General Education Assessment Pilot Results

On September 18, Shaun Reno, General Education Coordinator at Meramec, reported to the Assessment Council on the results of the General Education Assessment, 2008-2009. Last June, twenty-one STLCC instructors from various disciplines gathered to “participate in an assessment of writing on the capstone level.” This pilot, orchestrated by General Education Coordinators Bill Hartmann, Reno, Tim Roach, and Chris Stephens, was designed to see how student writing submitted for Gen Ed capstone courses would be assessed using a new rubric devised for that purpose.

Participants reviewed random sample of 99 essays (along with the assignments if provided) from over 500 collected using an in-house rubric. The Primary Trait Analysis Rubric “focused on some of the most important writing components” – such as thesis, development, use of sources – that the committee (and many who advised the committee) considers the requisite writing outcomes of STLCC’s General Education Program.

In his presentation, Reno focused on a number of interesting results. According to the committee’s interpretation of their findings, the [work of an] “Average Student” in this assessment could be described as follows:

- Clearly states a topic
- Cannot indicate a clear claim or focus for the topic
- Develops essays at bare bones level
- Uses transitions adequately
- Organizes essays adequately
- Uses clear prose free of errors that hamper understanding
- Chooses appropriate tone and words
- Poor ability to choose sources
- Poor ability to synthesize and document sources

Based on these preliminary findings and others, the General Education coordinators are considering a number of recommendations. Each comes with its own set of challenges. Needless to say, the results, their interpretation, and the changes that may be implemented to achieve the “desired” results will be discussed at length throughout 2009 – 2010, beginning with a featured Gen Ed session on Professional Development Day, October 20 at Florissant Valley.
Assessment Council Summary Notes: September 18, 2009

1. Update on 2009-2010 Mission-Based Assessment Efforts

Cosgrove updated the group on assessment efforts related to Developmental Education (NADE projects at each location) and Student and Institutional Affairs (CCSSE and CCFSSE). Cosgrove also mentioned that Assessment will be a major focus of Professional Development Day and that assessment efforts related to AQIP, CSSEE/CCFSSE, Developmental Education, and General Education will be featured in the assessment “strand.”

2. General Education Assessment Update

Shaun Reno (English Faculty Meramec) presented the findings related to the 2009 General Education Assessment project (see article below). A lengthy and lively discussion followed. Reno’s powerpoint can be found under the Announcements section of the Assessment portal (http://collegeweb.stlcc.edu/assessment/).

3. New Charge For Assessment Council & Relationship of Assessment Council To The AQIP Steering Committee

The group discussed the importance/value of linking the Assessment Council and the AQIP Steering Committee (a yet-to-be developed group). It is anticipated that the AQIP Steering Committee will first be charged with coordinating the College’s effort to apply for and gain HLC AQIP status. Once AQIP status is obtained, the AQIP Steering Committee will then lead and direct the STLCC community through all aspects of AQIP participation, including the selection and monitoring of STLCC AQIP Action Projects.

The Assessment Council’s current charge is to promote the design of appropriate assessment strategies and the collection, interpretation and communication of data related to student academic achievement and institutional effectiveness. In addition, the Council will continuously examine the college’s assessment processes. Cosgrove recommended that the Council expand its charge to include the following statement:

   Based upon its review of college-wide and campus-based assessment projects (including recommendations for improvement), the Council will recommend key projects to the AQIP Steering Committee for adoption as of STLCC AQIP Action Projects.

The Council agreed in principle to this change and will send Cosgrove suggested wording for the new charge. The draft charge is presented below. Please send Cosgrove your suggested changes prior to October 7th. The Council will adopt its new charge at the October 16th meeting.

Draft Charge For Assessment Council

The College’s Assessment Council will promote the design of appropriate assessment strategies and the collection, interpretation and communication of data related to student academic achievement and institutional effectiveness. The Council will continuously examine the College’s assessment processes. In addition, the Council will
review college-wide and campus-based assessment projects (including recommendations for improvement), and recommend key projects to the AQIP Steering Committee for adoption as STLCC AQIP Action Projects.

4. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Friday, October 16th from 2:30 to 4:00 on the Florissant Valley campus. Based on the assessment of our last meeting, we will have a guest speaker attend and provide faculty and staff motivation (see graphic →).

Moving Toward AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program)

Following is probably the most important document on the AQIP home page (www.aqip.org). It provides the reasons for, the reasoning behind AQIP. It explains and explores what “continuous improvement” is, its principles and practices. As STLCC moves toward AQIP, toward application to enter AQIP, it is essential that our community appreciates what becoming a member of that continuously striving community called AQIP entails.

For more on this and STLCC’s next steps to joining AQIP, please come to “AQIP 201: What’s Next?” hosted by Vice Chancellor Donna Dare and Professor Timothy Roach (an AQIP Peer Reviewer), on Professional Development Day, October 20 at Florissant Valley Campus.

Principles of High Performance Organizations
http://www.aqip.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=36&Itemid=150

Research and experience indicates that a web of common values permeates colleges and universities that have achieved a systematic approach to continuous quality improvement. Not only do these principles underlie all of the Academic Quality Improvement Program’s Categories, activities, and processes, but they are the values to which AQIP itself aspires organizationally.

Focus. A mission and vision focused on students’ and other stakeholders’ expectations provides the quality-driven higher education organization with the foundation it needs to shape its communication systems, its organizational and decision-making structures, and its planning and improvement processes. The institution earns the trust, confidence, and loyalty of its current and potential students and its other stakeholders, both external and internal, including faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees, by actively developing and regularly employing listening tools essential for gathering and understanding their diverse and distinctive perspectives. The institution interprets and weighs these expressed needs, preferences, hopes, and requirements to frame ongoing communication, discussion, and refinement of a common mission and vision. Faculty, staff, and administrators integrate this shared focus into their individual work goals and decision-making strategies.

Involvement. Broad-based faculty, staff, and administrative participation encourages better decisions and strengthens individual and group ownership of systems, activities, and initiatives.
Individuals understand how what they do affects others within and outside the organization, and appreciate how their work helps further the institution’s mission. A culture of involvement draws on the expertise and practical experience of people closest to a situation and helps leaders across the organization anticipate the complex implications of decisions. Such collaboration often helps initiate and implement improvements that better meet student and stakeholder needs. A culture of involvement requires ongoing development of people’s skills in making fact-based decisions, working with diverse groups, resolving conflicts, and using quality based tools to build consensus.

**Leadership.** An institution thrives when its leadership actively creates and supports a quality-driven culture, modeling values and behaviors that communicate a comprehensive and focused vision to all constituents. Leaders have a responsibility to make sure that everyone understands and values the institution’s mission, goals, and directions—and uses this understanding to inform their individual work goals and decision-making strategies. Leadership must work to help students and other stakeholders share this understanding as well. Further, leadership must ensure that the institution’s systems and processes align with its mission and vision, making certain that the necessary resources—people, funds, facilities, equipment, supplies, time, energy, and other assets—are allocated and used in support of the overall mission and vision.

![Academic Quality Improvement Program](image)

**Learning.** The quality-driven institution dedicates itself to developing everyone’s potential talents, centering its attention on learning. It continually seeks more effective ways to enhance student achievement through careful design and evaluation of programs, courses, and learning environments. The institution and staff both demonstrate an enthusiastic commitment to organizational and personal learning as the route to continuous improvement. Seeing itself as a set of systems that can continuously improve through measurement, assessment of results, and feedback, the institution designs practical means for gauging its students’ and its own progress toward clearly identified objectives. Conscious of costs and waste—whether human or fiscal—leadership champions careful design and rigorous evaluation to prevent problems before they occur, and to enable the institution systematically to strengthen its programs, pedagogy, personnel, and systems.

**People.** The quality-driven higher educational institution prizes and supports the systematic development of its individual faculty, staff, and administrators, recognizing that fully developing and using their abilities constitutes its most valuable resource. It consciously invests in all its people as leaders and learners through ongoing education, training, and opportunities for continuing development. Leadership encourages individuals to take responsibility in crafting and following through on professional and personal growth plans aimed at acquiring, practicing, and using new skills and knowledge to better serve students and other stakeholders. It nourishes a sense of responsibility and ownership in which all individuals understand how their role contributes to the measurable success of the institution and how they can become engaged as full participants in its improvement processes.
**Collaboration.** The quality-driven institution encourages active collaboration among and within different internal departments and operational areas, and, externally, between the institution and other institutions or organizations. It removes internal barriers to collaboration, such as the constraints individuals often experience within a hierarchical chain of command or when they find themselves working for a sub-unit rather than the larger organization. The institution promotes shared support for a common mission among its faculty, staff, and administrators by providing them with the training and resources successful collaboration demands. It rewards effective cooperation and celebrates model collaborative efforts with internal or external partners.

**Agility.** While it has been true that higher education institutions have traditionally existed in a more reflective and deliberative environment than the rest of society, the rapid development of new knowledge and technologies, and the rising expectations of external stakeholders, is greatly altering this condition. As the pace of change quickens and competition becomes commonplace in higher education, the quality-driven institution develops the flexibility to respond quickly to opportunities, threats, and changing needs, and practices, focusing its attention on the allocation of resources, when needed, in response to pressures for change, and measuring its performance in responding to such demands.

**Foresight.** The quality-driven institution thinks into the future, tracking trends in order to better predict how conditions will change, and anticipating how those changes may affect the institution's students and other stakeholders, operations, and performance. In dynamic or trying situations, foresight enables the institution to innovate, making meaningful changes to improve its services and processes in ways that create new or additional value for its students and other stakeholders. While it remains open to new approaches and techniques, the institution designs, tests, and improves its planning structures and processes through practical use and experience.

**Information.** The quality-driven institution and its personnel seek and use data and information to assess current capacities and measure performance realistically. Faculty, staff, and administrators track progress concretely and consistently, and use performance results to set ambitious but attainable targets that increase and improve the institution's capability to meet its students' and other stakeholders' needs and expectations. Data-enriched thinking nurtures evaluation and a results-orientation concentrated on increasing the benefits and value produced for students and other stakeholders. The institution develops and refines systems for gathering and assessing valuable feedback and data, and continually seeks better methods for obtaining the most useful information on which to base decisions and improvements.

**Integrity.** The quality-driven institution recognizes and fulfills its public responsibility and demonstrates responsible institutional citizenship. It treats people and organizations with equity, dignity, and respect, and models its values in words and deeds. It anticipates and takes into account the consequences of its actions upon the various larger communities to which it belongs, and upon the higher education system, regionally, nationally, and globally. Mindful that education serves society, the institution continuously examines its practices to make certain its effects and results actively contribute to the common good.
In Sight & On Site, On Campus and Off

“Educating for Personal and Social Responsibility: Deepening Student and Campus Commitments”
October 1-3, 2009
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Donna Halsband and Cindy Shanks Brueggenjohann (Service Learning & Sociology, Florissant Valley) will be presenting “Becoming Good Neighbors: Community-Based Research and the Politics of Engagement” at the Network for Academic Renewal Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The conference, one of many offered by AAC & U, will bring together faculty, student affairs educators, academic administrators, students, and others to explore how to move education for personal and social responsibility to the center of institutional culture and academic practice. The program will feature promising practices that develop students’ civic engagement and social responsibility in both a local and global context; personal and academic integrity; ability to examine and understand differing (and often competing) perspectives; and ethical and moral reasoning.

During the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 academic years, Introduction to Sociology students at the St. Louis Community College (STLCC) Meramec and Florissant Valley campuses participated in The Good Neighbor Initiative (GNI) Research Project, a service-learning (SL) and civic engagement (CE) collaborative between STLCC service-learning offices and local governments. The GNI Research Project is a form of indirect service-learning whereby students use survey methods to conduct assets/needs assessments of the local community.

“More Than Keeping Score: Comparing Faculty and Student Perceptions of Engagement”
October 25-27, 2009
Assessment Institute
Indianapolis, Indiana

Using CCSSE and CCFSSS 2009 data, John Cosgrove and Larry McDoniel will portray the college’s results and accompanying discussions held with faculty and students, provide samples of these conversations, and invite participants’ reactions to findings and resulting projects.
# STLCC Assessment Council Meeting Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date / Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri, Oct 16 2:30 – 4</td>
<td>Florissant Valley TC 110</td>
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<td>Fri, Nov 13 2:30 – 4</td>
<td>Wildwood Multipurpose Rm 102 A</td>
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<td>Fri, Dec 4 2:30 – 4</td>
<td>Meramec BA 105</td>
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<td>Fri, Jan 29 2:30 – 4</td>
<td>Forest Park L 007</td>
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<td>Fri, Feb 19 2:30 – 4</td>
<td>Florissant Valley TC 110</td>
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<td>Fri, Mar 12 2:30 – 4</td>
<td>Wildwood Multipurpose Rm 102 A</td>
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<td><strong>Fri, April 30</strong></td>
<td>Meramec Student Center 200 - 201</td>
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<td>12 pm – 3 pm</td>
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<td><strong>(Assessment of Assessment)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri, May 7 2:30 – 4</td>
<td>Forest Park L 007</td>
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“Save the Date!!!”

Following is a table listing important events relative to assessment and AQIP scheduled for 2009 – 2010. Please include these in your “must do” calendars and plans for this academic year.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 20, 2009</td>
<td>Professional Development Day - Assessment Strand Sessions:</td>
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<td>✓ “Crisscross: Faculty and Student Views of Student Engagement”</td>
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<td>✓ “Where are COL / ENG / MTH / RDG in the NADE Self - Study Process?”</td>
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<td>✓ “General Education Assessment of Writing”</td>
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<td>✓ “AQIP 201: What’s Next?”</td>
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<td>April, 2010</td>
<td>Campus-Based [Divisions/Departments] Assessment Showcases</td>
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**Announcing ...**

The Institute on First-Year Assessment
The Westin Charlotte
601 South College Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202
October 10-12, 2009
http://sc.edu/fye/events/assessment/index.html
The Institute on First-Year Assessment is designed to provide faculty, first-year program directors, student affairs professionals, institutional researchers, and/or assessment practitioners who are new to the field of first-year assessment with the tools to respond to these demands.

**The 2009 Assessment Institute**  
The Westin Indianapolis  
50 South Capitol Avenue  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
Pre-Institute Workshops: October 25, 2009  
Institute Dates: October 26-27, 2009  
[http://www.planning.iupui.edu/institute](http://www.planning.iupui.edu/institute)

The Assessment Institute in Indianapolis is the nation’s oldest and largest event focused exclusively on Outcomes Assessment in Higher Education.

**Performance Assessment in Higher Education**  
Harvard Graduate School of Education  
November 1-3, 2009  

The program brings together faculty experts and leading practitioners with considerable experience developing, implementing and sustaining campus-based assessment processes. The program focuses on the practical challenges of fostering institutional cultures of assessment and accountability.

**AAC & U Gen Ed and Assessment: Maintaining Momentum, Achieving New Priorities**  
Network for Academic Renewal Conference  
February 18-20, 2010  
Seattle, Washington  
[http://www.aacu.org/meetings/generaleducation/index.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/meetings/generaleducation/index.cfm)

The conference will draw on AAC&U’s long-standing projects and publications on general education reform including work to bring diversity, global, and civic learning into general education and models for advancing scientific and quantitative literacy through real-world curricula and problem-based pedagogies.

**10th Annual Texas A&M University Assessment Conference**  
February 21-23, 2010  
Hilton Conference Center  
College Station, Texas  

“Recognizing change as a powerful vehicle for achieving success is an important part of this year’s conference theme. Our assessment community is interested not only in what is being done, but what changes are being made to that assessment process, what are the long term implications and plans, what are the next steps?”
League for Innovation *Innovations 2010*
March 28-31, 2010
Baltimore, Maryland
http://www.league.org/i2010/

*Innovations 2010* is the premier event for professionals dedicated to improving organizational teaching and learning, and discovering new approaches for enhancing the community college experience. The conference provides a tremendous forum for collaboration among academic experts and leading community college professionals, while granting participants exclusive access to the most inventive and thought-provoking programs from around the world.

**Conference on Quality in Higher Education**

115th Annual Meeting of NCA / The Higher Learning Commission
The Higher Learning Commission
Chicago, IL 60602
April 9 -13, 2010
http://www.ncahlc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=166&Itemid=155

Don’t miss this chance to participate in one of the largest and most diverse higher education conferences of the year! The Higher Learning Commission seeks innovative, engaging proposals on a variety of topics for its 2010 Annual Meeting program.

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**STLCC Assessment Publications**

The following articles on STLCC assessment and strategic planning efforts were published recently:


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**Important STLCC Assessment Links**

- Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment Toolbox  http://collegeweb.stlcc.edu/assessment/
- 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/