

TMCC

Fall Semester, 2008

Assessment Coordinator Semi-Annual Report

This report is prepared for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and Turtle Mountain Community College. It chronicles ongoing faculty assessment efforts and analysis pertaining to student learning of the General Education Outcomes. It also makes recommendations based on the evaluation of assessment data for strategic planning, sponsored programs, and budgeting purposes.

1. Higher Learning Commission Focused Visit

On October 20-21, 2008, faculty and staff met with HLC representatives to address the four areas of concern, mainly Assessment of Student Learning. We had given them a Focused Visit Report in early September; the bulk of the report was written by Anita Frederick, Larry Henry, and Ron Carpenter, with supplemental materials drafted by Dr. Gourneau, Dr. Davis, Wannetta Bennett, Dr. Dauphinais, Arjun KC and others. We provided a host of documents in the resource room and presented our efforts in a forthright and candid fashion. We had a plan; we had followed this plan allowing for mistakes and improving upon them; we did not claim to be doing things we weren't; we were improving student learning, and the assessment processes; our two years of hard work as a collective body bore amazing fruit. Our strategy was a success! Not only did we receive accreditation approval with no major concerns, but also the TMCC Focused Visit Report was selected by the North Central Association of HLC to showcase an effective model of this document in the Resource Room, Hyatt Regency, Chicago, April 12-21, 2009. Anita, Larry, and I will be available to conference attendees on Sunday April 19, to answer questions about our experiences and represent TMCC to the best of our ability. I hope to celebrate as an institution next semester: we all have earned it.

2. Measure General Education Outcomes

External: The external method of pre and post-assessment and its primary instrument is under critical review based on professional advice from ACT/CAAP representatives, faculty expertise, and best practices of assessment. Readers can review Assessment Coordinator Chicago 2008 Report for a full discussion of ACT representatives and their concerns. In sum, they recommend strongly using COMPASS; Leech Lake CC, UTTC both use for incoming students because its sub-scores allow instructors to target specific areas in classes/for placement into classes. TMCC CTE department concurs.

In faculty consensus, the national test method has always had weaknesses that faculty originally believed could be avoided by having students complete an E-Portfolio as a terminal project/capstone course. In my opinion, best teaching and assessment practices favor these sorts of instruments as well. The difficulty has been in the coordination of faculty/courses/assignment/rubrics/goals/procedures related to undertaking and managing such a proposal. We would all probably agree that E-Portfolio is an extremely effective method for measuring student learning, because it relies upon critical thinking, holistic evaluation, qualitative data, and collaborative analysis. We have simply not had an extended period to develop such a measurement instrument, unique to our tribal student needs and mission

statement, as we have tried to initiate a system in preparing for the Focused Visit. A course/instrument and its method for evaluation would take a year minimum to develop. Resolving this General Education measurement issue, and perhaps instituting the E-Portfolio as another instrument remains our top priority as we are preparing to develop our strategic plan for assessment for the next 2 years. It may or may not be necessary to use an external instrument like the COMPASS or MAAP if our internal measurement system is thorough, simple, and reliable.

Internal: At the recommendation of Institutional Effectiveness Director, faculty has changed the Student Learning Outcomes Matrix, to gather more targeted data on Gen Ed. Goals and individual course goals. This form also distinguishes between instructional changes made, and institutional recommendations suggested. As a result, faculty are aligning Gen Ed Outcomes with specific course goals and demonstrating how students are performing entering and exiting Gen Ed. core courses. On November 14, 2008, faculty received training on this new form and sample documents to aid with their completion. A meal followed to recognize faculty efforts in assessment.

Faculty have met as departments and chairs have submitted reports pertaining to the assessment of student learning in General Education areas, which are attached as appendix here, and summarized below in the Recommendations section.

Conclusion:

The main goal of Assessment Coordinator at NCA in 2009 will be to research and review electronic and national measurement systems available in assessment of General Education Outcomes, and for student learning, especially literacy skills. The pre/post issue is tabled until May, 2009, at which time faculty and administration must make a committed decision in a direction, and be ready to change policy and student degree requirements in order to ensure a fair and representative sampling of General Education Outcomes. These changes must be reflected in the new programs of study, which the Academic Dean and Department Chairs are likewise currently reviewing, and coordinated with administration and strategic planning. TMCC will need to effect these changes for the 2010-12 College and Student Catalogs.

3. Recommendations

- 1) A Language Learning Center (Reading/Writing English/Ojibwe/Spanish) is still needed, as is Reading Faculty and qualified tutors.
- 2) A central electronic database for storage, retrieval and processing of student learning (assessment, attendance, advisement, retention, and instructional) materials.
- 3) The Technology department needs to improve the AVI extensions.
- 4) Newer equipment in the Social Science department, such as computers, software and combinations of media equipment (TV, DVD, VCR, Blackboard) in the classrooms.
- 5) Suggest the Course Capture system for Distance Education Learning sub-committee.
- 6) Study Skills course be made mandatory for entering students and require that students check grades weekly.
- 7) Secure more Criminal Justice supplemental resources.

APPENDIX

Arts and Humanities Dept. Fall Semester, 2008 Assessment Report

August 23, 2008

Present: Chair. Ron C., Andy, Peggy, and Zelma

Dept. discussed what changes they had made in their courses as a result of assessment. General discussion of electronic resources, and their further inclusion in courses. Ron began by saying he increased the exercises basic writing and composition students had to complete in the textbook, and planned on including the electronic resources more next semester. Andy is looking for alternative search engines for student to research. Peggy discussed what to do with underprepared Comp II students. We really stressed how we would fix this situation by ensuring that Comp I students who could not write in complete sentences and recognize standard written English in typed papers should not pass. She went on to explain how she has had to review materials more. She sends students to Jenzabar for tutorials, and develop those skills and how to self-motivate students to writing and reading. Zelma identified how she changed her Humanities course to make readings with notes. She wanted to ensure, through group work, that students were in fact reading material and being prepared to discuss materials in class. She said it had improved retention and students were present more often in class.

We then discussed a couple of courses: one for the TED; and one for CTE. Zelma will eventually be teaching the CTE, and has arranged with Sheila. Peggy is getting together a course for teachers that she has taught/prepared before, and will present next semester.

Recommendations:

AVI extensions for computers

Investigate the Course Capture system to archive our classes and lectures for online/distance education instruction.

CTE Assessment Report

Submitted by: Rhonda Gustafson, CTE Department

December 2008

In the Spring Semester 2008, the CTE Department consisted of four, full-time instructors. One instructor of the four submitted the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment to the Assessment Coordinator.

From the one outcomes assessment completed the following was identified:

- To revise the curriculum to exclude resume writing, interviewing techniques and job searching since it was identified that these topics are covered in the Job Preparation course each student is required to complete upon graduation.

- The department chair recommends to the instructor to revise or to generate a new pre and post assessment examination and to also calculate the results of the pre and post.

A meeting was attended by the current department instructors, including the new Entrepreneurship instructor on December 14 regarding the new Student Learning Outcomes Assessment form. A CTE department meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 5, to complete the assessment forms for Fall Semester 2008. The goal is to have 100 percent of the department instructors complete the assessment prior to leaving campus on December 12.

Math and Science Dept. Report

(August 23, 2008)

Math and Science faculty members present: Dr. Scott Hanson, Chair; Miles Pfahl; Luther Olson; Irene Ost; Audrey LaVallie.

The Math and Science faculty met at 12:20 pm in Luther's office.

Audrey said that something that is working well for her classes is that they are doing worksheets in class. Another method that seems to be working for her is to assign homework and check that homework, akin to what is done in math courses.

Miles said that he has observed that students in the University Algebra (UA) course are generally not as studious as those in Applied Math (AM). A larger proportion of the UA students doesn't complete assignments and does not express any concern when they fail a test compared to the AM students. Audrey and Scott commented that it seems counterintuitive that students who have achieved a higher level of math are less likely to want to succeed. Miles and Luther postulated that the reason for the UA students' perceived lack of commitment may be caused by their lack of definite career goals and their ease at getting good grades in high school.

After the meeting, Miles said that it may be good to set up a "study skills" class that would be mandatory for all incoming Freshmen in which they would be required to check on their current grades each week. Therefore, the students who were not making adequate progress would be aware of the problem right away. This would help those students that may not otherwise be aware that they were not doing well.

The meeting adjourned at 12:57 pm. A good time was had by all.

Social Sciences Department Report

Submitted by Leslie Peltier.

Faculty members of the TMCC Social Sciences department "met" through email and through a collection of assessment reports by the chair in November of 2008. Due to conflicting course schedules and other events we could not meet face to face, but still managed to communicate with one another. Four out of the five submitted reports and all agreed that we are achieving our

course goals and objectives as evidenced by the successful rates of student completions of the course and feedback from assessment instruments. Faculty agree that the language culture and history of the Turtle Mt. Band of Chippewa is an important component of every class taught not only in our classes, but in every course taught here at TMCC. This basic premise reflects the Institutional Goals and Objectives of TMCC. There still remains some need for future expenditures for supplemental resources for newer areas of study such as Criminal Justice and equipment within the department, such as updating the computers, software, DVD, VHS, televisions, and combinations of media equipment in the classrooms.

Teacher Education Department

Due to the extensive work regarding assessment, Dr. Allery presented to the Board in September their work in electronic data collection, and surveys by graduates of the program. They are preparing for an accreditation visit in March, 2009 and we wish them luck.