

Business & Technology Division 2013 Program Review Executive Summary

Reflection and assessment has become more than buzz words in academia; to a point, these words have entered the very basis for justifying the academic landscape. We, in the Career Technical Education field, a recognized community college mission, have been charged with an ever increasing challenge to establish value as budgets shrink and resources are channeled to General Education. Our Business and Technology Program Review provides evidence of this challenge over the past six years; it also attempts to provide hope for the future by identifying growth areas and justification for resource allocations to support them.

As a road map to this reflection and assessment, this preamble will summarize the evidence provided in the attached documents. (Programs addressed in random order)

Cooperative Work Experience:

Prior to joining our division, this program was first within Student Services and then the Life Sciences Division; it has transitioned, through the efforts of Kathleen Clark, COOP Coordinator/Faculty, from a faltering program to a value added educational experience for students across disciplines within MPC. Student enrollment has been significantly improved to identify real students looking to gain both an academic learning and work experience. Serving underrepresented student populations has also been realized in this transition, as evidenced by student participation from both African American and Latino students; women enrollment has also been higher in this program than other programs at MPC.

This transition, through reflection and assessment, has also centralized Faculty Advisory to the Program Coordinator and two additional advisors within two specific trade programs. The results have been increased structure and attained outcomes for both students and the businesses that participate in COOP. This also allows for enhanced design qualities within all branding materials: Orientation material and presentation (video, online website, and on-site sessions), brochures, and student/business forms that add credibility to the program in the business community. As we look to the future for this program, it now has a foundation that will continue to experience growth connecting students to work experience opportunities that will add depth to their educational portfolio and resume.

Computer Science and Information Systems:

A recurring theme among the traditional programs within our division will begin with this department. Since our last program review, this department has seen additional retirements, which now places the faculty reduction to two and one-half positions. This fact when added to facility restriction of only two labs has limited growth and taxed the existing faculty with a

daunting challenge to meet student demand. Although efforts have been made over the years to facilitate access for students by scheduling evening, weekend, and Marina campus offerings, the department has really been in maintenance mode. Link this fact with aging lab computers (six years +) that no longer meet specification requirements to run current software efficiently, it is only by the exemplary effort of our PC Technicians, full-time and adjunct faculty that students rate their overall experience at MPC as exceptional. Current faculty have reflected and assessed the impact on student outcomes given these handicaps and they have determined that some key strategic inputs are required to exceed the expectations for future:

- Hire at least one new full-time instructor
- Add one new lab facility
- Create a permanent lab in Marina
- Update software and hardware curriculum
- Clarify paths for job placement and college transfer
- Add Forensic Security Program
- Increase internship opportunities for students

To support these strategies, the department continues to gather research data that shows the growth trends is momentous for computer science careers over the next twenty years; each report also shows that there will be a shortage of trained, certificated, or degreed individuals throughout the state and the country, if efforts are not made now to recruit young men and women into this career focus.

Business Skills Center:

Similar to the computer science labs, the Business Skills Center is challenged daily with utilizing computers that are seven years or older. The impact for students is software inefficiencies such as delayed load times and inability to function with the newly designed tools, such as touch screen technology or voice command. Staff reductions have also had their impact, as the loss of two staff members to short and long term illness, have not been fully replaced. The department is also anticipating additional transition over the next two years; two faculty members are considering retirement. Link these facts with the faculty student reflection and assessment that has introduced a paradigm shift to offer online instruction for designated courses to enhance student access and outcomes. Within the coming year many courses will need to be revised for the new Windows 8 OS, for the Metro interface, MS Office 2013, and for cloud applications including Google Docs.

Student success and outcomes within the Business Skills Center curriculum is directly impacted by faculty and staff access, up-to-date software and technology tools, and flexible operating hours both in lab and online. Planning for the future will require both physical and staffing

resources beyond the current allocation to ensure that student needs in an ever changing business and community environment.

Business:

The department has two full-time faculty that routinely teaches 19+ units of our core curriculum per semester; this has been an unacceptable transition as two full-time positions have not been replaced after faculty retirements. Our full-time faculty is in dire need of additional full-time faculty to enable more attention to the development and growth of the program. Our on-leave Division Office Manager failed to adequately perform most every job function, which resulted in those tasks either being tended to by faculty or simply going uncompleted or improperly completed. Thankfully our Temporary Office Manager has those processes under control and has provided immense relief for those affected by the previous shortfalls in support.

This five year period has been marked by shrinking budgets and an emphasis on reducing the number of sections offered while attempting to increase average class size. Robust demand for core transfer courses has helped the Business Department avoid eliminating too many sections. Where sections were reduced, we took special care to compare any reductions to the programs offered to ensure we are still offer classes in sufficient frequency for students to be able to complete programs of study in the time allotted for each program. In virtually every case we were able to alternate semester offerings where course sections were cut back without causing students to fall off of their completion schedules. Recently we have begun adding back in a small number of sections where student demand is especially strong. The decreased frequency of less demanded sections coupled with increased sections of highly demanded classes has increased the efficiency with which MPC Business produces FTES revenue.

Reflection and assessment has focused on student success and access to trending curriculum that will position them for current job placement, business creation, and future careers. It will be crucial for the MPC institution to reassess its commitment to Career Technical Education and recognize that only with equitable resource funding can we be competitive today and tomorrow.

Real Estate:

After meeting with industry experts and adjunct faculty, a new strategy has been adopted to reach competitiveness with the for-profit real estate learning centers in the region and the statewide marketplace. This strategy will re-configure the curriculum from sixteen week semester courses to eight week online or hybrid courses; it will allow real estate students an opportunity to prepare to sit for the state real estate licensing exam within two semesters. The prior configuration impacted student enrollment in our program, along with economic downturns, because we had an inability to compete with for profit groups which marketed their program completion timeline to four months. In a soft market, this is the prime time to change our curriculum as a positioning strategy for the next real estate market growth.

Real Estate courses will be updated during program review; during the spring semester, we offered the first courses in this format. The next step is to develop our marketing campaign to promote MPC Real Estate as a viable solution for licensing preparation at a reasonable cost in comparison with for profit groups.