

# Adams State College Self-Study

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### CRITERION I:

#### MISSION AND INTEGRITY

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Adams State College (ASC) is guided by a clear and distinct statutory role and mission to serve as a general baccalaureate institution providing access to teacher education in rural Colorado; to serve as a Regional Education Provider; to provide a limited number of master's level programs; and to offer programs that preserve and promote the history and culture of the region. Intrinsic to this mission is the need to offer quality, accessible, and affordable educational programs to meet the needs of Colorado's rural, underserved, and minority populations.

This statutory role and mission is reflected in the College's core institutional documents. The faculty, staff, and students work daily to bring the mission to life, creating an institution that offers a distinctive, student-centered environment. The college operates efficiently, responsively, and collaboratively within its structures and in partnership with other agencies that share the College's community-oriented mission.

#### *Core Component 1a:*

**THE ORGANIZATION'S MISSION DOCUMENTS ARE CLEAR AND ARTICULATE PUBLICLY THE ORGANIZATION'S COMMITMENTS.**

For purposes of this *Self-Study*, mission documents are those overarching written statements that summarize and define the core beliefs of the institution. They include the *Vision Statement*, *Mission Statement*, and *Institutional Goals*. Each of these documents resulted from the participation of all segments of the college community, including trustees, students, faculty, staff, community members, and alumni.

In early 2006, faculty, staff, students, community members, and community educators were surveyed to assess their support for the *ASC Vision*, *Mission Statement*, and *Institutional Goals*. Of nearly 600 responses, 86 percent said they either supported or strongly supported the current *Vision* and *Mission* statements.; more than 90 percent indicated they supported or strongly supported the current *Institutional Goals*.

Common themes linking the three documents include the following:

- A commitment to student access, opportunity, and success
- A focus on student-centered learning and academic excellence
- A commitment to improving regional education and the regional economy, and to preserving and honoring regional cultures

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The ASC Official Publications website provides a permanent, central location for key mission documents and other related material ([www2.adams.edu/pubs](http://www2.adams.edu/pubs)).

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### *Core Component 1b:*

**IN ITS MISSION DOCUMENTS, THE ORGANIZATION RECOGNIZES THE DIVERSITY OF ITS LEARNERS, OTHER CONSTITUENCIES, AND THE GREATER SOCIETY IT SERVES.**

Adams State College promotes diversity as a core institutional value. All three ASC mission documents address the importance of diversity among the College's many constituencies. In addition, to comply with state policy, ASC aligned its facilities and academic planning processes with the *Vision Statement* and *Institutional Goals* in its *Academic Master Plan (AMP)*. Addressing all seven *Goals*, the *AMP* aligns the educational mission with facilities maintenance and procurement procedures and with resource enhancement and reallocation through the Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) process. Annual assessment processes permit the institution to measure how well it is meeting the needs of its diverse constituency. Specific strategies addressing diversity call for the College to:

- Continue to serve underserved populations, especially Hispanics
- Develop and implement an academic diversity plan
- Actively recruit diverse faculty and students

The *AMP* may be viewed in the Document Room or online at: [www2.adams.edu/pubs](http://www2.adams.edu/pubs)

Also, ASC's Performance Contract with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) explicitly requires that the institution address the needs of diversity and of underserved students, and stipulates "increasing enrollment of underserved students, including low-income individuals, males, and minority groups."

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### *Core Component 1c:*

**UNDERSTANDING OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE MISSION PERVADE THE ORGANIZATION.**

ASC's mission documents reflect an inclusive and ongoing process of development and revision. There is a renewed commitment to ensure that all campus constituencies are aware of and embrace the spirit and intent of the mission documents. This creates a communal sense of ownership and a vested interest in accomplishing those goals.

In an effort to ensure stakeholder understanding of and support for the *Mission*, in 2004 Adams State College began migrating to ZBB to "right-size" campus budgets. The ZBB process provides a genuine opportunity to evaluate the institution's *Goals* and how they are being met across campus. This allows the first comprehensive, cross-campus look at assessment and evaluation of *Institutional Goals*.

The College has demonstrated its support for the mission through both operational and academic innovations, including:

- The recent creation of the One Stop Student Services Center, which furthers the College's student-centered mission. A direct result of student input, the One Stop integrates the functions of Admissions, Records, Financial Aid, and Student Business Services in one area to improve service.
- Expansion of academic curricula in response to constituents' understanding of the mission and direction of the institution. For example, the development of an RN-BSN completion degree program in FY 2005 proceeded from discussions by the San Luis Valley Nurses' Forum.

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- ASC's statutory mission to serve as a Regional Education Provider (REP) entails the responsibility to determine and address regional educational needs. ASC's region covers 14 counties in south-central and southeastern Colorado. The innovative Rural Education Access Program (REAP) in Lamar, La Junta, and Trinidad, Colorado, allows rural students to transfer to a bachelor's degree taught by ASC faculty on the community college campus.

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### *Core Component 1d:*

#### **THE ORGANIZATION'S GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES PROMOTE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES THAT ENABLE THE ORGANIZATION TO FULFILL ITS MISSION.**

Adams State College's governance and administrative structures and processes are well defined and proven. They have become an integral part of the campus culture, working in concert with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) and supported by an active and engaged Board of Trustees. The College's executive leadership team (Cabinet) works closely with faculty, staff, and students to effectively implement programs and initiatives that support ASC's current *Mission, Institutional Goals*, and *Vision* for the future.

The ASC Board of Trustees consists of eleven members, nine of whom are appointed by the Governor of Colorado and confirmed by the Colorado State Senate. Two of those nine must represent the San Luis Valley (SLV); members reside both in metropolitan and rural Colorado. These members have diverse professional backgrounds and strong management, accounting, legal, and entrepreneurial skills. There are also two non-voting board members: a student and a faculty representative.

While the Board clearly understands that day-to-day program implementation is the responsibility of Cabinet and other campus leaders, it does hold the College's executive leaders accountable. For example, in 2005 the Board dismissed the College President for failing to provide effective fiscal oversight of the College's operating budget. The Board has also insisted that the institution's finances comply with general accounting practices. Members of the Board have worked closely with the Vice President for Finance and Administration to institute a monthly cash flow analysis process and implement ZBB.

The CCHE plays a key role in defining the Adams State College mission and assessing its performance against the mission objectives. ASC negotiates an annual Performance Contract and Fee for Service Contract with the Department of Higher Education. The most recent (2005) Performance Contract includes offering programs for undergraduate liberal arts and sciences, teacher preparation, and business, as well as master's level programs and two-year transfer programs. It also requires ASC to be the primary teacher education provider in rural Colorado, to serve as a Regional Educational Provider, and to offer programs that preserve and promote the unique history and culture of the region.

Shared governance and collaboration are key components of ASC's management philosophy. A primary mechanism for shared governance is the use of campus committees, councils, and boards to address myriad campus issues and responsibilities. Shared governance permeates the curriculum review process. The institution has established structures and processes that clearly delineate management roles and responsibilities and that encourage cross-campus collaboration. A detailed ASC organization chart can be found online at [www2.adams.edu/pubs/](http://www2.adams.edu/pubs/)

The College is working to improve both its internal campus communication processes and to expand its communication channels with the community.

*Core Component 1e:*

**THE ORGANIZATION UPHOLDS AND PROTECTS ITS INTEGRITY.**

Adams State College abides by all applicable laws and regulations, establishes clear and fair policies for governance and personnel, responds appropriately to complaints and grievances, fosters integrity, and deals fairly and honestly with its constituents.

ASC procurement and contracting policy and procedures comply with all State of Colorado procurement and fiscal rules. The position of Controller for Sponsored Programs was established to guarantee proper fiscal management and accountability on grants. In 2002, a discovery of financial irregularities led to the arrest and conviction of the former Vice President for Financial Affairs. Subsequently, ASC revised its procedures according to recommendations from the Office of State Auditors Financial and Compliance Audit.

The Colorado Attorney General's Office provides advice and counsel to the ASC Board of Trustees and senior administrators on pertinent legal matters to ensure proper compliance and accountability. Additionally, an attorney from the Colorado Attorney General's Office attends Board meetings.

A commitment to ethical conduct, honesty, and integrity form the bedrock of ASC's relationship with its large and diverse constituency. A climate of zero-tolerance for unethical behavior contributes to a campus culture of integrity.

ASC has internal policies designed to guide and protect its students and employees. These include policy documents such as the *Trustees' Policy Manual*, the *Student Handbook*, the *Faculty Handbook*, the *Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA) Employee Handbook*, and the *Handbook for Professional Personnel*. The *Trustees' Policy Manual*, *ASC Faculty Handbook*, and the *Handbook for Professional Personnel* were recently revised; all have been approved and adopted, with the exception of the *Handbook for Professional Personnel*, which is still under review. The process entails review by the Colorado Attorney General's Office. ASC is also in the process of developing a meaningful diversity plan.

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**CRITERION II:**

**PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE**

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

In today's challenging fiscal climate for higher education, the Adams State College Board of Trustees and administration have recognized the need to ensure that all of the institution's resources are aligned with its *Mission* and *Vision*. Financial, human, and physical resources are under increasing strain, due to reduced state support of higher education and limits on tuition increases. Adams State College continues to experience significant challenges caused by factors such as changing demographics, faculty and staff turnover, budget cuts, state and federal regulations, changing technology, globalization, and public perceptions of higher education. But as a small institution, Adams State College has the mechanisms and flexibility to respond rapidly to these challenges, to take advantage of new opportunities, and to use the institution's resources effectively. ASC continues efforts to fulfill its mission to serve the underserved.

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In executing its statutory mission and using its resources effectively, ASC specifically addresses

- Access and opportunity
- Service as a Regional Education Provider
- Outreach and economic development
- Enrollment management
- Assessment
- Budget Crosswalk

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### *Core Component 2a:*

**THE ORGANIZATION REALISTICALLY PREPARES FOR A FUTURE SHAPED BY MULTIPLE SOCIETAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS.**

Adams State College continually monitors both the internal and external environments to determine constituents' needs. Through community meetings, participation in state and national committees, collaborative relationships with other institutions of higher education, participation in discipline-based organizations, and internal research efforts, ASC applies current academic, technological, structural, and service strategies to prepare for the future.

Enrollment management goals are influenced by the statutory role and mission of ASC to provide access to rural Colorado by maintaining moderately selective admission standards. Student recruitment strategies are driven by economic, demographic, and societal trends reflected in Colorado's rural communities, particularly in the SLV.

The 2000 U.S. Census reported a median household income of \$28,138 for the SLV, compared to a Colorado median household income of \$47,203. Recognizing the limited resources of our local population, ASC maintains one of the lowest tuition rates in Colorado. More than 80 percent of ASC students receive financial aid. The average family income of ASC students who applied for financial aid in 2005 was \$19,600. The affordable tuition and availability of financial aid provide both opportunity and access for students who might not otherwise have the means to attend college.

Adams State College is a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). According to the 2000 Census, 46.5 percent of the SLV population is Hispanic. Twenty-nine percent of ASC's undergraduate students and 17 percent of its graduate population are Hispanic.

ASC is known for being responsive and flexible in addressing the educational requests of Colorado's teachers and administrators. The Teacher Education Department, Counselor Education Department, and Extended Studies all address the professional development, undergraduate, and graduate needs of rural Colorado educators. The Rural Education Access Program (REAP) is an example of how ASC meets its REP responsibilities. The College contributes to the economic growth of the community through outreach efforts and development of new programs, such as the Agribusiness emphasis in Business Administration.

Several changes have been made to address organizational inefficiencies and changing student expectations, such as development of the One Stop Student Services Center, the virtual One Stop ([www2.adams.edu/onestop](http://www2.adams.edu/onestop)), a Welcome Center for Admissions adjacent to the One Stop, and an Enrollment Management Processing Center in Richardson Hall. In order to improve organizational effectiveness, Enrollment Management is focusing on greater accountability and working to align and integrate all its areas.

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### *Core Component 2b:*

**THE ORGANIZATION'S RESOURCE BASE SUPPORTS ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND ITS PLANS FOR MAINTAINING AND STRENGTHENING THEIR QUALITY IN THE FUTURE.**

ASC creatively uses funding from a variety of sources. The ASC Foundation is a 501c3 organization established to solicit and accept charitable gifts on behalf of the college. Extended Studies has grown dramatically and provides a significant revenue stream for the college. Grants such as the Title V Cooperative Grant also provide funding to supplement the General Fund.

The intent of this budget process and of the Crosswalk program is to align all levels of institutional planning with ASC's *Mission* and *Goals*, ensuring that resources are used to enhance the mission of the College and allowing the institution to respond to future challenges and opportunities.

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### *Core Component 2c:*

**THE ORGANIZATION'S ONGOING EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES PROVIDE RELIABLE EVIDENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS THAT CLEARLY INFORMS STRATEGIES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.**

Adams State College has a multitude of assessments to ensure quality of courses, curricula, faculty, and programs. Many campus-wide units have developed and implemented sound evaluative programs.

Assessment data is gathered from students, faculty, staff, employers, alumni, and the community. This data has been used to develop strategies to continuously improve courses, programs, and teaching. Evaluations by students and department chairs provide instructors with suggestions to improve student learning in particular courses.

Adams State College will continue to survey students and external constituents to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and to plan for the future needs of our students, College, and community.

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### *Core Component 2d:*

**ALL LEVELS OF PLANNING ALIGN WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S MISSION, THEREBY ENHANCING ITS CAPACITY TO FULFILL THAT MISSION.**

In early 2005, the Cabinet and HLC Steering Committee used the reaccreditation process as an ideal opportunity to revise the *ASC Mission Statement* and *Institutional Goals* and align all levels of planning with the *Mission*. A change in leadership later that year helped to strengthen the institution's resolve to align and improve planning across the campus.

Planning at all levels is now aligned with ASC's *Mission* and *Institutional Goals*. This includes planning at the individual department level and in broader organizational units, as well. The *Academic Master Plan*, *Extended Studies Strategic Plan*, *Facilities Master Plan*, and *Institutional Technology Plan* are all directly aligned with the *Mission*. Assessment of both academic and operational programs, combined with ZBB and the Crosswalk process, supports comprehensive planning and shared decision-making. This is an opportune time to integrate assessment into the campus culture.

Even though ASC has received enterprise status, limited funding will remain an issue as ASC stays true to its mission to serve the underserved and keep tuition costs as low as possible. Significant action has been taken to remedy salary compression and inversion, in an effort to

maintain top-notch, dedicated faculty. A continual concern is the need to keep pace with instructional and infrastructure technology needs.

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### CRITERION III:

## STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Adams State College's *Institutional Goals* identify academic excellence and a student-centered environment as core values. To fulfill this essential mission, ASC engages in a thorough assessment of student learning and teaching effectiveness. In 1997, assessment of academic quality was identified as a goal for the next ten years. This charge has been addressed through institution-wide efforts that include academic program reviews; opportunities for innovative, outcomes-based teaching; and institutional changes intended to cultivate an environment of academic excellence.

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### *Core Component 3a:*

**THE ORGANIZATION'S GOALS FOR STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE CLEARLY STATED FOR EACH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND MAKE EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT POSSIBLE.**

The *Self-Study* required by the Higher Learning Commission has given Adams State College reason and motivation to review assessment policies and procedures, particularly in view of student learning outcomes. Additionally, changes in ASC administrative structure and state higher education governance provided impetus to evaluate current practices. ASC has made significant gains in organizing and institutionalizing an assessment plan that provides input from students and faculty at the department level, the committee level, and the administrative level.

The *Plan for Assessment of Student Learning: An Academic Assessment Plan*, completed as part of the self-study, gives direction and structure to the assessment process on the ASC campus. The plan allows for continuous assessment, with curricular decisions based on the results. This strengthens the current assessment of programs and student learning outcomes and ensures that learning remains at the forefront.

A review of all curricula was initiated in February 2005. Using a standardized approach, the academic programs worked to align their student learning goals and outcomes with the *Mission* and *Goals*. Next, the specific student learning outcomes in all institutional syllabi were aligned with department goals and outcomes. Individual faculty members are expected to align their actual course syllabi with these same goals and outcomes. This review was designed to stimulate collegial dialogue and highlight student learning outcomes, both at the institution level and within each academic unit.

The second stage of this examination was the expansion of the academic assessment process at ASC. Each department was asked to highlight one student learning outcome of specific interest to their faculty and one student learning outcome related to the General Education emphasis on writing.

*Core Component 3b:*

**THE ORGANIZATION VALUES AND SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE TEACHING.**

Consistent with its ongoing commitment to furthering its student-centered environment, ASC especially values effective teaching and learning. Indeed, evidence of teaching effectiveness is the key component in hiring, retaining, and promoting faculty, as well as in awarding tenure. Survey data indicates that departments use a variety of evidence when evaluating teaching effectiveness of tenured and probationary faculty.

Philosophically, both the *Mission Statement* and *Academic Master Plan* stress the importance of supporting faculty in both discipline-specific and pedagogical research. Academic departments perceive the college as generally supportive of proposals for new approaches to delivering a curriculum.

All academic departments rely on ASC to provide services that support improvement in pedagogy, encourage student learning in a variety of settings, and facilitate teaching. The primary methods by which the institution provides such support include college and departmental faculty development funding, grant funding, sponsored workshops, and library and technical resources.

For example, faculty members from every department (except the newly created Nursing Department) have participated in the Title V grant-funded Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT) workshops. These workshops have stimulated many faculty members to implement new teaching practices and a more student-centered approach to learning.

Faculty participation in research related to their discipline is much higher and also has a direct impact on teaching and learning. Faculty members who keep abreast of developments in their field will undoubtedly apply such knowledge in their classrooms.

While ASC faculty, staff, and administration have been creative in finding ways to support professional development, each cost unit budget should include a line item for development. Operating budgets have been tight, and professional development is often the first item to be cut.

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*Core Component 3c:*

**THE ORGANIZATION CREATES EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.**

Ample documentation demonstrates that Adams State College values and supports effective learning environments. Assessment procedures, both at the campus-wide level and within individual programs, are designed to measure academic learning and the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices. Over the last five years, ASC has improved efforts to link assessment with program change.

ASC uses national surveys to gather data on student engagement and satisfaction on campus. Campus-wide assessment of student engagement and satisfaction is obtained through the national Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Some of the NSSE data collected since 1999 reflects positively on ASC, and other results suggest areas for improvement. Adams State College fares well, overall, in comparison to peer institutions in most categories.

To measure student responses to its student-centered learning environment, ASC administered the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory in 1998, 2002, and 2006. The results indicate strengths in course content, quality of instruction, and academic advisement. Other strengths include students feeling welcome and cared about as individuals. Most of the challenges identified by the survey are centered on customer service issues. The 2006 Noel-Levitz survey and the NSSE both indicate a high degree of student satisfaction with advising at ASC.

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Academic learning campus-wide is measured through the Academic Profile (AP), which provides feedback on the General Education curriculum. The *Academic Assessment Plan* adopted in 2006 specifically charges the General Education Coordinating Committee with determining the best practices for assessing General Education and student engagement. Evolving student-centered course offerings throughout campus, especially in the General Education curriculum, continue to characterize the College's commitment to effective learning environments. The College implemented a new General Education curriculum and process for approving General Education courses in 2000.

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### *Core Component 3d:*

#### **THE ORGANIZATION'S LEARNING RESOURCES SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING.**

While there is increased strain on ASC's resources, there is also an obvious commitment to provide services necessary to support and enhance learning and to provide underserved students with opportunities for academic success.

Significant resources have been expended to build and maintain technology-enhanced classrooms (TECs) in all academic buildings, complete with digital projection units, integrated sound systems, and state-of-the-art computers. ASC's Computing Services Department provides access to 326 computers in campus computing labs; 30 computers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the Student Union Building lab. Budget constraints make it difficult to keep technology updated and to staff student computer labs.

ASC's official course management system is WebCT. During the fall 2005 semester, 3,981 WebCT seats were used. The College recently approved development of an Office of Academic Computing to manage this system and assist faculty and students. Up to now, these services were provided by a faculty member and graduate assistant.

The Nielsen Library provides student-centered services and access and responds to user needs. The library provides circulation, reference, and instructional services to support ASC's growing distance-student population. Many of the Nielsen Library's challenges are related to the budget: a distance education librarian is needed to serve the growing number of off-campus students, and the book collection is outdated.

Adams State College is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and is located in a historically Hispanic region of Colorado. ASC supports its diverse student population through a substantial tutoring program, an early alert system, a writing center, technology-enhanced classrooms, and the Cross Cultural Center. In addition, faculty members have been trained to be more cognizant of and relate to students of different ethnic, cultural, class, and social backgrounds through the Title V grant-funded CELT program.

Incoming freshmen have access to the First-Year Interest Group (FIG) program, which encourages discussion of first-year transition issues, creates a sense of camaraderie, and eases entry into college.

**CRITERION IV:**

**ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE**

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Consistent with its institutional goal to provide access and opportunity for success, Adams State College promotes a life of learning for all its constituencies. ASC values creativity, diversity, critical thinking, self-directed learning, personal growth, social responsibility, and technological literacy, not only in its students, but also in its faculty and staff.

Adams State College prepares undergraduates through its General Education requirements in the liberal arts and sciences. Competency in technology and communication are required, and there is an emphasis on living and working in a rapidly changing world. The First Year Experience and Engagement (FYEE) program helps retention efforts by assisting entering students with the skills necessary to navigate college life.

Graduate education at Adams State College complements the undergraduate mission. The Master of Arts degree is available in five content areas to students who desire to further their education, fulfill personal goals, or improve their careers and earning potential.

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*Core Component 4a:*

**THE ORGANIZATION DEMONSTRATES, THROUGH THE ACTIONS OF ITS BOARD, ADMINISTRATORS, STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF, THAT IT VALUES A LIFE OF LEARNING.**

Teaching effectiveness as applied to student learning outcomes is the primary concern of ASC's faculty and staff. In 2000, ASC was awarded a five-year, \$1.96 million Title V grant to increase institutional capacity to better serve Hispanic students. Clearly, as ASC continues to improve its service as a Hispanic Serving Institution, the benefits extend to all students, staff, and faculty. Title V funding allowed creation of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) to "support curricular innovations and efficient use of technology."

A generous commitment from the Adams State College Foundation provides tuition scholarships that allow ASC employees to enroll in classes to enhance their job performance and careers.

Modeling lifelong learning extends to both the campus and surrounding community. Each academic program has its unique way of modeling lifelong learning and forming partnerships with school districts and local community groups. One of the most successful and wide ranging of these efforts was the 2006 *Dead Man Walking* Theatre Project. ASC's production of the play was combined with several other activities involving diverse constituencies.

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*Core Component 4b:*

**THE ORGANIZATION DEMONSTRATES THAT ACQUISITION OF A BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND THE EXERCISE OF INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY ARE INTEGRAL TO ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.**

ASC's curriculum, services, facilities, and special programs are shaped by the priority our faculty and staff give to achieving academic excellence.

ASC's General Education curriculum develops the framework for lifelong learning by recognizing the inherent educational value of diversity and providing proficiency in communica-

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tion and technological skills. All ASC undergraduates are required to complete 34 hours of General Education requirements.

In addition, the General Education curriculum is fully transferable and corresponds with gtPathways, Colorado's statewide guaranteed transfer program for general education. ASC is required to continuously review its General Education program to assure fulfillment of the Performance Contract, while staying true to the College's mission. ASC established the General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) to review and critique annual student assessment and accountability data, and to approve revisions to the General Education curriculum.

Because access and opportunity for success are cornerstones of ASC's *Mission*, students who do not meet the minimum test scores on the ACT or SAT are placed in developmental courses, which help students gain skills to succeed in the college environment. Other assistance includes Student Support Services, the Writing Studio, the Tutoring Center, the Academic Advisement Center, and the CHAMPS Life Skills course for student-athletes. The Counseling and Career Center, Department of Housing and Residence Life, and Student Support Services offer workshops to boost confidence and enhance study and test-taking skills.

The First Year Experience and Engagement (FYEE) office is the primary support for incoming students. It is an umbrella for the many campus resources designed to assist in making the transition to college life and foster success in developmental courses.

Faculty and students collaborate on an array of co-curricular and service projects. Capstone courses, internships, field experiences, and practica provide links between the knowledge and skills gained in the classroom and the hands-on experience needed to succeed in the world. Inquiry, discovery, and application are addressed in each of these experiences.

Almost every department has found ways to form community and K-12 partnerships, to link classroom and experiential learning, and to serve students and the larger community. Because Alamosa and the surrounding San Luis Valley are rural, isolated areas, the community makes good use of our students and serves as a partner in furthering their "real world" education.

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### *Core Component 4c:*

#### **THE ORGANIZATION ASSESSES THE USEFULNESS OF ITS CURRICULA TO STUDENTS WHO WILL LIVE AND WORK IN A GLOBAL, DIVERSE, AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY.**

Program reviews and feedback from alumni and employers assist ASC in developing programs that are current and relevant to today's world. Regular program and course reviews take place in all academic departments. These take the form of a self-study that evaluates, among other key concerns, the following dimensions of a program's course offerings:

- A review of goals and student learning outcomes and their assessment methods
- A review of the strengths and weaknesses of the department, particularly as they relate to achieving program goals and student learning outcomes
- Recommendations for improving course structure and content

Some, but not all, of the College's academic programs use external consultant/reviewers. The Biology program conducted a formal Program Review in 2001. In the *Institutional Summary Report* from the site visit, the external reviewer emphasized the department's "up-to-date curriculum subject to continuous improvement," stated that the department had "an especially enthusiastic faculty with contemporary, state-of-the-art training," and cited "the outstanding success rate of ASC Biology graduates" as an indicator of the program's quality.

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*Core Component 4d:*

**THE ORGANIZATION PROVIDES SUPPORT TO ENSURE THAT FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND STAFF ACQUIRE, DISCOVER, AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE RESPONSIBLY.**

Adams State College fosters an ethos of academic integrity through several policies and procedures that are communicated to students, faculty, and staff. The *Faculty Handbook* and *Trustees' Policy Manual* discuss ASC's expectations for honest academic conduct, and the Institutional Review Board monitors faculty research to assure academic integrity and responsibility.

In 2003, the Faculty Senate adopted an Academic Integrity Policy delineating procedures and consequences for student violations. An annual event introduces new freshman to the ASC Affirmations, which address academic integrity, honoring diversity, and striving for excellence. A Declaration of Tolerance emphasizes the inherent educational value of diversity. These statements are included in the *Student Handbook* and its Code of Conduct, as are the College's expectations regarding academic integrity and intellectual property rights and the consequences of academic or other campus misconduct.

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**CRITERION V:**

**ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE**

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

At Adams State College, service and engagement have regional implications. Beginning at its founding in 1921 with a primary mission to prepare school teachers for rural Colorado, Adams State College has focused on quality education for the entire region. Today, ASC is committed to offering educational access and opportunity, promoting the unique history and culture of the region, and stimulating economic development in the San Luis Valley.

ASC has taken a number of actions designed to shift from a one-way service model to a two-way collaborative model of engagement. The College identifies and works proactively with the multiple constituencies in our service area, particularly those who have been underserved in the past.

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*Core Component 5a:*

**THE ORGANIZATION LEARNS FROM THE CONSTITUENCIES IT SERVES AND ANALYZES ITS CAPACITY TO SERVE THEIR NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS.**

As a Colorado Regional Education Provider (REP), Adams State College determines and addresses regional educational needs. Just over 46 percent of the San Luis Valley population is of Hispanic origin, primarily descended from families who migrated to the area in the mid-1800s. The northern counties have larger numbers of recent Hispanic immigrants who have been attracted by agricultural jobs. The majority of long-established white, non-Hispanic families immigrated to the region in the late 1800s and early 1900s, part of a Mormon settlement still present in the region.

Adams State College has listened to its constituencies and offers what is within our capacity to meet their needs. Program reviews are one way we learn from our constituencies. Another is ASC's Community Forum series, a proactive effort to develop more collaborative relationships with the College's constituencies.

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### *Core Component 5b:*

#### **THE ORGANIZATION HAS THE CAPACITY AND THE COMMITMENT TO ENGAGE WITH ITS IDENTIFIED CONSTITUENCIES AND COMMUNITIES.**

The College provides services that support the economic, educational, and cultural interests of the San Luis Valley and, by state mandate, extends its educational services to the larger area of southern Colorado. It remains for ASC to find programs and mechanisms to serve the economic and cultural needs of this larger service area.

The College's service capacity is expanded by numerous successful grants that address everything from lab equipment in the sciences to community outreach and tuition waivers for master's degree seeking students.

Adams State College recognizes the importance of its students in developing capacity to engage its constituents. Through internships, practicums, and field study courses, students work in businesses, schools, mental health centers, and other agencies to provide services reflective of their education and goals.

Grant applications and awards have increased in the past ten years, with many departments and offices obtaining funding for projects. Nearly \$8.5 million was received between 2003 and 2006 from federal, state, and private sources. Adams State College actively seeks grants such as Title V to assist with professional development for faculty and staff. There is enormous potential for ASC to continue receiving substantial grant funding, but our ability to take advantage of these opportunities is limited without a position dedicated to grant writing.

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### *Core Component 5c:*

#### **THE ORGANIZATION DEMONSTRATES ITS RESPONSIVENESS TO THOSE CONSTITUENCIES THAT DEPEND ON IT FOR SERVICE.**

Programs have been created, delivery methods have been refined, partnerships have developed, and service has grown as a result of ASC's responsiveness. An evolving sense of institutional mission is helping the College community better address the issues of educational access, opportunity, and student success.

Programs demonstrating our commitment and responsiveness to educational needs include the following:

- RN-BSN completion program
- Agribusiness program
- TRIO grant-funded programs
- Community-based graduate programs off campus in several endorsements offered by the Teacher Education and Counselor Education departments
- The Rural Education Access Program (REAP)
- More than \$5.4 million in grant funding to serve the educational needs of students and educators in the Southern Colorado service area.
- The annual summer Math Academy
- Top of the Nation Honor Band and Honor Choir programs for high school students
- Kids on Campus summer enrichment program, co-sponsored by the Boys and Girls Clubs of the San Luis Valley and the Alamosa School District's Youth Enrichment Academy
- College@High School, giving high school students the opportunity to earn college credits without leaving their home campuses.

## *Adams State College Self-Study*

In addition to providing access and opportunity for education, Adams State College engages in a wide range of activities that promote economic development and enhance cultural life. Constituents served range from public school children to non-profit organizations within the communities of south-central and southeastern Colorado.

ASC's Community Partnerships Center coordinates several projects that support the region's economic stability. Since 1988, ASC has sponsored a business development center that received the national "State Star" center award in 2000 from the Association of Small Business Development Centers. It has obtained grants to support a virtual business incubator, enhance community capacity for high-speed technology, and otherwise bridge the rural technology gap. The Business Support Center also supports disabled and minority business owners, provides assistance to the agricultural sector, and collaborates on community economic development projects. ASC initiated a series of symposia on water, renewable energy, and natural resources in response to a 2004 survey of SLV residents. Also in 2004, ASC received a HUD HSIAC (Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities) grant of \$600,000 to renovate a vacant campus building for a Community Partnership and Outreach Center.

It remains for ASC to find programs and mechanisms to serve the economic and cultural needs of the larger southern Colorado service area beyond the San Luis Valley, as specified in state statute.

The wider SLV community is also involved in campus cultural events. ASC is the largest venue for visual and performing arts in the San Luis Valley. The public is encouraged to attend and participate in conferences, workshops, exhibitions, and cultural experiences sponsored by several academic departments.

Perhaps the most impressive example of community involvement in a cultural event has been the *Dead Man Walking* School Theatre Project, which is highlighted as a national model ([www.dmwplay.org/school\\_spotlight.html](http://www.dmwplay.org/school_spotlight.html)). Adams State College's Mariachi Corazon del Valle is another example of collaboration between the College and external entities.

Starting in 2006, grants from HUD and the Colorado Council on the Arts (CCA) are supporting a community arts coordinator and development of a campus cultural resource center as part of ASC Community Partnerships.

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### *Core Component 5d:*

#### **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES VALUE THE SERVICES THE ORGANIZATION PROVIDES.**

The community's perception of Adams State College's service is changing as ASC's efforts to collaborate with the community grow. For example, members of the Hispanic community who did not feel well served during previous decades are more hopeful now after seeing outreach efforts that actively engage and support them.

Continued campus and community involvement through attendance at cultural and athletic events shows that both internal and external constituencies value the services ASC provides. Art exhibitions and music and theatre performances provide an experience of the arts on a professional level and scale unavailable elsewhere in the SLV. Likewise, college sports competitions are the highest level of athletic performance in the region. Community support through the Grizzly Club provides evidence that the community values this contribution. In addition, ASC's athletic facility, Plachy Hall, hosts more community activities and events than any other single facility in the six-county region.

Another indicator of how much constituents value the College is a significant increase in contributions to the ASC Foundation, which rose an impressive 33 percent from 2003 to 2005.