

**Adams State College
Focused Visit Report to the
Higher Learning Commission
of the North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools**

October, 2009

Introduction

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) last visited Adams State College (ASC) for a comprehensive evaluation in February 2007. In the 2 ½ years since the Commission's visit, ASC faculty, staff, administration, and students have worked collaboratively to address the concerns cited by the visiting team. The team recommended ten-year accreditation with a focused visit to occur in 2009-2010 addressing four issues.

“... (1) formalization of strategic planning process, (2) clarification of oversight and execution of assessment, (3) delineation of the role and authority of faculty in a shared governance structure for the institution, and (4) definition of responsibility and accountability within the administrative structure of the institution (Assurance Section, Final Team Report, p. 12).

Adams State College has made significant progress in all areas, as evidenced in this report and the supporting documentation. Since the Commission's comprehensive visit, ASC has made considerable effort in formalizing planning processes, assessment processes, shared governance structure, and organizational structure. This report describes these changes, and the supporting documentation demonstrates the efforts and progress that have been made to meet the Commission's concerns.

Strategic Planning

Adams State College continues to demonstrate ability to plan and deal with crises in an effective fashion, as observed by the 2007 team visit. In the spring of 2008, the college was forced to close the campus for three days because of a salmonella outbreak in the city water supply. This incident received national attention. ASC was able to work effectively with Alamosa city officials, as well as state officials, to meet the challenges and provide food and water for students who were unable to leave campus during the closure. The college's food service was the first restaurant in Alamosa to be certified safe by state and federal officials. There were no reported cases of ASC students suffering from salmonella poisoning during this time. The college reopened, and finals and graduation proceeded as scheduled, with only a few classes and labs forced to meet over a weekend to make up missed class time. As noted in the team's report, administration at ASC is prepared for and deals well with crisis situations.

Budget/Revenue Planning

Much of the planning time during 2008 was devoted to addressing financial issues due to mandated budget cuts, as Colorado state revenues followed the national downturn. The Cabinet and the Executive Council worked together to make strategic reductions that would strengthen the college. (The makeup of Cabinet and Executive Council can be found in the organizational structure section of this report.) The situation was further complicated by revenue lost from the college's Foundation as the stock market lost 40%

of its value, essentially eliminating the Foundation's unrestricted funds and forcing the college to assume costs of approximately \$600,000.00. In addition to assuming these cuts, the college's general fund budget was cut by \$2.4 million (out of a \$15 million dollar budget); however the State of Colorado has committed to backfilling these cuts with Federal stimulus funds over the next two fiscal years.

Our greatest planning challenge is to prepare for the time when stimulus funds are no longer available, as it is not clear the Colorado economy will have rebounded by the 2011 budget year. Without an economic recovery in the state, these cuts will neither be reinstated nor covered by state funds. Thus the focus of our strategic planning is on preparing for the loss of stimulus funds by enhancing our revenue streams, creating new programs, and growing our enrollment. With a nearly 15% increase in summer 2009 revenues and a dramatic increase in Fall 2009 undergraduate enrollment, Adams State College is well on its way to meeting our fiscal challenges. This is the first real undergraduate enrollment growth at ASC in ten years. It is the result of careful planning and focus, modernization of campus student life facilities, and the addition of high demand programs.

Strategic Planning Process

Although the Cabinet and the Executive Council spent a good deal of time focusing on the immediate crises of salmonella and financial solvency, the groups, with input from stakeholders across campus, continued to develop strategic planning. In its report on the comprehensive visit of February 2007, the team noted that ASC "lacks a coherent, integrated strategic planning process across the institution with demonstrated goals, objectives, action plans, timelines, responsibility designations, outcomes, measures, and evaluation protocols which are necessary for efficient operation of ASC" (Assurance Section, p. 11). In order to correct this issue, Cabinet began discussing a planning process at its regular bi-weekly meetings; however these meetings did not provide sufficient time to address the important matters of revising and updating the current Strategic Plan (2006-2009) and developing new objectives, action plans, timelines, responsibility designations, outcomes, measures, and evaluation protocols needed to implement the plan.

In spring, 2008, the Cabinet decided to reconvene as a Strategic Planning Committee for quarterly full-day meetings devoted exclusively to long-term strategic planning and the revision and updating of ASC's Strategic Plan. The first of these meetings was a two-day retreat in August 2008.

At this first retreat, working groups were formed to address each HLC designated area of concern. The membership of the strategic planning group included the President, David Svaldi; the CIO, Mike Nicholson; the Budget Director, Heather Heersink; and originally the VP for Institutional Advancement, Bruce Landis, who was later replaced by Associate VP for Facilities Planning, Design & Construction, Erik van de Boogaard. This

smaller group met before each full Cabinet quarterly planning meeting to develop an agenda and activities with the intention of keeping the planning meetings on task.

As of this writing, the Cabinet has met as the Strategic Planning Committee four times since the August 2008 retreat. At the first planning meeting, held October 9, 2008, the college's CIO facilitated group discussion defining strategic planning, exploring the reasons strategic planning fails, asking what the college wants to accomplish through strategic planning, and exploring struggles and successes with strategic planning.

At the second meeting, held January 8, 2009, Adams State College's statutory role and mission were reviewed, as were the college's own mission and vision statements. Action items from this meeting included forming sub-committees to write sample vision statements and another to explore a name change from College to University. Additionally, Cabinet agreed to review the college's current mission statement in January of 2010. Since this meeting, the Cabinet/Strategic Planning Committee has submitted to faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members proposed vision statements and a name change position statement for review and comment. Stakeholders have the opportunity to voice their opinions on the name change through a series of focus groups being conducted during the summer and into the fall of 2009. Also, blogs were established for comment on both the potential name change, as well as selection input on a vision statement (<http://blogs.adams.edu/university/>; <http://blogs.adams.edu/vision/>).

The third meeting, held April 9, 2009, addressed Adams State College's process of strategic planning itself. The current process involves quarterly meetings of the Cabinet, facilitated by the CIO, with agendas and activities developed by the Strategic Planning work group. The need to formalize this process with goals, objectives, action plans, timelines, responsibility designations, outcomes, measures, and evaluation protocols was discussed. The group also discussed whether to establish a separate planning committee that meets on a regular basis to address strategic planning issues, hire a consultant to lead or facilitate planning efforts, or formally assign strategic planning to a position within ASC's current structure. The Cabinet chose to continue with the CIO's facilitation of the planning meeting and to continue Cabinet's role as the Strategic Planning Commission. Cabinet has broad campus representation, and its 17 members have clear lines of communication to all stakeholders on campus.

The discussions at the third meeting resulted in the invitation of four ASC faculty members to attend the fourth strategic planning meeting on June 10-11, 2009. This meeting was a two-day retreat facilitated by Kevin Crockett of Noel-Levitz. Mr. Crockett used information gathered from a campus visit on April 7, 2009.

The objectives for the meeting included

- Identifying the driving and restraining forces in ASC's enrollment planning environment
- Developing a planning rubric for ASC
- Identifying an initial set of enrollment growth initiatives for ASC and conducting an initial prioritization of these strategies
- Developing a template for standardizing the action/business plans associated with each strategy

The Noel-Levitz consultant suggested developing a core team to manage implementation of the planning process, tasking out teams to develop action plans for each strategy, and communicating back to the campus. Twenty recommendations from this retreat were presented to the Board of Trustees at their July 31, 2009, retreat. These suggestions are being implemented as of this writing.

Prior to the planning efforts mentioned above, ASC did not have a 10-year facilities master plan. The new facilities master plan originated from the Campus Renewal and Planning Committee, a representative campus group composed of faculty, students, residence life staff, and others. The group planned the new Residences at Rex building currently under construction, the first step in a complete renovation of ASC's long-neglected north campus. Additionally, we now have an enrollment plan which will help to sustain enrollment efforts into the future. A planning website has also been established to provide timely updated information on planning activities to the campus (<https://www.adams.edu/administration/planning/>).

Section Summary

Strategic planning continues to be a work in progress. Major steps have been made in formalizing the strategic planning process through the efforts of the Cabinet and the Executive Council. These steps include

- Holding four strategic planning meetings over the course of the past academic year
- Implementing work groups for such things as a name change from Adams State College to Adams State University and revising ASC's vision statement
- Including the campus constituencies in planning strategies
- Reconvening the Strategic Planning Work Group to schedule and direct the next four strategic planning meetings of the entire Cabinet and Executive Council
- Developing and incorporating a planning rubric for the college
- Developing and implementing action plans for stated enrollment strategies
- Moving forward with campus renovations and building projects congruent with a new 10-year facilities master plan.

While strong steps have been taken to formalize the strategic planning process, this area will continue to grow as the needs of Adams State College and its relationship with the state of Colorado continue to evolve.

Assessment

When the Commission visited Adams State College in early 2007, creating a culture of assessment and the clarification of oversight and execution of assessment were of primary concern. Assessment of student learning outcomes has progressed significantly since that time, simultaneous with progress toward developing an overall college assessment plan.

Academic Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

At the time of the Higher Learning Commission's comprehensive visit, Adams State College had just put in place a "Plan for Assessment of Student Learning." The committee had met for approximately one year prior to the Commission's visit to create and propose the plan. The plan was adopted in April 2006 by Academic Council, which is made up of the chair of each academic department and chaired by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs. The plan was reviewed, revised, and approved by Faculty Senate, Academic Council, and Graduate Council in April of 2009.

The purpose of the academic assessment plan is to "improve student learning, thus helping the college fulfill its educational mission." The plan evaluates departmental goals, as well as general education goals, with the intent of measuring outcomes to enhance student learning.

In its final report, the visiting team noted that while "significant work has been initiated in assessment of student learning, the institution does not demonstrate a consistent and active assessment culture which is appropriately directed and supported throughout the college" (Final Team Report, Assurance Section, page 12). With the Plan for Assessment of Student Learning firmly in place in academic year 2008-2009, that culture has developed. The plan delineates the role of each constituency in assessing student learning and covers two broad areas: General Education Program Goals and Departmental, or major-specific, Program Goals.

Administrative and Structural Leadership

In 2007, as noted in the HLC team report, ASC was undergoing transition in senior administration, and the responsibility for student learning assessment was somewhat haphazard. Once our senior administration was fully staffed and the roles of each office more clearly defined (see Organizational Structure section), attention was paid to the oversight and execution of the assessment plan.

Those involved in creating, reviewing, revising, and/or approving the Plan for Assessment of Student Learning include the following

- Academic Council (AC) – consisting of all 13 department chairs; chaired by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
- Graduate Council – consisting of one representative from each program that offers a graduate degree; chaired by the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies
- Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) – consisting of seven actively teaching tenured or tenure-track faculty members at the undergraduate level who do not carry academic administrative responsibilities
- General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) – consisting of members appointed by the Faculty Senate
- Faculty Senate – consisting of one elected representative from each of the 13 academic departments and the Faculty Senate President, elected at large
- The Provost and the three Associate Provosts

At the administrative and structural level, roles in assessment of student learning outcomes have been clearly defined. Those involved in student learning assessment and their respective responsibilities are listed below.

- The General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) is responsible for
 - Determining the assessment devices to be used for assessment of general education student learning outcomes
 - Assisting in the administration of selected assessment tests/surveys
 - Analyzing assessment data
 - Using assessment results to improve student learning
 - Making recommendations based on the results of the assessment tests
- The Academic Council and Faculty Senate are responsible for
 - Reviewing recommendations of GECC
 - Reviewing the program assessment reporting format and structure
 - Making recommendations regarding assessment plans and reports
 - As the primary faculty governing bodies, the Academic Council and Faculty Senate bolster faculty and staff responsibilities by providing leadership and support for assessment activities. The Academic Council, working with the Faculty Senate, GECC, the Graduate Council, and the Director of Institutional Research, is responsible for the coordination, review, and follow-up of assessment activities in each academic unit.
- The Curriculum Review Committee is responsible for
 - Evaluating the five-year program reviews for undergraduate programs
 - Meeting with program representatives and making recommendations to the Provost or designee
 - Reviewing and approving all curricular changes to undergraduate programs, which includes analysis of student learning outcomes
- The Graduate Council is responsible for
 - Evaluating the five-year program reviews for graduate programs

- Meeting with program representatives and making recommendations to the Provost or designee
- Reviewing and approving all curricular changes to graduate programs, which includes analysis of student learning outcomes
- Associate Provost for Graduate Studies is responsible for
 - Overseeing Graduate Council
 - Reviewing the recommendations of Graduate Council and modifying the recommendations as needed to ensure assessment planning and reporting of graduate programs is effective
 - Making recommendations to the Provost regarding the effectiveness of delivery of assessment plans in graduate programs
- Office of the Provost is responsible for
 - As the chief academic officer, the Provost is responsible for overseeing the assessment process and integrating the academic assessment plan.
 - The Associate Provost for Academic Affairs oversees Academic Council and ensures the academic assessment plan is in alignment with the overall college strategic plan and academic master plan.
 - The Associate Provost for Graduate Studies oversees Graduate Council and ensures that the academic assessment plan is in alignment with the overall college strategic plan and academic master plan.

Faculty Role in Assessment of Student Learning

Faculty plays an integral role in developing program goals and measurable student learning outcomes to assess student learning. Faculty from each academic department are responsible for

- Developing a set of program goals and measurable learning objectives for the program
- Developing course specific goals and learning outcomes that align with the program goals and learning outcomes
- Designing a curriculum to achieve those goals
- Developing course-specific measures/rubrics that assess both course-specific and program goals and learning outcomes
- Creating a program assessment plan
- Assessing student learning
- Analyzing assessment data
- Using assessment results to improve student learning

Using Assessment Data

Clearly, collecting assessment data is not enough. Each department must submit an assessment report in September that reviews the assessment of student learning for the

specific program. The assessment report includes a section that details how each department is using the assessment data to improve student learning outcomes through instruction, curriculum, and the program itself. Changes have already been accomplished in several departments as a result of the assessment process.

The Department of Chemistry, Computer Science and Mathematics found through their data collection in 2005 that students' oral communication skills were lacking. To address this issue, the faculty reviewed their assessment plan, focusing on the program-level learning outcomes related to oral and written communication. The faculty then required students in Math 403 – Senior Assessment, to give an oral presentation of the results of their research projects to an audience of their peers and program faculty. A common rubric was developed to guard against grade inflation. Student scores on oral communication skills did improve with this requirement.

The Music Department also used assessment data to make curricular changes. The department revised their performance rubric to be more specific. These rubrics have helped improve assessment of performance levels.

The Department of English, Theatre, Communications, and Foreign Languages found that students were weak in the integration of source material in a foundational English course, ENG 210, required of all majors. After adding a one-credit bibliographic research lab in collaboration with the library staff, bibliographic instruction is now a part of the institutional syllabus. Additionally, a written final examination is now required in every section of ENG 210, as is a final, source-based essay. These two items become part of the student's Local Writing Assessment.

The Department of Psychology noticed that scores on the biological psychology sub test of the Major Field Test had been consistently low. As a result, the department offered PSYC 458, Sensation and Perception, in fall of 2008 for the first time in five years. Students' scores improved as a result.

These are some of the examples of how ASC is 'closing the loop.' Academic departments are reviewing the assessment data collected and using what they learn to improve student learning outcomes, enhance teaching effectiveness, and improve the curriculum.

Overall Assessment Plan and Oversight

While the academic assessment plan has been implemented and has become a part of the assessment culture at Adams State College, an overall assessment plan has not yet been fully implemented. At the first planning retreat mentioned above, a work group was put together to head the development of an overall assessment plan. At this time, the assessment work group has not implemented the complete plan; however, the plan continues to be refined, and the President has made the decision to hire an administrative intern to oversee the assessment plan for the campus. This position will

be staffed in the academic year 2009-2010 and will work with and provide leadership to the assessment work group in developing and implementing a thorough overall assessment plan.

That said, other areas of campus are evaluating programs, efficiency, student satisfaction, and so on. Without a fully implemented comprehensive overall assessment plan and a person in charge of implementation and oversight, results of the assessment efforts tend to be confined to the specific area of assessment. While this is helpful to the specific unit or office, an overall assessment plan will benefit the entire campus community.

Assessment in other Areas of Campus: a Case Study

The college's office of finance and administration is charged with oversight of the institution's financial performance. To meet this objective, staff prepares monthly and annual financial reports for review by the Board of Trustees Finance and Audit committee. These in-depth reports include a balance sheet, income statement, and bond covenant reports. Assessment of these reports enables leadership to evaluate the college's ability to cover its short-term and long-term financial obligations, monitor reserve balances, monitor asset growth/erosion, evaluate the effectiveness of the management of operations, and ensure that the college meets outstanding bond financial performance measure covenants. The annual statements are also audited by the Colorado State Auditor's Office, which compiles a report for the Colorado Legislative Audit Committee, a group charged with ensuring that state entities use public funds in an efficient and effective manner in accordance to Colorado Revised Statutes and the Colorado State Constitution. This annual report is used by entities such as the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the Higher Learning Commission, the National Center for Education Statics, and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems to analyze national and regional trends in higher education financing.

In 2007 a consortium of Colorado higher education stakeholders consisting of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, higher education administrators, Governing Board members, and legislators, agreed to hire the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to perform an independent national peer funding study. This study assessed the overall state of higher education funding in Colorado in order to refine the College Opportunity Fund program and address inequities or inconsistencies in funding. NCHEMS' key recommendation was to move the funding discussions for higher education away from a cost model to a revenue-driven model. The fundamental question NCHEMS posed was how to determine whether institutions were adequately and equitably funded: i.e., each institution has adequate resources for the unique missions and resulting program offerings that affect cost. Based on NCHEMS' strong recommendation to utilize a model that benchmarks data and revenues, they developed comparable institutional benchmarks for each public higher education institution in Colorado.

Stakeholders used the data and findings to determine the best mechanism for addressing inequities in funding levels within the state system. The information presented in the study assisted stakeholders in determining how to better allocate funds to the College Opportunity Fund stipend, fee-for-service contracts, and financial aid in order to drive state priorities and provide greater predictability to institutions for budget planning purposes. This model drove state higher education general fund appropriations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008. In addition, the study facilitated a discussion regarding the proportion of educational costs that should be borne by taxpayers (stipend, fee-for-service, and financial aid) versus students and families (tuition and fees).

In February 2009, the college retained the services of Moody's Investment Services to perform an in-depth analysis of the college's financial standing in order to establish an institutional bond credit rating. Moody's Investors Service is among the world's most respected and widely utilized sources for credit ratings, research, and risk analysis. Moody's reports contribute to stable, transparent, and integrated financial market analysis to help investors analyze the credit risks associated with fixed-income securities, like the bond offerings used by the college to finance capital construction projects. Following a comprehensive study that assessed the college's history, mission, leadership, strategic planning, competitive position, admissions and enrollment practices and performance, and a five-year financial overview, Adams State received an A3 rating. This investment grade rating enabled the college to obtain low interest rates for capital construction bond financing, which saved thousands of dollars in debt service interest payments.

Section Summary

Assessment of student learning through the academic assessment plan has made the strongest strides in the 2 1/2 years since the Commission's visit. Although there is currently not a single entity responsible for assessment of student learning, the entire academic community is involved in the implementation of assessment. Effective systems are in place to ensure assessment plans are developed and implemented for all academic programs. In its initial stages, ASC has seen almost 100% compliance. Regular review of assessment activities occurs at the committee level; those reviews are then shared with departments. Most of the work related to assessment is done by and responsibility rests with the faculty, who conduct assessment of their own programs and oversee student learning assessment. All departments have assessment plans for their own programs. The General Education Coordinating Committee has responsibility for and has implemented an assessment plan for general education with annual review of the plan, the process, and the data.

At the program level, departments are using the data to enrich courses, add instruction in specific areas, and generally improve the student's experience. Now that the academic assessment plan has been in place for a two-year period, and all involved know and understand their responsibilities, the next step will be to "close the loop" and

document the planning, implementation, and use of results in continually more systematic ways.

While the campus has made clear strides in creating a culture of assessment, there are areas for continued growth. One area is the full implementation of an overall assessment plan. While this is in progress, the addition of an administrative intern to oversee campus-wide assessment will assist in strengthening the culture of assessment. Another growing edge for the campus is documenting how the overall results are used to improve student learning.

Shared Governance

Shared Governance has become a driving force at Adams State College since the 2007 HLC comprehensive visit. Faculty, staff, and administration all took the recommendations of the visiting team to heart and made significant strides in clarifying the role and authority of the faculty in a shared governance format. The Faculty Senate was instrumental in elaborating on and defining shared governance for the institution, and the group made significant progress in delineating their role and authority.

Shared Governance Steering Committee

At the August 2008 retreat mentioned above, Dr. Benita Brink, Faculty Senate President, was chosen to head the Shared Governance working group. The group was made up of other Cabinet members: Dr. Don Johnston, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies; Bill Mansheim; VP for Finance and Administration; and Dr. Tony Laker, Chair of Human Performance and Physical Education and the Academic Council representative to Cabinet. This Shared Governance Steering Committee has met monthly since August 2008.

The Shared Governance Steering Committee set as its goals to

- Document evidence of faculty governance
- Compare current governance structure with that existing prior to the HLC visit
- Assess campus faculty/shared governance climate
- Educate stakeholders regarding faculty/shared governance

The steering committee also identified the steps involved to achieve these goals and established a tentative timeline for their completion.

The steering committee met to review their personal definitions of shared governance, as well as an instrument to evaluate shared governance at ASC. That instrument was the *Indicators of Shared Governance* from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The committee then revised the instrument to meet the needs of Adams State College and developed individual instruments for faculty/administration, classified staff,

and the Board of Trustees. These instruments were delivered via a Zoomerang survey to each constituency in the spring of 2009; the results were summarized and shared with the various constituent groups on campus for further discussion and education.

Shared Governance Survey Summaries

As mentioned above, the surveys used to assess the shared governance climate at Adams State College were adapted from the *Indicators of Sound Governance* document produced by AAUP. Once adapted, they were delivered to each constituent group in spring 2009. The results of the surveys are summarized below.

Faculty and Administration Survey

Responses to questions 1 -13 (surveys are included in the documentation notebook) indicate that the overall climate for shared governance is viewed favorably by the faculty and administrators. Response averages for all respondents were

- 6.5% strongly agree
- 45.3% agree
- 18.6% disagree
- 8.5% strongly disagree
- 21.1% don't know

Areas that may benefit from further discussion and education were identified by the Shared Governance Steering Committee. The full summary, with further breakdowns, can be found in the documentation notebook.

Board of Trustees

Responses to questions 1 – 4 indicate that the overall climate for shared governance at Adams State College is viewed favorably by the Board of Trustees. Response averages were

- 31.5% strongly agree
- 62.3% agree
- 6.3% don't know

Again, areas that would benefit from further discussion and education were identified by the Shared Governance Steering Committee. The full summary, with further breakdowns, can be found in the documentation notebook.

Classified Staff

Responses to questions 1 – 10 indicate overall dissatisfaction among classified staff with the climate toward shared governance. Response averages were

- 5.2% strongly agree
- 31.3% agree
- 26.3% disagree
- 14.7% strongly disagree
- 22.8% don't know

The full summary can be found in the documentation notebook, but some of the more important points include a need for further discussion and education about shared governance at ASC. Staff clearly disagrees with the statement “administration responds expeditiously to staff concerns.” This warrants further discussion and support.

Faculty Senate Role in Shared Governance

Prior to HLC's site evaluation in 2007, the Senate was comprised of one representative from each school; at the time Adams State College had 4 schools. In order to increase faculty representation, the constitution was revised in spring 2008 to include membership of one elected senator from each of the 13 academic departments. The Faculty Senate President is elected at large and becomes the 14th member. This arrangement allows for closer communication with constituents and broader representation of faculty. All academic departments have a clear line of communication and representation with other constituencies on campus.

The constitution itself was completed in February 2009 and approved by both the Senate and ASC faculty in March 2009. Article Two of the constitution addresses the Senate's role in shared governance directly. It lists 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.” Additionally, Article Two posits that the Faculty Senate should collaborate and communicate with the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and other constituents, and thus should be represented on campus planning and budget committees. The Senate President now serves on the Cabinet, which serves as the strategic planning committee and the budget committee.

The new constitution also discusses Senate subcommittees and the Senate's role in oversight of these subcommittees. The committee descriptions for the Curriculum Review Committee and General Education Coordinating Committee were revised to reflect the role of non-faculty liaisons on the respective committees. The non-faculty liaisons do not have voting rights, which strengthens the role of faculty in control of curriculum and academic issues. The Senate also created a new subcommittee in fall of 2008 to give faculty additional voice in defining instructional technology needs.

The subcommittees reporting directly to the Faculty Senate include

- The Curriculum Review Committee (CRC)
- The General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC)
- The Faculty Technology Advisory Committee (FTAC)

The Senate defines CRC's responsibilities as "reviewing, approving, and critiquing academic program reviews, changes or additions to all courses and/or curriculum, annual student assessment, accountability data and other issues that may relate to curriculum. The Committee will be composed of seven (7) actively teaching tenured or tenure-track faculty members who do not carry academic administrative responsibilities. Committee members will not advocate specific programs or department agenda, but will help ensure integrity of the college academic curriculum in the spirit of shared governance. The Chair for the following year will be elected by a majority vote, from the pool of continuing committee members at the last regular meeting of the spring semester." CRC reports directly to Faculty Senate and is required to give periodic reports to the Senate outlining its activities.

The Senate defines GECC's responsibilities as "determining the assessment devices for general education, assisting in the administration of selected assessment tests, analyzing assessment data, and making recommendations based on the results of assessment tests in order to improve student learning. The committee also functions to approve revisions to the general education curriculum." Members are appointed by the Faculty Senate for 3-year terms, and the chair of the committee is chosen by a majority vote of the continuing pool of committee members at the last regular meeting of spring semester. GECC, like CRC, must give periodic reports to the Senate outlining its activities.

The responsibilities of FTAC include serving "as a liaison to communicate the instructional technology needs of faculty to the college administration, and to help determine instructional technology priorities for campus-wide planning purposes." Members are appointed to 3-year terms by the Faculty Senate and are faculty members representing their respective disciplines. Again, the subcommittee reports to the Senate on a periodic basis.

In addition to changes in the Faculty Senate Constitution, representation on Cabinet, and revision and clarification of committee descriptions and roles, the Faculty Senate was instrumental in forming the Academic Communication Team in fall 2007. The team is comprised of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA), the Senate President, Chair of the General Education Coordinating Committee, and Chair of the Curriculum Review Committee. The purpose of this team is to disseminate information and discuss issues viewed to be important to academics at Adams State College.

Additionally, the Senate President meets biweekly with the Provost to discuss issues related to the Senate and academics in general. After the first year, in which the Provost met with only the Senate President, the meetings expanded to include two senate

representatives. The representatives attended on a rotating basis dependent on scheduling availability.

Section Summary

Great strides have been made in formalizing shared governance processes at Adams State College. The Faculty Senate and the Shared Governance Steering Committee took the lead in documenting the processes and procedures involved in shared governance and in surveying the various constituencies involved in shared governance. With these processes in place, and with faculty representation on Cabinet, shared governance will continue to be a theme for the campus. Now that data has been gathered from the surveys, focused education and discussion can take place.

Administrative Structure

The concerns expressed during the last HLC visit were that ASC's administrative structures were new and not yet well established. Specifically, the report notes: "As the new president implements a new administrative structure for the college, the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of the various college administrative officers should be clarified." (Assurance Section, p. 9) In this section, we explain the changes that have been made since ASC received the recommendations of the HLC team, and describe the administrative structure that ASC has had in place since early 2008.

To fully understand the recent changes in the administrative structure of the college, it is necessary to review the earlier changes in institutional leadership that created the discontinuities noted in the HLC report. In February 2004, Richard Wueste was hired as the President of ASC. He immediately began making dramatic changes in the structure and operation of the college. During the next several months, duties were reassigned among administrators, and the organizational charts were revised several times. When Wueste was finally removed from the presidency in October 2005, many of those changes were in process. Moreover, several senior leaders of the college had left the college.

At that point, ASC named then-provost David Svaldi as interim president and then-assistant provost Frank Novotny as interim provost. They held those posts through the 2005-06 academic year. In fall 2006, Svaldi was named President by the Board of Trustees, and a national search was begun to hire a provost. It was precisely at this point, in spring 2007, with a new president, an interim provost, and a search for a new provost well underway, that the HLC visit occurred.

In spring 2007, Michael Mumper was hired as the college's new Provost. He assumed those duties in July 2007. Among other things, Provost Mumper was charged with developing, implementing, and institutionalizing a stable and effective administrative structure for the college. After several months of review and discussion, the college adopted the structures that are in place today. These structures are described later in this section. These reforms center on a new 17-member Cabinet that serves as the

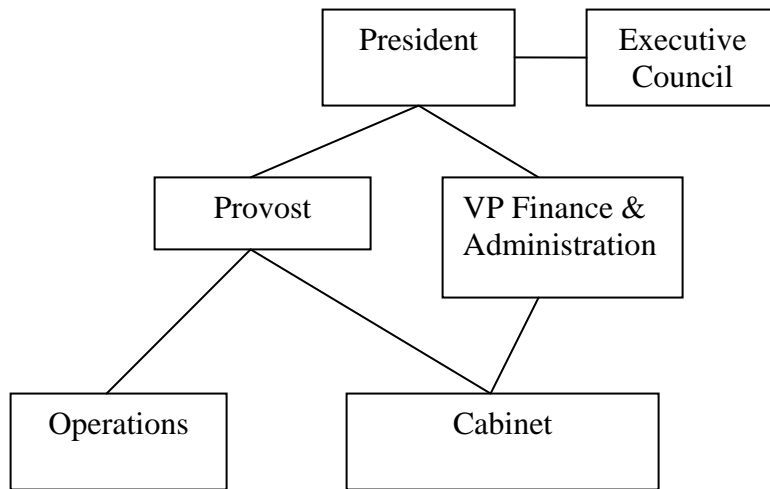
primary policy-making body of the institution and a new four-person Executive Council that advises the president, handles sensitive personnel matters, and deals with matters that require immediate action. These new structures have been in place for less than two years, but they have been working well. We believe this structure combines the broad participation from across campus essential to making and implementing good policy and the flexibility to make the quick decisions necessary to adjust to a rapidly changing political and fiscal environment.

ASC’s Administrative and Decision Making Structure

The structures presently in place for identifying, discussing, and making important decisions on campus are intended to ensure that the appropriate people are brought together regularly to develop and implement the mission, vision, and goals of the college. This structure also encourages and facilitates communication across units and clarifies which group is responsible for making any particular decision.

Final authority for all decisions rests with the President. The actions of these various groups are intended to provide the best advice to the President to ensure problems are identified quickly, the proposed solutions are vetted fully, and decisions are implemented efficiently and effectively.

Following is a summary of the reporting structure of each of the major committees.



- **Executive Council** includes all the President’s direct reports and is chaired by the President. It is responsible for advising the President on matters of campus-wide concern and serves as a sounding board for the President. The Executive Council pays special attention to external relations – including the relationship between the campus and community, state, and national actors. This is a tactical meeting

intended to problem-solve day-to-day issues facing the college. It also facilitates communication across units and generates agenda items for Cabinet.

The Executive Council meets the first and third Monday of each month from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Membership – President (Chair), Provost, VP for Finance, Athletic Director

- **Cabinet** includes the senior administrative leaders of the college. It is the primary planning, budgeting, and decision making body of the college. It is responsible for setting the strategic vision of the college and searching for opportunities to realize that vision. In doing so, the Cabinet initiates, reviews, and approves all major planning documents, including the college's Strategic Plan, the Academic Plan, the Enrollment Plan, the Facilities Master Plan, the IT Plan, and the yearly budget. Cabinet also discusses short-term and long-term college pricing policy. The Cabinet reviews and approves all college policies except academic policies, which are approved by Academic Council or Graduate Council and sent to the Provost for approval. The Cabinet is co-chaired by the VP for Finance and Administration and the Provost. The minutes of each Cabinet meeting are posted on the President's web site.

Cabinet meets the first and third Wednesday of each month from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. or as needed.

Membership – President, Provost (co-chair), VP for Finance (co-chair), Athletic Director, CIO, Associate Provost Academic Affairs, Associate Provost Graduate Studies, Associate Provost Extended Studies, Dean of Student Affairs, Associate VP for Facilities Planning, HR Director, Budget Director, Communications Director, Representative from Academic Council, Representative from ASC Foundation, Director of Alumni Affairs, and Faculty Senate Chair or designee.

- **Operations Committee** includes those units responsible for the day-to-day operations of the college. The agenda revolves around communication, short-term problem-solving, and implementation of the plans generated by Cabinet. The Operations Committee is chaired by the Provost in his/her capacity as the Chief Operating Officer of the campus. Summaries of the meetings are posted on the Provost's web site.

In order to ensure good communication across campus and to anticipate problems that might arise in the days and weeks ahead, the Provost convenes a regular bi-weekly Operations meeting. This group brings together the major operational units on campus, including Academic Affairs, Graduate Studies, Extended Studies, Student Affairs, Facilities, the Budget Office, Computing Services, the Library, and Institutional Research. The meetings focus on day-to-

day management of the college and provide an opportunity to coordinate activities and plans. Often, the Operations meeting is able to identify an area or process that is not working well and can appoint an ad-hoc “Grizzly team” to address the specific issue and develop potential solutions to present to the Operations Committee or the Cabinet meeting for further discussion and approval. The minutes from these meetings are also available on the Provost’s web page.

The Operations Committee meets every other Thursday from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Membership – Provost (chair), Associate Provost Academic Affairs, Associate Provost Graduate Studies, Associate Provost Extended Studies, Dean of Student Affairs, Associate VP for Facilities, Budget Director, IR Director, CIO, Communications Director, Library Director

The Organization of the Provost’s Office

The Provost serves as both the chief academic officer and the chief operating officer of the college. As such, the Provost’s Office is at the heart of the administrative operations of the college. The provost is assisted in those duties by three Associate Provosts. The Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA) is responsible for the operation of undergraduate programs at the college – including the undergraduate curriculum. This position also manages the processes of faculty hiring, promotion, tenure, and retention. The APAA also chairs the Academic Council, which is composed of the 13 department chairs. The Associate Provost for Graduate Studies (APGS) is responsible for all graduate programs – including admissions, curriculum, and new program development. The APGS also chairs the Graduate Council, composed of a representative from each of the academic departments that offer graduate programs. Finally, the Associate Provost for Extended Studies (APES) is responsible for all undergraduate programs offered at a distance, including degree programs and the College@ High School program, as well as graduate professional development courses.

The Current State of ASC’s Administrative Structure: A Short Case Study

After an extended period of multiple leadership changes and organizational flux, ASC now has in place a new set of administrative structures that are working well. The campus is coming to understand the role and responsibilities of the Cabinet and the Executive Council. Policies are regularly adopted by the Cabinet and sent to the President for approval. The minutes from these meetings are regularly posted for the campus to review. The actions of the Cabinet are also reported back to various constituency groups, including the Faculty Senate, the Academic Council, and the Graduate Council.

It takes time to institutionalize such broad organizational changes. Effective implementation of new administrative structures such as has occurred at ASC takes years to reach a point where it is fully functional. But the new structures are meeting regularly and communicating with campus constituencies. The campus community is developing a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of these relatively new units.

The best evidence of how well these structures are functioning can be seen by reviewing the events surrounding the major budget crisis, referred to above, that affected the campus this year. The Colorado General Assembly faced a huge budget shortfall in early 2009. At one point it appeared ASC might receive a reduction in state support that could be as large as \$8 million – a 60% reduction of state support. Fortunately, these huge cuts never materialized, but during the time they appeared imminent, the administrative structures of the campus had to quickly prepare for the worst. The Cabinet met to discuss the situation. Given the fluid nature of the crisis, and the fact that such large budget reductions would certainly involve layoffs, the Cabinet asked the Executive Council to develop a plan and bring it back to the Cabinet for approval before sending it to the President as a recommendation.

The Executive Council began meeting twice weekly to consider the situation. In order to ensure that the right voices were in the room, the Executive Council invited the APAA, the APES, and the Dean of Student Affairs to participate in those meetings. As the scope of the problem became clearer, the Executive Council began communicating with the campus about the situation. First, it conducted several campus-wide meetings to describe the situation and listen to the concerns and recommendations of the campus community. Later, a “Virtual Suggestion Blog” was set up to allow the campus to make suggestions directly to the Executive Committee. The President issued weekly e-mail messages updating the campus. The Cabinet was informed of the changing status of the situation at each meeting, and Cabinet members reported those developments back to constituency groups.

Once the Executive Council had developed a recommendation, it presented that recommendation back to the Cabinet. It was then approved and sent to the President as a recommendation. At that point, the Executive Council held another round of campus-wide meetings to share the recommendations and provide an opportunity for campus-wide input.

Before the President had to fully implement the budget reduction plan, the State of Colorado was able to use federal stimulus funds to reduce the budget cut significantly for at least the next two years. This greatly eased the crisis in the short term. But what could have been a divisive process generating heated challenges to a relatively new administrative structure did not happen. In fact, the new processes worked well. The campus community was well informed about the status of the problem, and was given the opportunity to provide input into the final decision. All this was done within the

established practices of the existing structures. As the magnitude of the crisis began to diminish, those structures continued to operate as they had been designed. This experience gives us even more confidence that ASC now has a set of administrative structures in place that will serve us well over the next several years.

Section Summary

In its final report of 2007, the Commission requested that the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of the various college administrative officers be clarified. With the senior administrative offices fully staffed, the officers have been able to design and implement a structure that allows for issue identification, discussion, and decision-making on campus. This structure has encouraged and facilitated communication across units and clarified which group is responsible for making any particular decision.

Summary

Adams State College has made significant progress in the four areas of concern cited by the HLC visiting team in February, 2007. Since that time, Adams State feels it has met the criteria established by the Commission in some areas and has taken its first steps in meeting those standards in others.

- Strategic Planning
 - Cabinet serves as the strategic planning body and meets quarterly to focus solely on strategic planning activities.
 - The Strategic Planning work group sets the agenda and activities for the quarterly planning meetings and brings to the attention of the strategic planning body issues for discussion and implementation.
 - A Noel-Levitz consultant was hired and used to help clarify ASC's planning efforts based on data gathered during a spring 2009 visit.
 - A 10-year facilities master plan has been created and is being implemented.
 - Strategic Planning continues to evolve as Adams State College grows and external events such as state funding, national economic downturns, and policies affect the campus.

- Assessment
 - An academic assessment plan, focused on student learning measures and outcomes, involves the entire academic community at ASC.
 - Faculty have responsibility for determining and implementing assessment measures at the course and program level.
 - The General Education Coordinating Committee has responsibility for determining and implementing assessment measures for general education.
 - The Curriculum Review Committee (undergraduate) and Graduate Council have responsibility for their respective five-year program reviews.

- Faculty Senate and Academic Council have responsibility for reviewing and approving or modifying the overall academic assessment plan.
- Roles and timelines are firmly established, and assessment is ongoing.
- While an overall assessment plan for the campus is in the planning stages, it has not yet been implemented.
- Assessment has a foothold in the culture at Adams State College; we have taken our first steps but have a ways to go before assessment is well-established and “second nature” among all constituencies.

- Shared Governance
 - Faculty Senate changed its constitution to reflect the role of Faculty Senate and its subcommittees in shared governance at ASC.
 - The Shared Governance Steering Committee meets monthly to determine its steps in educating the campus regarding shared governance at ASC.
 - The Shared Governance Steering Committee surveyed the faculty and administration, the Board of Trustees, and the classified employees to determine their level of satisfaction with shared governance; the results will be used to further discussion and education on this topic.

- Administrative Structure
 - All senior administrative positions have been filled.
 - The Office of the Provost has taken the lead in defining and delineating the roles of each administrative structure at ASC.
 - The roles and structure have been disseminated to the campus through postings on the President’s web-site and regular e-mail updates.

Adams State College continues to look for opportunities to fulfill its mission. Focusing on the four areas of concern for the Higher Learning Commission over the past 2 ½ years has given the college a chance to review its educational mission and strengthen its structure and processes. While growth will continue, we feel we have made significant progress in focusing our efforts and resources on our mission as an educational institution.