Chapter 9

Summary and Request for Continued Accreditation

A Time to Reflect, An Opportunity to Participate

The new criteria for accreditation require Higher Learning Commission member institutions to look forward rather than back when documenting evidence for maintaining accredited status. At the same time, the accreditation self-study process provides a valuable opportunity to reflect upon the many changes and challenges that have occurred at Monroe County Community College since the last visit from the HLC in 1999 and to describe their impact on institutional functioning and stability now and into the future. The self-study process at Monroe County Community College promises to be inclusive and wide-reaching by providing opportunities for all College constituents to evaluate and affirm our continued commitment to educational excellence E9.1.

Beginning in early 2006 with the review of both paths to continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission, Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) and Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP), Monroe County Community College (MCCC) embarked on an inclusive, sustained, and evidence-based institutional accreditation self-study process that substantiated compliance with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools- Higher Learning Commission (NCA-HLC) criteria for accreditation and evidenced its ability to not only survive but thrive well into the future.

At the beginning of the self-study, the College established institutional self-study goals that aligned with the HLC criteria for accreditation and Commission Statements, including:

- Conduct a process that adheres to the highest standards of integrity, objectivity, and thoroughness.
- Produce a self-study report that results in full accreditation from HLC.
- Engage all College constituencies in the self-study and publicize the results.
- Instill a culture of assessment and institutional improvement across all College operations.
- Provide evidence that practices and processes are aligned with the College mission and goals.
• Provide an opportunity for reflective and analytic discussion of substantive institutional issues.
• Utilize the process and outcomes of the self-study as a guide to improvement.
• Utilize the self-study to showcase improvement outcomes and processes.

MCCC believes that it successfully met its self-established goals and the HLC Criteria for Accreditation and Commission Statements, subsequently warranting continued accreditation through the HLC for the next 10 years.

**Mission and Integrity**

Monroe County Community College has clearly articulated mission documents, including Mission, Vision and Core Value Statements, and Educational objectives as well as related documents (Assessment Philosophy and Institutional Plan) which are widely distributed and/or visible to internal and external constituents. These documents are reviewed on a regular basis and revised when appropriate. The College’s mission is fulfilled through quality academic programs and noncredit instruction, an array of student support services and community partnerships, all operated under the auspices of highly qualified, highly committed faculty, administrators, maintenance and support staff.

The College’s sustained efforts to support the Diversity Initiative that began in early 2004, including the later establishment of a diversity standing committee and continued external advisory group, evidence the College’s commitment to providing an academic environment conducive to preparing students for study and work in a global society.

Institutional integrity at MCCC is maintained through a comprehensive set of policies and procedures. Formal language in these documents guide the College’s expectations for employing qualified faculty and staff, treating employees, creating and maintaining quality curricula, implementing a shared governance structure, providing a strong complement of student support services, partnering with the community, addressing the needs of employers, providing an array of lifelong learning opportunities, and acting in ways that are ethical and in line with the College’s mission.

**Preparing for the Future**

MCCC is well-positioned to plan for and meet the challenges of the future through a recently established vision and data-driven strategic planning process that connects mission, planning, and resource allocation. Research conducted internally and within the larger community (i.e., community focus groups and surveys, Branding initiative, and Vital Focus) yielded important data that continues to be used to inform and refine the institutional planning process.

Sound fiscal stewardship, flexibility in budgeting, prudent assessments in methods to generate revenue, and increasing success in securing alternative funding streams have all contributed to the College’s longstanding tradition of providing access to
postsecondary education while maintaining financial stability. At the same time, the College has successfully invested in facilities, technology, academic programming and workforce training, diversity and globalization initiatives, and human resources to meet the needs of the 21st century community college student.

**Student Learning and Effective Teaching**

The College embraces assessment of student learning on multiple levels from the broadest institutional level to program, credit, and noncredit course and co-curricular levels. The College regularly reviews general education requirements and has been assessing general education student learning outcomes for some time. The College is currently in the process of reviewing its general education program within the context of an HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning (2007 Cohort) project.

The College has clearly defined learning outcomes for each course within the Outline of Instruction and uses the World Wide Instructional Design (WIDS) course management system to standardized course records and, ultimately, to set student learning criteria and conditions. This being said, the College understands that much work remains to be done to determine assessment instruments, data storage, and evaluation methods.

MCCC’s faculty is highly qualified and regularly evaluated. Faculty members participate in an array of professional development and community-service activities and are committed to quality instruction and student academic growth.

The College continues to invest in facilities, technology, and instructional and student support services to enhance effective student learning environments and experiences, while maintaining its history of frugality in expending valuable resources.

Understanding that effective learning environments go far beyond physical and technological surroundings, MCCC works hard to create opportunities to cultivate and nurture learning beyond the classroom through an array of student clubs and organizations and opportunities for experiential learning.

**Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge**

MCCC is committed to the philosophy that life is about learning, and learning occurs throughout life. Subsequently, the College promotes freedom of inquiry and professional growth and development among faculty and staff. Students have significant opportunities to experience real-world applications of their general education skills that enhance, through practice, creativity and social responsibility. Students who wish to transfer have many options available to them and are well-prepared to perform at four-year institutions.

While promoting a hunger for knowledge and freedom of thought, the College fosters a climate of responsible use of knowledge and skills as supported by policies and procedures that regulate ethical behavior among students and employees.
Curricular and co-curricular activities provide opportunities both locally and internationally to practice academic skills in a responsible way.

The College keeps its eye on workforce needs and the appraisal of its external stakeholders. Responses to the Diversity Initiative have been positive, and the College has shown its commitment to the project by creating a standing committee to address diversity issues. MCCC seeks the input of advisory committees, external accrediting agencies, graduates, employers, and alumni to craft a curriculum that is relevant and timely.

**Engagement and Service**

The evidence presented in this self-study demonstrates that Monroe County Community College is a multi-faceted institution capable of engaging its constituents in a way that is mutually beneficial to both.

The College’s mission documents establish a clear direction for the institution to maintain a strong commitment to engagement and service through the development of programs and the cultivation of partnerships that benefit both the institution and the community. The College has a deep appreciation for the diverse community to which it belongs and regularly utilizes data collected through community surveys and assessments to build a solid understanding of the needs of its constituents.

The College strives to be an inclusive institution that seeks and utilizes input from all of its constituents. Over the last ten years, the College has worked hard to expand partnerships with business and industry, K-12 organizations, and other community colleges and four-year colleges and universities.

The College continues to seek opportunities for alternative funding that are conducive to cultivating and sustaining these and future partnerships. The Foundation at Monroe County Community College works to provide scholarships and grants that allow many students the opportunity to attend college to fulfill their dreams of a more successful future and/or to expand their learning experiences beyond the walls of the classroom.

For nearly 45 years, MCCC has been a mainstay in the community and has proven itself to be capable of meeting the needs of those it serves. MCCC has opened doors for numerous individuals to achieve their goals. The face of the institution has changed over the years, but MCCC’s dedication to higher education continues to fit the needs of its community and serves the College in positioning itself to continue doing so well into the future.

**Federal Compliance**

Beginning with Chapter One of the self-study, MCCC has successfully evidenced that it operates with integrity in compliance with all state and federal regulations and within its own related institutional policies and procedures. As presented in Chapter 8, the College maintains full compliance with Title IV requirements of the Higher
Education Reauthorization Act and specific requirements for Federal Compliance as listed in the Higher Learning Commission’s Handbook of Accreditation.

**Request for Continued Accreditation**

As supported by the evidence presented in the self-study document and subsequent face-to-face interaction between the HLC evaluation team and the College and its community, Monroe County Community College believes that it fulfills the HLC Criteria for Accreditation and respectfully requests continued accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools-Higher Learning Commission (NCA-HLC) for a period of ten years.