MID-CYCLE VISIT
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

FOR

MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE
CONTINUING EDUCATION

1100 North Grand Avenue
Walnut, CA 91789

March 18, 2015

Visiting Committee Members

Sy Lyon, Jr., J.D.– Committee Chairperson
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Introduction:

Include the following:
- **General comments about the school and its setting and the school's analysis of student achievement data.**

Mt. SAC Continuing Education (CE) is the 4th largest noncredit program in the state of California. The Division has experienced significant change and growth in its more than 40 year history. Since it came into existence the Division has undergone six name changes including its most recent, Continuing Education. The current name, CE, reflects the common terminology used by California community colleges for similar programs.

Continuing Education overall student demographics parallel the ethnicity of the communities served by Mt. SAC. It is also notable that while the student populations of some student groups closely resemble the Continuing Education average, other programs' student populations differ greatly. The ESL program evidences the greatest dichotomy wherein 59% of the enrolled students are Asian and 35% are identified as Hispanic/Latino. Over the last three years the Asian student population in ESL has increased by 7% while Hispanic/Latino students have decreased by a similar percentage. Interestingly, all of CE's Adult Basic Education programs have a high majority Hispanic/Latino population that has also grown 7% in the last three years. Approximately 56% female and 42% male (with 3% not reporting). The gender for each program has generally remained consistent throughout the last three years, with the only evident change being an increase in female students to 51% of the GED student population. Student age data have not significantly changed in the last three years.

- **Significant changes or developments that have affected the school since the last visit.**

During the past three years, in what CE calls "The Great Recession", the school experienced a climate of constant budget instability that necessitated flexibility in the use of its resources. As a result CE responded to student needs by making program adjustments to ensure provision of core courses and services. Decisions included elimination of ABE elective courses from the Summer High School program offering leaving only core basic skills courses available. Other program adjustments included increased scrutiny and enforcement of repeatability limits for ESL students and restrictions on enrollment in multiple sections of Older Adult courses. More recently, the budget crisis has begun to abate, and CE funding for program growth returned in the 2013-14 academic year and, as a result some specific services, beyond core courses, have been restored. Additionally, the college requested that CE grow by 3.5% in 2014-15, and further growth is anticipated in the 2015-16 academic year. At the state level, the 2014-15 Budget Act provided for an equalization of the apportionment rate for noncredit Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) attendance to that of credit.

During the past two academic years Assembly Bill 86 was implemented. This bill directed the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to implement a joint planning process for the improvement of adult education statewide. The legislation appropriated $25 million to distribute to regional consortia to develop plans with the shared goal of better serving the educational needs of California's adult learners. In AB86, a region is defined by community college district boundaries, includes all colleges and school districts as members, and requires that consortia also work with partners such as Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and community-based organizations.

– **Comments on the school's follow-up process, including a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school's action plan and the visit preparation.**

The VC gathered evidence supporting the school's observation that Action Plan implementation has become a part of the "culture" of Continuing Education. The Continuing Education Division Leadership Team meets weekly and includes a representative from Community Education, English as a Second Language (ESL), Education for Older Adults (EOA)/Adults with Disabilities (AWD), Adult Basic Education (ABE), a project administrator, and the Division Dean.

– **A description of the process to prepare the progress report, including to what extent stakeholders were involved in the preparation of the report.**

Development of the Mid-Cycle Progress Report was a three-year process, with annual progress check updates built into existing organizational planning structures. CE's Leadership Team led the process for creating the report but were assisted by "Program" Leadership Teams that collected evidence for the Report from a variety of sources, including student and staff surveys, student round tables, student focus groups, advisory groups, faculty and staff meetings, and other College documents. Throughout the Mid-Cycle Report development the Leadership Team also validated data and evidence collected, revised narrative drafts, and communicated progress to Division employees.

– **A description of the process to present the progress report to the Governing Board.**

In January 2015, a full draft of the Mid-Cycle report was shared with all Division stakeholders with an invitation to validate their contributions and the content and to provide input. The Leadership Team used this feedback to finalize the Mid-Cycle Report and submit it to the Board of Trustees for review. Board approval of the final copy occurred at the January 2015 Board meeting.

II. School's Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up within the Action Plan

➤ **Critical Area 1:** *The Division, in collaboration with College systems personnel, will improve the collection, integration, and reporting of data in order to meet accountability standards, enhance planning & decision*

Over the last three years Mt. SAC's College systems have improved, supporting Continuing Education's ability to move forward on this Action Plan Goal. Some improvements include completion of Argos data system reports that provide administration and support staff with access to relevant and timely data. As of Fall 2014 all noncredit curriculum creation and review cycles are conducted using an online software system, College WebCMS. The Educational Design Committee and the Outcomes Committee accesses this system during course review to assure that student learning outcomes assessment is current for each course that is completing a review cycle. TracDat is software used by all programs within the Division where results of SLOs, are recorded, tracked and evaluated. The California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) established a California Community Colleges Board of Governors (BOG)-approved performance measurement and reporting system called the Student Success Scorecard. Among several things, the Scorecard tracks, on a cohort basis, the success of noncredit students who have participated in Career Development and College Preparation courses (CDCP). For this initiative, success is defined as completion of a certificate, degree, or transfer-related outcomes. Over the last three years Continuing Education programs have institutionalized the input of noncredit student certificate history into the college data system for uploading into the CCC Management Information System (MIS), from which the Scorecard draws its data.

➤ **Critical Area 2:** *Faculty with support from the Division and programs will improve in the use of systematic processes in which data are analyzed and used for improvement of student learning.*

Evidence shows that over the last three years there has been a considerable increase by CE in the use of data in collaborative arenas, including Advisory Group, program faculty and staff teams, and program SLOs. SLO Assessments are automatic, and analysis and use of results to make program and curricular improvement to support learning is a continuous improvement model. CE has initiated an on-going all-inclusive faculty involvement approach, supported with professional development. The 3-year cycle SLO assessment process is designed to

provide faculty with data that facilitates improvements based on patterns and trends revealed. It is through this process that faculty is aided in designing intervention strategies or generates new courses. Through reflective activities, faculty monitors the progress of students toward intended goals.

SLO data in the Education for Older Adults (EOA) and Adults with Disabilities (AWD) programs is collected on an annual basis and stored in TracDat for each course. SLO data and curriculum review are conducted on a 3-year cycle. Beginning in 2012, an ABE faculty team was established to coordinate the department's SLO process for courses in the High School, ABE, and In Home Support Services programs. The faculty team created 3-year assessment cycle to ensure that all courses are assessed and data and outcomes are discussed. Subsequently, it was determined after Year 2 of the assessment cycle that midterm reporting process needed to be included in the plan. Thus, data are collected and evaluated mid-cycle to identify any initial trends in student learning that may require faculty to provide early interventions.

➢ **Critical Area 3: *The current state budget crisis has significantly impacted Continuing Education's ability to meet student demand for classes and support services. The Division will need to continue to explore funding resources beyond the usual state funding sources***

Over the last three years, CE has demonstrated fiscal responsibility with limited resources and has made difficult budget decisions to ensure core programs, courses, and services continue to meet student needs. Continuing Education has successfully weathered the budget crisis caused by the so called "Great Recession". During the years of deepest cuts College-wide, most Continuing Education program reductions remained in proportion to the cuts made in other College Divisions due to the strong value placed by the College on noncredit adult learners. While statewide cuts were targeted strongly at such noncredit programs as Education for Older Adults and Parenting Education, the EOA program in Mt. SAC Continuing Education remained vibrant through a combination of curriculum redesign, development of more vocational options, and creative engagement of the community-based EOA Advisory Group. Additionally, the Division continued to actively pursue opportunities for grant funding, contracts, and fee-based Community Education options.

III. Commendations and Recommendations

A. Commendations:

– **Note and report on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.**

Since Continuing Education's last WASC visit three years ago the school has made significant process in responding, pursuant to its action plan, to all of the critical areas for follow up noted by the VC during its full visit. Consequently, the school should be commended for its progress in each of the three critical areas identified by the previous VC. However, this VC believes that in light of the fact that so many of the State's school district's have significantly reduced or eliminated non-credit adult education programs as a direct result of the state's funding upheaval for such programs CE's response to "Critical Area 3" is worthy of special commendation. CE, with the full support of its Board, has judiciously continued to develop and uncover new funding streams to facilitate its ability to meet its adult non-credit student education and support needs.

B. **Recommendations:**

- **Identify and note any areas that need to be given priority for the school's ongoing improvement. (This may also include critical areas for follow-up.)**
- **Identify new areas of concerns, if applicable.**

Notwithstanding CE's creative and commendable progress in addressing the demand for noncredit adult learner classes and support services the challenge is ongoing. Given the State legislatures' persistent attention on noncredit adult education programming in general and funding in particular the future of noncredit adult education is not at all certain. Therefore, CE, with the continuing support of its Board and senior administration, cannot rest on it past accomplishments but must continue actively exploring alternative funding sources to augment current…as well as any future…funding sources of noncredit adult education.