Community College of Aurora

Monitoring Report

on the

Assessment of Student Learning

Submitted to

The Higher Learning Commission

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Section One

I. Purpose of the report

This report responds to the request of the 2003 Higher Learning Commission’s (HLC) evaluation team that the Community College of Aurora (CCA) submit a monitoring report in 2006 to describe the improvements the college has made in its assessment of student learning. The evaluation team indicated that the report should describe CCA’s progress in meeting the following goals:

- All programs must have an assessment plan in place that uses multiple measures, including at least one direct measure of assessment of student learning.

- All programs must have begun gathering data using multiple measures, including at least one direct measure.

- At least 75 percent of the programs must be able to identify specific decisions that were the direct result of data obtained from the multiple measures.

- At least 60 percent of the programs must be able to demonstrate at least two years of data gathering and decision-making.

- There must be a clear link between assessment of student learning and the overall planning process.

- There must be evidence that students have become active participants in the assessment process as demonstrated by committee minutes.

- There must be evidence of continued professional development to involve adjunct faculty in the assessment process.

The evaluation team also made written observations about CCA’s assessment efforts and responded to the college’s questions about assessment. Among the team’s observations was that the college had relied heavily on indirect measures of student learning (course evaluations, for example) and needed to use more direct measures. In response to a question about documenting student achievement, the team said that the college should consider assessing student learning in units larger than individual courses, but smaller than formal degree
programs. The college’s assessment of student learning in clusters of courses follows this advice and goes beyond what the evaluation team required.

This report describes how CCA has met the challenge to improve assessment of student learning and has made assessment the college’s number one strategic goal, even in a period of declining revenues. The faculty assessment committee developed an assessment plan that addressed the seven areas highlighted by the evaluation team. The plan built on the college’s existing lifelong skills, acknowledged the importance of assessing occupational skills, and emphasized that assessment is primarily about student learning.

Programs and clusters then developed their own annual plans based on the college plan and reported their progress to the committee in a format that followed the HLC requirements. In response to these reports, the committee provided feedback to program and cluster leaders about their successes and the areas needing improvement. The committee took a proactive approach, providing training for faculty members and establishing a structured process.

This report also provides a means for the college’s faculty, staff, and students to examine systematically their accomplishments with assessment over the past three years, to consider what challenges remain, and to use these insights to plan for the future.

II. Organization of the report

Section one begins with a history and overview of assessment at CCA. It then discusses the two areas upon which the college’s assessment program has concentrated: lifelong skills and occupational skills. The first section ends with an overview of the roles faculty members and administrators have played in CCA’s assessment efforts and the structure and resources the college has provided to support assessment during the past three years.

Section two responds directly to the evaluation team’s request for a report and the areas in which the team indicated CCA should show improvement over three years. The section also describes how the college has accomplished what the evaluation team required of it, evaluated its assessment process, and used evaluation findings to improve assessment of student learning.

The final section explores the challenges CCA has faced and met over the past three years, the strengths the college can use to improve its assessment of student learning, and the continued development of assessment at CCA. The
CCA’s assessment efforts reflect the culture and characteristics of the college. The college has a decentralized management structure with a culture of participation by faculty, staff, and students. Community residents founded CCA as a “college without walls,” and those origins have produced an institution with many adjunct faculty members and a lean administrative and support staff. The college also has a tradition of working across disciplines, with academic and occupational faculty members demonstrating a high degree of collaboration.

III. History and Overview

A. Prior to 2003 – Embarking on the accreditation journey

CCA developed a comprehensive assessment plan as part of the self-study report that it submitted to the North Central Association in February 1993. Following the plan’s approval, the faculty identified six lifelong skills as the foundation of the college’s curriculum and the focus of its assessment efforts (see appendix 1 for CCA lifelong skills). The process of identifying and adopting the lifelong skills included extensive conversations with community employers, visits to Alverno College, meetings with industry focus groups, and discussion at faculty forums.

During the 1990s, the college made considerable progress in integrating the lifelong skills into the curriculum. The faculty defined student learning expectations pertaining to the lifelong skills, developed a teaching paradigm that identified good practices, and implemented an outcome-based syllabus format that reflected lifelong skill competencies. CCA also established a syllabus audit to ascertain progress toward integration of the lifelong skills, conducted related professional development activities, and piloted a capstone course integrating the lifelong skills as a graduation requirement for the AA degree.

In the spring of 2002, CCA evaluated its assessment efforts in relation to the levels of implementation described in the Addendum to the Handbook of Accreditation, Second Edition. The self-evaluation indicated that six areas had progressed to level two, although two areas were still at level one (efficacy of assessment and shared responsibility – students). A year later, the evaluation team acknowledged CCA’s own ratings and placed the college at a low level two.
In its 2003 self-study report, the college evaluated its assessment strengths as including the following:

- Integration of the lifelong skills across the curriculum,
- Alignment of learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment strategies, and
- Alignment of student evaluation of instruction with the lifelong skills.

Among the challenges the self study described were the following:

- Strengthening CCA’s data collection, analysis, and storage infrastructure,
- Collecting data on student achievement of the lifelong skills,
- Developing pilot projects that use assessment results to improve teaching and learning, and
- Utilizing assessment outcomes in the college’s annual budgeting and planning processes.

B. 2003-04 – Assessing our efforts and ourselves

CCA responded immediately to the evaluation team’s report. The college strengthened its faculty assessment committee in May 2003 and asked the committee to prepare a course of action that addressed the team’s concerns. Reflecting the college’s tradition of widespread faculty involvement in institutional decision-making, each of the college’s instructional divisions named two faculty representatives to the committee. One or more of the instructional deans and the vice president for instruction began to attend each meeting (see appendix 2 for committee membership).

The college also named new committee co-chairs. Dr. Kathleen Cramm, a member of the psychology faculty and coordinator of Behavioral Sciences, and Dr. Christopher Ward, Director of Grants and Planning and an adjunct instructor in anthropology, have served since 2003.

The committee began meeting weekly in the summer of 2003 and has met regularly since that time, generally every two weeks from September through April and approximately once a month during the summer. Early in 2004, the
committee engaged a consultant, Lynn Watson, to work directly with program and cluster leadership on technical issues such as data collection and storage. In the fall of 2005, the new director of institutional research, Dr. David Bailey, joined the committee.

During the summer of 2003, the assessment committee developed a revised assessment plan that responded to the evaluation team’s concerns and suggestions. A condensed version served as the college’s annual assessment plan for 2003-04. In each subsequent year, the committee issued a revised annual plan (see appendix 3 for annual plans). One change in the second year plan, for example, was to ensure that each program and cluster was actually collecting and analyzing data. Another change from the first year to the second was to focus plans on specific lifelong skills. The plans for 2004-05 and 2005-06 also emphasized the importance of producing short program/cluster level reports as part of the committee’s effort to limit the length of assessment documents while enhancing their content.

Among the committee’s first tasks was to define the list of programs and clusters that were to assess students’ mastery of the lifelong skills and, where appropriate, occupational skills (see appendix 4 for programs and clusters assessing student learning). The committee based its decision to include clusters of courses on the advice of the evaluation team and on a desire to include as many CCA departments and faculty members as possible in assessment.

One outcome of this decision-making process, for example, was to include developmental math and developmental English in the math and English assessment programs. The committee also decided that the English as a Second Language faculty should prepare an assessment plan, as should the college’s Center for Workforce Development for its Essential Skills certificate.

The committee determined that occupational programs were to assess occupational skills in addition to the lifelong skills and recommended that the capstone course for the AA degree continue. A separate assessment process would be developed for the AS degree that involved pre- and post-testing of written communication, quantitative reasoning, and critical inquiry skills.

As the committee developed its plans, the instructional deans identified faculty members responsible for the assessment effort for each program or cluster and charged them with developing assessment plans, implementing pilot assessment projects, and submitting progress reports to the faculty assessment committee. The faculty leaders began to work together at a meeting August 21, and many developed plans with their teams at a half-day training workshop.
September 19 (see appendix 5 for workshop presentation). The assessment committee began reviewing plans in mid-October and provided feedback through face-to-face meetings with faculty leaders or via a committee representative (see appendix 6 for sample assessment plan).

Faculty leaders submitted progress reports May 1 with follow-up reports, if needed, by June 15 (see appendix 7 for sample 2004 report with rubric). The committee reviewed all reports and responded with suggestions and comments. These reports provided accountability and assurance that assessment was on track throughout the college. The committee’s suggestions and comments supported program and cluster leadership. The progress reports and comments also served as the basis for the committee’s report to CCA’s president at the beginning of July 2004 (see appendix 8 for assessment committee report).

The first year ended on a positive note with a celebration and barbecue in mid-July at the president’s home, highlighting the important role the faculty committee played in encouraging colleagues in their assessment efforts.

C. 2004-05 – Gaining momentum and permeating the culture

The committee began 2004-05 by hosting a training session and a meeting on August 25 to discuss goals for faculty assessment leadership (see appendix 9 for agenda). Throughout the year, faculty leaders in the programs and clusters continued to collect data each semester and to increase their understanding of how to use data to improve teaching and learning. During the year, the committee became more involved in receiving and reviewing plans and reports and providing programs and clusters with comments. In the fall of 2004, the committee began to use standardized review sheets to review plans and reports (see appendix 10 for review sheet).

Faculty leaders submitted progress reports to the committee in February and June of 2005. The committee reviewed all reports and provided feedback to each program or cluster via a committee member. The committee continued to hone its requests of the programs and clusters. For example, in response to programs and clusters that included limited data collection in their February reports, the committee required that programs and cluster leaders attach one-page summaries of their data from direct and indirect measures to their June reports.

The committee asked individual members to communicate directly with assessment leaders about committee recommendations. These steps were part of a
broader effort by the committee to emphasize the central role faculty members play in CCA’s assessment effort.

The committee informed the college community about assessment and the lifelong skills through presentations at general faculty meetings, emails, an upgraded webpage, and presentations at meetings of the academic planning council and the president’s cabinet. A new version of the faculty handbook (Faculty frequently asked questions), developed in 2005, contains information on the lifelong skills, assessment, and expectations for faculty members about participation in their program or cluster assessment efforts (see appendix 11 for handbook table of contents). Several faculty members developed an online workshop to introduce CCA faculty and staff to assessment, “Making Assessment a Reality: An Online Workshop.” The college’s job description for adjunct faculty members now includes participation in assessment, and all regular faculty members include assessment in their annual work plans.

During 2004-05, the committee faced the challenge of turnover and the need to acquaint new members – added throughout the year – with both the written assessment documents and the history of the committee’s work. The committee recognized that as people retire or move on, all institutions must develop processes for ensuring that work continues and builds. At the same time, the committee strengthened some of its own procedures and processes. For example, the committee scheduled its bi-weekly meetings to follow those of the academic planning council to allow more faculty members to attend.

In the fall of 2004, the assessment committee began to discuss the need for outside evaluation of CCA’s assessment efforts. With the help of the vice president for instruction, the college secured the advice of Dr. Phyllis Abt and a team of her colleagues from Front Range Community College. In early March 2005, they reviewed documents related to CCA’s assessment of student learning, met for a day with CCA faculty members, and made recommendations for CCA’s assessment efforts (see appendix 12 for team’s presentation to CCA faculty). The faculty assessment committee considered these recommendations at its spring training and included some in its 2005-06 annual plan.

D. 2005-06 – Celebrating successes and building for the future

During the past year, the committee has continued to review and comment on revised plans and new reports. The committee has encouraged programs and clusters to focus on benchmarks and to identify specific decisions that are a direct result of their assessment efforts in 2004-05. The emphasis on benchmarks was
an outcome from the March 2005 visit by the Front Range Community College team.

The committee also focused on increasing student involvement, on bringing information about one of the least understood lifelong skills (aesthetic perception) to the faculty, and on working with the deans and program/cluster leadership to improve specific program or cluster reports and overall assessment efforts. A major thrust during the second semester was to collect a brief summary report from each program or cluster to document data collection and changes in instruction.

IV. Focus on lifelong skills and occupational skills

A. Lifelong skills

The Community College of Aurora has multiple missions and serves a broad range of students. Some students seek preparation for transfer, with or without a degree, to four-year institutions. Others complete an occupational program and earn a degree or certificate. Still others need developmental education instruction in mathematics, English, ESL, or reading. The college also serves employers in its service area and beyond through attention to their workforce needs and their employees’ skills. Given these multiple missions, the college, with faculty leadership, has focused on the six lifelong skills as the foundation of instruction for all students, and, by extension, as the foundation of assessment of student learning. The lifelong skills include the following:

- Communication – abilities to effectively express, impart, or exchange feelings, thoughts, opinions, and information both orally and in writing.
- Critical Inquiry – abilities to examine and utilize reasoning strategies in order to select, apply, and evaluate evidence in multiple disciplines.
- Personal Responsibility – abilities to work independently or cooperatively in a group setting on situations and issues that affect the common welfare and one’s own welfare in relationship to others.
- Aesthetic Perception – abilities to identify characteristics of, and to judge qualitatively, a creative work.
• Quantitative Reasoning – abilities to perform mathematical operations and to reason and draw conclusions from numerical information.

• Technology – abilities to make use of various technology-based applications.

B. Occupational skills

The faculty assessment committee, in choosing to endorse the college’s emphasis on the lifelong skills, also acknowledged that occupational programs have somewhat different instructional missions than do general education programs. Occupational programs expect to teach, and their students expect to learn, a more defined set of skills. Moreover, organizations or institutions that license or certify occupational program graduates often define the teaching and learning of these skills.

V. Assessing student learning at CCA

A. Role of the faculty

Faculty members, both regular and adjunct, have been the most important element in the college’s assessment efforts. On an institutional level, the faculty assessment committee determines the structure, direction, and timeline of CCA’s assessment efforts. Most committee members also serve as assessment leaders in their programs or clusters. During each of the past three years, the college has had 30 or fewer regular faculty members. This means that a high percentage of these faculty members have served, or are serving, on the assessment committee or as assessment leaders.

As programs and clusters began to submit plans and reports, committee members took on added responsibility as reviewers. Members also took on increasing responsibility to report back to, and work with, their colleagues on the revision of plans and responses to reports. In practice, this has meant that faculty members, rather than administrators, have provided guidance on assessment issues to others in their divisions.

At the program or cluster level, faculty members have set the benchmarks and learning outcomes for their program or cluster, selected the tools to measure student learning related to these benchmarks or outcomes, collected and analyzed
the data, and determined what changes to make in instruction. Faculty members have also been responsible for the program/cluster plan, for updating that plan, and for reporting their progress to the faculty assessment committee.

Reflecting the college’s culture of inclusion for adjuncts, the faculty assessment committee has emphasized involvement of adjunct faculty members in the assessment process. Several current committee members are adjuncts and, in some programs and clusters, adjuncts are responsible for running the assessment process. In other programs or clusters, a regular faculty member leads the effort and recruits adjuncts to assist. All programs and clusters are expected to share assessment data with adjuncts.

The model’s great strength has been that faculty members have made all major decisions about assessment during the past three years. The challenges include the wide variation in aptitude for assessment, particularly the design of measurement tools and the analysis of data, the large numbers of adjuncts who have had to learn about the lifelong skills and assessment program, and the turnover in program and cluster leadership due to retirement and other factors beyond the committee’s control.

B. Role of the administration

College administrators have strongly supported the assessment committee and its activities throughout the past three years. The instructional deans have attended committee meetings, worked with faculty members in their divisions to implement assessment, and invited faculty leaders to deans’ meetings to give assessment updates (see appendix 13 for memo to administrators). The vice president for instruction has attended meetings and supported the committee’s work with advice and resources. The president attended key meetings and events, emphasized the importance of assessment publicly, and hosted the assessment leadership for a year-end barbecue at her home. In 2006, she initiated a president’s assessment update where all program and clusters reported their progress on assessment and improvement in instruction directly to her (see appendix 14 for update agenda).

C. Institutional support: Structures

Several college structures have contributed to the success of the assessment efforts over the past three years. Overall, the administrative and academic structure of the college is collaborative, decentralized, and non-
hierarchical. All levels of the college talk regularly with each other so that assessment, the lifelong skills, and related topics get regular discussion across the institution (see appendix 15 for minutes from division meeting discussion assessment).

One faculty assessment committee co-chair reports, as a standing agenda item, to the academic planning council. The academic planning council consists of all department chairs, deans, directors, and program coordinators, and is open to all faculty and staff who wish to attend. This regular reporting provides a flow of information about assessment to all departmental chairs and other faculty members who attend the council’s meetings. It also provides feedback from these chairs and instructors to the assessment committee. Similarly, the other committee co-chair reports to the president and is a member of the president’s cabinet, providing direct information exchange with this group.

For most of the three-year period, instruction and student services reported to the same vice president, and the student services staff met regularly with the faculty. In this structure, the committee and other faculty working on assessment projects were able to work closely with the student life office and other student services groups on events such as the student assessment fair.

D. Institutional support: Resources

The college has provided a variety of resources to support assessment of student learning and the work of the faculty assessment committee. For each of the past three years, through the annual budgeting process, the college has provided the assessment committee with a budget allocation sufficient to cover operating expenses, events, and similar costs.

The college, through its instructional divisions, has provided support through pay for adjunct faculty who participate in program or institution-level work or activities. The instructional deans administer the payment process, which is standard across campus.

The college has also provided release time for one faculty assessment committee co-chair (Cramm) and built in time for participation in the committee to the work assignment for the other co-chair (Ward). Regular faculty members participate in the assessment process, whether serving on the committee or providing program/cluster leadership or both, as part of their institutional service, another institutional contribution to assessment of student learning.
The institution has contributed to the assessment efforts through the contributions of many college staff whom the assessment committee or individual programs and clusters have called upon for help. For example, the regular updating of the committee’s webpage and the organization of the student assessment fair have both required significant staff time.

Finally, in response to a need voiced by the assessment committee, the college expanded the position of director of institutional research from part-time to full-time in the summer of 2005 and wrote service to the assessment effort into the new job description for the director.

Summary

Over the past three years, CCA has successfully met the requirements of the HLC’s 2003 evaluation team. The assessment program has concentrated on the college’s lifelong and occupational skills while gathering data and making improvements in instruction in 21 programs and course clusters. Faculty members, both regular and adjunct, have planned the assessment effort and continue to guide its implementation and direction. Over the past three years, the college’s administration, structure, and resources have supported the improvement of assessment.

The next section responds in detail to the evaluation team’s request for a report, describes how CCA has met the team’s requirements, and explains how the college has evaluated its own assessment process and used the findings for continued improvement.
The Community College of Aurora has met the goals set for the 2006 monitoring report and improved its assessment of student learning in each of the areas requested by the evaluation team.
Section Two

Introduction

The Community College of Aurora has met the goals set for the 2006 monitoring report and improved its assessment of student learning in each of the areas requested by the evaluation team. This section describes these improvements in the order found in the team’s report. The section also describes how the college has evaluated its assessment process and is using the evaluation findings to improve how it assesses student learning.

I. Multiple measures

All CCA programs and clusters selected for assessment have a plan in place that uses multiple measures including at least one direct measure of assessment of student learning.

In the late summer of 2003, the faculty assessment committee requested plans from degree programs (Examples: Associate of Arts and Associate of Science), occupational programs, and course clusters. Over the course of that first year, all of the selected programs and all but one of the clusters submitted plans to the committee. Each program or cluster based its plan on the committee’s institution-wide assessment plan and included at least one direct measure of student learning.

The programs and clusters submitted progress reports in May of 2004 and, using comments from the committee, revised their plans for the fall of 2004. Since then, the committee has requested semi-annual progress reports, and, where needed, asked the programs and clusters for additional information or revisions. Currently, all programs and clusters have assessment plans in place. All are using at least one direct and one indirect measure of assessment of student learning.

The appendices attached to this report include several sample plans, including one from an occupational program and one from a general education cluster, to illustrate how the faculty assessment committee has guided the development of assessment at CCA.
II. Methods of assessment

All CCA programs and clusters selected for assessment have begun gathering data using multiple measures including at least one direct measure.

A. Data gathering

Several programs and clusters collected data in the fall of 2003 and more began to collect it in the spring of 2004. The committee encouraged leaders to start with a pilot project, even if small, in order to prepare for full data collection in 2004-05 (see appendix 16 for chart of data collection history).

In their reports to the assessment committee, program and cluster leadership have described lessons learned about data collection. For example, the English as a Second Language cluster has determined that because many students are unfamiliar with multiple-choice tests, the cluster’s faculty members need to give students practice with these kinds of tests if assessment measures are to be effective. Other programs and clusters have learned the challenges of getting students to take seriously the completing of assessment instruments. To encourage completion of such instruments, the science cluster has provided gift certificates to the college bookstore, while the accounting program has given students extra credit in the course.

B. Direct measures

The faculty assessment leaders have selected a range of direct measures for their assessment programs. The evaluation team’s report suggested many of these measures, and the 2003 training sessions provided additional information about them for interested faculty members. CCA’s faculty-directed approach to assessment has allowed programs and course clusters to collect data on student learning, using instruments they feel are most appropriate. Three of the most common are described below:

1. Rubrics

Programs and clusters have used rubrics to assess research papers, randomized selections of course papers, specialized papers (analysis of an artwork, for example), oral presentations, and videotaped speeches. The AA capstone’s rubric is a model for curriculum-wide rubrics that faculty members are
now developing (see appendix 17 for capstone rubric). The arts and humanities cluster has also been a major proponent of using rubrics in assessment.

2. Faculty-designed content exams

Another common type of direct measure used at CCA is faculty-designed tests that assess knowledge learned in specific courses, primarily in occupational programs such as accounting, computer information systems, and management and marketing. Those using these exams have reported challenges including determining the right content and the correct level of difficulty.

3. Standardized assessments

A third type of direct measure is standardized assessment tests. In some cases, the state agencies or the organizations that oversee occupational programs mandate these instruments. For example, the Colorado Attorney General’s office administers the Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) exam used in CCA’s police academy. Likewise, students in the college’s EMS program take the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) exam.

Other standardized measures include those developed by proprietary groups like the American College Testing Service’s Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency Exam (CAAP), used by CCA’s science faculty, and the Accuplacer exam, used by the mathematics and English departments.

C. Indirect measures

The indirect measures selected by the various programs and clusters are as diverse as the direct measures. The AA capstone course and the speech cluster have used focus groups with students to address specific questions of interest to faculty. Several programs and clusters have developed their own surveys measuring exposure to the lifelong skills (science, accounting, computer information systems). The mathematics department uses a questionnaire to ask students about items such as students’ interest in math, their perception of how well prepared they are for the course, and their study habits.

A number of programs and clusters have also used information from existing instruments, including student satisfaction surveys and course evaluations. Post-graduation surveys, faculty conferences to discuss observations about student writing, and information from an American Bar Association site visit are other indirect measures currently used at the college.
D. Examples of degree program instruments

1. Associate of Science

The science department, in its assessment for the Associate of Science degree, has been among the leaders in assessment at the college. For a direct measure of student learning of the lifelong skills, the science faculty chose a commercially developed instrument, the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency Exam (CAAP) from ACT. The science faculty chose the CAAP because they were particularly interested in being able to compare the performance of their students to associate degree-seeking students nationally and had learned of the CAAP in conversations with other community colleges in Colorado. For its indirect measure, the program has been using a measure developed at CCA, a lifelong skills exposure survey, to learn the degree to which students are aware of the college’s lifelong skills and whether or not they are using the skills in their science classes.

2. Associate of Arts

Those assessing the Associate of Arts degree program have used an approach different from that used to assess the AS degree. Through a capstone course required of all AA degree students, the program has administered a rubric that assesses all six lifelong skills in three assignments: a research paper, a presentation, and an aesthetics paper. For an indirect measure, the program holds focus groups with students that address four questions related to learning. As assessment has diffused throughout the culture of the college, the capstone rubric has served as a model for other programs. For example, in the fall semester of 2005, anthropology faculty began using a modified form of the rubric to assess short written assignments in their courses.

E. Data analysis

Faculty members have generally analyzed their own data with assistance from the assessment committee's consultant and, in the last six months, from the office of institutional research. In most cases, those doing the analysis compare results from tests or other instruments against the benchmarks set by faculty members of the program or cluster. Analysis also includes looking at data over time to see what patterns emerge. The assessment committee has encouraged those doing assessment to analyze their data to determine how students have performed on groups of items or in order to understand where students may need additional assistance (see appendix 18 for EMS data analysis by groups of items).
For many programs and clusters, the analysis of data includes requesting that faculty members review the data to see what changes in instruction they would recommend.

III. Use of results to improve teaching and learning

More than 67 percent of the CCA programs and clusters selected for assessment are able to demonstrate at least two years of data gathering and decision-making. More than 90 percent of the programs and clusters are able to identify specific decisions that were the direct result of data obtained from the multiple measures (see appendix 19 for science department assessment report with decisions based on data).

This is an area of major progress and success. During the first year following the evaluation team visit, the committee found that a few programs and clusters were beginning to use assessment data to improve teaching and learning. For example, based on its 2003-04 assessment efforts, the English composition cluster decided to rewrite its composition I and II manuals for new faculty members. Moreover, the use of results to improve teaching and learning has increased dramatically in the last two years. Virtually all programs and clusters have made changes or will be making changes for the coming year. One priority for the assessment committee has been to ensure that program and cluster leadership overtly link changes they make to what they have learned from their assessment data.

A. Changes made in degree programs based on assessment results

CCA faculty members have used assessment results to make changes in the AS and the AA degree programs, as described below:

1. Associate of Science

Comparisons of the scores of CCA students with those of students nationally on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) have shown CCA students to be a few percentage points above the national average. The science faculty has interpreted those scores to mean that it needs to do more work to improve student learning in the lifelong skills and integrate the skills throughout the curriculum (see appendix 20 for AS degree assessment report with CAAP scores).
The science faculty has considered the CAAP scores in conjunction with the science assessment scores when changing the science laboratory curriculum. The science department is also providing the CAAP scores to all other departments where AS students enroll in courses and is recommending that they use the scores in evaluations of their programs and clusters. This effort is being done through a committee of five general education department chairs organized in the fall of 2005 to disseminate and analyze CAAP data.

2. Associate of Arts

Semester-to-semester comparisons of student scores on the six lifelong skills in the capstone course have shown improvement over the last four semesters. However, faculty members are not yet satisfied with the skills level that the students are demonstrating and realize that essential skills are not being sufficiently developed in courses leading up to the capstone. As a result, the faculty is developing a common rubric for use across the curriculum for teaching and evaluating each of the skills in the summer and fall of 2006 (see appendix 21 for AA degree 2006 progress report).

The capstone faculty has made changes in teaching the capstone and has made recommendations for faculty members teaching courses leading to the capstone:

a). Assessment-based changes in the AA capstone course

- Ongoing and more rigorous expectations for the capstone research project.
- Addition of faculty advisors to coach students through the research process and development of the presentation and paper.
- Development of a cadre of faculty to serve as advisors, readers for papers, and evaluators of presentations.

b). Assessment-based changes in the courses leading to the AA capstone course

- Feedback to all faculty to increase training and monitoring for plagiarism.
- Increased expectations for more speaking assignments in classes.
- Increased focus on lifelong skills in all classes.
- Increased training on methods for citation of sources in course papers.
B. Changes made in programs and clusters based on assessment results

1. General steps faculty have taken to improve teaching and learning

CCA faculty members, using the results of data gathered in their program and cluster assessment efforts, have taken a variety of steps to improve teaching and learning. Among them are improvements that span more than one course:

- Technology added to classrooms used for reading classes to improve instruction
- Increased professional development for program and cluster faculty members
- Biology and chemistry laboratory curricula revised and lab manuals written
- Additional components added to the requirements for a certificate
- Conversion of two discrete courses into a sequence of two courses

In other cases, the improvements have focused on a single course:

- Distribution of a short writing handbook with a course syllabus
- Case studies or other supplemental materials added to a course
- A new textbook or a different instructor selected for a course
- Administration of a first-day diagnostic test to be sure students are at the right level
- The addition of an exit exam to a developmental course
- Specialized facilities requested for a course

2. Examples of changes to programs and clusters

The following are examples, taken from spring 2006 progress reports, of the changes individual programs and clusters have made to improve teaching and learning:
a). Accounting

Accounting assessment results have shown that students need to improve their critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. As a result, the accounting faculty is increasing the emphasis on case studies in the principles of accounting course and is adding more computational problems in the auditing course (see appendix 22 for accounting spring 2006 report).

b). Computer Information Science

CIS assessment results have shown that student mastery of course content has improved, but not to the extent that faculty had hoped. In response, the faculty leadership has ordered new textbooks that provide additional tutorials, more hands-on application exercises, and more detailed content. The faculty is also soliciting ideas from its advisory committee about how to incorporate more real-world activities into the courses. Based on results from a student self-evaluation of the lifelong skills, the CIS leadership will work with faculty to emphasize the lifelong skills in the classroom.

c). Emergency Medical Services

The EMS program measures student achievement with the results of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) exam. While the program’s students have had a 100 percent pass rate on the exam, the students have scored the lowest on the airway and cardiology sections. Based on these results, the EMS faculty has integrated specialized airway training, taught by the program’s physician advisor, into the curriculum and has increased emphasis on instruction in cardiology. The EMS program has also undertaken additional assessment studies to understand how well students learn when they use the program’s sophisticated simulation devices. A State of Colorado grant is funding these efforts and researchers from the University of Denver are providing technical assistance.

d). Arts and Humanities

Faculty determined that assignments needed to help students develop more confidence in the adequacy of their own subjective aesthetic perceptions. Furthermore, assignments will help students identify these subjective perceptions, and encourage them to integrate those with more objective, external standards for aesthetic perception. This integration will lead to a more complex and sophisticated aesthetic perception, which is closer to that expected of college students (see appendix 23 for arts and humanities spring 2006 report).
e). English Composition

Among the results demonstrated in the faculty’s assessment of randomly selected argumentative essays from English 121 was weakness in claims and addressing the opposition. Therefore, the faculty is asking all instructors to place greater emphasis on teaching students to remember their audience and purpose, particularly when they write an argumentative essay.

f). Mathematics

From the results on its direct measure, the mathematics faculty has learned that student retention and understanding in Math 106 correlates to students’ starting point in the math sequence. From its indirect measure, the faculty has learned that students tend to rate themselves as more successful than would their instructors in areas such as preparedness and understanding. Based on these results, the faculty has decided to inform all instructors where each of their students started in the developmental sequence so the instructors can provide needed assistance. The mathematics program will also offer faculty workshops, pilot courses using additional technology, and develop policies for setting and maintaining high standards in the classroom.

g). Science/Biotechnology

Faculty members have observed little improvement in scores for students taking a sequence of anatomy and physiology courses. To improve this situation, faculty have decided to switch the anatomy and physiology classes from a laboratory book that was predominately observation to a lab book that asks the students to discuss and analyze their results.

IV. Faculty and student involvement

CCA provides continuing professional development that involves regular and adjunct faculty members in the assessment process. The college has also involved students as active participants in the assessment process.

A. Faculty involvement

Over the past three years, CCA has emphasized a variety of means, including professional development, to inform regular and adjunct faculty
members about assessment and to involve them in the assessment process. The college, with its modest number of regular faculty members, is heavily dependent on adjunct instructors. In the fall semester of 2005, for example, CCA had 27 full-time and 320 adjunct faculty members, as reported in the college’s IPEDS human resource report. In that semester, adjuncts taught 83 percent of CCA classes. An important milestone for involvement of adjunct faculty in assessment was the creation in 2005 of a college-wide adjunct job description that requires participation in assessment of student learning.

The faculty assessment committee, with representation of both regular and adjunct faculty, has taken the involvement of all faculty members as an important challenge. To this end, the committee has promoted the following strategies:

1. Informative presentations at scheduled faculty events

Since 2003, a presentation on assessment has been a standard feature on the agenda at the general faculty meeting at the beginning of each semester — the one time each semester when the entire faculty assembles. Additional information about assessment has also been part of the division and/or departmental meetings that follow the general faculty meeting.

At the fall 2005 meeting, for example, several assessment committee members prepared a joint presentation, “Get on Board with Assessment: Knowledge is Power.” It reviewed CCA’s assessment requirements and efforts, discussed what faculty had accomplished in 2004-05, and laid out the challenges for 2005-06 (see appendix 24 for “Get on Board with Assessment” presentation).

In the fall of 2005, the faculty assessment committee assumed responsibility for the college’s faculty in-service day. This is one day each academic year when the college does not hold classes, and all regular faculty are expected to attend joint professional development training. Adjunct faculty are strongly encouraged (and paid) to attend (see appendix 25 for in-service flyer and agenda).

The assessment committee chose to focus attention for the 2005 in-service on a lifelong skill that members believed their colleagues assessed less frequently than they assess other skills: Aesthetic perception. To start the day, Dr. P. Bruce Urmacher, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, School of Education, University of Denver, presented “Transforming Teaching and Learning: An Aesthetics of Education” to more than 100 faculty members. The in-service also included a session “Conversations with Students on Assessment” and a wide range of faculty-conceived and produced presentations related to aesthetics. For
example, Rich Italiano, an adjunct member of the music faculty and coordinator of the music program, led the entire group through a classroom exercise he uses to help students better understand music.

2. Professional development workshops for faculty working on assessment

   The assessment committee held a half-day workshop for all faculty members beginning to develop assessment plans in September 2003. The workshop introduced both the specifics of assessment (setting learning goals, developing direct and indirect measures) and the college’s recently revised plan for assessment.

   As part of the faculty in-service day, the assessment committee also sponsored professional development workshops on assessment, ranging from an introduction to assessment presented by the faculty assessment committee co-chairs to more specific topics such as techniques for assessing critical thinking.

3. Revised faculty handbook with updated information on assessment

   In 2005, the college developed a new version of the faculty handbook that contains information on the lifelong skills, assessment, and expectations for faculty members about their participation in their program or cluster assessment efforts.

4. Materials (handouts) on the lifelong skills and assessment

   During the summer of 2003, the committee began to develop written summaries about assessment at CCA and related topics that have since served as handouts for faculty new to assessment. Several PowerPoint presentations and the printed versions of those presentations have served the same function.

5. One-to-one training and assistance

   The committee engaged Lynn Watson as a consultant to work individually with program and cluster-level leadership to assist them with developing and learning more about measures, data collection, data storage, and data analysis.

   In the fall of 2005, following his hiring as Director of Institutional Research, David Bailey began to meet with faculty members working on assessment to assist them with specific problems and to pass on to them expertise in research methods and data analysis.
6. Feedback on assessment plans and reports

The faculty assessment committee has provided feedback on plans and reports through committee members to their colleagues working on assessment. Approximately one-third of those heading an assessment effort in a program or cluster are adjuncts, and they benefit from suggestions tailored to their efforts based on the committee’s critique. The committee began to use standardized review sheets to review plans and reports in 2004.

7. Mentoring by department chairs and deans

Deans and department chairs provide ongoing mentoring and advice to adjunct and regular faculty working on assessment. The annual goal setting and evaluation process, which includes a focus on assessment, provides the mechanism for these efforts.

8. Opportunities to use the year-long project to focus on assessment

Adjunct faculty members (in Early Childhood Education and English as a Second Language, for example) have worked on their program or cluster assessment efforts as part of the yearlong project they need to complete to move to the top pay level.

9. Website with online tutoring available to all faculty members

Several faculty members developed an online workshop to introduce CCA faculty and staff to assessment “Making Assessment a Reality: An Online Workshop.” The workshop is at www.ccaurora.edu/psy-b/assessment/index.htm (see appendix 26 for online workshop cover page).

10. Special events to understand and celebrate assessment

The college, under the leadership of the vice president for instruction, organized and hosted a Colorado Community College System-wide assessment conference in November of 2005. The event included both local practitioners and a speaker from the Higher Learning Commission staff. Numerous CCA faculty members attended. The event will be held again in 2006.

Throughout these efforts, the assessment committee and others with assessment-related leadership responsibilities have promoted a spirit of camaraderie and festivity along with serious attention to the assessment process. For example, it awarded candy-filled coffee mugs to recognize those who
contributed to CCA’s efforts in the first year and who were members of what it billed as the CCA “A” team.

B. Student Involvement

Developing creative and effective means to involve students in the assessment process has been among the most challenging tasks faced by the assessment committee. CCA is a commuter school, with classes spread across two campuses and with a student body that averages more than 29 years of age. Students have jobs, families, and other commitments in addition to their studies. Most students come to school in the morning or evening and then leave the campus for home and work responsibilities.

Efforts to recruit students to participate in the ongoing work of the committee or the ongoing work of program or cluster committees have not proved practical. In 2004-05, the committee, in collaboration with the Student Life Office, invited students to a committee meeting to discuss their knowledge and perception of the assessment process. The turnout was very small, and the committee continued to brainstorm other ways to involve students. Following the meeting, the Director of Student Life sent an email survey to student government leaders asking them about assessment and the lifelong skills with modest results.

In the fall of 2005, the faculty assessment committee assumed responsibility for the annual faculty development day. Several committee members, with a commitment to student involvement, organized a student focus group as part of the day’s program. This approach, with a one-time event, proved useful.

The workshop’s success led to the next step: A student assessment fair where students learned about the lifelong skills and about the assessment process. The design and implementation of the fair became a major project for the committee in January and February of 2006. The committee scheduled the fair for the time slot (a Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) regularly reserved for the popular “Pizza with the President.” The event, offered at a time of day when many students are on campus, engaged students with participatory activities focused on different lifelong skills. Attendance was good (approximately 270 students) and interest was high (see appendix 27 for student involvement documents: committee agenda, minutes, and assessment fair planning document).

Students continue to be consulted about issues related to assessment. For example, as part of the college’s strategic planning process, the student
government hosted a student discussion of student needs attended by the president and other senior administrators. Assessment of student learning was one of the strategic goals that emerged from this and similar discussion groups. Students have a representative on the president's cabinet advisory council that meets monthly and includes representatives from each of the college's employee groups.

V. Assessment and the planning process

CCA has linked assessment of student learning and the college's overall planning process.

The assessment process was one of the college's six priority initiatives for 2004-05 and again for 2005-06. The initiative for 2005-06 and related action steps focused on completing the monitoring report, meeting the criteria for progress set out by the evaluation team in 2003, improving student outcomes through assessment, and improving several aspects of assessment at CCA identified by the faculty assessment committee (communication to the college community about the committee's work, for example).

Assessment is also a component of individual faculty members' work plans for each year. The development of these plans begins in the spring with conversations with the faculty members' deans. The plans are put in final form in the fall, revisited in February, and used in the annual employee evaluation process in April and May.

The college further solidified the place of assessment in the planning process during preparation of the 2006-09 strategic goals (see appendix 28 for CCA's 2006-09 strategic goals). Developed over a number of months in discussion sessions throughout the college community, these goals are the public plan that will guide the college – including its budget – for the next three years. Goal number one addresses assessment and reads as follows:

Goal 1. Utilize assessment of academic achievement data to make improvements in teaching and learning.

This strategic goal emphasizes the use of assessment data to improve teaching and learning, moving beyond the earlier emphasis in college plans for completing a process of assessment. Its selection and placement at the top of the list of goals is significant, given the declining budgets for higher education in Colorado and related competing demands in the strategic planning process.
The faculty, including members of the faculty assessment committee, has contributed ideas to the development of the strategic goals. A student group convened by the student government was among the groups with whom the college president and other administrators met during the formulation of the strategic goals. The college has hung posters with the strategic goals, including the assessment goals, in the student center. Structurally, assessment and planning have been closely connected because the administrator charged with developing the strategic goals (the director of grants and planning) has also co-chaired the faculty assessment committee since 2003.

VI. Evaluation of the assessment process

Over the past three years, CCA’s faculty assessment committee has made particular efforts to evaluate its strategies and activities and to use the information obtained through these efforts to improve assessment of student learning. The committee has made these efforts through regular discussions of the assessment process at its meetings, through annual reports and plans, and by an external review by community college colleagues in March of 2004.

A. Faculty assessment committee’s ongoing evaluation

The committee has continued to have regular, lively discussions about the assessment process. These discussions – some scheduled and some spontaneous – have served as an informal method to evaluate assessment and to revise or strengthen how the college carries out assessment.

One example of those evaluative discussions and their impact on assessment concerns the lifelong skills. From the beginning of the college’s increased focus on assessment in 2003, committee members have noted the challenge in informing students about the lifelong skills. Committee members have anecdotes of successful approaches, such as the history instructor who pauses to announce quite dramatically to his class that they are about to deal with a lifelong skill. On the other hand, members also describe conversations with students in which the students do not always know about the lifelong skills.

Out of these discussions has come a renewed commitment to addressing the lifelong skills across the college. The committee added this commitment as a priority to the 2005-06 program and cluster assessment plan as “explain the lifelong skills to students in every CCA course each semester.” To carry out the priority, the college renewed emphasis on the skills in its orientation for adjunct
faculty and through other means including posting the skills in all classrooms. Individual programs and clusters have also created plans to increase the visibility of the skills.

B. Annual plans and reports

Beginning in 2003, the committee developed a concise two-page plan each summer for assessment for the coming year. The plan was updated in the summers of 2004 and 2005 for the following academic year. Information for the updates came in part from annual reports put together in the early summer of 2004 and 2005 that contained information the committee felt might be useful in compiling the monitoring report and observations and recommendations about the assessment process. The recommendations were built into the plan for the following year.

In 2003, the committee was very optimistic about the ability of all programs to assess all six lifelong skills. However, during the 2003-04 school year, it became apparent that the task of assessing all the skills overwhelmed the faculty leadership in many small programs and clusters. Reflecting this experience, the committee noted in its 2003-04 report that a major challenge would be to decide whether all programs should eventually assess all six lifelong skills. By the end of 2004-05, the committee had decided not to ask each program to assess all six skills, but to view the students' whole college experience in achieving these skills.

C. External review

The committee, with help from the vice president for instruction, hosted a visit by an outside review team led by Dr. Phyllis Abt from Front Range Community College (Colorado) on March 4, 2005. Dr. Abt is an HLC consultant evaluator. The team members reviewed CCA documents before their arrival and met for the day with the assessment committee, faculty assessment leadership, and administrators.

The review team produced a written report for the faculty assessment committee. Equally important, it summarized the report in a PowerPoint presentation for the meeting with the committee, faculty assessment leadership, and administrators. The review team leader also produced a separate set of recommendations for the instructional deans.
In addition to providing ideas for individual faculty members to use in their program or cluster, the review team’s recommendations provided the committee with guidance for additions to the CCA assessment efforts (definition of benchmarks in plans) or, in many cases, to renewed emphasis on known priorities (student involvement).

The committee responded in several ways. First, for the June progress reports, the committee asked that program and cluster leadership include several items mentioned by the review team including specific benchmarks for each of the measures and the additional resources each program and cluster needed to continue its work.

During 2005-06, the college also responded to specific review team observations with increased emphasis on bringing students into the assessment process (the March 2006 student assessment fair) and linking data to improvements in instruction (a theme of the assessment presentations to the CCA president in April 2006).

Finally, the plans the committee is developing for the future respond to several points in the review team’s report, including institution-wide goals and measures for the lifelong skills and rubrics developed for use across disciplines.

Summary

The Community College of Aurora has met or exceeded the goals set by the evaluation team in 2003. All 21 programs and clusters have a plan in place that uses multiple measures, all are using at least one direct measure, and all have begun collecting data. Sixty-seven percent (14 of 21) are able to demonstrate two or more years of data gathering and decision-making and 90 percent (19 of 21) are able to identify specific decisions they have made based on assessment data.

CCA provides assessment-related professional development for regular and adjunct faculty members, has begun to involve students in the assessment process, and has linked assessment of student learning and the college’s overall planning process. As CCA has accomplished what the evaluation team required, the college has regularly evaluated its assessment processes and used the results for continuing improvement.

The next section describes the challenges CCA has faced and met over the past three years, the strengths that the college can use to improve its assessment of student learning, and the continued development of assessment at CCA.
Faculty and college leadership, as well as the faculty assessment committee, have voiced enthusiastic support for a fuller integration of lifelong skills into teaching and learning across the college.
Section Three

I. Challenges in our assessment journey

A. Challenges we’ve met

Since the HLC evaluation team presented its findings related to assessment and called for a monitoring report, CCA has faced a number of assessment-related challenges. Among these challenges, and the ways in which the college has met them, are the following:

1. To develop and maintain a strong faculty assessment committee.

   For three years, the faculty assessment committee has planned, implemented, and evaluated the college’s assessment of student learning. The committee considered and made decisions in the summer of 2003 that have shaped CCA’s assessment efforts for the past three years. These decisions included continuing to focus on the six lifelong skills and assessing student learning in course clusters as well as in programs that lead to degrees or certificates.

   As the faculty implemented these plans, the committee members had heavy workloads that included reviewing program and cluster plans and reports and providing feedback on them to their colleagues. At the same time, the committee was responsible for creating and organizing activities such as training workshops, presentations to the faculty, and special events such as the faculty inservice day and the student assessment fair.

   The committee has benefited from support of the college’s instructional leadership and from access to resources including a more-than-adequate annual budget. The direct involvement by most committee members in assessment in their own programs and clusters has provided a growing reservoir of experience. Although there has been some turnover on the committee, a core group — including the co-chairs — has served since 2003.

   This group’s ongoing commitment and the interest in assessment by members added in 2005 has strengthened and renewed the committee. In April of 2006, during a committee discussion about the monitoring report, one member acknowledged this growth by exclaiming: “The level of discussion in the
assessment committee has changed. It has gone up! There is a higher level of knowledge compared to a year ago.”

2. To improve in the seven areas recommended by the HLC evaluation team.

The college has met this challenge in several steps. First, the faculty assessment committee developed a concise, institution-wide assessment plan that addressed the seven areas highlighted by the evaluation team. The plan built on the college’s existing lifelong skills, acknowledged the importance of assessing occupational skills, and emphasized that assessment is about student learning, not about simply satisfying institutional requirements. Each year, the committee revised some details of the plan, but kept the basic outline that centered on meeting the evaluation team’s recommendations.

Second, programs and clusters developed their own annual plans based on the college plan and reported their progress to the committee in a format that included a question covering each of the seven areas. This format reminded the programs and clusters about the HLC requirements.

Third, the committee provided regular written and face-to-face feedback to program and cluster leaders about their successes and the areas that needed improvement. The committee also advised instructional administrators about programs or clusters that needed to improve in a particular area. When necessary, the committee co-chairs met with program and cluster leaders and their deans to discuss these improvements.

3. To raise the technical quality of the assessment plans and their implementation.

CCA has approached assessment of student learning with a faculty-centered, decentralized approach that reflects the overall ethos of the college. Dozens of faculty members from many disciplines have been responsible for designing and carrying out assessment in 21 programs and clusters. In this context, the training and experience of those actually doing assessment have varied widely. Some faculty have been familiar and comfortable with assessment and its techniques for some time, while others have begun their involvement with little or no experience with the technical aspects of assessment.

To meet this challenge, the committee took a proactive approach, not only providing training for faculty, but also establishing a structured environment in which they could work. The committee requested specific plans each fall and progress reports in the early spring and summer from each program and cluster. The assessment committee then gave suggestions about measures, data collection,
data storage, and data analysis to the programs and clusters. Committee members worked face-to-face with assessment leaders to explain the committee’s suggestions.

The committee hired a consultant early in the process to work with individual programs or clusters, when requested, on technical aspects of assessment plans and their implementation. In 2005, the committee successfully advocated for the hiring of a full-time director of institutional research whose job responsibilities include working closely with assessment.

The March 2005 outside evaluation and the fall 2005 system-wide assessment conference also helped to improve the technical quality of assessment at CCA. These activities brought new ideas to the campus about measures, methods of analysis, and other technical details of assessment (see appendix 29 for agenda of assessment conference).

4. To communicate to the college community CCA’s commitment to the lifelong skills and to the assessment process.

The college has faced and met two related communication challenges. First, it has had to communicate the institution’s longstanding commitment to the six lifelong skills to faculty and to students. Second, CCA has had to communicate to the same audience a wide range of information about the assessment process, including its importance for improving instruction, its relationship to accreditation, and the details of how the college conducts assessment. These challenges have been significant at an institution where adjunct instructors teach most classes, where faculty members conduct classes on two campuses, and where all students are commuters.

To meet these challenges, the college has included information about the lifelong skills and assessment in formal documents and activities. For example, the most recent edition of the faculty handbook features the lifelong skills and the process for assessing them (see http://www.ccaurora.edu/facultyfaq). Adjunct job descriptions now emphasize assessment and the lifelong skills as part of the model syllabus the college requires faculty members to use in their courses (see appendix 30 for adjunct job description with assessment requirement). Faculty receive information about assessment and the lifelong skills at faculty meetings, through in-service presentations, and during new faculty orientation, as well as in assessment training workshops.

Communication about the lifelong skills and assessment also occurs through other, more informal channels. For example, with the responsibility for
assessment held by so many people throughout the institution, members of the CCA community learn about assessment from colleagues, in departmental meetings, and from discussing what the results of data analysis may mean for changes in teaching.

B. Challenges we face

The college, its faculty, and its faculty assessment committee continue to face assessment-related challenges. Some challenges have emerged recently, while others have been present for a number of years.

1. To maintain quality, faculty-centered assessment with a largely adjunct faculty.

A growing number of faculty are participating in assessment. At the same time, the college continues to have turnover among its more than 300 adjunct faculty, even as many continue to teach for a decade or more. Each semester, new people become part of the college family and prepare to teach one or more courses. Many of these instructors have limited contact with the day-to-day life of CCA, apart from their teaching duties. Many come with little or no direct experience in assessing student learning at the program or cluster level. Socializing these newcomers into the importance and use of the lifelong skills and into the college’s approach to assessment takes time, effort, and resources from the faculty assessment committee, from program and cluster leadership, and from instructional administrators.

2. To collect and use longitudinal data in as many programs and clusters as possible.

All programs and clusters have begun to collect assessment data and are using this data to make decisions about improving teaching and learning. The challenge for the next few years is for a substantial number of these programs and clusters to continue to collect data using consistent measures, to analyze it each semester, and to compare it with previous semesters in order to track student performance over time. Of particular importance is for programs and clusters to use their data to judge how improvements they put into place affect student learning in subsequent semesters.

3. To continue to find creative ways to include students in the assessment process.
Involving CCA students in assessment has required hard work, persistence, and creativity on the part of the faculty assessment committee. Successful event such as the student assessment fair in March 2006 reach a fraction of the college’s students, most of whom work. On the CentreTech and Lowry campuses, where few students stay beyond their class time, finding ways to capture students’ attention has been, and will continue to be, a challenge. The college has been able to work through organized campus groups, such as student government, to bring students into the assessment process.

4. To maintain support for assessment of student learning in the midst of competition from other priorities.

CCA, with its multi-faceted mission and close ties to the community, operates with constantly changing priorities. Shifts in the local economy, the size and makeup of high school graduating classes, and state or community college system policy can bring new priorities in a relatively short time. As assessment becomes more established, the college continues to meet challenge of keeping it as a top priority.

II. Strengths on which to build

The efforts by faculty, staff, and students over the last three years have demonstrated clear strengths upon which the college can build its future assessment of student learning. These strengths include the following:

1. A faculty-centered approach to assessment with a strong faculty assessment committee guiding the assessment process.

For the past three years, the college's regular and adjunct faculty have improved CCA's assessment program and satisfied the recommendations set out by the HLC evaluation team. The faculty assessment committee, program and cluster leadership, the academic planning council, and individual faculty members have all contributed to these efforts. Their successes and the system they have developed are clearly a strength upon which to build. The basis for this strength is the cohort of faculty members who are committed to teaching the lifelong skills and understanding how well students are mastering these skills.

2. A culture of assessment that is expanding throughout the college.

Over the past three years, many faculty and staff have come to share a set of beliefs, values, and knowledge about the importance of assessing student
learning. Assessment-related events throughout the year support this growing culture of assessment. These events include the student assessment fair, the faculty-in-service day, the annual system-wide assessment conference, the assessment training at the beginning of each semester, the spring assessment presentations to the president, and the assessment discussions at the all-faculty meetings at the beginning of each semester.

3. Strong administrative engagement and support with assessment integrated into the college’s institutional planning process.

While the faculty has provided much of the leadership for program- and cluster-level implementation for assessment, the support and engagement by college administrators starting with the president and expanding throughout the college are program strengths. The commitment to assessment is evident in administrators’ support for the faculty assessment committee, the allocation of resources needed to carry out assessment, and personal interest and participation in assessment activities.

4. A growing capacity to improve assessment.

CCA’s capacity to improve assessment comes, in part, from the experience numerous faculty members have had in designing and implementing their own assessment plans. The program and faculty leadership, and those who have helped them, have learned by doing what works and what does not work. The college’s capacity for improvement also comes from the technical support now available from the office of institutional research.

III. The future of assessment at CCA

The future of assessment at the Community College of Aurora looks bright. The faculty assessment committee and the many other faculty members and administrators who have worked on assessment over the last three years have developed strengths upon which to build. While CCA faces challenges with its assessment program, the college’s ability to meet such challenges is well established. The future includes the following plans:

1. To continue a faculty-centered assessment program led by the faculty assessment committee, focused on program- and cluster-level efforts, to learn how well students are mastering the lifelong and occupational skills.

2. To implement the 2006-09 strategic goal for assessment.
3. To integrate the lifelong skills and their assessment more thoroughly into the instructional life of the college through a “Lifelong skills in a global community” initiative.

4. To integrate more fully and assess the lifelong skills across the curriculum (detailed below).

IV. The plan to integrate and assess the lifelong skills across the curriculum

A. Mission

The college expects all students to develop competence in CCA’s six lifelong skills in addition to competence in occupational and discipline knowledge. The lifelong skills are written and oral communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, technology, aesthetic perception, and inter/intra personal responsibility. This plan is the continuation of CCA’s focus on lifelong skills as the foundation of students’ education and will allow faculty to reach agreement on the benchmarks and standards expected of all students.

To insure that education focuses on and guides students in the development of these lifelong skills, the college will identify specific competencies it expects students to master in their CCA classes. For example, the college will hold all students to sound writing standards including writing mechanics, organization of content, and writing for an audience, whether they are taking a class in diesel mechanics, biology, or humanities.

These competencies will be the norm for all CCA courses. Some courses will require more than the norm, and instructors are always free to evaluate student performance on higher standards. For example, students in college algebra will demonstrate specific course competencies in addition to those expected of students in classes outside math. However, when the plan is fully implemented, faculty will be expected to assess student competence in each skill.

Faculty members will develop rubrics and a plan for assessing student performance on the six lifelong skill competencies. As they develop the rubrics and plan, instructors will use the rubrics and report on student success each semester.
Small work groups of regular and adjunct faculty will define competencies for the lifelong skills across the curriculum. The committees will establish the norms for student performance in each skill, develop rubrics to assess the skills, and implement a plan to have faculty in all disciplines across the curriculum evaluate and report results of their assessments.

Once the program is implemented, the faculty assessment committee will prepare a summary of data each semester and share it with the entire faculty. Faculty members in individual departments may use this data in addition to information from their own assessment plans to identify changes to teaching.

B. Rationale

As a direct result of assessment through the capstone course for AA graduates, it became apparent that students were not learning the skills instructors had expected them to learn in prior course work. Faculty who read papers and evaluated student presentations felt students were weak in many areas and had difficulty integrating the lifelong skills into major assignments (see appendix 31 for AA capstone report). Through a wonderful example of the value of assessment at CCA, faculty concluded that, based on the capstone data, more needed to be done to improve student learning. In addition, the evaluation team who reviewed CCA’s assessment plan in the spring of 2005 recommended that CCA consider developing rubrics for assessing the six lifelong skills across the curriculum. Therefore, this plan to assess the skills across the curriculum is starting in summer semester 2006.

C. Implementation

Workgroups are beginning their tasks in the summer of 2006 (see appendix 32 for request for participation in new CCA assessment effort). The faculty assessment committee anticipates that the college will conduct a pilot program for assessing written communication, quantitative reasoning, and technology in the fall semester of 2006. The pilot program will expand during the spring and fall of 2007. CCA will conduct a pilot program to assess the remainder of the lifelong skills in the spring of 2007 and implement it more broadly during fall 2007 and spring 2008. Faculty members will continue with the assessment plans already developed in their departments.

Faculty and college leadership, as well as the faculty assessment committee, have enthusiastic support for a fuller integration of lifelong skills into
teaching and learning in the college. As with any undertaking of this size and complexity, the assessment committee may modify the plan based on what it learns as implementation begins.
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Community College of Aurora

Lifelong Skills

Communication

On completion of their course of studies, students will be able to effectively express, impart or exchange feelings, thoughts, opinions and information both orally and in writing. The successful student will be able to:

- Construct effective written and oral communications using content, organization and delivery techniques that convey accurate, concise and complete information appropriate to topic, audience, occasion and purpose.
- Adapt listening behaviors to accommodate the listening situation and offer appropriate and effective feedback.
- Create written communications using grammar, sentence structure, mechanics (i.e. capitalization, punctuation), spelling skills and content appropriate to defined standards or criteria.

Critical Inquiry

Upon completion of their course of studies, students will be able to examine and utilize reasoning strategies in order to select, apply and evaluate evidence in multi-disciplines. The successful student will be able to:

- Formulate solutions to problems by separating information into component parts, determining the relevancy of data, evaluating facts and inferences and recognizing logical fallacies in reasoning.
- Evaluate alternative viewpoints, arguments, belief systems, and the like
- in order to analyze the divergent views of others and to interpret behaviors without making stereotypical or prejudicial judgments

Intra/Interpersonal Responsibility

On completion of their course of studies, students will be able to work independently or cooperatively in a group setting on situations and issues that effect the common welfare and one's own welfare in relationship to others. The successful student will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to plan, organize, manage, and successfully complete a variety of tasks and projects within defined time lines.
- Analyze and accept responsibility for personal behaviors and interactions that reflect individual and societal ethical standards and values.
- Determine appropriate ways to work respectfully in both leadership and followership roles with people of various capabilities and orientations in order to appreciate the integrity and uniqueness of interactions among diverse social and cultural groups.
Quantitative Reasoning

On completion of their course of studies, students will be able to perform a variety of mathematical operations and to reason and draw conclusions from numerical information by:

- Illustrating basic mathematical functions i.e. addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; estimating and judging the reasonableness of numerical results; and thinking proportionally.
- Translating problem situations into symbolic representations and using symbolic representations to solve problems.
- Interpreting and applying statistical information in various forms, e.g. charts, graphs.

Technology

On completion of their course of studies, students will be able to make use of various technology-based applications by:

- Constructing products that demonstrate competency in the operation of applicable equipment and/or programs.
- Investigating and using technology to access information and to assess its reliability.
- Utilizing technology to complete various tasks applicable to lifelong skills of communication, critical inquiry, and/or quantitative reasoning.

Aesthetic Perception (Creativity and Appreciation of Imaginative Works)

Upon completion of their course of studies, students will be able to identify characteristics of and to judge qualitatively original, expressive work by:

- Identifying and applying internal criteria and/or external standards.
- Articulating the value of a work.
- Examining the impact of historical or current events on expressions of ideas and theories and judging the adequacy with which conclusions are supported by data.
- Developing personal creativity through the experience of designing or modifying a work (e.g. writing a creative story, constructing an experiment, formulating a scheme for classifying objects).
Community College of Aurora
Faculty Assessment Committee Membership
2003 – 04

Computers, Mathematics, Business, and Accounting
   Cheryll Wingard - Mathematics
   Lewis Schlossinger - Business
   Jerry Martens - Computers

Public Service, Science, and Workforce Development
   Martha Jackson-Carter - Science
   Linda Forrest - Early Childhood Education
   Shar Halford - Public Service

Humanities, Fine Arts, and Social Sciences
   Mark Kemble - Humanities
   Kathleen Cramm - Social Sciences

Deans
   Bob Fulcomer - Computers, Mathematics, Business, and Accounting
   Les Moroye - Public Service, Science, and Workforce Development
   Geoff Hunt - Humanities, Fine Arts, and Social Sciences

Co-chairs
   Kathleen Cramm - Social Sciences
   Chris Ward – Director of Grants and Planning, Social Sciences (adjunct)

Technical Advice
   Lynn Watson - Consultant
Community College of Aurora
Faculty Assessment Committee Membership
June 1, 2006

Humanities, Fine Arts, Social Sciences, Mathematics, and English
  James Gray – Mathematics
  Nancy Jackson – Communications
  Ronnie Peacock – History (adjunct)

Public Service, Science, Computers, Business, and Workforce Development
  Joni Brioli – Emergency Medical Services
  Gil Davies – Computer Information Systems
  Martha Jackson-Carter – Science
  Robin Rossenfeld – Paralegal
  Lewis Schlossinger – Business

Deans
  Les Moroye – Public Service, Science, Computers, Business, and Workforce Development
  Nancy Jackson (acting) – Humanities, Fine Arts, Social Sciences, Mathematics, and English

Co-chairs
  Kathleen Cramm – Social Sciences
  Chris Ward – Executive Director of Grants and Planning; Social Sciences (adjunct)

Technical Advice
  David Bailey – Director of Institutional Research
  Lynn Watson – Consultant

Bernice Harris, Vice President for Instruction
Introduction

The Community College of Aurora's (CCA) assessment effort provides the college faculty with information to make decisions about improving student learning.

The faculty drives assessment, at both the institutional and program levels. The assessment committee, comprised of faculty members from all divisions, determines the direction, content, and timeline for assessment. Department chairs and program coordinators collaborate with colleagues to design and implement program assessment plans. The deans and other administrators support the committee and individual program efforts.

The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (HLC/NCA) also shapes CCA's assessment plans. Based on its team's April 2003 visit, HLC/NCA requires that the college report our assessment progress in 2006. The progress must include the following:

- All programs must have an assessment plan in place that uses multiple measures including at least one direct measure of assessment of student learning.
- All programs must have begun gathering data using multiple measures including at least one direct measure.
- At least 75 percent of the programs must be able to identify specific decisions that were the direct result of data obtained from the multiple measures.
- At least 60 percent of the programs must be able to demonstrate at least two years of data gathering and decision-making.
- There must be a clear link between assessment of student learning and the overall planning process.
- There must be evidence that students have become active participants in the assessment process as demonstrated by committee minutes.
- There needs to be evidence of continued professional development to involve adjunct faculty in the assessment process.

The assessment committee has formulated the questions CCA's assessment will answer, determined which programs will implement assessment plans in 2003-04, and developed the list of contents and the schedule for the plans.

Questions CCA Program Assessment Will Answer

- "During their period of study at CCA, to what degree do all students master each of the six lifelong skills?" The skills include the following:
  Aesthetic perception  Personal responsibility
  Communication  Quantitative reasoning
  Critical inquiry  Technology skills

- "During their period of study at CCA, to what degree do occupational students master the skills and knowledge required by that occupation?"
Program Plan Content and Implementation

The faculty members (regular and adjunct) in each program will prepare a written 2003-04 program assessment plan for committee review (October), implement that plan (October – April), and report their progress to the committee (May). The committee will offer resource materials and training, and feedback on plans and reports. The deans will provide resources and support. Each program’s plan will include the following:

1. Learning Outcomes/Objectives
   - The program’s learning outcomes for each of the six lifelong skills stated as measurable objectives
   - The program’s learning outcomes for occupational skills and knowledge stated as measurable objectives (occupational programs only)

2. Measures of Student Learning
   - The direct measure(s) of student learning the program will use for each objective
   - The indirect measure(s) of student learning the program will use for each objective
   - The person(s) responsible for determining the program’s direct and indirect measures

3. Data Collection
   - How and when data will be collected using each measure
   - The person(s) responsible for collecting the program’s data

4. Data Recording and Storage
   - How the data from each measure will be recorded
   - Where and in what form the data will be stored
   - The person(s) responsible for recording and storing the data

5. Data Analysis and Reporting
   - How the data will be analyzed
   - The person responsible for analyzing the data
   - How and when the analyzed data will be reported to all the program’s faculty
   - The person responsible for reporting the data to the program’s faculty

6. Decision Making and Program Change Based on Data
   - How faculty members (regular and adjunct) will use the data to make decisions about improving student learning
   - The person(s) responsible for recording decisions about improving student learning
   - The person(s) responsible for reporting what changes, if any, faculty members make based on these decisions.

7. Student and Adjunct Faculty Involvement
   - How the program will involve students in assessment activities and decision-making
   - How the program will involve adjunct faculty in assessment activities and decision-making

August 6, 2003
Community College of Aurora

Program and Cluster Assessment Plan 2004-05

Assessment Priorities for 2004-05

- Data collection in all programs and clusters.
- Identification of multiple measures including indirect measures in all programs and clusters.
- Identification of specific data-based educational decisions in all programs and clusters.
- Simplification of plans so they are reasonable, short, and clear.
- Communication of CCA’s commitment to the Lifelong Skills and the assessment process to the college community including to all adjunct faculty members.
- Faculty explanation of the Lifelong Skills to students in every course each semester.
- Involvement of students in assessment (by the faculty assessment committee).
- Identification of assessment-related professional development needs; training to meet those needs.

Introduction

The Community College of Aurora’s (CCA) assessment effort provides the college faculty with information to make decisions about improving student learning.

The faculty drives assessment, at both the institutional and program levels. The assessment committee, comprised of faculty members from all divisions, determines the direction, content, and timeline for assessment. Department chairs, program coordinators, and other faculty leaders collaborate with colleagues to design and implement program and cluster assessment plans. The deans support the committee and individual program and cluster efforts in their divisions.

The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (HLC/NCA) also shapes CCA’s assessment plans. Based on its team’s April 2003 visit, HLC/NCA requires that the college report our assessment progress in 2006. The progress must include the following:

- All programs must have an assessment plan in place that uses multiple measures including at least one direct measure of assessment of student learning.
- All programs must have begun gathering data using multiple measures including at least one direct measure.
- At least 75 percent of the programs must be able to identify specific decisions that were the direct result of data obtained from the multiple measures.
- At least 60 percent of the programs must be able to demonstrate at least two years of data gathering and decision-making.
- There must be a clear link between assessment of student learning and the overall planning process.
- There must be evidence that students have become active participants in the assessment process as demonstrated by committee minutes.
• There needs to be evidence of continued professional development to involve adjunct faculty in the assessment process.

The assessment committee formulated the questions CCA’s assessment will answer, determined which programs and clusters will implement assessment plans, and developed the list of contents and the schedule for the plans.

**Questions CCA Program and Cluster Assessment Will Answer**

• “During their period of study at CCA, to what degree do all students master each of the six lifelong skills?” The skills include the following:
  - Aesthetic perception
  - Personal responsibility
  - Communication
  - Critical inquiry
  - Quantitative reasoning
  - Technology skills

• “During their period of study at CCA, to what degree do occupational students master the skills and knowledge required by that occupation?”

**Program and Cluster Plan Content and Implementation**

The faculty (regular and adjunct) in each program and cluster will revise their written assessment plan, implement that plan during fall and spring semesters, and report their progress -- especially in data gathering and decision-making -- to the committee at the end of each semester. The committee will offer direction, resource materials and feedback on plans and reports. The deans will provide resources, advice, and assistance with professional development. During 2004-05, the faculty in each program or cluster will carry out a plan that includes the following:

1. **Learning Outcomes/Objectives**
   - Learning outcomes for one or more of the Lifelong skills stated as *measurable* objectives
   - Learning outcomes for occupational skills and knowledge stated as *measurable* objectives (occupational programs only)

2. **Measures of Student Learning**
   - At least one direct measure(s) of student learning for each objective
   - At least one indirect measure(s) of student learning for each objective

3. **Data Collection**
   - How, when, and by whom data is collected using each measure

4. **Data Recording and Storage**
   - How and by whom the data from each measure is recorded
   - Where and in what form the data is stored

5. **Data Analysis and Reporting**
   - How and by whom the data is analyzed
   - How and by whom the analyzed data is reported to the program’s faculty

*August 24, 2004*
6. Decision Making and Program Change Based on Data
   - How faculty members (regular and adjunct) use the data to make decisions about improving student learning
   - What changes faculty members make based on these decisions.

7. Adjunct Faculty Involvement
   - How the program is involving adjunct faculty in assessment activities and decision-making

Timeline
September 15 – Revised plans for 2004-05 due to committee
September to December – Implement revised 2004-05 plans
February 1 – Progress reports to committee; emphasis is on data collection
January to April – Continue to implement 2004-05 plans
May 11 – Progress report due to committee; emphasis is on decisions made about instruction

August 24, 2004
Community College of Aurora
Faculty Assessment Committee
Programs and Clusters

Programs

AS Degree
Accounting
Computer Information Systems
Equipment Transportation Technology
Management/Marketing
Early Childhood Education
Criminal Justice/Police Academy
Emergency Medical Services
Paralegal
Biotechnology
Essential Skills for the Workplace Certificate
AA Degree (capstone course)
Film Video

Clusters

Science
Mathematics – Developmental
General Education – Speech
English Composition
Development English
General Education – Arts and Humanities
General Education – Social Sciences – Psychology
English as a Second Language
Program Assessment

Community College of Aurora
September 19, 2003

Program assessment determines...

* To what degree students during their period of study at CCA master each of the six lifelong skills.
* To what degree occupational students during their period of study at CCA master other skills required for success in the career field.

Goals of our assessment process...

* Use multiple direct and indirect measures to gather data about student learning
* Use collected data to make decisions aimed at improvements in teaching and learning
* Link assessment with college planning process
* Engage students as active participants in the assessment process
* Provide continued professional development on assessment for faculty
Program team responsibilities...

* Develop measurable learning outcomes for each lifelong skill/occupational skill
* Develop direct and indirect measures of student learning for each lifelong skill/occupational skill
* Collect, record, and store data
* Involve all regular and adjunct faculty in the assessment process
* Include students in the program's assessment process

Developing the plan...

* Keep your program plan simple:
  * Determine what you want to know and how the data gathered will be used
  * Identify and describe performance expectations using measurable outcomes
  * Choose an assessment method that allows students to demonstrate identified outcomes
  * Include both direct and indirect measures of learning
  * Establish success criteria that will be used to judge student work

Direct v. Indirect Measures...

* Direct measures assess student performance of identified learning outcomes
  * Requires standards of performance and a faculty review process that provides meaningful feedback
* Indirect measures assess opinions or thoughts about student knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning experiences, and perceptions
Some direct measures...

- Student academic portfolios
- Pre and Post Tests
- Course-embedded questions
- Comprehensive tests reflecting student outcomes for the program
- Performance on national/standardized tests
- Committee reviews of student work

Some indirect measures...

- Alumni, employer, and student surveys
- Student self-assessments of performance
- Exit interviews and focus groups
- Retention and transfer studies
- Graduation rates
- Student evaluation of instruction
- Job placement data

Assessment is a process not a product; it is a beginning not an end.

Fred Yellen
Pom State University
ASSESSMENT PLAN - SOCIAL SCIENCE CLUSTER
PSYCHOLOGY 101

This plan is the pilot project for assessing courses in Social Sciences. Eventually additional courses in Behavioral Sciences, Political Science and History will also be assessed.

Learning Outcome/Objective

Life Long Skill Assessed: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: 80% of students completing the major course assignment (e.g. research paper, critical thinking exercise or reflection paper) will achieve a minimum score of 80% on the critical thinking rubric.

Measures of Student Learning

Direct Measure: A research paper (or alternative writing assignment approved by the Department Chair) will be required of each student. A sample of these assignments will be reviewed and scored by a team of instructors who are trained to use the rubric.

Indirect Measure: All students will complete a self-assessment on critical thinking skills by the 14th week of the Psy101 course.

Persons responsible for selecting the measures: Department Chair and Psychology Assessment Team. (PAT)

Data Collection

Direct Measure: At the end of each semester, the Psychology Assessment Team will identify representative sections of Psy 101 from which to draw writing assignments. Student numbers drawn from each section will designate the students whose assignments will be reviewed. Papers will be copied by each teacher and turned in to the department chair; a number or letter will identify papers, rather than student name.

Indirect Measure: the Assessment Team will tabulate data from the Student Self-Assessment.

Responsibility: Psychology Assessment Team

Data Recording and Storage

Recording of Data: The Psychology Assessment Team will record data from the critical thinking rubric, the Student Self-Assessment questionnaire as well as comments of the reviewing team.
Storing Data: Data will be stored on an Excel Spreadsheet that will be maintained by the Department Chair.

Persons responsible for data storage: Data will be maintained by the Department Chair.

Data Analysis and Reporting

How will data be analyzed: The Psychology Assessment Team will look at the strengths and weaknesses of students' papers using the critical thinking rubric. They will also review the Student Self-Assessment questionnaires. Analysis will look for patterns in data, including which criteria received the highest scores; which received the lowest scores; what percent of students demonstrate acceptable scores on each criteria.

How will data be reported to Psychology faculty: A written report will be prepared for Psy faculty which will present the results and the team's recommendations.

Decision Making and Program Change Based on Data

Encouraging faculty to make use of data: Specific recommendations will be made to faculty based on the results of the data. Some recommendations might include: familiarizing students with the critical thinking rubric, use of the rubric in assignments throughout the semester, focusing attention on a particular characteristic of critical thinking during a semester. Faculty will be asked to submit plans for incorporating recommended changes in their classes.

Responsible persons: Psychology Assessment Team

Student and Adjunct Faculty Involvement

Adjunct faculty will be involved as members of the Psychology Assessment Team; as providers of student papers; in meetings to evaluate findings and develop plans for improvement; in revising syllabi, lesson plans, handouts, etc.

Students will be involved in: completing the self-assessment questionnaires, writing papers and using critical thinking in preparation of their papers.
Overall accomplishments: We brought together a team of 6 volunteers: 5 adjunct and 1 regular faculty. Composition Assessment Team (CAT) members have been teaching at CCA from one semester to 20 years. Our goal in reviewing a sampling of final student essays from Comp I sections was to assess how well students appeared to be developing their Comp I writing skills. Secondly, we were interested in how consistent CAT members’ scoring of the essays would be. Perhaps of greatest interest was the coming together of a diverse group, with different involvements in the College and with experience from other colleges and states, to share our evaluations, interpretations, and recommendations.

Learning outcomes/objectives and measures used: See Appendix: Writing Rubric. We selected this generalized rubric because, in requesting “final essays,” we anticipated the general rubric being more appropriate for a variety of essays than rubrics applying to specific kinds of essays. It is consistent with goals and outcomes identified for Composition by the State system (common numbering/description).

Data analysis and report to Departmental faculty: Eighteen essays were collected. CAT members read and scored the essays, and results were compared. Our initial plan predicted that 90% of the essays would earn a 3 or above (roughly equivalent to a grade of ‘C’ or better), reasoning that students who have gotten to the end of a term would mostly be passing. However, only about 60% of essays proved to be “passing.” CAT members were largely consistent in our scoring, varying by no more than one “grade,” or occasionally two. (Discrepancies were mostly attributed to the wider-than-anticipated divergence in kinds of writing—it was at times difficult to see whether a student was meeting objectives because some writings were apples; others, oranges.) Our discussions analyzing the data, including the large discrepancy between expected and actual scores, resulted in a number of observations and recommendations, detailed below.

Data, consisting of the collective score sheet, will be stored in department chair’s office. A report, based on this report, will be issued to department faculty.

Departmental faculty’s use of data: Based on the divergence of final essays—both in terms of quality and of the nature of the assignments—CAT members believe that greater coordination and consistency is needed among the ever-turning-over department faculty. To that end, our members undertook to rewrite old manuals for Comp I and II—manuals that used to be distributed to new faculty and that provided guidelines for syllabus and course construction, appropriate use of texts, recommendations for essays, evaluation criteria, etc. These manuals were outdated anyway and quit being distributed a year or so ago after being lost in one of the office-staff relocations. (Only one manual was found on a computer; the other has to be typed from scratch.) We hope to complete the rewriting and distribution of these manuals by Summer (or Fall) term so that new—and veteran—faculty can again be operating off the same set of guidelines.

How faculty make changes in instruction: Departmental meeting in Fall will clarify expectations and directions; Spring meeting will follow up. Next year’s CAT will review this year’s work, discuss its applicability, and compare our results with its findings.

Involvement of students and adjunct faculty: Five of six members of CAT were adjunct faculty. All essays were the work of randomly selected students and were submitted, on request, by randomly selected adjunct faculty. (Students and faculty became anonymous once collection was completed.) (An original intention to develop and analyze a course-specific summary sheet based on the Student Evaluation of Instruction was tabled until the new data system allows this to be done.)

Observations/Lessons learned:

* Unexpectedly wide divergence of essay assignments and quality led to the ff observations:

** One major factor contributing to the low percentage of passing scores is mechanical/grammatical problems. These problems overshadow content and organization, rendering some essays virtually unreadable. We believe this problem is partly related to the State’s having lowered significantly the Accuplacer and other
entry-level scores a couple years back. One focus for next year’s CAT will be to see whether higher Accuplacer scores, to begin this summer, will be reflected in higher essay scores. ESL issues also contributed to at least one low score (see recommendations below).

** Better communication and coordination with all English teachers is needed in order to get them on the same page. (For example, we anticipated that asking for the “final essay” of Comp I would result in mostly argumentative essays; this was not the case.) The rewriting and re-issuing of the course manuals (see above) should assist in this effort. At least one departmental faculty meeting per semester is also considered desirable, probably in conjunction with the Thursday back-to-school meetings in Fall and Spring.

**Recommendations for English Comp Faculty /Department:**

* Follow guidelines in newly revised/reissued manuals, including which chapters/assignments are appropriate for Comp I/II. Have mentors follow up with new instructors.

* Assign an argumentative paper as the last paper of Comp I, in order to synthesize Comp I skills and to provide a bridge to Comp II.

* Draw connections, in class, between Comp I and II: how what we’re doing in Comp I will relate to the future course; how what we’re doing in Comp II connects with previously learned skills.

* Avoid overly formulaic and prescriptive instruction (e.g. 5-paragraph essays; everyone doing exactly the same thing—writing-by-numbers approach). Use open-ended vs. closed prompts—guide rather than force.

* Anticipate/plan for a department meeting each semester.

**Recommendations for future CAT teams:**

* Solicit sampling of comparable papers—e.g. argumentative essays—for increased consistency in material, enabling more consistent appraisal and scoring

* Consider whether higher entry-level Accuplacer scores result in significant essay-scoring differences (see above)

* Consider whether comparing entry-level Accuplacer scores with post-Comp II Accuplacer scores, by requiring Comp II students to (re-)take the test, would be a) an appropriate measure of student learning, and b) feasible.

**Recommendations to College/Assistance needed:**

* Increase coordination between Developmental and Composition departments

** Consider having students finishing ENG 090 (re-)take the Accuplacer to see whether scores are comparable to others placing into 121.

** Increase Writing Studio hours and double-staff popular time periods. (Studio coaches report that there are often no more than 10 minutes possible with each student due to long waiting lines.) Writing Studio staff spends a lot of time on developmental issues—grammar, mechanics, etc., in addition to its traditional mandate to assist with compositional/organizational issues.

** ESL issues in student writing are unique, persistent, and unlikely to go away given the nature of first language interference in adult learners of second languages. ESL students require a much more time-intensive reading and line-by-line revising of their writing than the Writing Studio is designed to provide. More special tutoring of ESL students, probably through something other than the currently constituted Writing Studio, is recommended. Due to the changing demographics of CCA’s service area, and to the envisioned “seamless web” between ESL programs and mainstream programs, we see the ESL-in-writing issue becoming bigger and more urgent over time.
APPENDIX

GENERAL WRITING RUBRIC FOR ENGLISH COMPOSITION ASSIGNMENTS

SUPERIOR (5)

* Addresses topic fully and explores issues thoughtfully
* Shows substantial depth, fullness, and complexity of thought
* Demonstrates clear, focused, unified, and coherent organization
* Is fully developed and detailed
* Evidences superior control of diction, sentence variety, and transition; of mechanics, spelling, grammar, punctuation; of proper form and appearance

STRONG (4)

* Clearly addresses topic and explores issues
* Shows some depth and complexity of thought
* Is effectively organized
* Is well-developed, with supporting detail
* Demonstrates control of diction, sentence variety, and transition; may have a few minor flaws in mechanics, spelling, grammar, etc.

COMPETENT (3)

* Adequately addresses the topic and explores the issues
* Shows clarity of thought but may lack complexity
* Is organized
* Is adequately developed, with some detail
* Demonstrates competent writing; may have some flaws in form, grammar, mechanics, etc.

WEAK (2)

* May distort or neglect part of topic/issue
* May be simplistic or stereotyped in thought
* May demonstrate problems in organization
* May have generalization without supporting detail or detail without generalizations; may be undeveloped
* May show patterns of flaws, or consistent major flaws, in language, sentence structure, mechanics, etc.

INCOMPETENT (1)

* Fails in its attempt to discuss the topic
* May be decidedly off-topic
* Is so incompletely developed or disorganized as to suggest or demonstrate incompetence
* Is wholly incompetent mechanically
Community College of Aurora

Faculty Assessment Committee 2003-04 Report

in preparation for the

2006 Monitoring Report to
the Higher Learning Commission (NCA)

July 2004
Community College of Aurora
Faculty Assessment Committee 2003-04 Report
in preparation for the
2006 Monitoring Report to the Higher Learning Commission (NCA)
July 2004

I. Overview

The report of the 2003 Higher Learning Commission’s (HLC) Evaluation Team indicated that the Community College of Aurora (CCA) should revise its Assessment Plan of Student Academic Achievement. The Evaluation Team called for a monitoring report in 2006 and listed seven specific areas in which the college must show improvement by the time it submits the report.

In response to the Evaluation Team’s report, CCA strengthened its Faculty Assessment Committee by ensuring that each of the college’s three divisions had two active faculty representatives and by naming committee co-chairs. The committee met frequently in the summer of 2003 and has met regularly since that time. Early in 2004, the committee engaged a consultant to work directly with program and cluster leadership on technical issues such as data collection, storage, and analysis.

In this document, the committee describes CCA’s significant accomplishments in assessment during 2003 – 04, the major challenges for 2004 – 05, and the successes and challenges in each of the seven areas where the Evaluation Team called for improvement. Attached to the report are examples of various assessment documents (committee minutes, for example); complete copies of the documents are filed in the co-chair’s office.

Significant Accomplishments in 2003 – 04

Among the collective accomplishments of the many CCA faculty and staff members working on assessment of student learning during the past year are the following:

- The Faculty Assessment Committee developed a revised assessment plan for the college during the summer of 2003. Among the committee’s decisions were that
  o all programs and course clusters (related courses that do not constitute a program) are to assess students’ mastery of the Lifelong Skills; and
  o occupational programs are to assess occupational skills in addition to the Lifelong Skills.

- The Committee drew up a list of 24 programs and clusters that were to begin assessment activities in 2003-04. Deans selected faculty members to lead the assessment effort for each program or cluster.
• Faculty leaders from the programs and clusters developed assessment plans, implemented pilot assessment projects, and submitted progress reports.
  o Faculty leaders began to work together at a meeting August 21 and many developed plans with their teams at an all-day workshop September 19.
  o The Assessment Committee began reviewing plans in mid-October and provided feedback through face-to-face meetings with faculty leaders or via a committee representative.
  o Faculty leaders submitted progress reports May 1 with follow-up reports, if needed, on June 15. The Committee reviewed all reports and gave suggestions and comments to each program or cluster.

• College administrators supported the Assessment Committee and its activities throughout the year.
  o The three deans regularly attended committee meetings, worked with faculty members in their divisions to implement assessment, and invited faculty leaders to deans’ meetings to give assessment updates.
  o The Vice President for Student Services and Instruction attended meetings and supported the Committee’s work with advice and resources.
  o The President attended key meetings and events, emphasized the importance of assessment publicly, and hosted the assessment leadership for a year-end barbecue at her home.

• The Assessment Committee regularly informed the college community about assessment and the Lifelong Skills through presentations at general faculty meetings, a webpage, and presentations at the Instructional Leadership Team meetings.

Major Challenges for 2004 – 05

Committee discussions and an analysis of the program/cluster reports indicate that many challenges remain, both for the Committee and for faculty leaders. Among the major challenges are the following:

• To make progress in the seven areas identified by the HLC Evaluation Team including collecting data in all programs and clusters, identifying decisions that are made based on the data, and getting students involved in assessment.

• To continually improve the quality of the technical aspects of the assessment plans: measures, data collection, data storage, and data analysis.

• To integrate the professional development needs for assessment (how to assess, how to implement decisions, Lifelong Skills) with other professional development priorities, including those supporting student retention.

• To communicate the assessment process and CCA’s commitment to the Lifelong Skills to the college community, particularly to the many adjunct faculty members.
• To make committee requests to the programs and clusters reasonable and concise and to ask the programs and clusters to develop documents that are short and clear.

• To reach a decision on whether or not all programs should eventually assess all six Lifelong Skills (in 2003-04 the committee left it up to each program).

• To provide training on how to tailor assessment to include special needs students.

II. Progress on the Seven Monitoring Report Expectations

1. All programs and clusters must have an assessment plan in place that utilizes multiple measures including at least one direct measure of assessment of student learning per program.

A. Successes in 2003 – 04

• The Faculty Assessment Committee requested plans from two degree programs, thirteen occupational programs, and nine course clusters. Over the year, all programs and clusters, with one exception, submitted plans to the committee. All the plans had at least one direct measure of student learning.

• All the programs and clusters submitted progress reports in May and June except for the cluster which had not submitted a plan, a program which had recently submitted its plan, and two occupational programs including one that did not conduct classes during the year.

• The plans and reports indicate that faculty leaders are using a wide variety of direct measures to assess student learning:

  o The most widely used direct measures are rubrics to assess research papers, course papers, specialized papers (analysis of a work of art, for example), oral presentations, or acquaintance with technology.

  o Another common type of direct measures are faculty-designed tests that assess knowledge learned in specific courses, knowledge reflecting recommendations of professional groups (bar associations, for example), Lifelong Skills such as critical inquiry, and occupational skills.

  o A third type of direct measures are standardized assessment tests including the Accuplacer (English Accuplacer, WritePlacer), an ESL listening test, a national certification exam for Emergency Medical Providers, and a state exam for law enforcement professionals.
Other direct measures included the taking of attendance, capstone projects assessed by the instructor, and portfolios for the first project in an introductory course and for the final project in a second-year course.

- Some faculty leaders have included indirect measures in their plans. Among these measures are self assessment of Lifelong Skills, student focus groups, student evaluation of Lifelong Skills, and student evaluation of instruction.

B. Challenges for 2004 – 05

The Faculty Assessment Committee and program/cluster leadership face the following challenges in the year ahead:

- To revise and improve plans based on their initial experiences in the spring of 2004.
- To refine measures based on pilot project experience and technical assistance given by the Committee and professional development activities.
- To ensure that all programs and clusters have at least one indirect measure.
- To work with the college’s Office of Institutional Research to have student evaluation of instruction data available for all programs and clusters that will use it for an indirect measure.

2. All programs and clusters must have begun gathering data using multiple measures including at least one direct measure per program.

A. Successes in 2003 – 04

- Many programs and clusters began to collect data in the spring of 2004, establishing resting practices and developing rubrics and other measures. The Committee encouraged them to start with a pilot project, even if small, in order to prepare for full data collection in 2004 – 05.
- Some programs and clusters reported lessons learned from their 2004 pilot projects and/or outlined “plans of action” in the progress reports. For example, the English as a Second Language cluster determined that because many students are relatively unfamiliar with standardized tests, the cluster’s faculty members need to give students practice with such multiple choice tests in coming semesters if assessment measures are to be effective.

B. Challenges for 2004 – 05

- To begin collecting assessment data in all programs in the fall of 2004.
• To begin using multiple measures including at least one direct measure in all programs and clusters in 2004 – 05.

3. Programs and clusters must be able to identify specific decisions that were the direct result of data obtained from the multiple measures.

A. **Successes in 2003 – 04**

• A very limited number of programs identified decisions made on the basis of their spring 2004 assessment efforts. The English Composition cluster, for example, decided to rewrite its Composition I and II manuals for new faculty members.

B. **Challenges for 2004 – 05**

• To identify specific decisions that are a direct result of the assessment efforts in all programs and clusters in 2004 – 05.

4. Programs and clusters must be able to demonstrate at least two years of data-gathering and decision-making.

A. **Successes in 2003 – 04**

(See 2 and 3, above)

B. **Challenges for 2004 – 05**

(See 2 and 3, above)

5. There must be a clear link between assessment of student learning and the overall planning process.

A. **Successes in 2003 – 04**

• Assessment is one of the college’s six priority initiatives for 2004-05. Developing the initiatives, which are based on the college’s goals and mission sources, is CCA’s major planning effort each year.

• Assessment is a component of the work plans that all regular faculty member must submit each year to their deans.

B. **Challenges for 2004 – 05**

• To successfully implement the assessment priority initiative and to document that success.
6. There must be evidence that students have become active participants in the assessment process as demonstrated by committee minutes.

A. **Successes in 2003 - 04**

- The Committee began to discuss strategies for involving more students and asked programs and clusters to report on such involvement in their progress reports.

- Occupational programs have students on their existing advisory committees.

B. **Challenges for 2004 – 05**

- To develop a strategy to involve students with the Faculty Assessment Committee.

- To develop strategies to involve students, particularly in programs and clusters where most students are part-time and all are non-residential.

- To develop strategies to more fully utilize students on existing program review committees in the occupational programs.

7. **There needs to be evidence of continued professional development specifically with regard to involvement of part-time faculty in the assessment process.**

A. **Successes in 2003 – 04**

- The Committee engaged Lynn Watson as a consultant to work individually with program and cluster-level leadership on measures, data collection, data storage, and data analysis.

- Several adjunct faculty members (in Early Childhood Education, for example) worked on their program or cluster assessment efforts as part of their year-long project to move to pay Level III.

- The Assessment Committee held a day-long workshop for faculty from the programs and clusters in September 2004.

B. **Challenges for 2004 – 05**

- To provide professional development activities that support both assessment and college efforts to improve student retention and graduation rates.

- To provide professional development activities that improve faculty members' skills in areas highlighted by the pilot implementation (data analysis, development of rubrics and instructor designed tests).
III. Summary

The Faculty Assessment Committee, with support from the college administration, has revised CCA’s assessment plan and has begun to implement the course of action suggested by the HLC Evaluation Team in April 2003. College faculty members, both regular and adjunct, have made significant progress in assessment in more than 20 programs and clusters with written plans, spring 2004 pilot projects, and progress reports. The entire college assessment team is now preparing for the challenges of 2004 – 05 and the years beyond.

Addenda

- College Assessment Committee Membership 2003 – 04 (attached)
- College Assessment Plan 2003 – 04 (attached)
- Program/Cluster Plans 2003 – 04 (sample attached, complete set on file)
- Progress Reports May/June 2003 (sample attached, complete set on file)
- Minutes 2003-04 (sample attached, complete set on file)
- Training Materials 2003 – 04 (sample attached, complete set on file)
Agenda for Leadership Meeting on 8/25

2:00 – 2:15  Greg  Recognition of accomplishments for 2003-4

Programs/clusters developed and carried out assessment plans
Data collected from most plans
Final reports developed for programs/clusters
Commitment of faculty leadership has been outstanding
Development of web site
First year effort is ahead of many other schools
People made it happen
We’ve learned from results this past year

Committee has met over summer to evaluate where we are and where we want to be going forward

2:15 – 2:30  Chris  Copy of report for 2003-4
Copy of committee feedback on each plan

2:30 – 2:45  Kathleen  Plan for 2004-5 – 7 priorities (handout)

- Data collection in all programs/clusters
- Identifying multiple measures including indirect measures
- Identifying educational decisions made based on data
- Communicating the assessment process and CCA’s commitment to Life Long Skills to the college community including adjunct faculty
- Simplifying plans so they are reasonable, short and clear
- Identifying and meeting professional development needs for assessment
- Getting students involved in assessment – on Assessment Committee

2:45 – 2:55  -  Introduce Lynn – available to help
Timetable for Fall/Spring 2004-5
Faculty Assessment Committee
Review of Revised Program/Cluster Plans

Program/Cluster: ___________________________ Date of Review: ________________
Reviewer: ________________________________

Does the revised plan include:

1. Learning outcomes for one or more of the Lifelong skills stated as measurable objectives?  Yes  No
2. Learning outcomes for occupational skills and knowledge stated as measurable objectives?  Yes  No
   (occupational programs only)
3. At least one direct measure(s) of student learning for each objective?  Yes  No
4. At least one indirect measure(s) of student learning for each objective?  Yes  No
5. How, when, and by whom data is collected using each measure?  Yes  No
6. How the data from each measure is recorded?  Yes  No
7. Where and in what form the data is stored?  Yes  No
8. The person(s) responsible for recording and storing the data?  Yes  No
9. How and by whom the data is analyzed?  Yes  No
10. How and by whom the analyzed data is reported to the program’s faculty? Yes  No
11. How faculty members (regular and adjunct) use the data to make decisions about improving student learning? Yes  No
12. What changes faculty members make based on these decisions? Yes  No
13. The person(s) responsible for recording decisions and changes related to improving student learning? Yes  No
14. How the program is involving adjunct faculty in assessment activities and decision-making? Yes  No
15. In your opinion, is the revised plan one the program or cluster can implement and complete in 2004 – 05? Yes  No

Your Recommendation:

16. Should the Faculty Assessment Committee accept the revised plan? Yes  No
17. If no, what revisions need to be made?

18. Comments or suggestions for the Committee:
FAQ – FACULTY ASKED QUESTIONS

I. Teaching Philosophy
A. What are Lifelong Skills?
B. What is assessment of academic achievement?
C. How does assessment impact my teaching?

II. Managing Courses
A. What information is required in my syllabus?
B. When do I turn the syllabus in?
C. How do I order text books?
D. What is the College grading policy?
E. How do I enter grades or get my class roster?
F. How do I change a grade?
G. When are grades due?
H. When/where do I turn in my gradebook?
I. What is a “no show” and how do I report it?

III. Managing Classrooms
A. How do I order A/V equipment?
B. Where do I make copies?
C. How do I get a key or a room unlocked?
D. Who is my Administrative Assistant?
E. How can I improve my teaching?
F. What if I want a guest speaker?
G. What if I want to take the class on a field trip?
H. What are my office hours?
I. What is my responsibility to students with disabilities?
J. What technology is available to students with disabilities?
K. What if I am going to miss class?
L. What if I want a substitute?
M. What is the college policy on disruptive student behavior in class?
N. What is the college policy on children in class?
O. How can the college testing center help me with make up tests?
P. How will I be evaluated?
Q. What is a split section?
R. What if a student can not speak English well enough to succeed?
S. What is FERPA and how does it affect my teaching?

IV. Instructional Resources and Support (outside the classroom info)
A. Where do I send my students for additional help?
B. What Library services does the college provide?
C. What if a student needs professional counseling?

V. Faculty Development
A. What are my faculty development requirements?
B. What is the faculty development philosophy?
C. Where do I find faculty development opportunities?
D. What are the credentialing requirements for regular occupational faculty?
E. What are the conference attendance and travel guidelines at CCA?
F. What is mentoring at CCA?

VI. Payment information
A. How do I increase my pay?
B. When do I get paid?

http://www.ccaurora.edu/facultyfaq/
Assessment of Student Learning
Community College of Aurora March 4, 2005

Visiting colleagues from FRCC
- Pat Meade, Director of Institutional Research
- Nancy Casten, Mathematics Department Chair
- Liliana Castro, Faculty – Spanish/ESL
- Dr. Glenn Good, Dean of Instruction
- Dr. Phyllis Abt, Dean of Instr. Services

Four Reasons to Assess Student Academic Achievement
1. To measure student learning and teaching effectiveness
2. To monitor continuous improvement of teaching and learning
3. Accountability to our students, our community, CCCS and CCHE
4. As a requirement of the Higher Learning Commission – “assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning”

HLC’s position on ASL (Assessment of Student Learning)
- Under the new criteria, ASL is more important than ever
- ASL cuts across all 5 criteria
- Colleges must engage in ASL to meet the commission’s mission (assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning)
- Assessment of other college units should be in support of student learning

Why are we here?
- To provide feedback on your implementation of assessment of student learning in preparation for submission of your follow-up report to the HLC

Our observations in perspective
- Remember that there is not a right way and a wrong way to conduct assessment.
- Each college’s approach must be appropriate for its own unique mission and culture.
- There are, however, some commonly accepted practices.

Strengths of CCA’s ASL
- Assessment is clearly faculty driven with a large contingent of faculty and adjunct participating.
- Programs and clusters have been clearly defined providing a good correlation between the data of similar programs/departments.
- Lifelong skills for the college are well defined on the web site with measurable objectives for these skills.

Strengths (continued)
• All programs and clusters (except one) have submitted plans and are collecting data
• Reports follow a clear and simplified form for easy reference and analysis
• Progress report summaries show recommendations and comments by the assessment committee for further refinement of plans
• 2004-2005 plans use more direct measures than in 2003-2004

9 Strengths (continued)
• Many of the CTE programs are using standardized/national tests to collect data which can be compared to standard benchmarks
• Deans do a good job following up to assure that plans and reports are submitted
• The college web page is an excellent reference regarding assessment concepts and goals

10 Strengths (continued)
• The English Composition plan demonstrates a good model for using the data to contribute to decisions about instructional change
• The Science plan is also exemplary. Objectives list the skills being measured along with expectations. This plan uses both direct and indirect measures and lists suggested instructional improvements based upon this data. Adjunct faculty are involved in the process.

11 Areas for Improvement
• Many plans and reports do not show how data will be used to improve instruction.
• There must be a clear link between the assessment and planning process.
• Some assessment tools were changed when desired results are not achieved. Instead, review the tools and verify the validity of each question rather than change the tool. Maintain consistency!

12 Areas for Improvement (con't)
• Specific skills and desired learning behaviors are not stated.
• Benchmarks are not clearly defined in most plans.
• Goals and measures for Lifelong Skills should be institution-wide, not by program (General Education).
• Rubrics should be developed for use across disciplines

13 Areas for Improvement (con't)
• Many program/clusters show little involvement of the adjunct faculty, students or external constituents.
• Include online learning assessment for all disciplines/programs that use that delivery mode.
• Provide professional development for adjunct faculty regarding the ASL process

14 Areas for Improvement (con't)
• Include both direct and indirect measures. Make certain that measures are valid (e.g., the types of questions asked of students)
• Verify the validity of assessment tools. (What types of data are being
sought, do the students have a stake in the outcome, are the results comparable to some standard data, and is the evaluation of the data consistent?)

15 Areas for Improvement (con’t)
- Deans and chairs should be more involved in analysis of data
- Practice continuous improvement of instruction based upon assessment findings
- Expand the use of data from assessment of student learning in making budget decisions

16 Advice
- Continuous attention to ASL is difficult, look for ways to encourage ongoing progress
- Recognize that there will be ebbs and flows
- Become a learning institution of assessment processes
- Encourage dialogue with other institutions
- Consider participation in the HLC assessment forum
- Volunteer to present at conferences

17 Don’t give up!
Sustain your work.
Our student’s success is worth the continued effort.

18 Best wishes as you continue your assessment efforts!
June 22, 2005

Linda, Greg, Les, Bob, Bernice:

At its meeting today, the Faculty Assessment Committee discussed the upcoming semester and now proposes the following events and invites your participation:

Wednesday, August 24, 2005 Noon to 2:00 p.m. – A lunch meeting for the committee, program/cluster/department chairs, and administrators to review what we’ve accomplished at CCA on assessment since the March visit, summarize what we learned from the progress reports, and look to what we’d like to do in 2005-06.

Thursday, August 25, 2005 during the early evening faculty meeting – A 15-minutes time slot to present to faculty – particularly to adjuncts – a quick update on assessment and some ideas for how they can begin to integrate what the assessment data is showing into improving teaching and learning in their courses.

Thursday, August 25, 2005 during the evening division/department meetings – Encouragement from deans and department chairs for faculty to participate in assessment and in using assessment data to improve teaching and learning.

Tuesday, November 22, 2005 for faculty in-service day – The Faculty Assessment Committee would like to have the responsibility for organizing the faculty in-service day around assessment.

Please add these dates to your calendars and let us know if you see barriers to implementing any of these plans. The committee will work out the details of the events at its July 6 and July 20 meetings.

Thanks!

Chris
Community College of Aurora

President’s Assessment Update
Thursday, April 13, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Classroom Building 207A

AGENDA

1. Welcome

2. Brief summaries by programs and clusters:
   - What data has the program/cluster collected about student learning?
   - What have you learned from the analysis of the data?
   - What changes have you made to instruction based on what you learned?

3. Discussion: Overall status and impact of assessment of student learning at CCA

4. Closing Comments

Programs/clusters doing assessment (2006-07):
AS Degree
Accounting
Computer Information Systems
Equipment Transportation Technology
Management/Marketing
Early Childhood Professions
Criminal Justice
Emergency Medical Services
Public Service
Paralegal/Mediation
Biotechnology
Essential Skills for the Workplace
AA Degree (capstone course)
Mathematics – Developmental and 120/121
General Education – Speech
English Composition
Development English
General Education – Arts and Humanities
General Education – Social and Behavioral Science
English as a Second Language
SSAH Division Meeting
November 3, 2004

Present: Michele Amon, Eileen Blasius, Kent Bowers, Linda Bradford, Jack Buschmann, Kathleen Cramm, Sue Gibbons, Maria Halloran, Bernice Harris, Elizabeth Hirsh, Geoff Hunt, Mark Kemble, Susan Kirk, Marian Lauterbach, Michael Osborne, Cynthia Trujillo, and Sue Waldheim

Regarding assessment, all the work everyone has done is wonderful and is appreciated. Assessment is a process: if you find it doesn’t work well for your program, or it is too burdensome, revise it and make it more manageable.

Bernice informed everyone that this meeting was going to have one agenda item – the Humanities, Fine Arts and Social Sciences capstone course. The floor was given to Kathleen Cramm so that she could talk about the capstone course. Kathleen distributed the final plan of the Capstone Course Assessment plan dated June 2004.

Kathleen presented an overview of the capstone and let the group know that the following people were part of the multi-disciplinary team: Elizabeth Hirsh, Joni Briola, Wayne Gilbert, James Gray, and Jacques Hutchinson. This group observes the student presentations. The students present papers that are considered controversial offering the pro and cons of the topic. The students also participate in field work, write papers on creative topics, do a self-assessment on life-long skills, and do readings, short papers before they present their major (final) paper.

The handout explains the six learning outcomes identified by course.

- Students demonstrate competence in Communication skills. 90% of students will score 80% or better on the communication grading rubric for the final project.
- Students will demonstrate competence in critical inquiry skills. 90% of students will score 80% or better on the critical inquiry grading rubric for the final project.
- Students will demonstrate competence in technology skills. 100% of students will demonstrate the ability to use technology to conduct research and prepare their final paper.
- Students will demonstrate competence in quantitative reasoning. 80% of students will use and interpret quantitative data, i.e. charts, graphs, statistics as part of their final project.
- Students will demonstrate competence in aesthetic perception. 90% of students will receive a score of 80% or better on a reflection paper written about a creative presentation or reading.
- Students will demonstrate competence in personal and interpersonal responsibility. 100% of students will receive a score of 80% or better on the scoring rubric for their final self-assessment on Life Long Skills.
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<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Prg</th>
<th>Ctr</th>
<th>F03</th>
<th>S04</th>
<th>F04</th>
<th>S05</th>
<th>F05</th>
<th>S06</th>
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67 percent (14 of 21) have collected data for two or more years
90 percent (19 of 21) have made decisions based on data
<table>
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<th>CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING WRITTEN WORK AND FINAL PROJECT</th>
<th>CAPSTONE COURSE</th>
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<td><strong>WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>CRITICAL THINKING</strong></td>
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<td>1. Holds reader's attention</td>
<td>1. Synthesize information and insights into coherent solution/analysis</td>
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<td>1-2- 3- 4- 5- N/A</td>
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<td>2. Use standard English grammar effectively</td>
<td>2. Identify uncertainties and complexities inherent in research/data</td>
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<td>3. Accurate, concise, complete information</td>
<td>3. Demonstrate assessment of multiple view points related to topic</td>
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<td>5. Provides Appropriate summary</td>
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<td>6. Language appropriate to college paper; sensitive to ethnicity/gender</td>
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Scoring: 5: Exemplary; exceeds expectations. 4: Above average. 3: Acceptable level of performance. 2: Less than acceptable. 1: Significantly flawed. N/A: not required or evaluated.
Faculty Assessment Committee  
Review of Revised Program/Cluster Plans  
EMP Program – Fall 2005 Semester

1. How and when did you collect data during the fall semester of 2005?
   - Data is collected from “National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians” (NREMT) exam results. This exam is a required event for all Colorado EMT-Paramedic graduates.

2. Where and in what form are you storing your assessment data?
   - When received, the data will be stored in hard copy which is sent by the NREMT.
   - The NREMT data is entered into a spreadsheet which has been developed by Lynn Watson.

3. How are you analyzing your data?
   - The data is analyzed within 7 cognitive sub-emphasis areas as well 12 separate psychomotor skill sets.
   - The department is breaking cohort groups into the following 3 categories:
     - Curriculum evolution = involving 4 cohorts spread between 41 students.
     - Curriculum finalization = involving 4 cohorts (2 currently completing cohorts spread between 21 students with 6 of these students still in process and moving toward fulfilling requirements for eligibility to test, 1 that has just begun this semester with 19 students, and 1 that will begin in the summer semester).
     - Simulation curriculum = involving future cohorts that are fully benefiting from simulation based training.

4. What results are you getting as you analyze the data from indirect measures?
   - The department is working with Lynn Watson to integrate this information into the spreadsheet that has already been developed for the department.

5. What results are you getting as you analyze the data from your direct measures?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Written Exam</th>
<th>Airway &amp; Breathing</th>
<th>Cardiology</th>
<th>Trauma</th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>OB/Pediatric</th>
<th>EMS Operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum evolution 41-students</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum finalization cohorts 21 students (6 still in process)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in percentage</td>
<td>+3%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>+1%</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The direct cognitive measures are showing generalized improvement within all areas of the program. The program is still experiencing 100% student success within this area.
### Practical Exam Number of Retests

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum evolution cohorts 41-students</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum finalization cohorts 21 students (6 still in process)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Areas requiring emphasis “X”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- The areas with an “X” will require emphasis and revision within the curriculum. The program is still experiencing 100% student success within this area.

6. How are you sharing these results with faculty (regular and adjunct) in your program or cluster?
   - The information is shared with all faculty during biannual meetings which are mandatory to attend. If an instructor is unable to attend, information is sent to them in the form of our EMP program assessment plan.

7. What changes are you making to instruction based on your assessment results?
   - It appears that the increased emphasis in cardiology has improved student cognitive performance by 4% points. Practical exam performance within this area has been dramatically improved between cohort groups.
   - Mid-term practical exam testing that was implemented has helped identified students requiring remediation resulting in overall practical performance improvement.
   - To address the slight drop in practical airway management, the program has applied for a waiver with the State of Colorado to increase airway management opportunities for our students by utilizing the simulation environment and the high-end ALS manikins for practicing and refining critical airway skills.
   - Trauma practical skills will be addressed by redirecting a greater number of lab hours towards this area and integrating trauma scenarios into the simulation studio.
   - Student test results will continue to be monitored to identify if the program changes have improved student performance.

8. What comments or suggestions do you have for the assessment committee?
   - None at this time.
SCIENCE DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT FALL 2005

Learning Outcomes:
1) Students will demonstrate competence in communication.
2) Students will demonstrate competence in critical inquiry.

Measures used for each objective:
1) Critical Inquiry: The direct measure of student learning is a twenty-five question multiple choice assessment test. The test consists of five parts: variable relationships, graphical analysis, reading passage analysis, data analysis and scientific analysis.

2) Communication: The direct measure of students learning is a brief opinion paper students write in response to one of three different scientific statements.

The above two assessments, critical inquiry and communication, are given as a pre-test at the beginning of the semester in entry level classes, and at the end of the semester in exit level classes.

3) Indirect Measure: Students in exit level science classes will be surveyed regarding their exposure to, and usage of the life long skills in their science classes. This is given as a part of post-testing.

Benchmarks for 2005 – 2006
The science department assessment exam is given to students taking a wide variety of science classes, both majors and non-majors. These classes emphasize material covered on the science assessment exam to varying degrees. Consequently, setting a common benchmark for the science department would be unusable. Instead we are looking for improvements in the score students receive on the exam as they proceed through a particular class sequence. The science department would like to see an average improvement of 20% on the exam score over a 2-semester sequence.

Data Collection:
The science department gave the pre-test to 247 students in eight different entry level science classes: Astronomy 101, Geology 111, Chemistry 101, Chemistry 111, Biology 111, Biology 201, Physics 111, and Physics 211. The post-test and the life long skills exposure survey will be given at the end of the semester.

Data Recording and Storage:
The critical thinking portion is graded for each individual student. Results are averaged for each science class and recorded as the percentage of students answering each question correctly. Results are then tabulated question-by-question, averaged for each topic area, and finally averaged for the entire exam. These results are tabulated for each science class taking the exam. The communication portion of the exam is graded using a rubric on a scale of 1 to 5. Average scores on the communication portion are tabulated for each science class taking the exam. The survey is a series of 5 questions regarding the lifelong skills that students respond to from strongly agree to strongly disagree, given with the posttest. The science department chair stores all the exams as well as the tabulated scores.

Data Analysis and Reporting:
Results are disseminated to all science faculty at the end of each semester. Assessment meetings are held at the end of the spring semester to analyze the results of the testing for the completed academic year.
Decision Making and Program Change Based on Data:
Curricular changes were made during summer 2005 and put into place for the Fall 2005 semester. The changes in curriculum were made in targeted classes: BIO 105, BIO 111, BIO 112, CHE 101, CHE 111, and CHE 211. The goal is to expand changes in curriculum to include all areas of the science department over time. It was decided that the most effective place to introduce changes would be in the laboratory curriculum. A variety of instructors teach these classes, each with their own lecture style and class structure, making any consistent changes to the lecture portion of the class difficult. The laboratory manuals on the other hand are written by the faculty and used in all classes, this means that any changes made to the laboratory manuals will reach all students. The results of the assessment exams were analyzed by topic area and individual questions. Based on the analysis the labs were modified to include additional use of tables, graphs, and equations. Material was added to the labs that require the students to analyze this additional material critically. The department chair is storing detailed descriptions of the changes made to the lab manuals. The lifelong skills exposure survey indicates that a high percentage of students feel that they are using the lifelong skills in their science classes. However, the percentage of students who are aware of the lifelong skills as a commitment of CCA is much lower. All science faculty are being encouraged to not just include the lifelong skills in their syllabus, but to discuss this material with their students on the first day of class.

Adjunct Faculty Involvement:
Adjunct faculty participate in giving the assessment exam, at meetings analyzing the data, and in assessing the new laboratory curriculum.
Associate of Science Degree Assessment - Fall 2005

Learning Outcomes:
1) Students will demonstrate competence in the lifelong skills of critical inquiry, quantitative reasoning, aesthetic perception, interpersonal responsibility, communication, and technology.

Measures used for each objective:
The goal is to include all of the lifelong skills in the assessment of the Associate of Science Degree though currently students are not being assessed in all areas.
1) Associate of Science degree students are assessed at the end of their last semester using the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) exam. CAAP is a five-part exam designed by ACT specifically for Associates Degree students. The five parts include: reading, writing skills, writing essay, mathematics, science, and critical thinking. Currently students are taking three of the five parts, reading, science, and critical thinking. This exam was given for the first time in the Spring of 2005, 21 of the 33 A.S. degree graduates took the exam. Eventually, the assessment will expand to include all five parts. This is the direct measure of assessment.
2) Indirect Measure: Students taking the CAAP exam will complete the science department lifelong skills exposure survey. This was not done in by the Spring 2005 graduates, but will be completed by the graduates beginning in Fall 2005.

Benchmarks:
Scores for the CAAP tests are reported on a scale that ranges from 40 (low) to 80 (high). Additionally, two types of normative information are provided. One type is based on the CAAP scores of students at your institution, Local Norm, and is reported as the percentage of students receiving that students’ score or below. The other type is based on the CAAP scores of sophomores from institutions nationwide, National Norm, this is also reported as the percentage of students receiving that students’ score or below. Since the A.S. degree is college wide and not specific to one area or program I think that benchmarks should be determined using input from all departments. Results from Spring 2005 graduates are being prepared for dissemination throughout the college. The plan is to distribute a report to all areas of the college and request input. Once this input has been received benchmarks will be set for each of the areas being assessed.

Data Collection:
The CAAP exam was given to 21 of the 33 A.S. degree graduates. Dates for giving the exam to Fall 2005 graduates have already been set, and potential graduates are being notified of the requirement and the testing dates.

Data Recording and Storage:
The exams are graded and scores, local norms, and national norms determined by ACT. This data will be tabulated and summarized for distribution throughout the college. The science department chair will store the original data and all summaries and reports based on the data.
Data Analysis and Reporting:
A summary of the results will be prepared and distributed to all programs and clusters throughout the college. Programs and clusters will be encouraged to use the results as part of their assessment process.

Decision Making and Program Change Based on Data:
The CAAP test is meant to assess student achievement after the completion of an Associates Degree. The results are meant for use by all areas of the college, to aid in the improvement of student learning throughout the entire degree program. It is not possible for one program or department to make changes to a degree in isolation, nor is it possible to direct college wide changes. Decision-making and program change should be left to individual areas. Each time the CAAP test is given all of the data and a summary report will be disseminated to programs and departments that are a part of the A.S. degree. All areas will be encouraged to incorporate the results into their assessment plan and report any changes and decisions made based on the data. The science department chair will prepare the summaries and reports and keep a record of decision-making and program changes.

Adjunct Faculty Involvement:
Adjunct Faculty will be involved as part of programs and departments using the data in their assessment process.
## CAAP Test Results - Spring 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student number</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Norm %</td>
<td>National Norm %</td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5897</td>
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<td>99</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7236</td>
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<td>5766</td>
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<td>4149</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Norm % is based on the CAAP scores of students at your institution; it is the percentage of students at or below score.

National Norm % is based on the CAAP scores or sophomores from institutions nationwide; it is the percentage of students at or below score.

Scores for the tests are reported on a scale that ranges from 40 (low) to 80 (high) for the total test score.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community College of Aurora
Program and Cluster Assessment
Progress reports due to the Faculty Assessment Committee February, 2006

Program or Cluster: ___ AA Degree

Leader: Kathleen Cramm Date: 2/8/06

1. What were your assessment benchmarks for 2005?

Learning Outcome 1) Students will demonstrate competence in Communication Skills. 90% of students will score 80% or better on the Communication grading rubric for the final project.

Learning Outcome 2) Students will demonstrate competence in Critical Inquiry Skills. 90% of students will score 80% or better on the Critical Inquiry grading rubric for the final project.

Learning Outcome 3) Students will demonstrate competence in Technology Skills. 100% of students will demonstrate the ability to use technology to conduct research and prepare their final paper.

Learning Outcome 4) Students will demonstrate competence in Quantitative Reasoning - 80% of students will use and interpret quantitative data, i.e. Charts, graphs, statistics as part of their final project.

Learning Outcome 5) Students will demonstrate competence in Aesthetic Perception 90% of students will receive a score of 80% or better on a reflection paper written about a creative presentation or reading.

Learning Outcome 6) Students will demonstrate competence in Personal and Interpersonal Responsibility. 100% of students will receive a score of 80% or better on the scoring rubric for their final self-assessment on Life Long Skills.

2. How and when did you collect assessment data during the Fall semester of 2005?

Data was collected from faculty evaluation of student presentations, faculty evaluations of student research papers, and from a focus group with students in the day class.

3. What methods have you used to analyze the data you collected?

Results of faculty scoring of papers and presentations have been compared semester to semester and against benchmarks. A more detailed report has been prepared for Division and program leadership. See the attached report for additional detail.

4. What are the results from your analysis of the data you collected about indirect measures in Fall, 2005? (Please attach a one-page summary of your results.)

Feedback from student focus group is attached in the extended report.

April 14, 2005
5. What are the results from your analysis of the data you collected about direct measures in Fall, 2005? (Please attach a one-page summary of your results.)

The overall trend in direct results appears promising as scores have generally risen over the last two semesters. A semester to semester comparison of results from the direct measures is included in the extended report attached.

6. How have you shared and discussed these results with faculty members (regular and adjunct) in your program or cluster?

These results of prior semesters have been shared in the General Faculty meeting and with faculty in Division meetings. Results from Fall, 2005 will be shared with Division leadership and then with faculty along with recommendations for changes to teaching.

7. What specific changes have you made to instruction based on your assessment results and discussion of those results with your colleagues? (Please list the changes.)

The following changes were made in Spring 2005 semester:
- Faculty were assigned as advisors to students to help with the structure and presentation of their projects.
- The major research assignment was changed to increase critical thinking by having students develop a persuasive argument to support their perspective on the controversial topic.
- Students attended the CCA Theater Production and wrote a reflection paper using aesthetic criteria.
- Students were required to use Power Point technology in their presentations.

8. What further improvements do you plan to make to instruction in your program or cluster based on your assessment results? (Please list the changes.)

These will be determined after review of the Fall, 2005 data. We will continue with faculty advisors and the changes listed above.

9. What resources have you spent (approximate) on your assessment efforts during 2004-05?

Approximately $800 was spent on pay for adjunct faculty to attend presentations and to read and score papers.

10. What additional resources do you need to implement the changes to instruction that you are making based your assessment results?

On-going budget for faculty advisors, readers and reviewers.
11. What comments or suggestions do you have for the faculty assessment committee?

None at this time

12. How many
   - Regular faculty members are participating in your assessment effort?   3   
   - Adjunct faculty members are participating in your assessment effort?    18   
   - Students are participating with faculty in your assessment effort?     0   

April 14, 2005
Program/Cluster Assessment Summary
For Higher Learning Commission Monitoring Report

Program/Cluster _Accounting_ Leader Lewis Schlossinger_ Date May 15, 2006

*Please answer briefly, with a few words or, at most, a sentence, for each question.*

1. What instruments/measures have you used to collect assessment data for your program/cluster during 2005-06?
   - Direct: Pre-test used in Principles of Accounting, ACC 121.
   - Direct: Post-test used in Auditing, ACC 232.
   - Indirect: Student Self Evaluations of Life Long Skills, used in both ACC 121 and ACC 232.

2. How have you analyzed your 2005-06 data?
   - Direct: We analyzed the data by comparing the test scores from the Pre and Post tests for Critical Thinking and Quantitative Reasoning changes.
   - Indirect: From the Student Self Evaluations of Life Long Skills we compared these test scores with the previous years test scores.

3. What results do you have from the analysis of your 2005-06 data?
   - From our results by comparing several semester tests scores the analysis indicates that more improvement is needed in the areas of Critical Thinking and Quantitative Reasoning. This is based on the low Pre & Post Average indicator test score results over the last several years.

4. What specific changes have you made/do you plan to make to instruction based on your 2005-06 assessment results?
   - To further improve Quantitative Reasoning, our instructors this Fall 06 will add to the Auditing Syllabus, ACC 232, more computational problems requiring the application of accounting concepts. To improve Critical Thinking skills, our instructors this Fall 06 will emphasize more case studies in all of our Principle of Accounting, ACC121 classes.

5. How have you tied your assessment results to your program/department's budget or resource allocations? (Please give an example)
   - No

6. For which of the following semesters have you collected and analyzed assessment data?
   - Fall 2003 _X_
   - Spring 2004 _X_
   - Fall 2004 _X_
   - Spring 2005 _X_
   - Fall 2005 _X_
   - Spring 2006 _X_

7. What highlights or accomplishments from your program/cluster can we include in the report?

Major highlights from the results obtained:
- Have documented and confirmed that the accounting program has been effective in providing content and lifelong skills to students taking accounting classes at CCA
- Have established a maturing base of data to document program improvements and trends
- Have established and initiated a continual review of the accounting program assessment plan
- Have involved adjunct faculty in the assessment process through participation on the committee, generation and review of test questions, email reports of assessment results and received feedback, discussions at faculty meetings, and informal encounters
- Have made conscientious efforts to increase faculty and student awareness of the Lifelong Skills and assessment process through meetings, master syllabi, and informal discussions
- Have asked selected faculty to administer the tests and student self evaluation in their individual classes

We recognized that some changes are needed and will be made this Fall 06. These changes will take place in the Fall 06 Principles of Accounting, ACC 121 and the Auditing, ACC 232 syllabi.

Additional highlights and elements to begin incorporating immediately, based on results indicated below and not requiring a full “Program” change:
- Improve Critical Thinking and Communication skills by emphasizing applications of accounting theory through the use of more case studies
  - Critical thinking - Pre-avg: 55.6 points; Post-avg: 64.5 points; Growth: 15.2%
    - Student Self Evaluation average: 3.4 on a scale of 1 to 4
  - Communication - Pre-avg: 5.7 points; Post-avg: 6.3 points; Growth: 3.4%
    - Student Self Evaluation average: 3.2 on a scale of 1 to 4
- Improve Quantitative Reasoning skills by integrating more computational problems requiring the application of accounting concepts
  - Quantitative Reasoning - Pre-avg: 28.4 points; Post-avg: 35.6 points; Growth: 23.6%
    - Student Self Evaluation average: 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 4
- To require all instructors to emphasize all of the Lifelong Skills, especially Personal Responsibility by adhering more strictly to attendance and due date policies
  - Personal Responsibility - Pre-avg: 0.8 points; Post-avg: 1.2 points; Growth: 35.0%
    - Student Self Evaluation average: 3.6 on a scale of 1 to 4
- To continue to increase faculty awareness of the assessment process and lifelong skills through informal discussions and at faculty meetings as was accomplished during the fall, 2005 meeting
- To instruct faculty members (regular and adjunct) regarding the use of assessment data to make recommendations for improving student learning in each class with the assessment committee
- To reconsider test questions and point assignments incorporated in the assessment plan in view of results collected
- To continue to emphasize the need to increase Technology Skills and the need of using a computer classroom for ACC 121
- To identify ways to measure Aesthetic Perception, possibly by having students “draw up” financial statements
1. **Learning Outcomes and Objectives**

The assessment we undertook during the Spring '06 semester involved the following course areas within the department: Art Appreciation, Music Appreciation, Literature, Humanities, and Introduction to Theatre.

*Lifelong skill assessed:* Aesthetic Perception

*Learning Outcome Objective:* 75% of students will score a 3 or higher in each of the three areas defined in the Aesthetic Perception Rubric, attached.

*Learning Outcome Achieved:*

2. **Measures of Student Learning**

*Direct measure:* During the second half of the semester, students in selected sections of our focus courses were required to attend a cultural event (poetry reading, play, concert, or other) and were required to submit a reaction paper. The requirements for the paper were tailored to elicit demonstration of each student’s level of ability in each of the areas of the Aesthetic Perception Rubric. The faculty teaching the selected sections then formed an Evaluation Committee to evaluate student papers, and selected student papers were evaluated by all faculty on the committee.

*Indirect measure:* Teachers of participating sections will write a critical reflection report detailing their own observations of student achievement, including for example techniques that seemed more or less successful, how and why; impressions of student mastery that may not have shown up in the papers or their evaluation; any other ideas or observations about student learning of, and instructor facilitation of, the evaluation criteria.

*Responsible Person(s):* Faculty, either adjunct or regular, who teach the sections chosen to participate in the assessment. All faculty teaching relevant courses will be offered the option of participating.

3. **Arts and Humanities Department progress during Fall 2005**

- During the fall semester, faculty of the department met several times to work through our objectives and methods, and to refine our assessment plan. As a result of these meetings, the following steps have been taken:

  a. Whereas the earlier model of our plan involved only Literature and Humanities courses, the plan has now expanded to include Music, Art and Theatre as well.

  b. The Literature faculty selected and instituted use of a new textbook for Lit 115.
c. As a result of reflection by faculty on what the department wishes to accomplish and how, the chair has reduced the number of sections of Humanities offered by the department.
d. The plan has been further revised and refined.

   ➢ Data Collected
     o Direct Measure: As shown in the table below, 53% of students attained the benchmark score of 3 or better.

     | Score | #   | %   |
     |-------|-----|-----|
     | 0-1   |     |     |
     | 1.1-2 |     |     |
     | 2.1-3 | 12  | 46% |
     | 3.1-4 | 11  | 42% |
     | 4.1-5 | 3   | 11% |

     o Indirect Measure: A summary of the essential points that emerged from Faculty critical reflection reports:
       a. The focus of teaching has often been on developing student awareness of objective standards of critical evaluation, which has contributed to relatively weak subjective evaluation among students. This assessment experience has led instructors to rethink the balance of that focus.
       b. Many instructors commented on a sharpened awareness of the difference between aesthetic perception which we measure in this assessment, and creative expression which we do not. Our department hopes to cultivate both, and we note the lack of attention to the latter in the college’s Lifelong Skills.
       c. Faculty commonly had difficulty separating students’ aesthetic perception skills from their written expression skills. We will continue to work on building both, while being aware for the purpose of this assessment that we are striving to measure aesthetic perception specifically.
       d. Instructors will be working to develop new ways of teaching students to practice the integration and synthesis of objective standards and subjective experience. Many expressed interest in increasing student opportunities to exercise such skills in class, rather than simply teaching about them.

We found that there was a wide range of Rubric score results for some of the selected papers that were evaluated by all seven evaluators. Detailed discussion of the causes and significance of those disparate results, and reflection on the overall scores obtained, has led to changes to the Assessment Process itself, and to changes to pedagogy. We have also developed a tentative timeline for the process going forward.
The following are changes to the Assessment Process:

a. We have further refined the Aesthetic Perception Rubric.

b. We have improved our understanding of the difference between using the rubric to measure students’ progress in aesthetic perception as opposed to evaluating overall quality of student papers.

c. We have further refined our definition and understanding of aesthetic perception.

d. Each faculty member has refined the assignment he or she is giving students to elicit the Direct Measure papers to ensure that they are student-outcome driven.

The following pedagogical changes have been or will be instituted by participating faculty:

a. Faculty will refine their assignments with a new awareness of the impact of wording and structure of expectations on student outcomes. Many faculty participants expressed a new understanding of how to communicate expectations effectively, and of what kind of expectations to communicate.

b. Faculty also developed awareness of the need to actively cultivate an atmosphere of permission and confidence for enabling students to discover and express subjective standards in aesthetic evaluation.

c. Faculty deepened our understanding of the difference between what we formerly referred to as “internal” vs. “external” standards, and as a result changed our terminology to “subjective” vs. “objective” standards. Many student papers showed stronger awareness of the objective standards, but weak subjective standards and little to no integration of the two. Instructors increased awareness of and clarity about these two realms, and will intensify focus on helping students learn to identify and express subjective standards, and to integrate them with the objective standards for a more sophisticated level of aesthetic critical judgement.

The calendar of events for the next semester of assessment is as follows:

a. **August 23, 2006**: Assessment Committee will meet to review (and practice using) the revised Aesthetic Perception Rubric, and to review revised paper assignments.

b. **Two weeks before end of fall ’06 semester**: Reminder to Assessment Committee that papers need to be collected and copies made for the rubric assessment before they are graded.

c. **End of fall ’06 semester**: Chair and coordinator will meet for initial processing and redistribution of papers for rubric evaluation. Also, instructors will submit their reflections and observations regarding the assessed course to the chair (indirect measure).
d. Although the papers won't be "rubricked" until the beginning of the following semester, a committee will meet to select participants for the next phase of the assessment, and train them for their assessment process?

e. **Beginning of spring semester 2007:** Instructors will receive packet of papers for rubric evaluation.

f. **Two or three weeks into spring '07:** Full assessment committee will meet to compare and analyze results of rubric evaluation, to share results of the indirect measure, and to make necessary revisions to the evaluation rubric and/or curricula, etc.
Get on Board With Assessment Knowledge is Power

NCA Expectations
For all programs/clusters

- Assessment plan in place
- Use multiple measures of student learning
  - At least one direct measure
  - At least one indirect measure
- Collect assessment data
- Identify specific decisions made as a direct result of data
- 60% of Programs/clusters have 2 years of data

NCA Expectations

- Clear link between assessment and college planning process
- Evidence of student participation
- Evidence of Professional Development

Accomplishments 2004-5

- Emphasis on data collection for all plans
- Continued improvement in assessment plans
- Use of a wide variety of measures
- Feedback to leadership on plans/reports
- Some plans include indirect measures

Accomplishments 2004-5

- Some programs/clusters reported considerable progress in data collection
- At least 60% will have two years of data collection
- A few programs identified specific changes to teaching
- Committee reviews plans and provides feedback to programs/clusters

Accomplishments 2004-5

- Assessment was one of six CCA goals for 2004-5
- Assessment is component of work plans
- Added to Adjunct job description
- Student Involvement is Assessment Committee responsibility
### Accomplishments 2004-5
- Training for program/cluster leadership
- Assessment Information in Faculty Handbook
- Assessment Information in New Faculty Orientation
- Making Assessment a Reality: An Online Workshop developed for adjunct faculty
- External review and recommendations
- Consultant available for data gathering

### Challenges for 2005-6
- Continue to improve plans based on semester to semester learning
- Every program/cluster identifies specific changes to teaching as direct result of assessment
- Clear and Precise Benchmarks
- All programs include at least one Indirect measure

### Challenges for 2005-6
- Student evaluation of instruction data available to all programs/clusters
- Find ways to overcome barriers to successful data collection
- Use assessment in departmental/divisional planning
- Provide professional development activities to improve skills

### Challenges for 2005-6
- Continue to involve adjunct faculty
- Continue professional development

### THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE

PRE AND POST TESTS GIVEN FOR MAT 030, 060, 090, AND 106
INDIRECT MEASURE CAME FROM STUDENT EVALUATIONS

**PROS:**
- Get tons and tons of data
- The ability to control the questions being asked
- Easy to make the post test a part of the class final
- Collection of indirect measure was easy
THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE
PRE AND POST TESTS GIVEN FOR MAT 030, 060, 090, AND 106
INDIRECT MEASURE CAME FROM STUDENT EVALUATIONS
CONS:
• Get tons and tons of data
• Never quite sure how useful the data gathered is
• Collection of indirect measure is not so easy

SURVEY OF ALGEBRA
PRE TEST
Solve the equation
1. \(2(x - 2) = 3(x + 2)\)
2. \(x^2 + 9x - 22 = 0\)
Solve the problem
3. A biologist collected 326 fern and moss samples. There were 66 fewer fern samples than moss samples. How many fern samples did the biologist collect?
Graph the line described
4. Through the point \((0, 2)\) and with slope \(m = -\frac{1}{2}\)

WHAT WAS THE RESULT, YOU ASK???
LOUSY
TONS OF WORK, BUT NOT A SINGLE IDEA FOR IMPROVEMENT

THE WAY THINGS ARE
STUDENTS ARE RETESTED WITH ACCUPLACER WHEN FINISHED WITH MAT 106
INDIRECT MEASURE COMES FROM A SURVEY IMBEDDED WITHIN ACCUPLACER
CONS:
• Not nearly as much data
• No control over the content of the test
• Difficulty in getting the students to take the test seriously

ACCUPLACER ONLINE
If \(|x - 2| = 5\) and \(x < 0\), then what is \(x\)?

a. \(x = 7\)
b. \(x = -7\)
c. \(x = -3\)
d. \(x = -5\)
The area of a circle with radius \( r \) is \( \pi r^2 \). If \( P \) is the center of a circle with radius \((x+3)\), what is the area of the circle?

- \( \pi (x^2 + 9) \)
- \( \pi (2x+6) \)
- \( \pi (x^2 + 3x + 9) \)
- \( \pi (x^2 + 6x + 9) \)

The volume of a cylinder is \( V = (\pi r^2)h \).
If the volume of a cylinder is \( V = \pi (x^3 - x^2 - x + 1) \) and the \( r = (x - 1) \), what is the \( h \)?

- \( x-1 \)
- \( x+1 \)
- \( x-3 \)
- \( x+3 \)

WHAT WAS THE RESULT, YOU ASK???

GROOVY

LOTS AND LOTS OF SURPRISES TO APPROACH OUR FACULTY WITH

QUESTIONS RAISED
- HOW DOES THE INSTRUCTOR'S PREDICTOR OF SUCCESS COMPARE WITH THE ACCUPLACER PREDICTOR?
- HOW ACCURATE IS ACCUPLACER?
- DO THE STUDENTS HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN A MATH CLASS?
- WHAT ABOUT INSTRUCTORS?
- WHY DON'T THINGS CONNECT?

The accuplacer exam placed me into a class that was...

- Too easy
- Just right
- Too difficult

My previous math class(es) at CCA prepared me for math 106?

Agree

Disagree

Not Sure

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree
Science Department Assessment

Assess students in all science classes using the same assessment tool.
- Astronomy
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Geology
- Physics

Lifelong Skills
- Aesthetic Perception
- Communication
- Critical Inquiry
- Interpersonal Responsibility
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Technology

Test Logistics

Many science classes are a 2 semester sequence.

Pre-Test is given at the beginning of the first semester of the sequence.

Post-Test is given at the end of the second semester of the sequence.

Pre- and Post- are the same test.

Written Communication

3 Paragraph Essay
Science Topic
Why does an ant in the soil on the south side of your house not live in the same weather conditions that you perceive outside?

Graded on a rubric of 1 to 5

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

- Add more classes to the testing group
- Get together with faculty and brainstorm

What percentage of the problems were you able to complete successfully if given a minor hint or a good example to follow?
- a. 90-100%
- b. 80-89%
- c. 70-79%
- d. 60-69%
- e. Less than 60%
Critical Inquiry

25 Multiple Choice Questions
- Reading Analysis
- Graphical Analysis
- Data Analysis
- Variable Relationships
- Scientific Analysis

Critical Inquiry

Questions from a science point of view, but not content based questions.

NO: What are the products of cellular respiration?

YES: Researchers conducted experiments studying the effects of mean daily temperature on scavenger consumption of bison carcasses. Below is a bar graph of their results.

Which of the following is not supported by the results?

Data Collection & Analysis

Give Assessment Exams
- 200 Pre-tests
- 100 Post-tests

Tabulate Results
- Question: BIO 111 CHE 111
- Reading Passage: Analysis of % of students responding correctly
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3

Analysis of Results
- How do students do on individual and groups of questions?
- What kind of improvement is observed over a course sequence?

USING THE DATA!!!

Laboratory Curriculum

What did we change?

More data and graphical analysis
More open ended questions
More analysis oriented questions.

What was the density of your wooden block?

If unknown to you the wooden block used in the experiment was hollow, what error would this introduce into your density calculations? Explain.
Assessment within the Emergency Medical Services Department

Cognitive Assessment Parameters
- Cognitive
  - Airway & breathing
  - Cardiology
  - EMS operations
  - Medical
  - Obstetrics/Pediatrics
  - Trauma

Motor Skill Assessment Parameters
- Motor Skill
  - Cardiology dynamic & static
  - Intravenous therapy
  - Oral testing A & B
  - Patient assessment trauma
  - Pediatric intrasosseous & ventilation
  - Spinal immobilization
  - Adult ventilation

Cognitive Analysis
- 4 Cohort groups
- 36 Students analyzed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Category</th>
<th>Average Scores</th>
<th>1st Pass</th>
<th>2nd Pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airway &amp; Breathing</td>
<td>74.69%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardiology</td>
<td>76.67%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMS Operations</td>
<td>84.23%</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>78.46%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>OB/Pediatric</td>
<td>83.61%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td>81.71%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians
- National certifying organization which is required for all new paramedic graduates

Testing Category Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Category</th>
<th>1st Pass</th>
<th>2nd Pass</th>
<th>3rd Pass</th>
<th>4th Pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiology dynamic</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiology static</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intravenous therapy</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV medications</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral station - A</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Oral station - B</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Patient assess. Trauma</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pediatric ID</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pediatric ventilation</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Spinal immobilization</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult ventilation</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult vent. dual lumen</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes Within Curriculum

- Airway & Breathing
  - Integrated one full day of airway management taught by Dr. Pineda

- Cardiology
  - Integrated practicum exercises into classroom activities
  - Use practicum exercises as a terminal testing event
Faculty In-Service Day

Tuesday, November 22nd, 8:30 a.m.
CentreTech Campus in the Rotunda.

- Keynote by P. Bruce Uhrmacher, University of Denver
  Transforming Teaching and Learning: Aesthetics of Education
- Join your peers and attend workshops on assessing student learning and other instruction-related topics
- Live entertainment by CCA faculty, staff and students
- Adjunct faculty members are paid to attend
- Continental breakfast and boxed lunches will be provided

Please RSVP to Sue Waldheim (303) 361-7405 or Sue.Waldheim@ccAurora.edu by Thursday, November 16, 2005. Doing so will ensure there are enough lunches for all who attend.

Organized by the Faculty Assessment Committee
Community College of Aurora
Faculty Assessment Committee Presents
Faculty In-Service Day
November 22, 2005

Agenda

8:30   Continental Breakfast -- Wes Geary, piano, and JoJo Connor, vocalist

8:55   Welcome: Linda Bowman and Faculty Assessment Committee

9:00   “Transforming Teaching and Learning: An Aesthetics of Education”
P. Bruce Uhrmacher, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, School of Education, University of Denver

9:45   Questions and discussion

10:15  Aesthetic perception exercise -- Rich Italiano

10:30  Break -- Dennis Rawley, piano

10:45  Workshops -- Session I
   Redefining Instruction: Aesthetic Considerations in Teaching and Learning -- P. Bruce Uhrmacher (C107A)
   Conversations with Students about Assessment -- Ronnie Peacock and Lynn Watson (Rotunda)
   Activities to Teach Lifelong Skills -- James Gray and Lewis Schlossinger (C207A)
   Introduction to Assessment for Those New to CCA -- Kathleen Cramm and Chris Ward (C207B)

11:45  Lunch in the Rotunda -- Todd Bergren, guitar

12:30  Workshops -- Session II
   Occupational Programs and Lifelong Skills-- Robin Rossenfeld and Bob Matoba; Joni Brioli, contributor
      (C107A)
   The Magnificent 250: How this One Lil Ole Cohort Keeps Us Alive -- Libby Broughton and Wayne Gilbert
      (Rotunda)
   Activities to Teach Lifelong Skills -- James Gray and Lewis Schlossinger (C207A)
   Assessing Critical Thinking -- Kathleen Cramm (C207B)

1:30   Break and in-service day evaluation (Rotunda)

1:45   Clash of the Titans: The Muscle of Math versus the Magic of Music -- Stephanie Fisher and James
      Gray (Rotunda)

2:00   Workshop: Banner for Faculty -- Libby Broughton and Todd Bergren (S204)

2:45   Program and cluster assessment meetings (scheduled by individual programs or departments)
      Other faculty development activities

Throughout the day:
   Drawings for copies of This Side of the Sky
   Scenes from Shakespeare
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT
WORKSHOP - ONLINE
Community College of Aurora
Assessment Committee

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT
WORKSHOP - ONLINE

Welcome to Faculty Development Assessment Workshop - Online.
We are looking forward to working with you. Cheers and best wishes.
Kathleen and Geoff.

please read & scroll down

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

MAKING ASSESSMENT A REALITY: AN ONLINE WORKSHOP

In this semester long interactive faculty development online-workshop participants will learn why it's important to assess our teaching; learn about CCA's college-wide assessment plan, learn what each department is doing about it and participate in and/or evaluate their departmental assessment plans.

COURSE WEBSITE:
http://www.ccaurora.edu/assessment/XXXX

FACILITATOR

http://www.ccaurora.edu/assessmenttraining/
Faculty Assessment Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 15, 2006
3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Lowry Campus
Building 903 Room 214

AGENDA

1. Semester Progress Reports Follow up

2. Student Assessment Fair -- March 9

3. Student Involvement Report from Lynn and Ronnie

4. Minutes

5. Other Items

6. Next Meeting -- March 1 at CentreTech (note APC has different schedule)
Faculty Assessment Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 7, 2005  
CentreTech Campus C207B

In attendance: David Baily, Kathleen Cramm, James Gray, Nancy Jackson, Ronnie Peacock, Robin Rossenfeld, Chris Ward, and Joni Briola  
11:00 a.m. – Noon

Faculty In-Service Day Follow-up  
Summary of evaluations and related comments:
- The committee spent a short period of time discussing the feedback gathered from participants at the in-service day. All agreed it was a positive experience that needs to be repeated at some time in the future (but not the week before Thanksgiving!) with a session discussing exercises teachers are using effectively in the classroom to teach the life-long skill.

Findings about students
- Lynn and Ronnie showed us a draft of a questionnaire they had created with the student feed-back they received at the faculty in-service. A total of seven students attended: six were from Kathleen’s capstone class and received extra credit for attending. While it was a small group, it was felt that the information gathered was an important step in deciding how to involve students in the assessment process. Lynn and Ronnie found that students did not initially state that they knew anything about the LLS, but after being led in discussion, realized that they had, just not using the same terminology. The decision now is whether future meetings with students should be to dialogue or gather data, but all agreed for the need to continue with focus groups and to try to incorporate a similar process into the upcoming student fair.

Committee Meeting Days and Times for Next Semester
- The committee is going to try to meet after the academic planning meetings (4:00 – 5:00 PM) starting January 18th, 2006.

Semester Reports for February (Due February 6th, 2006)
- The committee discussed a draft of a memo to be sent out asking for final progress reports in February. There were some minor recommended changes. We also discussed what things we could do to mentor and help the programs who are having problems. Suggestion included a possible series of workshops that might include a report writing workshop.

Student Assessment Fair
- Tentative dates and locations were discussed for the upcoming student fair. A tentative date of March 9th, 2006 in the rotunda is being finalized.

Meetings prepared by Joni Briola
Student Assessment Fair

Notes from January 18 Discussion

Thursday, March 9, 11:30 – 1 p.m. at CentreTech in Student Centre
--Rotunda available to later in afternoon
Time blocked out is one of the “Pizza with President” sessions
--Angie Tiedemann to attend February 1 to help plan
Set up room with six tables each representing one Lifelong Skill
A poster session will go with each Lifelong Skill table
Two people from the committee will develop and run an activity (sample test, grade sample essays, etc) at a table related to that table’s Lifelong Skill
--Bring activity plan to February 1 meeting
Encourage faculty to ask students to attend and give extra credit or bring entire class
-- Develop publicity plan with Liz VanLandingham’s help at February 1 meeting
Develop a “bingo” or punch card for students to get marked at each table
This is opportunity to get Lifelong Skill worded consistently

Table teams:
Communications: Nancy Jackson, Robin Rossenfeld
Technology: George Lesko, Ronnie Peacock
Critical Thinking: Kathleen Cram, Lewis Schlossinger
Aesthetic Perception: Lynn Watson, Ronnie Peacock
Personal Responsibility: Martha Jackson Carter, Joni Brioli
Quantitative Reasoning: James Gray, George Lesko

Comments from Nancy and Robin

We need clarification on the assessment day fair tables. We have too many ideas, and are having too much fun.
1. What is the goal of the presentation/activity?
   a. To be aware of assessment
   b. or the skill/knowledge/topic
2. How related to the assessment process should it be?
3. How much time for each?
4. Will there be a structure of groups that move together or will it be individuals wandering?
5. Do we need to have a presentation or science fair display?
6. We want to know what others are planning so we can copy--- or not.
Goal 1. Utilize assessment of academic achievement data to make improvements in teaching and learning.

Goal 2. Provide high quality instruction that responds to Aurora-area employment and transfer needs.

Goal 3. Improve the visibility and perception of the college and its programs.

Goal 4. Increase access to education at the college, placing particular emphasis on reaching underserved populations.

Goal 5. Strengthen developmental education and English as a Second Language programs and services.

Goal 6. Increase the quality and use of instructional technology.

Goal 7. Strengthen partnerships with business, P-12 and higher education, community groups, and government.

Goal 8. Recruit and retain the highest quality faculty and staff.

Goal 9. Extend and enhance professional development and advancement opportunities for faculty and staff.

Goal 10. Increase retention and completion rates for students who seek degrees and certificates.

Goal 11. Transform student services to improve student satisfaction and success.
Ward, Chris

From: Goode, Greg
Sent: Friday, October 14, 2005 8:49 AM
To: CCA, Distribution List
Subject: Assessment Conference

Faculty: We are up to 140 registrations for the conference October 20 and 21. **THUS, IT HAS BEEN MOVED TO THE FORUM.** We will use the Rotunda and C207A & B as the two additional presentation rooms.

Agenda:

**Thursday, October 20:**
8:00 – 8:30  Continental Breakfast – FORUM
8:30 – 8:40  Welcoming Comments – Dr. Linda Bowman, President, CCA FORUM
8:40 – 9:00  Introductions & Overview FORUM
9:00 – 9:50  **Keynote:** “Making a Difference in Student Learning: Assessment as a Core Strategy”, Phyllis Abt, Dean of Instructional Services, FRCC FORUM
10:00 – 10:50 Presentations (choose one):
   ____ Assessment for Beginners – an overview, Lisa Donaldson & Nancy Meiklejohn, Faculty/Assessment Co-chairs PPCC
   ____ and Jane Abbott, Dean, PPCC. FORUM
   ____ Course Level Assessment Strategies. Connie Strand, Carol Miller, Ruth Brancard, CCD ROTUNDA
   ____ Assessing Critical Thinking, Kathleen Cramm, CCA C207 A &B
11:00 – 11:50 Roundtable: Biggest Assessment Challenges ROTUNDA
12:00 – 1:00 Catered Lunch ROTUNDA
1:00 – 1:50  **Keynote:** AQIP and Assessment, Dr. Steve Spangehl, HLC, FORUM
1:50 – 2:15  Follow-up Panel Presentation: The Journey from PEAB to AQIP. Panel members: Terry Reeves, RRCC; Judith odzeller, Dean, PCC, Cindy Mihelich., Department Chair, PCC. FORUM
2:30 – 3:20  Presentations (choose one):
   ____ Using Assessment Data to Improve Teaching and Learning, Mary Hart, Faculty Assessment Coordinator, Laramie
   ____ County Community College, ROTUNDA
   ____ Models of effective feedback loops (into budget and planning but also back to classroom and students). Phyllis Gertge
   ____ & Betty McKie, Instructional Deans, MCC. C207A & B
   ____ Program Assessment, Sara Harris, Accounting Faculty, Faculty & Assessment Committee Chair, ACC. FORUM
3:30 – 4:20  Best of the Best: Model Assessment Plans Part I FORUM

**Friday, October 21:**
8:00 – 8:30  Continental Breakfast. FORUM
8:30 – 9:30  **Keynote:** Best Practice - General Education Gains for Graduates of a Community College, Laura Jensen & Pat Meade, FRCC. Both have presented this topic at several national conferences. FORUM
9:30 – 10:30 Presentations (choose one):
   ____ Integration of Assessment and Institutional Planning, Marsi Liddell, President, AIMS Community College, Robert
   ____ Philbin, Faculty/Assessment Committee Chair TSJC. ROTUNDA
   ____ Best Practice: Assessment in Career and Technical Education, Sherri Schneider, CCCS C207A & B
   ____ Measuring the effectiveness of Developmental Courses, Arshi Nisley, Developmental English, Laramie County CC
   ____ FORUM
10:30 – 11:30 Best of the Best: Model Assessment Plans Part II. FYI: We will put these in a binder for each institution. FORUM
11:30 – noon: Evaluations/Plan next year. FORUM

Greg Goode
Vice President, Instruction and Student Services
Community College of Aurora
303 360 4703
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF AURORA
JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Adjunct Faculty

REPORTS TO: Dean or Program Chair or their designee for the area(s) in which the faculty member teaches.

SUPERVISES: No supervisory responsibilities associated with this position.

BASIC FUNCTIONS: Provide instruction in assigned class(es) in coordination with your program supervisor and established course model syllabus. Assist the department with the department assessment plan as appropriate.

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Understand and uphold the values and mission of the college.
   a. CCA is a teaching and learning institution; we specialize in student success. Faculty must be more than subject area experts; they must be effective, developing teachers.
   b. CCA faculty members are knowledgeable about pedagogy, methods, retention, diversity, assessment, college and community life and leadership.
   c. Life-long learning is placed at a high value for all CCA faculty, staff and students.

2. Teach assigned classes, promote program(s), and advise students in accordance with CCA’s policies and mission to include:
   a. Start and end classes promptly at scheduled times and calendar start/stop dates; arranging for substitutes in accordance with CCA policy.
   b. Teach assigned curriculum and make maximum use of required texts and materials as directed by your Chair or program coordinator.
   c. All websites must be Section 508 compliant. For training on how to ensure your website is accessible, contact the Distance Learning Director at 303-340-7221.
   d. For those classes which include a laboratory component, conduct all lab experiences in a professional manner to include:
      1. Insuring availability of supplies
      2. Complete understanding of all aspects of the lab procedures
      3. Proper and prompt clean-up of the laboratory
   e. Promote a professional image and standard by abiding with all relevant college, division, and SBCCOES policies.

3. At the first class meeting, provide and review with students:
   a. A syllabus for the course that includes all required components of the course model syllabus.
   b. The CCA Lifelong Skills and how they relate to the course outcomes.
   c. The course attendance and grading policies.
   d. The “Other” section found in the Model Syllabus under “Section I” (the accessibility information must be included in your class syllabus) for students with accessibility needs to include how to call the Accessibility Services Office for registration and help information.

rev. 20 Oct 2004
4. By the end of the first week of class, email the division administrative assistant with a copy of the course syllabus(bi). By the end of the second week of class, or prior to the census/refund date on the top of your roster, email a list of class "No-Shows" to the division administrative assistant or program chair and the registrar.

5. On a weekly basis, check your voice, box, and electronic mail, responding promptly to messages.

6. The instruction in the course and the evaluation of student performance is in accordance with the student learning outcomes as stated in the course syllabus.

7. Participate in the CCA assessment program as requested by your Chair or Assessment Coordinator.

8. Conduct and ensure student evaluations of instruction are submitted to the respective administrative assistant before any deadline in accordance with established policies and procedures.

9. Maintain accurate records of attendance and grading of students, promptly entering grades in Web for Faculty and submitting/emailing a copy of your final grades and required records to the division administrative assistant according to published deadlines and CCA policy.

10. Attend, as frequently as possible, paid departmental/divisional/instruction-wide meetings as called by the Department Chair, Dean or Vice President for Instruction; particularly Fall/Spring General Faculty Orientation.

11. Participate in faculty development activities as recommended by CCA's Professional Development Plan.

   NOTE: Adjunct instructors must complete the "New Faculty Orientation" course during their first year of instruction at CCA.

QUALIFICATIONS: See CCA's Professional Development Plan:

Note: Adjunct faculty may teach a maximum total of 25 credit hours during any one academic year (fall and spring semesters). For the summer term, the maximum is ten (10) credit hours. Division Deans may grant waivers to this policy as necessary.

I have reviewed this job description with my department chair/coordinator and agree to comply with all the requirements therein.

CCA Chair/Coordinator

Adjunct Instructor

Department

Date

Revised 6/28/05

rev. 20 Oct 2004
Capstone Class – Report for 2 year period
Spring, 2004 – Fall, 2005

Introduction

The Capstone Class, HUM 289, is the program evaluation for students graduating from CCA with an AA degree. The class has been required of AA graduates since 2003; data has been maintained since Spring, 2004.

The class measures student achievement in all 6 of CCA’s Life Long Skills. The class requires that students choose a research topic, conduct both field and library research, prepare a presentation and a formal research paper. Student work is assessed by faculty members who are not instructors in the class; faculty attend student presentations, read student papers and, now, act as advisors to students in developing their research plans and final products. There has been on-going discussion in the Division about whether to retain the Capstone Class and whether the class is the best way to measure outcomes for AA graduates. This issue has not been finally resolved.

Learning Outcomes – Benchmarks – Direct Measure

1. Students will demonstrate competence in Communication Skills. 90% of students will score 80% or better on the Communication grading rubric for the final project.

2. Students will demonstrate competence in Critical Inquiry Skills. 90% of students will score 80% or better on the Critical Inquiry grading rubric for the final project.

3. Students will demonstrate competence in Technology Skills. 100% of students will demonstrate the ability to use technology to conduct research and prepare their final paper.

4. Students will demonstrate competence in Quantitative Reasoning - 80% of students will use and interpret quantitative data, i.e. Charts, graphs, statistics as part of their final project.

5. Students will demonstrate competence in Aesthetic Perception - 90% of students will receive a score of 80% or better on a reflection paper written about a creative presentation or reading.

6. Students will demonstrate competence in Personal and Interpersonal Responsibility. 100% of students will receive a score of 80% or better on the scoring rubric for their final self-assessment on Life Long Skills.
Indirect Measure

Students will participate in a focus group led by one of the team evaluators to discuss how their education at CCA has contributed to the development of each of the Life Long Skills.

Results of Direct Measure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Written Comm's</th>
<th>Oral Comm's</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Quant Reasoning</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Aesthetic Percept</th>
<th>Personal Resp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall, 2005</td>
<td>4.09**</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>4.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring, 2005</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring, 2004</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* see graph attached
**based on 5 point scale

Scores on each measure fell in Fall, 2004 and then trended somewhat higher in the following two semesters. The benchmark is that students will generally score at 80% or achieve a score of 4.0 out of 5. The data alone would seem to indicate that the AA program at CCA is achieving its goals of preparing students who are competent in the 6 Life Long Skills. The fact that scores are generally improving is likely explained by the changes to teaching of the class made in Spring 2005. At that time we began to use faculty advisors to guide student work and restructured the class to increase clarity of expectation (both of which are discussed below).

The scores while encouraging don’t tell the whole story. Two experiences lead the team to question the reliability of the data. First, the evaluation team has not spent time developing consistency in evaluation criteria and ratings. Second, and more importantly, when the team had the opportunity to invite members of the CCA Foundation Board to attend presentations, they were concerned enough about the level of quality from students that they chose not to use the presentations as a way to demonstrate student learning at CCA. Capstone advisors and evaluators have been consistently concerned about the range of quality in the student work.
Changes to Teaching

When the class was originally conceived, it was expected that students would have learned the Life Long Skills thoroughly in prior classes and would be able to fulfill the class expectations with minimal guidance. While a few students had internalized the desired skills and were self-motivated, for the most part, student performance was surprisingly disappointing. Because of this performance the Capstone Advisory Team could not be sure whether unsatisfactory student performance resulted from lack of clarity and structure in the Capstone class or whether students had truly not developed required skills in prior classes. Thus the first changes to teaching were made in structuring the Capstone class itself. These changes were made during Spring 2005 semester. They include:

- More structure and definition of the research topic and types of references required
- Increase critical thinking by having students define pro/con arguments about the topic and argue a point of view
- Adding faculty advisors who would work with students to guide the choice of topic, the presentation and the final paper
- Evaluating all papers and presentations rather than just a sample
- More clearly defining the Aesthetic Perception assignment by having students attend the CCA Theater production and providing guidelines about how to prepare a short reflection paper on the play
- Requiring students to increase use of technology by preparing their presentations using Microsoft PowerPoint
- Developing a cadre of faculty, most of whom are adjunct, who would serve as advisors, readers for papers and evaluators of presentations
- Streamlining the rubric used in assessing the Life Long Skills
- Inviting guest speakers to talk about Quantitative Reasoning and the theater production
- Developing a budget to pay adjunct faculty who participate on the evaluation team
Feedback to Faculty

Several discussions have been held with faculty members in the Division and the college regarding recommendations for changes to teaching in other courses. Feedback has been provided in General and Divisional Faculty meetings to increase focus on these topics in relevant classes:

- Provide more training and monitoring for plagiarism
- Increase expectations for more speaking assignments in classes
- Increase focus on Life Long Skills in all classes
- Require students to use formal methods for citation of sources when writing papers

Results of Indirect Measure

Students are asked to discuss four questions in the focus groups held at the end of each semester. The questions are:

- whether students have developed or improved specific lifelong skills through classes at CCA;
- suggestions for improving teaching/learning at CCA to develop competence in Life Long skills;
- how has the Capstone course helped in becoming a life long learner;
- what suggestions they have for improving the course to help in assessing Life Long skills.

Students generally feel they are getting what they need at CCA to prepare them for a 4 year school. They identify many classes that were specifically helpful to them and say they ‘get fired up’ when they have a good teacher. They often comment that they would like to understand more of the rationale for being required to take some of the classes. They also believe they already know everything that’s taught in the Capstone class although the evaluation team would disagree with them.

Students overwhelmingly say that they didn’t know about the Life Long Skills until the Capstone Class; that these skills should be emphasized from the beginning of their education; they have more appreciation of the value of the skills after the Capstone class; they realize they use the skills even if they don’t have a specific label for them; and that knowing more about the skills would help them understand why they are required to take some classes.

Feedback on the value of the Capstone class is decidedly mixed; students will say they learned more about research, writing a paper, improved grammar, assessed information; the class was a helpful summary; they have grown through the class and they can use the skills they learned. Just as frequently, students say the class seems arbitrary, shouldn’t be
required; they didn’t understand the point; they are concerned about transfer of credits, and they don’t think they needed to take the class.

Suggestions for improvement have included improving the textbook of readings; having more class activities; making the class optional. Have an introductory class at the beginning of a college career. Need to learn more about Microsoft PowerPoint, critical thinking and doing presentations; learn to recognize good sources, investigate authors and draw conclusions. Class should highlight the practical value of the Life Long skills.

As far as student feedback is concerned, the team has had several observations.

- Highly motivated students tend to like the class; average or marginal students usually have trouble seeing the point or comment that the class isn’t necessary
- When students prepare portfolios, they often realize the improvement in skills comparing earlier papers to what they can do today
- Students don’t know what they don’t know. They tend to evaluate their competence higher than faculty do in the class.
- ESL and Learning Disabled students struggle with class expectations

Feedback from Faculty Advisors

Formal feedback about the class has not been solicited from the evaluation team. Informally, they comment they enjoy being part of the process and guiding students’ work; the faculty who assess presentations tend to be quite critical of the level and quality of students’ arguments supporting their topics; critical thinking and the use of quantitative data to support conclusions tend to the most criticized skills. Team members talk about ways they are changing teaching in their own disciplines as a result of participating on the evaluation team. Here is a very frank statement written by one of the team after reviewing a set of research papers.

I’ve finally finished evaluating the Capstone Course papers that you gave to review and have put them in your box. Some observations:

- only two of the papers approached their subject as if it was an open question with the answer to be determined by the results of their research. Most went in with a hard over position (often morality or religion based) and appeared to seek out "evidence" that supported their preconceived position. This was definitely not my understanding of this project.

- few did any outside field research and some that consisted of only a couple of interviews.

- citations were, for many, random, infrequent, and inadequate.

- bibliographies or works cited were missing for many.

- only a couple did any self-assessment.

- there was, for most, a heavy reliance on internet sources to include media. They did not provide the spread/variety of sources as called for in the instruction.
-credibility of most internet sources could not be determined.

If I was to assign an overall "grade" to this group of papers (with two exceptions) it would have to be a low C or a D. It appeared that they ignored or did not follow the instructions in the handouts you provided.

**Opportunities for improvement in the class and assessment process**

Most importantly, the team and Division need to address the issue that we weren’t comfortable having the Foundation Board members attend student presentations

Develop a formal feedback loop for faculty with specific suggestions for changes to teaching

Provide training and develop consistency in scoring to improve reliability and validity of scores

Make class more important to school – symposia, ‘show and tell’ day; website with outstanding papers, requirement for honors graduation, broader attendance at presentations, foundation board participation in class

Find ways to make the class/assessment process more pertinent and meaningful to students – consider alternatives to class: portfolio, discipline capstones, community service

Engage a larger group of faculty on the assessment team to increase understanding of student exit performance

Schedule time for faculty evaluators to meet and discuss changes, recommendations to teaching, develop the process

Streamline the process of getting papers read – at present this is time consuming – data isn’t available until following semester

Need to institutionalize the process – ownership of chairs/Dean/institution

Increase focus in all classes on ESL and LD students who struggle with class expectations

Determine what to do about students who don’t meet class expectations – besides giving them a failing grade – what remedial work should be considered – should they graduate?
CCA is beginning a new phase of Assessment. We are planning to develop expectations – norms - that can be applied across the curriculum for each of the life long skills. Assessment of each skill across the curriculum will be phased in over several semesters – however we want to get started on developing criteria, rubrics and a plan to assess three of the skills this summer. The first skills we’ll work on are: written communication, quantitative reasoning and technology.

Your name has been suggested by your chair as a person who might be interested in working on this project. There will be three work groups – one for written communication, one for technology and one for quantitative reasoning. We are looking for 5-7 people for each work group who could meet together several times over the summer and put together criteria, develop a rubric to measure the criteria and a plan for pilot implementation in your classes in the Fall.

The criteria would apply to students in all – or most – classes in the college. So, as an example, we don’t expect all students to use algebraic equations in every class – but we might expect students to be able to use quantitative information to support arguments, to display quantitative data in tables or charts, to read and interpret graphs and charts, to reason using quantitative data.

We need people from various disciplines – ones that involve lots of the skills we’ll be working on – and ones that don’t use much of these skills. We want adjunct faculty on the committees because you will help develop usable criteria that can be integrated into your classes – and an implementation plan that’s workable for faculty. Faculty will be paid: $15/hour for time spent on the work group. Once we get work groups identified, we’ll decide how to meet. Perhaps some of this can be done by email; however we will likely need some face to face meetings as well.

So, we need you. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, will you let me know right away. If you have a specific committee that you’d like to be on, let me know that. If you have questions about what the project involves, I’ll be happy to answer them.

You can refer to the attachments for more information about the rationale and the plan.

If there’s a better email address to reach you, let me know and I’ll make the change in future messages. If you’re interested but not able to work this summer or want to work on one of the other skills, let me know that and I’ll stay in touch with you.