

Austin Community College Compliance Certification Response
Substantive Change Prospectus
South Austin Campus

Austin Community College engages in continuous improvement to achieve its mission through its Master Plan development process. The Master Plan process

[1]:

- Involves college-wide participation through the shared governance structure which is a system of councils and committees with representation from all employee groups, full-time and part-time faculty associations, affiliate organizations, and administration
- Integrates the college's various evaluation processes with planning and budget processes
- Provides for a 10-year view of planning, including the SACS Strategic Focus and the Facilities Master Plan
- Is a three-year "rolling" cycle with annual updates
- Provides for an intensive review of benchmark data every five years
- Ensures ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation of programs and services as required in Board Policy E-1 Master Planning [2], which states in part,

"The President shall develop, for annual review and approval by the Board of Trustees, a comprehensive Master Plan that... leads the College toward achievement of its mission/vision." and,

"Institutional research must be an integral part of the College's planning and evaluation processes, and there must be a clear linkage between

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planning, budgeting, evaluation, and assessment. The Master Plan must incorporate performance measures for, and provide evidence of, program and institutional improvement based on the results of assessment.”

Several evaluation/assessment processes inform the college’s Master Plan development process:

- The College’s mission functions are assessed through the use of college-wide Core Indicators (effectiveness measures)
- Instructional program performance is assessed through the Instructional Program Review process
- The performance of administrative and support units is assessed through the Internal College Survey process
- External effectiveness activities provide comparisons to state and national standards:
 - Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Institutional Effectiveness Measures
 - Community College Survey of Student Engagement
 - National Community College Benchmarking Project
 - Kansas Study

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability publishes the results of these assessments. College units, committees, and councils use the results to make recommendations for improvements. Functional area cluster groups (cross

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organizational groups based on function) [3] create Master Plan initiatives (goals) that include quantitative performance indicators (wherever possible), targets, and initiative objectives (action steps) to address the recommendations. The performance indicators and targets are the measures for evaluating the impact of Master Plan initiative implementation on the college's mission. The Institutional Planning Committee (IPC) [4] prioritizes all initiatives submitted in the Master Plan development process. Initiatives that receive the highest priority rating by the IPC are the focus for the planning cycle and are "moved" to the budget development process for units to reference in their unit-level budget requests (page 3) [5].

ACC uses the Core Indicators (effectiveness measures) process [6] to assess achievement of college-wide, state-mandated mission functions. Function owners review the measures annually and make revisions, as needed. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability publishes the results for each of the measures annually (*Effectiveness Updates* [7]). The Institutional Planning Committee reviews the *Effectiveness Updates* as one component of the Master Plan development process. Function owners use the Effectiveness Updates to monitor and guide improvements to the operations of the functional area.

The Instructional Program Review process [8], as stated in Board policy E-5 Review of Instructional Programs [9], requires faculty to "systematically and

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regularly gather and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data in order to facilitate the continuous improvement of each program, to guide resource allocation, and to assist the administration and Board in making decisions about programs.” Faculty lead an intensive instructional program review on a four year cycle using a broad range of data to determine the effectiveness of their program. These data include standard information about the program’s students, enrollments, completions, faculty, and budgets, but also include data from the program’s SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis and other environmental impacts that may affect the program.

The review process requires faculty to report their program's performance relative to eight criteria defined in Board Policy E-5 and to propose a plan for improvement. The Quality Improvement Plan is used to update curriculum as needed or to provide input to the Master Plan and budget development processes. Master Plan initiatives are coordinated through the Credit Instruction functional area cluster group. Budgetary items identified during the program review and included in the departmental budget are forwarded to the Instructional Dean, then to the Vice President over the particular area. This information, if approved at all levels, becomes a part of the budget process. Additionally, some specialized programs are required to meet the accreditation requirements of their discipline/profession [[10](#)].

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The Internal College Survey (ICS) process [\[11\]](#), as stated in Board Policy E-4, Organizational Performance Evaluation/Auditing [\[12\]](#), "...ensure[s] that all units of the college are evaluated annually by faculty, staff, and students for effectiveness, efficiency, and policy compliance." Administrative and educational support services use the results of the ICS in planning their quality improvement activities. This survey collects information about the quality of college services. Those units not meeting a minimum standard must develop an improvement plan. The improvement plan process [\[13\]](#) includes four steps:

1. Identify specific areas of dissatisfaction – why are ACC internal customers dissatisfied with your overall service, attitude, or promptness?
2. Determine approach to address the issues identified – how will you address the concerns of ACC internal customers?
3. Prepare and implement an action plan – what will you do to address the concerns of ACC internal customers?
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the action plan – how well did you address the concerns of ACC internal customers?

These four steps require that additional data be collected to identify and make improvements to services. Unit plans document this four step process [\[14\]](#).

ACC's continuous improvement processes enlist the participation of diverse constituents as required by Board policy E-1 Master Planning, "The Planning process shall include recommendations from the organizational units, faculty, and staff." The planning and assessment processes utilize input from a broad

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base of constituents and stakeholders, both internal and external. Internal constituents, staff, faculty, and students, are involved at the unit, departmental, functional area cluster group (a cross-organizational group based on function), and/or at the college levels. Involvement at the college level generally means participating on college-wide committees. Committees, such as the Institutional Planning Committee that is directly involved in the planning and assessment process, have representation from faculty, staff, students, and affiliate groups such as AAUP (American Association of University Professors), TCCTA (Texas Community College Teachers Association), TACHE (Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education), and Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education (TABPHE).

In addition, external constituents and stakeholders, including area independent school districts, chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, and elected officials, have participated in forums with the Board of Trustees and President to elicit input on the role and performance of Austin Community College in meeting their needs and identifying areas for improvement. ACC has conducted forums with the Austin Independent School District (November 1, 2005) [\[15\]](#), area Chambers of Commerce (November 21, 2005) [\[16\]](#), and community based organizations (February 27, 2006) [\[17\]](#) Two additional forums with legislators (July 2006) and area universities (to be determined) are included in the Board's annual work plan [\[18\]](#).

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For the South Austin Campus planning process, the South Austin Community Advisory Committee (SACAC), comprised of representatives from the South Austin area, provided input throughout the planning and implementation of the South Austin Campus project [\[19\]](#).

Austin Community College demonstrates a sustained and documented history of planning evaluation cycles and improvement in accomplishing our mission through planning documents, reports, work plans, schedule calendars, meeting minutes, and websites, to name a few.

Documentation includes the following examples:

- Master Plan [\[20\]](#) – This college-wide planning document is used in conjunction with quantitative reports such as the annual report of Core Indicators (effectiveness measures) and qualitative reports such as reports from meeting discussions to identify planning priorities, and initiatives for improvement.
- Reports to the Board of Trustees – As part of the Board's Annual Work Plan, the Board receives and discusses reports on the progress of improvement initiatives, as well as the general progress toward achievement of the college's mission. Some of the reports include the following:

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- Effectiveness Updates [\[21\]](#) – the results of core indicators of institutional effectiveness covering seven functional areas of the college’s mission. These effectiveness measures are aligned both with the college mission and the American Association of Community College’s Core Indicators.
- Master Plan Updates [\[22\]](#) – multiple updates on the planning process, as well as the progress of initiatives funded through the previous year’s Master Plan as part of the budget development process.
- Program Priorities and Program Costs Updates [\[23\]](#) – updates on the priorities and costs of instructional programs.
- Student Success Updates [\[24\]](#) – updates on a set of student success-related measures, including access, retention, goal achievement, and comparisons of developmental education and distance learning student success patterns.
- Closing the Gaps Updates [\[25\]](#) – an update on the progress toward student participation and success targets set as part of the state-wide “Closing the Gaps” initiative.
- Policy Compliance Reports [\[26\]](#) – reports based on Board policies that are part of institutional effectiveness activities to review performance and identify areas for improvement.
- Committee Meeting Minutes – ACC’s President has mandated that minutes of all college-wide meetings be posted on the committee’s

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website [\[27\]](#). Austin Community College uses the shared governance process to coordinate the planning, budget development, evaluation, and improvement activities. The shared governance council structure includes broad representation from faculty, staff, and students, as well as external constituent groups, as appropriate [\[28\]](#).

- Planning Calendar [\[29\]](#) – The President’s Office maintains a master calendar of all activities related to the effectiveness of the college and distributes electronic reminders to the responsible parties. The calendar and reminder system includes scheduled internal studies/reports and externally mandated reports to state, federal, and accrediting entities.
- Websites – The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability maintains a website [\[30\]](#) documenting institutional effectiveness information including the following:
 - Master Plan
 - Core Indicators (Effectiveness Updates)
 - Instructional Program Review
 - Assessment Reports (ULEAD – Unit Level Effectiveness Assessment Documentation)
 - Results of nationally or regionally normed surveys such as CCSSE, NCCBP, Gulf Coast Consortium Student Satisfaction Survey

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Other college websites contain data, reports and/or agendas and minutes that document discussions, reports, presentations, and actions:

- Board of Trustees website [\[31\]](#)
- College-wide Committees/Councils website [\[32\]](#)