 3500 student applicants over the past two years. An "Instant Admit Program" and "On-site Placement Tests" at key feeder high schools such as Central, Barringer, Irvington, and East Orange have also increased enrollment. Additionally, the College's Continuing Education Programs provide a rich source of students who enroll or transition to college credit degree seeking programs (e.g., adult education students).

Admissions and Registration. Admission and registration are available in the Enrollment Express Services Office at every College campus. Students may also register on-line. Information about admissions, registration, and payment, is available on the College's website and in individual mailings. Information is also generated by e-mail, newspapers, commercial advertisement, radio, and online structures such as Twitter and Google alerts. In addition, the College has developed a tracking system to trace the progress of admitted students. This system sends reminders to students who miss deadlines

regarding testing or registration appointments, informs them of payment deadlines, and updates regarding their financial aid status.

Enrollment Services Express administers a placement examination to new students four times a month throughout the year and more frequently in July and August. Students then make appointments to meet directly with an advisor or counselor who discusses their test results and guides them into the appropriate developmental and college-level courses.

The College community values the ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of its students and provides various services to meet their enrollment needs. In Fall 2009, minorities made up 75% of the student body. The percentage of Latinos has steadily increased in response to directed recruitment efforts and, at 23%, is close to the 25% goal. Similarly, the emphasis on recruiting recent high school graduates in the past 10 years has increased the number of students in the 17-22 age group by 16%. Women consistently constitute about 60% of the population with more than half attending full-time. The College continues to attract international students. In Fall 2009, the top five countries of origin were Brazil, Jamaica, China, India, and Burkina Faso. Foreign students often choose ECC because of its location and relatively inexpensive tuition.

Financial Aid. The Financial Aid Office communicates with students through the portal, e-mail, Twitter, and individual mailings. Award information is provided on the portal giving students 24-hour access to their financial aid information. In addition, the Financial Aid Office provides annual notices to new and continuing students by alerting them that "It's Time to Apply." This encourages students to file early in order to meet deadlines. The financial aid staff also participates in outreach activities such as College Day, college fairs, and other community activities.

Students interested in receiving financial aid may apply on line. Their application is monitored by the Financial Aid Office, with email reminders of documents needed to complete the process. Students may also access the portal using individual Student ID numbers to view the status of their awards, their award letters, and book vouchers. Financial Aid Officers will also assist late applicants who miss the College's Fall and Spring deadlines by helping them individually to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on the website and estimating their financial aid eligibility on the spot. The financial aid estimate holds students' registrations so they are not deleted for nonpayment. Students in the process of applying for financial aid are placed on academic hold so they will not be dropped from the system for nonpayment. Despite the College's efforts in this area, this is the area most frequently complained about by students. The College is instituting an expansive review of the area and changes will be made in the 2012 academic year.

The College also provides students with ongoing information regarding their progress in completing their degree requirements. Students are encouraged to meet periodically with their faculty advisor in their major to discuss their progress. Enrollment Services Express also mails degree audit letters to students who have completed 40 college-level credits to advise them of their progress. The *Student Affairs Annual Report 2009-2010* (Exhibit 55) noted that 5,340 degree compliance reports were generated AY 2009-2010, a 9.6% increase from the previous year. These letters have been successful in encouraging students to meet with faculty advisors or counselors to confirm their graduation status. Once the "what if" scenario is implemented by Information Technology, we expect an increase in the number of degree audits.

Analysis and Findings

In AY 2009-2010, the College increased enrollment each semester. According to *SSI* data, students report that the College's greatest strengths are: (1) classes are scheduled at convenient times; and (2) on-line services (e.g., registration) are adequate and easily accessible. The *SSI* also confirmed that students believed that "Tuition payment policies and procedures are clear and well publicized." Based on this data, students know what courses to take, registration procedures, and payment requirements.

It is noteworthy that despite multiple payment options and a liberal payment plan, over 1,000 students a semester register for classes, yet fail to make payment arrangements. These students are given opportunities to re-register before classes begin or are reinstated once classes have started. The College needs to be constantly vigilant to determine more effective ways to help meet students' financial needs. During the Spring 2011 semester, the College implemented a requirement that students must pay one-third of their bill up-front in order to be enrolled.

Financial Aid awards have been increasing over the last five years. In AY 2009-2010, the number of students awarded financial aid increased 40%, a $9.3 million dollar increase in funding over AY 2008-2009. Among New Jersey community colleges, the College is ranked #1 for the number of first-time, full-time students receiving federal grant aid. According to the *IPEDS Feedback Report 2010,* 41% of all undergraduates received financial aid in AY 2008-2009. Applying for financial aid can be complicated and intimidating. In fact, on the *SSI,* the number one area that students expressed dissatisfaction was that Financial Aid policies and procedures were not clear or well publicized, and that adequate aid, for most students, is unavailable. On the *SENSE*, students were equally dissatisfied with about one-third of the respondents stating they had not received sufficient information regarding financial aid.

To address these concerns, the Financial Aid Office instituted three new procedures. First, specific sites were established on MyECC (the ECC portal for students) to help students track their award status. Second, together with Information Technology, a data tracking base was developed to follow student files through all stages of the award process to identify and correct bottlenecks. Third, students completing the FAFSA on-line were given increased individual assistance by creating two workstations which students can use by appointment or on a walk-in basis. In addition, the Financial Aid Office was recently reorganized, giving the Assistant Director primary responsibility to analyze and resolve student complaints and introduce corrective measures. Although the volume of applications is expected to increase, applied technology and attention to customer service issues will make this area more efficient and able to meet future challenges.

The degree audit is another effective tool to help students track their progress toward completing their degrees. The audit, generated when the student has accrued 40 credits, has contributed to a steady increase in the number of graduates, which rose from 834 in 2006 to 1,039 in 2010. Unfortunately, students who continue to self-advise and take courses not required in their majors do not benefit from this initiative. Therefore, the College has made it a priority to provide students with the ability to view degree audits anytime and perform "what if" scenarios to view how changing their major might affect their graduation status.

STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS

The College's Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment (OPRA) tracks retention and graduation rates and publishes the results annually in the *Fact Book and Outcomes 2009-2010.* Data from

the *Fact Book* indicate Spring retention for first-time, full-time degree seeking students decreased from a high of 81.9% (Fall 2002 to Spring 2003) to 76.6% (Fall 2007 to Spring 2008). This decrease, however, actually reflects an improvement of 3.2% from Fall 2006 to Fall 2007. Over the last five years, the average Fall-to-Fall retention rate has been about 53%. This rate is below the 65% retention rate found at best-practice colleges. The College's official IPEDS three-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time degree seeking students has averaged a 6% improvement over the last three years consistent with the rate reported for similar institutions. When the time the student takes to graduate is extended, however, the rate improves significantly—10.3%, 14.3%, and 15.8% for four-year, five-year, and six-year, respectively. Because at least 90% of entering students require remediation in one or more areas and do not register every semester, this would explain the reasons the cohort took longer than three years to complete a degree.

College has initiated programs to improve retention and graduation rates. The programs with the greatest success are the ones that provide students with comprehensive support services. Programs which are partially supported through grant funding, such as the Student Support Services (a TRIO) program and the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF), offer comprehensive support services to students who are economically disadvantaged. The three-year graduation rate for the Student Support Service program (2005-2007) averaged 15%. For the EOF population, the four-year graduation rate for the Fall 2002 cohort was 16.9%.

The College is working to provide the general student population with additional support as well. The College's assessment and placement policies are designed to ensure that students will begin taking courses at a level appropriate to their skills and ability. All matriculating students, except those who qualify for exemptions, are required to take the Companion (paper and pencil) or Accuplacer (computer adapted) placement test. While the State establishes cut-off scores for college-level courses, the College determines the ranges for each course in the developmental sequence. Basic skills scores continue to indicate that approximately 90% of new students require at least one English or mathematics course at the pre-college level.

One of the College's major strategies for retention is the College Success Seminar (CSS 101) which began in Fall 2009. This course, required for students in the lowest level of remedial English, introduces students to goal setting, time management, note taking, test taking, adaptation to different learning styles, and critical reasoning as skills essential to academic success. During Fall 2009 and Spring 2010, the College offered 14 and 18 sections, respectively, increasing to 40 sessions during Fall 2010. The Office of Planning, Institutional Research, and Assessment is currently tracking student success of those enrolled in the course and monitoring retention outcomes.

Analysis and Findings

According to *SENSE* (Fall 2009), most students begin college highly motivated and confident in their ability to succeed. These same data, however, suggest that over 43% will not return in the following year. *SSI* data indicate that students' decisions not to return to college may be related to the failure of instructors to notify them of substandard performance early enough in the semester. The College is addressing this concern through better counseling, advisement, and academic support services, in addition to developing procedures to monitor intervention strategies such as required freshman orientation and the Early Intervention Program (EIP) developed by Academic Affairs. The EIP program targets at-risk students who are having academic trouble or have multiple absences early in the semester. The College

has adopted Sakai as its Learning Management System and is exploring ways to increase communication with students regarding their academic standing in a given course.

The College has reinforced the need to improve retention in the recently revised *Strategic Plan 2009-2012*. A major focus continues to be enhancing counseling, guidance, and support for students, improving student orientations, and developing programs that foster peer support and networking among students.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations
- ► The College engages in extensive outreach efforts to recruit students.
- ► The College provides multiple avenues and resources to disseminate information on admissions, enrollment, financial aid, and payment.
- ► The College has experienced five years of enrollment growth.
- ► Students are beginning to embrace on-line self-service options.
- ► The College provides an extensive developmental program to meet the needs of incoming students.
- ► The College is addressing retention through various college-wide initiatives.

Considerations

- ► Continue to improve the efficiency of the financial aid operation through applied technology and attention to customer service issues.
- ► Identify the reasons for student dissatisfaction with financial aid and resolve the problems through improved communication and increased student understanding of financial aid policies and procedures.
- ► The College should communicate with students by using technologies with which they are familiar.

Commitments

- ► Continue to offer programs and services supported by outcomes data to improve retention and success.
- ► Improve student success and retention by fully integrating Sakai into the student support services process to keep students informed about their academic progress throughout the semester.
- ► Provide students with the ability to generate on-line degree audits including "what if" scenarios to enable them to track their progress.
- ► Fully utilize the various BANNER modules to support student success tracking, information sharing, and data management for intervention purposes.

STANDARD 9: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

OVERVIEW

Essex County College is committed to providing quality services to meet individual student needs. Its various services underscore the College's commitment to student needs in and out of the classroom. Data were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of its services in advisement for new and returning students, orientation programs for new and special student populations, counseling services, transfer assistance, programs to facilitate acclimation to college life, programs to support general academic needs, student life programs, and intercollegiate and intramural sports programs. In addition, task force members reviewed the College's records management policies and procedures. Various documents were analyzed, such as: the *College Catalog* (Exhibit 1); the student handbook, *Lifeline* (Exhibit 56); the College website; the *Graduate Follow-Up Questionnaire* (Exhibit 11); the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory – SSI* (Exhibit 8); *Student Affairs Annual Report 2009-2010* (Exhibit 55); the *Survey of Entering Student Engagement – SENSE* (Exhibit 9); and the *Essex County College Regulations Manual* (Exhibit 18).

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Students learn how to access services in many ways (e.g., referrals from administrators, counselors, advisors, faculty, staff, *Lifeline,* published pamphlets, postcards, direct mail, the student portal, and the College website). A brief description of general and special population services follows.

Advisement. All *new* students, following placement testing, must attend an advisement/ registration session scheduled throughout the year. A small group structure is used to help make incoming students more comfortable and less anxious. During intake, students receive their placement test scores and specific information about their financial aid status. Students then meet with counselors or advisors to determine the classes they need to take based on their test scores, major, unofficial transcripts, and preferences. Following advisement, students are registered and given a detailed schedule and general college information including how to log on to the portal and payment options. For Summer I, II, and Fall 2009, over 7500 students were scheduled for intake sessions and approximately 5,000 actually attended, representing a yield of 66%. The 2,500 students who did not show were contacted and given the opportunity to matriculate in the next term or in a term convenient for them.

Returning students have the option to register in their major on-line via the portal, in-person with a counselor, or an advisor. Special student populations (e.g., EOF, NJStars, and the Center for Academic Foundations), are advised in those departments. NJStars are recent high school graduates who graduated in the top 15% of their classes. Eligible students can receive up to five semesters of tuition if they enroll full-time and maintain a grade point average of 3.25 or higher. Students in the Center for Academic Foundations, who scored at the lowest level on the placement test in English and mathematics, receive mandatory tutoring to augment their individual classroom work.

Students on academic probation must meet with a counselor. Academic probation is defined as a cumulative combined grade point average (GPA) of less than a 2.0. Students with a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 earning less than a 2.0 the following term are suspended for one academic period. Students returning from suspension and still earning less than a 2.0 GPA, however, are dismissed from the College for two years. During advisement sessions, counselors discuss the financial and academic

implications of poor academic standing. In addition, counselors assess the reasons for a student's poor performance and whether or not any other services are warranted to improve performance.

Counseling. Counselors provide academic, transfer, and career counseling to students with or without appointments. Counseling services are available Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in centralized locations at the main and West Essex campuses. A counselor is also available every evening and on Saturdays in the Evening and Weekend Services office at the main campus. Counselors assist students with their academic and personal concerns as they work to achieve their educational goals. Students also seek counseling to discuss a range of matters such as personal issues, self-improvement, study habits, and time-management strategies. Counselors work with students who need short-term assistance with personal issues which interfere with their college success by making referrals (as appropriate) to outside agency referrals. Also, faculty and staff employ counselor assistance with classroom conflicts and challenging students. Counselors also assist disabled students by providing additional support including academic accommodations in their courses when appropriate. In AY 2008-2009, the eight counselors in Counseling Services recorded 5,374 contacts, which increased to 6,891 in AY 2009-2010, an increase of 28%. EOF, West Essex, and other specialized program counselors, are housed at their respective sites. Evening and Weekend Services provides the same essential counseling services available to day students.

Transfer Services. The transfer process, coordinated by the Associate Director of the Career Resource Center, is supported by various services across the College. The Center provides information about the College's seven joint admission and 19 transfer agreements with four-year colleges or universities. Web links to local college and university home pages are available on the Transfer Services page of the College website, as well as scholarship information and deadlines. Instant Admit Days are scheduled on-campus with several local colleges and universities. Transfer Days and college-wide and program specific workshops are organized so that admissions officers and faculty from other institutions can provide students with specific transfer opportunities. Individual academic departments and divisions also offer workshops, tours and other activities targeted for students interested in transferring to particular majors and programs. The College also participates in New Jersey Transfer, a statewide program that establishes course equivalencies among all State colleges and universities. In AY 2009-2010, Transfer Services recorded over 800 student contacts.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS TO SUPPORT THEIR ACADEMIC NEEDS

The Learning Center provides students with tutoring in all subject areas. Students receive peer support, access to Learning Associates (tutors), faculty, and supplemental services and materials including technology-based resources. From AY 2006 – 2009, the Learning Center averaged over 7,000 student contacts. Tutoring is also available through specialized programs and services including the Center for Academic Foundations, the Educational Opportunity Fund, and the Department of Special Services. Students also receive assistance from faculty after class and during faculty office hours.

The Honors Program, with its own study center, provides services for eligible students. The MESA Center provides academic support for students majoring in engineering, computer science, math, and science; related services are provided through the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). This National Science Foundation funded program has its own computer learning lab and tutorial/study center.

Open computer labs are available days and evenings on both campuses. In addition, computer labs are available in Special Programs, the WISE Women's Center, the Division of Nursing and Allied Health, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Library.

Analysis and Findings

The College's mission states that it "serves the dynamic needs of diverse constituencies through comprehensive educational programs and services." Data from the *SSI* indicate the College continues to be responsive to the service needs of its students. According to the *SSI*, students view: (1) Computer labs are adequate and accessible; (2) Tutoring services are readily available; (3) Library resources and services are adequate; (4) A sufficient number of study areas are on campus; and (5) Services for evening and weekend students are available and accessible, as strengths of the College.

The *SSI* also revealed areas of concern. Students expressed dissatisfaction on items such as "this school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals." Concerns also focused on advisement-related issues. Students rated the following statements high in importance, but low in satisfaction: (1) This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals; (2) My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward; (3) My academic advisor is knowledgeable about transfer requirements of other schools; (4) My academic advisor is approachable; (5) My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual; (6) Counseling staff care about students as individuals; (7) There are adequate services to help me decide upon a career; and (8) The College shows concern to students as individuals.

SENSE data reveal that more than half of the respondents (new and returning students) reported they had met with an advisor to select a course of study, program, or major. However, only 28.2% of the new and 32.2% of the returning students thought that an advisor had helped them set academic goals and create a plan for achieving them. These data indicate that in addition to advisement during registration, increased ongoing advisement to focus on transfer or career planning is needed.

The College recognizes that the advisement process for new and returning students needs to be refined to address student concerns. The Advisement/Registration Subcommittee of the Enrollment Management Team made several recommendations to the Instructional Affairs Council to implement during Fall 2010. These included: making new signs; hiring student ambassadors; developing FAQs for new students; and finding additional space for advisors during new student registration. Students might benefit from a system that combines the efficiency of on-line self-service options with the support of personal intervention. Customer service issues also must be improved to increase student satisfaction and success.

PROGRAMS THAT HELP STUDENTS ACCLIMATE TO COLLEGE LIFE

Orientation programs and other activities at the Clara E. Dasher Student Center provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of community by fostering an environment of intellectual, social, and recreational development. The Center works with student leaders to conduct orientation programs at the start of each semester. The Center also sponsors programs throughout the year to assist students' transition to college life. During the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 semesters, the Dasher Center recorded over 2,000 contracts each month. Students participated in many activities throughout the year, with the Welcome Back Cookouts and mid-day movie series as the most popular ones.

According to *SENSE* data, 30% of the new students attended an on-campus orientation program before beginning their classes. While approximately 25% said they were unable to attend because of scheduling, another 37% stated they were unaware an orientation program existed. The College needs to create a mandatory orientation requirement and to improve communication with new students using formats such as on-line programs which may be more accessible to students.

A major initiative to assist new students is the College Success Seminar (CSS 101, a 1.5 credit course). In CSS 101, students are introduced to concepts such as goal setting, time management, note taking, test taking, learning styles, critical reasoning, and building effective professional relationships. During Fall 2009, the College offered 14 sections and 18 sections during Spring 2010, and approximately 40 sections during Fall 2010. The College is considering making this a mandatory course for all students requirement at least one remedial course.

Student Support Services (a TRIO program) is a College sponsored academic program for entering students. Students who meet eligibility criteria are provided with support services to help them achieve their academic potential. Similarly, the Stay-In-Step Academy (SISA) helps first-time, full-time African-American students with academic mentoring, advising, and planning support.

Child Development Center. The College operates a year-round, full-day nationally accredited educational program for children between the ages of two and five. In addition, the Center also manages an evening child care program from 5:00 p.m. – 9:45 p.m. for children between the ages of two and twelve. Information about the services is distributed during new student orientation/registration. Students can also access this information via the College website and publications such as the *College Catalog* and *Lifeline*.

Office of Student Life & Activities. The Office of Student Life & Activities designs and implements programs that enhance the educational experience at Essex County College. The programs and activities encourage cultural tolerance, civic responsibility, social consciousness, develop leadership skills, and provide opportunities for students to socialize.

The Student Government Association, Inner Club Council, Student Newspaper, *ECCO,* and numerous academic, cultural, and special interest clubs are also housed in this office. Each club must complete two community service projects per year (90% of the projects were in Essex County). Last year, several student organizations took the lead by coordinating Haitian Relief Fund Raising efforts. Of $10,815 collected, the clubs and organizations raised over $7,000.

The Office of Student Life & Activities also publishes *Lifeline* and distributes information about housing referrals and other issues concerning the College and the community. Finally, the Office works with academic divisions, the Africana Studies Institute, and the Urban Issues Institute to arrange for stimulating programs and speakers on local, state, national, and international issues. It is noteworthy that less than 20% of the total *SENSE* respondents participated in student organizations.

Intercollegiate and Intramural Sports. The College is dedicated to recruiting and retaining student-athletes who want to succeed academically and athletically. The coaching staff and administrators at the College strive for a balanced academic and athletic program where winning is defined as giving one's best effort in the classroom, in one's sport, and being proud of the results. A member of the National Junior College Athletic Association, the College's eligibility requirements are closely monitored at the conclusion of each term. During the semester, coaches' check on their athletes' academic progress through routine follow-up reports sent to their instructors.

The College offers various intramural sports and recreation for the entire student body. Staff members believe that fun, healthful, and shared experiences can help create a strong bond among

students, staff, and faculty. The Athletic Program offers various College-wide sports including flag football, indoor soccer, volleyball, basketball, and friendship games, to mention a few.

Analysis and Findings

The Athletic Program has been recognized for its outstanding record. This past season, for example, the men's soccer team captured Region 19 by becoming Northeast District Champions with their coach named Region 19 Coach of the Year. Similarly, the track team is nationally ranked, with 11 graduates participating in the Beijing Olympics.

In AY 2009-2010, 88 student-athletes were certified as academically eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics. At the completion of each semester, students must be recertified to continue participating in the upcoming year. Twelve students, who did not meet the minimal academic requirements, elected to withdraw from the College. Despite this small attrition, the Athletic Program had an 86% retention rate for the year. At the end of the year, 29 student-athletes completed their two years of eligibility. Thirteen student-athletes completed academic requirements for graduation, approximately 45% of those eligible. Of the 29 students, 23 student-athletes (many with scholarships) attended four-year colleges.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

College Regulation 5-9 describes students' right of access to inspect and correct their educational records as defined by the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act of 1974. It describes the students' right to consent to disclose personally identifiable information contained in their educational records, and lists the categories of student information designated as public "directory information." The policy is published in documents that students, faculty, administrators, and staff routinely access (e.g., the *College Regulations Manual*, *College Catalog*, course schedule book, *Lifeline,* and on the College website). Pursuant to procedures outlined in the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act of 1974, the College provides students, other authorized persons, businesses, governmental agencies, eligible parents/guardians access to educational records.

Accessing student records electronically is made possible via BANNER. Because access to BANNER is password protected, all college employees must first undergo training before access is granted. Employees are usually granted limited access to BANNER screens necessary to carry out their legitimate work responsibilities.

Analysis and Findings

As of Fall 2006, the College converted all social security numbers to randomly generated ID numbers to respond to students' privacy concerns and to comply with the New Jersey Identity Theft Prevention Act that prohibits colleges from displaying social security numbers on printed forms, reports, class rosters, ID cards, and other materials sent through the mail. Procedures were revised and forms were updated to safeguard the confidentiality of social security numbers.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

► The College responds to the needs of its students and provides various services to help students succeed.
► Most students are aware of the services available and use them.
► Most student athletes are successful on the field and in the classroom.
► New procedures have been established to properly safeguard and maintain records.

Considerations

► Determine the reasons for low participation in student organizations and develop methods to encourage more students to participate.
► Establish a mandatory orientation for all new students.
► Require all remedial students to take the College Success Seminar (CSS 101).

Commitment

► Study the methods by which academic advisement is delivered to new and returning students and make appropriate improvements.
► Plan and implement orientation strategies that meet the changing needs and demographics of students.
► Ensure students receive in every course a listing of all critical support services available to them.

CHAPTER 6

STANDARD 10

Standard 10

Faculty

The institution's instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored, and supported by qualified professionals.

STANDARD 10: FACULTY

OVERVIEW

Essex County College faculty is composed of a diverse group of individuals committed to the mission of the College and bring those values to the classroom. The College relies on the faculty to instruct, advise, and counsel students to help them achieve their educational and professional objectives. As of Fall 2009, the College employed 132 full-time faculty members also involved in various levels of governance. The quality of the faculty is ensured through the hiring process, as well as through peer and student evaluations of faculty. Faculty members have opportunities to improve through professional development and tuition assistance for advanced study in their disciplines. To ensure the College complies with this standard, task force members reviewed various documents including: the College's *Fact Book and Outcomes 2008–2009* (Exhibit 12); the *Faculty Association Contract* (Exhibit 23); *Essex County College Regulations Manual* (Exhibit 18); *Academic Master Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 3); the *Strategic Plan 2009-2012* (Exhibit 2); institutional surveys, and other pertinent documents.

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

Of the 132 full-time faculty, 99 are tenured, 27 on track for tenure, and 6 on non-tenure track lines. The racial breakdown is: White 46%; Black/African-American 33%; Asian 7%; Hispanic 2%; and Unknown 2%. With over 13,000 students at the College, adjunct (part-time) faculty exceed full-time faculty. In Fall 2009, 578 adjunct faculty taught in all disciplines a total of 1,431 sections; full-time faculty taught only 467 sections.

College Regulation 4-2 *Personnel Appointments and Reappointments* (see Exhibit 18 for all regulations), governs the hiring of full-time faculty. This regulation acknowledges that a collective bargaining agreement governs the employer/employee relationship between the faculty and the College. The President makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees, the final authority for approving appointments, granting tenure, and promoting faculty. As of Spring 2010, approximately 36% of the full-time instructional faculty held doctorates or professional degrees (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., Psy.D., or J.D.) while 64% percent held Master's degrees (e.g., M.A., M.S., MAT, or M.Ed.).

Full-Time Faculty Hiring. Each year, after thoroughly evaluating their departments and programs, Division Chairpersons submit requests to the Dean of Faculty/Academic Affairs for new full-time faculty based on criteria including: (1) projected growth of the department and program; (2) labor market demand for graduates; (3) current number of faculty in the department and program; and (4) potential retirements of senior faculty members. All faculty must have at least a Master's degree in their teaching discipline. Other criteria include additional course work, degrees beyond the Master's degree, professional experience, licenses or certifications, previous teaching experience and related work experience. Full-time faculty members are recruited by advertising in print and electronic media.

Once the faculty opening has been approved, a screening process begins. The Division Chairperson appoints faculty to serve on the search committee with a senior member of the division acting as chairperson. The Search Committee review resumes based on pre-established criteria and determine the number of applicants to be interviewed. Selecting a diverse candidate pool to interview is essential and carefully monitored. During the interview, candidates answer questions to demonstrate their familiarity with teaching and related responsibilities and their communication skills. In some divisions (e.g., the Division of Humanities and the Division of Social Sciences), the top candidates give "mock"

classroom teaching demonstrations. The search committee then recommends its top three candidates to the Division Chairperson, who then forwards his/her recommendation to the Chief Academic Officer, who interviews and makes recommendations to the President. Finally, the President forwards his/her recommendations to the Board of Trustees, the final approving authority.

Recently, the College experienced a significant decrease in the number of full-time tenured faculty due to retirements. Unfortunately, because of recent budgetary constraints, the College has been unable to hire new faculty to replace each member who has retired. Rather, faculty were hired where the greatest need existed or where no full-time faculty existed in a given discipline. In the past four years, the College filled 29 full-time faculty positions.

Part-Time Faculty Hiring. The College continues to need adjunct faculty who, in teaching over 70% of the courses, teach over 60% of all courses English and mathematics. The terms and conditions of employment between adjunct faculty and the College are governed by a collective bargaining agreement (*Adjunct Faculty Contract,* Exhibit 24). College Regulation 6–10 states, "[t]he minimum qualification for an adjunct faculty position is a Master's degree in the appropriate discipline or in a closely allied discipline."

Analysis and Findings

Although the current process for hiring full-time faculty is time consuming, as well as labor (and paper) intensive, it gives the College the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the prospective hires to determine if they will be a "good fit." This procedure has yielded excellent results by producing a strong and highly qualified faculty pool. Hiring adjunct faculty is also time consuming, but essential since recent budgetary constraints have contributed to the College relying more on adjunct faculty.

Dr. Abdullah, the College's new President, reviewed the hiring process of adjunct faculty and found several areas that needed strengthening. One, the review and collection of applications, for example, was decentralized with many incomplete applications. Two, specific guidelines regarding credentials had not been established to determine if adjunct faculty were qualified to teach in a specific discipline. Three, teaching evaluations, not always performed on schedule, tended to be uniformly positive with few if any recommendations for improvement. Dr. Abdullah directed that: (1) the hiring process be centralized; (2) the credentials necessary to teach specific courses must be clarified and files of individual adjunct faculty must be complete; and (3) Division Chairpersons must be apprised of what the College expects of adjunct faculty; and (4) more objective evaluations which provide adjuncts with a better understanding of where their teaching should be improved. These changes are a work in progress, but the process has improved, specifically in more consistent processing of paperwork and clarification of adjunct faculty qualifications for teaching specific courses. Also, Division Chairpersons and full-time faculty observers are writing more constructively critical evaluations of adjunct faculty by providing them suggestions for improvement.

FACULTY AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum development, under the auspices of the Division of Academic Affairs, is governed by College Regulation 6-2 (see *Essex County College Regulations Manual,* Exhibit 18). The Academic Departments, consisting of the Division Chairpersons and faculty, are responsible for developing, maintaining, and offering sound academic curricula. All seven Divisions have curriculum committees that review faculty proposals. Once a proposal has been approved at the Division level, it moves to the

College Curriculum Advisory Council (CCAC), consisting of faculty and chairpersons representing each Division of the College. After a proposal is approved by the CCAC, it is forwarded to the Dean of Faculty/Academic Affairs to review. If the Dean endorses the proposal, she forwards it to the President to review and approve. The Chairperson of the CCAC submits a yearly report to the Dean of Faculty/Academic Affairs documenting the status of course and program developments (*CCAC Annual Report,* Exhibit 57).

Analysis and Findings

Curriculum development at Essex County College is a faculty-driven process that is taken seriously. It is rigorous, time consuming, labor intensive, complete, and designed to ensure that the College offers programs which help students develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their future academic or occupational endeavors.

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Faculty members at Essex County College take pride in their teaching. They believe that a complete process of peer evaluation, classroom observation, and professional development are needed to ensure that their course content and teaching methods are effective, interesting, and current. The process of faculty evaluation is built on the ideal of continuous improvement and governed by the collective bargaining agreement between Essex County College and the Essex County College Faculty Association. Faculty members are observed and evaluated by their peers, their chairperson, and students. These evaluative methods are designed to enhance the performance of the faculty members in a constructive manner. In order to assist faculty update and implement their teaching strategies, the College has recently established a Faculty Technology Resource Center in the Martin Luther King Jr. Library.

New full-time faculty members are "mentored" in their respective divisions, usually by a senior faculty member in their discipline. The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC), a governance committee, also develops, organizes, and conducts seminars and workshops for faculty to enhance their skills inside and outside the classroom. In addition, faculty members get tuition reimbursement to take courses if the College approves. Furthermore, faculty members may serve in leadership positions as program coordinators and members on various Division committees. Finally, many faculty members serve on various non-profit boards in the community and teach as adjunct faculty at four-year colleges and universities to which many of students transfer upon graduating (e.g., Rutgers University—Newark, New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Montclair State University).

Analysis and Findings

Essex County College supports full-time faculty participation in professional development and offers on-campus opportunities whenever possible. Unfortunately, funds are limited for faculty to attend out-of-state conferences. This type of travel is generally limited to meetings that focus on grant development, reporting, or best practice. In these difficult economic times, few monies are available for scholarships or research. However, a new initiative implemented by the College President will provide professional development paid for by an external FIPSE grant, Project Delta. Faculty teaching SIRUS courses will be allowed to attend the International Teaching and Learning Conference at a significantly reduced cost.

Part-time faculty members are encouraged to attend on-campus training activities. Since many training workshops are now held on evenings and weekends, participation has substantially increased. Through collective bargaining, the College increased the adjunct pay rate to $630 per credit hour. Adjunct faculty have also expressed a need for office space, computers, and phones. The College administration is exploring ways to improve support and increase adjunct participation in College activities. The new College President has met with the Adjunct Faculty Association to discuss establishing an adjunct faculty institute that will meet their special professional development needs. Focus groups are being scheduled now to discuss this imitative and the PDAC is working on developing an adjunct faculty handbook that will help integrate adjuncts into the College's teaching and learning community.

FACULTY EVALUATION

Full-Time Faculty. The guidelines and timelines for evaluating full-time non-tenured and tenured faculty are delineated in the collective bargaining agreement between the College and the ECCFA. The contract specifies that full-time tenured faculty will be evaluated every three years (*Faculty Contract* and see Exhibit 58 for all bargaining unit evaluation forms). However, non-tenured faculty are evaluated annually for reappointment and retention. A folder containing a peer evaluation, self-evaluation, and a summary of student evaluations is submitted to the Division's Retention and Promotions Committee. The Committee's recommendations and the folder are forwarded to the Division Chairperson, who studies the Committee's report, and submits an independent evaluation of the candidate. This recommendation is forwarded, along with the collected documentation, to the Dean of Faculty/Academic Affairs who makes a recommendation to the President. The President, in turn recommends to the Board of Trustees, the final approving authority.

Part-Time Faculty. The process used to evaluate part–time faculty is less rigid and more flexible than the process used to evaluate full-time faculty. Because of the increased reliance on part-time faculty, each division is responsible for evaluating adjunct faculty at least once a year. However, Division Chairpersons evaluates new adjunct faculty in their first semester. Full-time faculty members in the discipline generally observe long-term adjunct faculty members. The goal is to evaluate every adjunct faculty member at least once during the academic year. This has become increasingly difficult due to the large number of adjuncts and the constant turnover. The problem is compounded by conflicts in time and distance when observers must travel to the West Essex Campus and satellite programs such as FOCUS and Ironbound.

Under the guidance of the Dean of Faculty/Academic Affairs, Division Chairpersons recently revised the forms used to observe and evaluate adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty members receive the same student evaluation forms as full-time faculty. Student evaluations of faculty are completed every semester on a course-by-course basis and manually tabulated in the Divisions. The evaluation results are shared with the faculty member to help improve classroom effectiveness. The manual tabulation system is antiquated, cumbersome, and time-consuming.

Division Chairpersons. All Division Chairpersons at the College hold faculty rank. Most Chairpersons were tenured full-time faculty members prior to their appointment. Recently, this practice has changed. Four of the seven Division Chairpersons have been hired from other academic institutions and received faculty rank at the time of their appointment.

Division Chairpersons are evaluated annually using the College administration evaluation form. Division Chairpersons in their fifth year of employment are evaluated, and if they are not granted tenure, will no longer be employed by the College in that position.

Analysis and Findings

The evaluation of new full-time faculty from their first date of hire until they receive tenure conforms to the procedure described in the collective bargaining agreement. The prescribed forms and procedures ensure that all faculty are evaluated according to the same criteria. Similarly, student evaluations of faculty are conducted in all divisions. Evaluating part-time faculty is a difficult task for Division Chairpersons to complete without the help and coordination of the full-time faculty. Ideally, every adjunct should be evaluated annually, but this is difficult. Finally, the procedure for evaluating Division Chairpersons, particularly those recently hired without tenure, is not clearly defined in the College regulations or in the Administrative Association's collective bargaining agreement.

FACULTY PROMOTION, RETENTION, DISCIPLINE, AND GRIEVANCE

Newly hired full-time faculty receive academic rank, for example, as a Lecturer, Instructor, or Assistant Professor, according to the collective bargaining agreement between the College and the Essex County Faculty Association (ECCFA). Guidelines for rank and promotion are delineated in the bargaining agreement, taking into account experience, length of service, and educational preparation, among other things. Full-time faculty are eligible for tenure after five years of exemplary service. If faculty members are not granted tenure after the five-year period, they can no longer be employed as a full-time faculty member.

Adjunct faculty members do not receive academic rank, nor are they eligible for tenure. All full-time and adjunct faculty have the right to file a grievance against the College for violating contractual provisions in the collective bargaining agreement. The collective bargaining agreement establishes procedures for filing a grievance against the College and determines the basis for filing an appeal if the grievance fails.

Analysis and Findings

Faculty and other employees of the College have a high retention rate. Once a faculty member receives tenure, turnover is rare and usually only occurs if the faculty moves to another position within the College or retires. Faculty discipline has not been a problem.

Faculty grievances over the past years have been few in number and have generally been resolved without bitterness. However, among some faculty, morale is low due largely to the Administration's decision in 2007 to "scope" the collective bargaining agreement between the College and the ECCFA. Prior to the last bargaining session, the College petitioned the State's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to clarify several terms contained in the existing bargaining agreement between the College and the Faculty Association. These terms specifically dealt with hiring and promotion, governance, and the curriculum. The State AOC removed what many faculty believed were their prerogatives, duties, and responsibilities, particularly with respect to forming an elected recommending body for promotion. Although some of the issues are no longer as sensitive, the full-time faculty's reservations about the promotion process were expressed in the *Employee Attitude Survey* (Exhibit 5).

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► Full-time and part-time faculty members are well-prepared, qualified, and dedicated.
- ► Full-time faculty direct the curriculum development process.
- ► Full-time and adjunct faculty have opportunities for professional development offered by the Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) and Information Technology.
- ► The collective bargaining agreement provides clear timelines and procedures for evaluating full-time faculty.

Considerations

- ► Have a continuous recruitment process in place for the hiring of adjunct faculty.
- ► Implement standards for hiring full and adjunct faculty to teach within their discipline.
- ► Develop and explain the policies and procedures for evaluating non-tenured Division Chairpersons.

Commitments

- ► Increase the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty as resources become available.
- ► Improve and streamline the hiring process for full time faculty.
- ► Increase professional development opportunities for all faculty.
- ► Implement the electronic scoring of the student-faculty evaluation forms.

CHAPTER 7

STANDARDS 11 AND 12

Standard 11

Educational Offerings

The institution's educational offerings display academic content, rigor, and coherence appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.

Standard 12

General Education

The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, and technological competency.

STANDARD 11: EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

OVERVIEW

Central to Essex County College's mission is the responsibility to provide quality academic course work and programs culminating in students receiving associate degrees or certificates that, upon graduating, prepare them to transfer to four-year colleges or universities and/or obtain gainful employment. Added to this is the charge of providing programs which address the needs of the diverse populations existing throughout Essex County, as well as the charge to prepare students for college-level study by enhancing their reading, writing, and mathematical skills. The Task Force investigated whether and how the College ensures that course offerings and programs are appropriate and that extra- and co-curricular offerings and resources support student learning. Major sources reviewed for this chapter included: the *Strategic Plan 2009–2012* (Exhibit 2); the *Academic Master Plan 2009–2012* (Exhibit 3); *Fact Book and Outcomes 2009-2010* (Exhibit 12); *Survey of Entering Student Engagement – SENSE* (Exhibit 9); *Community College Survey of Student Engagement – CCSSE* (Exhibit 42); and the *Lampitt Bill* (Exhibit 48).

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND CURRICULA

Consistent with its mission, Essex County College has always been an open admissions institution which enrolls students from diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and national origins. This includes foreign students from 69 countries, with more than 31% of all ECC students indicating that English is not their first language. To provide diverse students quality educational experiences, the College has continually developed and maintained degree, certificate, basic skills, and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs which speak directly to its mission. The College currently offers 70 majors and 467 courses. Mainstream courses are supplemented by basic skills and ESL courses.

Students may take courses at the main campus in Newark, at the West Essex Campus in West Caldwell, or at the Police Academy in Cedar Grove, as well as at several off-campus sites. Furthermore, students may attend on a full-time or part-time basis and study during weekdays, taking classes either during the day, evening, and on weekends. In addition, the College now offers distance and hybrid courses; in Spring 2011, ECC will offer nine courses in these formats, and as many as 30 sections.

The West Essex Associate Dean oversees the branch campus, which became operational in 1989. At the West Essex Campus, students may earn degrees (A.A. and A.S.) in Liberal Arts, Social Sciences, Education, Business Administration, Accounting, Criminal Justice, and Technical Studies: Uniform Construction Code Option. All student services offered at the main campus are duplicated at the West Essex Campus.

The Police Academy was recertified for three years by the New Jersey Police Training Commission in 2010. The Academy offers basic officer courses, firearms training, and advanced courses in eight key areas. In addition, the Academy offers an array of courses and certifications, such as the semi-annual requalification mandated by the New Jersey Attorney General Guidelines, all housed in the Academy's newly constructed indoor firing range. Upon completing certain courses at the Police Academy, graduates earn up to 21 college credits which can be applied to requirements for an associate degree in Criminal Justice.

The FOCUS Hispanic Center for Community Development and the Ironbound Community Center, both located in Newark, have been serving the community's large Hispanic population since 1974

and 1980, respectively. Both sites operate during the evenings, Monday through Friday, and on Saturdays. Students have access to services available at the main campus such as counseling, tutoring, and other support services.

To ensure consistent quality of every course and academic program the College offers at all of its various campuses/sites, the College has an established protocol on program/course development and revision. For example, all A.A.S. degree programs should have community advisory boards. The College also has established procedures for on-going assessment of existing programs. This begins at the departmental or divisional level, and then is reviewed by college-wide peer review by the College Curriculum Advisory Council (CCAC) that approves courses pertaining to curriculum or program development, or the Standards and Assessment Advisory Council (SAAC) that reviews program evaluations. Final approval rests with the appropriate dean. Recommendations for program improvements, however, are sent to the division chairpersons and the Dean of Faculty/Academic Affairs.

Analyses of various programs that offer degrees at the College verify a cohesive structure related to the major course requirements in support of the individual program goals. A cohesive structure exists between the major course requirements and the program goals. Students are advised to pursue their degrees in the recommended course sequence as outlined in the *College Catalog,* on the College website, as well as in divisional program outlines (Exhibit 59). Counselors and advisors are available throughout the semester, especially during registration, to provide academic guidance. When the prescribed sequence is followed, students can effortlessly move from a basic to an advanced level of understanding in their subject matter. Moreover, students can take advantage of the College's degree programs which provide dual admission to local four-year colleges and universities such as Rutgers University – Newark, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Kean University, Montclair State University, and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, to mention a few.

The College has developed and continues to fine-tune partnerships with four-year institutions to provide continuity in academic opportunities and quality academic support. And at the state level, a transfer agreement called the *Lampitt Bill* guarantees that Associate of Arts (A.A.) and Associate of Science (A.S.) degree programs will transfer in full to baccalaureate degree programs that State public institutions offer.

Following *Institutional Strategic* and *Academic Master Plan's* recommendations, the administration initiated new programs and co-curricular initiatives to support the development of all students and to promote the academic agenda. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Honors Program, the Barbara Grossman Writers' Conference, the WISE Women's Center, the Africana Studies Program, the Learning Center, the Stay-in-Step Leadership Academy, the Black Writers' Forum, the Next Step Program, the Urban Issues Institute, and activities within the Division of Bilingual Studies. .

Analysis and Findings

Essex County College strives to deliver the same exceptional educational programs and curricula to all its students, regardless of a student's major or available time slot. According to the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory* (*SSI*), students are satisfied with the scheduling of course offerings, affirming that "Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me" and "There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus." In addition, approximately 71% of students who took the *SENSE* in Fall 2009 strongly agreed or agreed that "All the courses I needed to take during my first semester were available at times convenient for me." Since the survey respondents included a large number of students who registered at the last minute and had a more limited choice of courses, the College was satisfied with

the 71% rating. The College remains, nevertheless, committed to seeing an increase in student satisfaction in the future.

To maintain program and course consistency, faculty on all campuses and in all Departments/ Divisions follow a standardized course outline format that applies to every course at the College. These outlines cite comprehensive, measurable course goals, as well as the goals of the specific course. Outcomes information is used to modify goals and objectives as necessary. Although all course outlines state precise goals and objectives, the widespread systematic process of collecting assessment data to determine the extent to which these student learning outcomes are achieved is an ongoing challenge.

One of the College's strategic goals is to develop new credit and non-credit programs that meet emerging needs while ensuring that all current programs are of superior quality and responsive to academic and labor market demands (*Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012* and *Academic Master Plan 2009 – 2012*). To achieve this, faculty initiate new courses and programs while existing courses and programs are continually reviewed to ensure high quality offerings.

To verify that new programs or courses meet the needs of the students and the community, each proposal requires a detailed rationale to justify the new program or course. This rationale must identify the need for such a program/course and establish its viability. For A.A. and A.S. degree programs, for example, evidence must be presented which establishes the program's appropriateness for the current job market and its articulation with baccalaureate curricula at four-year institutions. Furthermore, following the protocol of new program/course development ensures compatibility with the College's mission. This process ensures that new courses or programs adhere to College standards and fulfill the institution's mission. Although the procedure on new program/course development is effective, the College would greatly benefit from a searchable comprehensive database of approved new program/course proposals readily accessible to chairpersons and faculty.

Existing programs at the College undergo regular assessment, a process of measuring and evaluating the overall performance of programs and the extent to which they support the College's mission. Ongoing program assessment is crucial because it identifies what a program does well, determines the areas that need improvement, and develops plans to lead to that improvement. From Fall 2006 to Spring 2010, nine program assessment reports, encompassing 24 programs, were submitted and peer-reviewed at the College. Several more programs underwent rigorous external assessments by appropriate accrediting organizations within the same timeframe (see Chapter IV – Standards 7 and 14 for further details on program assessment).

To review courses and programs, appropriate faculty and administrators meet to close the "feedback loop" by communicating the results of the assessment back to the program coordinators. The coordinators in turn make the needed changes and conduct subsequent assessments to complete the program assessment cycle.

The College is proud of its program evaluation procedure. It is a model of planning and efficiency that enables the College to accurately monitor and assess the effectiveness of all its educational programs. Solid evidence that academic programs at the College are conducted with rigor and efficiency can be found in department-based Program Assessment Reports (PARs) on file in the Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment. External accreditation provides further evidence that College programs are academically rigorous and relevant. At present, 10 programs (i.e., Civil Construction Engineering Technology, Civil Construction – Land Surveying Option, Electronic Engineering Technology, Licensed Practical Nurse, Manufacturing Engineering Technology, Manufacturing Engineering – Mechanical Engineering Technology Option, Nursing, Physical Therapy Assistant, Radiography, and Vision Care

Technology), are accredited by appropriate professional agencies. Three additional programs (i.e., Dental Assisting, Dental Hygiene, and Respiratory Care), are accredited at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), one of the College's dual-admission partner institutions. Finally, the Paralegal Studies Program is in the process of seeking American Bar Association (ABA) approval.

Many students who major in these externally-accredited programs take state licensing exams. First-attempt passing rates on these exams for the College's Nursing and Allied Health students are perennially above 90%. An exception to this is the Nursing program that, in the last two years, had a passing rate of 75% on the first try. To address this situation, the administration hired a new chairperson. Students in the Respiratory Care Program, for example, sit for the Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) license examination and the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) license examination. Passing rates from 2004 to 2009 have ranged from 91% to 100%, averaging 97%.

Nineteen colleges and universities in New Jersey recognize the strength of the College's educational programs by having entered into articulation agreements. Colleges and universities in New York (e.g., John Jay College of Criminal Justice and New York University) also have articulation or transfer agreements with the College. Other institutions of higher learning in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania (e.g., Columbia University, Cornell University, Ramapo College, Rider University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Seton Hall University, St. John's University, Temple University, and the College of New Jersey), accept credits from Essex County College.

Students recognize the strength of educational programs and curricula as indicated by agreement to the top 10 responses to statements on the *SSI* (Exhibit 8). "The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent" and "I am able to experience intellectual growth here" are two of the top responses. Furthermore, 77% of students who were administered the *SENSE* in Fall 2009 strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "The instructors at this college want me to succeed." While this information is positive, responses to other questions on both surveys indicate further concerns about academic advising at the College (see Standard 9 in how this issue was addressed).

LEARNING RESOURCES

Several services at the College support students' learning and educational offerings. They include the Learning Center, libraries, computer laboratories, and Media Production & Technology (MPT).

The Learning Center. Since its opening on the main campus in September 2005, the Learning Center centralized tutoring at the College, and now provides tutoring and supplemental educational services to students of all skill levels in the subjects of mathematics, computer science, English, accounting, business, ESL, world languages, biology, chemistry, and physics. Tutors, or "Learning Associates," provide individual and small-group tutoring. Students seeking assistance at the Center can also find peer support, faculty instruction, supplemental materials, and technology-based resources including instructional software such as Computer-Aided Instruction (CAI) and DVDs for developing skills, habits, and attitudes needed to succeed in school and in life. In AY 2009-2010, there were over 30 Learning Associates available to students on a first-come, first-serve basis for varying hours from Monday through Saturday and Monday through Thursday during Summer Sessions I and II. To ensure high quality personnel, Learning Associates must complete at least 30 college-level credits, provide two letters of recommendation, and have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in the subject area in which they intend to tutor. Many tutors hold master's degrees and doctorates.

In an ongoing effort to assist students, the Learning Center offers a series of midterm and final examination review sessions in developmental and college-level mathematics, English, ESL, and accounting at various times during the academic year and summer sessions. In addition, approximately 100 workshops on note-taking techniques, examination strategies, time management, mathematical problem solving, among other workshops, are offered at the Center. Other workshops, appropriately named "Move Up" workshops, were developed for students who marginally failed English Foundations (ENG 096), Introductory Algebra (MTH 086), or Elementary Algebra (MTH 092). These 20-hour English and 25-hour mathematics Move Up workshops provide students with another chance to review the course material, improve their subject skills, pass the final examination, and "move up" to the next course—either College Composition I (ENG 101), Elementary Algebra (MTH 092), or Introductory College Mathematics (MTH 100).

The Learning Center also sponsors the Summer Connections program designed for entering freshman and New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Rewards Scholarship (NJ STARS) students who scored below college-level on their placement test scores. This program offers students the opportunity to complete developmental courses prior to the Fall semester.

Libraries. Essex County College has three libraries – the Martin Luther King Jr. Library on the main campus, the West Essex campus library, and the Police Academy library. All three maintain carefully selected collections shelved in open book stacks and extensive non-print materials. The King Library maintains a collection of more than 90,000 volumes, over 400 periodicals, 35 online databases, thousands of microfilms, and hundreds of videocassettes, filmstrips, slides/cassettes, and 16-mm film programs, in addition to small-group study rooms equipped with wireless Internet access. The branch campus library has over 11,000 volumes and a comparable collection of non-print media. And the library at the Police Academy has over 1,022 cataloged titles. The holdings of all three libraries can conveniently be accessed via an automated, online public access catalog called OPAC. Finally, the College is a member of and active participant in the Reciprocal Borrowing Libraries (ReBL) of Essex County, INFOLINK, and the Library Cooperative of the Council of Higher Education in Newark (CHEN). Consequently, students at the College have many other libraries available to them.

Computer Laboratories. In addition to its extensive library options, the College has fully-equipped, up-to-date computer laboratories at the main campus and at the West Essex Campus. The main campus contains 18 laboratories with 442 computers, including a newly created laboratory dedicated to Nursing majors. The hours of operation for the computer laboratories vary, but include 12 or more hours per day on weekdays and between three and six hours on Saturdays. Most computers in the laboratories operate on a Windows XP Professional Service Pack 3 (build 2600) with over 100 software applications installed. These computers also include software necessary for students to complete online assignments and high-speed Internet access for students to easily visit text-specific instruction and tutoring websites. Other designated computers run on Mac OS X 10.4 and have over 75 software applications installed. There are several "private" computer laboratories at the main campus that instructors reserve for holding classes. At the West Essex campus, there are three computer laboratories with software applications that include Office 2007, Quickbooks 2009, Adobe Master Suite CS4, and Medisoft 14. Also, the College has seven completely equipped SMART classrooms and is planning to convert all classrooms to smart classrooms using unique technologies that are inexpensive and effective.

Audio-Visual Support Services. The Media Production & Technology (MPT) Center, a College resource whose primary goal is to provide high quality audio-visual support services for classroom presentations, lectures, conferences, and special events at the College, has recently been significantly

upgraded. The revamped facility, which opened in Spring 2010, offers a state-of-the-art, student-friendly television studio with the latest in digital high definition production equipment and professional post production suites. The Center is also the home of the College's educational access channel on the FIOS network which reaches all of Essex County.

Analysis and Findings

Essex County College has well-established academic support services, including the Learning Center, several libraries, numerous computer labs, and MPT resources to enhance the learning experience of its students. Many students visit the Learning Center throughout the academic year. Recent data indicates that 3,238 unduplicated students (approximately 31% of total enrollment) spent a total of 13,857 hours at the Center in Fall 2008, averaging approximately 4.3 hours per student; 3,265 students spent 15,548 hours there in Fall 2009, averaging about 4.8 hours per student. In fact, slightly more than 75% of respondents to the Fall 2009 *SENSE* said they were aware of the availability of face-to-face tutoring. Of those students taking the 2006 *CCSSE,* 42% indicated they had been tutored at the College (in the Learning Center or elsewhere), compared with 26% of students at peer institutions. Some students at the Learning Center participated in the Move Up workshops or Summer Connections program.

Students also make many visits to the libraries throughout the semester. In Fall 2009, for example, the total patron count at the King library on the main campus (where checkouts totaled approximately 11,000) was approximately 114,100. At the West Essex library, with more than 1,000 check outs, the patron count was about 14,800 in Fall 2009. It is important to keep in mind that students use many other services at the College libraries besides checking out material including, but not limited to, conducting electronic research, using reference materials and other non-print media, photocopying material for classes, and studying individually or in small groups.

Students also use the computer laboratories. Recent student usage of open computer laboratories on the main campus indicates that almost 70% of registered students use them in the Fall and Spring semesters (*CCSSE*). It is reassuring that students report satisfaction with the computer laboratories. One of the top 10 strengths indicated on the recently administered *SSI* was, "Computer labs are adequate and accessible."

One of the College's strategic goals is to implement and upgrade academic and student support programs and services to improve access, recruitment, retention, and student success. Another goal is to advance all areas of the College by applying emerging technologies and upgrading the physical environment (*Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012* and *Academic Master Plan 2009 – 2012*). Meeting these goals will ensure that students benefit from the most current, up-to-date tutoring methods, library resources, MPT offerings, and computer laboratories, and will enhance the current learning resources and support services the College offers.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

► Essex County College has strong new program and course development protocol, as well as thorough program assessment procedures in place to ensure that all programs offer appropriate and coherent academic content, all courses are appropriately rigorous, and that all course offerings are consistent with the College's mission.

► All course outlines have been updated to include comprehensive and measurable student learning outcomes that match the general education goals of the College, as well as the goals of the program for which a specific course is required.

► The Learning Center offers many opportunities for students to strengthen their academic skills (e.g., tutoring and workshops) and further their academic progress (e.g., Move Up workshops and Summer Connections).

► The libraries and computer laboratories are well-used, and, as indicated by student survey responses, provide adequate support to students.

Considerations

► Develop and implement a College-wide system to disseminate course and program information more efficiently.

► Reconfigure the library to become a Learning Commons to more extensively meet student learning needs.

Commitments

► Develop initiatives to publicize support services available to students and encourage them to use appropriate academic resources.

► Track cohorts to determine whether the use of academic support services results in increased student retention.

► Ensure the availability of the latest technology for student and faculty use in teaching and learning.

STANDARD 12: GENERAL EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

In 2007, the State of New Jersey passed the *Lampitt Bill* guaranteeing the transfer of credits from community colleges to four-year educational institutions. In order to standardize and facilitate transfer of course credits, New Jersey community colleges were asked to collectively define General Education Foundation Course Categories and determine which courses from each community college met the criteria in each category. All New Jersey county colleges sent two delegates to the General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC), which met for two years, to debate and decide the General Education categories and criteria. GECC sent the final list of courses to the New Jersey Academic Officers's Association (AOA) for ratification. The GECC and the AOA agreed on the following nine categories: (1) Written and Oral Communication; (2) Quantitative Knowledge and Skills; (3) Scientific Knowledge and Reasoning; (4) Technological Competency/Information Literacy; (5) Society and Human Behavior; (6) Humanistic Perspective; (7) Historical Perspective; (8) Global and Cultural Awareness of Diversity; and (9) Ethics. Documents referred to in this section include: the *Lampitt Bill* (Exhibit 48); *College Catalog* (Exhibit 1); and *Lifeline* (Exhibit 56).

REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

The State General Education Coordinating Committee approved that all students demonstrate competency in the following measurable areas by scoring a certain level or by completing the appropriate course-work:

> A. English, as demonstrated by passing a pre-enrollment placement test given by the Enrollment Services Express Center, or taking ENG 085 and/or ENG 096;
> B. Basic Mathematics, as demonstrated by passing a pre-enrollment placement test, or taking MTH 086; or
> C. Algebra, as demonstrated by passing a pre-enrollment placement test, or taking MTH 092.

STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

All Essex County College degrees follow the State of New Jersey's guidelines for general education credits. The Associate of Arts, the Associate of Science, and the Associate of Applied Science degrees meet or exceed the State requirements for general education: 45 credits; 33 credits; and 20 credits, respectively. The College disseminated the general education foundation categories, goals and objectives to the entire college in order to revise all of its general education course outlines. The objectives provided a basis for assessing student performance, and a mechanism for measuring how well the objectives of each course were achieved (see Standard 14 for examples of general education outcomes). Moreover, instructors now had a list of outcomes to guide them in preparing their course outlines to meet the goals and objectives and to insure compliance with state requirements. The specific categories and behavioral objectives in each category are:

1. *Oral and Written Communication:* Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing;
2. *Quantitative Reasoning:* Students will apply appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and to solve problems;
3. *Scientific Knowledge:* Students will apply the scientific method of inquiry to draw conclusions based on verifiable evidence, use scientific theories and knowledge to understand the natural world, and explain the impact of scientific theories, discoveries and technological changes on society;
4. *Technological Competency:* Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals;
5. *Society and Human Behavior* (Social Sciences): Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions;
6. *Aesthetic Perspective* (Humanities): Students will analyze works of the literary, visual or performing arts;
7. *Historical Perspective:* Students will analyze historical events and movements in western and non-western societies and assess their subsequent significance;
8. *Diversity and Global Perspective:* Students will analyze the implications of commonalities and differences among culturally diverse peoples; and
9. *Ethics:* Students will understand ethical issues and situations.

The following table lists the number of general education credits required by degree type:

Table 7: Required General Education Credits by Degree Type

	A.A.	A.S.	A.A.S.
Communication	9	6	6
Mathematics, Science, Tech.	12	12	4
Social Science	6	6	6
Humanities	9	6	0
History	6	3	3
Diversity	3	0	0
Unassigned GE credit	0	0	1
TOTAL	**45**	**33**	**20**

Analysis and Findings

Two state committees (General Education Coordinating Committee - GECC and Academic Officer's Association - AOA) reviewed and affirmed the general education courses which meet the requirements in each foundation category. A list of all courses may be found on pages 37-38 in the catalogue, on the College website, and in Appendix G.

The course outlines for the approved general education courses have been rewritten in order to incorporate the new goals and objectives. The Chairperson of the College Curriculum Advisory Council (CCAC) met with the Division Chairpersons and with various College committees and councils. In an effort to focus on course assessment, it was decided that the revised course outlines would include course goals and measurable course performance objectives (MPOs). These would break down each goal into discrete learning outcomes, the mastery of which could be assessed by the instructor in a variety of ways

(e.g., quizzes, assignments, projects, papers, examinations, presentations, portfolios, and reports). Furthermore, course goals and MPOs would ensure that instructors were teaching those areas or topics in their course outlines.

The Chairperson of CCAC prepared a sample course outline with course goals and measurable performance objectives and sent it as a model to all faculty. A series of meetings was held to disseminate the new information and requirements. Each general education course outline was examined, dissected, and rewritten to ensure that it fully met the general education guidelines and contained appropriate course goals and corresponding measurable performance objectives.

For example, in General Psychology I (PSY 101), seven course goals support the general education goal in Society and Human Behavior. These are:

1. Apply critical thinking guidelines to assess claims and make objective judgments on the basis of well-supported reasons and evidence rather than emotion and anecdote; (GEG5)
2. Identify the different research methods in psychology, as well as their advantages and disadvantages; (GEG 5)
3. Differentiate the activities of psychologists who conduct basic or applied psychological research from those who practice psychology; (GEG 5)
4. Identify the major and minor psychological perspectives that predominate modern psychology, with particular attention devoted to the terms, definitions, and theories associated with the learning, sociocultural, and psychodynamic perspectives; (GEG 5, GEG 8)
5. Differentiate the central areas of human motivation; (GEG 5)
6. Determine how psychologists define and study personality; (GEG 5, GEG 8) and
7. Identify the symptoms of various psychological disorders and discuss how they are diagnosed and various therapeutic approaches of treatment. (GEG 5, GEG 8)

See Standard 14 for specific examples of general education outcomes.

COMMUNICATION OF GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Information about the general education program may be found in the *College Catalog*, program guides, *Lifeline* (the College student handbook), as well as on the website. New students are given an hour-long orientation regarding College expectations and provided with a printout of their program requirements. Advisors and counselors have the general education requirement sheets both on paper and on their computers. New students are encouraged to take College Success Seminar (CSS 101), a 1.5 credit course that covers information on general educational requirements. Students who self-register may refer to the College website, program guides, College *Catalog*, or to *Lifeline* for assistance.

Analysis and Findings

Students and faculty are informed about general education requirements in several ways (e.g.., in printed brochures, program guides, the *College Catalog*, the student handbook, and on-line). The CSS 101 course, student publications, and the presentations at each new student orientation, inform students of the general education requirements. Before students graduate, Enrollment Services Express send students graduation audits. The audit provides another means to determine if all the general education courses requirements have been met.

The College recognizes the importance of analyzing student learning to demonstrate that students have acquired the knowledge, skills, and competencies desired are consistent with the College's mission and goals. Measurable performance objectives in each general education course outline provide a basis for reviewing and analyzing indicators of student learning. The College is determined to ensure that student learning assessment is an ongoing, cyclical process. To this end, the schedule below establishes a three-year cycle for evaluating the general education goals**.**

1. *Oral and Written Communication:* Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing. **2009-2010**
2. *Quantitative Reasoning:* Students will apply appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts.
   and operations to interpret data and to solve problems. **2009-2010**
3. *Scientific Knowledge:* Students will apply the scientific method of inquiry to draw conclusions based on verifiable evidence, use scientific theories and knowledge to understand the natural world, and explain the impact of scientific theories, discoveries and technological changes on society. **2011-2012**
4. *Technological Competency:* Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals. **2009-2010**
5. *Society and Human Behavior* (Social Sciences): Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions. **2010-2011**
6. *Aesthetic Perspective* (Humanities): Students will analyze works of the literary, visual or performing arts. **2010-2011**.
7. *Historical Perspective:* Students will analyze historical events and movements in western and non-western societies and assess their subsequent significance. **2011-2012**
8. *Diversity and Global Perspective:* Students will analyze the implications of commonalities and differences among culturally diverse peoples. **2011-2012**
9. *Ethics:* Students will understand ethical issues and situations. **2010-2011**

GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

As indicated in Standard 14, students taking general education courses must demonstrate, either orally or in writing (e.g., in research reports, laboratory research, papers, examinations, projects, or portfolios), that they have met the student learning outcomes (SLOs) contained in each course outlines. Direct evidence of student learning is documented through tests, written reports, course portfolios, and similar activities linked to test blueprints or rubrics. Faculty use rubrics to determine how well students master competencies such as writing effectively, applying the scientific method, or thinking critically.

In a faculty workshop, Dr. Virginia Anderson, a professor at Towson State University and a well known assessment consultant, emphasized to faculty that assessment is a four-step process: (1) Establish learning goals; (2) Provide learning opportunities; (3) Assess student learning; and (4) Use the results to improve teaching and student learning. Moreover, she noted that contemporary assessment has clear advantages over traditional assessment. Instruction, she emphasized, is carefully aligned with goals and objectives, stresses critical thinking over rote memorization, focuses on improving teaching and learning; and helps educators to learn how successful they are in meeting program SLOs.

ECC faculty acknowledge that learning takes place best when students realize that their academic program is not comprised of discrete and unrelated courses; rather, it is a coherent set of general

education and program required courses. Based on this comprehensive view, the instructor's perspective in grading changes from grades on individual tests to a perspective on how students performed as a group, and where they succeeded and failed. Such analysis is a primary way to upgrade teaching and learning as a whole within a given discipline.

Though it was limited to a small number of faculty, changes took place immediately after Dr. Virginia Anderson visited ECC. Subsequently, in July 2010, a workshop for Chairpersons and Administrators was given by Dr. Lynn Crosby, an assessment specialist from Florida State College. Encouraging everyone to conform to assessment guidelines has taken time and patience. In updating course outlines and syllabi and making general education outlines and syllabi a priority took nearly a year. Reticent faculty have adopted the process and substantial progress has been noted since Dr. Abdullah became the College President in April 2010. Thus, the groundwork has been laid, not only for the assessment of general education, but also for the assessment of the entire curricula.

Analysis and Findings

The College is committed to creating a culture of assessment, as well as assessing the degree to which students have met general education goals. The academic divisions have reported that most of the work needed to revise the outlines of all the general education courses, including the writing of measurable performance objectives, has been completed. Currently, assessment information is being collected (see Standard 14 for specific outcomes information regarding general education goals). The College needs to continue improving the assessment process by ensuring that relevant data are compiled and analyzed. Once this system and methodology are well established, the data can be more fully analyzed and used to improve the curricular.

TRANSFERABILITY OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

Passage of the 2007 *Lampitt Bill* required New Jersey's four-year higher education institutions to "enter into a collective statewide transfer agreement that provides for the seamless transfer of academic credits from a completed Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree program to a baccalaureate degree program" (see page 1, Chapter 175, supplementing Chapter 62 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes, 2007). Consequently, the *Lampitt Bill* assures that students taking general education courses at Essex County College can transfer to any public New Jersey college or university and have those courses accepted in fulfilling general education requirements. In addition to the bill simplifying the transfer of courses from community colleges to public four-year institutions, it eliminates many of the difficulties students could encounter upon transferring. A student's ability to transfer general education courses to private colleges and universities in-state or out-of-state, however, is determined by the transfer institution.

Analysis and Findings

Data from the most recent *Graduate Follow-up Questionnaire* indicated that in FY 2009, 71% of the respondents who transferred to a four-year institution encountered no problems in transferring their credits. Of those who had problems, only 13% were related to actual credit hour transfers. A longitudinal analysis of follow-up data should determine whether ECC graduates who transfer encounter fewer problems.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

► Passage of the 2007 *Lampitt Bill* ensures that general education courses will transfer into general education categories at all public New Jersey four-year institutions.

► All associate degrees are in compliance with the State's minimum general education credit requirements.

► The College's general education course requirements have undergone two years of extensive analysis and revision to ensure that its general education course outlines include measurable performance objectives.

► The College Success Seminar (CSS 101) includes discussion of general education courses required for majors and degrees.

Considerations

► Develop methods and procedures to ensure that students are aware of and complete the general education requirements.

► Ensure that advisors, full-time, and adjunct faculty are aware of all general education requirements.

► Develop a more standardized system to gather data about general education course outcomes.

► Publicize the importance of collecting general education outcomes data to all full-time and adjunct faculty in the Division of Academic Affairs.

Commitments

► Continue to revise as appropriate general education course outlines to reflect objectives and student learning outcomes.

► Develop a more efficient advisement program for all new students, both in-person and on the website, about the general education requirements.

► Develop a system in e-mail or pamphlet format to advise all adjunct faculty of the general education requirements, especially if they are teaching a general education course.

► Ensure implementation of an iterative schedule for consistently reviewing the successful learning of general education requirements.

CHAPTER 8

STANDARD 13

Standard 13

Related Educational Activites

The institution's programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.

STANDARD 13:   RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

OVERVIEW

In fulfilling its mission, Essex County College maintains a commitment to open access and academic excellence by providing multiple pathways for learning. Standard 13 task force members analyzed the related educational activities of basic skills, credit, non-credit, and workforce offerings through the West Essex Branch Campus, credit and noncredit offerings through the Division of Continuing and Community Education, high school partnerships, distance and experiential learning, and cooperative education. Major sources reviewed for this chapter include: the *Academic Foundation Annual Report 2008-2009* (Exhibit 60); *Fact Book and Outcomes 2009-2010* (Exhibit 12); *West Essex Campus Annual Report 2008-2009 (*Exhibit 61); and the *Community and Continuing Education Annual Report 2008-2009* (Exhibit 26).

BASIC SKILLS

Essex County College, a champion of equal access to higher education, adheres strictly to an open-enrollment policy. With 90% of all applicants underprepared for college-level coursework, the College offers developmental coursework in English, reading, and mathematics for institutional credit. Students may place into the following levels or some combination thereof: (1) college-level credit courses; (2) basic skills (developmental) courses in English (excluding English as a Second Language), reading, or mathematics; (3) courses for non-native speakers of English; and (4) continuing education. Placement in basic skill courses is determined by several tests, including but not limited to, TABE Online, Accuplacer, and College Board SAT. Placement test levels and cut-off scores are established and consistent with the New Jersey Council of Community Colleges's recommendations for statewide scoring and placement. Non-native speakers of English, who do not achieve a satisfactory score of competency on the Test of English as a Foreign Language, take the BEST Plus, an adult ESL assessment.

Basic skills coursework is administered through a bipartite structure comprised of the Center for Academic Foundations (CAF) and the respective academic division—the Division of Humanities or the Division of Mathematics and Physics. In addition, the Academic Foundations Advisory Council (AFAC), an institutionally-appointed governance body of faculty and administration, offers curricular recommendations for developmental education. The table below illustrates enrollment for Fall 2009 and the percentage enrolled in remedial courses:

Table 8: Remedial Enrollment - Fall 2009

Total Fall 2009 Undergraduate Enrollment	Number of students enrolled in one or more remedial courses	% of Total
13,314	5,354	40.2%

English.   Native English-speaking students scoring below college level on the Accuplacer are placed into one of three English courses—Academic Foundations English (AFE 083), College Language Studies (ENG 085), or English Foundations (ENG 096). In AY 2006-2007, the Center for Academic Foundations developed AFE 083. This course adheres to the same course description and curriculum (including departmental mid-term and final examinations) as ENG 085, but requires students to complete additional tutoring and computer lab instruction. In addition, this course targets high-risk students and

seeks to increase their success and retention rates through a community learning course design, intensive support services, and applied functional teaching strategies. An example is the strategy used in AFE 083 that schedules two days of lecture and one day of mandatory computer lab facilitated by the instructor and augmented by a peer tutor. Also, students taking Academic Foundations English are required to attend mandatory tutoring sessions and to complete web-based English (MyWritingLab) classes which reinforce existing skills by building upon new knowledge through mastery learning.

Reading.   Students scoring below college level on the comprehension section of Accuplacer enroll in Reading Foundations for College Students (RDG 096).

Mathematics.   The Division of Mathematics and Physics offers various courses ranging from developmental to multivariable calculus and linear algebra. After considering Accuplacer scores and College Board's SAT scores, faculty in the Division of Mathematics and Physics establish cutoff scores for placement into various courses. Depending on their placement scores, students scoring below college level may enroll in Academic Foundations Mathematics (AFM 083), Introductory Algebra (MTH 086), or Elementary Algebra (MTH 092).

Similar to the design of the English curriculum, the Division of Mathematics and Physics and the Center for Academic Foundations offer developmental mathematics courses. Students scoring 29 or lower on the Accuplacer algebra section are considered high-risk and have the option of taking Academic Foundations Mathematics (AFM 083). This course follows a three day schedule—two days of lecture instruction and one day of mandatory computer laboratory—facilitated by the instructor and augmented by a peer tutor. Students taking AFM 083 are also required to attend mandatory tutoring sessions and complete web-based ALEX classes that reinforce existing skills by building upon new knowledge through mastery learning. The table below illustrates the distribution of students per developmental course.

Table 9: Percentage of New Students Placed into Remedial Sections

Reading	*Writing*	*Mathematics*
RDG 096 – 82% based on Reading Score alone	AFE 083/ENG 085 24%	AFM 083/MTH 086 – 85.4%
	ENG 096 – 61.5%	MTH 092 – 6.1%

Analysis and Finding

Student Performance in Developmental Education Courses.   It is a fact that 9 out of 10 students need to take one or more developmental courses at the College. Currently, a major concern is the number of students not successfully completing their developmental mathematics courses. Table 10 contains the pass and success rates of students in the College's developmental courses. A review of the overall success rate (the calculation of which includes all grades in the denominator - withdrawals and incompletes - whereas the pass rate only includes final letter grades in the denominator) shows that less than 50% of the students taking basic skills algebra (MTH 092) are successful. In English, over two-thirds of the students are successful.

Table 10: Percent Developmental Pass and Success Rates
Fall 2004 to Fall 2009

COURSE   PERCENT PASS* / (SUCCESS RATE**)

	F04	*F05*	*F 06*	*F 07*	*F 08*	*F 09*
AFE 083					84 (66)	81 (64)
AFM 083					56 (38)	73 (51)
ENG 085	80 (77)	64 (54)	71 (64)	78 (71)	80 (73)	75 (67)
ENG 088	82 (73)	76 (69)	74 (67)			
ENG 096	81 (72)	75 (68)	74 (67)	77 (69)	80 (73)	76 (69)
RDG 096	78 (64)	70 (62)	78 (70)	83 (77)	87 (81)	83 (76)
MTH 086	58 (46)	53 (42)	50 (41)	58 (50)	63 (55)	58 (50)
MTH 092	47 (36)	46 (36)	48 (37)	49 (41)	49 (40)	44 (37)

* Percent Pass = ABC/ABCDF   **Success Rate = ABC/All Grades

One way the College has addressed this concern is to try different pedagogical approaches in teaching. The Center for Academic Foundations is one area where different approaches are being implemented.

Center for Academic Foundations. Considering the sheer need for developmental education among the greater Newark population, CAF assists students in improving their knowledge through their Learning Communities and CAF teaching strategies. The total enrollment of 674 students in AY 2008-2009 reflects an increase of 153 students from the previous year. During this period, success rates in CAF increased by 8% in English (from 73% in AY 2007-2008 to 81% in AY 2008-2009) and decreased by 3% in mathematics (from 60% in AY 2007-2008 to 57% in AY 2008-2009). There was an increase in the number of AFM classes during Fall 2008 from 14 to 21 and AFE classes from 9 to 14; in Spring 2009, AFM classes increased from 14 to 17 and AFE from 9 to 12.

Move-Up Workshops and Summer Connections Program. The "Move Up Workshop" concept, developed through the combined efforts of the Division of Humanities and the Division of Mathematics, is administered through the Learning Center. Each division developed criteria for those students who marginally failed or received the grade "Incomplete" for developmental mathematics and English courses. The 20-hour English and 25-hour Mathematics course affords students the opportunity to improve their subject skills, pass the final examination, and move on to college-level work. Eligible students are sent letters and registration forms for the Move Up workshops held during the Winter Intersession and Summer I. After successfully completing the workshops, students are advised into the next course.

During the Winter 2008 intersession, nine students registered for and passed the MTH 086 Move-Up Workshops. Twenty-four students registered for the MTH 092 workshop with 17 students or 71% successfully completing the course. During Spring 2009 and Summer I 2009, 24 students registered for the MTH 086 workshop with 13 students or 54% successfully completing the course. Thirty-six students registered for the MTH 092 workshop with 28 students or 78% successfully completing the course. Four students registered for the ENG 096 workshop with three students or 75% successfully completing the course. The Move Up Workshops have benefited students by assisting students to successfully move to the next level.

To streamline the process of recommending qualified students for the Move Up workshops, the Learning Center and Information Technology created a "Move Up" link in Web services. Due to this convenient web-based design, faculty determined that approximately 120 students were eligible and recommended for MTH 086 and MTH 092 workshops via the student course management system.

CREDIT, NON-CREDIT, AND WORKFORCE OFFERINGS AT THE WEST ESSEX CAMPUS

The West Essex Campus (WEC), the College's official branch campus located in the suburb of West Caldwell, employs 22 full-time permanent staff members. The facilities include a library, a bookstore, four computer laboratories, two science laboratories, and twelve lecture classrooms. An Associate Dean of the West Essex Campus, who reports directly to the Dean of Community and Continuing Education, supervises all campus activities. The West Essex Advisory Board provides guidance and a forum to address the social and economic needs of the West Essex community.

The campus's student body represents each of the county's 21 municipalities. Annually, enrollment stands at approximately 4,000 credit and non-credit students. First and second-year college coursework is offered, in addition to developmental courses in English, reading, and mathematics. Degree-seeking students can complete one of seven degree programs at the Branch Campus or opt to enroll in prerequisite coursework before completing one of the College's Main Campus programs. WEC maintains a wide-array of student services, including one-on-one advisement, tutoring, and library services. In addition to credit offerings, WEC, through its office of Continuing and Community Services, offers non-credit courses, workshops, and seminars for personal enrichment and career advancement.

Analysis and Findings

The West Essex Campus experienced 18% increase in student enrollment from Fall 2008 to Fall 2009; a 12% increase in student enrollment from Fall 2007 to Fall 2008. While this increase in student enrollment has resulted in an increase in credit hours, it has created other challenges, particularly with parking and facilities. Also, the ratio of full-time faculty to adjunct faculty at the branch campus is lower than the main campus as evidenced by 82% adjunct faculty compared to 18% full-time faculty for AY 2009-2010.

The total graduates for FY 2008 and FY 2009 were 107 and 120, respectively. WEC graduates, defined as students who took 30 credits or more at the campus, represent approximately 10% of the total overall College graduates. A recent cohort study demonstrated that the six-year graduation rate for all first-time students at WEC was 22.8% (*Fact Book and Outcomes, 2009-2010*; *West Essex Campus Annual Report 2008-2009*). According to the *Fact Book and Outcomes of 2009-2010*, graduation rates for students attending the branch campus versus those attending the main campus were:

Table 11: Six Year Graduation Comparison West Essex Campus (WEC) vs. Main Campus

Year	Percentage of WEC	Percentage at Main Campus
	22.8 %	16.4%
Five	17.4%	13.2%
Four	17.4%	10.7%
Three	11.5%	7.4%
Two	2.4%	2.2%

Retention tracking information of full-time students from Fall semester to the following Fall semester at WEC is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Retention and Tracking Information

Fall to Fall	FT/FT - WEC	All
Fall 2004 – Fall 2005	70.9%	56.4%
Fall 2005 – Fall 2006	65.1%	51.2%
Fall 2006 – Fall 2007	58.4%	48.6%
Fall 2007 – Fall 2008	63.1%	55.1%
Fall 2008 – Fall 2009	60.7%	53.7%

CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT OFFERINGS THROUGH THE DIVISION OF CONTINUING AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Since the inception of the Division of Community and Continuing Education (CCE), its overall goal has been to address the dynamic educational needs of a diverse county population. Each year approximately 20,000 credit and non-credit full and part-time students participate in CCE programs which include, but are not limited to: (1) basic skills instruction including adult basic education and GED preparation; (2) English as a second language instruction; (3) job readiness instruction, job search activities, and direct job placement; (4) customized short-term training; (5) computer literacy; and (6) cultural and recreational activities. The CCE is served by an administrative team headed by the Dean of Continuing and Community Education, two Associate Deans, and 11 directors. The College offers courses off-campus at its Ironbound and FOCUS Extension Centers, the Police Academy, as well as non-credit courses and programs offered on-campus through the Department of Continuing Education, Training, Inc., and the WISE Women's Center.

Extension Centers. The College's Ironbound and FOCUS Extension Centers offer credit courses offered in Spanish to meet the educational needs of its Hispanic communities. Offerings include English as a Second Language, History, Mathematics, General Psychology I, Child Psychology and Development, Art, and Computer Information Science courses. During AY 2008-2009, 1,105 students enrolled in courses at the Extension Centers, representing a 4.6% increase over the previous academic year. Students are encouraged to continue their education by transferring to the main campus and matriculating into a degree program. A full array of student support services, such as counseling, financial aid workshops, and tutoring, along with extracurricular activities, completes the student's educational experience at the extension centers.

Essex County College Police Academy. The Essex County College Police Academy administers programs for current and aspiring law enforcement officers. The Alternate Route Police training program, a 21-week program, affords residents of New Jersey the opportunity to become state certified police officers. In-service training opportunities for current law enforcement officers are conducted continuously throughout the year for correction, juvenile detention, and police officers from local municipal, County, State and out-of-state law enforcement agencies. The Police Academy's total enrollment for AY 2008-2009 was 3,457 *(Community and Continuing Education Annual Report, 2008-2009* (Exhibit 26).

WISE Women's Center. The WISE Women's Center provides professional and personal development training and services to female and male residents of Essex County. During AY 2008-2009, WISE conducted 160 non-credit courses and workshops to address the expressed needs of its

participants. The Urban Women's Program, Employment Clinics, Construction Career Programs, Entrepreneurship, and Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) Programs afford students a variety of career and occupational training opportunities at little or no cost to the participants. Co-sponsored with the Department of Health and Human Services and the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), WISE offers an eight-week Parenting Skills Training Program. This program provides information and training and attempts to reduce child abuse by establishing strong family bonds. It provides parenting skills classes to parents whose children are under DYFS supervision and includes a parenting curriculum and professional social workers observing parents interacting with their children. In addition, this program provides resources and personnel who offer individual and group counseling, information, training to eliminate abuse, resources, and referrals to address social and economic issues.

The WISE Women's Center also takes great pride in the Female Offender Re-entry Group Effort (FORGE) program. FORGE is the first documented program in the United States to offer re-entry services and support group sessions for female offenders on parole. The program addresses, among other topics, issues of domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse, and trauma. For AY 2008-2009, the WISE Women's Center presented non-credit courses and workshops/seminars to 2,030 participants (*Community and Continuing Education Annual Report 2008-2009*).

Training, Inc. Training, Inc., the College's career training institute, offers a learning environment that enables trainees to develop their abilities and enrich their personal and professional lives. A leader in workforce development, Training, Inc. provides a wide variety of day and evening job training services at no cost to educationally and economically disadvantaged men and women seeking initial entry, re-entry, or upward mobility in the workforce. The programs, which utilize the standards and practices of the business world, provide trainees with innovative short-term and hands-on job training in simulated office settings.

Training, Inc. offers a broad array of training opportunities in both applied skills and soft skills. Given recent economic trends, Training Inc. has focused its curriculum on Computerized Business Office Skills and Allied Health Programs (e.g., Certified Nurse Aide, Certified Clinical Medical Assistant, Medical Technician, Patient Care Technician, EKG, and Phlebotomy). Training, Inc. uses "The Imaginal Education" approach that recognizes the importance of positive self-image and the learner's life experiences. And most importantly, the staff supports each trainee's goals and hopes.

Training, Inc. embraces community outreach through partnering with local organizations including FOCUS, KeySkills Learning, Inc., First Source Solutions, and the Center for Workforce Learning. In AY 2008-2009, Training, Inc. served 2,663 participants through its community outreach efforts. In addition, Training, Inc. offers summer programs to Newark Public School District freshman, sophomores, and juniors by exposing urban youth to potential career options through simulated work experiences (e.g., computer skills instruction and application). Eleven high school students were provided Workplace Literacy Skills between July 2008 and August 2008.

Educational Opportunity Fund. The Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program, funded by the State of New Jersey, facilitates access to higher education for students from economically and educationally disadvantaged communities. EOF offers counseling, tutorial services, cultural activities, forums, workshops, and financial grant assistance. By the end of AY 2008-2009, the EOF program enrolled 1,043 students (*Community and Continuing Education Annual Report 2008-2009).*

Each summer, EOF presents a six-week college preparatory program – The PreFreshman Summer Program (PSP) – for 70 new college students of all ages and backgrounds. In Summer 2008, while 79% of the PSP students in a special mathematics class advanced to the next level, 82% in a writing

skills course moved up at least one academic level. All students had an opportunity to earn college credits and learn about college life before their first formal semester. EOF oversees the College's Next Step Program serving the local ex-offender population. Each year, the Next Step Program assists over 50 ex-offenders as they pursue a college education.

Adult Learning Center. Since the Adult Learning Center officially opened in September 2001, the Center continues to meet more student needs, enhance program services, and address the New Jersey Department of Labor's objectives for literacy. The Center has been the lead entity at the College for the combined Essex County College Literacy and the Jewish Vocational Consortia. For FY 2010, the combined entity has successfully obtained its eighth year of WIA Title II funding in the amount of $2,329,980 to serve 4,091 Essex County residents. Of the aforementioned funds, the Essex County College Adult Learning Center received $414,380 to serve 644 clients.

To enroll in either the ESL or the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, students are required to take a placement test and be interviewed. Students are encouraged to attend classes on a long-term basis until academic goals are achieved. In addition, an array of support services is available to ESL and ABE students. They include counseling, tutoring, and workshops that pertain to job readiness, career planning, and applying to college. Adult Learning Center students also have the option of enrolling in computer literacy classes that include First Step to Computers Literacy and Introduction to Word for Windows or Excel.

Contractual Relationships and Affiliated Providers. Corporate and Business Training is an integral part of the College's continuing and community education mission. Targeting "employed, career-aspiring adults" seeking re-training and/or advanced instruction in technology, communications, and professional development to meet the demands of an ever-changing labor market, the College collaborates annually with approximately 20 local companies to provide training and educational opportunities to approximately 1,800 employees.

In addition to corporate affiliations, the College partners with national, State, and local governmental and non-profit agencies that include: the New Jersey Department of Labor; New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC); New Jersey Business and Industry (NJBIA); New Jersey Utilities Association (NJUA); New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services; and the Newark Alliance. WIRED Grant workforce initiatives include: Sales and Customer Service Certificate; Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution (TLD) Certificate; and a Supply Chain Management Certificate. Several years ago, the College initiated a partnership with DYFS to develop a Career Ladder Certificate Program. Attendees could obtain a Certificate in Human and Social Services after earning nine college credits.

In AY 2009-2010, the College, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration, launched a nine-credit Homeland Security program with a concentration on airport security personnel. Essex County College is one of only eight community colleges nationwide and the sole institution in the northeast region selected by the federal agency to pilot this program. With a current enrollment at 75 students, the Division of Community and Continuing Education is in the process of expanding the existing curriculum to develop a certificate or associate degree program in Homeland Security.

Analysis and Findings

During AY 2008-2009, Community and Continuing Education (CCE) served 21,829 students (20,074 adults and 1,755 youth), a 3% increase over the previous academic year. With programs offered in eight municipalities, participants included students from all 22 municipalities in Essex County. In

2009-2010, CCE enrolled 4,490 students in credit courses, a 7% increase from the previous year. Twenty one new and revised fundable non-credit course submissions were proposed and secured approval. The Non-Credit Curriculum Committee also reviewed and approved 18 non-fundable non-credit courses. During AY 2008-2009, CCE obtained $4,685,341 in grant dollars. A total of 455 graduates, or 47% of Essex County College's 968 graduates from FY 2009, participated in one or more CCE programs.

During AY 2008-2009, the branch campus in West Essex, FOCUS and Ironbound Extension Centers, the Police Academy, and other off-campus locations generated 39,024 credit semester hours. This represents nearly 14% of the total audited credit semester hours (284,935) for the entire institution.

Fourteen Adult Learning Center students obtained their GED and 34 acquired their U.S. citizenship by participating in a Civics and Government course. The number of students who successfully completed certificate and CEU programs at the On-Campus Continuing Education Adult Programs was 457. Twelve participants secured jobs from Workforce Development, 560 participants from the One-Stop Center (including through Newark Works, Goodwill, and America Works) participated in job search activities, and 71 participants graduated from Training, Inc.'s traditional training programs.

Graduation statistics from Training, Inc. have also been noteworthy. Of 170 graduates in the allied health field in AY 2009-2010, 69 were state-certified as CNAs, 26 as Phlebotomists, 31 as Patient Care Technicians, 13 as EKG Technicians, and 31 as Certified Clinical Medical Assistants.

Since its inception in 1986, Training, Inc. has graduated over 4,500 Essex County residents. For the previous two fiscal years, 70% of all Training, Inc. graduates were employed within six months of graduation, earning an average of $11.00 per hour. Prior to attending Training, Inc., while 67% of those employed graduates had been on some form of public assistance, an additional 14% had been collecting unemployment (*Continuing and Community Education Annual Report 2008-2009*).

During the July 2008 to June 2009 contract period, 87 clients attended the Parenting Classes conducted by WISE and 49 certificates of completion were awarded. A study conducted by Rutgers University, under the direction of Dr. Tubman-Carbone, concluded that FORGE participants had a 28% lower rate of recidivism compared to those who did not participate in the program. FORGE served 572 women in 2008 and 424 in 2009 (*Continuing and Community Education Annual Report 2008-2009*).

The ex-offender population continued to be served through the Next Step Program (NSP), FORGE, Kintock Halfway House, Distance Learning, and Opportunity Reconnect. The total ex-offender re-entry population served in AY 2008-2009 was 602. An additional 702 individuals (i.e., walk-ins) received counseling and assistance from the FORGE Program Coordinator.

Now in its eighth semester, the Next Step Program during AY 2008-2009 had an enrollment of 73. Of the 73 participants, 57 (78%) passed their courses with a GPA of 2.0 or better, eight made the Dean's List, and 11 earned 40 or more college credits (*Continuing and Community Education Annual Report 2008-2009*).

The job placement rate for graduates of the Police Academy Alternate Route Program was 87% for AY 2008-2009. This exceeds the statewide job placement rate of 75% for the same time period. Under the auspices of the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, all basic police, correction, juvenile, and detention officers training programs are approved by the New Jersey Police Training Commission (NJPTC). The expanded use of technology has resulted in developing a computer lab, constructing a Firearms Training Center, furnishing the equipment for this center, and upgrading the driving simulator. Over 4,000 officers participate in continuing education courses at the Academy annually (*Continuing and Community Education Annual Report 2008-2009*).

HIGH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

In response to the state initiative for community colleges to work closer with high schools by increasing the success rate of students once they enter college, the High School Initiative was developed six years ago. This initiative provides high school students with an awareness of college life, academic requirements, study habits, as well as the rigor and pace of a college course. Essex County College provides the option of Dual Enrollment and Career Academics to high schools in Essex County. The Dual Enrollment option provides students the opportunity to earn college credit and to satisfy requirements to graduate from high school. Assigned by Division Chairpersons, instructors follow the course outline in order for students to complete all course requirements.

All courses that students take at the College are transferable to any New Jersey state college or university and many private colleges or universities throughout the country. During AY 2008-2009, 727 students from 21 high schools participated. Of those high schools in the High School Initiative Program, the College offered 40 different courses ranging from dual credit to developmental coursework. Of 727 students, 58 were in two special programs – the Energy Utility Technology and the Minority Engineering Pipeline Program.

Analysis and Findings

During AY 2008-2009, the High School Initiative Program had a 67% passing rate. During this same period, 19%, 27%, and 21% received a final grade of "A," "B," and "C," respectively. The High School Initiative program had a 73.9% passing rate during AY 2009-2010. To improve the program, as well as to increase the passing rate, the College is: (1) Working more closely with high schools on the selection process; (2) Providing onsite workshops for students at high schools to understand the rigors of a college course; (3) Beginning to administer the Accuplacer as a tool to more accurately advise students on course selections; (4) Developing better lines of communication between adjunct instructors and high schools to promote better student success; and (5) Establishing a working relationship with ECC Division Chairpersons and high school staff.

Essex County Vocational High School, East Side High School, and Weequahic High School participated in the mathematics initiative with 250 students taking MTH 086 or MTH 092. Students participating in this initiative benefitted in two ways. One, they had a smoother transition to college-level mathematics. Two, during their freshman year, they took more required courses in their major.

Seven hundred twenty-seven students from the high school initiative program were enrolled in 40 different courses in AY 2009-2010, with many taking more than one course. Since the Program's inception in 2005, 388 students (18%) after graduating from high school enrolled at the College in the following Fall semester (*Academic Foundations Annual Report 2008-2009,* Exhibit 60). The College hopes to increase this percentage in the near future.

DISTANCE LEARNING/EXPERIENTIAL AND CO-OPPORTUNTIES

Essex County College awards credit for an array of experiential learning, including cooperative education, internships, and clinical coursework. To a lesser extent, the College offers distance learning opportunities via blended (hybrid) credit course offerings and through web-based educational support services, including course supplements such as ALEKS and MyWritingLab.

Project Delta, a distance learning initiative funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), became operational as a pilot project in Fall 2010. Project Delta

provides a solution to meet community needs with a faculty development and textbook replacement model known as SIRIUS, a low-cost program for students that concentrates on high-demand courses such as basic educational skills in reading, mathematics, and English delivered through on-line or hybrid methods. During Fall 2010, approximately 18 sections were offered using the Project Delta Model. These sections included College Success Seminar (CSS 101), Academic Foundations English (AFE 083), and Academic Foundations Mathematics (AFM 083). In addition to training on SAKAI—the College's learning management system—faculty participating in this initiative completed an online training course offered through Florida State College (*Project Delta – Institutional Brochure "Project Delta,"* Exhibit 62*)*. In Spring 2011, this learning initiative will expand to college-level courses. In addition, during Fall 2009, on-campus and Continuing Education offered a live-two-way distant learning Project Management certificate program. Successful participants were qualified to sit for the national project manager examination.

Cooperative Education and Vocational Programs. Cooperative education is an optional educational program that combines academic study with hands-on and career-related work experience. Qualified students may apply for the co-op program and earn academic credit for approved employment experiences directly related to their majors. Cooperative Education courses are offered for work experience, career development, and workplace credentials for "soft skills." While employees supervise, faculty advise students enrolled in a co-op experience for credit. The Career Resource Center and Career Officer screen all positions to ensure that they offer quality academic learning experiences. Students successfully admitted to the cooperative education program are awarded one credit for 80 hours of approved work experience and satisfactory completion of additional cooperative education course requirements. The maximum number of credits granted for cooperative education experience is eight in degree programs and four in certificate programs. Tracked by eRecruiting, 279 students and 96 employees participated in cooperative educational opportunities, generating $5,313,324.65 in salaries during FY 2009 (*Career Resource Center Annual Report Fiscal Year 2009* (Exhibit 63).

United Parcel Service (UPS) selected the College as an Option One institution for its "UPS Earn & Learn initiative." UPS encourages students they employ to attend the College, and in doing so, provides them up to $4,000 annually to help defray the cost of tuition and fees.

Technical Studies. Technical Studies is a unique program designed to ensure the validity of nontraditional learning by promoting adult access to and success in postsecondary education and the workforce. By majoring in Technical Studies, students can earn a college degree by transferring credits accepted from corporate, industrial, or military training programs.

One example of the technical studies program is the Uniform Construction Code Technology (UCC) program. While UCC is a degree program, students can also choose to enroll solely in individualized coursework (i.e., building inspection, construction official, fire protection inspection, plumbing inspection, or electric inspection), which offers the opportunity to fulfill the credentials for state approved licensing requirements adopted by the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code. In June 2009 and June 2010, seven and eight students, respectively, graduated from the Technical Options Program with a UCC degree.

COMMENDATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND COMMITMENTS

Commendations

- ► At the developmental level, the Center for Academic Foundations offers multiple instructional options for students.
- ► Services afforded by the branch campus continue to grow and meet the ever-changing demands of the student population.
- ► Business and industry are well-served by the number and variety of customized programs offered through the Division of Continuing and Community Education.
- ► An array of CCE offerings serves a broad range of students.
- ► Local high school students are served through various college-preparation initiatives.

Considerations

- ► Employ additional innovative strategies to increase the percentage of students who succeed in developmental courses.
- ► Expand the high school initiative to ease the transition of students from secondary to postsecondary education while decreasing the need for remediation.

Commitments

- ► Increase the opportunities for on-line and hybrid courses for students.
- ► Provide additional resources to the West Essex Branch Campus and extension centers to meet the demands of increased enrollment.
- ► Continue to review and implement new instructional strategies to improve the success of students in developmental mathematics courses.

ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

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Table 12 Retention and Tracking Information

GLOSSARY

AAC   Academic Advisory Council
AACC   American Association of Community Colleges
ABET   Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
ACCT   Association of Community College Trustees
AFAC   Academic Foundations Advisory Council
AY   Academic Year
CAF   Center for Academic Foundations
CCAC   College Curriculum Advisory Council
CCE   Community and Continuing Education
CCSSE Community College Survey of Student Engagement
CHEN   Council for Higher Education in Newark
CSHSE Council for Standards in Human Services Education
ECC   Essex County College
EMT   Enrollment Management Team
EOF   Equal Opportunity Fund
ESL   English as a Second Language
FTE   Full-time Equivalent
FY   Fiscal Year
GECC   General Education Coordinating Committee
GED   General Education Development Certificate
HACU   Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
ICAC   Institutional Computing Advisory Council
IPEDS Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
LMC   Large Member Colleges
MPO   Measurable Performance Objectives
NJSA   New Jersey Statutes Annotated
OPRA   Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment
PAR   Performance Assessment Report
PDAC   Professional Development Advisory Council
SAAC   Standards and Assessment Advisory Council
SENSE Survey of Entering Student Engagement
SLOAT Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Team
STEM   Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SURE   State Student Unit Record Enrollment
WIB   Workforce Investment Board