

**REPORT OF A
COMMISSION-MANDATED FOCUSED VISIT**

Assurance Section

TO

**Adams State College
Alamosa, Colorado**

October 12 & 13, 2009

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

At the last comprehensive visit in February 2007, the team identified three areas to be reviewed by a focused visit – strategic planning, assessment, and its governance and administrative structure. The team reviewed whether a formalized strategic planning process exists that includes goals, objectives, action plans, timelines, responsibility designations, outcomes, and evaluation activities. The team also reviewed assessment activities to determine whether an institution-wide culture of assessment existed, and that consistent on-going assessment activities and oversight exist. Finally the team examined the role and authority of faculty in a shared governance structure and verified that clear definition of responsibility and accountability exists within the administrative structure and culture of the institution.

B. Accreditation Status

Adams State College, chartered in 1921 and opened in 1925 as a normal school that offered a bachelor of arts degree in education, received initial accreditation in 1950. It has been continuously reaffirmed for accreditation since that time. At its last comprehensive visit in February 2007, the team recommended that the next comprehensive visit occur in 2016-2017. It also recommended a focused visit on the issues above. Adams State College has also requested/hosted a focused visit for change in November 2007 at which time the recommendation was to change the SAS to state that “no prior approval required for offering the MA in ED at sites within their service area.”

C. Organizational Context

Adams State College was initially known at its opening in 1925 as Adams State Normal School. In 1929 it changed its name to Adams State Teachers College of Southern Colorado and in 1945 it became known as Adams State College. It currently serves nearly 3200 students, nearly 80 percent of which are undergraduates with 21 percent graduate students.

Adams State College became governed by its own Board of Trustees in 2003 when the state dissolved the omnibus board which oversaw three state colleges. The current president served as the interim president during the 2005-2006 academic year and was named as president in the fall of 2006 just prior to the comprehensive visit. In July 2007, the current Provost/Chief Operating Officer assumed his duties and the campus began exploring how best to address the concerns cited in the Spring 2007 Comprehensive Visit. In the two years since, many changes occurred that are chronicled in this report below.

The College enjoyed an increase in students in the Fall of 2009 and is making plans for continued growth both on-campus and in its services to the rural region which it serves. It has an extensive Extended Studies program, offering

distance degrees through a combination of face-to-face, online video, and print-based media. It also offers certificate and associate degrees in selected areas.

D. Unique Aspects of Visit

There were no unique aspects to this visit.

E. Interactions with Organizational Constituencies

1. President
2. Vice President for Finance and Administration
3. Provost
4. Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (Chairs Academic Council)
5. Associate Provost for the Graduate School
6. Associate Provost for Extended Studies
7. Strategic Planning Team (also serves as the Cabinet and Supplemental Budget Request Committee) – in addition to the above six it also includes
 - a. Athletic Director
 - b. Chief Information Officer
 - c. Dean of Student Affairs
 - d. Associate VP for Facilities Planning
 - e. Human Resources Director
 - f. Budget Director
 - g. Communications Director
 - h. Representative from Academic Council (department chair)
 - i. Representative from ASC Foundation
 - j. Director of Alumni Affairs
 - k. Faculty Senate Chair or designee
8. Director of Financial Aid
9. Director of Admissions
10. Two members of the General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC)
11. Three members of the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC), including a former chairperson of the CRC
12. Chairperson, Faculty Technology Advisory Committee (FTAC) and 3 Committee members
13. Faculty Senate President and 4 Senate members
14. Academic Council members (8 of the Academic Program Chairpersons)
15. 6 Classified Employee Council members
16. Director, Office of Equal Opportunity
17. Budget Director
18. Chief Information Officer and Facilitator for Strategic Planning Committee
19. Dean of Student Affairs
20. Director of Institutional Research
21. Self Study Coordinator, Professor of Counselor Education
22. Chair, School of Business

F. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

1. ASC Portal and selected Web pages therein
2. ASC Strategic Plan, 2006 – 2009
3. ASC Draft of New Strategic Plan

- 4.ASC Organizational Chart
- 5.Presentation to Board of Trustees Meeting on ASC Institutional Strategic Planning (10/2009)
- 6.Minutes, Strategic Planning Meeting, 9/2009
- 7.Minutes, Strategic Enrollment Management Retreat (June 2009)
- 8.List of “Just Do It Initiatives” and “Macro Growth Strategies” from Strategic Enrollment Management Retreat
- 9.Noel Levitz Report from Enrollment Management Retreat (June 2009)
10. Minutes of Cabinet Meetings
11. Minutes of 2008 Cabinet Retreat
12. Minutes, Strategic Planning Working Group (2008-2009)
13. PowerPoints from 1/2009, 4/2009, and 9/2009 Strategic Planning Meetings
14. Day of Reflection Schedule of Events, budget and president’s message
15. Strategic Planning Schedule for FY 2009-2010
16. President’s Message at Cabinet Retreat (10/2008)
17. ASC Student Capital Fee Referendum and Notice
18. ASC Rating presentation to Moody’s Investor Service
19. Academic Assessment Plan (April 2009)
20. Academic Master Plan (revised April 2009)
21. Academic Council Information Packet on General Education Program (9/2009)
22. Department Assessment Plans and/or Records for the following areas: Art; Biology; Earth Sciences; School of Business; Chemistry, Computer Science and Mathematics; Counselor Education; English, Theatre and Communications; History, Government, and Philosophy; Human Performance and Physical Education; Psychology; and Sociology)
23. Minutes, Department of Biology and earth Sciences, Counselor Education, Psychology, and Sociology
24. GECC General Education Assessment Matrix
25. GECC Assessment information-gathering forms
26. Minutes, GECC Meetings (4/2007 through 4/2009)
27. Core Alcohol and Drug Survey
28. Housing Needs Assessment Survey
29. Residence Hall Exit Surveys (2003 and 2005)
30. ASC Faculty Senate Constitution (revised 2/2009)
31. Committee Descriptions (CRC, FTAC, GECC)
32. Meeting Summaries of Shared Governance Steering Committee (Fall 2008 – Spring 2009)
33. Shared Governance surveys from Faculty/Administration, Classified Staff, and Board of Trustees
34. Minutes, Faculty Senate meetings (8/2007 – 4/2009)
35. Minutes, CRC meetings (9/2007 – 4/2009)
36. Minutes, FTAC meetings (10/2008 – 4/2009)
37. ASC Faculty Handbook
38. ASC Professional Personnel Handbook
39. State of Colorado Employee Handbook
40. ASC Student Handbook
41. ASC Undergraduate Catalog
42. ASC Graduate Catalog
43. ASC Institutional Snapshot and Supporting Data

44. Recommendations for Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty and Staff
45. New Faculty/Administration Reporting to the Provost Office, 2009-2010
46. Memo regarding a Proposed Study of the Recruitment Process for Faculty and Professional Staff (7/2008)
47. Diversity Policy from the ASC Trustee Policy Manual (amended 4/2008)
48. Supplemental Budget Request Process (July 2008)
49. Faculty and Staff Director (September 2009)

II. AREA(S) OF FOCUS

A-1. Statement of Focus – Evidence of a formalized Strategic Planning Process with demonstrated goals, objectives, action plans, timelines responsibility designations, outcomes, and evaluation of activities.

B-1. Statements of Evidence

- **Evidence that demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.**
 - During the first year after the comprehensive visit the institution designed and developed a strategic planning process. This provided the foundation from which ASC then was able to complete a full cycle of quarterly meetings in the following year (10/2008, 1/2009, 4/2009, 9/2009), evaluate the effectiveness of its approaches, review its statutory role and mission and its ASC mission and vision, recognize the need for more precise strategic goals, strategies, and tactical language that will facilitate “SMART” outcomes measures, and grow accountability through assignment of responsibilities within the planning team and across campus. This evolutionary process allowed them to institutionalize strategic planning and begin to make it a part of ASC’s culture.
 - The Cabinet serves as the Strategic Planning Committee. It is a broad based representative campus group composed of 16 members chosen by the president and provost. Members include the president, provost (co-chair), vice president for finance and administration (co-chair), associate provosts (3), associate vice president for facilities planning, athletic director, dean of student affairs, budget director, chief information officer, communications director, human resources director, representative from Academic Council (academic program chair), alumni affairs director, and faculty senate chair or designee. The Cabinet also serves as the primary budgeting body of the college which supports alignment between the strategic plan and budget decisions.
 - Through ASC’s initial planning meetings the need for an Institutional Planning Steering Committee was identified. This Committee is made up of the president, provost, CIO (who facilitates strategic planning meetings), associate vice president for planning and facilities services, and the budget director. Its make-up helps ensure that the strategic planning process became effectively integrated into the college’s

culture and activities. This group schedules the quarterly, day long planning meetings, develops agendas, establishes goals for quarterly meetings, and determines the appropriate planning horizon. It also provided an update on institutional strategic planning to the Board of Trustees at its October 2009 meeting.

- Through deliberate efforts, strategic planning considerations are making their way to other campus constituencies. This is most evident in the Strategic Planning Committee's use of campus blogs to gather information and feedback on planning activities. Most recently, they used a campus blog as a means of gathering ideas and feedback on a proposed ASC vision update. Campus constituencies also were able to cite examples of how strategic planning affects their work by focusing their efforts around the strategic goals of the College.
- Other evidence of ASC commitment to strategic planning basics can be seen in its use of specific action teams charged to carry out strategic planning initiatives (such as enrollment management), its efforts to address areas of vulnerability (such as anticipated budgetary shortfalls when stimulus dollars disappear), and development of an environmental scan using a SWOT analysis. Additionally, the Strategic Planning Committee is revising its goals and strategies to increase their measurability and growing attention is being placed on the use of data in decision-making.
- To reinforce its strategic planning culture and to ensure that planning efforts become fully integrated and have a designated party responsible for ensuring continuity and alignment, the Institutional Planning Steering Committee identified an office of primary responsibility for each institutional plan at ASC. These plans include the strategic plan for which the President has primary responsibility, the academic plan and assessment plan (Provost responsibility), and technology plan and facilities master plan (VP for Finance and Administration responsibility).
- Utilizing the Noel-Levitz report presented at the June 2009 Strategic Enrollment Management Retreat, ASC's leadership and Cabinet (Strategic Planning Committee) brainstormed two categories of strategic ideas to support revenue growth. These ideas (Just Do It Initiatives and Macro Growth Strategies) addressed things that could be done immediately and those that would require additional time and study. As a result, a core team to manage the implementation of its strategic enrollment planning process was identified and began implementation and/or study of the identified areas to grow enrollment strategically. This complements the already implemented efforts in the athletics area and a scholarship program available to students who graduate from a high school in selected counties in areas near ASC.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.**

- While the College is working to make its strategic plan ~~SP~~ more of a living document, and one which speaks to other planning documents (such as technology, assessment, and academic plans), it is in the early stages of building linkages between and alignment with the strategic plan and setting identifiable priorities within and across those plans that will guide resource use among and within the plans. Such efforts may assist the College in avoiding redundancies in the plans and in sequencing interrelated actions among the plans.
- The strategic planning committee at its April 2009 meeting reviewed the current strategic planning approach to determine how it will proceed in the future. At present, the strategic planning process is primarily documented in presentations and minutes of the strategic planning and cabinet meetings. Formally documenting this process will help ensure its sustainability and will increase the transparency of the process throughout the campus.
- The Strategic Planning Committee is currently updating the 2006-2009 Strategic Plan. In doing this they are developing “SMART” language that will enable more effective evaluation of whether the strategic plan goals and strategies are being met. SMART refers to goals that are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Time-framed. This should facilitate setting of benchmarks, measures, or indicators by which to determine the College’s effectiveness in meeting its goals and strategies. Until a process and a common understanding of strategic planning principles existed within the Cabinet (Strategic Planning Committee) it was not possible to incorporate a measurement system into ASC’s plan. However, the HLC visit team is confident that the evidence provided in the prior section as well as planned progress reviews set for future quarterly strategic planning meetings indicates that the College is gaining maturity in its planning approaches. This and the evidence the team viewed related to revisions in the plan for 2010 – 2013 confirm that the College will meet this essential element of strategic planning in its upcoming revision.
- While the College has a strategic plan, it is in the early stages of using that plan to inform ongoing decision making. The leadership team appears comfortable with operational decision-making, and shows some evidence of linking operational decisions to the College’s strategic planning goals and objectives. Expansion of such efforts will facilitate strategic considerations and serve as a filter in the College’s everyday decision-making processes
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention and Commission follow-up are required.**

No such evidence noted.

- **Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that Commission sanction is warranted.**

No such evidence noted.

A-2. Statement of Focus – Consistent assessment activities and evidence of an institution-wide culture of assessment with evidence that oversight of assessment activities exists.

B-2. Statements of Evidence

- **Evidence that demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.**
 - The self-study and on-campus interviews confirmed to the team a dedicated level of commitment to effective teaching, consistent with ASC's student centered institutional goals and vision. Interviews with administrators and faculty indicated institutional support for faculty development in promoting teaching excellence and discipline currency. For example, annual Presidential teaching awards are presented each academic year along with peer recognition awards designating exemplary status. Additionally, faculty development funds are available through Academic Affairs in support of faculty participation in conferences and workshops.
 - The institution has developed a "Plan for Assessment of Student Learning: An Academic Assessment Plan," which outlines procedure and process for program and general education assessment. The deployment of the general education assessment plan has begun with the identification of four student performance goals/outcomes and the assessment of one specific goal each academic year with a completed cycle of all its goals in the fourth year and during the fifth year preparing a comprehensive report summarizing and making recommendations for the next 5-year cycle. The College has completed the assessment of one of the four general education goals (Goal #4) in 2008-2009 and is currently collecting data and measurements in the next selected goal/outcome (Goal #3).
 - A review of submitted program evaluation plans indicates progress in developing measurable learning goals in academic programs. For example, the Art department plan has program specific goals identified along with stated intended student outcomes and the particular measurements being utilized. Rubrics have been created by department faculty to reduce the inherent subjectivity in the field. Course syllabi contain listings of key learning goals and methods of evaluation to be deployed.
 - Interviews with administrators, and faculty members serving on the Curriculum Review Committee and the General Education Coordinating Committee, suggest the institution is experiencing a cultural shift in awareness of the significance of meaningful assessment of programs. Sample department minutes reflect faculty oversight and engagement in academic assessment planning. For example, the September, 2008, the Department of Biology and Earth Sciences minutes document that the majority of the meeting was

concerned with increasing achievement of department goals and student learning outcomes and the fall 2008 Counselor Education retreat included a session on department assessment plans for that academic year.

- The Institutional Research (IR) and Assessment Office has oversight responsibility for survey administration and the Director reports IR has become the sole source of institutional data providing information for planning, enrollment management and various college committees/task forces. Such centralization should ensure consistency of data reference and usage as assessment efforts mature at the college.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.**
 - As presented in the self-study and confirmed on site through a formal university announcement, the President has committed to the hiring of an administrative intern during the 2009-2010 academic year to oversee the campus assessment plan. While this appointment should assist the institution in its progress in the realm of assessment, the lack of a dedicated on going centralized entity or office to coordinate and manage the myriad details of a comprehensive college assessment plan will challenge the institution to successfully incorporate meaningful continuous improvement of its programs and services.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention and Commission follow-up are required.**
 - The institution has maintained a decentralized approach to assessment to remain flexible and responsive to disciplinary differences, and it has fully supported faculty-driven assessment of student learning. Interviews with faculty, chairs and administrators reveal that faculty control assessment planning and implementation and annually report data to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs consistent with the “Plan for Assessment of Student Learning: An Academic Assessment Plan.” While flexibility and disciplinary focus is maintained by the approach deployed, consistency across departments and systematic processes for continuous improvement of learning (i.e., closing the loop) are underdeveloped and will challenge the institution to successfully integrate administrative review and evidence-based decision making into deliberate strategic planning and budget allocation decisions.
 - The Academic Council, consisting of all department chairs and chaired by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, is the vehicle for helping define a common process that supports assessment across departments and programs. However, a review of the process outlined in the “Plan for Assessment for Student Learning: An Academic Assessment Plan,” does not reveal a strategy or requirement for a formal response following findings and recommendations by the

General Education Coordinating Committee, the Curriculum Review Committee, Academic Council, or the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs on submitted assessment plans, reports, or the five-year program reviews. To ensure a full cycle of continuous improvement this process gap may need attention.

- The “Plan for Assessment of Student Learning: An Academic Assessment Plan,” outlines an administrative structure with accompanying responsibilities for assessment review and recommendations. However, during interviews with faculty representatives to the various committees created to monitor assessment activities, the degree of authority conferred, pursuant to the policy, was not clearly understood. Such uncertainty impairs the effectiveness of the institutions assessment plan/process and demonstrates the need for enhancing the institutional infrastructure to accomplish meaningful continuous improvement through assessment activities.
- **Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that Commission sanction is warranted.**
 - No such evidence noted.

A-3. Statement of Focus – Delineation of the role and authority of faculty in a shared governance structure and clear definition of responsibility and accountability within the administrative culture of the institution.

B-3. Statements of Evidence

- **Evidence that demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.**
 - Since the previous comprehensive HLC visit, the College defined the roles and responsibilities of its administrative and decision making structure. The Executive Council includes all the president’s direct reports and is an advisory board on campus-wide concerns and external relations. It facilitates communication across units and generates agenda items for the Cabinet. The Cabinet, which is co-chaired by the Provost and VP for Finance and Administration, is the primary planning, budgeting, and decision making body of the college. Policies adopted by the Cabinet are sent to the President for approval. The Operations Committee, which is chaired by the Provost/Chief Operating Officer, addresses communication, facilitates short-term problem-solving, and coordinates activities and plans derived from Cabinet generated strategic plan implementations. Three associate provosts (for Academic Affairs, Graduate Studies, and Extended Studies) assist the provost in carrying out the operations of the College. Academic Council, which is chaired by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, consists of the 13 department chairs and the Graduate Council includes chairs or their representatives of departments housing a graduate program.

- Minutes of meetings of all the above entities are posted on the campus intranet for review and reported back by participants to their respective constituency group(s). When issues that affect the entire campus arise (e.g., recent state budget shortfalls that potentially would impact ASC), additional communication is implemented that includes presidential weekly e-mails, blogs, and campus-wide meetings.
- The more clearly defined administrative structure better defines who is responsible for what and how various campus groups go about bringing forward issues and proposals. These are being formalized through policy statements or defined procedures. Buy-in exists for the clarified structure and its processes and while some processes/roles are still being defined, it is being done in a collaborative manner. As processes/procedures are finalized they are put in writing as appropriate. Specific items cited in interviews included exempt job descriptions, personnel manuals, and the trustee handbook, all of which previously were defined under the former State College System of Colorado and applied to all state college campuses.
- The Cabinet serves as the Strategic Planning Committee. It is a broad based representative campus group composed of 16 members chosen by the president and provost. Members include the president, provost (co-chair), vice president for finance and administration (co-chair), associate provosts (3), associate vice president for facilities planning, athletic director, dean of student affairs, budget director, chief information officer, communications director, human resources director, representative from Academic Council (academic program chair), alumni affairs director, and faculty senate chair or designee. The Cabinet also serves as the primary budgeting body of the college which supports alignment between the strategic plan and budget decisions.
- Interviews with faculty, staff, and administrators indicated that the strategic planning and other cabinet-derived efforts have broad input by faculty and other relevant voices either at the table or consulted through discussions with the president or provost. The campus consensus is that this encourages more involvement, brings new perspectives to decision making, adds new understanding of differing perspectives, and improves sharing of information that enables better integration of common goals.
- At a two-day retreat in August 2008, the Cabinet identified four “working groups”, one of which was to address Shared Governance. This working group was headed by the Faculty Senate President, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, VP for Finance and Administration, and the Academic Council representative to Cabinet. They established four goals, steps to achieve the goals, and a tentative timeline for their completion. They also developed a questionnaire based on the AAUP document, *Indicators of Shared Governance*, to assess the shared governance climate at ASC

among three groups – faculty/administration, classified staff, and the Board of Trustees – that was administered in the spring of 2009.

- The Faculty Senate completed a revision of its constitution that was approved by the Senate and the ASC faculty in March 2009. It identifies the role and authority of faculty as “the development of curriculum content, the determination of methods of instruction, the conducting of academic research, and the assessment of faculty status.” It also indicates that shared governance includes involvement by the faculty as reflected in participation on executive decision-making committees and other collaborative bodies. Committees reporting to the Faculty Senate include the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC), the General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC), the Faculty Information Technology Advisory Committee (FTAC), and other ad-hoc or standing committees created by the Senate. A review of committee minutes and actions as well as interviews with committee members and/or chairs indicates that these committees are an on-going part of the governance system and that their recommendations are acted upon by the Faculty Senate and as appropriate other bodies.
- Faculty interviewed indicated that the roles of committees were much better defined, the integration among committees clearer, and that greater transparency of the governance system existed. Although some clarification of governance roles will be ongoing, it was clear that faculty were in charge of curriculum and that their defined responsibilities were respected.
- Other ad hoc groups and actions that reflect the acceptance of the faculty’s role in governance at ASC include an Academic Communication Team made up of the Faculty Senate President, the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Chairs of the GECC and CRC whose purpose is to disseminate information and discuss issues viewed to be important to academics, and bi-weekly meetings between the Provost and the Faculty Senate President where issues of interest to the faculty and/or the Faculty Senate can be discussed.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.**
 - While members of the Classified Employee Council indicated that informal constructive dialogue presently occurs with the Executive Council and the Cabinet when rule making processes are under consideration, there is some concern about whether this role will change, how it might change, and/or who will assume their responsibilities as a result of changes occurring in the State of Colorado. While shared faculty governance is a reality at ASC, the classified staff may need additional clarification about its roles and responsibilities, especially given the Colorado WINS situation.

- In discussions with members of the Faculty Senate committees, it was apparent that faculty may need support and/or professional development to prepare them for assuming greater responsibility in making “tough decisions” such as whether the general education assessment criteria are being met or whether program evaluations are approved since they are working in an environment where little precedent or practice exists for them to bring into consideration.
- **Evidence that demonstrates that further organizational attention and Commission follow-up are required.**
 - No such evidence noted.
- **Evidence is insufficient and demonstrates that Commission sanction is warranted.**
 - No such evidence noted.
- C. Other Accreditation Issues** [If applicable]
 - No such evidence noted.
- D. Recommendation of Team**
 - **Evidence sufficiently demonstrated. No Commission follow-up recommended.**
 - While the Strategic Planning Process needs additional time to mature, it is evident from the evidence reviewed, conversations with campus constituents, and the emerging acknowledgement of the Cabinet in addressing strategic planning concepts related to measurement and decision making, that Adams State College will continue to progress and hone its strategic planning processes. It currently has goals, objectives, responsibility designations, and action plans. Its current revision activities address timelines, outcomes measures, and evaluation activities. Their diligence in defining and implementing a workable process for Adams State College within the time constraints it faced is hard evidence that the College is committed to strategic planning to guide its future. (A-1)
 - Adams State College leadership and faculty worked collaboratively to craft a governance system and administrative structure that fit the institution’s culture. The system is in place, evidence exists that it is working effectively, and that ASC’s leadership and Board of Trustees supports the new structures. (A-3)
- **Evidence demonstrated. Commission follow-up recommended**

- While the college has developed its Plan for Assessment of Student Learning and has begun its implementation, a completed cycle of full review has not yet occurred. To date, there is minimal documentation to demonstrate the analysis of collected data and the subsequent use of such data analysis to improve student learning. A lack of consistency in department assessment plans is noted and the decentralized structure, with no institutional office/officer dedicated to oversight, promotes the current inconsistencies. Gaps in authority or responsibility for program improvement are also evidenced through a lack of policy requirements as to mandated follow-up reporting from the academic departments after assessment reports are submitted for review pursuant to the current plan. As such, and to sustain the commitment, momentum and effort demonstrated by the institution to student learning and assessment since the last comprehensive visit, the team recommends Commission follow-up on assessment in the form of a progress report due spring 2013. (A-2)
- **Evidence insufficient. Commission sanction warranted.**

E. Rationale for the Team Recommendation

III. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

Affiliation Status – No change.

Nature of Organization – No change

Legal status – No change

Degrees awarded – No change

Conditions of Affiliation – No change

Stipulation on affiliation status – No change

Approval of degree sites – No change

Approval of distance education degree – No change

Reports required

Progress Report

Topic(s) and Due Date

The team recommends that a Progress Report on Assessment be provided in the Spring of 2013.

Rationale and Expectations

A progress report on the assessment of student learning incorporating findings from the completed full cycle of general education assessment as well as all assessment plans for degree program shall be submitted. The report should include a detailed summary of all refinements to the institutional structure deployed to accomplish assessment including a listing of all offices/entities responsible for the design, implementation, review, and reporting of findings and actions taken. Finally the report should outline how the institution's assessment plan(s) and subsequent findings are informing institutional planning and budget allocations and student learning.

Monitoring Report – None required.

Topic(s) and Due Date
Rationale and Expectations
Conditions (if...then)

Contingency Report

Topic(s)
Rationale and Expectations

Other Visits Scheduled – None required.

Type of Visit
Topic(s) and Date
Rationale and Expectations

Commission Sanction or Adverse Action – None noted

Summary of Commission Review

Year for next comprehensive evaluation 2016-2017

REPORT OF A COMMISSION-MANDATED FOCUSED VISIT

Advancement Section

TO

**Adams State College
Alamosa, Colorado**

October 12 & 13, 2009

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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ADVANCEMENT SECTION

CONSULTATION OF TEAM

A. Observations of Team Regarding Area(s) of Focus

Since the February 2007 comprehensive visit, Adams State College has engaged in deliberate actions to address the concerns raised at that time by the HLC visiting team. Importantly, the institution has successfully filled all senior level administrative/staff positions which allows for continuity and support for a comprehensive strategic planning environment and the delineation of roles and responsibilities at all levels of the institution. It appears an environment exists where planning, assessment and resource allocation will become aligned as the institution moves forward. The visiting team was impressed with the progress made in a relatively short time-frame from the last comprehensive visit and expects significant and sustainable enhancements in planning, assessment and governance will be evident at the next comprehensive visit.

ASC is to be commended for its use of multiple communication channels to inform the campus as decisions are made or to gather input as decisions are in process. This transparency was evident in all aspects of the changes that occurred as a result of the HLC last comprehensive visit. This also contributed to the acceptance of changes, added input that otherwise might not have been heard, and created a climate of collaboration that supported the changes that occurred.

B. Consultations of Team

- While the institution shares, along with other campuses across the country, a financial concern of how to address potential funding shortfalls when stimulus money ends, allowing this possible threat to constrain or limit its strategic thinking or delay action on strategic issues aside from this one may prove shortsighted. Anticipating such shortfalls, working strategically to overcome them, and enlisting broad based campus input into possible solutions should financial shortfalls be realized can all be used to strengthen the culture of meaningful planning across the campus and reinforce transparency.
- Consciously taking time to document and evaluate ASC's many planning processes (e.g., strategic, academic, technology, facilities, etc.) and to align them with the strategic plan remains critical. Continue to consciously build linkages between the various plans, monitoring them to ensure consistency and avoid duplication or redundancies. The Cabinet can enable this since it includes all the parties responsible for the various planning documents/activities. This may also assist ASC in ensuring that its shorter-term action plans are coordinated and consistent with the Strategic Plan.

- While it may take several iterations before meaningful outcomes measures are developed for the various strategic goals, remain diligent in identifying appropriate and meaningful measurable outcomes for each strategic goal. Without such measures it will be difficult to verify that the changes being sought have been achieved or what type of progress has occurred.
- Consider including a representative of the Classified Employees Council on the Cabinet and/or in your planning efforts. By bringing their voice to the table you will further diversify the input that has so enriched your planning and governance processes thus far.
- Continue to assess the processes you have put in place. Take time to identify any institutional learning that has occurred because it may help identify ways that the various processes can become more efficient and effective. This may be particularly important as you face tighter budgets over the next couple of years.
- The Faculty Senate already utilized AAUP materials in developing the current governance system. They may also want to examine the “Traits of Effective Senates” on the AAUP web-site (<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/governance/effectsen.htm>) as a way of continually assessing the Senate’s progress relative to established standards.
- The Provost’s office is currently responsible for the coordination and oversight of all academic assessment activities through the positions of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and the Associate Provost for the Graduate College. This responsibility is in addition to a wide range of activities managed through this office. Given the need for the development of an overall assessment plan for the campus, and for the refinement of program evaluation which can assist and inform future planning and resource allocation, an organizational structure created specifically to address university assessment may be timely. A centralized office will strengthen the institutions commitment to addressing goals in facilitating student learning. The institutional plan to hire an administrative intern is an intermediate step in this regard.
- The team notes the institution has, through its Plan for Assessment, begun to connect its five-year program review process to assessment of student learning in said programs. While such effort is new, there is the recognition of the importance of such linkages as the institution matures in its assessment practices. The process, including templates and formal documentation as to actions recommended and taken, need to be incorporated into the assessment cycle outlined in the policy.
- As the institution refines its assessment efforts it should create multiple methods of program and general education assessment with the goal of developing a campus-wide consistent program. Providing professional development opportunities for faculty that support benchmarking

against national norms, and identified and aspiring institutional peers, will also strengthen the assessment process and should be incorporated into next steps planning.

- The institution may want to explore the value, consistent with its mission and vision, of specialized accreditation in key programs where enrollment and placement demands suggest outcomes that would benefit the college and its graduates. Such accreditation standards provide guidance relative to student learning goals, comparative measurements, and continuous improvement models that may assist the institution in its development of meaningful assessment of student learning.
- The visiting team encourages the institution to explore the possibilities of supporting key personnel in their application to serve with the HLC in its peer evaluator program. Such exposure will afford the institution another perspective as it refines its planning and assessment strategies and may assist in future continuous improvement practices.

*Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS*

INSTITUTION and STATE: : Adams State College, CO

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Focused Visit-Mandated

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW (from ESS): A visit focused on Strategic Planning, Assessment, Governance and Administrative Structure.

DATES OF REVIEW: 10/12/09 - 10/13/09

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

DEGREES AWARDED: A, B, M

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: Out of state offerings are limited to courses in Northern New Mexico.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREE SITES: Prior Commission approval is required except for offering the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with licensure in elementary education or the Master of Arts in Education at sites within Colorado.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: No prior Commission approval required for existing Master's or Baccalaureate degree programs offered through the Extended Studies Division.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Progress Report, April 1, 2013, on Assessment of Student Learning

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED: Focused Visit-Mandated: 2009 - 2010; A visit focused on Strategic Planning, Assessment, Governance and Administrative Structure.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: None

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2006 - 2007

*Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS*

YEAR OF NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2016 - 2017

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: No Change

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: Adams State College, CO

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS):) Focused Visit-Mandated
X No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

	Program Distribution	Recommended Change (+ or -)
Programs leading to Undergraduate	Associate	2
	Bachelors	23
Programs leading to Graduate	Masters	7
	Specialist	0
	First	0
	Professional	
	Doctoral	0

Off-Campus Activities

In-State:	Present Activity:	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Campuses: Sites:	None Bennett (MCC Outreach Center) ; Burlington (MCC Outreach Center) ; Canon City (Region I School District 101) ; Cortez (Montezuma-Cortez School District RE-1) ; Durango (Fort Lewis College) ; Eagle (Eagle County School District) ; Ellicott (Ellicott Elementary School Library) ; Ft. Morgan (Morgan Community College) ; Glenwood Springs (Roaring Fork RE-I School District) ; Grand Junction (Mesa State College Continuing Ed. Cener) ; La Junta (Otero Junior College) ; Lamar (Lamar Community College) ; Limon (MCC Outreach Center) ; Monte Vista (Monte Vista School District) ; Parker (University Center at Chaparral) ; Pueblo (Intellitec College, #250) ; Steamboat	

Springs (Northwest BOCES) ;
Sterling (Northeast BOCES) ;
Trinidad (Trinidad School
District) ; Trinidad (Trinidad
State Junior College) ; Wray
(MCC Outreach Center) ;
Yuma (MCC Outreach
Center)

Course
Locations: None

Out-of-State: Present Wording: **Recommended Change:
(+ or -)**

Campuses: None
Sites: None
Course
Locations: None

Out-of-USA: Present Wording: **Recommended Change:
(+ or -)**

Campuses: None
Sites: None
Course
Locations: None

Distance Education Certificate and Degree Offerings:

Present Offerings:

AA in Liberal Arts offered via Correspondence; AS in Liberal Arts offered via Correspondence; BA in Business Administration offered via Correspondence; BA in Interdisciplinary Studies offered via Correspondence; BA in Sociology offered via Correspondence; BS in Business Administration offered via Correspondence; Certificate in Paralegal offered via Correspondence; Certificate in Victim Advocacy offered via Correspondence; MA in Counselor Education offered via Internet; MA in HPPE offered via Internet

**Recommended Change:
(+ or -)**