

# *Self-Study Report*

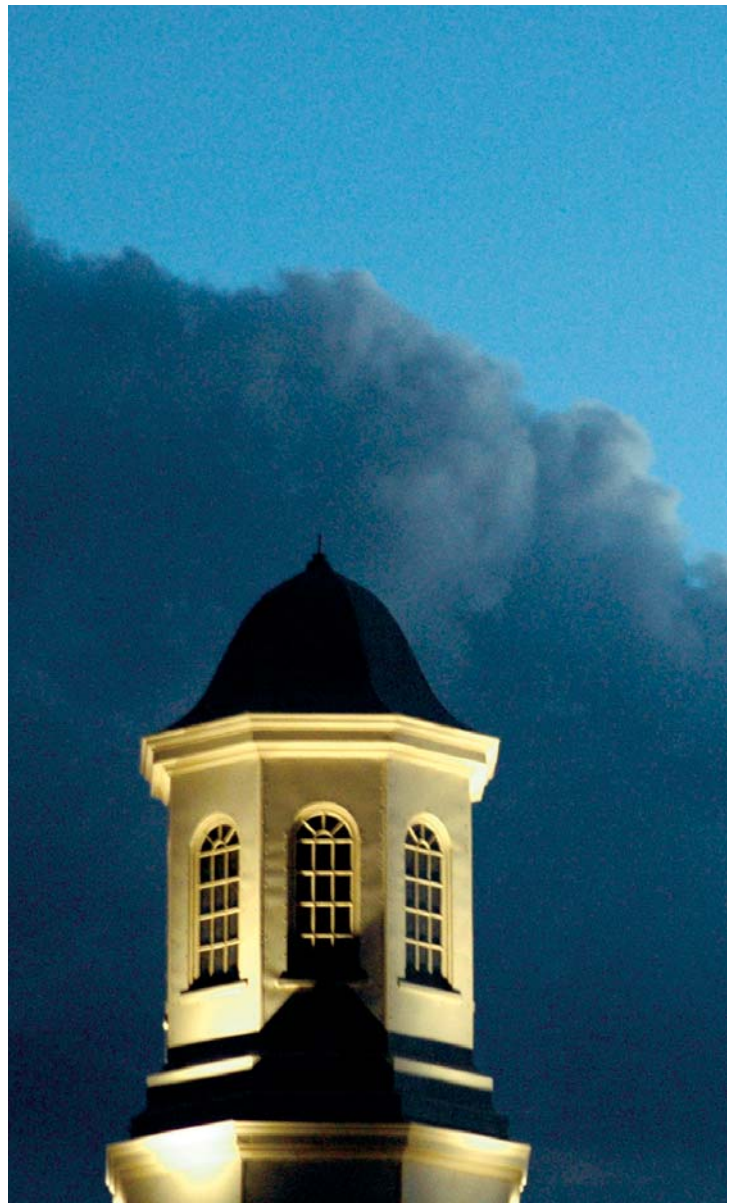
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## Adams State College

**PRESENTED TO THE  
HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION  
OF THE  
NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS  
FOR THE FEBRUARY 2007  
COMPREHENSIVE VISIT**



*Great Stories Begin Here*



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*Published November 27, 2006*



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# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

This *Self-Study* report results from a campus and community process of self-reflection and improvement undertaken to examine what Adams State College does well and to identify areas where change is needed. Adams State College (ASC) is a student-centered, responsive, and efficient institution. The College is especially known for building mutually beneficial collaborations and partnerships with its constituents.

## Purposes of the Report

Adams State College's Higher Learning Commission Steering Committee has established the following goals in our *Self-Study* plan:

- To complete an honest and thorough evaluation of the state of the College in meeting its role and mission
- To include and inform all College stakeholders during the self-study process
- To establish that Adams State College meets the new criteria for accreditation of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association
- To embed HLC values and best practices into the campus culture

The report contains descriptions, analyses, assessments, and evaluations of the effectiveness and performance of Adams State College. We believe this report demonstrates that ASC meets and exceeds the Higher Learning Commission's criteria for accreditation, which are addressed in the chapters that follow.

## Organization of the Report

This introduction section provides an institutional overview and a context within which to interpret the remainder of the report. This is followed by five chapters addressing each of the criteria: Mission and Integrity; Preparing for the Future; Student Learning and Effective Teaching; Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge; and Engagement and Service. Chapter Six addresses Federal compliance; Seven provides a conclusion and request for reaccreditation.



### Higher Education in Colorado

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), an agency in the Department of Higher Education, is the central policy and coordinating board for Colorado's public higher education system. The CCHE serves as a bridge between the Governor, the General Assembly, and the governing boards of the state-supported institutions of higher education. The Executive Director of the Department of Higher Education is a member of the Governor's Cabinet. The CCHE, which has 11 commissioners appointed by the Governor, is the agent of the General Assembly in implementing legislative higher education policy. Institutions are governed by an array of 1 constitutional and 11 statutory governing boards. By statute, the CCHE is responsible for the following:

- Higher education finance and appropriations
- Academic programs and system-wide planning
- Capital construction and long-range planning
- Advanced technology

The mission of the CCHE is to provide access to high-quality, affordable education for all Colorado residents. This education is to be student-centered, quality-driven, and performance-based. The CCHE addresses its mission through collaborative partnerships with students and parents, K-12 public schools, Colorado's higher education institutions and governing boards, the Colorado General Assembly, the Governor, and local communities.

### Adams State College Board of Trustees

On March 25, 2003, the Governor signed HB 1093 into law, dissolving the State Colleges in Colorado system and its omnibus board that oversaw three colleges. Since July 1, 2003, Adams State College has been governed by its own board that works directly with the CCHE and the General Assembly. The ASC Board of Trustees has 11 members, with 9 appointed by the Governor, plus a non-voting faculty trustee and student trustee.

As specified in 23-51 C.R.S. § 23-51-101 *et seq.*, the Board of Trustees for Adams State College is the governing authority for Adams State College. To exercise its authority appropriately, the Board may establish policies designed to enable the College to perform its statutory functions in a rational and systematic manner. To assist the Board in meeting its responsibilities, the Board delegates to the President of the College the authority to interpret and administer the Board's policies in all areas of operations.

It is the policy of the Board to assure substantial administrative authority and autonomy at the College, to guarantee a minimum of external involvement in the affairs of the College, and to encourage the development of the distinctive role of the College as it strives to fulfill its mission of achieving academic excellence. At the same time, however, the Board's policies and procedures, administered by the College President and staff, are designed to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. The Board expects the College to develop ways of making meaningful curricular arrangements with other Colorado



colleges and universities as part of its normal operations in order to enhance program availability for students. The Board shall have authority for and control of the College's assets and resources and shall ensure that the College's activities are performed in an exemplary manner.

## History of Adams State College

Adams State College, named after W. H. "Billy" Adams, a former Governor of Colorado and resident of the San Luis Valley (SLV), was chartered by an act of the Colorado legislature in 1921 as Adams State Normal School and accepted its first students on June 15, 1925. The College's name was changed in 1929 to The Adams State Teachers College of Southern Colorado. In 1945, the institution was given its current name, Adams State College, to reflect the broadening of the mission and curriculum.

Today, Adams State College is a comprehensive state college enrolling approximately 2,750 students. Of these, about 2,100 are on-campus undergraduates, 200 are on-campus graduate students, and 450 are off-campus graduate students. In addition, 13,500 students enroll annually through Extended Studies, ASC's off-campus delivery unit. The College has degree authority at the associate's, bachelor's, and master's levels and offers 18 majors and 28 minors and emphases. Adams State College has a statutory role as a Regional Education Provider (REP) for southern Colorado, as well as a significant responsibility to provide access to teacher education in rural Colorado.

All College operations were originally housed in Richardson Hall, which now serves as the College's main administrative building and is one of 52 buildings on the

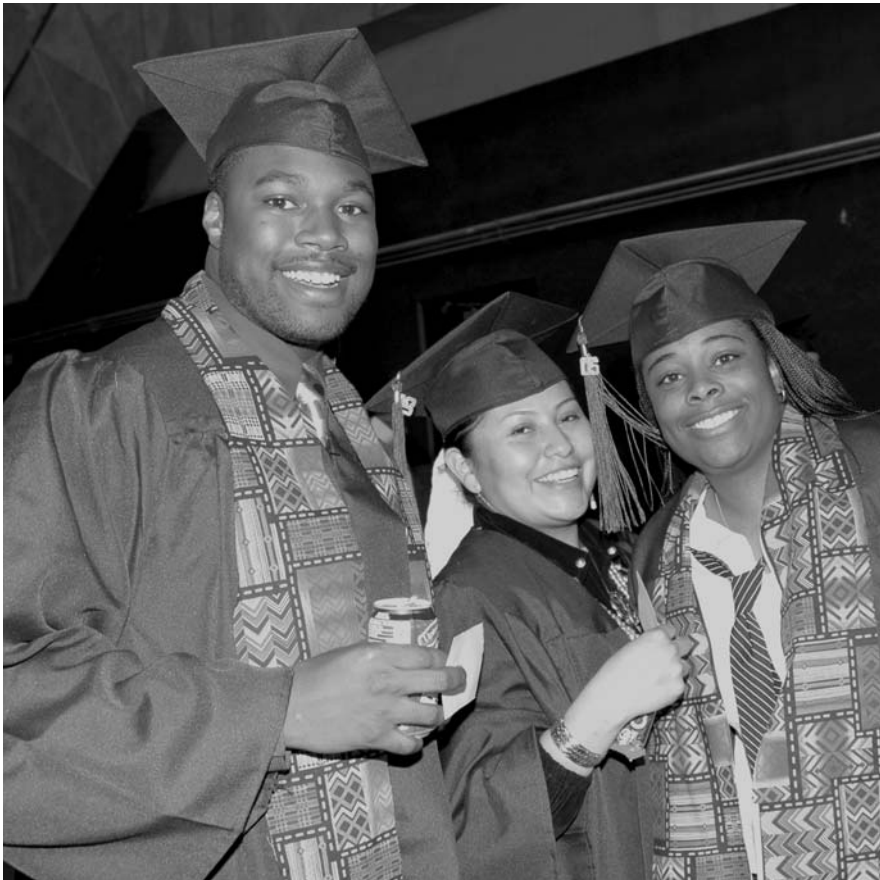
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90-acre campus. The institution is greatly influenced by its location in the historic San Luis Valley (SLV). A rich multicultural history is an important characteristic of both Alamosa, a city with a population of about 8,500, and the San Luis Valley as a whole, which has a population of approximately 49,000. Hispanic and Native American influences are particularly prominent in the region, along with important Dutch, Swedish, Danish, and Japanese settlements. The SLV has the highest percentage of Hispanic people of any region in Colorado. The region's cultural diversity contributes directly to the College's significant annual proportion of minority graduates (22-29 percent over the past ten years). In fact, ASC was recently recognized by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) for its success in increasing its Hispanic graduate rate. This diversity is also significant in helping students prepare to function effectively in an increasingly global, multicultural world.

### Significant Developments at ASC 1997 – 2006

During the past decade, since the last accreditation *Self-Study* in 1997, the College has undergone a number of dynamic and significant organizational, curricular, and physical developments and has grown to meet its new state designation as a Regional Educational Provider. Positive steps to improve student access and success, despite serious administrative and economic challenges, attest to the resilience, dedication, and effectiveness of the members of the Adams State College community.

Among the accomplishments of the College since 1997 are the following:



- ASC's statutory mission, the *ASC Mission and Vision, Institutional Goals, Strategic Plan, Academic Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, and Academic Assessment Plan* have been aligned. Administrative units and academic departments are well along in aligning their goals and objectives to the *Mission*
- A shift from assessment as the responsibility of a standing committee to faculty and staff within departments and units is most evident in the recent iteration of the *Academic Assessment Plan*.
- ASC adopted the Governor's Office of Planning and Budgeting Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) process in the fall of 2003. ZBB should be fully

implemented for fiscal year 2008. As part of the ZBB process, a Budget Crosswalk program requires each program or office to develop a strategic plan and align its goals with the institution's strategic goals. Specific outcomes, assessment measures, and benchmarks are aligned to these goals. Requests for budget increases are driven by these outcome measures. The intent of this budget process and of the Budget Crosswalk program is to align all levels of institutional planning with ASC's *Mission* and *Institutional Goals*.

- The state modeled its Regional Education Provider (REP) designation on the efforts of ASC. Community collaboration and outreach is especially important to ASC. The REP designation gives ASC responsibility for assessing the educational needs of a large portion of southern Colorado and providing programs to meet those needs.
- As the largest employer in the region and the recipient of several million dollars in grants, ASC is dedicated to enhancing educational opportunity, economic development, and cultural enrichment.
  - In 2002-03 alone, ASC was awarded \$2.5 million in grants to improve literacy achievement in public schools.
  - The Rural Education Access Program (REAP), a partnership with several community colleges in southern Colorado, provides the opportunity for students to earn degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies-Elementary Education (Literacy emphasis) or Business Administration, with full-time ASC faculty teaching upper-division courses on the community college campuses.
  - The Department of Counselor Education has graduate cohorts in Pueblo, Durango, La Junta, and Grand Junction.
  - The Teacher Education Department (TED) has 580 students in 22 off-campus graduate cohorts throughout Colorado, compared to fewer than 100 students in 3 cohorts a decade ago. Since 1998, TED has been awarded more than \$5 million in grant funding, primarily focused on preparing teachers to effectively work with linguistically and culturally diverse children.
  - In 2005 alone, ASC's strong Sociology program in Criminology and Social Welfare placed 31 interns who completed 3,700 hours of volunteer service in the San Luis Valley. Several federal grants allow the History program to provide history education to in-service teachers in Colorado and New Mexico.
  - Through ASC Foundation funding, the English program presents a series of author readings and workshops, while the Art Department brings major and local artists to its gallery in a dozen shows per year. The ASC Theatre presents seven plays a year to the community. Several of the productions travel to the public schools or hold public school matinees.
  - The small, yet impressively equipped campus planetarium and observatory logged 10,000 visitor hours in 2004, primarily by public school children.
- Positive enrollment trends include an increase in the percentage of minority and graduate students. The graduate student headcount has increased from 276 in spring 1998 to 678 in spring 2006, with the number of Hispanic graduate

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students increasing by 160 percent over the last decade. Although the overall undergraduate headcount has remained the same, there now are twice as many African-American undergraduate students and 9 percent more Hispanic students than in 1997. While the overall 4-year and 6-year graduation rates have decreased during the last decade, the 6-year graduation rate for Hispanic students has increased from 17 percent to 52 percent. This success resulted in ASC's inclusion in an upcoming study by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). Given the College's mission to effectively serve first-generation, minority, and low-income students, these are strong positive signs.

- Initiatives to improve the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate have been instituted, especially through the federally funded Title V grant (2000-2005) for Hispanic Serving Institutions. It brought \$1.96 million to the College for "Increasing Retention and Improving Student Success." Among the positive impacts that stemmed from the grant were the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and other faculty development activities; community outreach directed toward increasing college aspirations among low-income people and ethnic minorities of the San Luis Valley; development of learning communities through First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs); and the One Stop Student Services Center. Retention of SLV students has increased from 52 percent to 63 percent, while the overall freshman-to-sophomore retention rate has increased from 51 percent to 55 percent, changes that can be attributed in part to these projects.
- ASC was awarded another Title V grant (\$3.4 million) for a collaborative project to expand educational access for Hispanic students. The grant involves ASC, Trinidad State Junior College, and Otero Junior College. It aims to increase enrollment of community college students in four-year teacher education programs, increase the number of students in the transfer/baccalaureate pipeline, improve instructional skills among the faculty, improve student academic performance, and improve course alignment between the community colleges and ASC.
- New majors and degree tracks in the last decade include the following:
  - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) completion degree program
  - Earth Sciences
  - Theatre/English/Teacher Education combined degree
  - English/Creative Writing
  - Biochemistry
  - Chemical Physics
  - Mathematics/Physics
  - Sports Psychology (interdisciplinary)
  - Agribusiness
- ASC revised its process for adoption of new academic programs. New programs are reviewed by the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) at the undergraduate level or by the Graduate Council for graduate level. Graduate Council recommendations go directly to the Provost, while the Academic Council acts upon the

recommendations of the CRC and then sends its recommendations to the Provost for approval. Final approval for curriculum rests with the Board of Trustees.

- ASC academic programs have received a remarkable number of awards since our last accreditation visit. Notably, Program of Excellence Grants, designated by the CCHE, were awarded since 1996 to the departments of Music, Counselor Education, and Biology, in addition to the School of Business award in 1992.
- Over the past decade, ASC has modified its General Education curriculum to meet educational needs and state policy requirements. A strong general education program with interdisciplinary core courses (First-Year Seminar) was approved by faculty in the late 1990s. Faculty have approved two subsequent revisions to the curriculum. The most significant change occurred when the faculty voted to bring the General Education program in line with state-wide general education requirements to guarantee a student's ability to transfer and graduate within a four-year-period. As a result, the First-Year Seminar and Issues in Wellness courses were eliminated; Speech was added; and ASC achieved state-wide guaranteed transfer approval of all General Education courses in spring 2006.
- Over the past ten years, ASC has gathered placement data for new students, and the CCHE has established tests, processes, and cut-off scores for remedial and general education placement. Since 1997, mathematics and composition programs have mandated placement based on these scores and have been strengthening curriculum and faculty to meet the ever-increasing needs of college-level developmental students. In 2005, the Emerging Scholars Program, housed under the office of First Year Experience and Engagement, was established to unify these curricular efforts across campus.
- The Department of Athletics received the Sears Directors Cup in 1999 for best overall athletic department in the NCAA Division II.



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- The Mariachi program, which is integrated into the curriculum of the Music Department, is one of many innovative programs designed to develop college aspirations among students in the region. This important cultural activity has promoted academic excellence in high school students throughout the San Luis Valley and northern New Mexico. Community members initiated an attractive scholarship program that creates opportunities for Valley and Hispanic students.
- As a result of extraordinary efforts in keeping pace with instructional technology advancements and increasing needs, the College provides support for multiple student open computer labs, technology-enhanced classrooms (TECs) in all academic buildings, and planning for maintenance and replacement of equipment. The campus online portal site, combined with the new RESNET (Residential Network), has improved users' ease and satisfaction with communication and information processing.
- The College has increased assessment of student learning and engagement. In 1999, ASC established the Institutional Research Office and in 2001 implemented the Data Warehouse project. In order to improve college-wide assessment, particularly of General Education outcomes, ASC participates in the Colorado Quality Indicator System (QIS) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE program, Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS), has helped faculty and the Office of Institutional Research to collaborate on improving college-wide assessment. These significant developments have helped faculty close the assessment/curriculum loop by providing more reliable data on student achievement and satisfaction.
- The Nielsen Library has undergone renovation. As part of the college-wide *Instructional Technology Plan*, it has increased student access to electronic information, built TECs, and engaged in staff development to provide resources for distance students, as well as for the Western Colorado Library Consortium.
- Several major capital improvement projects have been completed. Porter Hall, the new Science and Mathematics facility, opened in 1998, aided by the generosity of alumnus William Porter (founder of E\*TRADE). The former science building was then extensively remodeled to house the Art Department. Once this renovation was complete, part of the former art building was demolished to make room for a new, state-of-the-art theatre building, which was completed in 2001. This was followed by a major renovation of the School of Business building, completed in 2003. Additional improvements in the physical plant include a new track, remodeled field house and gym, a renovated Student Union Building, and \$2 million in campus renovations for the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The state recently approved \$5 million in improvements to the athletics facility, Plachy Hall.
- The 2005 decision by Colorado voters to approve Referendum C allowed greater state spending for higher education. Budgets have stabilized and are beginning to return to levels seen prior to the 2002 economic recession.

## INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION

One of the College's *Institutional Goals* is to improve organizational effectiveness. A number of initiatives at the state, college, and unit levels address this goal.

The 2003 governance restructuring created a separate Board of Trustees for ASC. J. Thomas Gilmore retired as ASC president at the end of 2002, and Lee Halgren, interim president of the State Colleges in Colorado, was named interim president of ASC during this critical transition year.

Under Halgren's guidance, a major restructuring of campus governance took place, and the College began formal implementation of its responsibilities as a Regional Education Provider. The Vice President for Academic Affairs position was restructured to become the Provost, with additional campus governance responsibilities. The four academic dean positions were eliminated, some academic departments were consolidated, and a new position of Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA) was created. Administrative duties previously assigned to the deans were divided between the APAA and academic department chairs. Developing a strong communication and working structure for the Provost and Department Chairs was a priority. The Academic Council was reconfigured in December 2005 to comprise department heads and improve its effectiveness and stability.

The new Board of Trustees began a search for a new president and hired Richard Wueste in April 2004. President Wueste was subsequently placed on administrative





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leave in June 2005 and terminated in October of that year. Provost David Svaldi was named interim president in January 2006, and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, Frank Novotny, assumed the duties of interim provost. Svaldi was subsequently appointed president in June 2006.

Several other cabinet-level positions were subsequently restructured. The President's Cabinet now includes the Provost, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, Assistant Provost for the Extended Campus, Dean of Student Affairs, Director of the Graduate School, Athletics Director, and Chief Information Officer.

### Responses to 1997 Evaluation Report Concerns

The evaluation team for the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools identified several concerns after its visit to ASC on April 7-9, 1997. Important progress has been made toward addressing these concerns.

The most serious issues raised were low salaries, lack of professional development planning for faculty and staff, need for a coherent plan to enhance diversity among faculty, Title IX compliance, and lack of an assessment plan for general education. Significant progress has been made on several of these issues, especially the last. A General Education assessment plan was submitted as requested in December of 1999 and approved by the North Central Association. Since then, ASC has made promising advances on the overall assessment of student learning outcomes for virtually every academic program.

Title IX concerns have been thoroughly addressed through the addition of women's soccer and golf teams, improvement of female coaches' salaries and benefits, and the routing of additional scholarships and resources to women's sports. A soccer field was developed, and the softball field was improved. An upcoming \$5 million dollar renovation of Plachy Hall will upgrade and expand space for female athletes and coaches. One of ASC's most successful athletic teams is the women's cross country team, which recently won its fourth consecutive national championship (15 total) and was honored for excellence by a joint resolution of the Colorado State Legislature, as well as by the Colorado Sportswomen's Hall of Fame.

While ASC continues to face challenges on the issue of faculty salaries, considerable progress has been made over the past three years. Current entry-level salaries for Instructors are at or above the average salary of our peers. Entering Assistant Professors' salaries are at 90 percent of our peers' average. However, the salaries of associate professors and full professors, especially, are significantly below peer averages, resulting from small or no salary



increases over the last five years. During this time, Colorado made the largest cuts to higher education support in the nation. The recent voter approval of Referendum C has relaxed the Constitutional spending restrictions on the legislature. This approval, coupled with recent actions of the administration and Board of Trustees, is encouraging and may point a way out of this dilemma. Over the last three years, adjustments have been made to faculty salaries to try to bring them into line with peer institutions and to alleviate compression and inversion of salaries. Assistant professors' salaries were adjusted first, since some of them had been compressed or inverted by recent hires. Next were associate professors, and in fall 2006, full professors received adjustments. The new *Faculty Handbook* also changed the promotion increments from flat dollar figures to percentages. Promotion from assistant to associate professor now is accompanied by a 6 percent salary increase and from associate to full professor by an 11 percent increase.

Progress in minority hiring, while less dramatic, is also significant. In 1997, approximately 4 percent of ASC's full-time faculty were from minority groups; by 2006, that figure had risen to about 18 percent. The Teacher Education Department, which produces the largest number of ASC graduates in any given year, boasts a faculty that is 60 percent minority. However, ASC still needs to complete a revision of its *Affirmative Action Plan* and *Diversity Plan* and, quite frankly, to try harder to recruit faculty of color.

Other advances have been made over the last five years through a Title V Strengthening Hispanic Institutions Grant. This resulted in training for 100 ASC faculty in equity issues in the teaching and learning process and the effective use of instructional technology. Faculty training continues through the Title V Cooperative grant. The faculty development budget has increased from \$8,000 in 1997 to more than \$40,000 in 2006. CELT scholars had resources of approximately \$40,000 each year. However, the institution still has significant challenges to meet in providing adequate professional development for staff, as well as in finding resources to train faculty in distance education and Internet delivery, as indicated in the December 2005 HLC focused visit team report.

ASC has completed a new institutional *Strategic Plan*, which governs the *Academic Master Plan*, *Facilities Master Plan*, *Information Technology Plan*, and *Library Plan*. One intentional outcome of preparation for this 2007 comprehensive visit has been to make planning a part of the institutional culture at Adams State College.

## History of Accreditation

The first regional accreditation of Adams State College by the North Central Association (NCA) occurred in 1950. The early years of regional accreditation saw baccalaureate programs accredited throughout the College. NCA gave important attention to the College's initial master's degree programs, including preliminary accreditation in 1971 for the Education Specialist degree in guidance and counseling. The College withdrew the degree in preparation for the 1981 NCA visit, due to a long-term decline in student demand. The 1986-1987 comprehensive visit resulted in continued accreditation of all associate's, baccalaureate, and master's degree programs at the College. The visiting team found no major accreditation issues requiring specific college action or follow-up. The

result of the 1997 comprehensive visit was continued accreditation; specific recommendations are discussed in the preceding section of this chapter.

Two focused visits have been requested by ASC since the last comprehensive visit. The first, in 2004, was requested because of significant changes in institutional governance. The second, in December 2005, reviewed and approved ASC's capacity to deliver any of its currently approved academic programs via distance education without prior approval.

Adams State College has also received several specialty accreditations during the 1997-2006 period, including the following:

### **TEACHER EDUCATION**

The ASC teacher preparation program is a CCHE and Colorado Department of Education (CDE) approved program that just completed the reauthorization process. The CCHE and the CDE were on the ASC campus in December 2005 for site visits.

Formerly accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Teacher Education program found the process both onerous and expensive. The program is now undergoing accreditation review by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). Before applying for any national accreditation, the teacher preparation programs must be approved by the State Department of Education. ASC's teacher education program was approved in 2001 by the CDE, the first program to meet new state guidelines. The program was given one-year provisional approval by the CDE in spring 2006, pending revisions to the state guidelines.

### **MUSIC DEPARTMENT**

The Bachelor of Arts in Music and the Bachelor of Arts in Music Education programs are both fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The music programs received initial accreditation in January 1989 and were re-accredited in 1995. The department recently completed a new self-study and will undergo a reaccreditation site visit in February 2007.

### **COUNSELOR EDUCATION**

The Counselor Education programs in both school counseling and community counseling have been fully accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) since 1995. CACREP accreditation cycles run eight years. The program is accredited until 2011.

### **NURSING**

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) completion degree program was accredited October 28, 2006, by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

### **DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES**

The new (2005-2006) Emerging Scholars program, a strengthening and consolidation of ASC's developmental courses and services, will seek certification from the National Association of Developmental Educators (NADE).

## The Self-Study Process

In November of 2004, Provost David Svaldi and a small group of faculty and administrators attended the HLC Assessment Workshop, *Making a Difference in Student Learning: Assessment as a Core Strategy*, in Lisle, Illinois. The workshop yielded much valuable information on the new HLC criteria for accreditation, along with several useful consultant contacts. An initial timeline and draft prospectus for the *Self-Study* were produced following the workshop.

The Provost formed the HLC Steering Committee in January of 2005. The Steering Committee immediately began revising the *ASC Mission Statement* and *Institutional Goals*. In late January, the campus hosted a visit by Drs. Vincent Scalia and Theresa McDevitt from the University of Northern Colorado, who had led UNC's successful self-study process the previous year. Their visit provided valuable insight and advice into the process using the new criteria. As a result of their consultation, Dr. Guy Farish was named Director of the *Self-Study* and chair of the Steering Committee.

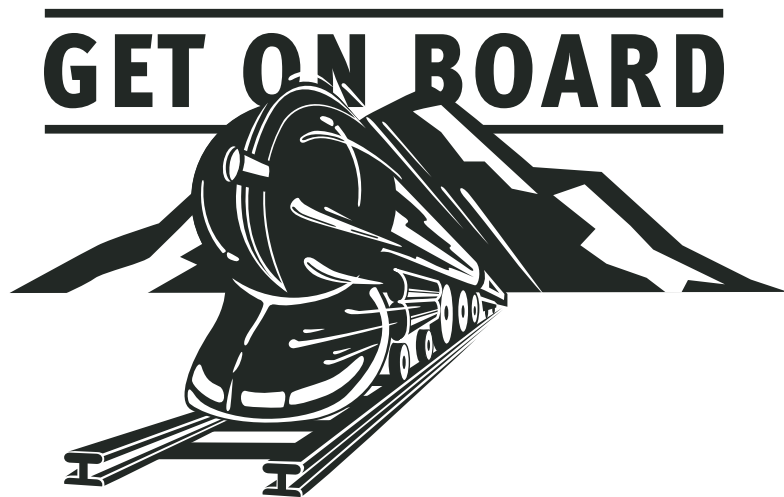
In February 2005, the subcommittees for each criterion were established and began meeting. The Steering Committee also invited an assessment consultant, Dr. Janice Denton, of the University of Cincinnati-Raymond Walters College, to work with the Criterion III subcommittee.

March 2005 saw the establishment of ASC's accreditation website. The Steering Committee conducted an accreditation theme contest, which resulted in the adoption of the "Get On Board" slogan and railroad theme, which alludes to Alamosa's railroading history.

In April 2005, a large group of faculty, staff, and administrators attended the HLC annual meeting in Chicago, IL. The *ASC Mission Statement* and *Institutional Goals* were finalized, as well.

During the summer months of 2005, the Steering Committee held an off-site planning meeting and began updating the *ASC Strategic Plan* and preparing the *Self-Study* Document Room.

In August 2005, the Writing Committee established a style and format guide for the *Self-Study*. The Steering Committee held a fall semester kick-off event highlighting the "Get On Board" theme to keep the campus informed of accreditation activities and their importance. Dr. Janice Denton was again brought in to consult on



## Introduction

assessment practices. All campus institutional syllabi were aligned with departmental and *Institutional Goals* and included assessment of student learning outcomes.

Dr. Mary Breslin, ASC's HLC liaison, visited the campus in September 2005, consulted with the Steering Committee, and reviewed progress to date. The timeline for submission of material to the writing committee was updated. Revision of the *Academic Master Plan* was begun.

During October 2005, planning began for a focused visit in December on distance degree approval. The process of centralizing campus documents, publications, and policies was also initiated.

The December 5-6 focused visit on distance degree programs was extremely successful. The team recommended approval of all distance degrees, and HLC chose to display our documentation at the Annual Meeting in April 2006.

January through March 2006 was a period of much writing and editing of chapter drafts by the criterion subcommittees, the Steering Committee, and the Writing Committee.

In April of 2006, a small group of ASC faculty and staff attended the HLC Annual Meeting in Chicago. This provided more detailed information on self-study and assessment, as well as affirmation that our *Self-Study* was progressing well. ASC Trustee Mark Cavanaugh and former interim president Lee Halgren also attended.

May through August 2006 was a continuing period of editing and chapter layout of the *Self-Study*. The full draft of the *Self-Study* was provided to the campus and other invested people for review in early September, after classes resumed. The Writing Committee incorporated these recommendations and revised the document to better reflect the distinctive qualities of ASC.

Over the course of the *Self-Study* review, the Steering Committee kept ASC constituents and other stakeholders apprised of its progress on a regular basis. The criterion subcommittees produced first drafts of each chapter, which were then reviewed by the Steering Committee and sent back to the subcommittees for revision. The Writing Committee edited these revised drafts for style and submitted them to the campus community for review and feedback before preparing the final copy of the *Self-Study* report. The report was shared and discussed with the ASC community in printed form on the reaccreditation website, in meetings of campus committees and organizations, and at campus and community open forums.

## Composition of the Steering Committee and specific subcommittees

### **THE SELF-STUDY STEERING COMMITTEE**

Guy Farish, Academic Affairs Intern and Director of *Self-Study*  
Tim Bachicha, Trustee  
Deborah Blake, Director of Undergraduate Teacher Education Programs  
Ed Crowther, Chair of History, Government, and Philosophy  
Georgia Grantham, Vice President for Enrollment Management  
Carol Guerrero-Murphy, Chair of English, Theatre, Communications and Foreign Languages  
Stu Hilwig, Faculty Senate President, Associate Professor of History  
Dianne Machado, Director, Nielsen Library  
Bill Mansheim, Vice President for Finance and Administration  
Ken Marquez, Dean of Student Affairs  
Teri McCartney, Director of the Graduate School  
Mike Nicholson, Chief Information Officer  
Frank Novotny, Interim Provost  
Cheryl Ravens, Administrative Assistant, Arts & Letters  
LeRoy Salazar, Trustee  
Sandra Starnaman, Assistant Provost for the Extended Campus  
David Svaldi, President  
Paul Tigan, Administrative Assistant, Arts & Letters  
James Trujillo, Executive Assistant to the President  
Mary Valerio, Interim Chair of Teacher Education  
Julie Waechter, Director of Communications

### **CRITERION ONE SUBCOMMITTEE**

Dianne Machado, Director, Nielsen Library (Co-Chair)  
Mike Nicholson, Chief Information Officer (Co-Chair)  
Julie Campbell, Assistant Professor of Management, Affirmative Action Officer  
Stu Hilwig, Faculty Senate President, Associate Professor of History  
Liz Martinez, Program Director, Extended Studies  
Frank Novotny, Interim Provost  
Bill Schlaufman, Controller  
Charles Scoggins, Trustee  
James Trujillo, Executive Assistant to the President

### **CRITERION TWO SUBCOMMITTEE**

David Svaldi, President (Chair)  
Guy Farish, Academic Affairs Intern  
Georgia Grantham, Vice President for Enrollment Management  
Bill Mansheim, Vice President for Finance and Administration  
Frank Novotny, Interim Provost  
Sandra Starnaman, Assistant Provost for the Extended Campus

**CRITERION THREE SUBCOMMITTEE**

Sandra Starnaman, Assistant Provost for the Extended Campus (Chair)  
Barbara Andrews, Associate Professor of Counselor Education  
Doug Camp, Assistant Professor of Music  
Ed Crowther, Chair of History, Government and Philosophy  
Robert Demski, Associate Professor of Psychology  
Margaret Doell, Chair of Art  
Stephanie Gonzales, Assistant Professor of Sociology  
Carol Guerrero-Murphy, Chair of English, Theatre, Communications and Foreign Languages  
Amanda Jojola, Instructor of Nursing  
Kurt Keiser, Interim Chair of School of Business  
David MacWilliams, Associate Professor of English  
Matt Nehring, Chair of Chemistry, Computer Science, and Mathematics  
Frank Novotny, Interim Provost  
Brooke Phillips, Reference Librarian  
Tracey Robinson, Associate Professor of Exercise Physiology and Leisure Science  
John Taylor, Associate Professor of Theatre  
Mary Valerio, Interim Chair of Teacher Education  
Brent Ybarrondo, Chair of Biology and Earth Sciences

**CRITERION FOUR SUBCOMMITTEE**

Teri McCartney, Director of the Graduate School (Co-Chair)  
Frank Novotny, Interim Provost (Co-Chair)  
Aaron Abeyta, Associate Professor of English  
Kris Daniel, First-Year Interest Group Coordinator  
Mike Garcia, Director of Upward Bound  
B.J. Keefer, Director of Student Life  
Kurt Keiser, Interim Chair of School of Business  
Ken Marquez, Dean of Students  
Tracy Rogers, Director of Human Resources  
Brienne Speichter, Student  
Mary Walsh, Reference Librarian

**CRITERION FIVE SUBCOMMITTEE**

Deborah Blake, Director of Undergraduate Teacher Education Programs (Co-Chair)  
Mary Hoffman, Executive Director of Community Partnerships (Co-Chair)  
JoAnn Crownover, Instructor of Nursing  
Lori Laske, Alumni Director  
Peggy Lamm, Trustee  
Mike Martin, Chair of Sociology  
David Mazel, Associate Professor of English  
Kat Olance, Special Events Coordinator  
Corrine Padilla, President of the Associated Students and Faculty  
LeRoy Salazar, Trustee

**THE FEDERAL COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

Julie Campbell, Assistant Professor of Management & Affirmative Action Officer  
Belen Maestas, Registrar  
Bill Mansheim, Vice President for Finance & Administration  
Tracy Rogers, Director of Human Resources  
Bill Schlaufman, Controller  
Phil Schroeder, Director of Financial Aid

**THE SELF-STUDY WRITING COMMITTEE**

Julie Waechter, Director of Communications (Chair)  
Ed Crowther, Chair of History, Government, and Philosophy  
Donna Griego, Program Assistant, Office of the Provost  
Carol Guerrero-Murphy, Chair of English, Theatre, Communications and Foreign Languages  
Margery Herrington, Professor of Biology  
Teri McCartney, Director of the Graduate School  
Cheryl Ravens, Administrative Assistant, Arts & Letters

**ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

Donna Griego, Program Assistant, Provost's Office  
Cheryl Ravens, Administrative Assistant, Arts & Letters



# *Mission and Integrity*

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## Criterion I



**ADAMS STATE COLLEGE**

**C O L O R A D O** SM

*Great Stories Begin Here*

# CRITERION I: MISSION AND INTEGRITY

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

## Criterion Overview

Adams State College (ASC) is guided by a clear and distinct statutory role and mission to serve as a general baccalaureate institution providing access to teacher education in rural Colorado; to serve as a Regional Education Provider; to provide a limited number of master's level programs; and to offer programs that preserve and promote the history and culture of the region. Intrinsic to this mission is the need to offer quality, accessible, and affordable educational programs to meet the needs of Colorado's rural, underserved, and minority populations. This statutory role and mission is reflected in the College's core institutional documents. The faculty, staff, and students work daily to bring the mission to life, creating an institution that offers a distinctive, student-centered environment. The college operates efficiently, responsively, and collaboratively within its structures and in partnership with other agencies that share the College's community-oriented mission. This section of the *Self-Study* assesses ASC's key mission-related documents, which derive from the statutory mission and the College's evolving vision in carrying out the mission. This section also describes the College's supporting administrative structures and collaborative processes, and provides evidence that the ASC community understands and embraces the College's role and mission. The following evidence demonstrates ASC's efforts to clearly and publicly articulate the College's commitments.

### *Core Component 1a:*

**The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.**

Although there are a variety of institutional documents that address Adams State College's mission and governance, for purposes of this *Self-Study*, mission documents may be described as those overarching written statements that summarize and define the core beliefs of the institution. They include the *Vision Statement*, *Mission Statement*, and *Institutional Goals*. Each of these documents resulted from the participation of all segments of the college community, including trustees, students, faculty, staff, community members, and alumni. In early 2006, faculty, staff, students, community members, and community educators were surveyed to assess their support for the *ASC Vision*, *Mission Statement*, and *Institutional Goals*. Nearly 600 responses were received. Eighty-six percent of all respondents said they either supported or strongly supported the current *Vision* and *Mission* statements. Over 90 percent of the respondents indicated they supported or strongly supported the current *Institutional Goals*.

## *Criterion I: Mission and Integrity*

These documents are reviewed and updated annually, in conjunction with ASC's strategic planning and budgeting processes, which are discussed in Criterion II.

Evidence also includes other institutional documents, such as the *Trustees' Policy Manual* and the *ASC Strategic Plan*, that expand upon the core mission documents. The *TPM* describes the role and responsibilities of the ASC Board of Trustees, delegates management responsibility to the College President, and provides top-level administrative guidelines for the campus.

The *Strategic Plan* translates Adams State College's *Mission, Vision, and Goals* into priorities and action plans. The core mission documents serve as the foundation for the campus priorities defined in the *ASC Strategic Plan*. In turn, the *Plan* is the foundation for all of the subsidiary campus planning documents, including the *Academic Master Plan*, the *Facilities Master Plan*, and the *Information Technology Plan*. These plans provide the basis for measuring unit goals and objectives, and student learning outcomes. Each of the subsidiary plans is aligned to support the top-level *ASC Strategic Plan* goals and objectives. This assessment provides evidence that the College operates with integrity to achieve its mission and goals.

### **MISSION DOCUMENTS**

The three primary ASC mission documents are discussed below. They represent the core precepts, ideals, and standards to which members of the ASC community have ascribed institutional and personal value. A 2006 survey revealed that more than 75 percent of faculty, staff, students, community members, and community educators either agreed or strongly agreed that ASC's actions were consistent with and supported its mission documents.

These documents jointly define and articulate ASC's unique identity and culture. Common themes linking the three include the following:

- A commitment to student access, opportunity, and success
- A focus on student-centered learning and academic excellence
- A commitment to improving regional education and the regional economy, and to preserving and honoring regional cultures

ASC's *Mission Statement* reflects the College's current purpose and priorities, while the *Vision Statement* describes what the Board of Trustees, Cabinet, faculty, and staff desire the institution to become in the future. The *Vision Statement* emphasizes current qualities that ASC embraces, while also setting direction for the future. The campus values addressed in the *Mission* and *Vision* statements are crystallized in the *Institutional Goals*. The institution is developing assessment benchmarks for these objectives, which form the basis for the campus strategic planning effort. The mission documents are available in the Document Room and online at [www2.adams.edu/pubs](http://www2.adams.edu/pubs)

### **MISSION DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT**

Each of the ASC core mission documents was updated in 2005 as part of the College's *HLC Self-Study* effort. The *Vision Statement* was updated by the Cabinet and the other

documents by the HLC *Self-Study* Steering Committee, which includes members from academic and administrative areas.

After their initial update, all of these documents were disseminated via the web and in print to the campus and general community for a review and comment period at each stage of revision. The process stimulated lively and meaningful debate across campus. At the conclusion of this period, the Steering Committee analyzed the comments and incorporated appropriate modifications. The final documents reflect a broad consensus of values, outlooks, and priorities.

Revision of the core mission documents stimulated updates of other institutional documents, such as the *Trustees' Policy Manual* and the *ASC Strategic Plan*.

## **DOCUMENT DISSEMINATION**

Adams State College has made every effort to ensure that its varied constituency is aware of its key ideals and precepts. ASC mission documents are publicly available, easily accessible, and widely disseminated. Links to each of these documents are clearly posted on the ASC *Self-Study* website ([www2.adams.edu/hlc/](http://www2.adams.edu/hlc/)). Posters displaying the *Vision*, *Mission*, and *Goals* are posted prominently throughout the campus academic, auxiliary, and administrative buildings, including the One Stop Student Services Center.

In addition, an ASC Official Publications website was established to provide a permanent, central location for key mission documents and other related material ([www2.adams.edu/pubs](http://www2.adams.edu/pubs)).

Mission documents are incorporated into formal College orientations for new faculty and exempt staff. They are also available in such key College publications as the website, the graduate and undergraduate catalogs, the *ASC Fact Book*, and the quarterly *A-Stater* magazine for alumni and friends.

### *Core Component 1b:*

**In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.**

Adams State College promotes diversity as a core institutional value. Along with our mission documents, ASC's Performance Contract with the State of Colorado emphasizes our commitment to diversity.

## **ASC'S MISSION DOCUMENTS ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY AND ADDRESS CHALLENGES OF A GLOBAL SOCIETY**

All three ASC mission documents address the importance of diversity among the College's many constituencies. Adams State College recognizes that diversity characterizes these constituencies in all of its service areas. To meet constituents' varying educational needs, the institution has aligned its key mission documents to direct its vision and its resources. A clear *Mission Statement* directs the College to use its

## Criterion I: Mission and Integrity



resources “to provide opportunity and access for all students . . . [as] . . . an innovative leader that recognizes the inherent educational value of diversity.” The *Vision Statement* commits the institution “to provide a high quality educational experience in a supportive environment. . . . Our programs will recognize the value of continual improvement, while embracing diversity of culture and ideas that stimulate intellectual growth.” The seven *Institutional Goals* provide a specific framework for measuring progress toward achieving the *Mission*.

The alignment of our mission documents described above demonstrates our determination to address the diverse needs of our students. In addition, to comply with state policy, ASC aligned its facilities and academic planning processes with the *Vision Statement* and *Institutional Goals* in its *Academic Master Plan (AMP)*. Addressing all seven *Goals*, the *AMP* aligns the educational mission with facilities maintenance and procurement proce-

dures and with resource enhancement and reallocation through the Zero-Based Budgeting process. Annual assessment processes permit the institution to measure how well it is meeting the needs of its diverse constituency. Attention to diversity permeates the *AMP*; goals two, three, and four, and their attendant strategies specifically address the issue of diversity. Strategies call for the College to

- Continue to serve underserved populations, especially Hispanics
- Develop and implement an academic diversity plan
- Actively recruit diverse faculty and students

The *AMP* may be viewed in the Document Room or online at: [www2.adams.edu/pubs](http://www2.adams.edu/pubs)

## **ASC'S CONTRACT WITH THE STATE OF COLORADO EMPHASIZES SERVING MINORITY AND OTHER UNDERSERVED CONSTITUENTS**

ASC's Performance Contract with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) explicitly requires that the institution address the needs of diversity and of underserved students. Title 23, Article 5, Section 129, Colorado Revised Statutes, requires that each performance contract address "increasing enrollment of underserved students, including low-income individuals, males, and minority groups." This contract serves as further evidence that ASC recognizes the diversity of the constituencies it serves.

For example, Goal #1: Access and Success, Section 3.1.a of ASC's Performance Contract states:

*The institution shall increase overall resident undergraduate enrollment by 10 percent over baseline enrollment of 1999-2003, as follows:*

- 1. Total resident enrollment (FTE) shall increase from 1914 to 2105.*
- 2. The institution shall increase the number of first-generation college students.*
- 3. The institution shall increase the number of minority students.*
- 4. The institution shall increase the number of Hispanic students.*
- 5. The institution shall increase the number of low-income students.*
- 6. The institution shall increase the number of enrolled freshmen from the San Luis Valley area.*
- 7. The institution shall increase the number of Hispanic males.*

In Goal #4: Other State Needs - Teacher Education, regarding the recruitment and training of qualified candidates, subsection 2.1, states:

*The Institution shall maintain or improve the recruitment, retention, and graduation of teacher candidates who are under-represented in Colorado's public schools, with a particular focus on Hispanics and males.*

## **Core Component 1c: Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.**

Adams State College's administration, faculty, and staff demonstrate a dedication to students and the local region that is central to the *Mission* and *Vision* statements. In part, this is a result of the shared governance philosophy at ASC. With all stakeholders having the opportunity to participate in the review and revision of the institutional *Mission* and *Vision Statement* and the *Institutional Goals* derived from these, there is a communal sense of ownership and a vested interest in accomplishing those goals. Ample evidence of an understanding of and support for the *Mission* follows.

## **THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDS AND SUPPORTS THE MISSION**

As described in Core Component 1a, a recent survey of constituents shows that the majority of student, faculty, and staff respondents agree with ASC's *Mission* and also

## Criterion I: Mission and Integrity

believe that ASC's actions support the *Mission*. One example is the recent creation of the One Stop Student Services Center, which integrates the functions of Admissions, Records, Financial Aid, and Student Business Services in one area. A direct result of student input, the One Stop was created to further the College's student-centered mission.

The academic curricula have also been positively affected by constituents' understanding the *Mission* and direction of the institution. For example, the development of an RN-BSN completion degree program in FY 2005 proceeded from discussions by a group of dedicated local health care professionals, the San Luis Valley Nurses' Forum. The Nurses' Forum, ASC administration, and community organizations assessed the need for and then developed the RN-BSN completion program, further supporting the mission of the College.



While the nursing shortage throughout the United States is well publicized, the shortage is especially severe in rural Colorado. In assessing need, the San Luis Valley Nurses' Forum found that there are approximately 750 Registered Nurses per 100,000 residents in Colorado, while in the SLV that ratio is about 490 per 100,000 residents (the actual population of the SLV is only about half of the latter number). They identified additional concern regarding the educational level of rural nurses. The National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP), which advises Congress and the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, supports increasing the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses nationwide. NACNEP recommends that at least 67 percent of the nurse workforce hold baccalaureate or higher degrees in nursing by the year 2010. The San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center (SLVRMC), the primary employer of nurses in the Valley, has set a goal to increase their proportion of BSN's from 20 to 50 percent.

The development of the RN-BSN completion program through a community-wide collaborative effort is evidence that the College supports the objectives of ASC's *Strategic Plan* to "provide educational access and opportunity for success." This program could not have been developed without an understanding of and support for the mission of the institution by the stakeholders, including representatives from SLVRMC's administration, Blue Peaks Developmental Services, Area Health Education Center, Alamosa County Nursing Service, Alamosa School District, and Trinidad State Junior College.

Another significant example is ASC's mission to serve as a Regional Education Provider (REP). The ASC region covers 14 counties in south-central and southeastern Colorado. The goal of an REP is to determine and address regional educational needs. These needs can be met through the extension of existing programs, the creation of new undergraduate programs, partnerships with other educational institutions, and delivery of graduate programs. Assessment of these needs is determined through the work of a community-based REP advisory board, surveys, and requests from individual community groups.

One program that was developed in direct response to ASC's statutory mission to serve as a Regional Education Provider was the innovative Rural Education Access Program (REAP) in Lamar, La Junta, and Trinidad, Colorado. This program allows rural students to take the first two years of coursework at a community college, then transfer to ASC for the final two years. Classes are presented by ASC faculty on the community college campus, thus eliminating the need to travel to the ASC campus in Alamosa. The community colleges, ASC Extended Studies, ASC departments of Teacher Education and English, the School of Business, and the Library collaborated to meet the distance education needs of the region.

### **THE COLLEGE'S MISSION AND GOALS GUIDE THE INSTITUTION AND PROGRAM UNITS' PLANNING AND BUDGETING PRIORITIES**

In the mid-1990s, ASC's budgeting process largely occurred at the administrative level. This was not an effective method, so in 1998 the institution formed a budget committee with campus-wide representation. This committee made recommendations to the Cabinet, which then developed the budget. While this did increase campus participation in the process, there was no direct link between budget priorities, *Institutional Goals*, and assessment.

In an effort to ensure stakeholder understanding of and support for the *Mission*, in 2004 Adams State College began migrating to Zero-Based Budgeting to "right-size" the existing budgets on campus. Some units have completed the transition to this process. This iterative process makes the institution's allocation of resources more transparent. Involving administrators, faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees, it uses business practices designed to support the ASC *Mission, Vision, and Goals* described in the *Strategic Plan*.

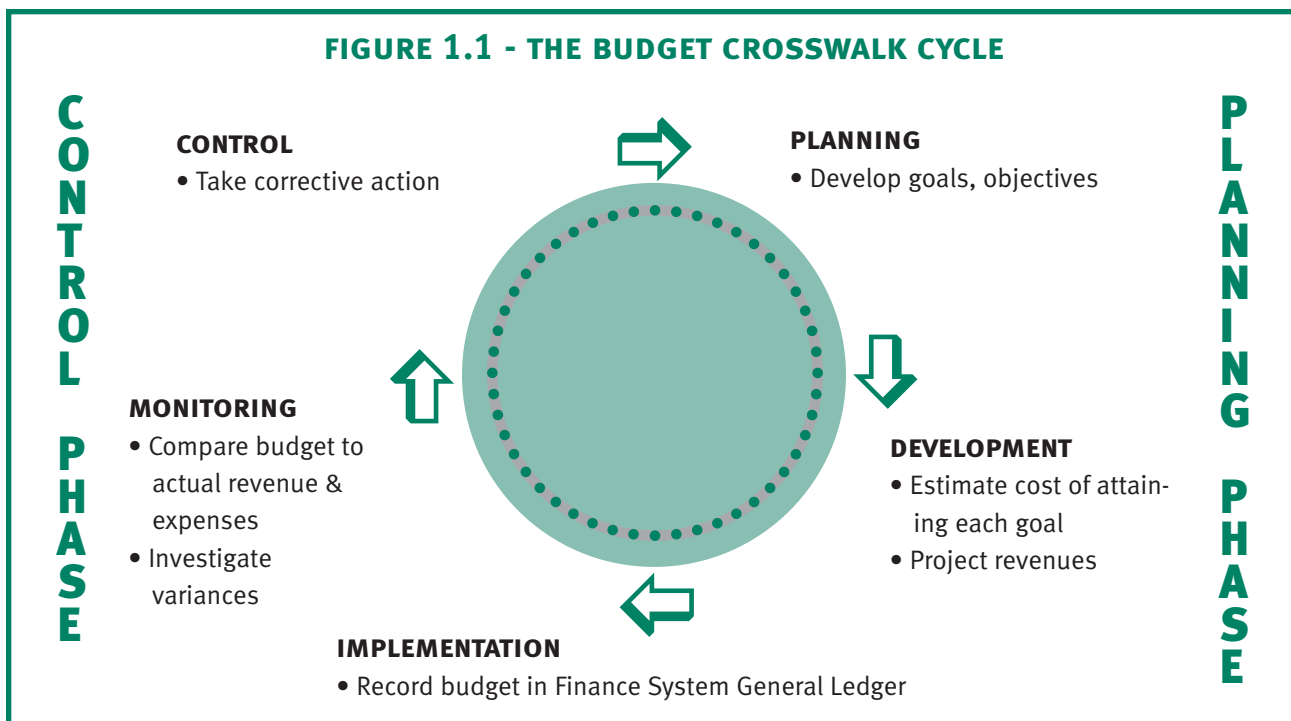
In the development of a Budget Crosswalk, a program unit aligns its program goals and objectives with *Strategic Plan* and *Institutional Goals*. Each unit then develops and aligns specific outcomes, assessment measures, and benchmarks to these goals.

In this evolving budgeting process, continuation budgets and new budget requests should be linked to specific outcomes for each program unit and justified based on assessment data and benchmarks. The Finance Office collects the information for each program from the Crosswalk database, allowing the Cabinet to develop a preliminary budget that supports the institutional *Mission and Goals*. The preliminary budget is sent to the budget committee, which has campus-wide representation. The committee reviews the budget and makes recommendations. After considering all recommendations and comments, the Cabinet submits the budget to the President. The President then presents the budget to the Board of Trustees for approval.

This process provides a budgetary feedback loop based on assessment of outcomes that involve the campus as a whole. Each program unit has an incentive not only to align its goals and outcomes with the institution's, but also to critically examine its activities to demonstrate it is accomplishing its objectives. In a time of challenging budgetary decisions, this process helps ensure that limited resources are focused on the mission and core functions of the College. Figure 1.1 summarizes this process and feedback loop.



## Criterion I: Mission and Integrity



### **THE GOALS OF ASC'S ADMINISTRATIVE AND ACADEMIC SUBUNITS ARE CONGRUENT WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S MISSION**

The goals of every subunit, whether the Library, Office of Student Affairs, Computing Services, Records, Financial Aid, or Facilities Services, while varying in specifics, all support student learning. Every campus unit shows evidence of supporting the *Mission*; listed below are just some examples.

- The Library supports student learning and scholarship for students, faculty, and staff through the acquisition, maintenance, and cataloging of its holdings and by providing services such as interlibrary loans and reference searches.
- The Office of Student Affairs enhances student learning by arranging a variety of cultural programs and student recognition programs, and by teaching personal responsibility through the Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity policies, among other things.
- Computing Services supports student learning through a wide variety of activities, including providing and maintaining high-quality student computer labs and technology-enhanced classrooms (TECs) and providing workshops for faculty and staff on the use and integration of technology.

Optimum student learning is not accomplished by a subunit in isolation, but by subunits working together to efficiently and effectively use the available resources to achieve the institution's *Mission* and *Goals*.

*Core Component 1d:*

The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Adams State College's governance and administrative structures and processes are well defined and proven. They have become an integral part of the campus culture, working in concert with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and supported by an active and engaged Board of Trustees. The College's executive leadership team (Cabinet) works closely with faculty, staff, and students to effectively implement programs and initiatives that support ASC's current *Mission, Institutional Goals*, and *Vision* for the future. The evidence detailed below illustrates the College's collaborative processes.

**INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE**

The ASC Board of Trustees consists of eleven members, nine of whom are appointed by the Governor of Colorado and confirmed by the Colorado State Senate. Two of those nine must represent the San Luis Valley. These members have diverse professional backgrounds and reside both in metropolitan and rural Colorado. In addition to the appointed members, there are two non-voting board members: a student and a faculty representative. They help ensure that faculty and student interests are clearly articulated and considered during board deliberations.

Collectively, the Board membership brings strong management, accounting, legal, and entrepreneurial skills. Meeting at least six times per year in public session, the Board strives to provide overarching guidance and vision for the institution. The Board works closely with the CCHE and the ASC Cabinet.

The governing document for the ASC Board is the *Trustees' Policy Manual*, originally developed under the State Colleges in Colorado, to which Adams State College belonged until 2003. When the State Colleges system was dissolved, Colorado Statute 23-51-102(6) transferred the duties of the State Colleges Board to a newly formed Adams State College Board of Trustees. The *Trustees' Policy Manual* has been revised to reflect this change. Colorado statute, coupled with the *TPM*, provides the Board of Trustees with primary responsibility for



## *Criterion I: Mission and Integrity*

the governance of Adams State College. Section 1.2 of the *Policy Manual* further defines the Board's goals as follows:

*...to create and maintain an environment conducive to discovery and dissemination of knowledge to all citizens who seek it, to provide necessary resources in an atmosphere that induces and honors excellence and promotes equality of access, and to develop a salutary sense of mutual authority, responsibility, accountability, and ethical practice among all those who are involved in sponsoring and providing educational services.*

Actions taken by the Board reflect its dedication to these principles. The Board has consistently supported the institutional *Mission* by encouraging and approving new academic programs. The Board strongly supported creation of the nursing program, which became a joint venture between Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) and ASC. This support fostered a team approach that resulted in receipt of the Health Professional Initiative Grant funded by the Colorado Trust. This partnership allows the faculty to teach classes at both ASC and TSJC, while providing for matriculation of students from the RN program at TSJC to the RN-BSN program at ASC.

Given the institution's role as a Regional Educational Provider, the Board has worked closely with Cabinet to ensure that ASC provides educational access and opportunity through a vibrant Extended Studies program, off-campus graduate programs, and and one of the lowest tuition rates of any public, four-year institution in Colorado.

At the same time, the Board has insisted that the institution's finances comply with general accounting practices. Members of the Board have worked closely with the Vice President for Finance and Administration to institute a monthly cash flow analysis process and implement the Zero-Based Budgeting approach.

While extremely involved with the College, the Board strives to balance oversight with a respect for the autonomy of the College's leaders. Section 1.13 of the *Trustees' Policy* states: "The Board reaffirms its policy of delegating to the president the authority and responsibility for administering the institution." The Board clearly understands that day-to-day program implementation is the responsibility of Cabinet and other campus leaders. On the other hand, the Board holds the College's executive leaders accountable. For example, in 2005 the Board dismissed the College President for failing to provide effective fiscal oversight of the College's operating budget.

### **STATE GOVERNANCE**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education plays a key role in defining the Adams State College mission and assessing its performance against the mission objectives. CCHE is an eleven-member board appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The CCHE is charged to implement the directives of the Colorado State General Assembly. It must act as a central policy and coordinating board for Colorado public higher education, as well as promote and preserve quality, access, accountability, and efficiency within Colorado public higher education.

As mandated by CCHE and guided by the Colorado Revised Statute, Title 23, Article 5, section 129, Adams State College negotiates an annual Performance Contract

and Fee for Service Contract with the Department of Higher Education. A mutual agreement between the State and College, these contracts specify the objectives and goals that ASC will satisfy during the contract period of performance. The most recent (2005) Performance Contract included offering programs for undergraduate liberal arts and sciences, teacher preparation, and business, as well as master's level programs and two-year transfer programs. It also requires ASC to be the primary teacher education provider in rural Colorado, to serve as a Regional Educational Provider, and to offer programs that preserve and promote the unique history and culture of the region.

The Performance Contract specifies procedures and measurable goals designed to do the following:

1. Improve Colorado residents' access to higher education
2. Improve quality and success in higher education
3. Improve the efficiency of operations
4. Address the needs of the State

The statutory role and mission drive the agreement made in the Performance Contract. ASC's current Performance Contract was approved by CCHE and will remain in effect until June 30, 2009.

## **INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION, LEADERSHIP & SHARED GOVERNANCE**

Adams State College has a well-defined organizational structure. Day-to-day management responsibilities are delegated to the ASC staff by the Board of Trustees, in accordance with the *Trustees' Policy Manual*. ASC's Cabinet represents the most senior level of campus management, comprised of the ASC President and managers drawn from the major functional areas of the College. A detailed ASC organization chart can be found online at [www2.adams.edu/pubs/](http://www2.adams.edu/pubs/) The Cabinet meets weekly to address policy matters and issues of college-wide significance. An organizational hierarchy composed of administrative and academic departments reports to the Cabinet. Each department is led by a director or chair with clearly defined responsibilities. Shared governance and collaboration are key components of ASC's management philosophy. A primary mechanism for shared governance is the use of campus committees, councils, and boards to address myriad campus issues and responsibilities. Currently, ASC has 19 standing committees with broad representation of students, staff, administration, and faculty. Each spring, the President's Office surveys faculty and exempt staff regarding committees on which they would like to serve. That list is given to the Faculty Senate to facilitate assignments, and the membership assignments are published and distributed through the President's Office early in the fall semester.

These campus organizations and their primary functions are listed in Table 1.1. Other ad hoc campus committees are formed as needed to address short term actions or projects that arise. These are disbanded once the specific committee objectives have been satisfied.

## Criterion I: Mission and Integrity

To ensure greater communication and shared governance, a President's Council with membership from all major campus constituencies meets every three weeks. Chairpersons from the Classified Staff Council and Professional Administrative Staff Council participate in the President's Council and report to their respective constituents regarding campus concerns, ideas, and general information.

Shared governance permeates the curriculum review process. The Academic Council, reporting to the Provost, was restructured in December 2005. The Council convenes academic chairs twice a month to address academic issues and curriculum review. The Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) approves all new undergraduate academic programs and course changes, and oversees regular review of academic programs. The Graduate Council was reinstated in January 2005 with the same responsibilities as CRC, but focused solely on graduate programs. Undergraduate curricula must be approved by the CRC and then Academic Council, while the Graduate Council

**TABLE 1.1 FUNCTIONS OF STANDING CAMPUS COMMITTEES, COUNCILS, AND BOARDS**

**Affirmative Action (AA) Committee**

Reviews AA policies and advises AA officer

**Academic Council**

Discusses, develops, solves, and communicates the direction, vision, policies, and procedures for ASC academic departments

**Academic Instructional Technology Committee**

Reviews and plans all academic and instructional technology needs

**Athletic Policy Committee**

Reviews and recommends policies related to intercollegiate athletics

**Budget Committee**

Reviews all aspects of budgets and provides recommendations to the President on planning and budget priorities

**Cabinet**

Advises the President on broad college policy and discusses issues of college-wide significance

**Communications Board**

Reviews student communications media and recommends policies for governing them

**Commencement Committee**

Plans and coordinates college commencement activities

**Curriculum Review Committee**

Reviews and critiques annual student assessment, accountability data, academic programs, and new course proposals

**Enrollment Management Council**

Provides strategic direction for the office of Enrollment Management

**Faculty Senate**

Advises the President by identifying institutional concerns of the faculty, reviews institutional and statewide issues referred to the Senate, and recommends changes in personnel or operational matters

**General Education Coordinating Committee**

Reviews and critiques annual student assessment and accountability data and approves revisions to the General Education curriculum

**Graduate Council**

Reviews and critiques annual student assessment, accountability data, academic programs, and new graduate course proposals

**Information Technology Planning Committee**

Formulates an overall campus IT strategic plan, recommends priorities for campus technology, identifies and recommends methods to optimize the use of IT resources

**Library Committee**

Advises the Director of the Library on adequacy of holdings and personnel, learning resource needs, and budget priorities

**President's Council**

Facilitates communication among all areas of the college and advises the President on issues of common concern

**Provost's Council**

Shares information and receives feedback on changes in policy and new initiatives, academic and otherwise

**Residents' Appeals Committee**

Hears appeals of residency status

**Student Appeals Board**

Hears student appeals on suspension and/or expulsion decisions

approves at the graduate level; all curricula must then be endorsed by the Provost and Board of Trustees.

In summary, ASC's governance and administrative structures have proven to be both efficient and effective in providing oversight and management of the resources and programs needed to achieve the College's *Mission* and *Goals*. Participation from all segments of the campus community has ensured a collaborative environment that welcomes and encourages shared governance in the institutional goal-setting and problem-solving processes. With an involved and energetic Board of Trustees and an ingrained shared-governance philosophy, ASC is well positioned to meet the management challenges that lie ahead.

### *Core Component 1e:* **The organization upholds and protects its integrity.**

Adams State College abides by all applicable laws and regulations, establishes clear and fair policies for governance and personnel, responds appropriately to complaints and grievances, fosters integrity, and deals fairly and honestly with its constituents. Evidence of these practices is listed below.

#### **ADAMS STATE COLLEGE ABIDES BY ALL APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

The ASC Human Resources (HR) Department and Affirmative Action Officer (AAO) work together to ensure that personnel and hiring procedures are legal and fair. The HR Department also communicates information to the campus related to pension and benefits, which are administered under the auspices of the Colorado Higher Education Insurance Benefits Alliance (CHEIBA) and the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA). HR informs the campus regarding health and safety, payroll, labor and employment law, Social Security, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance benefits, leave, terminations, and separations.

ASC's Business and Purchasing Offices adhere to the appropriate federal and state rules and provide training and oversight to staff and faculty members to ensure campus compliance.

ASC's financial records are subject to systematic internal and external audits and reviews. The State of Colorado Auditor's Office contracts with a CPA firm annually to perform an independent financial and compliance audit, which is reviewed by the State of Colorado Legislative Audit Committee. These audits have verified that Adams State College financial statements present the financial position of the College fairly in all material respects and conform with the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. ASC procurement and contracting policy and procedures comply with all State of Colorado procurement and fiscal rules. The position of Controller for Sponsored Programs was established to guarantee proper fiscal management and accountability on grants.

Such procedures and precautions are not, unfortunately, aimed merely at hypothetical problems. In 2002, a discovery of financial irregularities led to the arrest and

## *Criterion I: Mission and Integrity*

conviction of the former Vice President for Financial Affairs. Subsequently, ASC revised its procedures according to recommendations from the Office of State Auditors Financial and Compliance Audit.

The Colorado Attorney General's Office provides advice and counsel to the ASC Board of Trustees and senior administrators on pertinent legal matters to ensure proper compliance and accountability. Additionally, an attorney from the Colorado Attorney General's Office attends Board meetings.

Policies set forth in the *Trustees' Policy Manual* meet or exceed state and federal legal requirements. Activities, meetings, and policies of the board are open to the public as required by the Colorado Sunshine Act (C.R.S. § 24-72-201) *et seq.* and Colorado Open Records Act (C.R.S. § 24-80-101) *et seq.* (State Archives and Public Records). The Board meets a minimum of six times per year. Meeting results are available through meeting minutes and online information.

Campus academic and administrative departments apply the standards of legal and ethical compliance in accordance with applicable federal and state legislation. Some laws govern all aspects of the campus, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and civil rights legislation guaranteeing non-discrimination. Individual departments, such as Financial Aid and the Teacher Education Department, are also guided by and subject to federal and state laws and regulations unique to their roles. Many of the academic departments also are subject to codes of ethics for their academic specialties. The *Faculty Handbook* articulates a code of professional ethics for all faculty.

### **ADAMS STATE COLLEGE ESTABLISHES CLEAR AND FAIR POLICIES FOR GOVERNANCE AND PERSONNEL**

In addition to externally mandated regulations, ASC has internal policies designed to guide and protect its students and employees. These include policy documents such as the *Trustees' Policy Manual*, the *Student Handbook*, the *Faculty Handbook*, the *Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA) Employee Handbook*, and the *Handbook for Professional Personnel*. The *Trustees' Policy Manual*, *ASC Faculty Handbook*, and the *Handbook for Professional Personnel* were recently revised; all have been approved and adopted, with the exception of the *Handbook for Professional Personnel*, which is still under review. The process entails review by the Colorado Attorney General's Office.

The *Trustees' Policy Manual* elaborates the Board's statutory "authority and responsibility for the control and governance of Adams State College . . . including such areas as finance, resources, academic programs, admissions, role and mission, personnel policies, etc." The *Manual* delegates to the ASC President "the authority to interpret and administer their [trustee] polices in all areas of operations." The *Manual* also provides guidance and direction in the areas of personnel/welfare, business/finance, physical plant, academic affairs, student affairs, and the College President. Internal policies and guidelines are also discussed at regular reviews and meetings held by senior administrators and department heads.

ASC provides training in key policy areas. For example, the Affirmative Action Officer (AAO) presents ASC's policies on discrimination (including sexual harassment) for all new administrators and faculty. Additionally, under the direction of the Registrar, all staff (classified, faculty, and administration) are trained in small groups on the application of FERPA.

Classified personnel are regulated by the Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration. Classified staff are hired, transferred, promoted, and disciplined in accordance with state personnel regulations. As required in policy, HR maintains the required documentation for such actions as discipline, evaluation, paid and unpaid leave, and benefits. HR reviews and updates records to show compliance to law or policy.

Hiring of all faculty and exempt administrative staff, as outlined in the *Faculty Handbook* and *Handbook for Professional Personnel*, follows legal and non-discriminatory procedures, and the AAO conducts informational meetings for all search committees. The AAO then follows the search process until hiring takes place to monitor and support all actions. The Faculty Senate and Professional Administrative Staff Council can recommend changes to their respective handbooks, as necessary.

Outlines for updated versions of the *ASC Affirmative Action Plan* and *Diversity Plan* reflect the campus commitment to support opportunities for minorities and protected class individuals.

## RESPONDS TO COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The *Student Handbook*, the *ASC Faculty Handbook*, the *Handbook for Professional Personnel*, and the *DPA Employee Handbook* provide step-by-step procedures for addressing all grievances, whether from students, faculty, or staff. These procedures are approved by the Colorado Attorney General's Office. In all cases, the handbooks encourage an informal grievance resolution. If the formal process is necessary, the appropriate administrator oversees the process to guarantee impartial committees and fair hearings, using timelines defined by the handbooks and in accordance with applicable federal and state law.





## *Criterion I: Mission and Integrity*

A campus magistrate acts as a neutral third party to resolve some complaints not submitted in the formal grievance process as provided for in the *Student Handbook*.

For all grievances, a written record of the process is maintained, and in certain cases the meetings are tape recorded for integrity and accuracy. The administrator reviews the documentation for completeness and impartiality and maintains the written records after completion of the process.

### **FOSTERS INTEGRITY THROUGH CLEARLY DEFINED STRUCTURES, PROCESSES, AND ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT THE INSTITUTIONAL MISSION**

The ASC Board of Trustees has established an organizational structure that gives the necessary day-to-day operating authority and responsibility to the President. In turn, the President empowers his senior staff to manage their areas of responsibility. (See the ASC Organizational Chart at [www2.adams.edu/pubs/](http://www2.adams.edu/pubs/)) The ASC organizational structure has clearly defined lines of management authority and communication and includes both line and staff positions. Vice presidents and senior directors establish and oversee the institutional processes needed to carry out the *Mission*.



Processes are modified as needed to better meet *Mission* objectives. A good example is ASC's recent adoption of a Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) process. ZBB recognizes that budgets are really statements of institutional values and will be instrumental in linking the allocation of fiscal resources to the campus *Mission, Institutional Goals, and Strategic Plan*. This new fiscal process will permit the institution to establish programmatic priorities, direct available resources, and measure program performance against measurable goals. Use of ZBB will also improve general fiscal accountability by establishing defined budgetary cost centers. As part of the ZBB process, a Budget Committee with campus-wide representation has been created to address the difficult programmatic, prioritization, and budgeting issues.

Adams State College's structures and processes also allow it to properly oversee its co-curricular and auxiliary activities. All auxiliary campus activities are incorporated into the organizational structure to ensure proper management oversight. Most auxiliary activities fall under the purview of the Dean of Student Affairs, the Office of Academic Affairs and, in the case of clubs, faculty advisors. Bylaws of the Associated Students and Faculty (AS&F, student government) regulate the funding of clubs.

The Director of Athletics is charged with guaranteeing that the College follow all applicable regulations governing student athletes as required by the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference (RMAC) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Careful attention is paid to students on athletic scholarships, assuring that they are informed of all regulations and policies. An independent Compliance Officer also reviews current practices and standards. The Athletic Department has fulfilled the criterion of expansion for Title IX's three-prong test of compliance, which requires a program to demonstrate proportionality, continued expansion, or satisfaction of student-body needs.

## DEALS FAIRLY AND HONESTLY WITH ITS CONSTITUENTS

ASC utilizes its management structure to see that the appropriate personnel deal with external constituencies such as the CCHE, vendors and suppliers, alumni, local residents and schools, other colleges, the City of Alamosa, and the media.

The ASC website, [www2.adams.edu](http://www2.adams.edu), provides information on all facets of the College. Resources have been and continue to be directed to making the website the repository for College information, policies, and procedures. Job openings and purchasing procedures are posted online to make them accessible to prospective employees and suppliers. The ASC Development Office and ASC Foundation work closely with the Communications Office to ensure that consistent and regular information is shared with their constituents.

The Communications Office is the focal point for ASC's external communications. This office works to assure that public statements, publications, and documents are accurate and aligned with ASC's *Mission, Vision, and Goals*. The Communications Director has the responsibility to disseminate information that is accurate, timely, relevant, and comprehensive. A process of channeling community inquiries to the Director, as the official college spokesperson, helps to ensure a consistent college message and voice.

When changes on campus directly affect the city, city streets, or zoning, the Board of Trustees, President, and Communications Director work closely with the Alamosa City Council and local business community to coordinate and communicate such changes. An example of cooperation was the successful installation of a pedestrian crossing light on First Street during 2005. This crossing, which bisects the campus, had long presented a pedestrian hazard and impeded smooth vehicle traffic flow.

## Summary

Adams State College recognizes that Criterion I is the basis for all other accreditation criteria. ASC has strived to develop mission documents that accurately capture the College's true character and priorities. Its *Mission, Vision, and Goal* statements clearly articulate the organization's commitment to excellence in meeting its academic, community partnership, and regional responsibilities. Each of these documents also addresses the importance of supporting and honoring a diverse learning community. The ASC community continually works to shape and refine its vision and to translate that evolving understanding into clear and practical mission documents.

The institution has established structures and processes that clearly delineate management roles and responsibilities and that encourage cross-campus collaboration. Finally, a commitment to ethical conduct, honesty, and integrity form the bedrock for ASC's relationship with its large and diverse constituency. This is not to say that challenges and opportunities do not abound. As with all Colorado higher education institutions, the state budget shortfalls have challenged ASC to do more with less, resulting in real impacts to existing personnel, programs, and infrastructure. ASC's Criterion I strengths, challenges and opportunities, which follow, address this and other issues.

## *Criterion I: Mission and Integrity*

### **Strength:**

ASC's *Vision, Mission, and Institutional Goals* are clearly articulated. ASC's mission documents reflect an inclusive and ongoing process of development and revision. There is a renewed commitment to ensure that all campus constituencies are aware of and embrace the spirit and intent of the mission documents.

### **Strength:**

ASC's *Strategic Plan* is directly linked to the *Institutional Goals*, ensuring that all actions taken to implement the *Strategic Plan* move the institution closer to achieving its goals.

### **Strength:**

ASC's subsidiary plans, such as the *Academic Master Plan* and *Information Technology Plan*, are directly linked to the *Strategic Plan*, which is linked to the *Mission, Vision, and Institutional Goals*. This ensures that scarce resources are not spent at cross-purposes, but rather, are used consistently to address stated campus priorities.

### **Strength:**

With nearly a third of its students and staff designated as ethnic minorities, ASC has a highly diverse student and staff population. ASC does not simply espouse the virtues of diversity; it lives them day-in and day-out. As a Hispanic Serving Institution, ASC is committed to providing an environment that supports the needs of a diverse constituency.

### **Strength:**

ASC's trustees have approved the mission documents and are dedicated to moving the institution forward to meet the *Institutional Goals*.

### **Strength:**

Through implementing the Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) process, the College will assure constituents that the available resources are being used to further the institution's *Mission*.

### **Strength:**

ASC operates with the highest integrity in all areas of the campus. A climate of zero-tolerance for unethical behavior contributes to a campus culture of integrity.

### **Challenge:**

Internal campus communication of significant events remains a major area for improvement. In a survey of faculty and staff, 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they felt the degree of effective communication throughout all levels of the campus was very low or low. Successful campus collaboration requires consistent and accurate communication. Use of ASC's web-based portal for general announcements and an attribute-based email system for targeted announcements has improved the communication flow, but has not completely resolved this important issue. A new email employee newsletter was also recently begun, and the president regularly updates the campus via email.

### **Challenge:**

ASC must improve and expand its communication channels with the community. Though improvements have been made through the ASC-sponsored Talk Straight

with Adams State community forums, consistent campus-community dialogue remains problematic.

**Challenge:**

In order to keep the mission documents relevant and meaningful, all ASC stakeholders must continue to participate in their review. Improving efforts to involve off-campus students and community members presents a particular challenge.

**Challenge:**

The percentage of ASC's faculty designated as ethnic minorities does not mirror that of the student population. Even though ASC recruits from a national pool and follows stringent affirmative action guidelines in recruiting and hiring, it must work harder to recruit and increase the percentage of minority faculty members.

**Challenge:**

The ZBB process will evolve and improve over time. Establishing the ZBB database, however, will be time and labor intensive. Changing the institution's accounting and budgeting processes requires strong leadership commitment and administrative support. In a survey of staff and faculty, only 25 percent of the respondents felt that ASC's budget priorities flowed from its *Mission* and *Institutional Goals*. This low percentage emphasizes the need for campus-wide ZBB training and more effective communication.

**Opportunity:**

ASC is in the process of developing a meaningful diversity plan.

**Opportunity:**

Because the field house, Plachy Hall, was built in 1965, prior to the adoption of Title IX in 1975, changes are needed to the women's locker room facilities. A freeze on state capital project funding over the last five years has delayed the renovations needed for compliance. In May 2006, the state legislature appropriated \$5 million for the first phase of the project. Phase II funding will be requested in 2007.

**Opportunity:**

The 2005 termination of President Wueste afforded the opportunity to continue refining the organizational structure. Though unsettling, this dramatic event opened the door to self-evaluation and positive changes in structure and processes. With President Svaldi in office, the campus is seeking permanent leadership for Academic Affairs and exploring other administrative restructuring.

**Opportunity:**

The ZBB process provides a genuine opportunity to evaluate the institution's *Goals* and how they are being met across campus. This will allow the first comprehensive, cross-campus look at assessment and evaluation of *Institutional Goals*.

# *Preparing for the Future*

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## Criterion II



**ADAMS STATE COLLEGE**

**C O L O R A D O** SM

*Great Stories Begin Here*

## CRITERION II: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

### Criterion Overview

In today's challenging fiscal climate for higher education, the Adams State College Board of Trustees and administration have recognized the need to ensure that all of the institution's resources are aligned with its *Mission* and *Vision*. Financial, human, and physical resources are under increasing strain due to reduced state support of higher education and limits on tuition increases. Nevertheless, ASC continues efforts to fulfill its mission to serve the underserved.

Adams State College continues to experience significant challenges caused by factors such as changing demographics, faculty and staff turnover, budget cuts, state and federal regulations, changing technology, globalization, and public perceptions of higher education. As a small institution, Adams State College has the mechanisms and flexibility to respond rapidly to these challenges, to take advantage of new opportunities, and to use the institution's resources effectively.

In executing its statutory mission and using its resources effectively, ASC specifically addresses

- Access and opportunity
- Service as a Regional Education Provider
- Outreach and economic development
- Enrollment management
- Assessment
- Budget Crosswalk

Service to rural Colorado requires a realistic understanding of the societal and economic trends that affect the citizens of these areas. Adams State College continually monitors both the internal and external environments to determine the needs of its constituents. Through community meetings, participation in state and national committees, collaborative relationships with other institutions of higher education, participation in discipline-based organizations, and internal research efforts, ASC applies current academic, technological, structural, and service strategies to prepare for the future.

## Criterion II: Preparing for the Future

### Core Component 2a:

### The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

Adams State College continually monitors societal changes and economic trends that may have an impact on students. These trends are carefully considered and play a significant role in decisions affecting the types of programs offered, their costs, and how they are delivered. ASC is meeting the core component as evidenced by the following examples.

#### **ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY**

ASC's student recruitment strategies are driven by economic, demographic, and societal trends reflected in Colorado's rural communities, particularly in the San Luis Valley (SLV). The 2000 U.S. Census reported a median household income of \$28,138 for the SLV, compared to a Colorado median household income of \$47,203. Recognizing the limited resources of our local population, ASC maintains one of the lowest tuition rates in Colorado. More than 80 percent of ASC students receive financial aid. The average family income of ASC students who applied for financial aid in 2005 was \$19,600. The affordable tuition and availability of financial aid provide both opportunity and access for students who might not otherwise have the means to attend college. Adams State College is a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). According to the 2000 Census, 46.5 percent of the SLV population is Hispanic. Twenty-nine percent of ASC's undergraduate students and 17 percent of its graduate population are Hispanic.

Access was also a factor in developing ASC's distance degree programs. Associate's and Bachelor's distance degrees are available to working students or to those whose location prohibits learning on campus. For example, ASC offers a B.A. in Sociology with emphases in Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice-Corrections through correspondence. These distance programs address the needs of rural communities for law enforcement and corrections officers and give place-bound students access to this necessary training.

The use of technology is critical in the education of today's college students. Technology also connects ASC to student populations around the state. The *ASC Institutional Technology Plan* drives the planning, procurement, and management of the College's technology resources. The WebCT course management system complements many of ASC's undergraduate and graduate programs and allows delivery of hybrid and online courses and programs.

#### **REGIONAL EDUCATION PROVIDER**

Adams State College is one of four Colorado institutions of higher education designated as Regional Education Providers (REP). As a Colorado REP, Adams State College serves 14 counties in southeastern Colorado. (For a map of ASC's region, see Criterion V, p 90.) The goal of a Regional Education Provider is to determine and address regional educational needs. Needs can be met through such strategies as the extension of existing programs, the creation of new undergraduate programs, partnerships with other educational institutions, delivery of graduate programs, and promotion of cultural

opportunities. Assessment of these needs is determined through the work of a community-based REP advisory board, surveys, and requests from individual community groups. For example, a needs assessment resulted in the development of the RN-BSN completion degree program. An Agribusiness program is also being developed in response to local interest. Additionally, ASC has sponsored a series of water symposia to bring community members together to discuss the critical issues associated with water access and use in the San Luis Valley.

ASC is known for being responsive and flexible in addressing the educational requests of Colorado's teachers and administrators. The Teacher Education Department, Counselor Education Department, and Extended Studies all address the professional development, undergraduate, and graduate needs of rural Colorado educators. These courses and programs are customized to meet the specific needs of each school district and are a good example of ASC's planning capacity.

In response to requests from K-12 educators, ASC's Graduate Teacher Education program provides community-based graduate programs in curriculum and instruction; educational leadership; literacy, language, and culture; and special education. Most of the communities served through this program are rural (e.g., Durango, La Junta, Trinidad, Cortez, and SLV communities) and have limited access to higher education resources.



In addition, to meet the need for counselors throughout the nation, the department of Counselor Education offers a graduate program with tracks in community counseling and school counseling through a hybrid delivery model. Students take their coursework online, participate in a one-week summer residency, and complete internships within their own communities. ASC Extended Studies also delivers professional development courses in conjunction with school districts throughout Colorado, as well as the distance degrees mentioned earlier.

As the demand for teachers in rural Colorado has grown, ASC has assumed an even greater role in providing access to teacher education programs. In 2000, at the request of the presidents of three southeast Colorado regional community colleges, ASC was approved by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) to deliver a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies with Elementary Education Licensure/Literacy Emphasis. This program is delivered at several rural sites in Colorado through the Rural Education Access Program (REAP). It provides teacher preparation to individuals who have an investment in and commitment to their rural communities. More than 116 students have graduated from these programs since spring 2002. The program was expanded to an additional site at the request of Douglas County in 2002, and to a northeastern Colorado site in the fall of 2006.



## *Criterion II: Preparing for the Future*

### **OUTREACH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Adams State College is keenly aware of its economic and cultural position as a member of the San Luis Valley community. The College contributes to the economic growth of the community through outreach efforts and development of new programs, such as the Agribusiness emphasis in Business Administration. Student projects, such as the study conducted by business students to establish markets for value-added potato products, play a role in expanding the opportunities for business in the San Luis Valley.

Two to three times a year, Adams State College hosts a community forum, Talk Straight with Adams State. These events elicit input on collaborative opportunities between ASC and the surrounding community. Recent topics have included What ASC Can Do for the Community, Health Care in the SLV, and The Arts in the Community. The first community forum held outside of Alamosa was Connecting with Conejos County, hosted by the SLV town of Antonito.

As part of outreach, the administration and faculty of Adams State College have been active in securing grant funding that supports the College's mission. Over the past seven years, ASC has been awarded grants in excess of \$24 million. The majority of these grants have been in the area of Teacher Education and have directly improved K-12 collaboration and partnership. Approximately \$3.4 million in grants have been linked to enhancing access and opportunities for Hispanic students. The ASC pre-collegiate programs (Talent Search and Upward Bound) were funded by approximately \$4.5 million in federal TRIO grants. These programs bring local middle school and high school students to campus to learn about and prepare for their postsecondary options. More examples of the range of service ASC offers the community are presented in Criterion V.

### **ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT**

Adams State College is committed to strategic enrollment management. The Office of Enrollment Management brings together the areas of Financial Aid, Admissions, Student Business Services, Records, and Communications to recruit and support students. The Enrollment Management leadership team assesses the policies and procedures that affect all areas of recruitment and retention. Enrollment management leaders build their processes around the academic strengths of the institution, anticipate changes that are likely to affect the institution, and articulate the need for change to the campus community. Enrollment management goals are influenced by the statutory role and mission of ASC to provide access to rural Colorado by maintaining moderately selective admission standards.

Several changes have been made to address organizational inefficiencies and changing student expectations. One significant addition is the One Stop Student Services Center, located in the ASC Student Union Building. It offers a variety of services and information at one convenient location and serves as the front-line student center for the offices of Records, Student Business Services, Admissions, and Financial Aid. Previously, students were required to visit four separate offices in the administration building. One Stop counselors are available to answer questions, review forms and



applications for completeness, and address general concerns about the business aspect of being a student. The virtual One Stop, on the web at [www2.adams.edu/onestop](http://www2.adams.edu/onestop), allows students to conduct their business online. The most recent improvements include development of a Welcome Center for Admissions in the Student Union Building (adjacent to the One Stop) and an Enrollment Management Processing Center in Richardson Hall.

In order to improve organizational effectiveness, it is important to align and integrate all areas of Enrollment Management, focusing on greater accountability. The newly formed Enrollment Management Assessment Committee will coordinate recruitment outreach, retention planning, and assessment of the *Enrollment Management Plan*. Activities include developing specific targets each year for applications, admitted students, and enrolled students. The committee will oversee the implementation, assessment, and further development of recruitment and retention strategies for the campus. These strategies will identify target markets and prioritize marketing activities. The committee is currently developing a process for the regular reporting of *Enrollment Management Plan* outcomes, recruitment, admissions, and enrollment progress. The report will track progress toward established targets compared to previous years and will record enrollment in relationship to demographic characteristics of applicants.

## Criterion II: Preparing for the Future

### Core Component 2b:

The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

ASC has faced economic challenges throughout its history due to its small size, rural location, and limited state support. Despite these challenges, it has found a variety of ways to maintain a stable resource base and has thrived and grown in several areas. Some examples demonstrating that ASC meets this core component include the following:

#### **ALTERNATIVE REVENUE SOURCES**

ASC creatively uses funding from a variety of sources. The ASC Foundation is a 501c3 organization established to solicit and accept charitable gifts on behalf of the college. A strong and supportive organization, it provides numerous scholarships and funds for special projects, equipment, and personnel. Extended Studies has grown dramatically and provides a significant revenue stream for the college. Grants such as the Title V Cooperative Grant also provide funding to supplement the General Fund.

#### **BUDGET AND CROSSWALK PROCESS**

ASC adopted the Governor's Office of Planning and Budgeting Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) process in the fall of 2003. Implementation was interrupted for a year and a half due to a change in leadership, then resumed in the summer of 2005. ZBB should be fully implemented for fiscal year 2008.

The aim of the first phase in this budgeting process was to make the institution's allocation of resources more transparent by "rightsizing" the budget into programmatic cost centers.

The second phase links the budget to the *Strategic Plan* by tying budget change requests to programmatic goals and outcomes. During the initial stages of budget planning, it became apparent that the budget process could be expanded by linking program unit outcomes and assessment to budget requests, as described in Core Component 1c. The Crosswalk program links all budget requests, continuing and new, to ASC's *Mission* by way of *Institutional Goals* and program goals and outcomes. The Crosswalk program requires each program unit or cost center to develop a strategic plan and align its goals with the *Institutional Goals*. Each program unit or cost center then develops and aligns specific outcomes, assessment measures, and benchmarks to these goals.

The intent of this budget process and of the Crosswalk program is to align all levels of institutional planning with ASC's *Mission* and *Goals*, ensuring that resources are used to enhance the mission of the College and allowing the institution to respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Quarterly budget reviews serve as the catalyst for a collaborative, open, and forward-thinking budgeting process. Extensive quarterly budget reviews ensure campus-wide communication, understanding, and accountability. The budget planning, development, and implementation process is illustrated in Figure 1.1 (p. 26) and Table 2.1.

**TABLE 2.1 - CALENDAR FOR BUDGET PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

MONTH	TASK	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
JUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the budget for the new fiscal year</li> <li>• Book adjustments approved during the budget process</li> <li>• Audit the budget for the new fiscal year and make corrections</li> <li>• Set up standard journal entries for the new fiscal year</li> <li>• Review departmental goals, objectives, and budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year</li> </ul>	Business Office Dept. Heads Budget Committee Cabinet Budget Director
AUG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue initial classified staff salary survey for new fiscal year</li> </ul>	State Dept. of Personnel
OCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete 1st Quarter current fiscal year budget vs. actual variance analysis and projections</li> <li>• Review and prioritize departmental budget change requests for upcoming fiscal year</li> </ul>	Dept. Heads Budget Committee Cabinet
NOV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor and CCHE submit statewide budget request to Joint Budget Committee (JBC) for the upcoming fiscal year</li> <li>• Capital Development Committee (CDC) holds hearings on capital projects. (Sometimes these have a cash-funded component.)</li> </ul>	
DEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare the first draft of upcoming fiscal year budget, incorporating Governor’s request, revenue projections, and departmental budget change requests approved by the President</li> </ul>	Budget Director
JAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete 2nd Quarter budget vs. actual variance analysis and projections via Budget Summit with Budget Committee, Cabinet, and Campus Community</li> </ul>	Dept. Heads Budget Committee Cabinet
FEB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit rewrite of current year budget to Board of Trustees as an action item</li> </ul>	Budget Director
MAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JBC revenue figure setting</li> </ul>	President VP of Finance
APR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete 3rd Quarter budget vs. actual variance analysis</li> <li>• Submit draft budget for upcoming fiscal year to Board of Trustees as information item</li> <li>• Long Bill introduction and debate</li> <li>• Capital projects introduced in bill form</li> <li>• Department heads prepare goals, objectives, and budget change requests for out fiscal year that begins 15 months hence.</li> </ul>	Dept. Heads Budget Committee Cabinet Budget Director VP Finance Colorado General Assembly
MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriations Bill (Long Bill) becomes law</li> </ul>	Colorado General Assembly Governor
JUN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit budget for upcoming year for final Board approval</li> <li>• Issue current fiscal year-end closing instructions</li> </ul>	Budget Director Controller

## Criterion II: Preparing for the Future

### Core Component 2c:

The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

One of ASC's strengths has always been its willingness to respond and adapt to the needs and requests of its constituents. ASC has functioned as a regional education provider since its inception, long before the CCHE made this an official designation. Changes to program and degree offerings are made on an ongoing basis in response to market demands, societal changes, and advances in technology. These needs are communicated in a variety of ways, both formal and informal, and ASC has been very creative in finding ways to meet them. ASC also strives to meet the non-academic needs of its students. Improvements to the campus infrastructure, recreational programming, and customer service have been made in recent years in response to student feedback.



Assessment for the purpose of guiding curricular and institutional direction is paramount to the success of every institution. Each college unit is expected to use appropriate assessment data to evaluate its student learning and/or operational outcomes. A wide variety of assessment tools (e.g., departmental assessment of student learning outcomes, REP Advisory Board, *Institutional Technology Plan*) guide ASC in improving every aspect of its operation. Analysis of assessment data is then used to inform allocation of resources as described in the Budget Crosswalk.

Some examples of how ASC gathers input from constituents and responds to those needs include the following:

Adams State College will continue to survey students and external constituents to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and to plan for the future needs of our students, College, and community. Information is gathered from student assessment instruments, such as the Academic Profile (AP) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE); local community forums; alumni and employer surveys; Counseling and Career Center surveys; regional and national employment trends; and personal professional contacts with K-12 and college administrators, government administrators, and business owners. By engaging a broad, diverse group in assessment, ASC continues to offer high quality programs that meet current and future needs of our constituents.

Many campus-wide units have developed and implemented sound evaluative programs. To evaluate student performance on general education and undergraduate engagement in both academic and non-academic areas, students who have achieved sophomore status participate in the nationally normed AP and NSSE. In 2007, the AP will be replaced by the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP).

As many institutions have discovered, it is not always a simple matter to get students to participate in these assessments. Historically, the participation rate on the NSSE was quite low. In fall 2005, administration of the NSSE was evaluated to improve the participation rate. The institution subsequently implemented a local, mass administration of the survey to specific freshman and senior classes. This targeted effort increased ASC's sample size from 180 in 2005 to 560 in 2006. We are now developing methods to educate faculty about what NSSE assesses and how NSSE results can be used to guide practices to improve student engagement.

Adams State College has a multitude of assessments to ensure quality of courses, curricula, faculty, and programs. The assessment data is gathered from students, faculty, staff, employers, alumni, and the community. This data has been used to develop strategies to continuously improve courses, programs, and teaching. Evaluations by students and department chairs provide instructors with suggestions to improve student learning in particular courses. The changes faculty members have made as a result include making materials available on their web pages, increasing the number of hands-on activities, having more assessments per semester, using more active learning strategies, holding review sessions, and improving the use of instructional technology.

Other examples of how ASC meets this core component include less formal feedback. The Chemistry program collected and evaluated data using an employer/employee survey. The data showed that Chemistry alumni thought the program was very strong overall, but weak in written and oral communication. To address this, the Chemistry program increased the credit hours of their capstone course and implemented a writing program using a student learning strategy, Calibrated Peer Review, throughout the Chemistry curriculum.

Meeting with local community members and constituents also has had a direct impact on our academic programs. The San Luis Valley Nurses' Forum, a group of local health care professionals, became strong advocates for a BSN completion program at ASC. The Nurses' Forum worked with ASC for several years to assess the need for a BSN program in the local community and concluded that there was a strong need. After ASC's administrative restructuring, the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs continued working with the Nurses' Forum and the College's chief financial officer to develop the RN-BSN completion program. Development of a traditional BSN program is under consideration, as well.

Other academic programs developed in a similar fashion include distance degree programs in Business, Sociology, and Teacher Education; the Evening and Weekend College; the bachelor's degree in Sports Psychology; and the emphasis in Agribusiness.

ASC Extended Studies has a program review process that includes a course/instructor approval and involves curriculum specialists, department chairs, the Assistant Provost

## Criterion II: Preparing for the Future

for Extended Campus, and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs. Previously approved courses and instructors are reevaluated on a three-year cycle. Extended Studies also works with department chairs to incorporate assessment measures of student learning outcomes into the distance degree curriculum. The academic and operational review processes ensure that CCHE and ASC academic criteria are addressed, and that enrollment and revenue goals are met for each program. Generally, a course or program will be discontinued if it is not meeting enrollment and/or revenue goals, but a program deemed vital to ASC's role and mission will continue to be offered, even if it does not meet these criteria.

In order to ensure institutional effectiveness, non-academic areas also have evaluation and assessment components. Housing, Student Life, and the Student Union Building personnel do annual, semi-annual, and daily evaluations to determine the effectiveness of operations and to identify areas for improvement. Examples include an annual quality-of-life survey, continuous student program evaluations, a room-use survey, semi-annual student interest/needs surveys, personal and career counseling online surveys, and customer satisfaction evaluations. Input from our external and internal constituencies has resulted in a number of changes. Evaluation and assessment are the catalysts for change and continual improvement.

### *Core Component 2d:*

**All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.**

Historically, ASC has used a strategic planning process that supports the statutory mission of the College. Mission statements, which were largely excerpts from that statutory mission, were developed during that planning process but did not truly drive the process. Prior to 2005, there had been little effort to specifically align other levels of planning with the *Mission* or current *Strategic Plan*.

In early 2005, the Cabinet and HLC Steering Committee identified the upcoming reaccreditation process as an ideal opportunity to revise the *ASC Mission Statement* and *Institutional Goals* and align all levels of planning with the *Mission*. A change in leadership later that year helped to strengthen the institution's resolve to align and improve planning across the campus.

Evidence that ASC meets this core component is exemplified by the following recent events. A new *Mission Statement* and *Institutional Goals* were adopted during the summer of 2005, and each academic department was asked to develop departmental goals to specifically support one or more of these *Institutional Goals*. Once these goals were established, each department implemented assessment measures to link student learning outcomes to these departmental goals. A hierarchical numbering system was developed to aid in tracking assessment results to department goals and ultimately to specific *Institutional Goals*. This process is discussed in detail in Criterion III, and specific examples are given there.

Non-academic areas were also asked to develop strategic plans and departmental goals that align with the *Mission*. While not tied directly to student learning outcomes, each area was required to identify measurable outcomes and assessment measures for those outcomes. Analysis of these assessment outcomes, along with the analyses from the academic departments, provides the foundation for the Budget Crosswalk program described above in Core Component 2b. The result of this program is that budgetary decisions are linked to student learning outcomes or operational outcomes that specifically support the *Mission*.

Planning at all levels is now aligned with ASC's *Mission* and *Institutional Goals*. This includes planning at the individual department level and in broader organizational units, as well. The *Academic Master Plan*, *Extended Studies Strategic Plan*, *Facilities Master Plan*, and *Institutional Technology Plan* are all directly aligned with the *Mission*.

## Summary

Assessment of both academic and operational programs, combined with Zero-Based Budgeting and the Crosswalk process, supports comprehensive planning and shared decision-making. It provides a clear, concise mechanism for allocating resources based on the evaluation and assessment of program outcomes in relationship to the College's *Mission*. Annual assessment and evaluation of programmatic outcomes drive budget prioritizations. All levels of planning are aligned with the organization's *Mission*. Fiscal and directional decisions are evaluated against fulfillment of the *Mission*.

### **Strength:**

ASC has appropriate planning and budgeting processes in place to assure stability. Institutional focus on the Crosswalk process assures constituents that the available resources are used to further the institution's mission.

### **Challenge:**

Fluctuations in the state capital construction budget have required the institution to allocate already limited resources toward deferred maintenance. Even though ASC has received enterprise status, limited funding will remain an issue as ASC stays true to its mission to serve the underserved and keep tuition costs as low as possible.

### **Challenge:**

Instructional and infrastructure technology are significant concerns. Both are necessary for our mission, entail significant expenditures on a yearly basis, and have not been adequately addressed in the past in either the state or institutional budget.

### **Challenge:**

ASC has taken significant action to remedy salary compression and inversion, in an effort to maintain top-notch, dedicated faculty. Whether such efforts will continue in the future depends largely on state funding.

### **Challenge:**

Establishing the searchable Crosswalk database will be time and labor intensive. With strong administrative leadership and support, this can be accomplished over the next few years.



## *Criterion II: Preparing for the Future*

### **Opportunity:**

The Crosswalk program is a process for evaluating how the institution's *Goals* are being met across campus. This process links assessment and budgeting.

### **Opportunity:**

While many academic and non-academic areas had previously collected data, there had not been an institutional mechanism to utilize that data for program change and improvement. With the new Crosswalk program and assessment of student learning outcomes in all academic departments, now is an opportune time to integrate assessment into the campus culture. With strong administrative support, these efforts should be maintained and expanded.

# *Student Learning and Effective Teaching*

## Criterion III



**ADAMS STATE COLLEGE**

**C O L O R A D O** SM

*Great Stories Begin Here*

## CRITERION III:

# STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

### Criterion Overview

Adams State College's *Institutional Goals* identify academic excellence and a student-centered environment as core values. To fulfill this essential mission, ASC engages in a thorough assessment of student learning and teaching effectiveness. This practice is long-standing. In 1997, assessment of academic quality was identified as a goal for the next ten years. This charge has been addressed through institution-wide efforts that include academic program reviews; opportunities for innovative, outcomes-based teaching; and institutional changes intended to cultivate an environment of academic excellence.

Due to the renewed emphasis on academic excellence, the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC), the Graduate Council, and the General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) were reconfigured and charged with the periodic review of both undergraduate and graduate programs, course changes, and degree plan changes. These committees are comprised of faculty from across campus and related staff (e.g., Library, Extended Studies, Advising). Their primary focus is to assure that curricular development and changes are aligned with institutional and individual department goals and procedures. At the departmental level, assessment of student learning has been conducted over many years, in a variety of ways. Both formative and summative data are collected by individual departments through Major Field Tests, cumulative portfolios, exit surveys, and capstone courses. A matrix summarizing departmental assessment mechanisms is available in the Document Room.

In addition to departmental evaluations, General Education outcomes are assessed using the following instruments:

- The Academic Profile (AP) measures college-level reading, writing, and critical thinking in the context of material from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. It also measures knowledge of basic math.
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) measures student engagement. ASC has administered this survey since 1999.
- The Noel-Levitz Survey of Student Satisfaction measures student satisfaction with various aspects of the college experience.

### Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching



Adams State College has expanded its formal processes to foster greater integrity and consistency in assessment, especially to promote effective student learning. With direction from the Office of the Provost, the Academic Council reestablished the Assessment Committee and expanded its responsibilities. The committee was charged with recommending College policy and procedures that establish a consistent, institution-wide assessment process. It developed the *Plan for Assessment of Student Learning: An Academic Assessment Plan*. This plan provides a local definition of learning assessment, purpose and rationale for doing assessment, a set of principles, and a description of what is to be assessed and how the assessment activities will be coordinated and managed. *The Assessment Plan* institutionalizes the practices developed through this HLC *Self-Study* process. The Academic Council and the academic department chairs are responsible for conducting annual program assessment and longer

cyclical reviews, especially the five-year program review, basing curricular change on the assessment results. A common annual review will ensure consistency in academic practices. The Academic Council also assumes responsibility for reviewing the *Assessment Plan* and making recommendations for changes in assessment policies based on previous results.

Three additional campus committees are also involved in the *Assessment Plan*. The GECC is charged with overseeing the evaluation of student performance relative to the goals for General Education. These goals are typically broader than program goals, and successful performance is expected of all students. The CRC and Graduate Council are responsible for evaluating new courses and proposed changes to undergraduate and graduate programs, respectively. In addition, they evaluate the required five-year program reviews, in which programs assess how well they have met their goals and propose actions to improve weaknesses. The Provost and the Office of Academic Affairs review these annual assessment reports and oversee the entire *Assessment Plan*. In its entirety, the assessment plan ensures assessment is both regular and frequent, and that results are used to inform student-centered teaching and learning.

### Core Component 3a:

The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

As part of a campus-wide reexamination of the institution's *Mission, Institutional Goals*, and procedures, a review of all curricula was initiated in February 2005. Using a standardized approach, the academic programs worked to align their student learning goals and outcomes with the *Mission* and *Goals*. Next, the specific student learning outcomes in all institutional syllabi were aligned with department goals and outcomes. Individual faculty members are expected to align their actual course syllabi with these same goals and outcomes. This review was designed to stimulate collegial dialogue and highlight student learning outcomes, both at the institution level and within each academic unit.

The second stage of this examination was the expansion of the academic assessment process at ASC. Each department was asked to highlight one student learning outcome of specific interest to their faculty and one student learning outcome related to the General Education emphasis on writing. The second outcome was chosen to allow for a campus-wide assessment of student writing at ASC. Each department was asked to create rubrics and benchmarks against which to compare their findings. In addition to the assessment data historically collected by each department, data on the above mentioned outcomes was collected in the 2005-06 school year. This data is being used to address possible changes to curriculum and to fine tune the assessment process. The Document Room contains ample evidence of this level of academic assessment at ASC.

### Core Component 3b:

The organization values and supports effective teaching.

#### **FACULTY HANDBOOK**

Consistent with its ongoing commitment to furthering its student-centered environment, ASC especially values effective teaching and learning. Indeed, evidence of teaching effectiveness is the key component in hiring, retaining, and promoting faculty, as well as in awarding tenure. The *ASC Faculty Handbook* clearly identifies teaching effectiveness as the number one priority for faculty in their annual evaluations. It mandates that all faculty members, tenured and probationary, are to be evaluated each year in the areas of teaching effectiveness, scholarly activity, and service. Each faculty member must produce an annual evaluation folder that includes documentation such as course syllabi, student ratings, and summaries of classroom observations. Additional documentation, such as samples of student work, assignments, and exams, may also be included. This process was recently reviewed and minor changes made during a revision of the *Faculty Handbook*. Survey data indicates that departments use a variety of evidence when evaluating teaching effectiveness of tenured and probationary faculty.

## Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

**TABLE 3.1 -  
AWARENESS OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

*Was it explained during the hiring process that you would be evaluated on teaching effectiveness?*

FACULTY MEMBERS		DEPARTMENT CHAIRS	
Yes	No	Yes	No
83%	17%	75%	25%

*Was it explained during the hiring process that you would be evaluated on how well your students met the learning outcomes for your class/program?*

FACULTY MEMBERS		DEPARTMENT CHAIRS	
Yes	No	Yes	No
30%	70%	12%	88%

Most faculty members at ASC are evaluated as "Meritorious," meaning they exceed the College's expectations in all evaluation areas. Faculty members who demonstrate highly effective teaching may be awarded "Exemplary" status in recognition of their commitment to teaching and learning. Faculty members whose evaluations give evidence of poor performance may be designated "Needs Improvement." Failure to make significant efforts toward improving a "Needs Improvement" or marginally "Satisfactory" evaluation in teaching effectiveness provides grounds for non-retention of probationary faculty, denial of promotion and/or tenure, or post-tenure review of tenured faculty. In addition to these mandated measures of teaching effectiveness, many departments make use of supplemental evidence to evaluate effective teaching. For example, three departments regularly use classroom observations by peers to evaluate teaching. Four departments use the Assessment of Learner Centered Practices (ALCP) as an evaluation component. Eight departments routinely use course syllabi to evaluate teaching.

The institution communicates its expectations of effective teaching and learning to prospective faculty members, as indicated in Table 3.1. ASC also is making progress in communicating the importance of learning outcomes in faculty evaluation.

### **EVALUATION OF CURRICULA**

Additional evidence that ASC values and supports effective teaching was collected through discussions with faculty members across disciplines and through two surveys, one of academic department chairs, and another of faculty and department chairs. The first survey, completed by all department chairs, provided information regarding faculty qualifications, research, curriculum development strategies, and other indicators of effective teaching. The second survey was sent to all department chairs and faculty members. It focused on the degree to which assessment of student learning outcomes is valued and used by faculty and department chairs. The survey detailed additional information and a description of the curricular process.

The first survey addressed a central question of higher learning: "Who creates, controls, and teaches the curriculum?" At ASC, qualified faculty members decide the

curricular content and strategies for instruction. Department chairs and full-time faculty collaborate on devising curricular content, with input from adjunct faculty when relevant. Full-time, tenured, and tenure-track faculty are expected to hold a terminal degree in a relevant field, demonstrating that they are qualified to determine appropriate curricular content. Examples of such terminal degrees include the M.F.A., D.M.A., Ed.D., and Ph.D.

In the second survey, 12 of 13 departments report that most curricular changes or policies are implemented as a result of formal departmental discussions. Informal departmental discussions are less important in determining curricular content (Table 3.2). Minutes of meetings of faculty, the CRC, the GECC, the Graduate Council, the Academic Council, and the Provost's Council provide a record of curricular discussions and development. Program review documents, catalog change forms, and institutional syllabi indicate the changes made.

**FACULTY DEVELOPMENT**

All academic departments rely on ASC to provide services that support improvement in pedagogy, encourage student learning in a variety of settings, and facilitate teaching. The primary methods by which the institution provides such support include college and departmental faculty development funding, grant funding, sponsored workshops, and library and technical resources.

All departments across campus have used either college or departmental faculty development funds to support improvements in pedagogy. Additionally, faculty members from every department, with the exception of the newly created Nursing Department, have participated in the Title V grant-funded Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT) workshops. These emphasized student-centered learning and the use of a wide variety of teaching techniques. In conjunction with the CELT workshops, most CELT participants used the ALCP. This compares student and faculty perceptions of the instructor's ability to relate to students and adapt to their learning needs. Faculty members report that they had some difficulty ascertaining how to directly apply the results to their teaching. Nevertheless, this process does demonstrate the institution's commitment to investigating new ways of assessing teaching effectiveness. Moreover, eight departments report that their faculty have participated in other conferences or workshops related to teaching and pedagogy during the past five

<b>TABLE 3.2 - CURRICULAR CHANGE - DEPARTMENT HEADS</b>			
<i>How often is curricular change implemented as a result of formal department discussions?</i>			
<b>More than 50% of the time</b>	<b>25-50% of the time</b>	<b>10-25% of the time</b>	<b>Less than 10% of the time</b>
12 (92%)		1 (8%)	
<i>How often is curricular change implemented as a result of informal departmental discussions?</i>			
<b>More than 50% of the time</b>	<b>25-50% of the time</b>	<b>10-25% of the time</b>	<b>Less than 10% of the time</b>
		4 (31%)	9 (69%)

## *Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching*

years. Seven departments report that their faculty members have participated in conferences or workshops related to student-centered learning or varied learning environments during the past five years. Overall, this indicates an effort on the part of many faculty members to participate in the development and application of relevant disciplinary pedagogy.

The Teaching Improvement Grants (TIGs) provided each CELT participant with up to \$2,000 to explore new ways to teach and assist students in their learning. Faculty members have used the TIGs for a wide variety of activities. Some examples include travel to workshops and classes related to their academic disciplines, purchase of new technology or equipment for their classrooms, and application of new pedagogical practices stemming from conference participation. Faculty shared innovations in teaching and approaches in varied learning environments through forums such as the annual CELT Showcase, brown bag lunch talks, and informal meetings with colleagues. The *ASC Mission Statement* and *Academic Master Plan* also place a priority on facilitating teaching in varied learning environments.

### **RESEARCH AND TRAINING**

While all departments have taken advantage of opportunities like CELT, some departments have more actively promoted improvements in pedagogy by sponsoring workshops or providing training. Most notably, the departments of Teacher Education; Nursing; Music; and English, Theatre, Communications, and Foreign Languages sponsor or provide training in pedagogy 1-5 times per year. Most other departments provided such services only occasionally over the last 5 years.

Departments indicate that the research support provided by the library and the option of using technology in the classroom are important services that assist in improving teaching. Budgetary constraints in both these key areas make it difficult for them to provide an ideal level of service, however. There is strong evidence that faculty members are increasingly using technology as a key component in course delivery, whether it be technology-enhanced classrooms (TECs), or using WebCT for online course delivery or to supplement a traditional course. Grant monies have enhanced budgetary resources applied to library/research and technology improvements on campus.

All departments responded positively regarding the organization's openness to innovative practices that enhance learning. Once again, numerous academic departments cite the CELT program as having encouraged and promoted innovative practices. Many department chairs state that faculty members have implemented new teaching practices and a more student-centered approach to learning as a result of their participation in CELT workshops. In addition, the College as a whole is seen by academic departments to be generally supportive of proposals for new approaches to delivering a curriculum.

The First Year Seminar (FYS), part of a revised General Education curriculum, provided ASC faculty with an opportunity to put new pedagogies into practice. Addressing the outcomes of critical thinking, reading, and writing, the FYS encouraged faculty to develop a student-centered professional practice. The FYS remained as a component of the General Education curriculum until 2005. A variety of factors led



to its discontinuance, including staffing, associated costs, and state regulations governing guaranteed transfer of General Education courses.

All departments cite innovative practices they have developed. Some examples include distance education and online programs, hands-on learning experiences, significant technology use in the classroom, course-specific textbooks, and a technology-enhanced demonstration classroom.

Adams State College supports faculty in keeping abreast of research on teaching and learning. Participation by faculty in research related directly to teaching and learning varies widely among the academic departments. However, faculty participation in research related to their discipline is much higher and also has a direct impact on teaching and learning. Faculty members who keep abreast of developments in their field will undoubtedly apply such knowledge in their classrooms. In ten departments, at least half of the faculty have published, presented, exhibited, or performed in a professionally relevant venue during the last three years. Institutional support is essential to faculty involvement on such a level. In nine departments, at least half of the faculty members have received faculty development funding during the last three years. Not surprisingly, this corresponds with the number of faculty members who have presented their research in a professional venue. Related external grants in various departments also contribute to support for faculty. Philosophically, both the *Mission Statement* and *Academic Master Plan* stress the importance of supporting faculty in both discipline-specific and pedagogical aspects of research into teaching and learning.

### ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING IMPROVES TEACHING

Additional survey data indicates that evaluation of how well students meet the learning outcomes for a course is a priority on this campus. The importance of teaching effectiveness in the evaluation process was explained to the majority of faculty and department chairs during the hiring process. Since the rate is somewhat lower for department chairs, typically the most senior faculty, these numbers suggest communication with newer faculty may be improving. (Table 3.1) The institution is exploring ways to improve communication of expectations of teaching effectiveness during the hiring process.

Nearly all faculty members and department chairs indicate that they use an assessment of student learning outcomes to improve instruction. Most make modifications to instructional techniques or to course content to improve instruction. Some make

**TABLE 3.3 - USE OF ASSESSMENT TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION**

*How do you use assessment of learning outcomes to improve instruction?*

	FACULTY MEMBERS	DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
I modify instructional techniques.	93%	88%
I modify assessment methods.	63%	75%
I do not use assessment of learning outcomes to improve teaching.	3%	0%

### Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

modifications to assessment methods. Only three percent say they do not use assessment of student learning outcomes to improve teaching (Table 3.3.)

Nearly all faculty and department chairs agree with the statement, "Evaluation of student learning outcomes is a key measure of teaching effectiveness." Only 13 percent of faculty members disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. Results from department chairs are even more supportive of evaluation of student learning outcomes as a method of assessing effective teaching (Table 3.4).

Most faculty and department chairs assess student work to evaluate teaching effectiveness. All faculty members, including department chairs, make use of student work to evaluate teaching to some degree. Only three percent of faculty members "Rarely" use student work to assess teaching effectiveness. These results clearly indicate that ASC faculty and department chairs value student work as an important component in evaluating teaching effectiveness (Table 3.5).

<i>Extent of agreement with the statement: "Evaluation of student learning outcomes is a key measure of teaching effectiveness."</i>		
	FACULTY MEMBERS	DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
Strongly disagree	1%	0%
Disagree	12%	0%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%	13%
Agree	50%	75%
Strongly Agree	20%	13%

#### **RECOGNITION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING**

Effective teaching is highly valued within the organization. Apart from the role of teaching effectiveness in retention and tenure decisions, there are additional methods used to recognize effective teaching. For most departments, the extent of recognition for effective teaching is the designation of such on the annual evaluation. Five departments also acknowledge the Associated Students & Faculty Awards as evidence of effective teaching; however, these are relatively new awards given entirely on the basis of student nominations and are awarded by the student government organization. A few departments cite external awards as a means of recognizing effective teaching. Typically these would be awards from a professional organization related to that field.

*Core Component 3c:*

The organization creates effective learning environments.

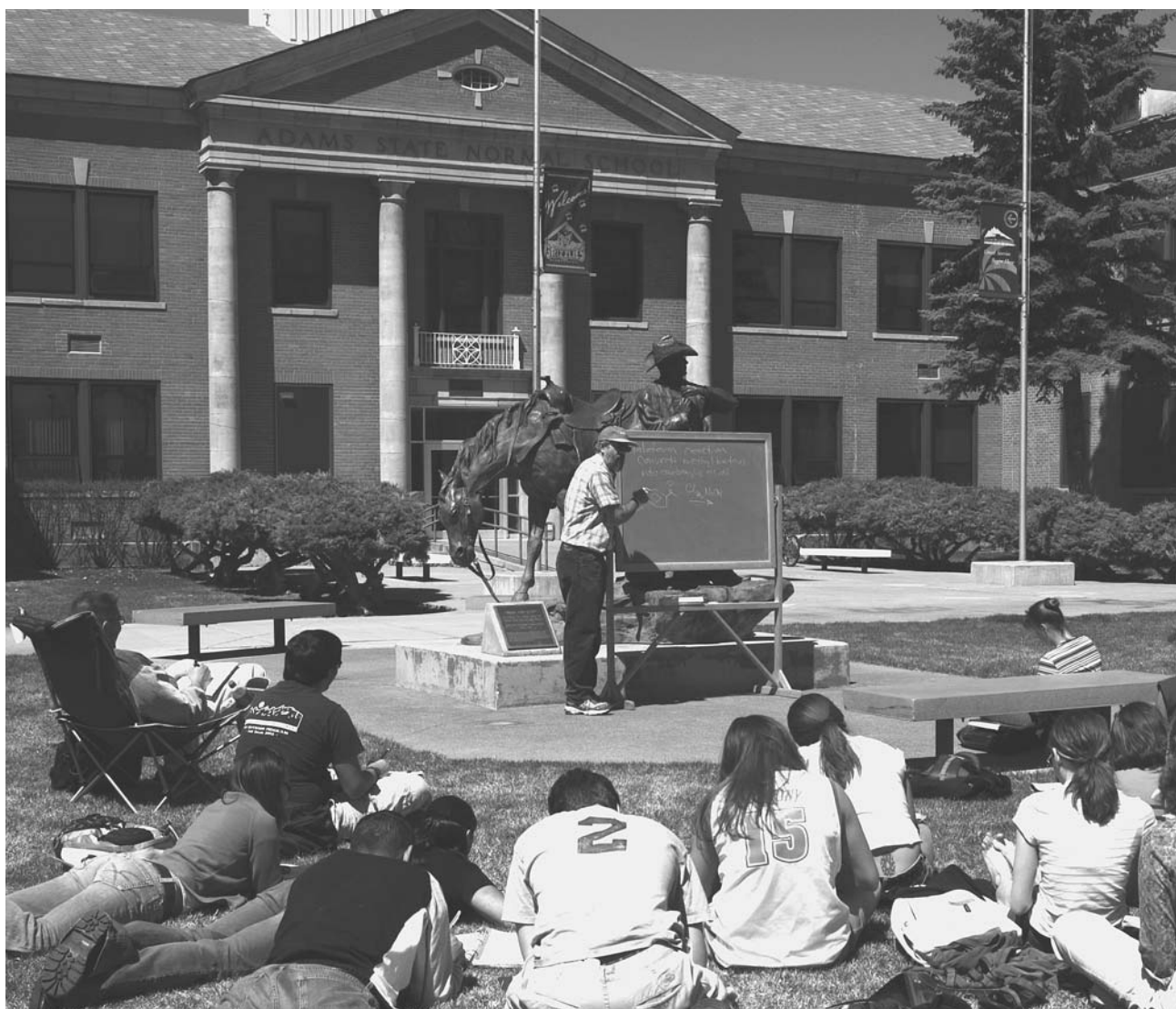
Ample documentation across campus demonstrates that Adams State College values and supports effective learning environments. Evidence in support of this core component was gathered from faculty and students in each academic department and through a survey administered to every academic department chair.

<b>TABLE 3.5 - USE OF STUDENT WORK TO EVALUATE TEACHING</b>		
<i>To what extent do you use assessment of student work to evaluate your teaching?</i>		
	FACULTY MEMBERS	DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
Never	0%	0%
Rarely	3%	0%
Sometimes	18%	38%
Often	54%	50%
Always	25%	12%
<i>To what extent does your department chair use assessment of student work to evaluate your teaching? (faculty responses only)</i>		
	FACULTY MEMBERS	
Never	4%	
Rarely	12%	
Sometimes	33%	
Often	42%	
Always	8%	
<i>To what extent do you use assessment of student work to evaluate your faculty? (department chair responses only)</i>		
	DEPARTMENT CHAIRS	
Never	0%	
Rarely	12%	
Sometimes	38%	
Often	50%	
Always	0%	

## *Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching*

### **ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

Assessment procedures at ASC, both at the campus-wide level and within individual programs, are designed to measure academic learning and the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices. Campus-wide assessment of student engagement and satisfaction is obtained through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). While the NSSE has been administered on the ASC campus since 1999, effective use of this data has been better emphasized since ASC joined the Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS) program in the spring of 2004. The mission of ASC's local BEAMS working group is to increase awareness of NSSE on the ASC campus, to advocate the use of NSSE for program development, to assess the effectiveness of the Summer Bridge Program on student engagement, and to identify an appropriate NSSE comparison group for ASC. Since 1999, the ASC freshman and senior sample sizes have been too small for individual departments to use results to implement discrete program changes. As a result of BEAMS advocacy and administrative support, the administration of the NSSE



survey in spring 2006 was expanded to 35 targeted classes. This resulted in a sample size of 560. Individual department-level analysis will be possible when the raw data file is received later in 2006 from NSSE. This process also provided a large enough sample to help assess the ASC General Education program.

Some of the NSSE data collected since 1999 reflects positively on ASC, and other results suggest areas for improvement.

- Between 1999 and 2005 and in the majority of cases, ASC freshmen and seniors reported as much classroom analyzing, memorizing, synthesizing, judgment making, and application of theory and concepts as those at peer institutions.
- Between 1999 and 2005, both freshmen and seniors reported that their relationships with faculty are about as friendly and supportive as their relationships with other students.
- In three of four years since 2002, freshmen have reported higher levels of involvement in learning communities than students in the peer comparison group.
- Between 2003 and 2005, seniors reported writing fewer papers of 20 pages or more than the peer group.
- In three of the past five years (2001-2005), both freshmen and seniors reported spending less time studying than students in the comparison group.

To measure student responses to its student-centered learning environment, ASC administered the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory in 1998, 2002, and 2006. The results indicate strengths in course content, quality of instruction, and academic advisement. Other strengths include students feeling welcome and cared about as individuals. Most of the challenges identified by the survey are centered on customer service issues. Specific challenges included helpfulness of financial aid counselors and registration personnel, registration conflicts, and reasonableness of billing policies. While more difficult to quantify, student evaluations of individual faculty and courses also provide a measure of engagement. Historically, student satisfaction with the performance of their instructors has been very high.

Academic learning campus-wide is measured through the Academic Profile (AP), which provides feedback on the General Education curriculum. While the College has not always been effective in using AP data, an effort is being made to address this weakness. The *Academic Assessment Plan* adopted in 2006 specifically charges the General Education Coordinating Committee with determining the best practices related to assessment of General Education and student engagement. This committee will determine the most appropriate assessment devices. In addition, it will work with the Office of Institutional Research to recommend actions based on assessment results. Recommendations will be made to the Academic Council, which is responsible for ensuring they are implemented appropriately.

Evolving student-centered course offerings throughout campus, especially in the General Education curriculum, continue to characterize the College's commitment to effective learning environments. The College implemented a new General Education curriculum and process for approving General Education courses in 2000. New or

### *Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching*

substantially revised General Education courses in mathematics, world civilization, and the sciences were created. Other course offerings were revised to support the College's General Education outcomes. Over time, these courses have been modified or new offerings developed as student data suggested revisions. For example, the liberal arts mathematics course was developed to meet the needs of the non-science major for college-level mathematical literacy. The General Education science offerings were revised and repackaged as a two-semester integrated science sequence. The Development of Civilization course material was placed online, and the department revised the discrete readings and assessments based on the performance of students in prior semesters. The Department of English, Theatre, Communication, and Foreign Languages is constantly assessing its freshman-level courses in composition to ensure that faculty stay abreast of current pedagogies and student needs.

During the 2004-05 academic year, the faculty voted to align ASC's General Education requirements with the State of Colorado's gtPathways guaranteed transfer program. Courses approved as guaranteed transfer (GT) courses must meet specific content and competency criteria for each of the following content areas: Communication (Written), Mathematics, Arts & Humanities, Social & Behavioral Sciences, and Physical & Life Sciences. In addition, all courses must address competencies in one or more of the following:

1. Critical Thinking
2. Mathematics
3. Reading
4. Technology
5. Written Communication

Demonstration of information acquisition, application, analysis, synthesis, communication, and evaluation are essential aspects of each of these competencies and form some of the student learning outcomes in each approved course. Courses are reviewed by a team of three faculty members from two and four-year institutions across the state. ASC's General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) and the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) must also approve all General Education courses. ASC was the first college in Colorado to have all of its General Education courses approved as GT courses. This three-part approval for General Education ensures that courses meet both campus and state goals.

In other disciplines where content is mandated by accrediting and professional organizations, faculty members have experimented with a variety of student-centered pedagogies to make the learning environment more effective. The Chemistry Department, now part of the Department of Chemistry, Computing Science and Mathematics, implemented calibrated writing activities, which include a peer assessment component, to ensure that students understand the course content well enough to communicate it accurately to third parties. In upper-division political science courses, student presentations on case studies, which include a peer-grading component, stand alongside the traditional lecture to create a fuller learning environment.

## ADVISING AND ASSESSMENT AS COMPONENTS OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Not only do students seek advising to monitor their progress toward a degree, they must meet with an advisor for course registration each term. A student must receive a personal identification number (PIN) from an advisor (a faculty member, except for some first semester freshmen or transfers), which allows them to proceed with registration. Undergraduate students are unable to register without this advising PIN. The PIN advising system allows faculty to monitor fulfillment of prerequisites and student progress toward degree completion. Advising is required each semester for all degree-seeking students, regardless of location (e.g., distance degree, off-site programs). For example, the academic advisor for the elementary licensure programs offered in four rural sites around Colorado visits the students every semester to review degree plans. The 2006 Noel-Levitz survey and the NSSE both indicate a high degree of student satisfaction with advising at ASC.

Over the last five years, ASC has improved efforts to link assessment with program change. Previously, assessment of student learning was inconsistent across campus. The current Higher Learning Commission *Self-Study* has stimulated a campus-wide process to assess student learning outcomes. These results inform revision of curricular and instructional strategies. ASC is committed to embedding this process into the campus culture.

A state-mandated program review process has always been in place, but was revised in 2005 to place greater emphasis on assessment of student learning outcomes. The Curriculum Review Committee and Graduate Council first used this process to evaluate program reviews in the spring semester of 2006. This assessment process will improve student learning.

### *Core Component 3d:* The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Adams State College recognizes the need to ensure that all of the institution's resources are aligned with its *Mission* and *Vision*. While there is increased strain on ASC's resources, there is also an obvious commitment to provide services necessary to support and enhance learning and to provide underserved students with opportunities for academic success.



## *Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching*



### **INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

Since the last self-study, perhaps the most remarkable physical transformation at Adams State College has been in the facilities themselves. Significant resources have been expended to build and maintain technology-enhanced classrooms (TECs) in all academic buildings, complete with digital projection units, integrated sound systems, and state-of-the-art computers. In a few areas, “smart” classrooms have been created that are outfitted with computer stations for all the students in the class. Many academic areas maintain specialty computer labs and equipment that support discipline-specific hard-

ware and software. All of the campus residence halls and apartments have high-speed internet connectivity. With the aid of grant funds, the Teacher Education Department has created a technology-enhanced demonstration classroom.

ASC's Computing Services Department provides access to 326 computers in campus computing labs; 30 computers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the Student Union Building lab. Computing Services monitors computer use and adds additional equipment as necessary. Computer labs are checked regularly to ensure all equipment functions properly. A Help Desk provides students and faculty with technological assistance during the work week.

These marvelous new technologies are expensive. Funding their acquisition and maintenance is a constant challenge that has been addressed in a variety of ways. One way is assessment of a student technology fee used to ensure that computing resources are current and working correctly. Students elected to increase fees to also support TECs. Funds are allocated as follows, in order of amount:

1. Replacement of obsolete equipment in open labs and TECs
2. Services to maintain equipment in open labs and TECs
3. Software used across campus for academic purposes
4. Training of open lab and TEC managers
5. Research and development of new technologies for academic instruction



Discipline-specific labs represent an especially difficult problem. They are not funded by the student technology fee. Individual academic departments support technology maintenance and software upgrades through departmental operating budgets. The lack of funding poses problems, and so some departments must charge course-specific fees to maintain these facilities. The institution has not budgeted for the necessary hardware upgrades; therefore, replacement of obsolete equipment does not occur on a regular basis. The unpredictability of funding makes program planning and development difficult. Prioritization through the Budget Crosswalk is a potential solution to this problem.

Essential to any program of technological support is knowing how the equipment is being used. Evaluation of computer use in labs is tracked using a software program called MonNet. The data collected determines when and where Computing Services' work-study students should be scheduled as lab attendants. The effectiveness of computing resources is assessed through both student and faculty satisfaction surveys. The student survey administered by Computing Services, however, provides limited data, due to a poor response rate. During the 2005 school year, the Academic Instructional Technology Committee (AITC) administered a survey to determine faculty satisfaction with technology in the classroom. Faculty members indicated that, overall, they are very pleased with the technology in the classrooms, particularly with the TECs.

Since 2003, the NSSE survey has also assessed computer use in student learning. ASC freshmen and seniors consistently report the same level of computer use as students in the peer comparison group and the national sample. A graduate student satisfaction survey administered the summer of 2005 showed that 80 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that labs were available when needed. However, only 21 percent agreed or strongly agreed that computer lab staff were helpful, primarily because staff are often simply not available during the summer months, when the largest number of graduate students are on campus.

WebCT is ASC's official course management system. During the fall 2005 semester, 3,981 WebCT seats were used. All off-campus students and faculty using WebCT receive a CD-ROM user guide. Currently, the WebCT office is housed in a faculty office with one full-time faculty member acting as the WebCT administrator. The WebCT administrator is supported by one graduate assistant who assists with course building and student issues. Satisfaction with WebCT resources and services at ASC was documented in the 2004 dissertation of Dr. Mark Manzanares, ASC WebCT Administrator. To alleviate the challenges presented by this limited staffing, the College recently approved development of an Office of Academic Computing.

## **NIELSEN LIBRARY**

The Nielsen Library provides student-centered services and access and responds to user needs. It is open 87 hours a week during the regular school year. Librarians staff the reference desk 68 hours a week. Approximately 132,000 books and 20,000 journals are available for students and faculty, with the vast majority of journals accessible online. The Library staff provides students and faculty with training on bibliographic and article databases and web searching through formal instructional sessions or help at the reference desk.

### *Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching*

The administration and staff of Nielsen Library use circulation, reference, and inter-library loan data, and instruction statistics to evaluate how often library resources are used. Approximately 22,000 items were circulated by the Nielsen Library in 2005, a decrease from previous years, probably due to the online availability of numerous full-text databases.

In March of 2005, library staff conducted a formal survey of students and faculty to measure resource use and the level of satisfaction with services. The library found that students and faculty are, overall, able to find the resources and assistance they need. Students often complete librarian evaluations during library research sessions. The librarians fare very well in these evaluations, and the sessions are typically evaluated as "excellent" or "very good."

The library provides circulation, reference, and instructional services to support ASC's growing distance-student population. A student in any location can check out an unlimited number of books from the Nielsen Library and have them shipped to him or her. Journal articles can be obtained from the Nielsen Library or other libraries around the world. Reference assistance is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, via telephone, e-mail, and virtual chat through AskColorado, an online service provided by Colorado libraries. Upon request, an instructional librarian visits off-campus sites for library orientation. Three orientation sessions were presented during the summer of 2005 in Ellicott, Holyoke, and Haxtun, Colorado.

Many of the Nielsen Library's current challenges are related to the budget. One of the most pressing concerns is staffing. One librarian position has been lost due to reduced funding. A distance education librarian is needed, as the number of off-campus students continues to grow. Currently, three Nielsen Library staff members share the duties that would be performed by a distance education librarian. These staff members are fulfilling article and book requests, and offering training sessions for distance students around the state, in addition to their regular duties.

Overall, the Nielsen Library book collection is outdated. The library administration and staff are addressing this problem by aggressively purging certain sections and buying as many new books as the budget allows.

#### **STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES**

Student support resources at ASC provide students with opportunities for effective learning and exposure to expanded modes of instruction. ASC supports its diverse student population through a substantial tutoring program, an early alert system, a writing center, technology-enhanced classrooms, and the Cross Cultural Center. In addition, faculty members have been trained to be more cognizant of and relate to students of different ethnic, cultural, class, and social backgrounds through the efforts of the Title V grant-funded CELT program.

Tutoring services are provided to students through the Academic Advising and Tutoring Center, Student Support Services, the Math Lab, and the Writing Studio. The Academic Advisement Center and Tutoring Center serve as the focal points of a revised Early Alert system by which instructors can notify these centers of academic

problems, including poor class performance, chronic absences, and other issues. The Advisement Center then contacts the student. This system was fully integrated into the portal online communication system, after it was determined that the earlier paper-driven system was too cumbersome. The current system is entirely web-based and provides professors with email feedback from the Advisement Center.

Adams State College is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and is located in a historically Hispanic region of Colorado. The College provides student support services that begin in middle school. Programs such as TRIO's Upward Bound and Talent Search focus on increasing the probability that students from low-income and/or first-generation families will attend and succeed in college.

Incoming freshmen have access to the First-Year Interest Group (FIG) program. By joining teams of up to 25 students with similar academic interests, new students take two or three of the same courses together and meet regularly with faculty and student mentors. This team approach encourages discussion of first-year transition issues, creates a sense of camaraderie, and eases entry into college. Students are immediately included in support groups of peers with whom they attend class, go on field trips, and participate in other events related to the FIG theme. The FIG program has been a positive effort to help freshmen connect with one another and become successful college students. FIGs are available in a wide variety of topics, including Art, International Business, Health Sciences, Pre-law, Theatre, and Music. Seventy-two percent of fall 2005 FIG students were retained and enrolled at least part-time for the spring 2006 semester. The College's overall retention rate from the first to second year was 57 percent.

Students who elect the FIG option do very well academically. Of the 100 FIG students in fall 2005 (about 20 percent of the freshman class), 22 percent received academic recognition at the spring 2006 Academic Awards ceremony. This ceremony recognizes students who take at least 12 credit hours over the 100-course level and earn a 3.4 or higher GPA. A FIG mentor received the award for the highest sophomore GPA, and a FIG student received the award for the highest freshman GPA.

Resources to enhance student learning include the Writing Studio and the ASC Tutoring Center. In 2005, two-hundred-fifty students sought assistance from the Tutoring Center, and there were 812 visits to the Writing Studio. Ninety-two percent of respondents "strongly agreed" that "the service provided by the tutor(s) was helpful and beneficial," while 85 percent of respondents "strongly agreed" that "the tutoring program is useful and needed." A Writing Studio survey showed 96 percent of respondents felt their visit was helpful.



### *Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching*

ASC provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented physical and learning disabilities. The Office of Student Affairs and Student Support Services work closely with the State of Colorado, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the local community. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, extended-time testing, interpreters, note-taker services, scribes, reader services (e.g., books on tape, electronic text), tutoring services, and registration assistance.

ASC provides internship and field study opportunities to students through formal and informal partnerships between academic departments and external agencies. The following are examples of some of these innovative learning opportunities:

- Students volunteer for 120 hours each in community organizations through the Psychology Department's Field Studies course.
- The Biology and Earth Sciences Department has extensive relationships with numerous natural resources agencies with whom students are routinely placed in internships, volunteer positions, and temporary jobs. Students participate in field studies for the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Pre-medical and pre-veterinary students are placed as volunteers in area hospitals and clinics.
- The Sociology Department requires internship courses in the areas of sociology, social welfare, and criminology.
- The Department of History, Government, and Philosophy routinely arranges internship positions with Congressman John T. Salazar's Alamosa office and the Colorado Rural Legal Services.
- The Nursing Program offers two clinical courses, one of which is a service learning component. Both field experiences use qualified nursing preceptors or supervisors as the primary educator, while the Nursing faculty member acts as a liaison. Students are placed in hospitals, clinics, and other health care organizations in the San Luis Valley. The service learning piece gives students the opportunity to work with many community services, as well as to travel outside of the country for work with other service groups.
- The Teacher Education Department has established a partnership with Evans Elementary School in the Alamosa School District that provides a field experience setting in the area of literacy.
- Graduate Counselor Education students each complete a 100-hour practicum and a 600-hour internship in either a school setting or a community agency.
- Each semester, about 10 ASC students mentor at-risk children in the Alamosa public schools through the Lucero Project, funded since 1995 by an alumni couple through the ASC Foundation.
- Mass Communications students intern at the local newspaper, public radio station, and national news centers.
- Graduate Teacher Education candidates complete either 180 or 360 hours of internship in a public school setting.

## Summary

The *Self-Study* required by the Higher Learning Commission has given Adams State College reason and motivation to review existing policies and procedures in relation to assessment, particularly of student learning outcomes. Additionally, changes in ASC administrative structure and state higher education governance provided impetus to evaluate current practices.

While Adams State College faces challenges typical of any small, rural institution of higher education, it nevertheless has placed a high priority on student learning and teaching effectiveness. The focus on enhancing the learning environment for students over the past ten years demonstrates our commitment to excellence in instruction and increased opportunities for academic growth. ASC has made significant gains in organizing and institutionalizing an assessment plan that provides input from students and faculty at the department level, the committee level, and the administrative level.

### **Strength:**

The *Plan for Assessment of Student Learning: An Academic Assessment Plan*, completed as part of the self-study, gives direction and structure to the assessment process on the ASC campus. The plan allows for continuous assessment, with curricular decisions based on the results. This strengthens the current assessment of programs and student learning outcomes and ensures that learning remains at the forefront.

### **Strength:**

Adams State College has always placed a high premium on teaching effectiveness and its role in student learning. Historically, ASC faculty have been evaluated for teaching effectiveness through student course evaluations, course observations, and other documentation, such as course syllabi.

### **Strength:**

ASC uses national surveys to gather data on student engagement and satisfaction on campus. Through targeted efforts, BEAMS advocacy, and administrative support, the sample size has increased to the point that individual department-level analysis is now possible. Additionally, Adams State College fares well, overall, in comparison to peer institutions in most categories.

### **Challenge:**

While ASC faculty, staff, and administration have been creative in finding ways to support professional development, each cost unit budget should include a line item for development. Operating budgets have been tight, and professional development is often the first item to be cut.

### **Challenge:**

ASC should explore mechanisms to recognize and reward, where feasible, superior performance by classified employees.

### **Challenge:**

ASC should find ways to recognize exemplary teaching through monetary or other rewards. The current method of recognition through the annual evaluation process has not been sufficiently attractive to potential applicants, nor adequately publicized. A

## *Criterion III: Student Learning and Effective Teaching*

more flexible plan could do more to inspire better performances and more frequent emulation.

### **Challenge:**

Budget constraints make it difficult to keep technology updated and to staff student computer labs.

### **Opportunity:**

ASC recently committed to establishing an Office of Academic Computing that will provide a help desk for students, training on the use of the course management system (WebCT) for faculty and students, and full-time staffing for WebCT operations. The process to hire an Academic Computing Coordinator and an Instructional Designer began in October, 2006.

# *Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge*

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## Criterion IV



**ADAMS STATE COLLEGE**

**C O L O R A D O** <sup>SM</sup>

*Great Stories Begin Here*

## CRITERION IV:

# ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

## Criterion Overview

Consistent with its institutional goal to provide access and opportunity for success, Adams State College promotes a life of learning for all its constituencies. ASC values creativity, diversity, critical thinking, self-directed learning, personal growth, social responsibility, and technological literacy, not only in its students, but also in its faculty and staff. ASC's academic and student support programs recognize the value of diversity and intellectual growth. They are steeped in continuity, yet honor and value change, reflecting "current and accurate understanding of each of the academic disciplines, as well as informed judgments about what knowledge and skills will have enduring value."

Adams State College prepares undergraduates through its General Education requirements in the liberal arts and sciences. Competencies in technology and communication are required for undergraduate students, with an emphasis on living and working in a rapidly changing world. The First Year Experience and Engagement (FYEE) program helps retention efforts by assisting entering students with the skills necessary to navigate college life. Upper-division undergraduate education focuses on content, while making ample room for practice and discovery through capstone courses, field experiences, internships, and volunteer work.

Graduate education at Adams State College complements the undergraduate mission. The Master of Arts degree is available in five content areas to students who desire to further their education, fulfill personal goals, or improve their careers and earning potential. Graduate education assumes students have achieved a broad foundation in their undergraduate preparation and are now equipped to acquire content-specific skills and knowledge in their chosen fields. Graduate students engage in acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge in a variety of ways, including creating works of art, serving in their communities as interns, or conducting action research projects to assist their school districts.

In fulfilling its mission, Adams State College is motivated by both internal and external factors. The *Mission Statement* and *Institutional Goals* are derived from the statutory role of the College. ASC's first institutional goal is to promote academic



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excellence. To that end, ASC works closely with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) to develop its Performance Contract each year. The Performance Contract recognizes the unique cultural and economic profile of ASC students and is geared toward meeting the educational needs of the underserved, while maintaining high academic standards.

The Performance Contract addresses several areas, as indicated in Criterion I. The second goal of the Performance Contract addresses general education and preparation for continued success in higher education. A component of this goal states:

*The Commission has determined that it is a highest priority of the State to*

- *improve academic competencies and provide learning experiences that foster the development of skills and abilities that prepare students for the global economy;*
- *prepare students for continuing, graduate, or postgraduate professional studies;*
- *ensure the transferability of general education courses; and*
- *establish critical thinking and logic skills essential to full participation in a democratic society.*

The Commission's goal clearly articulates the importance of undergraduate education in preparing students for a life of learning and for becoming critical thinkers and independent learners in a diverse world. Adams State College is fully committed to the Commission's priorities regarding undergraduate education.

### *Core Component 4a:*

**The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.**

ASC faculty, staff, and students are engaged in a variety of projects, described below, that evince a pervasive, institution-wide commitment to a life of learning.

#### **COMMITMENT TO A LIFE OF LEARNING**

As stated in Criterion I, the *Mission, Vision, and Institutional Goals* articulate academic excellence and educational access and opportunity as primary values of the institution. The Performance Contract reiterates ASC's values, translating them into measurable outcomes with performance benchmarks. Teaching effectiveness as applied to student learning outcomes is the primary concern of ASC's faculty and staff. Faculty are evaluated and, when funds allow, rewarded for teaching excellence, as well as for scholarship and service.

In 2000, ASC was awarded a five-year, \$1.96 million Title V grant to increase institutional capacity to better serve Hispanic students. Clearly, as ASC continues to improve its service as a Hispanic Serving Institution, the benefits extend to all students, staff, and faculty. Through Title V funding, the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) was created. The Center was established to "support curricular innovations and efficient use of technology." CELT provided federal grant money to support training for

20 ASC faculty and staff members each year in learner-centered classroom practices and instructional technology. Over 100 faculty and staff participated in the two-week summer institutes, in addition to activities and events held throughout the academic year. CELT provided each participant \$2,000 for professional development in teaching. These Teaching Improvement Grants (TIGs) supported activities that enhanced teachers' abilities to serve diverse students.

In addition to CELT funding, each campus unit may designate a portion of its budget for professional development. Only two academic departments spent less than five percent of their budgets for faculty development in 2004-2005. ASC recognizes that departments should have larger budgets for professional development.

Another source of funding for professional development comes from the Provost's Professional Development budget. Faculty share approximately \$40,000 per year to participate in professional conferences or training and to conduct research. The institution also pays for several professional organization memberships, a critical component in professional development. Sabbaticals and leaves of absence are additional mechanisms to provide professional staff with time to pursue further degrees and scholarly or creative endeavors.

A generous commitment from the Adams State College Foundation provides tuition scholarships that allow ASC employees to enroll in classes to enhance their job performance and careers. Full-time employees may take up to six credit hours per fiscal year. A prorated number of credits is available for part-time permanent employees. In fall of 2004, for example, 18 employees used the tuition waivers to further their education or enhance their skills. Many of these employees are degree-seeking students. Additionally, on-campus training sessions in technology and other skills are offered periodically at no charge to employees.

ASC recognizes the importance of professional development and strives to provide opportunities for all employees. Through the use of CELT funds, employee scholarships, and training sessions on campus, ASC has found creative ways to foster professional development with limited funding.

## **FACULTY AND STAFF MODEL LIFELONG LEARNING AND SERVICE**

Faculty and staff at Adams State College model lifelong learning for students and one another. Many staff and faculty make use of the employee tuition scholarships mentioned above to pursue additional degrees or to further their knowledge, while others present papers at regional and national conferences or attend workshops and seminars in their content areas. Conference attendance is supported and is the most obvious example of professional development. However, many other activities also support a life of learning.

Modeling lifelong learning extends to both the campus and surrounding community. Each academic program has its unique way of modeling lifelong learning and forming partnerships with school districts and local community groups. The Art Department faculty members present demonstrations to students and teachers in local school districts each year, in addition to showing their own work in local and national

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galleries. The Edward M. Ryan Geological Museum provides tremendous educational resources for K-12 science students and the community. The San Luis Valley Regional Science Fair is held annually on the ASC campus, with faculty and students serving as judges. The Chemistry program hosts a Chemistry Magic Show each year for K-12 students and community members. Music faculty present recitals and play alongside their students in bands and ensembles. The English, Theatre, Communications, and Foreign Languages (ETCFL) Department hosts poetry readings by faculty, stages plays, and submits creative works to literary magazines. In 2005, the ETCFL Department hosted its first poetry contest, "Slamosa." The History, Government, and Philosophy Department hosts the District History Fair each year for K-12 students, with ASC faculty and students serving as judges. Faculty and staff model both lifelong learning and service through their partnerships with school dis-

tricts. In addition, faculty serve on a variety of community boards, focusing primarily on non-profit organizations. The community relies on the involvement of ASC personnel to assist in an array of projects and services.

The ASC Speaker's Bureau offers presentations by faculty and staff to community organizations. For example, the Rotary Club may ask a faculty member with skills in conflict mediation to speak at its group luncheon.

The campus joins together for learning opportunities, as well. In 2005, noted author and physicist Alan Lightman was brought to campus as part of a new tradition linking departments and community around a common theme. The College purchased over 200 copies of Lightman's book, *Einstein's Dreams*, for distribution across campus. It was the focus of art contests, writing contests, community forums, and campus discussions, all of which were open to students, faculty, staff, and community members. The event was a resounding success and epitomized faculty and staff modeling, as well as curricular and co-curricular linkages. The *Dead Man Walking* Theatre Project in 2006 included not only an ASC production of the play, but several other activities involving diverse constituencies. Students, staff, and community members had many opportunities to participate in the project, including a symposium on forgiveness and reconciliation in which Sister Helen Prejean (author of the book on which the play was based) was the keynote speaker. Twenty-five book clubs in the San Luis Valley discussed Prejean's book, and an art exhibition featured original works by San Luis Valley and regional artists.

The science and mathematics departments sponsor Lunch-time Talks in Science and Math that have interdisciplinary appeal. Professors from various disciplines present science topics from everyday life, such as the science behind the forensic medicine of television shows and the relationship between chemistry and music. Aimed at a general audience, the presentations have become very popular.

### **RECOGNITION FOR ACHIEVEMENT**

Adams State College recognizes its faculty, staff, and student achievements through public announcements, publications, awards banquets, press releases, other media, and coverage on the college website and in the alumni magazine.

Participants in the TRIO-funded Student Support Services are recognized for academic achievement at an annual banquet. Upward Bound students are acknowledged at banquets, as well as in monthly and annual publications. An annual Academic Awards Banquet honors high achieving undergraduates. Students from many academic departments have their creative work published in the literary magazine, *Genesis*, or the student newspaper, *The South Coloradan*.

Business students are honored at their own awards banquet for academic achievement and involvement in Phi Beta Lambda. The Psychology Department and the Counselor Education Department host mini-conferences where students share their research projects through poster sessions or presentations. Senior Biology students present their research in a public symposium as part of their capstone course each spring. Many academic departments offer scholarships to promote academic achievement.

Other departments announce student and staff achievements through their own newsletters, departmental meetings, or emails. For many years, the ASC employee newsletter has recognized specific achievements among faculty, staff, and students, as does the *A-Stater*, ASC's alumni magazine. The Associated Students and Faculty (AS&F, student government) sponsors an annual Faculty Awards Banquet, at which faculty are recognized for excellence in academic advisement, interdisciplinary initiatives, extra-curricular advisement, and research and published works.

Faculty members are evaluated annually in three areas: teaching, scholarly or creative activity, and professional service. Course evaluations completed by students each semester are included in the evaluation by department chairs, the Provost, and the President.



## *Criterion IV: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge*

Faculty who are deemed exemplary are considered for merit salary adjustments when funds allow. A true merit pay system is under discussion to more consistently and comprehensively recognize those faculty members who excel first in teaching and, second, in scholarship and service.

### *Core Component 4b:*

**The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.**

ASC's curriculum, services, facilities, and special programs are shaped by the priority our faculty and staff give to achieving academic excellence, as the following examples illustrate.

### **GENERAL EDUCATION AT ADAMS STATE COLLEGE**

A strong general education foundation is essential to provide access and opportunity for success. The General Education curriculum offers students the opportunity to master skills and abilities that allow them to succeed in their upper division coursework, in careers, and in life. A broad knowledge base establishes a foundation for lifelong learning and connects students to success at the upper-division and graduate levels. All ASC students are required to complete 34 hours of General Education requirements and demonstrate proficiency in writing and technology.

The purpose of ASC's General Education curriculum is to develop the framework for lifelong learning, to recognize the inherent educational value of diversity, and to provide proficiency in communication and technological skills. Students may choose from an assortment of courses in the arts and humanities, mathematics, physical and natural sciences, and behavioral and social sciences. Speech is required for all students. This broad foundation not only meets state requirements, but provides students the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed at higher levels of education.

In recent years, ASC has revised the General Education curriculum to reflect the changing needs of the state, its constituents, and students. In accordance with the Performance Contract, Adams State College has adopted a fully transferable, foundational general education core curriculum that corresponds with gtPathways, Colorado's statewide guaranteed transfer program for general education. These external forces require that ASC continue to examine its General Education program to fulfill the Performance Contract, while staying true to the College's mission. ASC established the General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) to review and critique annual student assessment and accountability data, and to approve revisions to the General Education curriculum. One focus of the committee is on student learning outcomes. The committee requires that each syllabus clearly state the student learning outcomes expected from the course and how those outcomes will be measured.

Technological proficiency is demonstrated through attaining a 70 percent score on the ASC Technology Proficiency exam or by successfully completing an approved

course with a grade of C or better. The skills attained to meet technological proficiency requirements prepare students to adapt to a continually changing workplace.

Individual departments or programs measure writing proficiency and set their own requirements for assessment. Students are typically evaluated at the end of their sophomore year or in the semester in which they will complete 60 credit hours.

The skills and knowledge gained in the General Education curriculum support student learning in upper division courses and in post-graduate endeavors. They also provide a basis for continued learning experiences throughout life.

### **SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN LIFELONG LEARNING**

Because access and opportunity for success are cornerstones of ASC's *Mission*, students who do not meet the minimum test scores on the ACT or SAT are placed in developmental courses. These courses help students gain skills needed to succeed in the college environment. Other assistance includes Student Support Services, the Writing Studio, the Tutoring Center, the Academic Advisement Center, and the CHAMPS Life Skills course for student-athletes. The Counseling and Career Center, Department of Housing and Residence Life, and Student Support Services offer workshops to boost confidence and enhance study and test-taking skills.

#### ***Entering freshmen receive assistance and support with focused programs.***

The First Year Experience and Engagement (FYEE) office is the primary support for incoming students. It is an umbrella for the many campus resources designed to assist in making the transition to college life and foster success in developmental courses. The Connections course was created for first-year students enrolled in two or more developmental courses. Among the topics covered are developing effective study skills, working with administrative processes, facing diversity issues, dealing with transitions, networking with clubs and organizations, and finding campus support resources. Offered in the fall semester, Connections is followed in the spring by Learning Integrative New Competencies and Skills (LINCS). LINCS focuses on personal growth, career exploration, values, interests, leadership, and personality styles. A key component of FYEE is the First Year Interest Group (FIG) program, which places groups of students into core classes according to a common academic interest. The purpose of FIGs is to foster stronger relationships among students and with the College. FIG students are also required to enroll in the Connections course. Other programs under the FYEE umbrella are the Emerging Scholars initiative, academic advisement, orientation, academic counseling, the Early Alert system, Accuplacer testing, and disability accommodations.



## *Criterion IV: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge*

### ***Upperclassmen form supportive relationships with faculty to promote lifelong learning.***

Upperclassmen have access to many of these same resources, including the Writing Studio and the Tutoring Center. However, much of their academic support comes from the faculty. Adams State College has always prided itself on its small class sizes, which enhance the personal attention students receive. Faculty members get to know their students and act as mentors and guides, both within and outside the classroom. Faculty serve as academic advisors to students in their majors. This close faculty interaction is always the highlight on alumni surveys.

Besides advising, faculty and students work collaboratively on an array of projects. Department of History, Government, and Philosophy (HGP) faculty members and students work together on the annual History Fair and in Mock Trial and Model United Nations competitions. Psychology Department faculty members assist students with research projects and in coordinating their poster session mini-conference. The Counselor Education Department works with students in presenting a poster session mini-conference in the Internship course and a mini-conference that includes both poster sessions and presentations in the Addictions course. The Theatre faculty work very closely with students, providing supervision and guidance for student-directed plays.

### ***Quality graduate programs promote intellectual inquiry.***

ASC's statutory mission includes a limited number of Master's degree offerings. The Graduate School oversees graduate studies and, through the Graduate Council, approves courses and programs. The Counselor Education program has been accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs

(CACREP) since 1994.

The graduate Teacher Education program is a candidate for accreditation by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) and will be notified before the HLC site visit in February of 2007. Previously, the Teacher Education programs were accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

ASC graduate students acquire both a breadth of knowledge and discipline-specific skills. Students are required to learn and



use research skills and become informed consumers of data. Additionally, many are required to demonstrate a minimum knowledge base in their field through licensure examinations. All graduate programs require a comprehensive evaluation, such as a thesis, comprehensive exam, or art exhibit.

### ***Campus resources support student learning.***

The campus continues to upgrade and expand its technology for student learning. A new student computer lab was created in the Education and Social Studies Building through Program of Excellence funds obtained by the Counselor Education Department. Technology-enhanced classrooms (TEC) were installed in the ES Building, the Music Building, and Plachy Hall (athletics building) funded through grants to Facilities Services and Computing Services. The School of Business remodeled its building in 2004, adding three computer labs and creating TEC classrooms throughout. Every academic building on campus has received technology upgrades in the past four years, and many classrooms have been enhanced with technology. In addition, the WebCT course management system has been adopted for online, hybrid courses to supplement traditional courses. Students have wireless Internet access in Girault Residence Hall, all on-campus apartments, the Student Union Building, and the School of Business. Ethernet access is available in the remaining residence halls and all academic buildings.

The Nielsen Library continues to expand its holdings and technology. Students now have access to a computer lab on the first floor of the library. The Library Research Skills course offers students the opportunity to enhance their use of the library and develop their skills for lifelong learning. Library education is a required component of all freshman composition courses. The Library staff hosts workshops for school districts and community members on weekends.

Many Adams State College students take advantage of the numerous work-study opportunities on campus. Student employees are trained by the unit hiring them in basic office skills or in more advanced skills appropriate to that area, such as peer tutoring, database management, and science laboratory preparation. This offers invaluable life experience to many students.

### ***Curricular/co-curricular linkages***

Capstone courses, internships, field experiences, and practica provide links between the knowledge and skills gained in the classroom and the hands-on experience needed to succeed in the world. Inquiry, discovery, and application are addressed in each of these experiences.

The Teacher Education program requires students to spend between 120 and 160 hours in field experiences before student teaching. Biology majors must enroll in Thesis I and II, capstone courses requiring an independent research paper or formal literature review. These findings are then presented to peers, faculty, and community members in a culminating symposium. Business students enroll in classes requiring field experiences and internship hours. Additionally, some business students provide free tax preparation assistance for the community. Graduate students in Counselor Education are required to spend 100 hours in a practicum experience and 600 hours in an internship.



## *Criterion IV: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge*

The Sociology program similarly pledges to support the ASC campus and Alamosa community by providing student volunteers and faculty expertise and involvement. Agencies that host Sociology interns include La Puente (homeless shelter and outreach services), Tu Casa (domestic violence services and prevention), San Luis Valley Youth Center, and Valley Horizons (services for pregnant teens). In the greater San Luis Valley community, Sociology faculty members are involved with twenty community groups and projects. In eight of these, faculty members have assumed leadership positions as board members and elected officials. Exercise Physiology and Leisure Science (EPLS) students assist with local community recreation activities, such as the ASC Kids' Climbing Club; and coach youth soccer, basketball, baseball, and Special Olympics.



In addition to credit-earning experiential activities, students have the opportunity to join one of 30 clubs registered with the Associated Students and Faculty (AS&F). AS&F requires all official college clubs and organizations to perform community service. Examples include food donation drives, blood donation drives, litter patrol of public spaces and highways, and service to a variety of community organizations. Circle K and Campus Ministries are devoted to service learning activities, including work with Habitat for Humanity, ASC Cares Day, and volunteer showcases in conjunction with Valley Community Fund. ASC Cares Day

2006 deployed 150 student volunteers to complete special projects for area non-profits. Education Club members spend more than 60 hours each semester working on a literacy intervention program to help fourth and fifth grade students improve their comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Adams State College faculty, staff, and students connect in numerous ways with the surrounding area. Almost every department has found ways to form community and K-12 partnerships, to link classroom and experiential learning, and to serve students and the larger community. Because Alamosa and the surrounding San Luis Valley are rural, isolated areas, the community makes good use of our students and serves as a partner in furthering their "real world" education.

### Core Component 4c:

The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

Adams State College is committed to providing quality educational programs and services so that students gain the skills necessary to be successful and responsible in a diverse, global society. The college community ensures that curriculum is current and relevant through internal review, as well as by consultation with external stakeholders who understand relationships between the curriculum and the world beyond the College. The various methods by which ASC assesses its curricula are detailed below.

#### PROGRAM REVIEW

Regular program and course reviews take place in all academic departments. These reviews take the form of a self-study that evaluates, among other key concerns, the following dimensions of a program's course offerings:

1. A review of goals and student learning outcomes and their assessment methods
2. A review of the strengths and weaknesses of the department, particularly as they relate to achieving program goals and student learning outcomes
3. Recommendations for improving course structure and content

Some, but not all, of the College's academic programs utilize the services of an external consultant/reviewer. The examples provided below are representative of the College's commitment to keeping its course offerings current and relevant.

The School of Business conducted an external program review in 2001 with an eye toward ensuring continued delivery of a contemporary, high value-added educational experience within existing resources. The consultant reviewed the program goals and objectives of the Business program primarily to assess the currency and relevance of course content. The reviewer reported that course syllabi are current in content and pedagogy, an "indication that the faculty remains intellectually active and dedicated to delivering a high-value business education."

The Biology program conducted a formal Program Review in 2001. In the *Institutional Summary Report* from the site visit, the external reviewer emphasized the department's "up-to-date curriculum subject to continuous improvement," stated that the department had "an especially enthusiastic faculty with contemporary, state-of-the-art training," and cited "the outstanding success rate of ASC Biology graduates" as an indicator of the program's quality.

The Art Department conducted an internal review of its goals, learning outcomes, and assessment methods in 2004. This particular self-study focused on assessing the program's strengths and weaknesses in terms of meeting these goals in an efficient manner, particularly given the department's limited resources and relatively high faculty turnover. The department's choice of goals and learning outcomes clearly reflects an overriding interest in this matter. For example, key program goals emphasize

## *Criterion IV: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge*

critical thinking skills, effective communication skills, and, in general, "the ability to enable students to pursue art-related careers and provide direction in the development of related professional skills and business implications."

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On a broad level, Adams State College's commitment to preparing students to function in a diverse world and with a diverse workforce is evident in its *Mission Statement* and *Institutional Goals*. The College's commitment to a quality liberal arts education is reflected in the goals and course offerings of the General Education curriculum. A representative sample of program reviews reveals the College's ongoing commitment to

1. Continuously identify the skill sets that enable graduates to function in a diverse workforce
2. Document that graduates do indeed gain these essential skills

The College's commitment to an educational experience attuned to the needs of a diverse workplace is clearly visible in various programs of study. For example, the Art program emphasizes as one of its program goals the need to instill in students a global understanding of the visual arts, its relationship to past and present social theory, and to promote appreciation of the visual arts within such a multicultural framework. As a result, the Art program review (2004) affirmatively reports as one of its strengths "the multi-cultural approach to Art Appreciation and the success of its hands-on lab component."

Similarly, the School of Business is committed to improving its educational process and modifying its offerings to keep pace with a diverse and ever-changing society. The School of Business program review (2001) reports achievement in this regard by noting, "Open-ended commentary from graduates consistently listed the real-world experience of the faculty as a significant strength in preparing the student for employment."



Likewise, one goal in the Teacher Education Department is to instill appreciation of diversity and democracy within schools. This goal is further refined into a student learning objective requiring that students develop an appreciation of diversity and individual differences within the classroom, something that historically has been lacking in public education.

As further evidence of the College's commitment to instilling an appreciation of diversity, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) reports Adams State College seniors have serious conversations with students from different religious backgrounds, political opinions, or personal values more frequently than their counterparts at comparable peer institutions.

### **Alumni and Employer Surveys**

The College's commitment to assessing the relevance of its curriculum is embedded within the culture of the institution in two ways. First, on a global level, the Office of Alumni Relations and the Counseling and Career Center conduct surveys to solicit general feedback from graduating seniors. The questions are typically geared toward gauging overall satisfaction with the total college experience, including involvement in campus organizations and extracurricular activities. This feedback is used at the administrative level to implement any changes deemed necessary to improve overall student satisfaction. Secondly, many academic departments utilize surveys of graduating seniors, alumni, and employers as a self-evaluation and assessment tool. For example, the English program, the Counselor Education Department, the Mathematics and Computer Science program, and the School of Business all use some form of these surveys. While generally useful, the survey approach has limitations

### **Student Scholarship**

Student research papers and projects assigned in coursework are common requirements throughout the various academic departments of the College. Many departments have senior-level capstone seminars or courses that require research projects to highlight and assess student research skills. Students are encouraged to present papers generated from these projects at regional and national conferences and submit them for publication in student and professional publications. Building the skills and study habits necessary for scholarship begins early in students' college experience. The 2005 National Survey of Student Engagement reports a positive trend for Adams State College freshmen in this regard. Over the years of NSSE administration at the College (1999 to present), freshmen have reported with increasing frequency that they prepare two or more drafts of assignments and receive prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance. The 2005 NSSE also reports other positive indicators that confirm the development of student scholarship at the College.

Several departments emphasize the importance of student scholarship by explicitly identifying this activity as a key program goal. For example, the Psychology Department reports: "The program has a vigorous initiative to promote research and publication by faculty. A feature of this initiative is for faculty to pursue publication in collaboration with students." Its Program Review (1998) provides examples of published articles collaboratively authored by faculty and students. Likewise, the Department of Sociology and the Department of Biology and Earth Sciences emphasize the importance of student scholarship. The Biology program establishes the goal of providing "opportunities for undergraduate students to gain critically important experience in independent research projects, as consistent with exit-level goals for Biology majors." The Program Review (2001) reports approximately \$16,500 in external funds were awarded over a five-year period to support undergraduate research projects.

The College recognizes the importance of educating and training students so they may succeed in work and life. The missions and assessment profiles of programs across the College explicitly define student learning outcomes aimed at instilling in students the skills and competencies necessary to be productive members of society. Reviews of the General Education program and academic programs identify core

## *Criterion IV: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge*

program standards that detail the knowledge, skills, and attitudinal dispositions expected of successful students. Evidence of success may include performance in capstone courses and seminars, preparation of documentation (student publications and graduate theses), attainment of specific scores on standardized exit and licensure exams, and successful completion of student teaching, other practica, or specific performance evaluations.

As noted above, many programs require senior-level capstone courses or seminars. Apart from the development of scholarship, a key function of the capstone experience is to challenge the integrative communication and thinking skills and independent learning abilities of the student. Several departments augment the capstone experience with internships and fieldwork.

### *Core Component 4d:*

**The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.**

Adams State College fosters an ethos of academic integrity through several policies and procedures that are communicated to students, faculty, and staff as described below.

Policies related to academic integrity are included in the *Student Handbook*, the *Faculty Handbook*, and the *Trustees' Policy Manual*. Honesty and academic integrity are taken seriously at Adams State College, and these documents address issues related to the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge.

The *Adams State College Student Handbook*, which was recently integrated into the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, is a comprehensive resource providing students with policies and procedures that apply to them as scholars and responsible citizens. The *Student Handbook* includes the Declaration of Tolerance, the ASC Affirmations, and the Students' Code of Conduct.

The Declaration of Tolerance emphasizes Adams State College's mission of recognizing the inherent educational value of diversity. The Declaration asks that students work with their communities to end intolerance and to speak out against hate and injustice. It states that while tolerance is a personal decision, respect is necessary to ensure ASC is a better place for all students, faculty, and staff.

Expectations regarding academic integrity are clearly defined in the *Student Handbook* under Code of Conduct. Academic honesty is the primary expectation and is grounded in an understanding of what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, or furnishing false information. The Code of Conduct also addresses campus policies related to facilities, other persons, and documents. The *Student Handbook* clearly states the consequences of academic misconduct or breaking other campus rules and regulations. In 2003, the Faculty Senate voted to adopt an Academic Integrity Policy delineating procedures and consequences for student violations. The Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs maintains a record of violations.

ASC not only provides this information in the *Student Handbook*, but also at a formal convocation at the beginning of each academic year. The entering freshman class learns about the ASC Affirmations and pledges to uphold the values and expectations of the College. Practicing academic integrity is the first of the affirmations. Honoring diversity, acting with civility, upholding responsible behavior in the community, and striving for excellence are also included.

Because of the College governance change in 2003, the *Faculty Handbook* was extensively revised and adopted by the Board of Trustees in June 2006.

Evaluation and retention processes are clearly articulated in the *Faculty Handbook*. The philosophy of performance evaluation and standards for evaluation of professional personnel are stated, as is the appeals procedure. Expectations include seeking the truth, supporting freedom of inquiry for faculty, encouraging free pursuit of knowledge by students, and fostering honest academic conduct, among other things.

The *Student Handbook* addresses intellectual property rights in its policy regarding academic integrity and academic dishonesty. That policy makes it clear that the violation of intellectual property rights will not be tolerated. An example of ASC's commitment to intellectual property rights and academic integrity is implementation of the "turnitin.com" program, a Web-based program that helps detect potential plagiarism.

Academic integrity and responsibility are also monitored through the Institutional Review Board (IRB). While teaching is the primary activity of ASC faculty, many do participate in research projects, either alone or in collaboration with colleagues or students. The IRB ensures that all research involving human subjects is completed in an ethical and responsible manner. A form outlining the research project must be submitted to the IRB before research begins. Comprised of faculty from various departments involved in research activities, the IRB is currently reviewing and revising its policies and procedures. A panel of faculty members will address the campus in 2006-2007 to ensure the College community has an accurate understanding of ethics, integrity, and protocol in relation to research activities.

Through its written materials such as the handbooks, Adams State College provides clear policy regarding the responsible use of knowledge.

## Summary

Adams State College engages students, faculty, administrators, and staff in acquiring, discovering and applying knowledge. Central to ASC's mission is the belief that there is inherent educational value in diversity and that our students will live and work in a diverse, global, and ever-changing society. It is ASC's responsibility to provide opportunities for learning to both students and the community.

Adams State College's documents and programs reflect our commitment to learning, to academic integrity, and to social responsibility. Program reviews and feedback from alumni and employers assist ASC in developing programs that are current and relevant to today's world. Academic programs, clubs, and organizations on campus contribute to the community in a variety of ways; in return, students gain "real-world"

## *Criterion IV: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge*

application of the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. ASC celebrates the achievements of all students, faculty, staff, and administration.

### **Strength:**

Faculty, staff, and administrators model their involvement in the local community through speaking engagements, workshops, service on community boards, and other volunteer work. These activities exemplify their commitment to supporting inquiry and social responsibility. The connections with the community carry over to students who are placed in local school districts, human service programs, and businesses for internships, field studies, and practica.

### **Strength:**

ASC's General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) defined learning outcomes for General Education courses in 1999. The committee has been at the forefront in addressing the purpose of the General Education curriculum, as well as the learning outcomes to be achieved. The GECC has creatively worked with the State of Colorado in its gtPathways program.

### **Strength:**

Adams State College has several mechanisms in place to assess its programs. Individual classes are evaluated by students, faculty are evaluated by students and department chairs, staff are evaluated by supervisors, and programs are evaluated through the program review process. Alumni and employers have the opportunity to provide feedback through the program review process. While processes and surveys are in place to gain information from various constituencies, there is always room for improvement in the response rates.

### **Challenge:**

The State of Colorado's funding for higher education continues to be a concern. While ASC faculty, staff, and administration have been creative in finding ways to support professional development, each cost unit budget should include a line item for staff development. Operating budgets have been tight, and professional development is often the first item to be cut.

### **Opportunity:**

Adams State College continues to expand technology use in the classroom, as well as in hybrid and online courses. Technology allows ASC to fulfill its role as a Regional Education Provider and allows students from rural areas to have the access and opportunity to pursue degrees or other programs of study. To further these efforts, the College recently created an Office of Academic Computing.

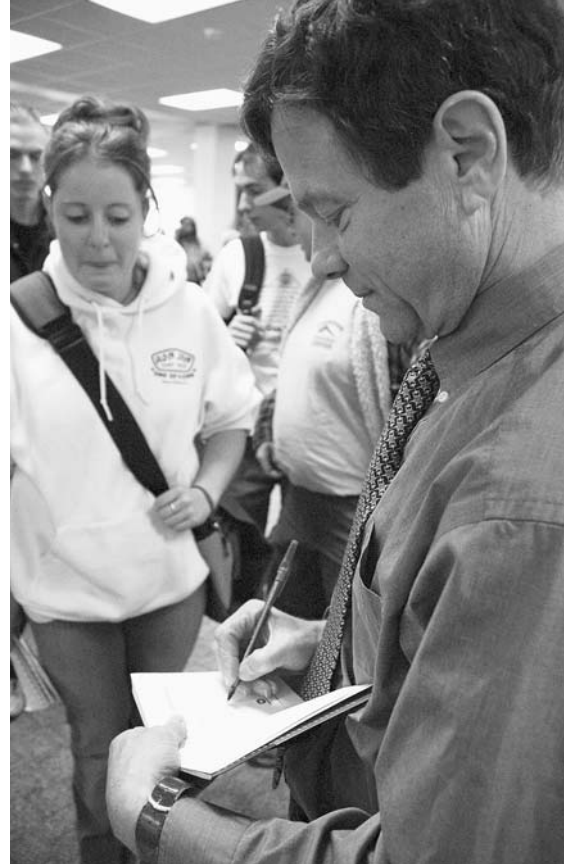
### **Opportunity:**

Adams State College's recent change in leadership creates opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved in moving the College forward. With the newly established Office of Community Partnerships, ASC has the opportunity to expand its relationships with community businesses, art and cultural groups, and other vested constituencies through its Talk Straight with Adams State forums and other projects. Campus-wide projects, such as the production of *Dead Man Walking* and the symposium on Alan Lightman's *Einstein's Dreams*, bring connection and collaboration to all

constituents, while building on curricular and co-curricular linkages. ASC has the opportunity to build on the success of these projects and incorporate K-12 schools in creative and scholarly efforts.

***Opportunity:***

Adams State College offers an array of support services and an innovative curriculum to first-year students. Building on this strength and expanding these services to upper-division students may increase retention rates and a sense of connection to ASC.





# *Engagement and Service*

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## Criterion V



**ADAMS STATE COLLEGE**

**C O L O R A D O** SM

*Great Stories Begin Here*

## CRITERION V:

# ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

### Criterion Overview

At Adams State College, service and engagement have regional implications. Beginning at its founding in 1921 with a primary mission to prepare school teachers for rural Colorado, Adams State College has focused on quality education for the entire region. Today, ASC is committed to offering educational access and opportunity, promoting the unique history and culture of the region, and stimulating economic development in the San Luis Valley. This chapter examines service, engagement, and outreach for the common good in these three areas, targeted in our *Mission Statement* and *Institutional Goals*. Numerous examples illustrate how ASC responds to community needs and collaborates to improve its services.

Colorado legislative and policy directives that support engagement have focused on education and provide a mandate that can be expanded to all areas of our *Mission*. In 2002, Colorado House Bill 02-1165 stated:

*The roles and missions of Colorado institutions located in rural settings, particularly Adams State College, Mesa State College, and Western State College of Colorado, should be guided less by their status as "state colleges" and more by a designation as "regional or community higher education provider." For purposes of strategic planning, Colorado should emphasize mission flexibility and program relevance suited to the needs of the areas served by the providers.*

In a 2003 policy statement, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) mandated that these same colleges have as their primary goal the assessment of regional educational needs and, in consultation with the CCHE, the allocation of resources for the purposes of meeting those needs. These mandates provide statutory support as Adams State College reviews and revises the institution's patterns of service and engagement in the community and region. Figure 5.1 illustrates the areas of responsibility for Colorado's Regional Education Providers.

The changes and challenges experienced during the period of this report are well reflected in the sixth report of the Kellogg Commission (2000, p. 22):

*By engagement, we refer to a redesign of basic university functions so the institution becomes even more productively involved with communities . . . Going well beyond most conceptions of public service, which emphasize a one-way transfer of university expertise to the public, the engagement ideal envisions new public/university partnerships defined by mutual respect for what each partner brings to the table.*

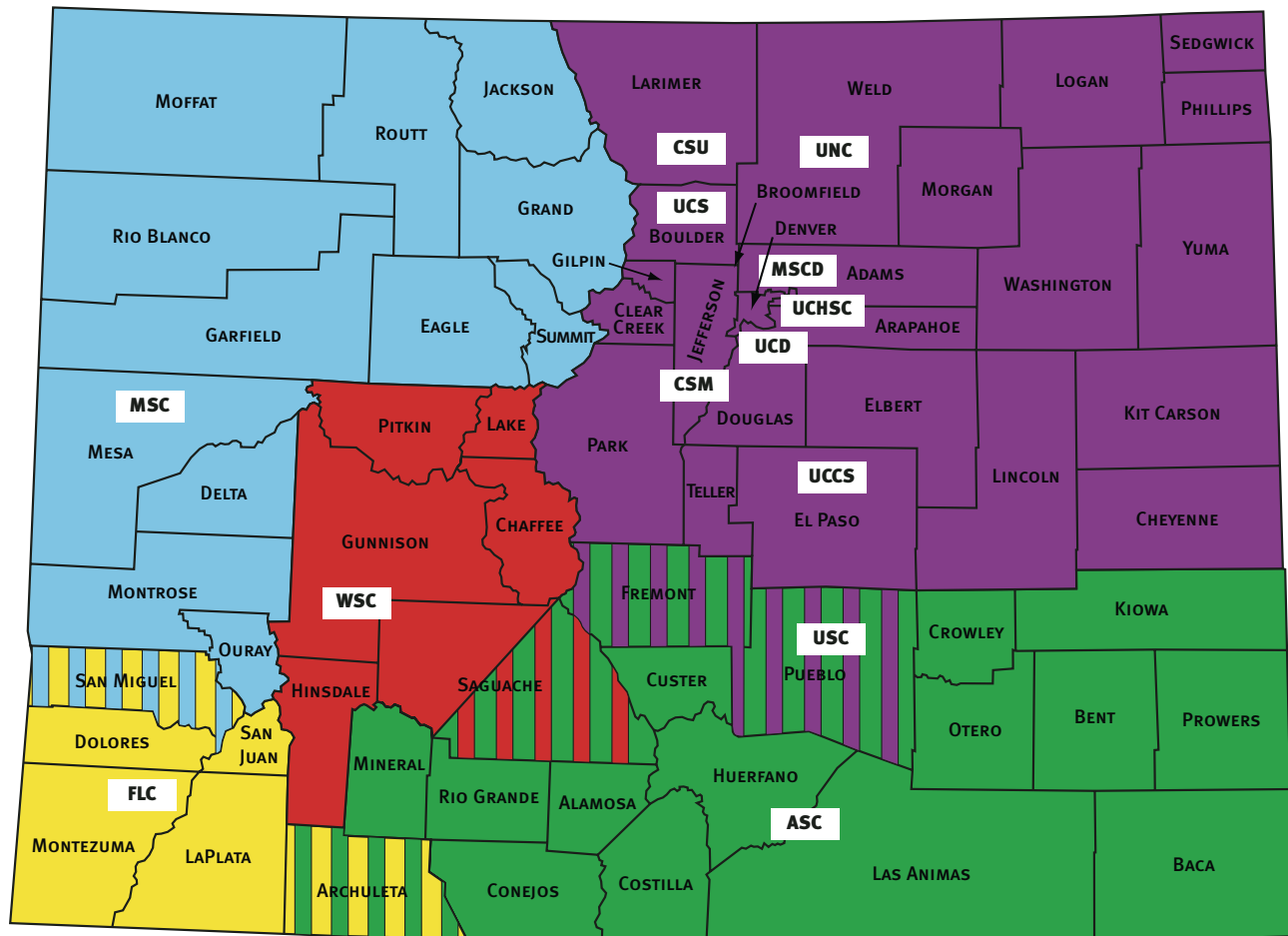
## Criterion V: Engagement and Service

This chapter is a report of challenges and responses as Adams State College

- Shifts from a one-way service model to a two-way collaborative model of engagement
- Leverages resources in a time of declining state support/funding and reorganization of state colleges
- Develops mechanisms to provide an accounting of our progress
- Identifies and works proactively with the multiple constituencies in our service area, particularly those who have been underserved in the past

Adams State College strives to use knowledge gained from past challenges to strengthen efforts to build effective partnerships that support the diverse peoples of the San Luis Valley and rural southern Colorado.

**FIGURE 5.1 - COLORADO REGIONAL EDUCATION PROVIDER SERVICE AREAS (ASC REGION IN GREEN)**



*Core Component 5a:*

The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Adams State College has several programs in place that engage various constituents to assess and meet their identified needs, as the examples below demonstrate.

**GEOGRAPHIC IDENTITY**

Adams State College is located in the San Luis Valley (SLV) of southern Colorado, a distinctive geographical region of 8,914 square miles. This isolated alpine valley lies at an elevation of 7,500 feet, surrounded by the Sangre de Cristo and San Juan mountain ranges. Our constituents are initially identified geographically, beginning within the San Luis Valley and, more recently, extending throughout south-central and southeastern Colorado. Communities in these regions are typically small rural towns with lower socio-economic status than the state on average, a predominance of Hispanic and white populations, and an economy primarily supported by agriculture, small business, and government employment.

Just over 46 percent of the San Luis Valley population is of Hispanic origin. This group is primarily descended from families who migrated to the area in the mid-1800s. The northern counties have larger numbers of recent Hispanic immigrants who have been attracted by agricultural jobs. The majority of long-established white, non-Hispanic families immigrated to the region in the late 1800s and early 1900s, part of a Mormon settlement still present in the region. These settlement patterns reflect the cultural heritage of the San Luis Valley. There are a few very small populations of other ethnicities in the San Luis Valley, totaling 1,397 persons (less than 3 percent).

**REGIONAL EDUCATION PROVIDER**

Demographics in the larger CCHE-defined service area for ASC are comparable to the Valley in terms of personal income, education, and poverty levels. The size of Hispanic populations in counties to the east and west of the San Luis Valley varies widely, from 41.5 percent in Las Animas County and 38 percent in Pueblo County, to 22 percent in Crowley County.

As a Colorado Regional Education Provider (REP), Adams State College determines and addresses regional educational needs. As mentioned in Criterion II, these needs can be addressed through the extension of existing programs, the creation of new undergraduate programs, partnerships with other educational institutions, and provision of graduate programs. Adams State College receives requests for programs of study or professional development opportunities from school districts and regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). Assessments are also conducted to determine educational needs in the region.

## *Criterion V: Engagement and Service*

### **LISTENING TO AND INTERACTING WITH CONSTITUENCIES**

Private, state, and federally funded projects require needs assessments to justify program funding. ASC's successful applications for a large number of funded projects, some of which are described below, demonstrate our ability to assess local needs and to develop appropriate services. Evaluation of these projects provides further input to identify and design services. Examples of funded projects include the Title V Cooperative Grant, Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant, and Project ALCANCE Grant for Teacher Training for Linguistically Diverse Students.



Adams State College's Community Forum series, begun in September 2004, is a proactive effort to develop more collaborative relationships with the College's constituencies. Titled *Talk Straight with Adams State*, the forum series fosters continuous conversation among ASC and the SLV communities. The forums strive to determine how the College can assist the community in meeting their needs, to identify methods to pool resources,

and to form collaborations that improve the standard of living for everyone in the San Luis Valley. Forum outcomes include increased community awareness of what ASC has to offer, reduction of overlap in community services, greater coordination and partnership in area projects, more input into how ASC programs can be improved and expanded, and better communication. Initially the forums were funded through the ASC President's Office; they are now funded through Adams State's Community Partnerships Center. This effort is supported by seed money from the Anschutz Foundation and funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of University Partnerships.

To date, six community forums have been held. Five were held in Alamosa and one in Conejos County, our neighboring county to the south. The initial forum in Alamosa and the forum in Conejos County focused on how ASC can better assist the communities. Other topics have included economic development, health-care, arts in the San Luis Valley, and water issues. More than 500 people have attended the forums, building community understanding and cooperation.

Program reviews are another way that Adams State College learns from its constituencies. Regular program reviews, completed on a five-year cycle, take place in all

academic departments of the College. Some of the College's academic programs use an external consultant/reviewer. Most programs use alumni and employer surveys to assist in restructuring or fine-tuning degree plans. For example, the Counselor Education program changed its curriculum to reflect the needs of regional mental health centers by adding the Diagnosis course.

The question of offering a BSN completion program was first raised about 25 years ago. A team of local practice nurses, nurse educators, and ASC personnel began the process of developing an RN-BSN curriculum in fall 2001. Following the development of an initial curriculum, the project was further defined by the San Luis Valley Nurses' Forum, a group of nurse leaders from the community. After receiving approval from the CCHE, the SLV Nurses' Forum continued to work on the development and start-up of the program through October 2004. Most members of the Nurses' Forum have agreed to continue their involvement through membership on the program's advisory committee. A director of the program was hired in August 2004, and classes began in January 2005. The program was accredited in October 2006 and will graduate its first students in December 2006.

Adams State College has listened to its constituencies regarding their needs and is willing to offer what is within our capacity to meet those needs.

### *Core Component 5b:*

## **The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.**

Adams State College possesses a strong commitment to engage our community and constituencies. ASC chooses to offer programs and educational opportunities that it can adequately support and that will have a beneficial impact in its communities. The examples that follow show some of the community interactions that stem from this commitment.

The College's service capacity is expanded by numerous successful grants that address everything from lab equipment in the sciences to community outreach and tuition waivers for master's degree seeking students.

Administration of graduate programs was centralized when the Graduate School was reestablished in 2005. ASC offers graduate programs over a large area of Colorado through a variety of delivery modes, so one goal was to improve services to off-campus students. The Graduate School provides a single point of contact for all matters related to graduate education and offers extended office hours. Additionally, communication with off-campus students has become a priority, and the website, catalog, and handbooks have been revised to reflect current practices. All of these efforts increased the capacity of ASC to meet the needs of current and future graduate students.

Adams State College recognizes the importance of its students in developing capacity to engage its constituents. Through internships, practicums, and field study courses, students work in businesses, schools, mental health centers, and other agencies to provide

## *Criterion V: Engagement and Service*

services reflective of their education and goals. Sociology students work with external constituents at local agencies such as Tu Casa (domestic violence services), La Puente (homeless shelter), and Valley Horizons (teen pregnancy services). Business students assist community members with tax preparation at no charge. Capstone courses and other coursework often produce research that is shared with the community.

The ASC community as a whole meets constituents' needs through clubs and service organizations, as well. The annual ASC Cares Day provides service learning opportunities for student organization members that range from painting and cleaning at the campus child care center (Gingerbread House) to stocking shelves and serving clients at the local food bank. Members of the Cross Country and other athletic teams helped La Puente move to a temporary location during their building renovation. Staff and faculty from the Teacher Education Department remodeled the Parent Center at Alamosa Headstart in preparation for its annual audit.

The College provides services that support the economic, educational, and cultural interests of the San Luis Valley and, by state mandate, extends its educational services to the larger area of southern Colorado. It remains for ASC to find programs and mechanisms to serve the economic and cultural needs of this larger service area. The breadth of programs described above reflect the capacity and commitment of the College to serve the multiple and diverse constituencies in the region.

### *Core Component 5c:*

### **The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.**

Adams State College faculty, staff, and students respond to the educational needs of our constituents. Programs have been created, delivery methods have been refined, partnerships have developed, and service has grown as a result of ASC's responsiveness. Adams State College grounds its engagement and service in educational access and opportunity, as historically mandated at its founding. An evolving sense of institutional mission is helping the College community better address the issues of educational access, opportunity, and student success. Our responses to student and community needs have created a number of vibrant programs that produce positive results, as described below.

#### **EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Programs demonstrating our commitment and responsiveness to educational needs include TRIO grant-funded programs, Teacher Education Department grant-funded programs, a range of distance education options, and an array of projects and programs supported by academic departments.

One example is ASC's recent development of the RN-BSN completion program and an Agribusiness program, both stimulated by requests from SLV residents.

A second example is the delivery of community-based graduate programs in several endorsements by the Teacher Education and Counselor Education departments. These off-site locations include such communities as La Junta, Pueblo, Durango, Cortez,

Cañon City, and Grand Junction. Also, the Counselor Education Department began a hybrid delivery program to attract students both nationally and internationally.

A third instance of ASC's responsiveness to the needs of our constituencies is Extended Studies, which delivers distance education programs, including distance degrees, to a wide variety of off-campus constituents who would otherwise be unable to pursue an education. Examples include certificate programs, baccalaureate degree programs in education and business in rural areas (REAP), College@High School, courses for the Colorado Department of Corrections, and professional development courses for K-12 educators throughout the state.

### **TRIO PROGRAMS**

Since 1973, Adams State College has provided institutional support for TRIO programs funded by the federal Office of Postsecondary Education. Upward Bound and Talent Search are directly geared toward local middle and senior high school students; Student Support Services serves current ASC students.

From 1995 through 2006, Talent Search served an average of nearly 1,000 students per year in 13 of the 14 San Luis Valley school districts. As a service for low-income, high-risk students in grades 6 through 12, the program provided early intervention and counseling, as well as information about college admissions requirements, scholarships, and various student financial aid programs. Unfortunately, the Talent Search grant was not funded in 2006. ASC will pursue renewal in the next funding cycle.

Upward Bound serves an average of 80 students per year in 7 of the 14 San Luis Valley school districts. The program prepares high school students who have low incomes or are the first generation in their families to attend college. Participants receive instruction in literature, composition, mathematics, and science on the ASC campus after school, on Saturdays, and during the summer. Services are provided in collaboration with the schools, as well as with community agencies such as the San Luis Valley Mental Health Center, which provides counseling; the Boys and Girls Club, which recruits participants; Rocky Mountain SER/Jobs for Progress, which provides summer employment for juniors and seniors; and the Area Health Education Center, which offers workshops and counseling.

Student Support Services (SSS) has successfully served first-generation students, low-income students, and students with disabilities since 1979. Currently, SSS provides a comprehensive package of services to 175 eligible students with the goals of fostering a supportive institutional climate that helps retain and graduate them. These services include counseling (academic, career, financial, and personal), individualized and group tutoring, peer/faculty mentoring, a pre-collegiate Summer Scholars Program, college success workshops, educational trips, graduate school preparation, and supplemental grant/scholarship aid to select qualified participants. Its "family" approach allows SSS to work in close partnership with students, to be devoted to their academic success, and to advocate, as well as empower them to advocate, for the resources and knowledge to ensure their success.



## *Criterion V: Engagement and Service*



### **K-12 PARTNERSHIPS**

Most academic departments at Adams State College partner in some way with local or regional public and private schools. Examples of these partnerships are discussed below.

The science programs have a variety of activities designed to expose local K-12 students to science and science-related occupations. The Physics program hosts hundreds of school children each year at the Zacheis Planetarium. Presentations include planetarium shows, live star and planet watching through the telescopes, and an annual rocket contest. A robotics workshop for high school students was begun in 2005. The Chemistry program puts on an annual Chemistry Magic Show and hosts K-12 students in college labs afterward for a variety of fun chemistry projects. The Department of Biology and Earth Sciences hosts dozens of elementary and middle school tours each year in the Edward M. Ryan Geological Museum, which is an exceptional resource for the College and region. All of the science departments support and staff the annual Regional Science Fair.

For the last two years, ASC has partnered with the Boys and Girls Clubs of the San Luis Valley and the Alamosa School District's Youth Enrichment Academy to present Kids on Campus. This summer enrichment program offers 5th-12th graders the chance to intensively explore a range of subjects.

The Teacher Education Department recently hosted the third Math Academy on campus. The academy partners with districts in the San Luis and Arkansas valleys to bring both public school students and teachers to the ASC campus to work with hands-on, problem-based algebra. The Math Academy is supported by a grant from the No Child Left Behind initiative, awarded by the CCHE. The summer Math Academy uses classroom coaching and lesson study to focus on pre-algebra and algebra in grades five through nine. The goals are to improve in-service teacher preparation in math education, to increase the number of highly qualified math educators, and to develop and implement a learner-centered, problem-based mathematics curriculum in seven rural Colorado school districts. Teachers significantly modify their teaching methods after witnessing the success of this instructional approach, particularly with underperforming students.

The Arts Extravaganza, presented by the departments of Art; Music; and English, Theatre, Communications, and Foreign Language, hosts over 100 high school students and teachers annually to participate in a variety of workshops in the visual, literary, and performing arts. Additionally, art education students provide art programs locally for Trinity Lutheran School and for New Beginnings, an adult education program sponsored by the San Luis Valley Mental Health Center. The Theatre program

regularly presents matinees for local school students. In spring 2006, College@High School students attended a performance of *Dead Man Walking*.

Perhaps the model for K-12 interactions at ASC was established years ago by the Music Department, which sponsors annual Top of the Nation Honor Band and Honor Choir programs for high school students from around the state. The Honor Band program was established more than 40 years ago. Through auditions at about 25 high schools in Colorado and surrounding states, roughly 100 band members and 60 vocalists are selected to participate in these annual events. The students participate in three days of clinics and rehearsals, culminating in a Saturday night performance.

Adams State College continues to offer a College@High School program that provides high school students the opportunity to earn college credits without leaving their home campuses. Echoing aspects of ASC's mission, the program aims to

- Inspire more high school students to attend college
- Promote student self-confidence
- Provide advanced-learning opportunities for motivated students
- Increase the probability of students completing a college degree in four years or less
- Strengthen relationships between high schools and Adams State College

Currently, in order to stay within the College's capacity for delivery of a quality program, the College@High School program is available primarily in the SLV and near-by regions.

## TEACHER EDUCATION

Since 1999, ASC's Teacher Education Department has acquired more than \$5.4 million in grant funding to assess and serve the educational needs of students and educators in the Southern Colorado service area. These initiatives provide tuition, books, and fees in most of the grant-funded graduate and endorsement programs described below.

READ-ELA is a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Title III English Language Acquisition: National Professional Development Program. READ-ELA was funded for five years at \$1,967,980, beginning in fall 2002. This project is designed to meet the shortage of highly trained teachers and paraprofessionals and to provide quality reading instruction to rural Colorado's large population of limited-English-speaking children. The project focuses on areas of rural Colorado that have limited access to this



## Criterion V: Engagement and Service



type of training at either the undergraduate or graduate level. Additionally, the project initiated a professional school partnership with Evans Elementary (Alamosa School District) in 2003 that places teacher candidates with practicing teachers in their classrooms and supports co-teaching with Evans and ASC faculty.

The Partnering Across Regions to Nurture Equity and Relevance for Students (PARTNERS) grant was funded for four years at \$793,172, beginning in October 2004. It followed a Colorado Consortium for Equity in Special Education Services (ACCESS) grant that was funded for five years at \$680,591, beginning in August 2000. These projects were developed to help schools meet the highly qualified Special Education guidelines set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act by providing teachers in Colorado and northern New Mexico with teacher licensure in the area of Special Education in the categories of mild to moderate needs. The goal of ACCESS was to improve education specifically for bilingual special needs students.

The Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) project prepares teachers of linguistically diverse students. It was funded by a Colorado Department of Education Literacy, Language, and Culture Grant for \$790,000 from fall 2002 through fall 2006. It provides practitioners in our K-12 partnership schools with training in English Language Learner (ELL) identification, assessment, and curricular development. It has offered institutes in reading and effective instruction for practicing educators, including those seeking literacy endorsement at Adams State College. It provided a pair of seminars for early childhood ELL identification and assessment training in collaboration with

Otero Junior College and Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus. A range of knowledge and skills for working with ELL students is integrated into the undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs through two phases of ASC faculty development. Through our partnership with Regis University, six ASC faculty members met with Regis faculty to discuss strategies for infusing ELL curriculum into courses.

Project ALCANCE was funded in fall 2001 through a \$623,888, three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education Title III English Language Acquisition: National Professional Development Program. The project provided an opportunity for Bilingual/English as a Second Language teaching endorsement to pre-K-through-12 teachers throughout southern Colorado. ALCANCE responded to the identified needs of students in 14 Valley school districts by improving the academic skills of teachers. In addition, 12 master mentor teachers received further training from experienced Bilingual/ESL teachers and ASC faculty. The master mentor teachers will serve as a resource for subsequent teacher training. To provide all pre-K-through-12 schools with training in effective teaching of linguistically diverse students, ALCANCE developed a collaborative network among three major college campuses in southern Colorado: Adams State College, Fort Lewis College, and Colorado State University-Pueblo. The program also created a professional learning network using web-based classroom support that is accessible to all 14 SLV districts and at least 85 percent of the remaining districts in southern Colorado.

### **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

The M.A. in Counseling has been offered off-campus since 1980. Faculty travel to sites in southern and western Colorado to deliver the same master's degree offered on campus. Current locations include Durango, Grand Junction, La Junta, and Pueblo. Additionally, a program delivered primarily online attracts students from around the country. Teacher Education has offered master's degrees at off-campus sites since the mid-1990s, including the sites listed above and others. These programs are generally offered at the request of a school district, a local BOCES, or a party of interested professionals. ASC responds to requests that fit our mission and our ability to serve students, allowing professionals from a wide geographical range to earn advanced degrees.

In an effort to enable all constituents to pursue a baccalaureate degree, ASC's Rural Education Access Program (REAP) uses ASC faculty to present a Business degree and an Interdisciplinary Studies-Elementary Education degree to students in off-campus rural locations. Students take the first two years of course work at Otero Junior College, Lamar Community College, or Trinidad State Junior College, and then complete the final two years with ASC through upper-division classes at a community college campus. A similar degree-completion program for elementary education licensure is offered at Arapahoe Community College.

ASC Extended Studies has focused on providing educational programs to diverse constituencies. It is committed to making available many of the same high-quality courses and programs offered on campus, using the flexibility of distance delivery. Extended Studies connects with more than 13,500 students and 1,300 instructors globally to provide quality learning and teaching opportunities.

## *Criterion V: Engagement and Service*

Extended Studies' Teachers Professional Development Center provides professional development opportunities for educators seeking dynamic ways to promote high quality education, improve student achievement, and motivate students. In direct response to requests from school districts throughout the state, the center provides professional development opportunities through conferences, workshops, and certificate programs.

Extended Studies' Business Professional Development Center specializes in distance courses focusing on personal growth and professional development. Topics range from job skill training and successful management styles to law or legal career opportunities.

In expanding ASC's degree programs, Extended Studies collaborated with the Sociology, Business, and Education departments to offer distance degrees, thus meeting the needs of a growing number of students unable to pursue a degree in a traditional campus setting. Students take courses on a part-time, independent basis to earn credit toward a degree, to prepare for a new career or promotion, to meet professional recertification requirements, or for personal satisfaction. Distance degrees available are Associate of Arts/Associate of Science, Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, Bachelor of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies-Elementary Education, Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Certificate Programs are available in Management Information Systems, Paralegal I, and Paralegal II. Certificate courses are available in Alternative Dispute Resolution (Mediation), Legal Investigation, Legal Nurse Consultant Training, Legal Secretary, and Victim Advocacy.

Extended Studies also offers ASC General Education courses to prisoners through a program in the Colorado Department of Corrections.

### **ECONOMIC NEEDS**

ASC supports the region's stability and improves educational access and opportunity for those with financial limitations by addressing the economic needs of its constituents and service areas. An institutional Community Partnerships Center coordinates and facilitates specific projects described below.

ASC has hosted and financially supported a business development center since 1988. The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at ASC received the national "State Star" center award in 2000 from the Association of Small Business Development Centers. The SBDC served as a focal point for linking resources of the federal, state, and local governments with the resources of the educational system and the private sector. The SBDC program met the specialized, complex management and technical assistance needs of this economically challenged community. During 2003, the center helped start 31 businesses, creating 48 jobs throughout the SLV. The SBDC partnered with San Luis Valley Development Resources Group (SLV DRG) in the local revolving loan fund program, funded by the state and federal governments to provide business support workshops. The center also played a vital role in supporting existing businesses by assisting in problem solving. In late 2005, ASC reorganized the SBDC into an independent Business Support Center as part of its Community Partnerships program. A total of 889 clients received individual business counseling from the center between 2003 and June 2006.

ASC partners with Colorado's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide business support services and workshops to disabled individuals. The division sponsors their clients through ASC Community Partnerships' 12-week program that guides participating community members through every aspect of owning and operating a business. In 2003, three disabled community members started their own businesses. Four Vocational Rehabilitation clients are being assisted in 2006, while another is enrolled full-time as a student at ASC.

As part of coursework, students in ASC's School of Business assist local economic development organizations in assessing community needs and developing marketing plans tailored to local counties, towns, and downtown areas. Students design and conduct surveys to gather needs assessment data, then analyze and present the results to community organizations.

In addition to the projects listed above, ASC faculty and staff members work as volunteers and/or board members for the area's economic development groups. These efforts have resulted in production of community guides for two counties, design and implementation of a marketing campaign to encourage residents to support local businesses, and development of a strategy to attract and retain downtown businesses.

In 1999, Adams State College received a \$342,310 HUD Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC) grant to create a virtual business incubator with existing and new community partners. ASC and its community partners matched the 1999 HSIAC grant with \$229,850 in in-kind funds, leveraging a total of \$610,000.

The incubator raised the capacity of the College and its economic development partners to provide business support services to potential and existing businesses within the community. A business volunteer network was created to provide mentoring services for low-income individuals. This program is self-sustaining and supports efforts of the Business Support Center and community development. In addition, the grant permitted expansion of the micro-enterprise loan program of an ASC partner, as well as development of a network of websites offering valuable information and interactive capability. These projects have reduced duplication of efforts among economic development organizations and significantly increased the pool of resources.

ASC participates in conferences and meetings sponsored by HUD. At the 2000 HUD conference in San Diego, a Virtual Business Incubator representative presented the ASC project as a case study of best practices and challenges.

To assist local agricultural producers, ASC's Business Support Center obtained funding from the USDA to pilot an alternative agriculture program. Designed for individuals not tied to large scale, commodity-style production, the coursework targets small producers interested in searching for innovative ideas and enhanced marketing opportunities. Since the original pilot program in 2002, ASC has regularly offered this coursework to address industry issues, including sustainability and alternative energy. It forms the basis of the new Agribusiness program offered by the School of Business.

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ASC's Community Partnerships Center also boosts the ability of rural communities to use technology for improved quality of life. The Rural New Economy (RNE) initiative in 2000 addressed gaps in high-speed technology that challenge rural Colorado. A consortium of 14 rural institutions of higher education, RNE's mission was to provide education to build capacity in rural Colorado to take advantage of opportunities presented in the new economy. With \$30,000 from RNE, ASC participated in the pilot program to develop, test, and distribute RNE initiatives. ASC collaborated with three other colleges to upgrade Internet-related skills of the healthcare workforce in rural Colorado. The program became a model for other western communities anticipating improvements in access to broadband. Managing Information in Rural America (MIRA) provided hardware and software through funding from the Kellogg Foundation. Computers were donated to organizations that lacked them, such as the Antonio Senior Center and the Costilla County Library. The college-community team installed the computers and provided instruction. The Internet Masters program, conducted from 1999 to 2002, trained community members in the use of the Internet (basic-intermediate-advanced) and required participants to train others once they became certified. A new partnership begun in 2006 with the John C. Ford Program-Global Education Initiative gives access to that foundation's web conferencing software in order to bridge the rural technology gap. That donation, valued at \$100,000 per year, includes software training and networking opportunities with other communities. In addition, the HUD HSIAC grant provides computers for community use in business plan development.

ASC's Business Support Center organizes a series of workshops to assist minority and women business owners with the process of becoming certified as a Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB), which is required to sell goods and services to the federal and state governments. These workshops, begun in 2004, connect local businesses with government agencies, provide information on SDB government programs, and mentor businesses through the certification process. ASC's first workshop was one of the best-attended procurement training events in the state, facilitated by representatives from eight government agencies. Follow-up workshops are held to assist disadvantaged businesses with the Internet-based registration and certification process. Individual counseling on procurement questions is offered regularly. Many small businesses have already been registered and certified.

In September 2004, ASC received a HUD HSIAC grant of \$600,000 to renovate a vacant campus building for a Community Partnership and Outreach Center. Renovation is expected to start in May 2007. The center will be a connecting point between the College and the community and will also showcase traditional cultural arts of the San Luis Valley.

ASC Community Partnerships collaborated with the SLV DRG and the Entrepreneurial Loan Center to obtain a \$50,000 grant from the Kellogg Foundation to provide leadership training for 100 community members. In 2000, phase two of the program brought in \$150,000 for community projects. Projects included providing computers and training and creating a central information website for the SLV.

ASC Community Partnerships helped Con-Cepts (Conejos County Economy and Environment Progressing Together) to obtain a USDA grant to fund a community guide that promotes the county and provides valuable information for residents. ASC student interns assisted community volunteers in writing and editing the information. The \$17,500 grant financed the research, design, printing, and distribution of the 2005 guide.

## **CULTURE**

Faculty, staff, and students at Adams State College are involved in preserving and promoting the history and culture of the region through a range of service commitments, cultural clubs and organizations, and activities. Surveys of ASC staff and faculty members indicate that many serve on the boards of directors or advisory committees of a wide variety of organizations. Faculty and staff are also committed to involving the wider SLV community in campus cultural events. The public is encouraged to attend and participate in conferences, workshops, exhibitions, and performances sponsored by several academic departments.

As the largest venue for visual arts in the San Luis Valley, the ASC Art Department galleries provide an artistic and cultural learning experience for the local, regional, and college communities. The Cloyde Snook and Hatfield galleries present 12-16 exhibits each year by local, regional, national, and international artists. In addition, the department hosts visiting artists, workshops, and interdisciplinary projects. In 2005, Hopi potter Lawrence Namoki gave demonstrations of traditional Hopi ceramic methods. A number of local potters from the community joined ASC art students in



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learning Hopi methods of making, decorating, and firing pots.

The ASC Music Department presents a broad repertoire of outstanding music concerts, including those by student groups such as the Chamber and Concert Choirs, 68 West (*a cappella* ensemble), the Jazz Band, Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, Chamber Orchestra, and Percussion Ensemble. Professional level performances by faculty and guest artists showcase a variety of musical styles. In addition to attending performances, community members

may participate in the Community Chorus and the SLV Big Band. These groups perform in a variety of settings, from local churches to parks. For many community members, these groups provide a chance to perform in a supportive environment and challenge themselves as musicians.

The Adams State College Theatre program recognizes the importance of the community to its success. The Theatre program has always made a conscious effort to consider community interests and demographics in its programming, but such efforts have been especially strong since completion of the new theatre building in 2001. While programming continues to be very diverse and sometimes challenging to audiences, there has also been an effort to include a major family-friendly production each year. The 2004 production of *A Christmas Carol* was not only appealing to audiences of all ages, but also provided opportunities for some younger community children to experience acting in a play of high caliber. The production of *Peter Pan* was geared to a similar audience and, like *A Christmas Carol*, its sold-out performances attest to the community's appreciation.

Perhaps the most impressive example of community involvement with a theatre production is the *Dead Man Walking* School Theatre Project. It initiated a broad-based community collaboration that involved 25 book groups, a public lecture by Sr. Helen Prejean (author of the book on which the film and play are based), and standing-room-only performances. The *Valley Courier* quoted Maureen Fenlon, coordinator of the *Dead Man Walking* School Theatre Project: "The cooperation was most impressive, as was the number of people engaged in the project. Adams State clearly got an A-plus on how to do that." Prejean said, "What's happening here in Alamosa is unbelievable . . . It's a wonderful example of how a play can get a community moved." ASC's project has become a national model and is highlighted on the website: [http://www.dmwplay.org/school\\_spotlight.html](http://www.dmwplay.org/school_spotlight.html)

In 2002, Adams State College hosted a symposium, *El Agua, La Cultura, Las Placitas - Water, Culture, Settlements*, which expanded work on the task of applying to Congress for designation of Alamosa, Costilla, and Conejos Counties as a National Heritage Area. The event was organized by an extensive collaboration of varied constituencies in the region: Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus, Adams State College faculty and Title V Outreach, the San Luis Valley History Museum, Ft. Garland Museum, and Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic Byway.

Adams State College's Mariachi Corazon del Valle is another example of collaboration between the College and external entities. Members of the arts coalition, Adobe de Oro, brought the idea of a mariachi group to ASC in 2002. Begun with Title V funding, the mariachi group is now housed within the Music Department. The group represents Adams State College at conferences and performances throughout Colorado and surrounding states. Students are eligible for ten scholarships offered specifically to mariachi participants. For eight years, ASC has sponsored a fall Mariachi Espectacular in cooperation with Adobe de Oro. This weekend event features a nationally renowned group giving workshops and a performance. Regional groups also perform. An annual spring concert showcases a number of regional mariachi groups, as well.

ASC has sponsored Semillas de la Tierra Grupo Folklorico on campus since 1971. ASC students, as well as high school students, present folk dances of Mexico and keep this tradition vibrant. The annual Christmas Fiesta performance is very popular with valley residents.

The Luther E. Bean Museum, housed in Richardson Hall, provides a cultural and historical center exhibiting local historical collections, college artifacts, and regional artwork.



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Starting in 2006, grants from HUD and the Colorado Council on the Arts (CCA) are supporting a community arts coordinator and development of a campus cultural resource center as part of ASC Community Partnerships.

Pan-American Days is a long-time tradition of *El Parnaso*, one of the oldest clubs on campus. Last year marked the 67th anniversary of the event. Eight high schools from around the San Luis Valley participated, with a total of 215 students. Each year, students compete in academic competitions such as spelling, grammar, speech, and oral interpretation, as well as in cultural competitions. *El Parnaso*, originally named *Los Voces del Valle*, was founded in 1928 by Spanish-speaking students to preserve their language and heritage in an intellectual setting. In 1939 it sponsored the first Pan-American Day to stimulate friendship and cooperation in the region and revive the influence of the Spanish culture. Schools throughout Colorado were invited to attend, and delegates were chosen to represent each school in a program. Speakers

and dancers were featured, and the evening climaxed with a Pan-American Ball. By 1960, Spanish education competitions were included at the annual affair, and in 1963, a scholarship program was added.

ASC has also been the site of activities focused on environmental problems. A 2004 survey of SLV residents revealed a desire to address water issues, stimulating a new series of water symposia. The first of these symposia addressed *The Economics of Water: What is Water Worth to the Community of the San Luis Valley?* The second was titled *Sustainable Natural Resources & the San Luis Valley*. Topics included energy and sustainability in agriculture, global sustainability, and a panel discussion of practical approaches to sustainability. The keynote address was given by SLV native, U.S. Senator Ken Salazar. He also keynoted a recent Community Forum on water well metering.

### **ATHLETICS**

Alamosa and the SLV community embrace the ASC Grizzlies by financially supporting and attending college-level athletic contests. In addition, ASC's athletic facility, Plachy Hall, hosts more community activities and events than any other single facility in the six-county region and also features Alamosa County's largest indoor pool. Community and public school activities held at Plachy include Alamosa Parks & Recreation programs, high school basketball and track events, Special Olympics, and summer camps for K-12 athletes presented by ASC coaches and teams.

Plachy Hall is also the scene of the annual SLV History Fair and Science Fair, the Regional FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) competition, meetings of the BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services), Upward Bound events, Scout-a-Rama, and commencement ceremonies for ASC and Trinidad State Junior College.

### *Core Component 5d:*

## Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

The community's perception of Adams State College's service is changing as ASC's efforts to collaborate with the community grow. For example, members of the Hispanic community who did not feel well served during previous decades are more hopeful now after seeing outreach efforts that actively engage and support them. Workshops and graduate programs for educators working with linguistically and culturally diverse students, as well as conferences and activities, celebrate and embrace the region's various traditions. This changed perception has resulted from reinvigorated outreach to communities and constituencies to identify varied needs and to tailor responses and support. ASC students also benefit through their participation in outreach, whether they volunteer in a service project, mentor at-risk children, or share their creative endeavors. Community support and appreciation of college services are evident in the examples that follow.

Symbolic of the more collaborative and interactive relationship between the College and community is the 2006 move of the Valley Community Fund (VCF) to a campus location. A non-profit agency in the SLV, VCF is comprised of 29 member non-profit agencies and supports these agencies through fundraising, training, and the promotion of volunteerism and philanthropy. Supporting humanitarian efforts of its member agencies, VCF works toward its goal of "Valley People Serving Valley People." By providing a central location for the VCF, ASC joins to support vital services in the region.

The *Dead Man Walking* Theatre Project epitomized the potential power of community projects. For more than a semester, community members were involved in such related activities as book groups, art exhibitions, and discussions on the issue of capital punishment. The degree of involvement was impressive in its magnitude.

Continued campus and community involvement through attendance at cultural and athletic events gives evidence that both internal and external constituencies value the services ASC provides. The art exhibitions and music and theatre performances provide an experience of the arts on a professional level and scale unavailable elsewhere in the SLV. In addition, events like the high school art show, the Top of the Nation Honor Band, and Honor Choir have had excellent participation rates and have provided opportunities in the arts for regional youth. The Community Chorus and SLV Big Band provide opportunities for adults in the region to participate in high level musical performances. Community Chorus members, in particular, have long supported the Music Department, both as performers and as audience members.

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The Music Department and community have a tradition of mutual support. The Friends of Music support the Music Department through annual donations, and the Music Department offers both its performances and its annual piano sale. A multi-year campaign raised \$47,000 from foundations and community members to support the department's purchase of a Steinway Concert Grand Piano. The acquisition allows music students to rehearse and perform on a concert-quality, internationally renowned instrument. The piano was showcased in a September 2006 dedication concert featuring performances by faculty members and exceptional students.

Likewise, college sports competitions are the highest level of athletic performance in the region. Community support through the Grizzly Club provides evidence that the community values this contribution. A joint fundraising effort of the Adams State College Alumni Association and the ASC Grizzly Club produced the Grizzly Courtyard, completed in spring 2006 at a total cost of nearly \$125,000. Central to the courtyard is a 12-foot bronze statue of "Old Mose," one of the last grizzlies in the south-central Colorado mountains. The courtyard was made possible by donors who purchased brick pavers, benches, capstones, and bronzes. Nationally known SLV sculptor Jim Gilmore donated his creative labor, and contributions were also made by local architects, contractors, and laborers.

Another indicator of how much constituents value the College is a significant increase in contributions to the ASC Foundation, which rose an impressive 33 percent from 2003 to 2005.

## Summary

In addition to providing access and opportunity for education, Adams State College engages in a wide range of activities that promote economic development and enhance cultural life. The constituents served range from public school children to non-profit organizations within the communities of south-central and southeastern Colorado.

### **Strength:**

Adams State College has successfully presented a wide range of outreach projects that both collaborate with and provide service to its regional constituents.

### **Strength:**

Grant applications and awards have increased in the past ten years, with many departments and offices obtaining funding for projects. Nearly \$8.5 million was received between 2003 and 2006 from federal, state, and private sources. Adams State College actively seeks grants such as Title V to assist with professional development for faculty and staff. The following are some examples of grant-funded development taking place at Adams State College.

- The Teacher Education Department has received grants not only to assist with professional development, but also to waive tuition for many rural teachers in graduate programs.
- A four-year grant of \$260,000 from the National Science Foundation to the Department of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Physics provided student scholarships. Acquisition of robotics equipment was supported with a \$51,000 grant from the Department of Defense.
- The Psychology Department and the Chemistry program received grants for equipment for and outreach to K-12 schools.
- The Office of Community Partnerships has received many grants recently for continued community outreach. Among these are two substantial HUD HSIAC grants, one for nearly \$230,000 in 1999, and another for \$600,000 in 2004.
- The Physics program has received funding to offer planetarium programs to K-12 schools.
- The Nursing program received grants totaling \$97,000 for classroom equipment and supplies; \$330,048 for student scholarships; and \$251,350 to hire faculty.

### **Challenge:**

There is enormous potential for ASC to continue receiving substantial grant funding, but our ability to take advantage of these opportunities is limited without a position dedicated to grant writing.

### **Challenge:**

The College has demonstrated extensive support for the economic, educational, and cultural interests of the San Luis Valley. It remains for ASC to find programs and mechanisms to serve the economic and cultural needs of the larger southern Colorado service area, as specified in state statute.

# *Federal Compliance*

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# FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

## Introduction

Adams State College dedicates its resources to providing opportunities and accessibility for all students. Federal compliance is the cornerstone of the institution's student focused environment. Adams State College has and will continue to demonstrate its abilities to maintain eligibility to participate in the U. S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid Programs by adhering to all compliance guidelines and laws applicable.

## Credits, program length, and tuition

The Higher Learning Commission expects an affiliated institution to be able to

- Equate its learning experiences with semester or quarter credit hours using practices common to institutions of higher education
- Justify the lengths of its programs in comparison to similar programs found in accredited institutions of higher education
- Justify any program-specific tuition in terms of program costs, program length, and program objectives

All ASC classes offered for credit are based on semester-hours. Each credit hour is equivalent to 750 minutes of contact time as required by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Policy Manual Section V. Part B., Policy for Reporting Full-Time Equivalent Student Enrollment. This translates into a minimum of fifteen 50-minute periods or ten 75-minute periods per semester. Each regular semester is 15 weeks long. Details are provided in the published Schedule Manual on the Office of the Provost web page: [www2.adams.edu/provost/](http://www2.adams.edu/provost/)

The length of all programs at Adams State College is governed by state law and monitored by the CCHE. Students must complete 120 credits for a Bachelor's degree and 60 credits for an Associate's degree. Adams State College does not charge program-specific tuition; therefore, justification of differential tuition rates is not necessary.



## Compliance with Higher Education Reauthorization Act

The HLC requires that

- All organizations receiving Title IV funds provide documentation relevant to Title IV compliance
- The self-study report evaluate the organization's default rate, and its plans, if needed, for reducing default
- The organization comment on compliance with Title IV-mandated student notification requirements, such as campus crime reporting and release of completion/graduation rates

ASC will provide copies of all documents relevant to Title IV compliance to the Higher Learning Commission's consultant-evaluator team. Including the Program Participation Agreement and Eligibility and Certification Renewal, these documents will be available in the Office of Financial Aid.

Adams State College maintains a lower-than-average default rate in Federal Family Education Loan Programs (FFELP) and has decreased this rate substantially over the past three years (Table 6.1). ASC uses the College Access Network (CAN) default management plan, which has likely helped to reduce the default rate. ASC also provides individual debt counseling for all first-time borrowers.

**TABLE 6.1 - ASC STUDENT LOAN DEFAULT RATE**

	FY 2004	FY 2003	FY 2002
<b>Default Rate</b>	3.7%	3.6%	6.3%
<b>Number in default</b>	24	24	41
<b>Number in repay</b>	640	655	650

Adams State College is in compliance with Title IV requirements regarding reporting campus crime statistics. The ASC Department of Public Safety publishes an annual report of crime statistics on its web page ([www2.adams.edu/ps/](http://www2.adams.edu/ps/)); reports dating back to 1998 are easily accessible.

The College is in compliance with Title IV requirements regarding reporting graduation rates. Graduation rates are reported to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Post Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, and the Adams State College Board of Trustees. Graduation rates and other state and federally mandated information are available on the Institutional Research Office web page: [www2.adams.edu/administration/ir/](http://www2.adams.edu/administration/ir/)

## Federal compliance visits to off-campus locations

Adams State College has several off-campus sites throughout Colorado for undergraduate and graduate degree programs as part of our role as a Regional Education Provider. Many of these sites have prior HLC approval, but through the self-study process some uncertainty was raised about the approval of the remaining sites. ASC is currently in contact with HLC regarding the status of these sites and will take whatever action is deemed necessary by HLC.

## Institutional advertising and recruitment materials

The Commission requires that organizations referencing their HLC affiliation include Commission contact information.

ASC refers to its affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission in printed and online materials. However, the self-study process revealed that the institution does not consistently provide Commission contact information. Policy is being developed, and this information is being added to the college catalog, admission viewbook, and other publications that note our affiliation with HLC.

## Professional accreditation

The Commission grants general institutional accreditation. An organization is required to identify any adverse actions taken by professional accreditation agencies.

Several of Adams State College's academic programs hold professional accreditation. These programs and associated accrediting bodies are:

- Teacher Education: Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Candidate for Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)
- Music: National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)
- Counselor Education: Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) Completion Degree Program: American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) - Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)

The most recent reports from professional accrediting agencies are available in the Office of Academic Affairs. All of ASC's accredited programs are in good standing with their professional accrediting agencies, and no adverse action has been taken against any.

## Institutional record of student complaints

The Commission expects an organization to provide the consultant-evaluator team with an organizational account of formal student complaints and their disposition during the two years prior to the comprehensive visit. This reporting obligation

## *Federal Compliance*

focuses on formal, non-trivial complaints signed by a student and submitted to the organizational officer in charge of handling complaints.

Adams State College is in full compliance with the Commission's expectations for keeping institutional records of student complaints and their disposition. The Affirmative Action Officer (AAO) serves as a resource for answering questions about various types of possible complaints, policies, and procedures. The AAO maintains records of all discrimination and harassment complaints and their disposition. The Affirmative Action Policy is published in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, along with procedures for filing a complaint. The Office of Housing maintains a conduct database logging all student conduct violations and complaints and resolutions. The Enrollment Management Office also maintains files of student complaints regarding admissions, registration, records, and financial aid processes. Finally, if the College President uses his discretion to handle a student complaint, the records are kept in the President's office. Records of complaints and dispositions will be available to the consultant-evaluator team upon request.

# *Request for Continuing Accreditation*

## Conclusion



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## CONCLUSION:

# REQUEST FOR CONTINUING ACCREDITATION

Adams State College is a strong, vibrant institution that plays an important role in the lives of its students, faculty, staff, administrators, and surrounding community. The self-study process has stimulated us to critically examine our *Mission, Vision, and Institutional Goals* and the ways by which we try to live up to that mission. We are proud of our commitment to access and opportunity, student-centered learning, and regional education opportunities to southern Colorado. The process has also helped us identify areas in need of improvement, and to develop and institutionalize some needed changes. We have adopted a much stronger focus on planning and assessment and have modified our budgeting process to support the mission in a more direct manner. We have also made significant efforts to improve communication throughout the campus and to involve all stakeholders in planning and decision making.

### A future-oriented organization

Adams State College is a future-oriented organization driven by a clear mission. Through an inclusive and ongoing process of development and revision, ASC has developed mission documents that accurately capture the College's true character and priorities. ASC's *Mission, Vision, and Goals* statements clearly articulate our commitment to excellence in meeting our academic, community partnership, and regional responsibilities. There is a renewed commitment to ensure that all campus constituencies are aware of and embrace the spirit and intent of the mission documents. ASC's *Strategic Plan* is directly linked to the *Institutional Goals*, ensuring that all actions taken to implement the *Strategic Plan* move the institution closer to achieving its goals. ASC is also implementing a Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) and Crosswalk process to ensure that resources are targeted to furthering the institution's *Mission*.

### A learning-focused organization

Adams State College places a high priority on student learning and teaching effectiveness. We have focused on enhancing the learning environment for students over the past ten years, which demonstrates our commitment to excellence in instruction and increased opportunities for academic growth.

## *Request for Continuing Accreditation*

ZBB and the Crosswalk process use assessment of both academic and operational programs to support comprehensive planning and shared decision making. This provides a clear, concise mechanism for allocating resources based on the evaluation and assessment of program outcomes in relationship to the College's *Mission*. Assessment is becoming integrated into the campus culture. Improvements in faculty development funding and training through the CELT program are other examples of ASC's commitment to learning.

### **A connected organization**

Since its founding 85 years ago, Adams State College has been connected to its diverse constituency. The College's documents and programs reflect our commitment to learning, to academic integrity, and to social responsibility. ASC's designation as a Regional Education Provider formalizes our decades-old relationship with the surrounding community and expanded service area. Program reviews and feedback from alumni and employers assist ASC in developing programs that are current and relevant to today's world. The Talk Straight with Adams State community forums have helped to connect local community members with the campus and to address issues of mutual concern. Academic programs, clubs, and organizations on campus contribute to the community in a variety of ways; in return, students gain "real-world" application of the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom. ASC also serves as a cultural resource for the San Luis Valley, offering a range of art exhibits, musical performances, and theater productions.

### **A distinctive organization**

Adams State College is a distinctive organization with a clear mission that is widely understood and supported by the campus and community. The alignment of our new *Strategic Plan* and individual department goals with the *Mission* demonstrates our commitment to supporting that *Mission*. ASC is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution and has a long tradition of embracing diversity. We have attracted significant funding to support diversity on campus and have increased the percentage of both students and faculty of diverse backgrounds. ASC is committed to ongoing self reflection and improvement and has used the self-study process as a springboard to reinvigorate those processes and maintain them long after the comprehensive visit.

Adams State College is proud of its history and many accomplishments. We are committed to institutionalizing an ongoing culture of planning and assessment and have made great strides toward that end. We have strongly demonstrated that we meet all five of the criteria for accreditation of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. We have presented evidence affirming that we strive to be a distinctive and future-oriented organization with a strong connection to our constituents and a long tradition as a learning-focused organization. This *Self-Study* report accurately reflects ASC's accomplishments and challenges, and provides us with direction for improvement, as well. With this evidence in mind, we respectfully request ten-year accreditation status.

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# *Self-Study 2006*



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