FOCUS ON LEARNING:
ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Presented by
League for Innovation in the Community College
May 6, 2008

CONTENTS

I. BACKGROUND

Estrella Mountain Community College commissioned the League for Innovation in the Community College to conduct an assessment of the college's perceptions of itself as a Learning College, with the intended outcome of administrators, faculty, and staff at Estrella Mountain Community College using the findings in determining strategies for strengthening and intensifying the focus on learning across the institution.

On January 30, 2008, Cynthia Wilson met with the president, the vice presidents, and the leadership council to introduce the project. Prior to these meetings, major college documents had been reviewed to provide background on the college and its connection to the Learning College movement. Over the 3-day period from February 3-5, 2008, Wilson met with 17 focus groups representing various employee groups across the college, one of which consisted of student employees. Prior to the meetings, a protocol for the conversations was developed, and this protocol was generally followed in the meetings. The data collected were reviewed and analyzed, and the findings are presented in this report. All employees were invited to complete the League's Learning College Inventory between April 4-15, 2008, and the results of the inventory are also presented in this report.

Estrella Mountain Community College is well positioned to continue its Learning College journey. Several fundamental elements are already in place:

- Leadership and support at many levels, including commitment from college leaders to advance this effort;
- Many services available to support student success;
- Many opportunities for employee professional development;
- A major assessment initiative under way; and
- Technology infrastructure and physical space to support learning.

Estrella Mountain Community College is on a Learning College path and has many of the necessary ingredients for successfully continuing journey. The findings from the study, listed below, are organized into five primary categories and, where applicable, subcategories. Specific comments made by focus group participants are noted by quotation marks; other comments attributed to participants are paraphrased.

1. **There is an awareness of the characteristics of a community college that is powerfully and effectively focused on learning.**

   Focus group participants listed a number of traits of a learning-centered college:
   - The learning college as *student focused*, placing "student success as a priority," with "all employees supporting students" in a "student friendly" environment.
   - The learning college as *learning focused*, with a "commitment to learning," "assessment tied to learning," and "faculty who are powerfully focused on learning." Learning extends to employees as well as students, and includes "a good staff development program" and "training faculty on helping students learn better."
   - The learning college as *collaborative*, where "cross-functional teams" work together, employee and process "flexibility" help make processes "seamless" for students, "everybody is on board," and "students and staff work together."
   - The learning college as *inclusive*, with "access open to the entire community" and "opening our arms to everyone." Inclusiveness also represents "transparency in decisions so everyone knows what and why" and "meaningfully including all faculty, including adjuncts" and staff from across the college.
   - The learning college as *risk taking*, where employees are "willing to take risks" and move "beyond the fear of change."
   - The learning college as a place of *integrity*, where there is no "difference between what's good for learning and the way we do things," and where employees "ask tough questions about what's in the best interest of learning." Integrity also extends to allocation of resources to support learning.
   - The learning college as *embedded in the culture*, where the "organizational structure" and "processes and practices" are "designed to meet the needs of students," goals and vision are shared, the atmosphere is "friendly," and the college is an "enjoyable place to work."

2. There is a perception that Estrella Mountain Community College is becoming increasingly focused on learning, accompanied by a recognition that the focus on learning could be strengthened further.

Focus on Learning. Focus group participants described the college's focus on learning as an emerging initiative, with comments such as, "We're becoming more focused on learning" and, from a staff member, "We're starting to talk about learning all the time as part of what we do and not just what faculty do." One participant had "never thought of campuswide being powerfully focused on learning, but it is in pockets," and another suggested that the college needs "to integrate the pieces of the learning college we already have." One participant commented, "The people want to be focused on learning."

The People. When asked to list the college's assets, every focus group had among its responses "the people." Focus group participants mentioned employee dedication and longevity, tying these traits to the creation of a continuing, consistent culture. Staff and faculty were described in terms of their "expertise" and "strength," and as "conscientious," "impressive," and "empowered." Staff were credited with having "specialization to support students," and faculty were described as having the "freedom to be creative and innovative in classroom" and being "focused on what the student is supposed to learn." Administrators were described as supportive and involved, teaching adjunct classes "which helps them know what the classroom is like" and "willing to try to get funds if it will help students." Participants noted that the president is "focused on students and learning," and, along with other senior leaders, is "supportive and approachable." Participants also praised students, with staff members singling out particularly student workers and student ambassadors. Although every focus group mentioned the people as a strong asset for the college, some participants expressed concern that some individuals may create challenges for the college's forward movement. They described difficulty in getting "buy-in" and "support" for new initiatives from employees as well as students, mentioning specifically "cynicism," "fear of change," and "inertia."

Learning Space. Most focus groups also mentioned the physical plant, praising the beauty and functionality of the campus. Participants specifically cited the flexible learning studios and interchangeable, moveable furniture modules, "which meet the needs of various learning styles." One participant explained that the "learning studios philosophy was that students would have all they needed no mater what the course." Others described the design of the campus as a way of helping to "accomplish learning," and mentioned "classroom design to encourage collaboration," the "structure of buildings to accommodate technology," and the "innovative, modularized classes." They mentioned that informal spaces are being designed for "impromptu connections" and that the "campus is conscious of students." Focus group participants said they look forward to having meaningful input into future building designs. Efforts to determine the effectiveness of the physical space in facilitating learning were mentioned, including focus groups and a study conducted by an intern. Some participants expressed concern

that the campus is "not used to its full capacity," particularly noting building use, while other participants indicated a "need for more space" due to growth.

Academic Support. Several academic support programs and facilities were mentioned numerous times, including new student orientation, the NASA Center, the Skills Center, the 24/7 librarian, the Online Writing Lab, MyMathLab, tutoring services, and the LEC. Focus group participants noted that faculty, student services staff, and students themselves connect students to the available support resources, but some mentioned that the services do not reach all students who could benefit from them. Others mentioned work to expand access, one person noting that "students see the Skills Center as part of their college," and another citing "efforts to integrate more learning support for students and make that support more visible." These efforts include access to the NASA Center, long open hours, tutors, and faculty support. One participant held up the NASA Center as a model that is "good at recruiting students into math and science, to support them with grants to attend conferences, internships, transfer to university, so they are taken care of there. We need to replicate the model and get grant funding for student stipends."

Other facets of academic support mentioned by focus group participants include small class size and the small student-teacher ratio; students having the same instructor for lecture and lab; attempts to address multiple intelligences and diverse learning styles; special events tied to curriculum; efforts to build a study skills class; and faculty and student services staff commitment to helping students. Participants mentioned specific programs that are focused on learning—ACE, Genesis West, Hoop of Learning—noting that "all are cohort programs that have some data to indicate they are working." One participant mentioned cross-disciplinary collaboration through a committee that meets weekly to review financial aid and probation appeals. This committee meets with individual students "as a kind of intervention to help students identify patterns of behavior while setting up a structured means for students to get what they need."

Technology Infrastructure. Focus group participants frequently mentioned technology as one of the college's major strengths. The technology was described as "up to date," "great," "innovative," and "looking to the future." The "new student system" was mentioned several times, described by one participant as "trying to remove hurdles to benefit students and staff, so anyone can help students, regardless of area or location on campus." Participants mentioned specific uses of technology tools as well, noting the availability of "many online tools that allow instant feedback," such as MyMathLab, and efforts to make e-learning programs "more integrated, accessible, and flexible for students." Another example was the Career and Planning Program providing students with access to technology to "build a portfolio" and "access information on career interests and skills." Although most comments about technology were positive, some participants mentioned that some administrative systems are dated. Other participants noted that while technology is modern, college employees need more training in order to "use existing capacities to their fullest extent."

Serving a Growing Community. The growing community the college serves was another recurring topic among focus group participants. Comments such as "we're a growing service area" were joined by a recognition that this provides the college with "a great opportunity to serve the West Valley." One participant mentioned the college has been "paying attention to what community and students want and has expanded programs to meet those needs," and this "has brought students to campus." Another participant mentioned the community's "sense of ownership of the college: 'It's ours.'" Participants noted that the college leadership "listens, has good networking skills, and wants to diversify," and that college leaders "hear a need and do their best to meet it." Participants cited ways the college is "reaching out to the community," including through the restaurant, fitness center, and summer programs for children. While growth is seen as a positive factor for the college, participants also recognized that it comes with "growing pains." They mentioned that the college is eager to serve the community, but this is difficult when physical space is limited.

Professional Development. Focus group participants mentioned the availability of professional development for employees as another way in which Estrella Mountain Community College is learning centered. Participants cited opportunities provided by the Center for Teaching and Learning; personal and professional development options; professional development opportunities and work space for adjunct faculty; and specific training in e-learning, active learning, collaborative learning, teaching strategies, and instructional design. One participant noted a need for more professional development and "just-in-time training, so employees can use all the resources that are available."

Diversity. Some focus group participants noted the diversity of Estrella Mountain Community College employees. One participant said the "wide variety of backgrounds of people brings a lot to the table." Others noted that the college "celebrates diversity" and tries to "strengthen diversity." While focus group participants applauded the amount of diversity on the campus, they also noted that the college could be more diverse.

Access. Participants provided examples of the college's accessibility, including the open-door policy, location, affordability, and the provision of scholarships and "other resources" for students. One participant noted that classes are scheduled throughout the day, from early morning to late evening, as well as on weekends, which "shows we're making college available for students." Another participant, though, said, "We pretty much shut down in summer. It's hard to say you're focused on students when we're not open." One focus group participant noted that the college "needs modalities that are appropriate for students," citing that "schedule and modalities are instructor based rather than learning based or student-need based." One participant provided an example, stating that "cohorts didn't work because of faculty schedules, and that's a shame." Another noted that "whole blocks of time are empty."

Evidence. Focus groups were asked to provide evidence that the areas they described as learning focused are producing learning. Several participants mentioned the availability of data; comments included job placement, student evaluations of instructors, graduation rate, focus groups with students and employees, requests for feedback, and

"reality checks." Institutional effectiveness and institutional research were described as responsive to requests. One participant noted there is "no systemic, systematic application yet, but data is everywhere and available." Several focus group participants mentioned the college's assessment initiative, noting that faculty and staff are "struggling" with how to assess learning outcomes and "trying to understand the whole concept of student learning outcomes." Student services staff noted that the learning outcomes movement "needs to be coordinated" between faculty and student affairs, and that "it would be nice for faculty to realize student affairs has learning outcomes." The assessment initiative includes "faculty working diligently to review abilities assessed across all disciplines," "working to develop interdisciplinary rubrics," "piloting a general education assessment tool," and learning to embed assessment in courses. The nursing program was offered as an example of a program relying on and using evidence from a districtwide evaluation that includes "assessments before and during the program," and the "immediate" application of data "to change and revise curriculum." Other participants mentioned well-trained faculty, advanced technology, and tracking student use of support services as evidence. Grants and allocation of resources were also mentioned, with one participant explaining, "money follows ideas, indicating that administrators are listening."

3. There is work still to be done to make the college more learning centered.

Collaboration. Participants mentioned the need for more collaboration across departments and across the college, described by several employees as "breaking down the silos." Collaboration was aligned with inclusiveness: "getting everyone to reinforce learning" and "using all resources." One participant noted that employees are "willing to collaborate" and that "collaboration is successful when it does occur." Another expressed a desire for all employees to realize that "helping each other benefits quality teaching and learning for students."

Self-assessment. Focus group participants mentioned a need for the college to question itself about issues of "consistency between what we say and what we do." Participants recommended examining practices by "asking tough questions about what's in the best interest of learning" and not being "afraid to ask questions about what we're doing." Other comments included the need for a "feedback loop," and several participants used the phrase, "walk the talk."

Student Retention. Participants mentioned a need for "help with student retention, what to do with them to keep them once they're here." They offered general suggestions, such as, "help students take responsibility for their own learning," "set students up for success," and implement "administrative and academic processes that support learning."

Resource Allocation. Focus group participants indicated the college "needs a process for reallocation of resources to promote student learning" and ways to "evaluate the effectiveness of resources in supporting learning." One participant mentioned a need for "alignment of resources with pedagogy/andragogy," while others spoke of the need to

revisit "pet projects" that have strong champions but may not contribute to learning. Several participants mentioned, also, the need to "use resources, including classrooms."

Communication. Participants in several focus groups mentioned the need for improved "vertical and horizontal" communication so, as one employee put it, "we're all on the same page." Focus group participants mentioned a need to "listen to all employees across the college" and "appreciate the contributions of employees at all levels."

4. There are challenges to face and overcome in strengthening the focus on learning.

Focus group participants identified some specific challenges that may inhibit progress toward strengthening the focus on learning. These challenges include resources, particularly time, and a need for "meaningful assessment" that "asks tough questions" and allows for "closing the data loops." Participants also mentioned the difficulties associated with change, including, as previously cited, "fear," "cynicism," and "inertia." The district structure was also mentioned as an obstacle, specifically in reference to late registration. Participants expressed concern that if Estrella Mountain Community College eliminated late registration without similar action across the district, the result would be lower enrollments as students would choose to enroll in other Maricopa colleges.

5. There are differences in knowledge and perceptions of the level of implementation of the college's learning-centered practices and activities.

In April 2008, 589 Estrella Mountain Community College employees were invited to complete the League's Learning College Inventory. The instrument was designed, field tested, and piloted during the League's Learning College Project and is an instrument designed to provide a snapshot of employee perceptions of the level of implementation of 75 learning-centered practices and processes. One hundred forty-one (141) inventories were submitted for a 24 percent (23.9) response rate. Four of those inventories were blank, so 137 completed inventories were submitted for a 23 percent (23.2) response rate. Of the respondents, 129 indicated an employment category: (a) 54 respondents indicated FACULTY (teaching and non-teaching); (b) 39 respondents indicated STAFF (maintenance, operations, facilities, safety and security, administrative assistant, professional staff, and similar positions); and (c) 36 respondents indicated ADMINISTRATION (executive leadership, dean, director, manager, and similar positions). Eight respondents indicated no employment category but responded to other items. General observations from the inventory as well as general observations from each section of the inventory are provided here.

Overall Observations. The following four overall observations about responses to the Learning College Inventory are not exhaustive, and college employees are encouraged to examine inventory responses more closely (see page 15, item 3).

- *The range of perceptions among all respondents crosses the response categories, from "I don't know" and "none" to "full implementation."* Among all respondents, responses to 27 of 75 items included 10 percent or greater responses

in all 6 response categories; another 27 of 75 items had a 10 percent or greater response in 5 of 6 categories. Among all respondents, no items had 0 responses in any response category, and only one item (13a) had a response category selected by less than 5 percent of respondents.

- *For most items, a noteworthy percentage of respondents reported not knowing the implementation status of the item.* Among all respondents, 64 of 75 items had 19 percent or greater "I don't know" response; 49 of 75 items had greater than 25 percent "I don't know" response. This was addressed by some respondents who provided comments; of the 19 comments submitted by faculty respondents, seven of them stated a lack of knowledge about these items. Of these seven respondents, six identified themselves in their comments as adjunct faculty and four identified themselves as new to Estrella Mountain Community College. Of the eight comments made by staff respondents, one explained that, "Perhaps these things occur, and I am simply not aware of them."

- *Administration respondents reported fewer "I don't know" responses than faculty and staff respondents.* In 69 of 75 items, respondents identifying themselves as administration represent the lowest percentage of "I don't know" responses.

- *There are marked variations in responses among the three employee groups.* These variations are evident in one or more response categories in every item.

   Observations by Section. The following represent general observations about the responses in the 16 sections of the Learning College Inventory, as indicated by all respondents and in some cases by respondent groups. These observations are not exhaustive, and further examination of each item by college employees is recommended (see page 15, item 3).

1. *Planning.* Responses to items focused on the college's planning activities indicate that a notable percentage of respondents, particularly faculty and staff, do not know the implementation status, while more than half indicate work is in progress. Although between 25 percent and 36 percent of faculty and staff responded "I don't know" to the three items in this section, between 2.8 percent and 16.7 percent of administrators indicated, "I don't know." For each of the three items, among all respondents, more than half (from 53.3 percent to 61.3 percent) indicated "discussion," "planning," or "partial implementation," and only 7.3 percent indicated "full implementation." See pages 19-21 of this report.

2. *Focusing Resources.* Responses to items concerning the college's focus of resources on learning indicate that a notable percentage of respondents do not know the implementation status, but a sizeable percentage indicate planning and implementation are under way. While 19 percent to 33.6 percent of all respondents indicated "I don't know" for six of the seven items in this section, 39 percent to 50 percent indicated "planning" or "partial implementation" for six of the seven items. See pages 22-28 of this report.

3. *Creating a Culture Focused on Learning.* Responses to the five items in this section indicate a variety of perceptions concerning the college's work at creating a culture focused on learning. The "partial implementation" response is indicated for four of the five items as the strongest response, with 24 percent to 28.5 percent of all respondents selecting that response. For the fifth item (3e), responses were somewhat evenly distributed across the range of response options: 16.1 percent indicated "I don't know," 16.1 percent indicated "none," 18.2 percent of respondents indicated "discussion," 14.6 percent indicated "planning," 18.2 percent indicated "partial implementation," and 16.8 percent indicated "full implementation." See pages 29-33 of this report.

4. *Selecting Employees.* Responses to items in this section reflect strong perceptions among some groups. For example, among all respondents, about 62 percent indicated "I don't know" or "none" to Item 4b, "Selection committees are trained in how to apply a focus on learning in the hiring process." Almost 13 percent of staff respondents indicated "none" to this item, but 35.2 percent of faculty and 47.2 percent of administrators indicated "none." Just over 30 percent of all respondents indicated "I don't know," reflecting 37 percent of faculty respondents and 38.5 percent of staff respondents, but only 13.9 percent of administration respondents. See pages 34-35 of this report.

5. *Defining Employee Roles.* Responses to items in this section indicate that a large percentage of respondents, particularly administration respondents, see little or no extensive work being done in implementing college reward systems to encourage employees to adopt learning-centered roles (Item 5b). For example, 61 percent of administration responses indicate "none" for Item 5b, while 37 percent of faculty respondents and 23.1 percent of staff respondents indicated "none" (38.7 percent of all respondents). Just over 5 percent of all respondents indicate "full implementation," 8.8 percent of all respondents indicate "partial implementation," and 7.3 percent indicate "planning." See pages 36-37 of this report.

6. *Developing Employees.* Responses in this section indicate 36.5 percent to 52.6 percent of all respondents selected "I don't know" or "none" for the three items; however, distinctions among respondent groups are pronounced in at least one response category in all three items. For example, for item 6a, 38.9 percent of administration respondents indicated "discussion," but only 20.4 percent of faculty respondents and 12.8 percent of staff respondents indicated "discussion." In Item 6b, 36.1 percent of administration responses indicated "discussion," while 11.1 percent of faculty respondents and 7.7 percent of staff respondents indicated "discussion." In Item 6c, 44.4 percent of administration responses indicated "none," but 29.6 percent of faculty respondents and 20.5 percent of staff respondents indicated, "none." See pages 38-40 of this report.

7. *Holding Conversations About Learning.* For the two items in this section, 59.8 percent (Item 7a) and 53.4 percent (Item 7b) of all respondents indicated

"discussion," "planning," or "partial implementation." Only 6.6 percent of all respondents indicated "full implementation" for Item 7b, with 13.1 percent of all respondents indicating "full implementation" for Item 7a. Just over 12 percent of all respondents indicated "I don't know" for Item 7a, and just over 20 percent of all respondents indicated "I don't know" for Item 7b. Almost 20 percent of all respondents indicated "none" for Item 7b, and 13.1 percent of all respondents indicated "none" for Item 7a. See pages 41-42 of this report.

8. *Planning for Information Technology.* More than half of all respondents (51.1 percent) indicate partial implementation or full implementation in response to Item 8a, "The college has a long-term strategic information technology plan that addresses technology purchase, upgrade, user support, and employee training." Among faculty respondents, the "I don't know" response for Items 8b, 8c, 8d, and 8e ranges from a low of 33.3 percent (Item 8c) to a high of 46.3 percent (Item 8d). This represents a 10 point to 23 point difference from staff "I don't know" responses and a 24 point to 35 point difference from administration "I don't know" responses. See pages 43-47 of this report.

9. *Applying Information Technology.* A notable percentage of faculty respondents reported not knowing the implementation status of applying information technology items. The faculty "I don't know" response ranges between just under 30 percent on Item 9k, "access to information resources," to 53.7 percent on Item 9h, "development of individualized student learning plans." Among all respondents, "partial implementation" or "full implementation" was indicated by from 40 percent to 54 percent for 6 (9a, 9c, 9e, 9g, 9j, 9k) of the 14 items. See pages 48-61 of this report.

10. *Providing Many Options for Learning.* Responses to the five items in this section indicate a notable percentage of "I don't know" responses. Among all respondents, the "I don't know" responses range from 21.2 percent (Item 10e) to 29.9 percent (Item 10a). For 4 of the 5 items in this section, a higher percentage of staff respondents indicated "I don't know" than did faculty respondents and administration respondents; for the one exception (Item 10a), 37 percent of faculty respondents indicated "I don't know" while 30.8 percent of staff respondents and 22.2 percent of administration respondents indicated "I don't know." For two items (10c and 10e), among all respondents, the percentage of respondents indicating "I don't know" is the same (10e) or close to (10c) the percentage indicating "partial implementation." See pages 62-66 of this report.

11. *Creating More Powerful Learning Environments and Experiences.* Among all respondents, the "I don't know" response for the five items in this section ranges from 24.8 percent (Item 11b) to 35 percent (Item 11a), with 28 percent to 30 percent of all respondents indicating "None" on four of the five items. For four of the five items, staff indicated a higher percentage of "I don't know" responses than did faculty or administration respondents; for Item 11a, an almost equal percentage of faculty (40.7 percent) and staff (41 percent) respondents indicated

"I don't know," while 25 percent of administration respondents indicated "I don't know." See pages 67-71 of this report.

12. *Collaborating for Learning.* From one-fifth to one-third of all respondents indicated "partial implementation" of the four items related to collaborating for learning in this section. Among all respondents, from 27.7 percent to 30.7 percent indicated "partial implementation" for Items 12a, 12b, and 12c; 21.9 percent indicated "partial implementation" for Item 12d (27 percent indicated "I don't know" for Item 12d). The variations in responses among employee groups is striking for some response options in some items. For example, for Item 12a, 33.3 percent of administration respondents indicated "discussion" while 5.6 percent of faculty and 2.6 percent of staff respondents indicated "discussion"; the three groups show closer alignment elsewhere in the same item, with 33.3 percent of faculty, 28.2 percent of staff, and 27.8 percent of administration respondents indicating "partial implementation." See pages 72-75 of this report.

13. *Orienting Students to New Options and Responsibilities.* Responses to the three items in this section indicate from 40.4 percent to 62.1 percent of all respondents reported either not knowing about these efforts or that the college has not addressed the item. Between 28.5 percent and 35.8 percent of all respondents indicated, "I don't know" to the three items, while 26.3 percent, 22.6 percent, and 16.1 percent of all responses indicated "None" to Items 13a, 13b, and 13c, respectively. Just over 20 percent of all respondents indicated "partial implementation" for Item 13a, reflecting 13.9 percent administration, 16.7 percent faculty, and 33.3 percent staff indicating "partial implementation." For Item 13b, 18.2 percent of all responses indicated "partial implementation," while responses to other item ratings ranged from 2.9 percent to 16.1 percent. See pages 76-78 of this report.

14. *Ensuring Success of Underprepared Students.* Among all respondents, 30.7 percent (Item 14a) to 43.1 percent (Item 14b) indicated "I don't know" for the four items in this section. For three of the five items, among all respondents 21.2 percent indicated "planning" (Item 14a), 21.9 percent indicated "none" (Item 14b), and 21.9 percent indicated "partial implementation" (Item 14d). Few respondents indicated full implementation, with responses ranging from 5.8 percent (Item 14b) to 10.9 percent (Item 14a). See pages 79-82 of this report.

15. *Identifying and Agreeing on Learning Outcomes.* For the five items in this section, staff respondents indicated the "I don't know" response ranging from 33.3 percent (Item 15b) to 46.2 percent (Item 15c). This compares to all respondents' "I don't know" responses ranging from 22.6 percent (Item 15a) to 35.8 percent (Item 15c). Although 13.9 percent of all respondents indicated "discussion" for Item 15a, 33.3 percent of administration respondents indicated "discussion." Similarly, 10.9 percent of all respondents indicated "discussion" for Item 15b, but 25 percent of administration responses indicated "discussion." From 27.8 percent to 38 percent of all respondents indicated "partial implementation" or

"full implementation" on the five items in this section. See pages 83-87 of this report.

16. *Assessing and Documenting Learning Outcomes.* For the six items in this section, between 35.9 percent (Item 16c) and 43.6 percent (Item 16d) of staff respondents indicated "I don't know"; for each of the remaining four items, the staff "I don't know" response rate was 38.5 percent. This compares with a range among all respondents indicating "I don't know" of between 21.2 percent (Item 16a) and 30.7 percent (Item 16d), with a range among faculty of between 18.5 percent (Items 16a, 16c) and 27.8 percent (Item 16f), and with a range among administration of between 5.6 percent (Item 16a) and 25 percent (Item 16c). Among faculty, between 20.4 percent and 33.3 percent indicated "partial implementation" for the six items in this section. See pages 88-93 of this report.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Continue identifying, communicating, and celebrating the many learning-centered practices the college already has in place.* Engage the entire college in cataloging and celebrating current efforts and initiatives such as those mentioned in this report. The celebration of existing practice can serve not only as validation of work already done, but also as a foundation for future work. Identify milestones and celebrate reaching them. Use local, state, and national publications and conferences to share and celebrate successful learning-centered practices and the college's experiences on the Learning College journey.

2. *Hold collegewide conversations about learning to define what being a Learning College means for Estrella Mountain Community College.* Capture the ideas and other contributions that come out of these conversations and communicate them to the college community. Create a time line for developing the definition; include professional development, time and venues for input, discussion, and feedback, and a reasonable deadline by which a working definition will be in place. As part of this work, develop a learning vocabulary or language of learning, and provide a glossary of terms for members of the college community. For an example, see Valencia Community College's Learning-Centered Reference Guide at http://faculty.valencia.cc.fl.us/development/resources/flipbook/.

3. *Explore the perceptions indicated in the results of the Learning College Inventory, comparing those perceptions with actual practice at Estrella Mountain Community College.* Where perception and actual practice diverge, create and implement communication plans to inform the entire college about the learning-centered practices that are in place, in development, or in discussion. Ensure cross-college representation and inclusion in Learning College activities such as this exploration, using strategies such as brown-bag lunches and collegewide conversations about learning.

4. *Build on the assessment initiative already in place.* Ensuring that assessment and evaluation apply to individual student learning and to programs, departments, and systems is fundamental to answering the how-do-we-know question. Terry O'Banion's first principle of the Learning College is that it "creates substantive change in individual learners." Assessment is some of the most difficult work of the Learning College, work Estrella Mountain Community College is already doing through the assessment initiative. As departments clearly define student learning—the substantive change—and identify strategies for assessing that learning, a next step in the process, and another of O'Banion's principles, is developing meaningful ways to document learning. Nontraditional documentation of learning provides a more detailed record of learning that can help students and advisors in planning, provide students with meaningful data to present to transfer institutions or prospective employers, and provide the college with useful data for improving practice. Consider nontraditional documentation options such as learning portfolios and annotated

transcripts. See Wilson, et al., *Learning Outcomes for the 21st Century: Report of a Community College Study* (full text available in iStream).

5. *Provide focus and support for a holistic movement toward becoming a more learning-centered college.* Use Learning College work as an overarching cultural concept under which all activities are gathered, and develop an inclusive process to identify new activities and initiatives that need to be in place to advance learning. Ensure that comprehensive communication mechanisms and inclusive, collaborative processes are in place and are used regularly and routinely. Align all efforts and resources to support becoming more learning-centered, using reminders such as tent cards or placards with the college's definition of learning or the Learning College, or with the Learning College questions: Does this action improve and expand learning? How do we know? Avoid developing projects that are or appear to be unconnected to the learning college work.

6. *Identify, examine, and question perceived obstacles to determine their veracity.* Use an inclusive, collaborative process to explore perceived obstacles. Where they are determined not to be obstacles, develop an information campaign to let the college community know that a perceived obstacle does not in fact exist. Where they are actual obstacles, determine how and whether they can be eliminated, and explore options for continuing the work within existing parameters.

IV. **LEARNING COLLEGE RESOURCES**

The following full-text resources are available through the League's online resource, iStream. Estrella Mountain Community College employees can access iStream by registering at www.league.org/istream using their college email address.

Learning Abstracts. The full archive of *Learning Abstracts* is available on iStream.

O'Banion, Terry. (1997). *Creating More Learning-Centered Community Colleges*. Mission Viejo, CA: League for Innovation in the Community College.

O'Banion, Terry. (1999). *Launching a Learning-Centered Community College*. Mission Viejo, CA: League for Innovation in the Community College.

The Cross Papers. The entire series of monographs on teaching and learning is available in the Publications section of iStream. *Innovations* conference presentations by The Cross Papers Fellows are available via video stream on iStream.

Presentations on Learning College topics. A number of video streamed keynote and special session presentations focused on learning and the Learning College are available on iStream.

Flynn, R. T. and de los Santos, G. E. (Eds.). (in press). *Student Services Dialogues*. Phoenix: League for Innovation in the Community College. This book includes case studies about learning outcomes, accountability, and programs to aid student retention and success as they relate to student services.

The following resources are available on the League's public website, www.league.org.

The Learning College Project ended in 2004; however, information is still available at http://www.league.org/league/projects/lcp/index.htm. Links to participating college websites may be broken, however, as colleges have made changes to their websites.

The 21st Century Outcomes Project ended in 2002; however, information is available at http://www.league.org/league/projects/pew/index.htm. Links to participating college websites may be broken, however, as colleges have made changes to their websites.

Getting Results, http://www.league.org/league/projects/results/index.html or www.league.org/gettingresults, is a free, online faculty development program produced by WGBH-Boston in association with the League for Innovation and funded by the National Science Foundation. The modules include lessons on instructional design, learning outcomes, active learning strategies, and a number of other strategies for effective teaching and learning.

The following websites provide resources focused on learning.

- Achieving the Dream, http://www.achievingthedream.org/default.tp
- Greater Expectations, Association of American Colleges and Universities, http://www.greaterexpectations.org/
- Innovation and Inquiry for Student Learning, Alverno College, http://iisl.alverno.edu/iislNews/iislNews.htm
- The Learning Organization, http://www.outcomesnet.com/