Assessment of General Education, 2008 – 2009

The Higher Learning Commission accreditation self-study made it abundantly clear that STLCC needs to continue to initiate more direct assessments of student learning outcomes. This semester, one such initiative is being launched by the General Education Assessment Committee, which is planning to collect writing samples from fall 2008 and spring 2009 Gen Ed capstone courses and examine such samples using primary trait analysis.

These primary traits were developed in accordance with the communication competencies outlined in the College’s general education model: “Conceive of writing and reading as recursive processes that involve many strategies, including generating material, evaluating sources when used, drafting, revising and editing.” Using a rubric based on these competencies, the analysis of student samples will focus on thesis, organization, development, critical thinking, use and citation of sources, and editing.

The assessment will consist of the following steps:

1. All capstone students in Fall 08 and Spring 09 will be requested to turn in one essay.
2. A sample of essays will be chosen.
3. Teams of faculty readers will use a primary trait analysis rubric to assess students in identified competency areas.
4. Data will be analyzed and shared.
5. Feedback will be shared and used to develop professional development or programmatic change.
6. Repeat the process as necessary.

According to the proposed timeline, the Committee will present results to faculty for discussion and recommendations (Steps 4 & 5 above) in Fall ’09.

Assessment Institute 2008

Having begun in 1992, the Assessment Institute in Indianapolis is “the nation’s oldest and largest event focused exclusively on Outcomes Assessment in Higher Education.” This annual event was held October 26-28, 2008 and was designed to introduce innovations in assessment that can be used by higher education professionals. Sessions were available for each skill level with regard to assessment and ranged in topic from new techniques to assessment outcomes. Moreover, a strand on assessment practices at “community colleges” allowed participants from two-year colleges to focus their attention on issues unique to institutions like STLCC.
The Institute and its presenters are well-known for their collegiality, and this includes their willingness to share what is known and discussed. Many presenters allow the Institute to post their handouts on the Institute website. To browse the materials made available, go to the IUPUI Assessment Institute website (http://planning.iupui.edu/574.html) and click on “Handouts.” Here you will find materials provided by assessment experts such as Barbara Walvoord, Jeff Seybert, and Thomas Angelo (the CATs guru). And you’ll even discover a powerpoint that will look very familiar, entitled “Don’t Wait For Students To Ask: Assessing Student Engagement and Institutional Effectiveness.”

Assessment Council, November 14, 2008

Following is a summary of the Assessment Council meeting of November 14 held at Florissant Valley.

1. General Education Update, Shaun Reno

   Shaun Reno, Meramec General Education Coordinator and English faculty member, provided an update on the General Education Mission-Based Assessment project for 2008-2009. (See related article above).

2. Update on ACT CAAP Content Analysis. IRPA is working with ACT to provide both a summary content analysis report related to our 2007-2008 CAAP tested students, as well as a unit record data set containing content analysis findings. ACT has been somewhat slow to respond to this request, but we are making progress and hopefully the information will be available in early January.

3. Update on Spring 2009 CCSSE and CCFSSE projects.

   Information related to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE) will be distributed during Spring 2009 service days. Actual data collection will occur in early to mid-March 2009. IRPA will work closely with the Student Affairs Mission-Based Assessment group to begin data analysis and interpretation in April 2009. John Cosgrove is meeting with CAC at their December meeting to solicit additional input regarding key areas for analysis.

4. MDHE LAMP Effort

   Cosgrove briefly discussed the MDHE LAMP effort. This project is part of a larger statewide to examine institutional assessment efforts across the state, and quite possibly lead to a much stronger statewide initiative aimed at state assessment requirements. As part of this discussion Dwight Smith mentioned the attached report entitled: Learning To Reason and Communicate in College, Initial Findings From the CLA Longitudinal Study.

   Cosgrove also denied a rumor that the Assessment Council is planning to mandate a graduate test to all campuses---this is NOT TRUE.

5. Assessment Communication Update

   Larry McDoniel presented information related to our Assessment Communication Efforts, including the 2008-2009 Assessment Poster, the development of the STLCC Student Handbook [page] on Assessment, conference presentation at the October IUPUI assessment conference, the upcoming assessment presentation at the COTA transfer conference, an upcoming article in Assessment Update, and an upcoming chapter in Trudy Banta’s new book on best practices in higher education assessment.
6. CAC and Assessment Council

Pat Suess has been added to the Assessment Council as the 2008-2009 CAC representative.

7. HLC and AQIP

Tim Roach suggested that the Council seriously consider recommending that the College should become an HLC AQIP college. The group agreed with this suggestion and asked Tim to draft a possible recommendation to go from the Council to the Chancellor and her Leadership Team. (see attached file). This item will be discussed during the December meeting.

8. Next Meeting, Friday December 12th, Wildwood Campus 2:30 to 4:00.

Forthcoming Assessment Conferences

28th Annual Conference on First Year Experience
Orlando FL February 6 - 10, 2009

"The First-Year Experience® Conferences are meetings where educators and students from two- and four-year institutions come together to openly share ideas, concepts, resources, assessment tools, programmatic interventions, and research results focused on the first college year. With this rich diversity of perspectives in mind, the conferences are designed to be both personally enjoyable and professionally enriching. An intentionally open and welcoming conference culture provides opportunities for intensive learning and relaxed interactions with fellow delegates."

AAC&U General Education, Assessment, and the Learning Students Need
Baltimore MD February 26 - 28, 2009

"This conference will help campuses align General Education vision and action, including action to assess and strengthen students’ cumulative learning. The four conference tracks are organized around one or more “big questions” related to philosophical and practical challenges facing campuses today and an expectation of evidence—the ability to show “what’s working” and why."

2009 NC State Undergraduate Assessment Symposium
Cary, NC April 24-April 26, 2009

The mission of the Symposium is to provide a forum for higher education professionals to exchange ideas, discover new practices and form partnerships to enhance the full undergraduate educational experience through assessment. The Symposium is designed to address both practical concerns and larger policy issues by providing attendees with ideas and tools that can be immediately shared and implemented at their home institutions, which range from community colleges to large research universities.
The International Assessment and Retention Conference is intended to be a "big tent" conference. Like the annual conferences once run by the American Association for Higher Education, this conference ("Taking the Next Step: Shared Ownership of Assessment & Retention in Higher Education") deals with topics of both policy and practice, and it is aimed at higher education professionals interested in and committed to the improvement of student learning. Thus it is designed, as the AAHE conferences were, to create conversations relevant to and benefiting professionals in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Institutional Research.

The International Association for Educational Assessment - 2009 Conference
Brisbane, Australia September 13-18, 2009

The International Association for Educational Assessment offers a global forum for all those involved in all forms of educational assessment – in primary or secondary schools, colleges or the workplace. Its members include examining bodies, university departments, research organizations and government agencies from more than 50 countries on all continents.

2008-09 Meeting Schedule
STLCC Assessment Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Room/Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Dec 12</td>
<td>Multipurpose Room 102, Side B</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>BA 105</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:00</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>Feb 20</td>
<td>Highlander Lounge</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:00</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>Mar 13</td>
<td>TC 110</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:00</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>SC 200-201 [Assessment of Assessment]</td>
<td>12:00 – 4:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>Multipurpose Room 102, Side B</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:00</td>
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Important STLCC Assessment Links

- Assessment Resources  http://www.stlcc.edu/Faculty_and_Staff_Resources/Assessment/Assessment_Resources.html
- Assessment Public Site  http://www.stlcc.edu/Faculty_and_Staff_Resources/Assessment/