

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
Of
Ulster County Community College
Kingston, NY 12484

By
An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report
And a visit to the campus from October 16-19, 2005

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the chair; it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist Ulster County Community College. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

Ulster County Community College Evaluation Report

I. Context and Nature of Visit

Institutional Overview: Ulster County Community College (UCCC) is a Two-year associate's degree granting public community college in the State of New York, USA, and the college is a part of the State University of New York (SUNY) system of higher education. The college is sponsored by the county of Ulster, located at the foot of the Catskill Mountains. It is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, with its initial accreditation occurring in 1971. The College's last accreditation was successfully completed in 1995 and its Periodic Review occurred in 2001.

Self-Study Process and Report: The College used a comprehensive self-study to enable it to appraise every aspect of its programs and services, governing and supporting structures, resources, and educational outcomes in relation to the institution's mission and goals. The College grouped related standards together in its self-study design, but chose to report the 14 standards in its actual Self-study report in sequential order. The Team's assignments were based on the Self-study design and consequently the Team's findings are reported in the same format.

II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Eligibility

Requirements: The College meets all seven eligibility requirements as stated by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The Certificate of Eligibility is attached to this report verifying its continued compliance.

III. Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory Requirements:

Requirements: The College meets federal and state requirements. Based on the self-study, certification by the institution, other institutional documents, and/or interviews, the team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits. The Team reviewed institutional documents, the College's certification statement and interviewed financial aid staff and the Dean of Administration to verify the accuracy.

IV. Compliance with Accreditation Standards:

Standards 1 and 2: Mission, Goals, Objectives and Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal

The institution meets these standards.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

UCCC's mission statement and its accompanying goals effectively define the institution's purpose and its role in the community. They also explain who the institution serves and outline what it intends to accomplish. In addition, the institution has a vision statement and a common set of values, which appear to serve as a guide regarding *how* the institution's members are to carry out its mission and goals. These building blocks of the institution were developed collaboratively with input from various groups of stakeholders and they appear to serve the college well. The institution's mission and goals are communicated to its students, employees, and other stakeholders via the college catalog, professional staff handbook, signs in buildings, and the college's website.

The college could further advance its mission, goals, and values, however, by making them more integral to its policies and practices.

Strategic planning at UCCC is ongoing, as good planning should be, and has been taking place for years. Furthermore, the process appears to utilize a collaborative approach when appropriate, with a committee that facilitates the overall process. The planning process culminates in a set of objectives for achieving each strategic goal.

Some data are utilized during the planning process, but it is unclear whether the data are adequate to guide strategic planning and move the college forward. Planning efforts appear to rely primarily on the personal knowledge and experience of the institution's employees (obtained through focus groups and employee feedback) for its data. While this type of institutional knowledge is extremely valuable, it does not appear to be complemented by more objective and quantitative data. Furthermore, while institutional assessment, via methods such as the College Outcomes Survey, is taking place on a regular basis and the results are shared, it is unclear to what degree the results are used to help guide strategic planning and improve the overall effectiveness of the college. In general, the College appears to use minimal data in planning. And while it reviews enrollment trends, student demographic data, and enrollment projections, it does not appear to be conducting true environmental scanning in a systematic way or incorporating much data into the planning process.

While the College may be affecting its students in a significant and positive way, without a set of performance indicators, only anecdotal evidence is available to show its impact. *Demonstrated* evidence of how the college is achieving its mission and goals, as well as the effectiveness of the strategic plan, is sketchy and fragmented. One of the college's goals, for instance, is to "prepare students to live and work in a global society." Although the College requires its students to take a course in other world civilizations (college process), it is not yet demonstrating whether or not

students, upon graduation, are prepared to live and work in a global society (the result, or outcome). Similar mismatches apply to each component of the College's mission and goals.

There is a clear flow from strategic planning to operational planning to budgeting at UCCC. Departmental plans are linked to the college's strategic plan and are in fact developed to support the strategic plan. In general, employees understand how what they do supports the strategic plan and the mission and goals of the college. Furthermore, through the budgeting process, items in departmental plans are funded that will move the college in the identified strategic directions. In this regard, the strategic plan is very effective; that is, it is being used to help the college prioritize and to strategically allocate resources.

It is not clear, however, what happens after the strategic plan is developed and (partially) funded. Do employees know what is happening *across the college* to support and advance the strategic plan or only what is happening in their department? What happens to items that were not funded? Does the institution know *collectively* what is being done across the college to advance each of the strategic planning goals? How does the college know that each strategic planning goal is being adequately addressed and implemented? There is also no apparent monitoring mechanism for completion of the strategic plan. Perhaps most importantly, there is currently no way for the college to tell if the plan worked.

However, departmental plans are specific, provide clear direction on what is to be done, and provide an obvious and strong link to the overall strategic plan. They include the person(s) responsible, which promotes accountability. Items, however, lack target end dates. And while one can easily tell whether or not actions in the plan were completed, one can currently not determine if they worked. In other words, were they effective in moving the college closer toward its strategic goals and objectives and its mission?

There is evidence that the planning process is already improving. For instance, after reviewing the 2000-2004 planning process, the Strategic Planning Committee identified a need for increased college-wide communication as an area for improvement. As a result, they have already begun to share updates with the College on a regular basis, including the President's progress reports at Faculty Development days and via e-mail.

Finally, while the College is certainly conducting strategic planning, the Team questions whether or not the College has adequate human resources and expertise college-wide to realize its strategic goals and objectives, and to accomplish its mission and goals in general. Multiple unfilled positions coupled with individuals wearing "many hats" may threaten the institution's ability to realize its vision.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices: Collaboratively developed and clearly communicated vision, mission, goals, and values. Good use of strategic planning committee to arrive at strategic

goals and objectives, while departments make the plan operational. Clear flow from strategic planning to operational planning to budgeting. Evaluation of 2000-2004 strategic planning process was used to improve the 2005-2009 planning process.

Suggestions for improvement (consultative advice):

- Consider hiring or designating a full-time person to oversee institutional effectiveness - to include external data reporting, institutional research (environmental scanning, surveys, etc.), data collection, analysis, and reporting to planners and decision makers, and institutional-level assessment.
- Modify employee evaluation process to include how each employee contributes to the college's mission and goals, supports the college's strategic plan, and/or the extent to which they exhibit the college's values.
- Ensure that new college employees are familiar with the College's mission, vision, goals, and values as well as its overall Strategic Plan and appropriate departmental plans.

Recommendations:

- Establish a set of results-focused, institutional-level key performance indicators, rooted in the college's mission and goals, that will help the college:
 - Determine to what degree it is accomplishing its mission and goals;
 - Determine the effectiveness of the strategic plan;
 - Identify areas for improvement to help guide strategic planning efforts;
 - Demonstrate to internal and external constituencies that it is fulfilling its mission and goals.
- Develop a system for monitoring, documenting, and communicating completion of the Strategic Plan to the college community.
- Ensure that the entire Strategic Plan, including the collection of departmental plans, is shared with the College community.

Standard 3 and 13: Institutional Resources and Related Educational Activities

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

UCCC has a new, recently approved, five-year Strategic Plan in place for 2005 through 2009. The Plan is clearly linked to the College's Mission Statement. As prescribed by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the College's budget is clearly linked and aligned with the Mission Statement, Strategic Plan and resulting annual operating budget. Furthermore, UCCC developed a Facilities Master Plan in 1998 as well as a six-year Capital Plan.

UCCC has established adequate institutional controls to deal with financial, administrative and auxiliary operations. Furthermore, the College does undergo an annual audit confirming the institution's financial responsibilities.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices:

UCCC should be commended for undertaking the creation of the Facilities Master Plan and Six-Year Capital Plan. Likewise, the fiscal/budget management that resulted in a \$696,000 Fund Balance in FY04, up from a negative balance of (\$169,000) in FY00, demonstrates the College's commitment to longer-term fiscal responsibility.

The College is to be commended for having a default rate well below the federal threshold for its Title IV funding.

The College has done very well with fund raising efforts as can be noted by the success of the capital campaign for technology that raised over \$1 Million from private contributions and special legislative support. The endowed capital fund has provided in excess of \$40,000 per year to meet technology needs.

Suggestions for Improvement (consultative advice):

The team suggests that UCCC continue to look for ways to improve the involvement and communication of the budget process and subsequent decisions. This could take the form of standard templates that are distributed to all department heads and completed within each of the respective departments. The team further suggests that the administration should report back, in writing, to the various departments as to how and why decisions were made to not fund certain items – ideally noting the criticalness of items that were funded in attaining the College's strategic plan goals and mission.

The Team also suggests that UCCC develops a plan that provide for the acquisition of its on-going technology needs, funding to support its Facilities Master Plan, and funding of its preventative maintenance schedule.

Recommendations:

The team recommends that UCCC incorporate formal assessment measures that indicate the efficient use of its institutional resources. Said assessments should be evaluated with the results being used for institutional renewal.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

The College meets this standard

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

The College meets this standard, as evidenced by the institution's related educational activities that are consistent with the mission, and which reflect the wide range of credit and non-credit courses, experiential learning options, and specialty training and education desired by the residents of the geographically large county area served by the college.

The College has a well-coordinated plan to identify matriculating students' abilities and refer them to appropriate classes. The process, which uses commercial software

for placement testing, has been modified appropriately by a conscientious and concerned staff to fit the needs of the incoming students. The Learning Center staff (in conjunction with the OIT) has integrated the COMPASS software with the BANNER WEB to provide timely placement testing information for students, faculty and staff. The faculty is significantly involved in the advising process, and the process itself has evolved to enable it to address students' individual circumstances. A wide range of developmental courses is available to students who need remediation in math, English or reading, and students are advised by faculty and Learning Center staff as to the options available to ensure their academic success.

A wide variety of certificate programs is available, both credit and non-credit, which are developed with appropriate faculty and staff input through an established curriculum process. Certificate programs follow the same procedure as degree programs and thus offer the same high degree of academic rigor appropriate to the discipline area. Faculty teaching in certificate programs with credit courses has the same credentials and quality teaching standards as degree programs. Certificate programs are developed by expressed needs and submitted and approved in accordance with SUNY requirements, in the same fashion as degree programs. Programs are regularly reviewed on the usual 5-year cycle, and all courses are evaluated by students regularly.

A significant non-credit portfolio is available to students and the community through the Continuing and Professional Education Office in the Business Resource Center, in Kingston. These courses range from technical and professional to hobby and enrichment areas, and offer a wide variety of educational topics that are relevant to the county residents. The Small Business Development Center is an effective community resource not only for Ulster County, but for several other surrounding counties.

The College serves a wide variety of individuals from Ulster County, many of whom are adults returning for specialized training for career advancement, as well as personal enrichment. The college has well-established and publicized procedures of allowing academic credit for appropriate career experiences

UCCC has embraced distance education as a method of fulfilling its mission to serve the community. It offers a variety of courses including both general education and technical courses, and serves a significant number of students. Students find the courses challenging, equivalent in every way to face-to-face versions, and of great help in arranging difficult travel schedules. The College encourages the development of distance learning courses in desired areas by providing no-cost training options in the SUNY Learning Network course framework. Courses are developed to add to the portfolio of selections available to students enrolled in many areas, but particularly the Individual Studies program, which has one of the larger enrollments.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:

The College is to be commended for the staff and faculty of the Learning Center who, as students remarked, “bend over backwards for you” in their efforts to make sure students succeed on every level. The staff and faculty that assist the students are extremely dedicated to the students, the college, and their role in fulfilling the college mission to the community.

The College is also to be commended for the outreach program through Continuing and Professional Education Office at the BRC, with its modern spacious classrooms, well-equipped computer labs, and an interactive video conference facility. The coordination and direction of the many community oriented services such as SCORE, PACE, and the SBDC, is an exemplary model for other regions of the state.

The College faculty is to be commended for its willingness to adopt new course delivery systems to aid the students in the geographically large area of Ulster County. This extra effort required of faculty who teach in this mode allows students to complete courses and programs otherwise unavailable, and as students have remarked, faculty still have the ability and desire to interface with students to whatever degree necessary to help them succeed.

Suggestions for improvement (consultative advice):

The Learning Center, as well as faculty and students, would benefit from more evidence of the effectiveness of the developmental courses. Data concerning the effectiveness of the placement process, as well as the effectiveness of the developmental courses, would assist the Learning Center Staff and faculty in making the optimum decisions for student success. Student success rates in higher level classes, related to their initial placement scores and subsequent developmental coursework, will enable the placement process to “fine tune” the selection of courses for students beginning their college-level academic work.

While the distance learning courses, with evidence from syllabi samples and anecdotal student remarks, appear to have the same academic rigor as the face-to-face versions, a uniform method of faculty evaluation and student evaluation of all of the distance learning courses should be developed for courses taught by both full-time and adjunct instructors. This process should be consistent with practices already in place, ensuring that the faculty within the departments are able to ensure the academic integrity of the courses. Program reviews should include any necessary information related to the effect of distance learning delivery on program outcomes.

In addition, as new technologies afford other options for course delivery, substantially different delivery modes, should be evaluated by departmental faculty, other college faculty, and administration to ensure comparable academic quality to existing and proven methodologies.

Standards 4 and 5: Leadership and Governance and Administration

The institution meets these standards.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

UCCC has strong leadership in its President, Executive staff and Board of Trustees. The years of service and commitment to this institution along with support from the SUNY system have served the College well. Additionally, the College's administrative leaders have the appropriate skills, degrees and training to carry out their respective functions. However, a large number of unfilled vacancies, coupled with the broad array of responsibilities shifted to some administrators, may exceed the management abilities of those individuals.

The Board of Trustees is very supportive of the President and the College and has worked with the faculty, staff, and administration to develop a strategic plan. There is much evidence that the Board allows for independence and staff expertise to assure academic and institutional integrity. The Board of Trustees takes its fiduciary responsibilities seriously and has brought the College back into financial stability during difficult economic times by approving new educational programs recommended by the President. The Board and the President hold annual retreats to review college goals. The addition of a voting student member to the Board has provided a direct line of communication from the student body to the Board.

During the past five years, the College has faced the loss of many administrative staff to retirement, illness or relocation. In an attempt to manage the diminished income from lower enrollment, many of the positions were recombined or not filled. The President, the Executive staff, and the Board of Trustees worked together to find replacements and realign duties to maintain continuity of service.

After a difficult economic downturn brought on by the loss of IBM in the mid 1990s, the College reversed its financial status by focusing on career-oriented program development. New programs such as Veterinary Technology, Paramedic Science and Networking Administrator provided the impetus to attract individuals seeking second-career opportunities. A concerted effort was made to attract older students and orient them to the college campus.

The Student Government Organization and the Academic Senate have added to the sense of collegiality found on campus. These groups have allowed for input from students and faculty in the development of College policies and procedures.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices: The development of the Academic Senate has provided an opportunity for faculty to participate in a more formal way in developing College policies and provide input into the budget process. Sub-committees have been established to write standards for student grievance and copyright/plagiarism procedures. Student

representation on the Board of Trustees provides an avenue for input from the population served by the College.

The President has addressed the affirmative action issues from the Middle States periodic review in the area of gender equity by including more females in the executive staff and faculty hires.

Suggestions for improvement (consultative advice):

- The President should continue his plans to post Board of Trustee and Cabinet meeting minutes on the President's website.
- Improve mentoring of Board members, including an orientation to new trustee.
- Post the Guidebook for College Trustees on an inter-campus electronic bulletin board.
- The College should continue to encourage the Governor to fill the two open positions on the Board of Trustees, including the inclusion of a trustee from a minority group.
- The College should continue to address the issue of ethnic diversity in the area of faculty and staff hires.
- The Team agrees with the Self-study's recommendation regarding a formal orientation program for all new hires and suggests that the institution consider this process.

Recommendations:

- The College must clarify and communicate its organization and governance structure to the college community.
- The Team agrees with the Self-Study recommendation that administrators should report to the College community their respective assessment outcomes and further recommends that the institution establish a plan to utilize said assessments for institutional renewal.

Standards 6 and 10: Institutional Integrity and Faculty:

The College meets these standards.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

The College Catalog and College website describe the programs, offerings, and policies of UCCC. The newly revised Professional Staff Handbook contains the policies and procedures for the campus. The above mentioned publication, along with the Strategic Plan, include the College Mission and Vision Statements as well as the Values statement. The Professional Staff Handbook is inclusive of most policy and procedural aspects of the operations for the College. The Collective Bargaining Agreement provides additional procedures for dismissal, leaves of absence and other contractual issues.

The College Catalog is printed every two years with a Student Handbook addendum published annually. The Student Handbook which is published annually includes an

updated calendar of events, the Student Government Organization Constitution, as well as Emergency Safety procedures.

College policies and procedures are included on the College website which is used as another avenue of disseminating information to students and staff. The information on the website is updated as changes are made and therefore is a more current method of obtaining information.

The faculty at Ulster Community College is a dynamic group committed to the success of the students and the college. They are the heart of the college's ability to fulfill its mission to the community, and the faculty takes their role seriously, as evidenced by literally hundreds of positive student comments during personal interviews, and recorded in course evaluations. Students review faculty teaching on a regular basis and offer candid comments about courses and instruction. Students regularly use descriptors such as "awesome", "compassionate, but stern", "holds students to high standards", and even "I have a reason to get up and come to school" when describing their instructors.

Faculty are well qualified, and appropriately trained and prepared to offer high quality instruction to a diverse student population. Faculty has demonstrated an ability and willingness to work with all types of students: a walk around classes in session reveals a student population that is diverse in terms of age, ability, gender, and ethnicity.

Administrators and chairs evaluate faculty using published guidelines available on an annual basis.

Adjunct faculty also strongly supports the college mission. Adjunct faculty are mentored by department chairs and full-time faculty as necessary, with the aid of an Adjunct Faculty Handbook.

The institution supports the faculty by providing staff development opportunities, recognition of achievement, and the opportunity to have significant input in departmental planning and budgeting as well as maintaining the integrity of the courses and program through the program review process. The promotion process is published and available to all faculty, and promotions are evaluated fairly by established procedures outlined in the collective bargaining agreement. Procedures for hiring, appointment, tenure, discipline, and grievances are fair and published within the collective bargaining agreement and/or the Professional Staff Handbook.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:

UCCC is to be commended on its support of faculty professional development with the use of Title III funds. The climate of intellectual freedom is valued by the College. Faculty concerns about communication and participation in College initiatives appear to be addressed through the development of an Academic Senate. The Academic Senate consists of all full-time faculty and representatives up to 20 percent of the total part-time faculty, and it provides a voice for the faculty in developing policies and procedures. The Professional Staff Handbook has recently been revised and contains most College policies and procedures. A President's

website, currently in development, listing Board of Trustee meeting minutes and other campus initiatives will address faculty and staff communication concerns. The initiation of the College-wide activity period has provided an opportunity for increased attendance in student club activities

The faculty is to be commended for their achievements in superior service to students, not only in instruction, but also in advising and counseling. Students report faculty to be open and available and especially helpful in making sure students make wise choices in their personal and academic lives.

Suggestions for improvement (consultative advice):

- Improve **systematic** methods to assure the better communication with faculty and staff regarding policies, procedures, institutional planning and other campus initiatives.
- Orientation of new faculty should be improved by making it a formal and structured program that will help new faculty acclimate easily to such areas as the organizational structure and decision making processes; advisement processes and expectations; use of specialized computer software (BANNER, etc); library services; curriculum processes; and other important areas.
- The college should assess its ability to meet the stated goal of 65%/35% ratio in full-time to part-time teaching loads with current numbers of full-time faculty. (The latest published teaching loads reveal a ratio of 43%/57%. Enrollment trends should be analyzed and an optimum student/faculty ratio should be determined that maximizes value to the college and community. Hiring goals may then be targeted to try to achieve this proportion.)

Standards 7 and 14: Institutional Assessment and Assessment of Student Learning

The College meets these standards.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Institutional Assessment:

UCCC describes its Institutional Assessment Plan as consisting of the Strategic Plan and planning process, the assessment of student learning, the academic program review and assessment, the assessment of General Education, the assessment of the academic support program, the assessment of faculty, the assessment of administrative support units, and the assessment of SUNY/ACT Student Opinion, Graduate Follow-up, and SUNY Alumni Outcomes Surveys. There are some components of an Institutional Assessment Plan in various stages of completion.

However, the Team did not find a comprehensive assessment plan in place.

Assessment of Student Learning:

UCCC has built on mechanisms already in place to move toward an assessment-based model for evaluating student learning outcomes.

SUNY's General Education requirements have been incorporated into both the AS and AA degrees at Ulster and are assessed on a three-year cycle. Evidence indicates

that the results of General Education assessment is being used to determine what needs to be changed, making modifications, and reassessing informally prior to the next scheduled round of assessment as needed. For instance, the History faculty has determined that objective tests do not correctly reflect student mastery of performance-based goals, and have modified their assessments accordingly. They are taking advantage of the time before the next “official” round of History assessment takes place to develop and test a different assessment method.

All course syllabi have clearly stated student learning outcomes. However, they are not consistently communicated to students.

In addition, UCCC has very recently begun the task of reviewing academic department goals and aligning course learning objectives with those goals. It is planned to assess the course learning objectives in order to have direct evidence that the department goals are being met.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:

Institutional Assessment:

The Strategic Plan as well as the accompanying planning process are well documented. Using the results of the Middle States Self Study in the latest Strategic Plan takes full advantage of the extensive work that went into preparation of the Middle States review and Self Study Report. UCCC is in current compliance with SUNY for the five-year program reviews.

Assessment of Student Learning: As stated in Standard 11 of the Self-Study, goals and student learning outcomes objectives have been determined for all current programs of study.

Suggestions for improvement (consultative advice):

Assessment of Student Learning:

- The Team suggests the establishment of a forum in which faculty and staff can share ideas, insights, and expertise with regard to teaching, learning, and assessment instruments.
- The Team encourages the College to make more resources available, including the time and money, for professional development in the area of student learning outcomes assessment.
- The College may benefit from a person or persons whose responsibility it is to oversee and coordinate assessment activities on campus. This person might also provide continuing professional development and consultation for assessment activities.

Institutional Assessment:

• The College may benefit from a person with expertise in institutional assessment, research and planning.

Recommendations:**Institutional Assessment:**

- There is a need to develop and implement a comprehensive Institutional Assessment plan that, among other items noted in Standard seven, provides for periodic assessment of institutional effectiveness. This plan should employ evaluative measures useful for institutional renewal, contain realistic timetables, and provide for periodic assessment of the plan itself. Perhaps most important is use of the acquired data to inform decisions of the institution.

Assessment of Student Learning:

- The Team recommends that the College align articulated expectation of student learning at each level such that course objectives tie to degree/program objectives, which in turn tie to institutional objectives, all supporting the mission of the institution.
- Course outlines and syllabi, which are provided to students, should articulate institutionally approved learning objectives for identical courses, and, in the case of an approved general education course, the learning objectives for the approved general education category.
- UCCC needs to create a comprehensive written Student Learning Assessment Plan that incorporates the various pieces as noted above as well as indicates how the resultant assessment findings will, as noted in Standard 14, “assist students in the improvement of their learning, assist faculty in the improvement of curricula and instructional activities, assist in reviewing and revising academic programs and support services, assist in planning, conducting, and supporting professional development activities, and assist in planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services”. This plan should encompass student learning from the perspective of student support services as well as academic areas.

Standards 8 and 9: Student Admissions and Student Support Services:

STANDARD 8: The College meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Admissions policies and procedures are consistent with the institutional mission and generally accepted professional standards. Students are well served by consistent and defined practices. Process sheets utilized by the office guarantee that students are fully aware of services and requirements, The college catalog represents the primary printed media informing students of policies and is presented to every student at registration. Given fairly rapid change at the college and the two year nature of the catalog it is a less than adequate source of information. Greater reliance is placed on the timely revisions to the online catalog, but this does not allow for students who do not have web access. Currently the college has not determined the off campus web capabilities of the student population.

The administrative structure in the student services area presents some student development issues as services normally grouped under a single administrative roof are disbursed into different reporting structures. However, a high degree of collaboration between the professionals in the respective areas appears to overcome these obstacles.

Placement testing accomplished with the COMPASS system appears to lead to appropriate student placement. Testing is the primary mode of placement, but it is coupled with high school academic achievements to better determine placement. The student mentoring program which allows students to select mentors, and the Student Success Manager Program which targets at risk students are evidence of a continuing commitment to student welfare. Both programs, however, would benefit from monitoring, documentation and assessment.

The Pre-Registration workshop which is designed by the admissions department is used to good advantage by this department to prepare students for registration.

Interest in Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) represents a positive direction for the future which should be lauded. The College has benefited from healthy enrollment with a 16.4% increase for the prior 5 year period which exceeds the 12.4% sector wide increase. Full time enrollment has increased after a period of decline, but has only now returned to 1994 levels. Part time enrollments, contrary to national trends, are on the increase. A demographic shift from full time to part time could threaten the financial vitality of the college. Preliminary Fall 2005 enrollment indicates a overall decline of 6.5%.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:

The student mentoring program which allows students to select mentors and the Student Success Manager Program which targets at risk students are evidence of a continuing commitment to student welfare.

Suggestions for improvement (consultative advice):

- The Admissions department would be well served with a unit plan tied to mission and institutional strategic planning.
- The College should consider utilizing an expanded student handbook to provide students with timely information in addition to the website.

Recommendation:

- The college would be well served to pursue the development and implementation of a comprehensive Student Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan as soon as possible.

Standard 9.

The college meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Student Services at UCCC, consisting of admissions, financial aid, registration, orientation, academic advising, academic, personal, transfer and disability counseling, tutoring, health services, athletics, student activities, childcare and retention activities is a conceptual collaboration as opposed to a departmental association with supervision of the respective areas divided between three senior level administrators. An institution need not be bound by traditional organizational modes, but the organizational model chosen should provide, “a well-organized and appropriate program of student services, complemented by good staff leadership and broad based institutional support” (Characteristics of Excellence).

The respective student services areas are staffed with committed and effective professionals; nonetheless, there is evidence of fragmentation. The job responsibilities of the Vice President/Dean of Enrollment Management are very broad and extend beyond the normal student services purview both in terms of the person’s experience as well as credentials; consequently, the vice president can only reasonably provide time and supervision to Student Services. Numerous problems were noted as a result of this lack of student services perspective. Students, staff and faculty lacked surety when asked where to refer a student with a problem. Faculty is unaware of procedures for dealing with unruly or disturbed students in the classroom and indeed such policies are not clearly articulated in the catalog or student handbook. Although policy exists to deal with academic conflict there is no well defined student code or articulated student disciplinary process assuring due process or appeal.

Admissions functions are competently organized and delivered to students. On line advisement and registration are available to exclusively on line students while an on line orientation is under consideration. Various forms of counseling, including transfer and career counseling are available to students, but the availability and delivery of personal counseling has been ad hoc since the departure of the Associate Dean; however crisis referral is available and coordinated. Health services are available during the day providing services to both students and day care operations.

Student Activities is established as an auxiliary enterprise; however the coordinator (Association Financial Coordinator) now reports within the enrollment management structure. The schedule of programming provided is consistent with normal community college activities programs. The students are served with a variety of entertainment and cultural activities. Leadership is competent and appropriate to the office. Students have access to governance through the SGO, an elected student member of the board with voting privileges and a monthly president’s cabinet with three student representatives. Students do not have membership on standing committees, but there is evidence that they are solicited to participate.

The Learning Center component of the student services collaborative, reporting to the Dean of Academics, is a pivotal department bridging the needs and activities of the three divisional structures. Students and staff when asked to identify a resource to resolve a broad range of problems consistently identify the Learning Center. The Learning Center clearly has the image associated with a traditional dean of student's office. Students are passionate about the services and caring extended through this office. The staff of the center should be justly proud of their student centered and student sensitive outreach efforts. Placement testing is offered through the Learning Center and is well structured to the benefit of students. Testing is flexible affording students a number of opportunities including paper and take home exams for those anxiety ridden students. Tutoring is offered to students on a scheduled basis while drop in tutoring centers in math and English are staffed (Times Squared and the Writing Center) daily.

The Center provides accommodation for students with disabilities consistent with professional practices. Students not already classified as learning disabled must provide for their own testing.

Additionally the Center provides some retention based services, registration assistance, assigns advisors and advises criminal justice majors. Until such time as the Vice president appoints a new associate dean, student discipline is administered through this office on an ad hoc basis.

The office of the Registrar reporting, to the Dean of Academic Affairs, is staffed by a new registrar who, although new to the position, is not new to the college. The registrar having spent four years in the admissions office understands the needs of the institution and is pursuing a resolve to the degree audit problems which are inhibiting the use of the system.

The Financial Aid office, in the dean of administration's reporting structure, is one of the more stable offices from longevity of leadership perspective with the director serving over twenty years in her capacity. The director works closely with Admissions, Enrollment Management and the Learning Center and initiates meetings and collaborations necessary for successful management. The director is a competent, experienced professional cognizant of critical issues such as: ability to benefit, Satisfactory Academic Progress, Pass through of Funds deadlines, last date of attendance and loan default risks.

Five years ago as the college coped with financial challenges the financial aid department experienced retrenchment with the loss of one and a half positions. The positions were not restored as the college returned to economic vitality.

The athletic area is staffed by another new director transitioning from a career in banking to athletics. A former student and alumnus, the director has a good general knowledge of the college, but should be mentored as he progresses in the college.

The college has experienced an unusual degree of transition through retirement, departure and reorganization.

Some departments participate in strategic planning, usually in conjunction with the president, but evidence of coherent planning, goal establishment and assessment does

not appear to be part of the culture, but should be embraced. Decision making does not appear to be data driven nor does data appear to be readily available. In summation, students are the recipients of caring services provided by a dedicated team of professionals. The respective administrators are competent, but not always experienced, while those that are not experienced possess the potential to excel. The services provided to student vary from adequate to exceptional, but in all case are consistent with market place standards for student services.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:

The “take home” math exam should be applauded for its sensitivity to student needs. The Drop in Centers represent a significant contribution to student academic welfare. The Learning Center staff is acknowledged for its commitment to student welfare. The attitude of the Financial Aid staff and their willingness to work the task is commendable.

Suggestions for improvement (consultative advice):

- The Vice President for Enrollment Management should be provided with training opportunities or be assisted by staff that could assume the student services responsibilities of the vice president’s office.
- The College should consider providing financial support for LD testing for students with limited income who do not qualify for either Social Services or VESID assistance.
- Consideration should be give to an evaluation of the current administrative structure to determine of it provides adequate and coordinated services to students.
- The college should evaluate staffing patterns in the Financial Aid area to determine if they are adequate to meet current and future needs.
- The Student Services collaboration should embrace a culture of planning, goal establishment and assessment.
- The college would greatly benefit from research and data driven decision making.
- Crisis intervention plans for classroom disruption should be drafted.

Recommendation:

- The Student Rules of Conduct found in the college catalog must be codified into procedures with a well articulated disciplinary process that assures students due process and provides for appeal. It should also be made available to student in media other than just the college catalog which is given to students when they enroll.

Standards 11 and 12: Educational Offerings and General Education

The College meets these standards.

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Educational Offerings

UCCC provides excellent educational opportunities to the members of the local community and to its service area. The strength of the current programs is underscored by a highly trained and competent faculty and staff.

UCCC is committed to the identification, development and implementation of new programs to enhance its educational offerings. This is evidenced by the College's response in the creation of a Veterinary Technology Program and the formulation of a Theatre Arts Program and to the discontinuance of dated or obsolete programs. The College has an institutionalized system for the identification of educational needs within its service area and has provided a mechanism to study the impact of educational innovations on the College community and its service area.

However, the planning process for new course and program development is being hindered by the lack of a strategic data-driven management system.

General Education:

The College is to be commended for its enthusiastic acceptance of the SUNY general education requirements. The College has required students to take one course from seven of the ten areas mandated by SUNY for completion of the requirements for an A.S. and A.A. degrees. The College has taken the initiative to promulgate a similar set of requirements for the completion of the A.A.S. degree.

However, SUNY System Administration has indicated that no reports on General Education student learning outcomes have been submitted since 2002-03.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:

The College is to be commended for developing its Library 111, Library and Information Literacy course, which is required of all matriculated students. This has become a model for other community colleges.

The High School Bridge program offers additional college level opportunities for advanced high school students from surrounding communities. These programs offer advantages to the communities for easy transition to college.

Suggestions for improvement (consultative advice):

Educational Offerings

- A clearly defined, written mechanism is suggested for the dissemination of policies and procedures utilized by the members of the College community.
- A comprehensive plan is needed to provide for systematic planning in the development, modification, and elimination of courses and programs.
- A uniform, written, and distributed syllabus template should be developed, adopted and implemented throughout the College to include courses taught in the Bridge Program at local high schools. This framework should include:

course syllabi that are uniform and consistent with the same courses offered on campus; course outcomes and goals that are the same as on-campus courses; and a student and faculty evaluation system that is consistent (as much as possible) with existing methods and ensures the quality and integrity of the course.

- The College should continue to explore alternative methods of delivery and scheduling of courses to nontraditional student.
- The College should continue to maintain and support the MID position.
- Programs of Study goals should be stated in all publications.

General Education

- Faculty should be more diligent about using the results of General Education assessment to improve teaching and learning across all divisions and disciplines.
- Faculty should continue to evaluate not only the results of General Education assessment but also the assessment tools and the process itself.
- The College should continue to comply with all SUNY General Education mandates.
- The College should develop assessment tools for General Education in A.A.S. programs.

Recommendations:

- Syllabi of identical courses should contain identical general education outcomes.
- A comprehensive enrollment management plan is needed to provide for systematic planning in the development, modification, and elimination of courses and programs.
- A strategic data-driven management system should be implemented to enhance the planning process for new course and program development.
- The College **must** submit its results for its general education assessment to SUNY immediately in order to be in compliance with the timeframe established by SUNY.

V. Summary of Team Recommendations and Requirements:

The Team finds the College substantially in compliance of all the accreditation standards required by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

VI. Team Recommendation for Commission Action:

The Team recommends “reaffirmation of accreditation” (Affirming Actions, 1.2.) and requests that the College submit a monitoring report on Institutional Assessment and Student Learning by December 1, 2007, documenting a comprehensive plan for both areas, including strategies to measure results and use them for institutional renewal.