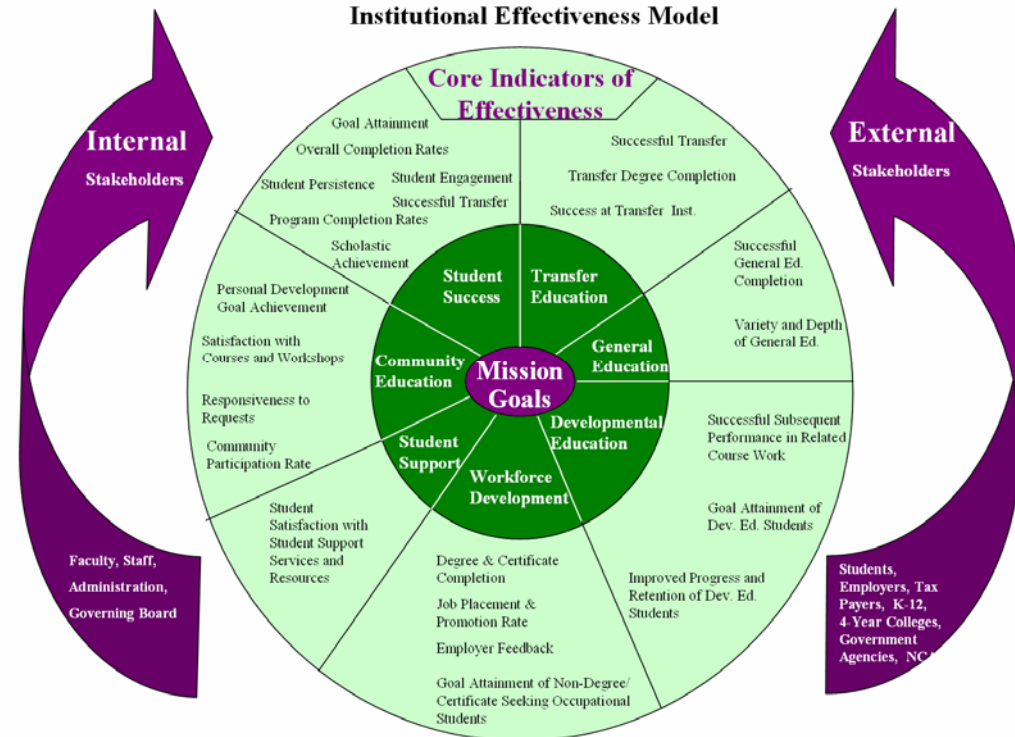


**Estrella Mountain Community College  
Institutional Effectiveness Model**



**Arizona Association of Institutional Research  
2005 Annual Conference  
April 8, 2005**

**Using Group Interviews for Improvement:  
*Getting I.E. Data off the Shelf and  
into the Hands of Stakeholders***

**For more information:**

Estrella Mountain Community College Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

[http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie\\_planning.html](http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie_planning.html)

Strategic Planning at EMCC

[http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie\\_planning.html](http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie_planning.html)

Institutional Effectiveness

[http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie\\_program.html](http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie_program.html)

**Lead Stakeholder  
Invites Others**

**Send Results of  
Core Indicator  
Data to  
Stakeholders**

**Final Progress  
Report to all  
Stakeholders  
Prior to next  
annual meeting**



**Conduct  
Continuous  
Improvement  
Interview &  
Identify**

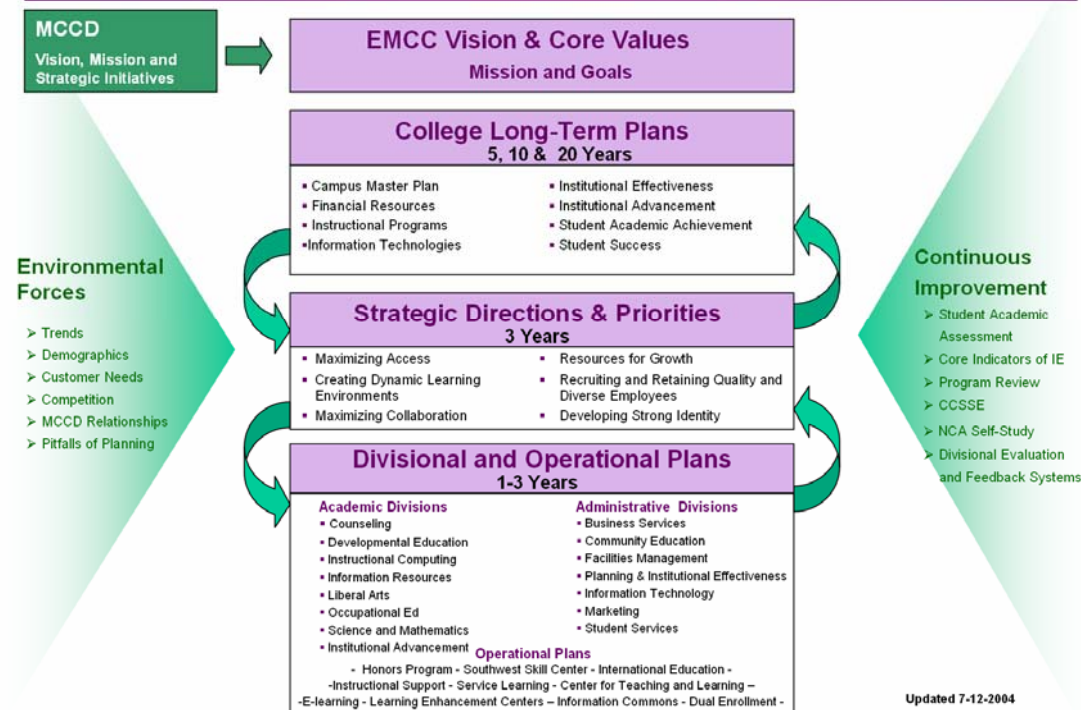
**Follow Up on  
Progress**

**Volunteer Teams  
Implement Strategies**

2 – 3 weeks  
prior to the next  
meeting

One week after and then every 2 – 3 months

**Estrella Mountain Strategic Plan Overview**



## Parts of the Key Stakeholders Interview Process and Follow-up

- **Review of the IE process**  
New members to the process may be unaware of the role of the Estrella Mountain Institutional Effectiveness program. This part of the interview provides pertinent information needed for new members to fully participate in the improvement meeting.
- **Evaluate previous year's improvement strategies**  
A review of the action taken in the improvement process provides evidence of progress and helps determine whether a strategy should be retained, altered, or deleted. Also, volunteers know that progress on improvement strategies will be made public at the annual meeting, so they are more likely to ensure progress on the strategies during the year.
- **Presentation of key findings**  
Core Indicator data are summarize and presented. The focus is on how the college is performing overtime and how our performance relates to District and National benchmarks. Qualitative judgments (e.g. "an area for improvement") are not presented. Stakeholders are the ones that render these judgments in the next phase of the meeting
- **Identification of strengths and opportunities for improvement**  
A review of the data and follow-up discussions ensure interaction between the stakeholders. Debate regarding identified strengths and opportunities for continuous improvement is encouraged.
- **Prioritization of improvement strategies and identification of volunteers**  
The stakeholder suggestions shared during discussion lead to a number of potential improvement opportunities. Prioritization is necessary in order to reasonably accomplish key improvement strategies and identify appropriate volunteers. Typically, only the top three to five strategies are addressed.
- **Review of standards & Core Indicator modifications**  
Opportunity is provided to review current college standards and related Core Indicators of Institutional Effectiveness to determine whether changes or alterations are needed. This activity is part of an ongoing effort to encourage stakeholders to provide input on what information is collected and how we define success.
- **Plus/Delta (evaluation of the interview)**  
The stakeholder interview process concludes with an open opportunity for participant feedback regarding the entire process including any suggested changes to meeting proceedings and participant attendance.
- **Follow-Up:**  
The college Student Success Coordinator follows up with all the highest priority volunteer improvement team during the first week following the meeting. Every two months, the Coordinator contacts group leaders to monitor progress. The Coordinator then creates a final progress report prior to the next annual meeting.

## Challenges

- **Growing Institution –New Faculty and Employees**  
Continued growth in campus enrollment and service needs often warrants human resource expansion including newly hired employees. The challenge in remaining fully inclusive in the stakeholder process offers continued opportunity for stakeholder growth and strategy implementation.
- **Multiple levels of "Buy-in"**  
The expansion of internal and external participants, as part of the stakeholder process, bring opportunities for a more diverse constituent of players necessary for monitoring the ever changing dimension of measured services.
- **Some data difficult to obtain and benchmarking not available**  
Because of the national challenge of obtaining comparable data, benchmarking is often difficult due to availability. Additionally, some information may be difficult for an individual college to collect (e.g. unemployment wage data for graduates). Since this process relies heavily on data, not having access to data or benchmark to evaluate success often hinders the improvement process.
- **Nature of Open Institutions and Community Colleges**  
The open-entry nature of the community colleges disallows equalizing measures for things like time-to-degree, academic progress, and certification achievement when comparing across institutions. Standardizing data on many measures remains a challenge.

## Lessons Learned

- **Stakeholder ownership is critical**  
Stakeholder members take personal pride and satisfaction as active participants in the strategic conversation. Informed participants contribute to the improvement process and volunteer as agents for change when they recognize the value of implementation in their areas. Ownership is not possible if stakeholders are not given the opportunity to provide input into the evaluation of core indicators..
- **Senior administration support a must**  
The process must be supported by senior administration or stakeholders may not always see the value in the improvement meetings. Key stakeholder meetings are attended by the senior level staff to document support for the process. The President will also attend these meetings. This process is most successful with a high degree of senior level buy in.
- **Use "Peer Persuasion"**  
Stakeholders are held accountable by their peers for taking action on improvement strategies generated during meeting conversations. Action volunteers are contacted throughout the year with follow-up progress reports listing current accomplishments. Formal reporting at the annual meetings supply the positive peer pressure.
- **Divide and conquer**  
Core Indicators of Effectiveness are addressed through mission goals presented in 6 separate Stakeholder meetings per year. Three meetings are scheduled each semester to accommodate participant's schedules and better focus on specific mission goals. Don't try to address all your Core Indicators in a single meeting!
- **Continuous review of progress**  
Progresses on Improvement Strategies are monitored throughout the year to insure positive action is being taken by volunteers. Stakeholders are kept informed on current actions being implemented to address improvement strategies.
- **Prioritize and assign "volunteer responsibility"**  
Prioritization of stakeholder suggestions is necessary in order to accomplish key improvement strategies. Stakeholders volunteer for action on specific strategies related to their areas of interest and/or affiliation. Systems to monitor volunteers progress are required to ensure accountability and progress.
- **Keep it simple – Use executive summaries**  
The amount of data available can often stifle productivity during stakeholder meetings. Information presented in executive summary format helps to streamline data and provide concise, rich information for policy and stakeholder decision makers.
- **Follow-up continuously**  
One key aspect of assuring strategy progress is a continuous follow-up regarding progress and implementation of improvement strategies. Contact with action volunteers occurs on a regular basis through e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face communication. An accomplishment matrix often accompanies communication with volunteers to help captivate and encourage continued action.

### For more information:

Estrella Mountain Community College Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness  
[http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie\\_planning.html](http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie_planning.html)  
Strategic Planning at EMCC  
[http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie\\_planning.html](http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie_planning.html)  
Institutional Effectiveness  
[http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie\\_program.html](http://www.estrellamountain.edu/ie/ie_program.html)

