



Dr. Sandra Elman, President  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
8060 165<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE  
Suite 100  
Redmond, WA 98052

Re: TMCC 2014 Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report

Dr. Elman,

In January of 2013, TMCC received its reaffirmation of accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. In that reaffirmation, the Commission requested that the College address Recommendation 1 (as revised) and Recommendation 2 of the Fall 2011 *Year One mission and Core Themes* Peer-Evaluation Report as well as Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2012 *Year Three resources and Capacity* Peer-Evaluation report in and Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report without a visit in Fall 2014.

Please find attached the amended recommendations as requested.

1. Recommendation 1 (as revised) and
2. Recommendation 2 of Fall 2011 *Year One Mission and Core Themes* Peer-Evaluation Report
3. Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2012 *Year Three Resources and Capacity* Peer-Evaluation Report.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Recommendations identified by our Peer-reviewers.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria C. Sheehan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maria" and last name "Sheehan" clearly legible.

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**I. Recommendation 1 (as revised) of Fall 2011 Year One Mission and Core Themes Peer-Evaluation Report. - The evaluation panel recommends that the College ensure that its core themes individually manifest essential elements of its mission. (Standard 1.B.1). [Revised January, 2012].**

The mission of Truckee Meadows Community College: "Truckee Meadows Community College promotes student success, academic excellence and access to lifelong learning by supporting high-quality education and services within our diverse community."

As with many other institutions, TMCC labored over the identification of our Core Themes, their intent, importance and how they ultimately support the Mission of the College. A broadly represented college task force was established in 2013 and worked exhaustively to revisit the college mission and then review the Core Themes of the Mission. In this work, TMCC reaffirmed our mission as applicable and current. The Core Themes were reviewed and adjusted to reflect the importance of each in terms of mission fulfillment. These included Student Success, Academic Excellence, and Access to Lifelong Learning.

**Core Theme: Student Success:**

Truckee Meadows Community College is a comprehensive community college. Within that construct, TMCC recognizes that students come to our college with varying goals. Consequently, no single definition of "success" can be all-inclusive. All students come to college with a purpose and that purpose requires progress towards a particular goal set by that student. These goals could be completing a degree or certificate, upgrading job skills, or simply personal interest. Regardless, TMCC provides the pathways and support for our students to be successful in all of their academic endeavors.

**Core Theme: Academic Excellence:**

Academic Excellence makes student achievement meaningful. In supporting this Core Theme, TMCC prides itself on recruiting and retaining only the most highly qualified and motivated faculty and staff. Standards for achievement are held to exemplary levels to ensure that our students receive the training and education that they require in their academic endeavors. All academic programs and courses are peer reviewed and evaluated according to the highest national standards and reviewed by advisory boards when applicable.

**Core Theme: Access to lifelong learning**

TMCC remains dedicated to access to lifelong learning for all members of our community. We actively partner with all segments of the population within our service area. Beginning with our on-site child care facility and partnerships with Washoe County School District to our collaborative relationships with local industry and affiliated sister institutions, we continue to develop strong working relationships with our partners in education.

## **II. Recommendation 2 of Fall 2011 Year One Mission and Core Themes Peer-Evaluation Report.**

**The evaluation panel recommends that the College continue to build upon its efforts to identify meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of the College's core themes and, therefore, fulfillment of its mission (Standard 1.B.2).**

During the 2013-14 academic year, the TMCC Planning and Resource Allocation Committee, under the guidance of the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services, convened to address and update the Strategic Master Plan for the college. The specific objectives of each of the Core Themes were identified and specifically designed to be in alignment with and support the mission of the college. Each of the Core Themes were strategically designed to not only contribute to the Core Theme but to also build a stable, sustainable and financially responsible foundation for fulfillment of the College Mission. In doing so, the college was able to identify realistic, measurable outcomes that will be used for institutional assessment. This process resulted in a definition of Mission Fulfillment based on its progress toward each measure.

A summary of TMCC's mission, core themes and objectives follows and the complete Strategic Master Plan is attached (Appendix A). Within the Strategic Master Plan, meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement (measures) have been identified for each of the objectives within each of the Core Themes.

### Mission

Truckee Meadows Community College promotes student success, academic excellence and access to lifelong learning by supporting high-quality education and services within our diverse community.

### Core Themes and Objectives

#### Core Theme 1: Student Success

Objective 1 – Promote College Readiness

Objective 2 – Increase Student Retention and Persistence

Objective 3 – Increase Graduation and Transfer Rates

#### Core Theme 2: Academic Excellence

Objective 1 – Provide relevant curriculum and effective delivery of instructional programs and services

Objective 2 – Provide relevant and effective non-instructional college programs and services

Objective 3 – Meet workforce educational needs in the service area

#### Core Theme 3: Access to Lifelong Learning

Objective 1 – Serve as a resource to the community, both internal and external, by providing a variety of opportunities for educational and cultural enrichment.

Objective 2 – Provide a welcoming and accessible teaching environment to a diverse community

Objective 3 – Create, expand and/or strengthen partnerships with civic, community, educational and business/industry organizations to provide lifelong learning opportunities.

### **Interpretation of Mission Fulfillment**

**For the college to meet the core themes of its mission, it needs to maintain or exceed a baseline measure for each indicator within the specified time frame. The College has identified a clear articulation of mission fulfillment that is based on satisfying at least 80% of the established measures. These are clearly defined in the Strategic Master Plan.**

### **III. Recommendation 1 of Fall 2012 Resources and Capacity Peer Evaluation Report.**

**While Truckee Meadows Community College has made substantial progress in educational assessment in recent years, full implementation has not yet been accomplished. The evaluation committee recommends that the College move forward with its current educational assessment initiatives, with particular attention to its general education outcomes (Standards 2.C.5, 2.C.9, and 2.C.10).**

#### **2.C.5**

*Faculty, through well-defined structures and processes with clearly defined authority and responsibilities, exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.*

The Curriculum, Assessment, and Programs (CAP) committee is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate established by Article 9.1 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws. Its authority, responsibilities and composition are defined by section 9.8. All curriculum, assessment, degree and program additions, revisions, and deletions are initiated by academic departments and submitted to the CAP committee at their monthly meetings. Proposals that are approved by CAP are submitted to the Faculty Senate for approval before submission to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The Faculty Senate bylaws define committee composition to encourage representation across all academic departments of the college. Through Article 7 of the collective bargaining agreement with the Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA), the college has clearly defined procedures for the selection of new faculty members which guarantee participation by current faculty members. Additionally, the TMCC Faculty Senate bylaws (9.8.2 and 9.15.2) clearly define the composition of the CAP and Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment (SLOA) committees as follows:

Faculty representation should come from a broad spectrum of disciplines on campus. In addition to representatives from each school or division, the committee should include representation from the Academic Affairs Office; Student Services; Institutional Research; as well as one academic Dean; the Associate Dean of Assessment and Planning; and members at large.

Beginning with the 2011-2012 year, the faculty evaluation criteria now incorporate the duty of assessment of courses as a basic responsibility of faculty, including submission of annual Course Assessment Reports (CARs) based on approved departmental assessment cycles and participation in the Program Unit Review (PUR) process.

### 2.C.9

*The General Education component of undergraduate programs (if offered) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment.*

*Baccalaureate degree programs and transfer associate degree programs include a recognizable core of general education that represents an integration of basic knowledge and methodology of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Applied undergraduate degree and certificate programs of thirty (30) semester credits or forty-five (45) quarter credits in length contain a recognizable core of related instruction or general education with identified outcomes in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes.*

The TMCC General Education Mission Statement (TMCC Catalog, page B-40) demonstrates the college's commitment to general education. The mission statement affirms that "General Education at TMCC provides a coherent curriculum that consists of a rigorous foundation of interrelated academic and applied experiences that introduce students to diverse ways of thinking and of understanding the world." The mission statement is published in the college catalog and on the college's website. The General Education section of the college catalog outlines five objectives of the general education curriculum. In addition, all general education courses must be vetted through the CAP and SLOA committees to demonstrate that students taking TMCC general education courses have successfully fulfilled the requirements of the general education mission. Finally, the catalog describes the general education categories which all degrees and certificates include.

For all AA and AS degrees, students must complete 6 credits in English, 3 credits of mathematics, 6 credits of natural science, and 3 credits each of social sciences, fine arts or humanities. This is in exact alignment with the NSHE System General Education Requirements. The learning outcomes relating to these courses address competencies in communications, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and personal/cultural awareness. These experiences directly relate to the college's overall mission of promoting student success, academic excellence, and access to lifelong learning.

For all AAS degrees, students must complete 6 credits in English, 3 credits of quantitative reasoning, 3 credits science, 3 credits of social sciences, fine arts or humanities, 3 credits of human relations and 3 credits of US constitution. For all Certificates of Achievement (30 credits), students must complete 3 credits of communications, 3 credits of human relations and 3 credits of quantitative reasoning. The learning outcomes relating to these courses address competencies in communications, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and personal/cultural awareness. As with the transfer degrees listed above, these course experiences directly relate to the college's overall mission of promoting student success, academic excellence, and access to lifelong learning.

As of the fall of 2012, every course satisfying the rigor of a general education course had clearly defined course student learning outcomes and associated measures of those outcomes approved and published. Furthermore, each of the general education courses are scheduled to be assessed on the published course assessment calendar, ensuring the complete assessment of all general education courses on a continuing 5 year cycle under the guidance of the Associate Dean of Assessment and Planning. In addition to course level assessment of general education, programmatic assessments are completed as part of the periodic Program Unit Review (PUR). All academic programs participate in the PUR every five to seven years depending on external accreditation. Program level student learning outcomes and program goals are evaluated in terms of academic excellence, student success and lifelong learning.

### 2.C.10

*The institution demonstrates that the General Education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) and transfer associate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs.*

TMCC's transfer associate degree programs, applied science degrees, and certificate programs include a recognizable core of general education, fulfilling students' need for breadth and depth of diverse knowledge and skill. All courses demonstrate identified outcomes that align with and support program goals or intended outcomes. The general education component of TMCC's degrees has been aligned with a recent Board of Regents mandate to streamline general education system-wide. This mandate was passed in December 2010 and was fully implemented fall 2012. (The new general education requirements are located in the Board of Regents Handbook, Title IV, chapter 14, section 18, page 18. New degree requirements are located in Title IV, chapter 16, page 16.)

This modification allows students to complete their degree in a more efficient manner while at the same time emphasizing the importance of a focused general education. TMCC's Curriculum, Assessment and Programs (CAP) committee met in early 2011 to discuss these new requirements and put forth recommendations for appropriate changes to degree programs; it also initiated an examination of transfer agreements with other institutions. The streamlining of degrees and emphases—AA, AS, AAS, AAS in Business, and AGS—as well as certificates, was conducted and as of the fall of 2012, all degrees had gone through the CAP committee for approval.

The updating of the degrees and certificates provided an opportunity for the CAP and SLOA committees to review learning outcomes associated with each of the degrees and the courses within those degrees. In doing so, academic departments were able to strategically align course level learning outcomes with degree level learning outcomes, and ultimately with the general education outcomes. These in turn are aligned with the mission and core themes of the college. Serendipitously, these analyses generated a very useful result in the form of a current single, open source for all objectives, learning outcomes and measures associated with all courses, degrees, emphases and certificates offered at TMCC. In this way, TMCC curriculum and learning outcomes are accessible to all interested parties, including faculty, staff, and students, accrediting bodies, advisory boards, funding agencies or other interested parties. This transparency in curriculum has helped us become more focused on the efficacy of our general education and its applicability to our degree programs and ultimately our students.