HLC Offers Advice On Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The Higher Learning Commission’s visiting team recognized the College’s excellent work related to mission-based assessment and reported that valuable information is being collected and used to improve student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. The team made special mention of the importance of linking the mission to the College’s assessment of institutional effectiveness.

Although a number of academic divisions have successfully developed direct measures of student learning outcomes at both the course and program level, the HLC visiting team felt the College needed to make a greater commitment to such assessment efforts across programs. In an effort to direct attention to the direct outcomes at the course and team recommended that the College participate in the HLC Assessment Academy.

“The Academy for Assessment of Student Learning offers HLC member institutional a four-year sequence of events and interactions that are focused on student learning, targeted at accelerating and advancing efforts to assess and improve student learning, and designed to build institution-wide commitment to assessment of student learning” (The Higher Learning Commission of NCA). A full description of the processes, features, and outcomes associated with Academy can be found at the following link:

http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=118&Itemid=221

The College is currently developing a team of administrators and faculty to participate in the Academy. The team will attend its first Academy session in June 2008. The College remains committed to the principle that the purpose of assessment is to improve student learning outcomes. Our mission-based assessment model is grounded in using “Assessment of Assessment” to help improve assessment processes. The Academy provides an opportunity for St. Louis Community College to continue to improve its mission-based assessment process and further develop its commitment to a culture of evidence and action.
**Spotlight on Transfers to UMSL**

This year, the Transfer Education Committee has decided to go directly to the source by asking SLCC students who transfer to UMSL about transfer experiences.

Using information from the 2006 transfer assessment project, the committee designed a project involving a series of focus groups with SLCC-to-UMSL students to discover how potential SLCC-to-UMSL transfer students can make better use of SLCC counselors and advisors.

In March, approximately 80 **paid** UMSL student volunteers will be asked questions about their transfer experiences. For example, the focus group facilitator will ask: “Were you satisfied with how your education at SLCC prepared you for transfer to UMSL?” And another question will be, “If you could give advice to someone thinking about transferring from SLCC to UMSL what would you tell them to do to have a successful transfer experience?”

The assembled information will then be collated, interpreted, and used to help students preparing to transfer, from SLCC to UMSL of course, but also from SLCC to “Any U” as well.

---

**Update 1: Forthcoming Faculty Survey on Student Engagement**

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment (IRPA) and the Assessment Council will pilot a new survey in March, 2008 (after Spring Break). This trial run of selected portions of the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSSE) will afford IRPA the opportunity to construct the means and methods by which faculty will be consulted later using the nationally tested instrument.

The Assessment Council has been interested in doing a follow-up to the survey with which students were able to estimate their sense of engagement at SLCC. Asking the faculty currently involved in assessment – on the Assessment Council, on Mission-Based committees – about their views is only a preliminary step to getting a more complete picture of our students’ engagement in their education.

**Update 2: Forthcoming Assessment of SLCC Assessment, 2008**

The Assessment Council has proposed to “assess 2007 – 2008 Assessment” at one of its last meetings of the year. This special assessment session will occur on Friday, April 18 at a site yet “to be determined.”

Modeled on last year’s “Assessment of Assessment Luncheon,” this year’s event should allow more faculty involvement in improving current SLCC assessments and recommending directions to take in 2008 – 2009.

Participants will include faculty, staff and administrators on the Assessment Council, the mission-based committees, and the assessment support committees. In addition, vice-presidents as well as the department chairs and deans who have lead division assessment efforts will be invited to attend. If possible, members of the newly formed HLC Assessment Academy team will join in the luncheon and discussion.

So, save the day/date/time: Friday, April 18, 12:30 – 3:00.
## Remaining 2007 – 2008 Assessment Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Council Friday</th>
<th>Mar 21 FV 2:30 – 4</th>
<th>Assessment of Assessment Apr 18 * (Site TBD) 12:30 – 3:00</th>
<th>May 16 M 2:30 – 4</th>
<th>Jun 13 FP 2:30 – 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Assessment Fridays”</td>
<td>Mar 7 FV 12:30 - 2</td>
<td>Apr 4 WW 12:30 - 2</td>
<td>May 2 M 12:30 - 2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Notes</td>
<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>Apr 28</td>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Jun 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Reports for 2007-2008 mission-based projects are due to the Assessment Council on Friday, April 18th. As was the case with original 2007-2008 assessment plans, the reports should be organized according to either the **I DID** or **LAASIE** format.