

**Report on the
Core Values Development Process**

Last Update 4-6-2001

Prepared by the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness.

The Estrella Mountain Core Values Process

Background:

During the Fall 1997, the Estrella Mountain Strategic Planning Steering Team identified a need to redefine the College's fifteen Institutional Values. These fifteen values were originally identified during the Spring 1994 semester. Although these original Institutional Values represented what is important at Estrella Mountain, they contained considerable overlap and were not written in behavioral terms. The Strategic Planning Steering Team made a formal recommendation to Leadership Council to condense the College Institutional Values into a smaller set of Core Values.

Core Values are intended to communicate what the College stands for and on what principles it operates. They guide the everyday actions of employees as well as college planning. Estrella Mountain believes that if our employees demonstrate the Core Values at a high level, the College will be a more effective institution.

After an employee-driven process that lasted the better part of a year, the Estrella Mountain Leadership Council adopted a set of five Core Values in October 1998. The following is a list of these Core Values. Each Core Value includes one or more bullets that state the Core Value in behavioral terms. It is these more detailed bullets that are regularly assessed by the College.

The Core Values:

COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK:

- Work together toward common goals
- Promote an ongoing exchange of ideas

DIVERSITY:

- Recognize that perspectives are shaped by backgrounds and experiences
- Promote positive attitudes toward each other

INTEGRITY:

- Commit to the highest principles of academic and
- professional standards

CREATIVE AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING

- Commit to the success of students and employees
- Encourage innovation
- Promote a caring and supportive environment

RESPECT AND FAIRNESS:

- Treat each other with respect
- Act fairly and honestly with all

The first assessment of these core values occurred during the spring 2000 semester. A survey designed to measure the degree to which Estrella Mountain employees are living the Core Values was administered to all faculty, staff, administration and temporary workers.

The Core Values Development Process:

All employees were given an opportunity to take part in the creation of the Estrella Mountain Core Values. More than 80% of board-approved employees participated in one or more activities that directly shaped these Values. Temporary staff, student workers and adjunct faculty also participated. Listed below are some key milestones in the process.

- The Strategic Planning Steering Team recommends that Core Values be developed to replace existing Institutional Values. (Fall 1997)
- The Values Planning Team is established. (January 1998)
- Employee focus groups on values conducted. (February and March 1998)
- First draft of Core Values developed using employee focus group results. (April 1998)
- Employees provide written feedback on the first draft of Core Values. (May 1998)
- Second draft of Core Values developed using written feedback from employees. (June 1998)
- Employee feedback sessions conducted on third draft of Core Values. (June – September 1998)
- Final draft (4th Version) of Core Values developed using information gleaned from the employee feedback sessions. (September 1998)
- Leadership Council formally adopts Core Values. (October 1998)
- Vision/Values Pocket Guides printed and sent to all employees. (March 1999)
- Core Values Team plans for assessment of Core Values. (February -May 1999)
- Core Values instrument beta tested. (July 1999)
- Core Values assessment finalized. (September 1999)
- Core Values assessment administered. (March 2000)
- Draft summary results reported to Leadership Council. (May 2000)

Next Steps in the Core Values Process

During the development process Estrella Mountain employees stressed that if systems are not put in place to close the gap between Core Values and actual behavior, the Core Values will have little impact. Spring 2000 assessment results will be included in the College's NCA self-study process. Results from the first assessment were very positive. Recommendations from the self-study process will be used to develop an action plan to better promote Core Value behavior.