

Out Comes Learning

McHenry County College's Assessment Team Newsletter

A newsletter dedicated to the promotion and recognition of Academic Assessment at MCC

Our Mission: The mission of the McHenry County College assessment team is to provide support to divisional faculty for learning outcomes assessment. This support will be provided by division liaisons who will communicate information about the assessment and transformation process; coordinate the flow of information; investigate and recommend plans to record, organize, analyze, and report data; and be an advocate for the integration of assessment into the College community for the purpose of improving student learning.

What do you really need to know about AQIP

In case you lost focus at some point during our professional development day, I want to provide a brief summary of what moving into AQIP means for all of us at MCC. First of all, AQIP is part of the Higher Learning Commission, just like NCA; the main difference is that AQIP allows us to set our own goals based on our Strategic Plan.

Based on our plan, we decide on three or four specific **Action Projects** that we can complete in a one-year cycle. At the end of the year, we provide an update and keep it as part of our **Systems Portfolio**. As part of a four-year cycle, our portfolio is reviewed in a **Systems Appraisal**. The appraisal will result in some feedback and further suggestions for future plans and strategies. In addition to this appraisal, which is conducted by professionals selected by AQIP, selected members of MCC will attend a **Strategy Forum** (as part of the same four-year cycle). This forum will allow for some brainstorming with other schools and will provide face-to-face interaction that should help us develop our own plans and strategies for our **Action Projects**. Finally, in a seven-year cycle we receive **Reaffirmation of Accreditation** based on all of the above plus a one or two day site visit that will occur during the fifth or sixth year of the cycle. They call this a "reaffirmation" because if we get this far, there should not be any problems in receiving accreditation.

If we are having trouble successfully completing **Action Projects**, do not attend the **Strategy Forum**, and receive a negative **Systems Appraisal**, they will discuss other options with us and we may decide to move out of AQIP. However, the goal of this entire project is to allow for continual growth and improvement of MCC with the goals that we have set for ourselves, so we will have increased autonomy and can focus on the needs of our specific community rather than working to meet the goals that NCA felt were necessary.

The first meeting of the AQIP Steering Committee is on November 2, 2005. More information will undoubtedly be forthcoming after that meeting regarding specific Action Projects and our official induction into AQIP.

AQIP stands for A Quality Improvement Process

ICCB Forum for Excellence Presentation

In August, the College received a request from the ICCB to present on our End of Program Assessment in the Career & Technical Education (CTE) areas at the Forum for Excellence Conference held in Springfield on September 20 and 21st. Kathy Chamberlain, Chair of Academic Assessment, Jim Van Bosch, Perkins Grant and Workforce Support Director, and Helen Campbell, Coordinator of Electronic Degree Audit shared with twenty-five participants the processes and policies regarding assessment in CTE at McHenry County College.



Jim Van Bosch, Kathy Chamberlain, Helen Campbell

Helen was really the show stopper as she shared important information with other community college attendees about the necessary catalog statements, key personnel issues, and especially our new degree audit system. The new degree audit system allows the college to track students in their programs. It assures that the end of program testing in Work Keys or other end of program assessment has been completed before the student graduates or receives a certificate. The degree audit system screen can also be used by Department Chairs for advising or just informational purposes. Just call Helen at ext. 8945 and she will gladly show you how to use it.

Data vs. Transformation

In a recent Chair training regarding assessment, this question came out of a Muddiest Point(C.A.T.): “Which is most important, gathering data or transformation?” The quick answer is both are necessary to improve the teaching and learning process. Data provides the information for faculty dialogue about the learning process. It provides the necessary evidence to determine if a transformation is needed. Transformations are then implemented and data gathering begins all over again. It is the assessment cycle of planning, data collection, discussion, and transformation that will improve student learning.



A Short Goodbye from our Assessment Associate

Looking back at the reasons why MCC hired me, Donald told me that it was partially because he was impressed that I was able to use the word “assessment” correctly in a sentence. But, as we’ve all learned, assessment is much harder to do than to write about. I’ve already thanked Donald for giving me a chance to work here. And now, Thank You to all of the faculty who have worked with me, while we’ve all tried to get MCC’s assessment loop up and running. Keep it up! --Annie Brady