Military Installation Voluntary Education Review (MIVER)

MIVER SITE VISIT TO
Marine Corps
Marine Corps Air Station
Cherry Point, North Carolina

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Team Members

Dr. Michael R. Chipps, Team Chair
Area President - Mid-Plains Community College
North Platte, Nebraska

Dr. Linda H. Colding
Associate University Librarian - University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Dr. Meredyth Anne Leahy
Former Dean - School of Liberal Arts, Excelsior College
Albany, New York

Dr. Marilyn L. Nicholas
Professor and Coordinator of the Teachers for Tomorrow Program - Towson University
Towson, Maryland

Dr. David E. Robinson
Professor Emeritus - Winona State University
Winona, Minnesota

Dr. Anthony B. Schroeder
Professor of Communication - Eastern New Mexico University
Portales, New Mexico

Dr. James R. Sherrard
Chairman, Nuclear Department - Three Rivers Community College
Norwich, Connecticut
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT
NORTH CAROLINA

The executive summary provides an overview of and presents the major findings resulting from the Military Installation Voluntary Education Review (MIVER) visit to the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) at Cherry Point, North Carolina. The MIVER report which follows contains a total of 17 commendations and 26 recommendations, each of which is supported and preceded by evidence.

Collaboration and Support: The Marine Corps Air Station Education Center and the participating educational institutions demonstrated an excellent collaborative relationship. There was on-going evidence that the Education Center staff work for the benefit of service members, dependents, and civilians. The four institutions who have formal memoranda of understanding often operate “beyond the call of duty” to serve potential and current students. There is a unified feeling that they collectively do what is best for the student. This culture fosters a positive learning experience for students, faculty, and the Education Center staff.

Facilities: The Education Center facility is exceptional and reflects the pride and support of the air station Command. The classrooms, offices and related support areas are clean, well-lit, and educationally inviting. The Command is commended for providing a collegiate setting for the conduct of voluntary education and for excellent learning resource support at the air station.

Comprehensive Observations: Each of the 17 commendations and 26 recommendations contain descriptive and evaluative rationale to independently support the report of the team. The observations merit additional attention as they represent what has been noted at this air station and are possibly reflected throughout the Marine Corps voluntary education program.
INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The visit to the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point, North Carolina was scheduled as part of the planned responsibilities of the Military Installation Voluntary Education Review (MIVER) project. The purpose of the MIVER project, funded by the Department of Defense (DoD) through a contract with the American Council on Education’s (ACE) Center for Lifelong Learning, is to examine “the collegiate educational programs conducted on military bases and to assist in the improvement of these programs through recommendations to the installation, the providing institutions, and the military services.” MIVER conducts evaluations on military installations within and outside the United States.

The MIVER process involves three steps to complete the visit:

- The Education Services Office and each institution providing programs at the installation prepare written evaluations and assessments of their programs based on the format stipulated in the MIVER Principles of Good Practice for Voluntary Education Programs on Military Installations and the MIVER Principles of Good Practice for Institutions Providing Education Programs on Military Installations.

- A team of professional educators drawn from accredited institutions of higher education (or persons of similar educational qualifications and experience) visits the installation, interviews staff from the installation and institutions providing programs, reviews supporting materials that are provided or requested, and examines the resources used for the programs.

- A written report containing sections on the installation and each provider institution is prepared in draft form, reviewed by the installation personnel for factual accuracy, and revised into a final report that is provided to the installation, the institutions, and the Department of Defense (DoD).

Voluntary education programs on all military installations follow policies enunciated in DoD Directive 1322.8 and DoD Instruction 1322.25. These directives include, among other requirements, that each military installation provide the following:

- Opportunities for service members to achieve educational, vocational, and career goals
- Access for service members, subject to the requirements of military duties, to educational opportunities available to other citizens
- Equal access to, and support of, educational opportunities for all service members.

Site Description

Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point is located in the heart of Havelock, North Carolina, which is in the eastern part of the state. Cherry Point received its name from being a point where cherry trees grew. The MCAS Cherry Point official name came from the Cherry Point Post Office that was originally established at this site.

MCAS Cherry Point is one of the world’s largest Marine Corps Air Stations and one of the best all-weather jet bases in the world. Occupying more than 29,000 acres, the MCAS Cherry Point runway system is so large that it serves as an alternate landing site for the space shuttles that launch from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

MCAS Cherry Point is home to the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, VMR-1, Fleet Readiness Center East, Marine Aircraft Group 14, Marine Wing Support 27, Marine Air Control Group 28, Naval Health Clinic, Fleet Aviation Specialized Operational Training Group Atlantic, Naval Air Maintenance Training, Fleet Readiness Center East, Defense Distribution Depot, Contractors and PEDRO Rescue Unit.

On a special note, the MCAS Cherry Point Headquarters Building 198 caught fire on 8 September 2007. The fire completely gutted the building, so a new facility is being constructed and is scheduled for completion in 2011.

The fiscal year 2008 Economic Impact Report indicates that the MCAS population consists of 8,684 active military and 5,300 active civilians. The total population, including family members and military/civilian retirees, is 52,891.

Active enlisted personnel number 8,289, with only 1.67 percent not possessing a high school diploma or equivalent. Active officer personnel number 940, with 77.87 percent possessing three to four years of college.

The MCAS Cherry Point Education Center is staffed with an education services officer (ESO), three educational specialists, two educational technicians, and an educational technician/administrative clerk.
Boston University (BU), Craven Community College (CCC), Park University (Park), and Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), have signed memoranda of understanding, and have a physical presence in the Education Center. BU offers graduate-level courses and degrees leading to master’s degrees in Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, and Leadership with a certification in Project Management. CCC offers courses and programs leading to associate degrees in Arts and Technical specialties. CCC also provides high school degree and General Educational Development (GED) completion programs. Park offers courses and degrees leading to bachelor’s degrees in Computer Science, Criminal Justice Administration, Management/Accounting, Management/Computer Information Systems, Management/Finance, Management/Human Resources, Management/Logistics, and Social Psychology. SIUC offers courses and programs leading to bachelor’s degrees in Electronic Systems Technologies and Aviation Management.

Use of Self-Study Guidelines and Documentation

The team conducted the visit over a three-day period. The July 2008 MIVER *Principles of Good Practice for Voluntary Education Programs on Military Installations* and the July 2008 MIVER *Principles of Good Practice for Voluntary Education Programs for Institutions Providing Education Programs on Military Installations* were used during the conduct of the visit and the writing of the team report.

Site Visit Schedule

The seven-member team, along with the MIVER assistant director, arrived on Sunday, 6 December 2009. Due to Command scheduling conflicts, the initial orientation meeting with Education Center personnel began at 0730 with the Command briefing occurring at 1030. Numerous faculty, student, institution, and installation staff meetings were conducted throughout the visit. A tour of the Education Center facility was provided for the team. The in- and out-briefings with the base commander provided insight regarding Command support for off-duty educational development for active and retired Marines, tenant commands, dependents, and civilians.

Acknowledgements

The team conveys appreciation to the command element and to the Education Center for hosting the MIVER team visit. The team found the Education Center institutional and installation representatives helpful and courteous. The team also extends appreciation to the base commander and his staff for committing time for discussion and review of pertinent educational principles and Command support.
MISSION STATEMENT AND COMMAND SUPPORT

**Principle One**

*The installation’s voluntary education program evolves from an educational mission statement that is compatible with the installation’s mission, reflects sound adult education principles and practices, and includes clear and measurable voluntary education program objectives. The mission statement and the program have the support of the appropriate military commander.*

The mission statement of the Lifelong Learning Program at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point, North Carolina is to “enrich the quality of life for our entire military community by providing a broad range of personal and professional learning opportunities.” This mission respects and corresponds with the installation mission “to provide the highest quality aviation facilities, support, and services to promote the readiness, sustainment and quality of life for Marines, Sailors, Civilian Marines, Family Members and others associated with MCAS Cherry Point.” The mission of the Lifelong Learning Program was revisited and revised in March 2009. (SP 1.1-1.4)

The station commander and his staff support the off-duty education program for base tenants, as noted in the station’s mission statement. The new MCAS Cherry Point commander initially sought out the services offered by the Education Center and developed a positive partnership connection to the base command element. The commander shared testimonies from service members who have furthered career opportunities through base Education Center operations. The Command element supports and actively participates in institution graduation ceremonies. (SP 1.5, 1.7)

**COMMENDATION:** The base command is commended for actively supporting the Lifelong Learning Program and the Education Center.

**COMMENDATION:** The education services officer (ESO) is commended for rejuvenating the Base Education Advisory Council, under her direction and with the participation and support of the command element. In this way, the director has
created a positive and unified network for improving the quality of administration, teaching, and support services at the Education Center.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

**Principle Two**

Managers of the voluntary education program are professional educators who effectively administer the human, fiscal, and learning resources required to meet the educational needs of the installation.

The Education Center is an attractive and accessible facility, which provides an excellent educational setting for base personnel. The education services officer (ESO) is a well-educated, positive, and organized leader who is innovative and responsive to the changing educational needs of the service member. The ESO is advised to continue to monitor and balance the tempo of change with the long-range desired outcomes. However, this leadership dynamic is valuable to the further development of higher education services for service members and other installation personnel. (SP 2.1-2.3)

**COMMENDATION:** The ESO is commended as the primary catalyst for positive change and growth at the Education Center.

The base library is soon to receive extensive renovation and is in the process of being moved to a temporary location. The library is staffed with professionally educated librarians and has a considerable collection and a well-equipped computer lab.

The Education Center and base library have an excellent cooperative relationship. It would be beneficial if the two facilities were jointly located so base personnel could receive comprehensive educational services in one location.

**RECOMMENDATION:** As additional funding and space become available, the base command should consider co-locating the Education Center and the library.

While there are numerous communiqués, events, and other educationally-related support activities transpiring at the installation, the ESO and Education Center personnel need to be increasingly progressive with the promotion and marketing of Education Center services. Even though many of the military personnel are highly mobile, the installation also has a rich source of potential students among those who are more permanently assigned to the station, as well as
dependents and other eligible civilians. The staff, facilities, and participating institutions are well-positioned to provide excellent educational services to the base. The remaining primary challenges for the voluntary education program are recruiting students and, with the consequent growth, space limitations. (SP 2.5, 2.12)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The ESO, in collaboration with the Education Advisory Council, should develop a written, multi-year measurable plan for aggressively recruiting additional students and, as needed, additional institutions, to serve the pressing postsecondary educational needs of the installation.

The Education Center is appropriately staffed for the current activity level. However, the center is geared for growth as it aggressively recruits students and networks with installation organizations and educational institutions. This progressive environment makes it even more imperative that a comprehensive, long-range plan for the Education Center be developed, implemented, acted upon, and continuously monitored.

The ESO works collaboratively with the institutions to ensure that the academic schedules and classes work well for students. It is evident from a review of the Education Advisory Council minutes that the director not only holds quarterly meetings, but is also adding new institutions and installation services. The director is focused on broadening the support base, so that a comprehensive higher education network is well-established across base operations. (SP 2.4, 2.10, 2.11)

The Education Center office complex is well-designed, with partitions to accommodate the privacy needs of the students. The office has been recently reorganized to address the workflow needs of students and staff. Office equipment and furnishings are appropriate and suitable for sustaining a business operation and educational environment. (SP 2.9)

At least three of the Education Center staff members are pursuing additional higher education degrees and a review of the professional development files clearly indicates that staff members are regularly engaged in various forms of continuing education. (SP 2.7) The ESO is encouraged to seek additional funding sources for training beyond the local level, with the intent to broaden the scope and understanding of higher education and the services needed for college students.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The ESO should seek additional training opportunities for Education Center staff beyond the local level.

The institution memoranda of understanding (MOUs) were reviewed and analyzed. It is important that the MOUs be reviewed on an annual basis and modified to align with the
provisions that each institution is making at the Education Center and on behalf of the service members. The current MOUs are outdated and do not accurately represent or clearly delineate the activity level of the institutions. The review and modification of the MOUs protect the common interests of the service members, the Education Center, and the providing institutions. The proposed modifications to the four MOUs were reviewed, and the team believes that additional substantive information needs to be included, such as the addition and deletion of courses and programs. It is evident that the finalization of the MOUs is pending, awaiting the approval and implementation of a standardized and universal DoD memorandum of understanding. However, interim steps still need to be taken to clearly define installation and institutional parameters.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The ESO should continue efforts to make interim changes in the MOUs with the institutions. The revised MOUs should include proposed course and program additions and deletions, as well as any other procedural or policy matters. The revised MOUs would be in effect until the new Department of Defense universal MOU is implemented.

**STUDENT SERVICES**

**Principle Three**

The policies, procedures, and practices of the voluntary education program take into account the conditions and circumstances of service members as adult learners and promote the success of those learners through appropriate counseling, testing, financial aid, and other services.

The ESO has rejuvenated the Base Education Advisory Council (EAC), enlarging it to include all the stakeholders in the Center’s educational endeavors. During the MIVER visit, interviews with the director and the institutional representatives confirmed that there is ready access to the director’s office. Examination of EAC minutes indicates a spirit of cooperation and communication. Through such meetings, Education Fairs, and numerous informal meetings, the director has ensured that cooperation is frequent and fruitful. (SP 3.1) The response to the MIVER questions details the extensive training and educational opportunities available to Education Center staff. Each staff member also has an Individual Development Plan, worked out and developed in cooperation with the director. The staff is appropriately trained and experienced and appears committed to improvement. (SP 3.2)
It should be noted that, should the Center achieve its goal of becoming a Pearson Vue testing center, the number of staff needed may increase. Since, by the Marine Corps staffing protocol, the MCAS Cherry Point office is already understaffed, adding this additional responsibility may overburden the current staff.

New students are obliged to attend College 101, a one-hour introduction to the various institutions, degrees, and opportunities available at MCAS Cherry Point. In that setting and subsequently, service members are given information which may be used to establish educational plans, get started with tuition assistance (TA) and Veterans Administration (VA) processes, and explain testing options. Counselors use a variety of modes and meetings to inform and advise students, including online and face-to-face sessions at the Education Center and at units. (SP 3.3-3.4)

Service members’ records are kept electronically through the Navy College Management Information System and in hard copy. They are annotated carefully following advisement sessions, College 101 attendance, grade reception, etc. (SP 3.6)

The Education Center offers numerous exams, including DANTES testing which includes SAT, ACT, CLEP/DSST, ECE, GED, PRAXIS, and ASE. Military classification testing includes AFCT, DLAB, and DLPT. The Education Center proctors college exams both online and in paper-based format from various institutions; tests are proctored on scheduled days and by appointment. On several occasions, staff members have worked overtime to accommodate students’ testing schedules. The Education Center provides test preparation material. It also mandates that students registering for TA take the Test of Adult Basic Education. (SP 3.7)

Students are able to obtain information and assistance on a variety of web sites, which are supplied by the Education Center. Chief among them is the Education Center’s own web site: [http://www.mccscherrypoint.com](http://www.mccscherrypoint.com). There are also links to other military and educational sites. (SP 3.8)

Finally, the graduation ceremonies, scheduled for the last weekend in May, represent an exemplary effort on the part of the installation and the cooperating institutions, as well as the MCAS Command, to mark the successful completion of students’ academic programs. Beginning with a breakfast for honored guests, proceeding through the ceremony at the station theater, and concluding with a reception for graduates and their families, the day is clearly designed to be a special occasion.
COMMENDATION: The MCAS Cherry Point Education Center and the institutions on the installation are recognized and applauded for their contributions to an excellent graduation ceremony.

RESOURCES

**Principle Four**

*A sufficient reservoir of relevant instructional resources is available to the instructor for teaching support and to the student for reference, research, and lifelong learning. Facilities and technology infrastructure are appropriate to support voluntary education program objectives and services offered. Financial resources are adequate and appropriately used to accomplish the mission and achieve the objectives of the program.*

Instructional Resources

The postsecondary institutions at MCAS Cherry Point have contributed a variety of learning resources to the installation. Included among them are the following: Boston University’s provision of wireless services to the library, Park University’s contribution of database, periodicals, and a reference set, Craven Community College’s donation of journals and reference books, and Southern Illinois University Carbondale’s provision of online and interlibrary loan resources through the SIUC library. All four institutions have contributed three percent of tuition assistance (TA) revenues to the library, as stipulated in the current MOUs. (SP 4.1)

The Station Library provides services and resources to all registered users, including students attending courses at MCAS Cherry Point. The Station Library maintains a collection of nearly 122,000 fiction and non-fiction volumes, including reference materials, periodicals such as magazines and newspapers, videos (VHS and DVD formats), music CDs, and audio books, including the new Playaway format. The collection can be accessed either in or away from the library through the online catalog. A variety of online databases, including GaleSearch, are available. Topics include general academic, business, criminal justice, health-related resources, and many others. These databases provide access to full-text newspaper and journal articles for students attending classes. Additionally, Park University provides the NewsBank database for access to newspaper articles. Materials not available in the library collection may be obtained from other Marine Corps libraries, public and institution libraries or interlibrary loans.
The Station Library is open seven days a week, including morning and evening hours, for a total of more than 80 hours. The library is currently staffed by three professional librarians: the library director, the reference librarian and the technical services librarian. This robust staffing and the staggered schedule for librarians ensure professional assistance nearly every hour the library is open. The library director is a member of the Education Advisory Council, which meets quarterly to discuss issues including the voluntary education program. (SP 4.1-4.4)

Library orientations are available for students attending courses on the installation if requested by teaching faculty. Currently, there are limited instructional aids to assist library users. The library director and the reference librarian should create handouts and instructional aids to explain the services available at the Station Library. These aids should be available to the institutions to distribute to students using the Station Library. (SP 4.5)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The library director and the reference librarian should develop handouts and instructional aids for students to ensure they are aware of and can use available library resources.

The relationship between the Station Library and the institutions serving MCAS Cherry Point is limited and greater efforts should be made to inform students of resources and services available at the Station Library, in addition to those available from the institutions. Handouts and brochures from the institutions’ libraries should be made available at the Station Library, in addition to the limited information available through the institutions’ onsite offices. These handouts should provide detailed information about the institutions’ libraries, including how to access the services and resources. (SP 4.1, 4.5)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The library director should work with onsite institution representatives to ensure handouts are available to library users concerning the library services of the institutions’ libraries.

A computer lab is available in the Station Library. The 24 computers have Internet access and word-processing software for valid ID card holders to use. Each computer is connected to a flatbed scanner and all share access to two laser printers. Additionally, there are five computers dedicated to online catalog research. There are also four computers throughout the library for reference and research use. A Wi-Fi network is available throughout the Station Library. (SP 4.6)

The Station Library is unable to achieve Premiere Status from the Department of Defense because seven of the 17 standards cannot be met. This is due to the actual library building. Repairs and minor renovations scheduled for 2010 will still not meet all of the standards. The
possible future co-location of the Education Center and the Station Library would greatly assist in achieving Premiere Status. The current building is too small for the collection to expand and grow. Additional space would also provide for conference and/or study rooms to offer instruction and orientations. (SP 4.2-4.3)

Technology Infrastructure and Physical Resources

As noted above, most of the computer access is available through the library. While no academic learning centers specifically dedicated to postsecondary programs are generally available to Cherry Point service members, there are several places where technology is available to selected groups or upon some occasions. Park University students have access to a computer lab, and students may access the Education Center’s Distance Learning Center when it is not being used for language instruction through the military training program. The addition of a Wi-Fi network throughout the Education Center has notably enhanced the Internet access for service members and faculty, as has the utilization of newly-repaired VTC equipment. (SP 4.9)

While some difficulties concerning email volume and availability continue to be addressed, in general there is adequate technological support for the administration of the educational programs. During the MIVER visit, the director expressed confidence that these problems would be solved. The recent addition of a computer terminal for students checking into the Education Center’s office should appreciably improve data-gathering on the number and purpose of visits, which has been lacking in years past. (SP 4.10)

There are no vocational/technical facilities at the Cherry Point site, although Craven Community College maintains such facilities at its nearby Havelock campus, and operates a computer lab to support students’ needs on the air station. (SP 4.11)

The Education Center has various facilities open during non-instructional and off-duty hours, scheduled through the Training and Support Administration Office. (SP 4.12) The testing facility features 15 computers in an adequately controlled environment. (SP 4.14) Classrooms are clean, well-lit and ventilated, and well-maintained, as are restrooms and common areas in the building. Safety and fire inspections are conducted monthly. (SP 4.8, 4.17) Except for continuing problems with heat controls, the classrooms appear to be more than adequate for instruction.

The Education Center has recently been significantly upgraded through the installation of new office furniture and equipment. Most important, partitions were added between desks to ensure greater privacy and confidentiality. For service members, their families, and the counseling staff, this addition has made the important work of individual counseling and reference considerably more effective. (SP 4.13)
COMMENDATION: The MCAS Cherry Point command is commended for recognizing the need for new office furniture and equipment at the Education Center and providing the necessary funds to meet that need.

Computers are replaced or scheduled for replacement on a regular basis. The Station Library is scheduled for renovation and repair in 2010. (SP 4.16) Beyond this, it is not clear what part the Education Center plays in the short- and long-term planning at MCAS Cherry Point, although the ESO has established some priorities for improvement, including co-location of the library and the educational facilities.

Financial Resources

Funding for the Education Center and library via tuition assistance (TA) monies comes through a stipulation of the institutions’ MOUs that each institution return three percent of TA received. Examination of the past three fiscal years’ revenues indicates a predictable, though shifting, revenue base. Clearly, deployment of troops has affected this funding, but the Education Center remains financially viable. (SP 4.18) Recently, the Education Center received additional funding, through end-of-year monies, to purchase new office furniture and equipment, as noted above.

The ESO was asked to participate in a Headquarters Marine Corps-wide Functionality Assessment team. That effort was postponed until 2010 or 2011, but the ESO still expects to serve on it. Currently, the ESO serves on the deployment working group and has, with the help of the EAC, developed long- and short-term plans for the Education Center, which were subsequently presented to various members of the command structure. The ESO works closely with the deputy director and the director of Marine and Family Services (MFS), as well as the finance director of Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) to identify funding priorities. (SP 4.19, 4.21) The ESO’s responses in both the pre-MIVER visit materials and during interviews conducted during the visit confirm the ESO’s familiarity with the fee structures and reimbursement policies of the supporting institutions at MCAS Cherry Point. (SP 4.22) The ESO asserts that there are no current TA funding issues and that the Education Center enjoys the support of the command structure in its effort to enhance the education programs.
THE VOLUNTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM PLAN

**Principle Five**

*The installation has a comprehensive Voluntary Education Program Plan (VEPP) designed to fulfill the mission, attain the objectives, and meet the needs of the voluntary education program.*

_Education program planning is comprehensive and continuous and ensures the effective application of resources in achieving program mission and objectives. Results of the program evaluation help modify and improve the program as well as provide the basis for planning.*

_Data collection, analysis and interpretation are used to identify and prioritize the installation’s educational needs so that they may be addressed in a systematic, data-driven fashion._

The ESO did an excellent job of pulling together the data and preparation of the different institutions to prepare for the MIVER visit. However, the focus of this report should not have been only on what the institutions are doing for the Marines and their family members; it should also focus on the Voluntary Education Program Plan. The report described what is currently being offered by Lifelong Learning programs: testing, high school completion and/or GED programs, as well as the ACT, SAT, DANTES, graduate admission exams and a myriad of other tests to assist students in earning their college degrees, along with the tuition assistance program, which appears to be highly efficient.

There is currently an informal process for data collection and analysis, as described by the ESO in response to the questions under Principle Two. However, it is not systematic at this point. The process and methodology for collection, analysis, and interpretation of data should be described in the VEPP. (SP 5.1) For example, the ESO attempted to involve all stakeholders in the assessment, planning, and implementation of a specific plan to meet a specific objective: the addition of a GED/HSPD program at MCAS Cherry Point. In another instance, an action plan established by the ESO resulted in major changes in the office space to provide privacy and confidentiality of records. The report and subsequent discussion focused on the space and equipment needs and the way the ESO went about achieving the objective. In other words, the ESO knows how to manage such a process, though not yet fully understanding how to conceive of it as such. (SP 5.2)

The ESO should request from each institution end of semester reports that summarize course enrollments, grade distributions, assessments of student learning, graduation data, program and course issues, average number of hours taken each semester and facility concerns, etc. The data
collection should be from actual numbers compiled by the colleges of students that have enrolled in the various courses and programs. It should reflect success and failure, dropouts, etc. Only with reliable data can the ESO know what is happening and assess the strength of the programs. For each need identified, the VEPP should indicate which academic programs and/or student services address this need and the extent to which it is being met. Conversely, those needs determined not to be congruent with the mission and objectives of the voluntary education program should be noted (with rationale) in the VEPP. Lacking the consistent collection of data, there is no formal process in place to meet the needs identified by such data. Put another way, the process is inchoate: it sometimes occurs, but it is not yet fully realized. (SP 5.4)

The Lifelong Learning mission statement identifies a series of broad objectives. (SP 5.5) The VEPP includes a chart that describes actions taken to achieve some goals in various programs. In that chart, the process of identifying a need, defining a way to meet it, and addressing the adequacy of resources available to meet the need is roughly outlined. (SP 5.6-5.8) However, the next step, a priority listing of unmet needs in the coming year, does not appear. (SP 5.9) Furthermore, as there is no indication of previous years’ actions plans, there is no way to establish that the actions projected have been accomplished. (SP 5.10)

At present, there is no identifiable, coherent action plan at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center, so the subprinciples involved are moot. (SP 5.11-5.15)

All this said, it is notable that the current ESO has been an energetic force for change in her office, sometimes to a fault. After extensive interviews with her, the MIVER team is convinced that the ESO will bring about the needed improvements in the VEPP. As one instance, the ESO has begun to collect data on “conducted briefs for service members” and “provided advisements”—two data categories which had not previously been tracked and which are surely crucial to any sound assessment of the Education Center’s effectiveness. A survey has been developed and distributed to determine the interests and needs of military personnel and spouses on base or in the community. The survey is readily available on the Lifelong Learning Program web site. After reviewing the survey, the MIVER team found it to be user-friendly and very complete. The survey should, if there is a significant response, provide valuable data for the colleges and the Education Center. This type of data would indicate if the programs offered are serving the needs identified or whether the ESO needs to discuss options for new academic programs.

At the end of the current VEPP and in an attachment to the report, there are a number of observations, data, and actions presented, but with no apparent overriding organizing principle. As the ESO gains experience, she will need to conceive how to organize and present the information in a coherent assessment and action plan, one which gathers data to identify and
support a perceived need, develops a plan to meet those needs, and formulates a method for evaluating its success.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The MCAS Cherry Point ESO, in coordination with the onsite institutions and the members of the Education Advisory Council, should develop an action plan to meet clearly-stated short- and long-term objectives.
Summary of Installation
Commendations and Recommendations

COMMENDATIONS

- The base command is commended for actively supporting the Lifelong Learning Program and the Education Center.
- The education services officer (ESO) is commended for rejuvenating the Base Education Advisory Council, under her direction and with the participation and support of the command element. In this way, the director has created a positive and unified network for improving the quality of administration, teaching, and support services at the Education Center.
- The ESO is commended as the primary catalyst for positive change and growth at the Education Center.
- The MCAS Cherry Point Education Center and the institutions on the installation are recognized and applauded for their contributions to an excellent graduation ceremony.
- The MCAS Cherry Point command is commended for recognizing the need for new office furniture and equipment at the Education Center and providing the necessary funds to meet that need.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- As additional funding and space become available, the base command should consider co-locating the education center and the library.
- The ESO, in collaboration with the Education Advisory Council, should develop a written, multi-year measurable plan for aggressively recruiting additional students and, as needed, additional institutions, to serve the pressing postsecondary educational needs of the installation.
- The ESO should seek additional training opportunities for Education Center staff beyond the local level.
- The ESO should continue efforts to make interim changes in the MOUs with the institutions. The revised MOUs should include proposed course and program additions and deletions, as well as any other procedural or policy matters. The
revised MOUs would be in effect until the new Department of Defense universal MOU is implemented.

- The library director and the reference librarian should develop handouts and instructional aids for students to ensure they are aware of and can use available library resources.
- The library director should work with onsite institution representatives to ensure handouts are available to library users concerning the library services of the institutions’ libraries.
- The MCAS Cherry Point ESO, in coordination with the onsite institutions and the members of the Education Advisory Council, should develop an action plan to meet clearly-stated short- and long-term objectives.
INTRODUCTION

Boston University (BU) Metropolitan College (MET) is an international, comprehensive, research-oriented higher education institution, currently the fourth largest private, independent university in the United States with more than 30,000 students. BU offers 250 undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and special degree programs and is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. The accreditation includes Metropolitan College.

Boston University Metropolitan College currently enrolls more than 4,000 students and is one of 17 degree-granting entities that make up BU. MET was founded in 1965 for the express purpose of serving the needs of adult learners, a majority of whom are employed and are seeking academic and professional development programs that meet their needs. One outreach arm of MET is the program offering graduate education opportunities on military installations. The Master of Science in Business Administration (MSBA) was first offered at MCAS Cherry Point in 1980 and the Graduate Certificate in Project Management was added in 2005. Graduate programs are also offered at military installations in Washington, DC, Massachusetts and Virginia and operate under the direction of the dean of MET. The Project Management Institute’s Global Accreditation Center for Project Management accredits select MET project management programs. The MET program offered at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point offers extensive support to its students and collaborates with the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center in its efforts to meet the graduate education needs of the military, family members, and civilian community.

MISSION

**Principle One**

*The institution providing voluntary education programs on a military installation has an educational mission statement that reflects sound adult education philosophy and goals and is clearly compatible with the installation voluntary education program mission statement and objectives.*

Boston University’s mission statement, located on its web site, was last reviewed and approved by its Board of Trustees on 10 February 2009. The mission statement speaks to the University’s presence as an “international, comprehensive, private research university, committed to
educating students to be reflective, resourceful individuals ready to live, adapt and lead in an interconnected world.” It goes on to state that it continues to honor its founding principle that Boston University should be “accessible to all” and that the university functions “in service to the wider community.” The statement’s closing positions Boston University as an institution that pursues “innovation in education to ensure that we meet the needs of students and an ever changing world.” (SP 1.1)

The self-study of Boston University’s Metropolitan College (MET) at MCAS Cherry Point does not provide a copy of the MET mission statement, and no mission statement for MET could be found in a search of the BU web site. Instead, the self-study provides, as an appendix, a document titled Constitution of Metropolitan College and Extended Education which describes in detail MET’s academic governance policies and procedures. No direct reference is made in this document to a mission statement of Metropolitan College; however, the preamble contains language that may represent the MET vision/mission statement. The preamble appears to be in line with the BU mission statement. The 2008-2009 catalog of MET’s graduate military programs mentions “fulfilling the (BU) mission” by delivering “the rigor and quality of Boston University’s programs in formats and locations that serve the needs of the military community.” (SP 1.1-1.2)

There is no indication that the MET programs offered at MCAS Cherry Point are not in line with the BU institutional mission. However, greater effort to clarify the mission of each of the various entities under discussion and how they are aligned and unified would have been very beneficial, particularly since the MCAS programs operate at a significant distance from the main campus. Faculty, students, visitors, and employers or prospective employers should not be left to surmise that such an alignment exists. (SP 1.5)
EDUCATION PROGRAM

**Principle Two**

*Education programs and services provided on military installations maintain the high quality required by regionally accredited institutions, using qualified and dedicated faculty supported by professional development programs and appropriate infrastructure. Assessment of student learning is based on the achievement of comprehensive and specific learning outcomes.*

**Instruction**

The graduate level programs offered at this installation by MET include the Master of Science in Business Administration (MSBA), and the Graduate Certificate in Project Management, which can also be completed as part of the MSBA and is offered in a blended/online format only. A Master of Science in Computer Information Science (MSCIS) was launched in 2004, but has since been discontinued for lack of interest. The extent to which the programs offered at MCAS Cherry Point are in response to an installation needs assessment is unclear. In light of MET’s plans to phase out the MSBA and implement a new Master of Science in Leadership in January 2010, more attention should be given to working with the installation Education Center to gather the data necessary to assure that such decisions are in the best interests of all stakeholders. (SP 2.4)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The MET should assist the ESO to develop and implement periodic needs assessment surveys.

Admissions criteria are typical of graduate programs in business and require official transcripts of all previous undergraduate and graduate work, a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university, two letters of recommendation, and official results of the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT). MET is flexible in its demands with regards to the admission process and often allows students to enroll prior to meeting all of the requirements, with the proviso that they be met prior to the completion of no more than four courses. (SP 2.1)

The MSBA requires completion of ten four-credit courses and is offered in an alternate weekend format over the course of 15 weeks. This intense format, with classes offered six hours every other Saturday and Sunday, allows students to complete up to two courses each term, while also making an effort to accommodate students’ work and family demands. Courses are scheduled to allow a student to complete the MSBA program in 20 months. While students are required to complete their program in six years, allowances are made for military students whose studies are
often interrupted by the demands of a military career. Staff estimates that 98 percent of all students officially admitted to the program have completed the program. (SP 2.14)

**COMMENDATION:** The MET is commended for offering its degree programs at MCAS Cherry Point in an alternate weekend format that allows service members to complete degrees in a timely and professional manner.

Up to six credits will be accepted in transfer, with a number of caveats typically found in graduate-level admissions policies, including approval of the MET Graduate Committee. Some military education at the graduate level, as evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE), may be accepted for transfer or waiver, including select courses from the Defense Acquisition University. (SP 2.8, 2.10)

MET maintains appropriate prerequisites to ensure that students can meet course requirements. Prerequisites required include demonstration of competency in spreadsheet, database and word processing applications. Students who cannot demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency are required to complete MET AD 500, Computers for Management. In addition, students have access to an assessment instrument which helps them to determine if their computer has adequate software applications to support their studies. (SP 2.6, 2.12)

Other than required textbooks it appears that nearly every course requires students to read readily available publications such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, *Business Week*, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, etc. While students do have access to extensive library resources online through the main campus, there is little indication that accessing such resources is regularly or systematically required or recommended for student use. It appears that only one course in the MSBA sequence requires students to conduct research that meets the research submission guidelines of the Project Management Institute. (SP 2.5, 2.7)

Overall, MET offers a sound and rigorous academic program to its students. However, there is room for improvement in at least two important facets of the program - the course syllabus and assessment. The course syllabus represents an opportunity for the MET program at MCAS Cherry Point to provide students with all information relevant to the learning experience they are about to undertake. A number of MSBA course syllabi were reviewed. There was little consistency across the program as to format or the amount or type of information provided to the students. Items such as course prerequisites, learning outcomes, instructional methods to be employed, evaluation and grading criteria, schedule of learning activities and assignments, group/team work assignments, case study and/or research papers required, including recommended academic resources or guidelines and relevant academic policies and procedures should be provided in every syllabus. Comprehensive course syllabi are critical, especially in a
program where student/faculty face-to-face meetings are two weeks apart and students are subject to work, family, and military demands that might unexpectedly take them away from class. (SP 2.6, 2.9)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The MET graduate program at MCAS Cherry Point should develop a common format for course syllabi that is comprehensive and provides adequate course information to students.

**Faculty**

The majority of the MSBA faculty commutes on a bi-weekly basis from Boston to MCAS Cherry Point, sometimes teaching two courses on Saturday and Sunday. Curriculum vitae of ten faculty members were reviewed and all were found to be relatively up-to-date. The faculty are well qualified to teach in this program. While only three of the ten held a PhD, or terminal degree, the remaining faculty members held master’s degrees in the assigned content area and two faculty members held two master’s degrees. All faculty are also active in business and industry; their vitae document many years of varied and diverse work experience in the field, including one who heads up the Massachusetts Department of Labor. All indications are that faculty readily share their real world experiences with students. (SP 2.17, 2.18, 2.21, 2.22)

MET at MCAS Cherry Point has experienced little or no turnover in faculty. Most faculty have been with Boston University and MET, in particular, for many years, with the most recent addition joining six years ago. Faculty report that the MET staff members at Cherry Point are very supportive and helpful in meeting their needs as commuters who are only at Cherry Point on weekends.

End of course evaluations are completed by all students, and the results shared with faculty by the program director within a few weeks of the end of term. They are also shared with the MCAS Cherry Point ESO. The apparent transparency in this aspect of the program would seem to indicate that faculty/staff/student relations are good. (SP 2.23)

**Assessment**

Assessment provides a second opportunity for program improvement. The MET self-study report indicated that procedures related to the development of learning outcomes, objectives and assessment in general are developed and implemented at the main campus and that the MET program at MCAS Cherry Point adheres to those processes. However, course syllabi did not reveal consistency in this area, with some course syllabi offering learning objectives in the form of a course description, others providing a list of course outcomes, and still others neglecting to
make mention of either. A lengthy discussion of academic policies and procedures was provided in some course outlines, whereas in others it was abbreviated or missing altogether. A review of learning activities reveals a heavy emphasis on case studies, including written analyses, team and small group work, as well as oral presentations – individual and team. There was no indication, however, that these activities are assessed for their effectiveness or that they have any direct or indirect relationship to ensuring that the proposed learning outcomes, stated or not, are achieved by students. Activities unique to individual courses (portfolio management and the Business Strategy Game) should also be assessed for their effectiveness. Rubrics, which would provide additional information to students relative to performance criteria and assure consistency in the application of grading standards across the program, are not available. Involvement of the MSBA and MSL program faculty in this activity, as well as in the development of common course syllabi, as recommended above, could serve as an excellent professional development opportunity for faculty and raise their level of awareness of the extent to which they, individually and as a group, contribute to the achievement of program outcomes. (SP 2.26, 2.28, 2.29)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The MET MCAS Cherry Point graduate program should develop an assessment plan to systematically ascertain the effectiveness of various instructional strategies and assessment methodologies employed in the MSBA program and the soon to be launched MSL program, and the extent to which they contribute to the attainment of learning outcomes, at the student and program level.

Grade inflation at BU and MET appears to be an issue, enough so that faculty, including those at MCAS Cherry Point, are held to fairly strict guidelines as to the percentage of A’s and B’s they may award in any given class. Attention given to more clearly defining program and course outcomes, delineating grading criteria, assessing the effectiveness of learning activities, and determining the extent to which they contribute to the attainment of course outcomes could provide additional data regarding this issue. (SP 2.27, 3.11)
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

**Principle Three**
*Administration of the program includes academic and student services and demonstrates effective and reliable management of human, fiscal, technological, and learning resources.*

Management

The MET program at MCAS Cherry Point is managed by a director and a field representative and both individuals have been with the program for a number of years. Both are qualified, with several years of administrative and management experience in various business and finance positions. (SP 3.2, 3.4)

Program publications for the MSBA indicate that course scheduling is completed in such a way as to give a high level of consideration to student and faculty concerns. That students can be assured of completing the MSBA in a period of just 20 months, less than two years, and that faculty will be available to teach the required courses in the sequence outlined is a testament to the attention given to this particular student population. The course schedule requires onsite professional staff to work closely with the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center staff to assure that necessary classroom space is available and that all facilities are open and available over the weekend. (SP 3.3, 3.9)

It was apparent after discussions with faculty and students alike that the onsite professional staff provides excellent student and faculty services. Students readily indicated a high level of satisfaction with the personal care and services offered, including one-to-one orientation to the program when necessary, program completion planning, assistance with complicated financial aid and deployment issues, etc. Both students and faculty commented on the regular availability of program staff during weekend classes. Staff members voluntarily adjust their weekday schedules to accommodate weekend hours on a regular basis. (SP 3.3, 3.5, 3.10)

Onsite administration has ready access to main campus academic records, databases and other computer and technical support. Main campus appears to provide the administrative support structure for the MET MCAS Cherry Point programs. On the other hand, onsite administrators found that end of course evaluations, when sent to main campus for processing, sometimes took months to be returned to Cherry Point. The administrators collate evaluation data by hand before sending the forms to the main campus. It became apparent through the course of the visit that onsite professional staff appropriately have some latitude in the application and implementation of institutional policies and procedures, giving them the opportunity to be somewhat more
flexible and better serve their target population without compromising academic rigor or the credibility of the program. (SP 3.5, 3.8, 3.9)

In preparation for the site visit, Boston University Metropolitan College (MET), like the installation and other institutions, submitted a self-study based on the MIVER template of Self-Study Questions and Other Requirements. The MIVER request for self-studies set a submission date of approximately five weeks before the start of the actual visit. Unfortunately, Boston University Metropolitan College did not submit its self-study until slightly over three weeks after the due date. In addition, the document submitted was inadequate and insufficient for MIVER pre-site visit preparation purposes. Many of the questions did not include the requested data and descriptive and analytical narrative. As a result, the MIVER team was unable to carry out the necessary pre-visit review and analysis of MET’s programs and academic and administrative policies and practices.

In response to both email and in-person requests, MET did provide self-study revisions in piecemeal fashion. MET delivered some materials to the front desk at the lodging for pick-up by the team on their arrival late Sunday afternoon, 6 December 2009. MET provided additional materials on Monday, 7 December and on Tuesday morning, 8 December. A fourth, and final, edition of the self-study was delivered late Tuesday morning.

This process of piecemeal delivery of information essential for both advance preparation for the visit and onsite review, analysis and discussion of MET’s programs hindered a thorough review of the program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** In the future, MET administrators should take care to ensure that the person responsible for the self-study prepares a thorough and acceptable MIVER report with all of the attachments in a timely fashion.

Student Services

All indications are that the MET staff provides excellent student services. Students praised the staff for their support and assistance throughout their programs of study. Institutional policies and procedures governed by the main campus are followed, as are the standards and practices set forth in the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Principles and Practices. Every effort is made to ensure that students are able to apply previously earned academic, as well as military-related education to their degree programs, up to the maximum of six credits. (SP 3.18)

Students couldn’t say enough about the assistance they received from the MET field representative with regard to the use of their military educational benefits. In addition to
participating in all previously available military and veteran education benefit programs, BU also participates in the new VA Chapter 33 Yellow Ribbon program. The University generously funds nearly $50,000 a year for grants, which are awarded to students based on a review of academic performance and financial need. These awards are made by the MET Cherry Point staff. The staff is flexible, as are the faculty, recognizing that military demands may interrupt a student’s program of study. Both faculty and staff work together to help deployed students complete their work within the established academic framework and standards but without additional academic or financial penalty. (SP 3.22)

Finally, MET staff participate in the onsite graduation ceremony, which is an important event at MCAS Cherry Point. Graduating students are also invited to attend the graduation ceremony at the main campus in Boston. Students did raise concerns about the purchase of textbooks through the University’s book store managed by Barnes and Noble. (SP 3.18, 3.20, 3.21, 3.23)

RESOURCES

**Principle Four**

*There is a sufficient reservoir of relevant instructional resources available to the instructor for teaching support and to the student for reference, research, and independent learning. Facilities and equipment are appropriate to support the programs and services offered. Financial resources are adequate and appropriately used to accomplish the institutional mission and to achieve program goals and objectives.*

**Instructional Resources**

Students attending Boston University at MCAS Cherry Point have access to the Station Library and BU’s Mugar and Pardee Management Libraries resources via the Internet. Due to the limited research required by the BU programs offered at MCAS Cherry Point, library resources are not used to the fullest extent. Should the programs become more research-oriented, the BU libraries have resources and services available for students and faculty. Students are not provided with BU library information from the Cherry Point onsite representative. However, the library web sites are fairly easy to access and use. From the “Ask-a-Librarian” page, students taking distance and online programs can find information on how to connect to eResources and obtain BU books and articles that are not available online. Students may request books through the interlibrary loan services of the Station Library and/or the local public libraries. Additionally, students can contact BU librarians for research assistance using the email link and a local Boston telephone number during the hours posted on the library’s web site. (SP 4.2, 4.5-4.7, 4.11)
In the past, BU has paid for the business cable broadband connection in the Station Library. However, with the Marine Corps Wi-Fi network available throughout the library, this service is no longer necessary. The relationship between the BU libraries and the MCAS Cherry Point Station Library is very limited. While the BU libraries are available for BU students and faculty, the Station Library can provide limited additional support. The installation reference librarian is available for orientations and can provide reference support to students and faculty. Because students receive no information concerning BU library resources from the onsite representative, handouts and training aids from the BU libraries should be made available at the Station Library. (SP 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The onsite BU representative should ensure handouts and instructional aids are available at the Station Library for BU students.

Instructors require students to use computer technology to complete the core course, AD 642, project. In addition to this project, the capstone course, AD 646, requires the use of computer software. BU does not provide a computer resource center for its students. Most graduate students either have their own computers or have access to computers. Students attending BU may use the 33 computers available at the Station Library which is open more than 80 hours per week. (SP 4.8, 4.9, 4.11)

Classrooms at MCAS Cherry Point have access to data projectors, laptops, overhead projectors, audio-visual equipment, a TV/VCR combination unit, and a DVD player. (SP 4.10)

**Physical Resources**

The physical resources offered at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center, including classrooms, office space, various computer laboratories, storage, etc., are adequate for current needs; however, it appears that nearly every available space is heavily utilized. MET has the space necessary to assure students of privacy in their discussions with staff. With regard to the MOU, the ESO is making necessary revisions to long-standing agreements in order to bring them up-to-date. The director of MET MCAS Cherry Point programs should make sure that the new MOU takes into consideration the pending changes in academic programs to be offered at this installation. (SP 4.12-4.14)

**Financial Resources**

Uncovering the financial resources allocated to the MET graduate program at Cherry Point proved to be a challenge. Some figures were provided in the final edition of the self-study. The
difficulty seemed to be two-fold. First, there was a concern that such information was proprietary and not to be published. Second, there appear to be several budgets and sources of funding involved for various expenses incurred, with some covering just the Cherry Point location, others covering all of the programs in North Carolina, and still other costs, such as faculty salaries and fringe benefits, charged to the MET main campus. There was no evidence available to indicate that a regular cost analysis of programs and services offered through this program was undertaken.

Like most institutions serving the military community, MET at MCAS Cherry Point offers a significantly reduced tuition rate to its students. The current rate for a graduate course at this location is $530 per credit hour or $2,120 per course, compared with a tuition rate at the main campus of $700 per credit hour or $2,800 per course. That reduction, combined with the available tuition assistance and grants, makes this a very attractive program for this particular community, causing one to wonder why the program has not attracted far more students, particularly in light of the fact that there is almost no competition for a program such as this one.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

**Principle Five**

*Continuous and systematic program evaluation stimulates program improvement, enhances quality and increases the likelihood of the achievement of program mission and objectives.*

Program evaluation activity, beyond the collection of data from end of course student evaluations and number of course registrations each term, is nearly non-existent. Granted, the program is very small, with 29 students enrolled, and the perception may well be that professional staff has a handle on all of this information without having to formally collect and analyze it on an annual basis. However, every aspect of the program should be examined on a regular basis. Administrative data, such as the number of students officially admitted each year, the number of students enrolled in the program prior to completing the admissions process, as compared to those who do complete the process, course completions and withdrawals, number of graduates each year, analysis of faculty grading patterns, term-to-term retention, and retention to graduation can prove very useful, even to a relatively small program. Such data provide a longer term view of the program and reveal the effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, or even gaps in the budgeting, marketing, recruitment, and advising strategies employed, as well as in the admissions, course scheduling, registration, and graduation processes.
Graduate follow-up data should also be gathered to explore the impact of program completion on graduates’ incomes, employment status, and eligibility for promotion, as well as both employer and student satisfaction with the program as related to intended program outcomes and any perceived gaps in the program’s curricula. On the second day of the visit, a database was shared which listed several years’ worth of program graduates and their contact information, date of graduation, and current employer, when available. This information was apparently used only to provide networking opportunities between enrolled students and graduates, which certainly is a good use of such information, but there are other uses as well. (SP 3.14, 3.15)

All data of the sort described here serve to support a cost-benefit analysis of the program and help to determine whether or not the program is operating at peak efficiency and effectiveness. Finally, data resulting from periodic reviews and analyses provide the framework and foundation for continuous program improvement.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The MET should establish the means to collect data regularly on program outcomes specific to MCAS Cherry Point.

Self-assessment or the lack of it seems to be the greatest weakness of the program. While on the surface it appears to be a high quality academic program serving the needs of its students, the MIVER team review reveals that formal evaluation in nearly all its forms is lacking. Complacency in such a setting is easy to come by, but not a healthy environment for an academic program of any kind in today’s world, where accountability and outcomes assessment are in demand at every level of our society.
Summary of Boston University Metropolitan College
Commendations and Recommendations

COMMENDATION

- The MET is commended for offering its degree programs at MCAS Cherry Point in an alternate weekend format that allows service members to complete degrees in a timely and professional manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The MET should assist the ESO to develop and implement periodic needs assessment surveys.
- The MET graduate program at MCAS Cherry Point should develop a common format for course syllabi that is comprehensive and provides adequate course information to students.
- The MET MCAS Cherry Point graduate program should develop an assessment plan to systematically ascertain the effectiveness of various instructional strategies and assessment methodologies employed in the MSBA program and the soon to be launched MSL program, and the extent to which they contribute to the attainment of learning outcomes, at the student and program level.
- In the future, MET administrators should take care to ensure that the person responsible for the self-study prepares a thorough and acceptable MIVER report with all of the attachments in a timely fashion.
- The onsite BU representative should ensure handouts and instructional aids are available at the station library for BU students.
- The MET should establish the means to collect data regularly on program outcomes specific to MCAS Cherry Point.
Institution Report
Craven Community College

INTRODUCTION

Craven Community College (CCC) is one of 58 community colleges serving the state of North Carolina. In 1965, the college initially offered seven courses to Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point service members, their dependents, and civilian employees of both the air station and the nearby naval air rework facility. Within four years, the college established a storefront operation in nearby Havelock. By 2004, the Havelock Campus had evolved and grown into the current 24-acre, three-building facility, which is physically located just outside the air station’s main gate. Similarly, the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center continued to grow and evolve until in 1993, the Jerry W. Marvel Training and Education Center became the “campus” on base for postsecondary higher education on the air station. CCC offers more than 70 certificate, diploma, and associate degree programs to address the evolving educational needs of its student population, among which the service members and their dependents at MCAS Cherry Point are a main constituency.

The service members and their dependents primarily utilize the Education Center for coursework and the primary educational goal is acquiring the 44-credit hour base which satisfies the general education requirement for North Carolina higher education degrees. Program coursework requires both written and oral reports. All MCAS Cherry Point service members have full access to the Station Library, as well as the nearby Havelock Campus library. The main campus library, with its extensive holdings, is 16 miles away in New Bern. CCC has had program graduates from MCAS Cherry Point in its certificate, diploma, and associate degree programs, but most students are enrolled in the 44-credit general education requirement core program, which can be obtained entirely at the Education Center. Service members are welcome and encouraged to seek other associate, diploma, or certificate degree programs at the nearby Havelock or main New Bern Campus. The retention rate at MCAS Cherry Point is nearly 100 percent, as CCC staff members continually strive to assist the service members and their dependents in achieving their educational degree goals.

The responsibility for CCC education support onsite at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center is assigned to a full-time office manager (with two full-time educational assistants). The office manager reports directly to the dean of the Havelock Campus, who in turn reports to the president on the main campus. The CCC MCAS Cherry Point office manager, with his full-time
staff, provides all necessary administrative educational support to the military and civilian air station student population.

The MIVER team interviewed the CCC office manager and support personnel, as well as a diverse mix of regular and adjunct faculty, and 22 current students. In addition, the MIVER team interviewed management personnel at the Havelock and New Bern campuses. The educational opportunities available to the students are well recognized, and appreciated, and this positive association with CCC should continue to flourish.

MISSION

**Principle One**

*The institution providing voluntary education programs on a military installation has an educational mission statement that reflects sound adult education philosophy and goals and is clearly compatible with the installation voluntary education program mission statement and objectives.*

The stated mission of Craven Community College (CCC) as formally adopted by its Board of Trustees on 21 July 2009 is:

> Craven Community College, a public comprehensive community college with open admissions and exceptional teaching, meets the diverse learning needs of our region in the global environment though a variety of delivery systems and providing high quality: career and technical programs, skill development and credentialing; college/university transfer courses and programs; continuing education for professional growth, licensure and quality of life enrichment; developmental studies, academic support and literacy education; industry and business services to further economic development; and workforce development education, training and partnerships.

The MIVER team found no conflict between the academic program and services offered to the MCAS Cherry Point service members and the general mission statement of the parent college. The college is encouraged and does adhere to the principles and criteria of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC). (SP 1.1-1.2)
To support the mission statement and strategic goals, the college has developed and implemented plans to assure program and discipline evaluation, institutional effectiveness, instructional telecommunications, information systems, facilities, and educational planning.

The college’s program planning, goal setting, decision making, and policies are adequately reflected in the college’s mission statement. (SP 1.3)

The college’s mission statement and goals are included in all catalog, brochure, and program material publications. (SP 1.4)

The mission statement is reviewed regularly, most recently in 2009. (SP 1.5)

The mission statement is quite broad and could cover a number of educational activities in any of CCC’s regional campuses at the certificate, diploma, and associate degree levels. CCC management is committed to the support of the educational needs of the MCAS Cherry Point community; this educational support and involvement is rapidly growing. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center and CCC has been in place since 1999. This MOU is currently being updated and revised to more accurately reflect the expanded educational opportunities available for the service members. It is understood that the Department of Defense is currently developing a universal MOU that is to be adopted by all service Education Centers by 2012.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Principle Two

Education programs and services provided on military installations maintain the high quality required by regionally accredited institutions, using qualified and dedicated faculty supported by professional development programs and appropriate infrastructure. Assessment of student learning is based on the achievement of comprehensive and specific learning outcomes.

Instruction

CCC offers Associate in General Education, Associate in Science, Associate in Arts, Associate in Applied Science, Diploma, and Certificate degree programs, and any service member may take any course and work toward any of the academic programs offered at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center, the nearby Havelock Campus, and the main New Bern Campus. All course offerings for the degree are taught by well qualified adjunct and regular faculty during the
fall, spring, and summer academic terms at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center. These terms are condensed—two academic terms are offered during the typical fall and spring semesters—to better meet the educational needs of the student, especially the active duty service member attempting to complete a degree within a typical three-year rotational assignment. (SP 2.1)

Degree requirements for all programs are well publicized and identified in the general catalog of the College and online, as well as in promotional brochures and flyers available at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center. Students can work toward their degree programs at the Education Center on station, or take other desired coursework at the nearby Havelock Campus or the main New Bern Campus some 16 miles away, as well as utilize more than 100 available online courses. The degree programs offered, including certificate, diploma, and associate degrees, are appropriately named and use degree requirements and standards common to similar community college institutions of higher learning. (SP 2.3)

The current program student population at MCAS Cherry Point has grown markedly in recent years (there are 344 service members enrolled in coursework this fall semester, an increase of 14 percent) as the degree programs have produced graduates and the viability of numerous programs has been well established. Student numbers are expected to grow as CCC expands its educational presence at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center and especially at the nearby Havelock Campus by offering additional courses and entire degree programs. While academic degree program offerings and expanded online and in class course offerings are noted, there have been only infrequent needs assessment surveys done of the service members to better quantify their educational goals. (SP 2.4, 2.14) The MCAS Cherry Point ESO, in collaboration with the onsite higher education institutions, should conduct more frequent and thorough needs assessment surveys to better assist the service members and their dependents.

**RECOMMENDATION: CCC should assist the ESO and Education Center staff in the development and implementation of periodic needs assessment surveys.**

More than 100 online course offerings are now available to the service members, and this number is expected to grow in the long-term. The expanded use of online courses will certainly encourage the service members and their family members to continue their academic program work and attain their degrees, even after they have physically been transferred from the Cherry Point area. (SP 2.15)

CCC has provided a office manager, with two full-time assistants, at the Education Center to help service members achieve their educational goals. This office manager and staff work one-on-one with all service members to understand their educational objectives, identify courses that
meet degree requirements, schedule necessary classes, assist in complying with college procedures, and assist with the tuition assistance and payment processes, and especially work with the service member to complete the degree within a typical three-year military assignment. Student interviews indicated that a full-time financial aid specialist for the CCC staff at the Education Center and more frequent visits by the regional Veteran’s Administration office would be beneficial. The specialist, along with his staff, is highly respected by the students, as well as by regular and adjunct faculty for both their professional and personal support.

Students have been awarded recognized associate, diploma, and certificate degrees by CCC. Students have also successfully transferred into appropriate baccalaureate level degree programs at other institutions of high education in North Carolina and graduated from those programs as well. CCC actively participates in both the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) articulation and transfer pact with the University of North Carolina system and a similar University Connections partnership with the North Carolina State University system and East Carolina University. These effective partnerships dramatically enhance the transfer of academic credit through a “2+2” agreement, which has proven to be a strong incentive to the service members to continue their education toward a baccalaureate degree. (SP 2.1, 2.10)

Service members can take all required degree-specific courses to meet the 44-credit general education core requirement at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center from this excellent mix of CCC full-time and adjunct faculty. They can also take added courses and some laboratories at the Havelock Campus for several specific certificate, diploma, and associate degree programs. Finally, service members always have the option to return to the reasonably close main New Bern Campus to take any course or laboratory toward any of CCC’s extensive degree programs. The involvement of the military community in CCC degree programs offered at MCAS Cherry Point is expected to grow due to the known success of current programs, coupled with the anticipated increase of the overall military population at the station. (SP 2.1, 2.10)

CCC and the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center have had an approved memorandum of understanding (MOU) in place since 1999, and it appears to function well. This document is currently being revised to reflect as the extent of CCC’s expanded educational services and academic program offerings.

CCC does limited surveys of both current program students and graduate service members to ascertain their higher education needs. CCC needs to conduct a more comprehensive educational/academic needs assessment for the military student population on a more frequent basis. Students who were interviewed stated a strong desire to pursue further educational goals at the baccalaureate level. They were aware of both the University Connections and Comprehensive Articulation Agreements, which assure a maximum transfer of college credits
toward higher degree programs. Also, students requested that an additional natural science course—physics with laboratory—be offered at the Havelock Campus, as physics is a key prerequisite needed in several baccalaureate degree programs and travel to the main New Bern Campus was not always a viable option with their military daily work schedules. (SP 2.10)

**RECOMMENDATION:** CCC should improve data collection efforts among the student/graduate population to continuously improve its educational offerings.

**RECOMMENDATION:** CCC should offer a physics course with laboratory at the Havelock Campus to satisfy the natural science requirement in several baccalaureate degree programs.

Academic credits from other educational institutions or approved military education may be transferred into CCC degree programs. The college publicizes the procedures to adequately review any courses for credit transfer. The college is currently in the initial stages of the development of an Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) program, which utilizes a portfolio method to allow a student to ask for academic credit for prior documented workplace and life experience. Once adopted, this APL process will benefit the entire student population, by offering an academic credit incentive to go to college to earn a degree. (SP 2.8, 2.10)

The existing information technology management system utilized by CCC allows for the routine collection, utilization, and/or implementation of necessary undergraduate information for decision making. Continuous monitoring of program effectiveness and identification of student information is possible.

A review of graduate transcripts shows that external credit is being properly utilized and applied in the service members’ degree programs. Likewise, plans of study are being followed by program students and courses are being taken in the recommended sequence. (SP 2.8)

Course syllabi for all CCC courses offered at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center were reviewed; they follow a uniform format and include information pertinent to student success. All include course descriptions, expected learning outcomes, texts and instructional materials, course requirements, grading, course outlines and pre-requisites, and other pertinent information. Each includes the instructor’s name and contact information. These syllabi are typically distributed at the first class meetings. They are identical to syllabi for both the Havelock and main New Bern Campuses. From student interviews, it is suggested that these syllabi be posted on the college web site so students can purchase required textbooks at much cheaper costs before classes actually start. (SP 2.9)
Each CCC student at MCAS Cherry Point is assigned an academic advisor and the student is encouraged to meet periodically with the advisor to achieve academic progress. All students are assigned the on-station CCC as their academic advisor; but they are also assigned a regular faculty member from the main campus to further assist in academic advising.

One important assessment tool is the surveying of both program graduates and their employers to effect continuous improvement of educational needs and services. These very useful data are being collected and utilized in the College’s continuous improvement plan.

CCC has excellent Education Center computer laboratory facilities. From both student and faculty interviews, these computer laboratories are well utilized by the service members. With a growing military student population and a defined need for an additional computer laboratory facility to support academic assignments, CCC and the ESO need to identify appropriate resources and substantially enhance the current computer laboratory facilities at the Education Center. (SP 2.12)

Students currently have adequate tutoring resources – one-on-one with available CCC MCAS Cherry Point support staff or nearby Havelock Campus staff, plus the option to travel to the main New Bern Campus to a fully-staffed tutoring center. As new courses and degree programs are developed at the Havelock Campus, CCC may need to provide additional local tutoring resources to fully satisfy a growing service member student population.

Interviews with students and faculty members confirmed that students must use library resources to address course assignments or projects. Internet usage and proficiency is promoted and is a defined outcome in classroom-based courses. (SP 2.12, 2.13)

**Faculty**

During the recent one-year cycle of the 2008-2009 academic year, three full-time and five adjunct faculty taught all CCC courses offered at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center. Most adjunct faculty have taught extensively and prefer to teach at the Education Center, since that student population is perceived as older, more mature, and very committed to their educational goals. Resumes for all faculty were available during the visit and all faculty have the proper credentials and teaching experience to offer the courses to which they were assigned. Most of these faculty members also teach at the nearby Havelock Campus and a few also teach at the main New Bern Campus. Adjunct faculty are interviewed and selected by the dean of the Havelock Campus. All full-time and adjunct faculty teaching at the Education Center are evaluated each semester by the students and these assessments are utilized by college management in faculty counseling and future teaching assignments. Peer or management review
of adjunct faculty performance is conducted periodically. Service members have a very positive assessment of the faculty who support their educational programs. The adjunct faculty utilize time before and after posted classroom meeting times for their required office hours and the students interviewed are quite satisfied with the availability and quality of this extra support time. The CCC full-time faculty salaries are comparable to those at similar degree-granting regional institutions, but the adjunct faculty salaries are lower. (SP 2.17, 2.18, 2.21, 2.22)

Both full-time and adjunct faculty can use available professional development funds to remain professionally current in their fields. The past and current funding levels are sufficient for requested fiscal support and no faculty members interviewed had ever been denied funding for their professional growth and development. (SP 2.23, 2.25)

Assessment

All certificate, diploma, and associate degree programs offered by CCC have learning outcomes that are clearly articulated within course syllabi and other documents. The development of learning objectives and outcomes measures is the responsibility of the appropriate academic department chairs at the main CCC campus. These objectives and assessments are incorporated in course syllabi and are periodically reviewed and updated as required. (SP 2.26, 2.28, 2.29)

The formal policy of awarding letter grades is published in college literature and documents, including definitions of grades, grade values, and actions involving withdrawals, repeats, incompletes, and appeals. College management does conduct periodic reviews of grade distributions to determine the potential for the existence of grade inflation. Student assessment processes are in place to provide needed feedback on courses offered, and this important assessment tool appears to be functioning well for MCAS Cherry Point service members. (SP 2.27, 2.28, 2.29)
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Principle Three
Administration of the program includes academic and student services and demonstrates effective and reliable management of human, fiscal, technological, and learning resources.

Management
CCC’s course offerings, student recruitment, and associated student service support at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center are managed by a full-time onsite office manager at the Education Center, with one assistant. The office manager reports directly to the dean of the Havelock Campus. The dean and office manager have aggressively pursued an enhanced presence at the Education Center and the Havelock Campus during the past 18 months. This effort is greatly improving educational opportunities for MCAS Cherry Point service members. In addition to enhanced physical facilities at both campuses, two new degree programs have been developed at the Havelock Campus with an emphasis on the service member. First, in a collaborative effort with Southern Illinois University Carbondale, a new baccalaureate degree program in a 2+2 format in Aviation Management has been developed and is now offered. Similarly, after extensive interaction with regional, commercial, and federal constituencies, an Associate of Science in Manufacturing Composites has been developed to meet the growing aviation community workforce needs; this degree will be offered entirely at the Havelock Campus. The CCC MCAS Cherry Point office manager and Havelock dean are very dedicated and handle all aspects of educational program service member support on a daily basis. CCC is an equal opportunity employer, and there are no differences between the compensation, teaching loads, orientation, professional development, or administrative support between the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center and the other two CCC campus sites. (SP 3.1)

COMMENDATION: The dean of the Havelock Campus and the office manager are commended for exceptional insight and determination in improving the educational opportunities for military students and their dependents.

COMMENDATION: CCC and Southern Illinois University Carbondale are commended for their collaborative efforts in developing and offering a 2+2 baccalaureate degree program in Aviation Management.

COMMENDATION: CCC is commended for working with regional, commercial, and federal groups to develop and offer a new Manufacturing Composites Associate of Applied Science degree program to meet growing area aviation workforce needs.
All pertinent college and degree program materials/information for the faculty, support staff, and students are maintained by the main campus, but are readily available at both the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center and the Havelock Campus. Communications between the CCC MCAS Cherry Point staff and main campus management is maintained via frequent visits, as well as telephone and email contact. CCC representatives from all off-site campuses also meet periodically with the MCAS Cherry Point ESO and her staff to coordinate educational opportunities. (SP 3.2)

A clear and concise organization chart was provided in the self-study report and accurately reflects the management roles of the college personnel involved with the operation of the CCC MCAS Cherry Point facility. The CCC MCAS Cherry Point office manager and the Havelock Campus dean are well qualified for their positions, have excellent professional and personal skills, and are dedicated to the success of the degree programs. Together, they have energized the educational opportunities for the MCAS Cherry Point service members. The CCC students and permanent/adjunct faculty interviewed consider the office manager and dean to be effective, professional, and efficient. (SP 3.3-3.5)

The administration and student service functions for MCAS Cherry Point are supported by CCC’s management information system. All key functions, including registration, academic advising, financial aid, and course scheduling can be administered at MCAS Cherry Point Education Center to assist any student. Credit transfer, academic record keeping, graduation audits, and testing results are securely maintained, but readily available to the student at the Education Center. (SP 3.6-3.9)

CCC encourages the academic success of MCAS Cherry Point service members. Associate program graduates are encouraged to continue their education toward a specific baccalaureate degree through articulation and transfer pacts with all in-state public North Carolina universities. (SP 3.10)

The 44-credit general education requirement program offered by CCC appears to be effective, as assessed by the service members interviewed. The college has procedures to periodically review its management and administrative practices consistent with its strategic objectives and goals to maintain a continuous improvement academic policy. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been developed to clearly define the responsibilities and obligations of Craven Community College and the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center and is currently being revised. Assessment efforts are periodically employed to evaluate enrollments, course evaluations, course completions, remedial writing needs, and program graduation rates. A two-year academic calendar grid listing course offerings addresses the planning needs for the service member, but a
three-year grid would better assist them, as most military tour assignments are for three years. (SP 3.11-3.17)

The College markets its degree programs quite well, utilizing the Internet, pamphlets, brochures, and other print media to reach the MCAS Cherry Point service member population. The CCC web site promotes all of its academic programs, including those at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center.

All MCAS Cherry Point service member graduates are invited to attend the annual CCC graduation ceremony at the main New Bern Campus to recognize their academic achievements. In addition, the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center hosts a separate ceremony to reward program graduates.

Student Services

Craven Community College’s academic services and student support services, including policies and practices regarding admission, assessing and awarding credit for prior learning, and the transcription of credit are consistent with its mission and in accord with nationally recognized and accepted practices. (SP 3.18)

Counseling and general advising services are provided for the service member at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center by the well-trained CCC office manager and the Havelock Campus dean. Advisement is provided for both the degree-seeking and the non-degree student. All student records are kept onsite, but are also available electronically from the Havelock and New Bern Campuses. Course textbooks can be acquired from the main campus and by online purchase. A bookmobile visits the Havelock Campus at the start of each academic semester and is available to the service members for textbook purchase needs. Better advertising of these bookmobile visits to service members would minimize unnecessary travel by the service members to the main campus for bookstore usage. The office manager also assists in providing any necessary financial aid information, including tuition assistance, the GI Bill, Pell Grants, and other forms of financial aid. CCC allows all service members and their dependents to enjoy a special $50 per credit tuition rate. To further aid service members, CCC has eliminated all fees, except for the $16 technology fee. Although CCC does not eliminate student fees for dependents, it does charge them “in-state” tuition.

**COMMENDATION:** CCC is commended for eliminating most student fees and charging a reduced tuition rate for service members and dependents.
Service members can use the CCC onsite office manager, Havelock dean, as well as adjunct or full-time faculty, for counseling and advisement as he/she deems necessary. CCC also encourages the educational growth of the military member’s family, base civilians, and military retirees with all institutional services and facilities made available to this extended educational constituency.

The systematic assessment of faculty, courses, and programs is robust and is constantly evolving into a useful and continuous improvement tool. The collection, analysis, and use of this data are essential to maintaining quality, technically current, and relevant degree programs. (SP 3.19-3.23)

RESOURCES

**Principle Four**

*There is a sufficient reservoir of relevant instructional resources available to the instructor for teaching support and to the student for reference, research, and independent learning. Facilities and equipment are appropriate to support the programs and services offered. Financial resources are adequate and appropriately used to accomplish the institutional mission and to achieve program goals and objectives.*

**Instructional Resources**

MCAS Cherry Point students attending CCC have access to the Godwin Memorial Library on the New Bern campus, the joint use Havelock Public Library, and the Station Library. Library cards may be obtained in person or through email. Students and faculty who have a library card may also obtain a username and password for databases by stopping by, calling, or emailing the Godwin Library. The online catalog and databases for full-text articles can be accessed in the libraries or off-campus. With NC LIVE (North Carolina Libraries for Virtual Education), students and faculty can access an array of electronic information, including full-text articles from more than 16,000 newspapers, journals, magazines, and encyclopedias, and more than 25,000 online print and audio books. CCLINC (Community Colleges Libraries in North Carolina), a shared catalog with more than a million learning resources, allows students and faculty to search for resources. Online tutorials are available for NC LIVE and CCLINC. Vendor-produced tutorials are available for most other databases. If resources are not available, students may request books through interlibrary loan services. The Godwin Library has three zones for students to work and study. Silent, quiet, and collaborative zones allow students to study and research by themselves or in groups. Library instruction is available at the Godwin and...
Havelock libraries. While there are no weekend hours at the Godwin Library, there are limited Saturday hours at Havelock Public Library. (SP 4.2, 4.5-4.7, 4.11)

RECOMMENDATION: CCC should consider working toward making the Havelock Public Library/CCC Library more of a higher education support facility than a regional public, recreational library. This could include adding a reference librarian position and expanding the library holdings.

There is limited interaction among the Godwin Library, the joint use Havelock Public Library, and the MCAS Cherry Point Station Library. CCC students using the joint use Havelock Public Library should receive adequate and appropriate research services, as well as be fully aware of the Godwin Library services. The same applies to the Station Library. Handouts and instructional aids should provide detailed information about the Godwin Library services, including how to access the services and resources. (SP 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

RECOMMENDATION: The onsite representative should ensure that handouts and instructional aids are available at the joint use Havelock Public Library and Station Library for CCC students using those libraries.

Because computer competency is one of the general education outcomes for CCC, instructors require students to use computer technology in several curriculum classes. The English 111 course requires a research paper. A computer lab with 14 computers in the Godwin Library allows for research and instruction. Thirteen wireless laptops are available for check out in the library. Four research-only computers are also available. There are three Academic Skills Center computer labs on the New Bern campus. Students may use the 33 computers available at the Station Library, which is open more than 80 hours per week. (SP 4.8, 4.9, 4.11)

Classrooms at MCAS Cherry Point have access to data projectors, laptops, overhead projectors, audio-visual equipment, and TV/DVD/VCR capabilities. (SP 4.10)

Physical Resources

The MCAS Cherry Point Education Center has excellent classroom space, computer laboratory, language laboratory, and good library facilities to support the degree programs offered by the College. CCC has utilized these physical resources well to offer both evening courses and, especially, novel noontime courses each weekday, which provide the service members with more course options for addressing their academic degree needs. These physical resources provide a comfortable physical environment to promote learning and educational growth, as well as permitting the offering of additional courses and degree programs to the military student.
population. Advising facilities are adequate to support private, uninterrupted sessions. The technology infrastructure is being continually updated to support the educational programs. The nearby Havelock Campus also has excellent classroom space, plus extensive laboratory space. Of course, service members may always travel to the main New Bern Campus to take any course or laboratory offering for any of the extensive certificate, diploma, or associate degree programs offered by CCC. (SP 4.12-4.14)

Financial Resources

CCC’s financial practices, records, fiscal services, and reports demonstrate fiscal viability and a dedication to support this educational program. The CCC budget to support the MCAS Cherry Point program appears to be adequate for maintaining the current quality level of education and counseling. With their ambitious educational expansion plans, CCC management appears to be firmly committed to meeting the educational needs of its MCAS Cherry Point service member population and is dedicating the necessary fiscal and personnel support to continue this academic commitment.

Any course offered at any CCC campus must have a minimum of 13 paying students to make the course financially viable. Almost all of the advertised courses in each of the fall, spring, and summer semesters at the Education Center do run, and the integrity of the two-year course planning grid is upheld. If student enrollment is below the required threshold number, the faculty may opt to teach the course anyway with a pro-rated stipend, as the faculty are very committed to their military students. The students can also enroll at either the Havelock or main New Bern Campus. (SP 4.15-4.19)
PROGRAM EVALUATION

Principle Five
Continuous and systematic program evaluation stimulates program improvement, enhances quality and increases the likelihood of the achievement of program mission and objectives.

The MIVER team reviewed the evaluation processes used by CCC to assess the academic programs it offers at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center and nearby Havelock Campus, as well as the academic and support services provided to the student and faculty population. It appears that a number of well recognized assessment tools and processes have been established, and they are routinely utilized to assure the continuous and systematic improvement of educational programs and services. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has continuously accredited CCC, most recently in the 2007-2008 academic year. The MCAS Cherry Point and Havelock Campuses were included under this college-wide review. College-mandated academic program reviews are periodically scheduled. College literature cites appropriate diverse, well structured external program and discipline review committees to provide necessary guidance and oversight of all degree programs. CCC has an effective continuous improvement plan in place and operating to assure all degree and certificate programs are current and relevant. (SP 5.1-5.4)

COMMENDATION: CCC is commended for the development, application, and implementation of an excellent general education assessment plan.

The faculty performance review process at CCC, as documented in the College’s literature, includes peer, self, and student evaluations. All faculty are evaluated by the students each semester at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center. This assessment information is also used to continuously improve the academic programs CCC offers. (SP 5.5)

Current online course availability is growing, and CCC management has committed to the expansion of online course offerings to better address the educational needs of the College’s service member student population. CCC has the appropriate assessment tools in place to evaluate distance education course offerings. (SP 5.6-5.7)
Summary of Craven Community College
Commendations and Recommendations

COMMENDATIONS

- The dean of the Havelock Campus and the office manager are commended for exceptional insight and determination in improving the educational opportunities for military students and their dependents.
- CCC and Southern Illinois University Carbondale are commended for their collaborative efforts in developing and offering a 2+2 baccalaureate degree program in Aviation Management.
- CCC is commended for working with regional, commercial, and federal groups to develop and offer a new Manufacturing Composites Associate of Applied Science degree program to meet growing area aviation workforce needs.
- CCC is commended for eliminating most student fees and charging a reduced tuition rate for service members and dependents.
- CCC is commended for the development, application, and implementation of an excellent general education assessment plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- CCC should assist the ESO and Education Center staff in the development and implementation of periodic needs assessment surveys.
- CCC should improve data collection efforts among the student/graduate population to continuously improve its educational offerings.
- CCC should offer a physics course with laboratory at the Havelock Campus to satisfy the natural science requirement in several baccalaureate degree programs.
- CCC should consider working toward making the Havelock Public Library/CCC Library more of a higher education support facility than a regional public, recreational library. This could include adding a reference librarian position and expanding the library holdings.
- The onsite representative should ensure that handouts and instructional aids are available at the joint use Havelock Public Library and Station Library for CCC students using those libraries.
INTRODUCTION

Since June 1988, Park University has been offering educational opportunities to service members at MCAS Cherry Point. The degree programs offered are a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Administration, Management, Management/ Accounting, Management/Computer Information Systems, Management/Finance, Management/Human Resources, Management/Logistics and Social Psychology. The courses are offered in an eight-week format. This scheduling helps service members complete their degrees in a timely fashion.

MISSION

**Principle One**

The institution providing voluntary education programs on a military installation has an educational mission statement that reflects sound adult education philosophy and goals and is clearly compatible with the installation voluntary education program mission statement and objectives.

Park University describes its mission as follows, “The mission of Park University, an entrepreneurial institution of learning, is to provide access to academic excellence, which will prepare students to think critically, communicate effectively and engage in lifelong learning while serving a global community.”

Park University states the mission of the School for Extended Learning is to provide “quality, multifaceted and cost-competitive learning experiences for non-traditional students, to enable study in and impact upon the communities in which they live and work.” With 37 campus centers located on military installations in 21 states, Park’s SEL is one of the largest providers of education on military installations. SEL’s four learning course delivery models are compatible with service members’ needs: 1) online courses, 2) blended courses, 3) face-to-face with eCompanion augmentations, and 4) the MARE program which offers courses to Marines and Sailors aboard ship. These four models are aligned with the installation’s mission to provide educational opportunities that will assist the service members, their dependents, and civilian base
employees in career advancement and lifelong learning opportunities, as well as contributing to the community.

Park engages in periodic reviews of its vision, mission, and core values. It has developed a new strategic plan called *Exploration and Transformations 2012: Access to Excellence*. The plan’s goals are to, “1) Enhance the Image and Identity of Park University, 2) Ensure Academic Excellence, 3) Ensure Excellence in Student Services, and 4) Ensure that Park will function as One University.”

The University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. (SP 1.1-1.5)

**EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Principle Two**

*Education programs and services provided on military installations maintain the high quality required by regionally accredited institutions, using qualified and dedicated faculty supported by professional development programs and appropriate infrastructure. Assessment of student learning is based on the achievement of comprehensive and specific learning outcomes.*

**Instruction**

The Campus Center director collaborates with the ESO on a regular basis. Recently, a needs assessment survey was conducted. The results of this assessment will provide insight into what additional courses or degree programs would benefit the service members. Presently, the programs offered at this site provide career advancement for military, civilian and dependent students.

The classes are offered in an eight-week format, and students may register for six credit hours, which is considered full-time. This accelerated format helps service members complete their degree programs in a timely fashion.

The admission’s process includes reviews of the students’ previous college credit and military training. Each student receives a degree audit. This audit is available through the Park University portal OPEN.
Any student needing a tutorial in writing may access CDL200 Virtual Student Services Center and Online Writing Lab. Students can also get help by sending an email to help@park.edu. All of these services are available 24/7. The undergraduate degree programs require students to complete 27 hours of general education courses, with at least nine hours in each of the following areas: humanities, natural and applied sciences, and social sciences. Park states, “Having students take courses outside of the major core . . . allows students to explore other areas and topics. This will also allow students to gain new perspectives in their degree areas.”

During an interview with faculty members, the MIVER team learned that some students have been placed in courses without having completed the prerequisites for the course. When this occurs, the faculty find they have to differentiate instruction and provide individual tutoring, which can result in not being able to offer in-depth instruction to the students who are prepared for the course. (SP 2.3)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Students enrolling at Park University Cherry Point should be advised to take the prerequisite course by the third semester in a face-to-face or online format.

**Faculty**

The resumes of the Park faculty at Cherry Point were up-to-date and available for review. An academic director is onsite. This is an adjunct faculty member who assists the onsite director with course scheduling, the student review process, professional development activities and any other concerns that need addressing at the installation. Park University has created a formal model of professional development activities for full- and part-time faculty. All faculty teaching online must take a training course prior to teaching an online course. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is charged with the responsibility of promoting innovative methods of curriculum delivery, supporting scholarly research, and developing best practice modules for faculty. Upon completion of training, faculty may seek a certificate of completion. (SP 2.17)

**COMMENDATION:** Park University is commended for recognizing the importance of continued professional development, regardless of location.
Assessment

Park University has a well-developed plan for assessing student learning. The University has identified objectives and courses that will be assessed, has selected assignments, and has actually collected data. The process involves a tri-modal approach, one that ensures implementation in all three modes of class instruction (face-to-face, online, and blended). Academic departments and committees develop learning objectives, learning outcomes assessment, and rubrics. Syllabi for all courses are required to include these items, and faculty are required to implement them in their courses. Other faculty review the objectives/outcomes assessment/rubric use for appropriate sequencing.

Park University has put into place a program review for all programs (reviewing faculty credentials, course materials, enrollment, grade distributions and assessment data) on a five-year cycle. Assessment is done every semester. The program review and assessment plans were adopted for all Park University campuses. (SP 2.26-2.29)

**COMMENDATION:** Park University is commended for its well-planned assessment program.

A review of the installation’s grade distribution report suggests that the Campus Center director, the academic director, and the regional director review the alignment of core assessments and grading rubrics with the onsite faculty. (SP 2.27)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Education Center grade reports should be reviewed to determine if grade inflation is an issue and, if so, to address it, as necessary.

**PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

**Principle Three**

*Administration of the program includes academic and student services and demonstrates effective and reliable management of human, fiscal, technological, and learning resources.*

Management

The Park University program appears to run smoothly and to be well-managed. The office personnel are committed to serving the service member. The Cherry Point Campus Center director is a graduate of Park University. She works in a professional manner to support the
The integrity of the academic program and to provide the necessary support to help service members complete their degrees. The students interviewed gave high marks to the Campus Center director and her staff. The Campus Center director and academic director report to the regional director, Professional development is provided onsite, as well as at the main campus. A webinar training program was initiated this year. This format was successful and will be repeated. (SP 3.1-3.5)

The MIVER team noted the cooperation between the institution and the Education Center. This was determined through the recent assessment survey and the revised MOU initiative.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Park University Campus Center director should assist the ESO in her development and implementation of periodic needs assessment surveys.

Student Services

Student services offered at MCAS Cherry Point are professional, well organized, and well administered. A student service survey is conducted to determine the scheduling of classes, course offerings, or new program offerings. The common calendar allows service members to register for face-to-face, as well as online classes. Education is encouraged on base through various media. The Campus Center director attends education fairs, advertises in base newspapers, provides information for base marquee signs and radio spots, posts flyers and posters and provides academic counseling to service members. The collaboration and cooperation of the academic institutions at the Education Center allow students to have access to an education that will serve their professional and career goals.

A task force was assigned to review policies and procedures that govern Park University and the satellite campuses. The task force recommended that all policies and procedures be the same for all students at all campuses. (SP 3.18)

**COMMENDATION:** Park University is commended for making academic policies and procedures consistent across all campuses.

Park University has a large proportion of students choosing to do online courses. In order to ensure continuity of content, regardless of delivery, all courses must include the following: the standard core learning outcomes, required texts, and core assessments. In addition, the face-to-face courses have access to eCompanion and faculty must use the Dropbox and Gradebook tool. An annual observation is conducted by the academic directors and forwarded to the program coordinator for review. (SP 3.13)
As the online student population has risen in significant proportions, faculty have noted occasional indications of possible behavior problems in student postings for their online courses. Consequently, Park has established a Behavioral Intervention Team Task Force to provide a collaborative, cross-functional approach to assessing and responding to individuals who might pose a threat to themselves or others. This team is facilitated by the dean of Student Life with representation from members of the Park University community. Counselors who work with online students have been certified to counsel in this arena. (SP 3.20)

**COMMENDATION:** Park University is commended for proactively establishing a Behavioral Intervention Team.

**RESOURCES**

**Principle Four**

*There is sufficient reservoir of relevant instructional resources available to the instructor for the teaching support and to the student for reference, research, and independent learning. Facilities and equipment are appropriate to support the programs and services offered. Financial resources are adequate and appropriately used to accomplish the institutional mission and to achieve program goals and objectives.*

**Instructional Resources**

Students attending Park University at MCAS Cherry Point have access to the McAfee Memorial Library via Internet, as well as the Station Library. The McAfee Library’s collection includes nearly 138,000 volumes, nearly 800 videos, and 70,000 microforms. The library subscribes to a variety of online databases for full-text journal and newspaper articles to support the programs taught at MCAS Cherry Point. When materials are not available, students may use the McAfee Library’s interlibrary loan service. Students may contact the distance learning librarian via email or a toll-free telephone number for assistance during the hours posted on the library’s web site. However, there are no tutorials to ensure distance learning students know how to use the catalog and databases. Developing tutorials for searching the catalog and databases would make it easier for distance students to use the library. (SP 4.2, 4.5–4.7, 4.11)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The McAfee Memorial Library should provide online instructional tutorials and training aids to assist students and faculty in using the resources offered.
The relationship between the McAfee Memorial Library and the MCAS Cherry Point Station Library is limited. While the McAfee Memorial Library is available for Park University students and faculty, the Station Library can provide limited additional support. The installation reference librarian is available for orientations and can provide reference support to students and faculty. Because students receive no information concerning the McAfee Memorial Library resources from the onsite representative, handouts and training aids from the McAfee Memorial Library should be made available at the Station Library. (SP 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The onsite Park University representative should ensure that handouts and instructional aids are available at the Station Library for Park University students using the Station Library.

Park University faculty encourage their students to use resources and technology as part of the academic experience. A computer lab, located in the Education Center and equipped with 16 computers, is available for Park University students to use. The Education Center is wireless. Students attending Park University may also use the 33 computers available at the Station Library, which is open more than 80 hours per week. (SP 4.8, 4.9, 4.11)

Classrooms at MCAS Cherry Point have access to data projectors, laptops, overhead projectors, audio-visual equipment, and TV/DVD/VCR capabilities. Park University also has laptops for instructional purposes. (SP 4.10)

**Physical Resources**

Administrative and advisement space is excellent, allowing for performance of administrative and advisement operations in an effective and efficient manner. However, while classroom space is adequate, competition with military and civilian training programs and the necessity to provide flexible course scheduling in order to meet service member students’ military duty schedules has limited the availability of classroom space. The combination of the VOLED and the military/civilian education programs could be outgrowing the space available in the current building. (SP 4.12-4.14)

**Financial Resources**

Like the other extended campuses of Park University, MCAS Cherry Point has its own individual budget geared to its financial requirements. Park University returns three percent of the gross tuition income from the previous year at Cherry Point to be used for library expenditures.
Tuition for Park military installation campuses has recently risen (effective 1 October 2009) from $183/credit hour to $192/credit hour (five percent); however, that figure is still well below the general campus rate of $298/credit hour.

Revenue from Park’s military installation campuses supports both administrative staff and academic faculty on site and such home campus administrative operations as the Registrar’s Office, Accounting, Student Financial Services, and other main campus services essential for operation of the extended campus. (SP 4.15-4.19)

PROGRAM EVALUATION

**Principle Five**

*Continuous and systematic program evaluation stimulates program improvement, enhances quality and increases the likelihood of the achievement of program mission and objectives.*

Academic and student services programs are evaluated each semester. Faculty receive an annual performance review. The performance review includes the following: the student opinion survey, evaluation of the class observation by the academic director, instructor’s feedback of observation, copies of syllabus and tests. The program coordinator reviews the packet to determine if the course objectives are met. The instructor is approved, disapproved, or given contingent approval. Any faculty members receiving contingent approval are given improvement criteria and mentoring. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate the performance of the Campus Center twice a year. (SP 5.2-5.5)
Summary of Park University
Commendations and Recommendations

COMMENDATIONS

- Park University is commended for recognizing the importance of continued professional development, regardless of location.
- Park University is commended for its well-planned assessment program.
- Park University is commended for making academic policies and procedures consistent across all campuses.
- Park University is commended for proactively establishing a Behavioral Intervention Team.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Students enrolling at Park University Cherry Point should be advised to take the prerequisite course by the third semester in a face-to-face or online format.
- The Education Center grade reports should be reviewed to determine if grade inflation is an issue and, if so, to address it, as necessary.
- The Park University Campus Center director should assist the ESO in her development and implementation of periodic needs assessment surveys.
- The McAfee Memorial Library should provide online instructional tutorials and training aids to assist students and faculty in using the resources offered.
- The onsite Park University representative should ensure that handouts and instructional aids are available at the Station Library for Park University students using the Station Library.
Institution Report
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

INTRODUCTION

Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) has had a long-standing program at Cherry Point, beginning with courses in the B.S. in Aviation Management being offered in 1976. In 1985, the degree program in Electronics Management was added. There are currently 6.5 full-time equivalent students in the former program, 14.25 in the latter.

SIUC currently occupies a small space in the Education Center, housing a clerical staff member and a program advisor. It has two dedicated classrooms, in which it offers courses in its degree programs in an alternate-weekend format. The program advisor is available for individual help on weekends.

In preparation for the site visit, SIUC, like the installation and the other institutions at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center, submitted a self-study based on the MIVER template of self-study questions and other requirements. However, the SIUC document was inadequate and insufficient for MIVER pre-site visit preparation purposes. Many of the responses did not include the requested data and descriptive and analytic narrative. As a result, the MIVER team was unable to carry out the necessary pre-visit review and analysis of the SIUC programs and academic and administrative policies and practices.

In response to both email and in-person requests, SIUC provided some additional data and narrative material. For example, a signed and dated memorandum of understanding was produced, but not until the second day of the visit. This process of late and piecemeal delivery of information essential for both advance preparation for the visit and onsite review, analysis, and discussion of SIUC programs hindered and prolonged a thorough review of the program.

In the future, SIUC administration should take care to ensure that appropriate staff prepares a thorough and acceptable MIVER report, including all attachments, in a timely fashion.
MISSION

**Principle One**

The institution providing voluntary education programs on a military installation has an educational mission statement that reflects sound adult education philosophy and goals and is clearly compatible with the installation voluntary education program mission statement and objectives.

The mission statement of Southern Illinois University Carbondale focuses on the University’s dedication to “quality academic endeavors in teaching and research, to supportive programming for student needs and development, to effective social and economic initiatives in community, regional, and statewide contexts, and to affirmative action and equal opportunity.” The University “actively promotes the intellectual and social benefits of cultural pluralism [and] encourages the participation of nontraditional groups.” It seeks “to meet [the] educational, vocational, social, and personal needs of its diverse population of students and [to help] them fully realize their potential.” SIUC is also “[c]ommitted to the concept that research and creative activity are inherently valuable,” and “it continues a long tradition of service to its community and region.” Finally, the “University seeks to help solve social, economic, educational, scientific, and technological problems.”

While the mission statement does not make specific reference to the military programs that SIUC conducts at several sites, those programs are clearly outgrowths of the statement’s references to “student needs and development,” to “the intellectual and social benefits of cultural pluralism,” to “the participation of nontraditional groups,” and to helping “its diverse population of students . . . fully realize their potential.” These concepts are clearly values implicit and explicit in the military voluntary education programs. They are also consistent with the principles that should govern such programs. (SP 1.1-1.2)

Since all the programs at Cherry Point are governed by the main campus, through the University’s Off-Campus Academic Programs (OCAP) office, the program planning at the Cherry Point site is consistent with that on the main campus. (SP 1.3) The mission statement appears in the University’s catalog; it was last revised in 2003. (SP 1.4-1.5)
EDUCATION PROGRAM

Principle Two

_Education programs and services provided on military installations maintain the high quality required by regionally accredited institutions, using qualified and dedicated faculty supported by professional development programs and appropriate infrastructure. Assessment of student learning is based on the achievement of comprehensive and specific learning outcomes._

Instruction

The upper-division programs at the MCAS Cherry Point site were both begun as a result of a needs assessment. (SP 2.4) These programs require completion of a broad-based general education program. Students are regularly referred to Craven Community College (CCC) to complete these requirements before they are allowed into the SIUC programs. (SP 2.3, 2.6, 2.10) Review of the courses in the program indicates that the students are required to undertake research and that instructors are aware of the requisite body of knowledge, although fewer instructors have terminal degrees than is optimal and all serve on an adjunct basis. (SP 2.7)

The advisement process at SIUC is well-established, with a thorough advisement manual governing that process. The manual is being revised, with a new edition due out in January, 2010. Each student has a SOCMAR contract, which is updated at the end of each semester. (SP 2.8) Since the program is small, with only 29 student majors currently in the two programs, students should have individual attention. Interviews with students indicate high satisfaction with their advisement. (SP 2.9) Students obtain transfer sheets from either the SIUC office at Cherry Point or through the appropriate web site. SIUC also publishes a _Military Programs Supplement to the Undergraduate Program_ that covers curricular matters clearly and concisely. (SP 2.10-2.11)

Students must use computers to do research for and prepare papers in many courses. Faculty increasingly uses Blackboard as an instructional mode. Again, students report satisfaction with instruction in and help with computer use. (SP 2.12) Students have access to online research resources from the Morris Library and other sources, including faculty journal subscriptions and interlibrary loan. (SP 2.13)

Both the department chair on the main campus and at the OCAP office have access to online courses, and syllabi and requirements are the same as those in classroom courses. (SP 2.14) Although the online courses are relatively new to SIUC, the institution appears to be proceeding to institute both online and “hybrid” courses with academic responsibility and adequate technical
support. SIUC is currently preparing a training manual for faculty teaching online courses. At present, the OCAP web site has several aids for faculty using Blackboard. (SP 2.15-2.16)

Faculty

Faculty vitae and interviews indicate that they have the appropriate skills and attitudes to teach effectively in these programs. (SP 2.17) Examination of faculty credentials leads to the conclusion that faculty are hired as much for their practical experience as for their academic credentials. Given the special needs of these programs, that balance seems appropriate. (SP 2.18, 2.21) Most faculty in the program are adjunct; however, they often teach at various campuses for SIUC, as well as for other institutions. (SP 2.19) From materials submitted and interviews with faculty, it is unclear whether they have significant input into or impact on the relevant programs, which are largely governed by the main campus. (SP 2.20) Professional development opportunity is minimal but adequate and is focused primarily upon teaching techniques rather than academic enhancement. (SP 2.23)

SIUC’s system of mentorships for new faculty is designed to help new faculty succeed in the system, whether by classroom or online delivery mode. In interviews, faculty indicated mild approval of the system. (SP 2.23)

Assessment

Examination of catalog materials and course syllabi indicates that SIUC students at MCAS Cherry Point are held to the same assessment standards as those at the main campus. Grading standards are clearly stated in the Military Programs Supplement. Grade inflation is monitored at the main campus. (SP 2.27) Faculty use a variety of instruments to determine whether students have met the course’s objectives and these are reviewed by the appropriate department on the main campus. While the objectives are not always clearly formulated, they are for the most part present and stated on the course material. (SP 2.26, 2.28) Assessment criteria and methods are determined at the main campus and faculty at MCAS Cherry Point must submit syllabi that incorporate these principles. (SP 2.29)
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Principle Three
Administration of the program includes academic and student services and demonstrates effective and reliable management of human, fiscal, technological, and learning resources.

Management

As the two staff members at the installation are State of Illinois civil service employees, they are governed by the same rules and salary rates as those on the main campus. (SP 3.1) This limitation has led to an admitted difficulty in keeping experienced advisors working at the site. A roster of current faculty is kept at the site, including updated vitae, and was inspected during the MIVER visit. (SP 3.2)

Through the rejuvenation of the Education Advisory Council (EAC), the SIUC staff are included in the networking and information sharing at MCAS Cherry Point. (SP 3.3, 3.15) There is no onsite administrator at the Cherry Point site; only the program advisor and a secretary are present on a regular basis. The program advisor has a B.A., but only one year of experience in this position. (SP 3.4, 3.5, 3.10) To date, the program advisor has attended several training opportunities. (SP 3.6)

SIUC does provide adequate administrative and technological support to the onsite personnel through its OCAP office. Policies are established at the main campus and promulgated via the Military Programs Supplement to the Undergraduate Catalogue and the Policies and Procedures for Military Programs documents. (SP 3.8-3.9)

SIUC and Craven Community College are finalizing a 2+2 articulation agreement under which CCC graduates may more readily make the transition into the B.S. in Aviation Management program at SIUC. The agreement should enhance SIUC’s outreach to the civilian community. It represents the kind of institutional cooperation that ideally takes place on a military installation.

COMMENDATION: SIUC is commended for its collaborative efforts with Craven Community College in developing and offering a 2+2 baccalaureate program in Aviation Management at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center.

A standing committee, chaired by the associate provost and including academic deans, program directors, the director of Military Programs, and the director of Admissions, oversees the program. The committee reports to the provost and vice chancellor, who reviews procedures in
Classes in both the major programs offered at MCAS Cherry Point are scheduled on an alternate-weekend basis. This approach allows service members to schedule their classes at usually available times and to finish their undergraduate work in a reasonable period. It also helps to avoid scheduling and classroom conflicts with other institutions at the installation. Students unanimously praised this unusual system, claiming that, absent this approach, they would not have been able to obtain the desired degree. (SP 3.15-3.16)

**COMMENDATION:** SIUC is commended for offering its degree programs at MCAS Cherry Point in an alternate weekend format that allows service members to complete their degrees in a timely and professionally responsible fashion.

As noted above, there is no onsite director for SIUC at MCAS Cherry Point. The program advisor, SIUC faculty, ESO, and command structure are committed to encouraging and enhancing voluntary education among service members. (SP 3.15) However, in interviews conducted during the MIVER visit, SIUC students complained that the SIUC programs were inadequately advertised, relying too heavily on word of mouth to alert service members to their existence and attractiveness. They pointed out that, at a Marine Corps Air Station, the two degrees offered by SIUC were uniquely appropriate and should be enrolling many more students. As the installation is currently doing a commendable job in advertising educational opportunities, SIUC should be able to take advantage of this strength to advertise its own programs more fully.

**RECOMMENDATION:** SIUC should extend its advertising and marketing efforts at MCAS Cherry Point to attract more students to its degree programs.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed in 1999, currently exists between MCAS Cherry Point and SIUC. (SP 3.18) During the MIVER visit, SIUC stated that it will wait until the universal MOU is completed before negotiating a new MOU with MCAS Cherry Point.

**Student Services**

Students in SIUC programs at MCAS Cherry Point are subject to the same admission, testing, registration, and graduation policies as those on the main campus. (SP 3.18)
The SIUC undergraduate catalog states policies on CLEP and DANTES scores, which are accepted at ACE-recommended levels. That document also contains clear statements on the validation of prior credit transfer, nontraditional and military service, and, in its Military Program Supplement, work experience. (SP 3.19)

As noted above, a full-time program advisor is situated at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center. Student interviews indicated satisfaction with her availability and helpfulness. Students may also obtain help from OCAP. (SP 3.20) Students are advised about tuition assistance (TA), VA, and Pell benefits upon application and registration in the SIUC program. Students needing additional advice are referred to the off-campus financial aid advisor. (SP 3.22)

Students usually purchase textbooks online. Textbook requirements are published on the SIUC Cherry Point web site; the course syllabi, containing text requirements, are distributed on the last weekend of the previous course. Students reported encountering no problems with textbook identification and purchase. (SP 3.21)

In addition to participating in the excellent installation graduation ceremony, graduates of SIUC are invited to another ceremony and a reception. Students have also travelled to the main campus for ceremonies. (SP 3.23)

RESOURCES

Principle Four
There is a sufficient reservoir of relevant instructional resources available to the instructor for teaching support and to the student for reference, research, and independent learning. Facilities and equipment are appropriate to support the programs and services offered. Financial resources are adequate and appropriately used to accomplish the institutional mission and to achieve program goals and objectives.

Instructional Resources

The MIVER site visit indicated that SIUC cooperates with other institutions and the installation in responsibility for instructional resources. (SP 4.1) Interviews with students and faculty showed a high degree of satisfaction with the facilities provided. As SIUC moves toward more hybrid and purely e-learning courses, it will likely need to provide further training in that format. (SP 4.2)
Students attending Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) at MCAS Cherry Point have access to the Station Library and the Morris Library resources via the Internet. Students are provided with information from the onsite representative including information from the distance learning librarian to explain resources and services offered from the Morris Library. Additionally, they can contact the distance learning librarian for research assistance using the online chat reference service or a toll-free phone number during the hours posted on the library’s web site. There are several online tutorials available for students and faculty to assist with library research. These resources include the online catalog for books and online databases with many full-text databases. If resources are not available, materials can be sent through interlibrary loan. Books are sent via two-day courier and articles can be sent via email. Students may also request books through the interlibrary loan services of the Station Library and/or the local public libraries. (SP 4.2, 4.5-4.7, 4.11)

The relationship between the Morris Library and the Station Library at MCAS Cherry Point is limited. While the Morris Library is available for SIUC students and faculty, the Station Library can provide limited additional support whenever possible. The installation reference librarian is available for orientations and can provide reference support to students and faculty. Plans are underway for the Station Library director to receive a password so that access is available to the Morris Library databases and to assist students using the Station Library. Although students receive handouts concerning library resources from the onsite representative, handouts and instructional aids from the Morris Library should be made available at the Station Library. (SP 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

**RECOMMENDATION:** The onsite SIUC representative should ensure handouts and instructional aids are available at the Station Library for SIUC students using the Station Library.

Instructors orient students in the use of computer technology through required reports and presentations. The independent studies instructors have the primary responsibility for instructing students on use of library resources, including how to log on to the Morris Library site and access its resources. SIUC does not provide a computer resource center for its students. Students attending SIUC may use the 33 computers available at the Station Library, which is open more than 80 hours per week. (SP 4.8, 4.9, 4.11)

While the provision of computer technology to support the degree programs remains only implicit in the SIUC/MCAS Cherry Point MOU, the site visit and interviews confirmed that current computer technology is adequate, given the subsequent installation of wireless capability in the Education Center. (SP 4.8, 4.9) Inspection of the classrooms and student/faculty interviews also confirmed that necessary instructional technology was available and well maintained.
Classrooms at MCAS Cherry Point have access to data projectors, laptops, overhead projectors, audio-visual equipment, and TV/DVD/VCR capabilities. (SP 4.10) Students reported no difficulty in accessing instructional support resources. (SP 4.11)

Physical Resources

Except for occasional problems with heating, the classrooms, office, and common areas for SIUC students are comfortable, clean, and well-lit and ventilated. SIUC’s alternate weekend schedule and the up-to-date classroom facilities at the MCAS Education Center, in addition to the conversion to Blackboard, have resulted in adequate physical instructional resources, for both e-learning and face-to-face classes, as stipulated in the current MOU. (SP 4.12-4.14)

Financial Resources

Resources are generated entirely through tuition. SIUC charges service members $225 per semester hour and fees (application, transcript, and graduation). (SP 4.19) Allocation is appropriate, being entirely dedicated to salaries for faculty and staff and expenditures for indirect services supplied by the installation. (SP 4.15) While SIUC has had a financially strong program for some years at MCAS Cherry Point, it is currently struggling somewhat. The many recent deployments, along with financial difficulties in Illinois, have worked a hardship upon the program at this site, though it is still financially viable, with a slightly better than 1:1 ratio of revenues to expenditures. (SP 4.16) As noted above, SIUC has developed a 2+2 articulation with Craven Community College, which may help increase enrollments in these programs. The current MOU stipulates that SIUC provide requested information to the ESO. (SP 4.18)

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Principle Five

Continuous and systematic program evaluation stimulates program improvement, enhances quality and increases the likelihood of the achievement of program mission and objectives.

The last accreditation visit to the main campus occurred on 12-14 April 1999. The MCAS Cherry Point site was not included in that visit. SIUC states that the programs offered at this site are the same as those on campus. Although the next visit was scheduled for this year, SIUC has been granted an extension by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. (SP 5.1-5.2) The response to the MIVER questions claims that the off-campus programs are “one of the most reviewed programs on campus.”
SIUC is in the planning stage of assessing student learning outcomes. It has identified learning objectives and selected courses for assessing how well students have met those objectives. Initially, analysis will focus on the student’s ability to communicate orally and in writing. Rubrics have been developed on the main campus but need local input in their design and implementation. In general, these assessment programs need to be applied and implemented at MCAS Cherry Point as soon as practicable. (SP 5.4)

SIUC employs both student and faculty end-of-course evaluations and states that it receives candid and valuable feedback on both. (SP 5.5) From the SIUC report and the onsite visit, it is not clear that there exists a needs assessment process to improve the programs at MCAS Cherry Point. However, such a process is crucial in program planning and evaluation.

**RECOMMENDATION:** SIUC should assist the MCAS Cherry Point ESO with the development and implementation of periodic needs assessment surveys.
Summary of Southern Illinois University Carbondale Commendations and Recommendations

COMMENDATIONS

- SIUC is commended for its collaborative efforts with Craven Community College in developing and offering a 2+2 baccalaureate program in Aviation Management at the MCAS Cherry Point Education Center.
- SIUC is commended for offering its degree programs at MCAS Cherry Point in an alternate weekend format that allows service members to complete their degrees in a timely and professionally responsible fashion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- SIUC should extend its advertising and marketing efforts at MCAS Cherry Point to attract more students to its degree programs.
- The onsite SIUC representative should ensure handouts and instructional aids are available at the Station Library for SIUC students using the Station Library.
- SIUC should assist the MCAS Cherry Point ESO with the development and implementation of periodic needs assessment surveys.