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Criterion 3: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

“Danville Area Community College provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.”

Introduction

As per its mission statement, DACC is committed to providing quality learning experiences that meet the needs of those it serves. This is not a new development. Mary Miller writes in *A Chance for All*, “It should be noted that even at this early stage the Danville Extension Center was already concerned with standards and academic achievement.” Since the 1999 North Central Association (NCA) site visit, the College has been committed to establishing a culture of assessment within all divisions and departments of the institution. In these ten years, assessment has evolved in many ways at DACC, from the course to the program to the institutional level. Today the College is using data not only from the various assessments conducted in the academic divisions to improve student learning but also from assessments conducted in the non-academic departments that make up the student services and administrative divisions of the College. With this growth, it is important to monitor the effectiveness of the assessment initiative and document what DACC is doing with assessment data to elicit change and improvement in the classroom and in the offices that support the overall mission of the College.

Core Component 3a:

DACC’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

Assessment of student learning provides evidence at multiple levels: course, program, and institutional.

Evidence:

Course-level Assessment Reporting System
General Education Outcomes
General Education Matrix
Assessment Champions
Since 1999 DACC has been committed to establishing a culture of assessment within all departments and divisions of the institution. The process was spearheaded by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, the deans, and the Assessment Committee. This team is made up of faculty, administration, and staff members. Student input is invited as well. Members typically serve a two-year term before rotating off to be replaced by other members of the campus community. Some members, however, such as the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services and the deans, hold permanent places on the team. DACC’s assessment initiative is a process which has evolved over time, but there have been four clearly identifiable phases. During the first phase course-level assessment was emphasized, during the second phase general education outcomes were emphasized, and during the third phase program-level assessment was emphasized. The College is currently in the fourth phase, and the focus is on institutional effectiveness.

The first phase was the implementation of course-level assessment. Initially faculty were asked to assess at least one course per semester; by spring 2003 full-time faculty were required to assess two courses per semester and submit a report. Now all faculty, both full- and part-time, are required to assess at least one course every fall and spring semester and submit a report each semester on that assessment. In this report, they are to indicate their name, what semester it is, if they are full-time or part-time, the program they are in, the course they assessed, and the number of students they assessed. They are also asked to indicate to which program outcome the assessment applies, and to which general education outcome it applies. Faculty members are given a list of types of classroom assessment and are asked to check off all that apply and to provide a short description of their classroom assessments and procedures. They are then asked to explain why they chose the particular assessment they used for this assignment, what they were trying to measure, and what aspects of instruction or learning they were concerned about or interested in. They are asked to describe what they learned about student learning as a result of this assessment, and what changes they will make based upon those results. Finally, they are asked what resources might help them improve student learning and teaching, based on their assessment results. These reports are due by December 1 for the fall semester and by May 1 for the spring semester.

The second phase of the implementation was the development of general education outcomes for the College. During fall 2003 the Assessment Committee established four general education outcomes. They are:
• Competence in communications: written communications, oral communications/listening skills, visual communications

• Competence in critical inquiry and problem solving: qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, ability to define a problem and construct methods to gather, analyze, interpret, and evaluate data

• Technological competence: ability to use current resources, methods, technology, adaptive skills for future learning

• Cultural awareness and social skills: effective human relations in diverse settings, application of ethical principles, understanding of local, national, and global issues, appreciation for aesthetics and the arts

The committee members wanted to incorporate these general education outcomes into the course and program assessments and find methods to measure growth. One of the first steps was to develop a matrix for each course, where faculty listed classroom activities that would support each general education outcome. It was not expected that every course would adequately address every general education outcome, but that over the course of a student’s program of study, all outcomes would be addressed. **These matrices, which were completed for all courses beginning spring 2004, are on file in the Resource Room. See examples at [http://www.dacc.edu/selfstudy](http://www.dacc.edu/selfstudy).**

For many years the College has required students who filed an intent to graduate to complete post-testing in order to assess their skills levels in general education. Students complained because the testing process required nearly four hours of their valuable time at the end of the semester when they needed to complete projects, finish research papers, and study for finals. To reduce the burden on the graduating students, the Assessment Committee decided that the College would concentrate on assessing one general education outcome per year, which would require approximately one hour of the graduating students’ time. In fiscal year 2008 the College used the CAAP test in writing to provide a standardized measure of students’ growth in the targeted area. In fiscal year 2009, assessment activities are focusing on critical inquiry and problem solving. Please refer to Core Component 4b for a more thorough discussion of the assessment of general education outcomes.

The third phase in the College’s assessment initiative was the implementation of program-level assessments. Beginning in fall 2006 the College required faculty members to identify program-level outcomes and then to assess to what extent those outcomes had been met. Prior to this date, program-level assessments had not been systematically completed across the disciplines and were not necessarily related to the general education outcomes. Beginning that year DACC also required that all departments in the student services and administrative services divisions of the College complete an assessment planning document.
To assist with the effort to collect and analyze program-level assessments and to assure continued growth and consistency in the integration of effective assessment practices in the academic areas of the College, DACC implemented the assessment champion initiative in 2006. In May of that year the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services, along with the appropriate dean, identified an assessment champion for each of the three academic divisions. They were faculty members who had demonstrated excellence in assessment, had supported their peers in their respective divisions with their assessment activities, and were committed to DACC’s assessment initiative. The essential tasks and responsibilities of the assessment champions are five-fold. First, they spend at least three hours per week assisting full-time and part-time faculty in understanding the value of assessment of student learning. Second, they identify within each program area of their division a leader who will work with colleagues in their respective program area in the development of course- and program-level assessment reports. Third, they ensure that all full- and part-time faculty meet all deadlines set forth by the assessment calendar. Fourth, they work with the part-time faculty of the division and establish a standard course-level assessment tool that can be used within their program areas. Finally, they tailor the assessment of student learning reporting process to meet the needs of their dynamic academic divisions.

A second thing the College did to assist with program-level assessment was to send a team to an outcomes assessment workshop hosted by the Higher Learning Commission in fall 2006. The team, which was comprised of the deans of the three academic divisions, the dean of library and academic services, and the Associate Vice President of Student Services, shadowed other colleges and universities for the four days and gathered best practice information on program-level assessment. As a result of the workshop, the Assessment Committee was able to construct a new program-level assessment reporting system and develop a department and office-level assessment planning matrix and reporting scheme. The report templates are available online at http://www.dacc.edu/selfstudy and in the Resource Room.

With the new reporting system in hand, the Assessment Committee then identified a total of twenty-six academic program areas, nine in Business and Technology, six in Liberal Arts, ten in Math and Science, and one in Developmental Education.
Once the program areas had been defined, the Assessment Committee constructed program-level report templates to be used by the academic divisions. All programs are required to submit a program-level report each year. In these reports they indicate how many faculty participated in the report and who they are, how many are full-time and how many are part-time, the program they are in, and the number of students they assessed. They identify their program outcomes, describe what they learned from their assessment activities, indicate what changes they made as a result of their assessment results, and share what changes they are considering making as a result of their assessment. They identify which program-level outcomes were impacted, what general education outcome the assessment related to, and what impact the assessment had on that outcome. Faculty are asked if there is some form of institutional support that would help to improve learning and teaching, based on the results of their assessment. The faculty in each program take turns writing their report and submitting it to the appropriate assessment champion by June 1 of each year. The assessment champions are responsible for making sure all of the reports are submitted and for sending them to the deans and the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services.

Although assessment of institutional effectiveness has been an ongoing process, the College is now focusing more of its efforts here. Since 2003 the Director of Institutional Effectiveness has prepared an annual report for the College’s Board of Trustees. Included in this report are examples of the improvements made as a result of course- and program-level assessments. This report also includes other assessment information, such as the College’s performance on core indicators identified by the state, CCSSE results, and program reviews that adhere to state requirements. For a more extensive discussion of the College’s overall institutional effectiveness plan and
reporting process, please refer to Core Component 2c. Recently the report has included data from the department-level assessment reports from the non-academic areas of the College. Please see Core Component 3c for more information on these reports. DACC continues to evaluate its assessment efforts in order to improve and is currently investigating ways to enhance the culture of assessment for courses that are offered at off campus sites. These include dual enrollment classes at area high schools and courses offered at the two correctional centers the College serves.

*DACC clearly articulates learning outcomes for all academic programs.*

**Evidence:**

- Course Syllabi and Outlines
- Curriculum Guides
- Learning Outcomes by Division

There was a time when a course syllabus and outline were considered sufficient to assure that the College had clearly articulated what it expected students to learn in a given course. A curriculum guide was considered sufficient to assure that students knew what they were to learn in a given program of study. Certainly these standards are still important. Syllabi for all courses at DACC are on file with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and are available online and in the division offices. These syllabi adhere to a required topical outline format with specific learning outcomes, evaluation methods, textbook requirements, and assessment activities listed. Each semester all faculty members, both full- and part-time, are required to submit outlines for all courses to the appropriate dean. These outlines contain much of the same information as the official course syllabi, but they also contain information specific to each instructor and each semester. For example, a typical outline will include contact information for the instructor, office hours, and the calendar for the class. Curriculum guides are also on file with ICCB for all programs of study, and changes to the guides must be filed with that governing body. These guides are available online, in the printed catalog, and from the counseling office. In this age of accountability, however, institutions of higher education must be much more specific about what they expect students to learn, and they must be diligent about assessing whether or not students are learning.

On an in-service day in October 2006, full-time faculty members were given the charge to develop program-level learning outcomes for their respective areas. They were divided into their program areas as defined by the Assessment Committee. They were given copies of the syllabi for all courses included in their program areas, curriculum guides, and copies of the program-level assessment report template from which to work. They were assisted in this process by the assessment champions. Learning outcomes were developed for each area of study. While industry-driven skills standards were the
foundation for the learning outcomes identified in many of the career and technical programs, faculty members in other program areas linked many of their learning outcomes to the four general education outcomes established by the Assessment Committee: competence in communications; competence in critical inquiry and problem solving; technological competence; and cultural awareness and social skills.

In the Business and Technology Division, for example, the accounting faculty said a student completing their program should be able to “process business information for strategic decision planning” (critical thinking). The electronics faculty members said a student completing that program should display “competency in translating circuit diagrams into working electric/electronic circuits, and analyzing and troubleshooting electronic circuits and written programs” (technology and critical thinking). The office systems faculty members identified the “ability to follow oral and written directions” as a learning outcome (communication). In the Liberal Arts Division, the arts and humanities faculty members indicated that students completing courses in their program would “employ critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving with regard to cultural artifacts.” Communications faculty said students completing courses in their program should be able to “use the library and online resources to conduct research” (technology). One of the program level assessments identified by the social sciences faculty was that students would be able to use citations in all research assignments (critical thinking).

In the Math and Sciences Division, the faculty in the agri-business program identified “understanding the relevance of science in maintaining a sustainable agricultural environment” (cultural awareness and social skills), while the biological sciences program listed “understanding of the relevancy of science in everyday life and global affairs” under that same general education goal. In mathematics and physical sciences, the faculty members easily identified learning outcomes related to critical thinking. Mathematics identified problem solving and physical sciences identified scientific reasoning. They also identified learning outcomes in the area of communication. The Mathematics program expects students “to use, understand, and write all appropriate symbolic forms and mathematical terminology.” The physical sciences program expects that students will “demonstrate effective communication skills through written, oral and/or multimedia reports.” The faculty in developmental education were very specific in regards to their outcomes. Developmental learners would be retained in their coursework, would obtain mastery in their subject area (English, math, or reading), would place into subsequent college classes, and would persist in their coursework.

Developing program-level outcomes was a major step in the College’s assessment initiative and has allowed the College to move forward in evaluating its effectiveness as an institution. As with all initiatives, however, there is room for improvement. While program-level outcomes have been identified for all programs of study, the outcomes
are not written in a consistent format and some are not easily measurable. The College is revisiting the program-level outcomes for each area and will revise them so the format is consistent and the outcomes themselves are easier to measure. **The learning outcomes for all programs are available online at http://www.dacc.edu/selfstudy and in the Resource Room.**

**Core Component 3b:**

DACC values and supports effective teaching.

_DACC evaluates teaching._

Evidence:

- Administrative Evaluation of Instruction
- Student Evaluation of Instruction

DACC adheres to the Commission’s “Good Practices in Determining Qualified Faculty” and prides itself on the fact that its faculty members are first and foremost teachers, and excellent teachers at that. To ensure a high quality of instruction, the College evaluates faculty on a semester basis, by the deans or lead instructors, as is appropriate, and by the students. The primary goal of evaluation of instruction is to provide information for faculty members to improve effectiveness in the classroom and thereby improve student learning. The deans visit at least one classroom each semester for all non-tenured, full-time faculty members during their three-year probationary period and at least one classroom each academic year for full-time, tenured faculty. This may be a traditional classroom or an online classroom. The Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services visits the classrooms of non-tenured faculty members at least once during their probationary period. Part-time faculty members are observed each semester, either by the dean or a lead instructor. The observers are looking for evidence that the faculty members have expertise in the subject matter, use multiple teaching strategies that will address a variety of learning styles, use technology effectively, demonstrate awareness of diversity in the classroom and the impact that will have on student learning, and use a variety of assessments that will measure student learning.

The deans and lead instructors incorporate their observations into the written faculty evaluations. In these evaluations they also look at whether or not the faculty members use assessment of student learning to inform practice; work effectively with colleagues; are actively involved in efforts to improve the College and help better serve the community; work to extend their knowledge of subject matter and to improve
teaching techniques; take advantage of opportunities for professional growth and development through participation in professional organizations; communicate clearly and effectively with students, colleagues, and chairperson; and are prompt, thorough, and accurate in evaluating student assignments and tests. Information taken from student evaluations is included as appropriate. These written evaluations are shared with the faculty members. If the deans or lead instructors have identified problems, they use this opportunity to address them. Once these evaluations are signed by the faculty members and the observers, they are forwarded to the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services, who signs them and then submits them to the Human Resources office, where they are included in the personnel files. The faculty members and the deans receive copies of the signed evaluations for their records. The evaluation form is available in the Resource Room and also online at http://www.dacc.edu/selfstudy.

As important as it is for administration to evaluate faculty effectiveness, it is even more important for students to evaluate how their instructors are doing. Three of the courses taught by full-time tenured faculty members and all classes taught by non-tenured and part-time faculty members are evaluated by students each semester. The evaluation forms are distributed to the students near the end of the semester. Faculty members leave the room, and a student volunteer delivers the completed evaluations to the office assistant, who then forwards them to the Institutional Research Office. For online courses, a link to the evaluation is posted on the course homepage towards the end of the semester, and the results are fed to the Institutional Research Office. The Director of Institutional Research processes these evaluations and presents them to the Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services. They are then reviewed by the Deans. After the semester ends, the data are shared with the respective faculty members for their review. Again, if there are areas of concern, the deans use this opportunity to address them.

This process for student evaluation of instruction has been in place for many years; the instrument being used has changed, however. In spring 2000 a team comprised of members from across the campus community recommended that the College look into changing the instrument used by students to evaluate instructors. This was because the instrument being used at that time was very subjective. In April 2000 the Board of Trustees contracted with a company for professional services to support the development, implementation, analysis, and evaluation of a revised student evaluation of instruction system. The process used by this company allowed for the general questionnaire to be field tested during the summer session. The questionnaire then was tailored to make it unique to DACC. It is comprised of 48 questions for non-tenured or new part-time instructors and 23 questions for tenured or part-time instructors who have taught at least three semesters. Many of the questions were statistically verified by nationally normed tests. The computerized system provides data that is more reliable and allows the College to more quickly evaluate all courses. More importantly, it
generates information that is more directly linked to what the faculty member does that impacts student learning. For example, students compare one instructor’s effectiveness to other instructors, they indicate whether or not they were treated with respect, and they identify if they learned more than average in the course. Students also have a space where they can add comments. These comments are read by division Deans and faculty members. Student evaluations are on file in the division offices. A copy of the student evaluation form is available in the Resource Room.

Evidence:

- Travel Funds
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Best Practice Workshops
- Instructional Media Department Offerings
- Technology
- Online and Print Resources
- Part-time Faculty Academy
- Employee Survey Fall 2007

Faculty are encouraged to experiment with new teaching techniques and to vary their teaching styles to appeal to visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, and musical learning styles. They are also encouraged to provide alternative projects so students can choose the project that best fits their learning style and to use changing technologies to enhance student learning. The College provides the training and the resources for faculty to do these things. Full-time faculty and staff are provided a small travel allowance to enable them to engage in professional development. They are also eligible for tuition reimbursement for courses taken at other institutions. In addition, training is provided in a number of cost-effective ways, such as best practice workshops, satellite training, print materials, and online resources.

On in-service days, time is frequently devoted to best practice workshops on a variety of topics designed to improve pedagogy and show faculty ways to employ innovative practices in their classroom. Some of the topics over the past five years have included: online course development, library instruction, interactive technology, white board technology, and grant writing. In fiscal year 2008, faculty received training on how to prepare course syllabi that meet ICCB standards. The in-service activity was conducted by selected faculty from each academic division. In this training, models of course outlines were shared with full- and part-time faculty and workshops were conducted on how to incorporate legal considerations. In fiscal year 2009 faculty received
training on podcasting and active learning. Over the past two years, the Instructional Media Department has sponsored many faculty development opportunities to ensure that faculty members are up to date on the use of technology. For example, at the January 2007 in-service, a half-day workshop on streaming audio and video and the use of Audacity software was offered.

Other programs that the Instructional Media Department facilitates are those offered through StarLink, which is available to faculty online. StarLink presents various scholarly topics on a monthly basis to the faculty to assist in classroom instruction. Programs available this academic year have included Best Practices from Hybrid Instructors, Leadership and Success, and Pedagogy 201 for Distance Learning: Enhancing Interactivity. The purpose of StarLink research based programs is to improve student learning and to enhance teaching techniques, thus providing a stimulating learning environment for students and faculty. At present the StarLink system is not equipped to give the College a count of how many instructors access the programs provided to them. By next academic year, the system hopes to be able to provide that information. Meanwhile, the Director of Instructional Media maintains that usage is quite high, based on the number of faculty who contact him because they are having difficulty initially logging into the programs. Each year numerous development opportunities are made available to faculty through Illinois Community College Online (ILCCO), Illinois Online (ION), and the Instructional Technology Council (ITC). These programs are offered at a minimal fee or completely free of charge. One program is the annual Faculty Summer Institute, which is held at and indirectly sponsored by the University of Illinois. The Illinois Online Conference is another opportunity afforded faculty at DACC annually through the Instructional Media department. Any of the programs offered through ITC are available as requested by faculty.

The training opportunities devoted to using changing technologies to improve student learning would be ineffective, however, if the College did not also provide the required technology or the technical support. Nearly 100 percent of the classrooms are smart classrooms, equipped with a computer with Internet access, a video projector, a DVD player, a VCR, and an overhead projector. Several classrooms have interactive whiteboards – also known as SmartBoards – and more and more instructors are making use of I-clickers and podcasting to engage their students in the learning process. All faculty, both full- and part-time, have access to e-mail and a variety of software packages.

Other resources provided by the College include periodicals, newsletters, magazines, and books, as well as subject-discipline specific academic and scholarly documents. All divisions and departments on campus have access to copies of the Chronicle of Higher Education, the Community College Times, and the Community College Journal. All full-time and part-time faculty receive copies of Innovation Abstracts, a publication from the
National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD). Distributed monthly, this publication provides a print version of scholarly topics that have been researched to improve and stimulate learning for students in the classroom. Faculty members are encouraged by the administration to attempt new methods of instruction and to evaluate the effects of the new methods on student learning. The DACC library maintains a comprehensive online database directory that enhances teaching and learning. Some of the titles are the Science Resource Center, the History Resource Center, the Literary Reference Center, Testing & Education Reference Center, the Elsevier Social & Behavioral Sciences Journal Collection, the Gale Virtual Reference, the African-American Culture and History, the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the Gale Encyclopedia of Cancer, the Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, the Historical Statistics of the US, Saskia Digital Image Archive, Webfeat, Noodletools, and SFX.

Part-time faculty have always been and will continue to be an invaluable component of the College. The Part-time Faculty Academy serves as a training and development tool for these important members of the DACC instructional team. The Academy is conducted four times a year, twice in the fall and twice in the spring, in keeping with the in-service days for full-time faculty. A meal is provided, and the agenda for each program closely mirrors the professional development activities provided for full-time faculty. The Vice-President of Instruction and Students Services and the deans regularly attend these meetings, as do other administrators and staff members as is appropriate, depending upon the topics covered. Recent programs at the Academy have included: health and wellness; outcomes assessment; safety procedures and safety manual review; course outline and syllabus development; and planning sessions with the College President. Part-time faculty members who attend four programs are then eligible for the same pay rate per credit hour as full-time faculty members are paid for overload. Members who continue to attend academy programs receive a small stipend after each meeting in addition to the pay increase. Attendees evaluate each session and are asked to suggest topics for future sessions. Part-time faculty members have access to the many resources available to full-time faculty members to help them improve pedagogy and use innovative practices in their classrooms to improve student learning. These include the best practices workshops, Instructional Media Department offerings, print and online resources, and technology.

The College’s emphasis on providing faculty and staff the resources to employ innovative practices that enhance learning has had a positive impact at DACC. According to the employee survey conducted by the self-study steering committee in Fall 2007, 92 percent reported they have implemented innovative practices in the last 24 months. They listed increased use of computers, scanners, printers, SmartBoards, wireless internet, updated software, PowerPoint presentations, internet projects, group work, active learning activities, clickers, updated CD ROMs and DVDs, and more online courses as examples of innovative practices. In addition, 92 percent of those
completing the survey were confident that services and accommodations have been made for the different learning styles. The results of this survey are available online at http://www.dacc.edu/selfstudy and in the Resource Room.

**DACC recognizes effective teaching.**

Evidence:

- Faculty, Staff, Support Staff and Part-time Faculty of the Year Awards
- ICCTA Outstanding Faculty Member Awards
- ACCT Central Region Awards
- ACCT William H. Meardy Awards

Each spring the Board of Trustees, with the assistance of the Human Resources Department, hosts the Employee Recognition Banquet to thank those individuals who have given much to the College. At this banquet the board acknowledges past retirees, recognizes current employees for their years of service, celebrates the contributions of those who are retiring, and announces the faculty, staff, support staff, and part-time faculty of the year award winners. Weeks prior to the banquet the Human Resources Department posts the nomination packet for these awards to the website and mails packets to all employees via campus mail. Over the course of several weeks employees are frequently reminded via e-mail to nominate their colleagues for the awards. Nominations may be made by faculty, staff, students, and alumni. The selection committee, which is comprised of previous honorees, meets, evaluates the nominations, and selects the four individuals to receive the awards. This is an enormous challenge in that many worthy employees are nominated.

To be eligible for the appropriate award, an individual must have three years of continuous service and must not have received the award in the last five years. Nominees for the staff and support staff awards should display professionalism, enthusiasm, and a positive attitude. They should exhibit good communication and leadership skills and be good at morale building and teamwork. In addition they should be involved at DACC and engaged in activities conducive to their personal development. Nominees for the Faculty and Part-time Faculty awards should be teachers who challenge students to pursue their goals and prepare them to make life choices. They should be teachers who help students to improve their skills for employment and/or success in academic endeavors and who motivate students to be active and concerned citizens of their communities. The previous year’s honoree in each award category has the privilege of introducing the current year’s honoree. This is a very exciting moment because the winner is kept “top secret” until the announcement. At times there are tears and at other times there are smiles. Always there are standing ovations. Each honoree receives a plaque. The faculty and staff award recipients are each offered an opportunity to attend
a national conference of their choice, while support staff recipients receive a personal business day and $100.00 gift card.

Nowhere is the College’s commitment to effective teaching more apparent than in the number of DACC faculty members who have been nominated for and received regional and national awards. The College automatically nominates the winner of the faculty of the year award for two other awards. The first is the Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA) Outstanding Faculty Member Award. The ICCTA recognizes the high achievement of Illinois’ full- and part-time faculty. Letters of support from the College President or Board Chair, and letters of recommendation from students, colleagues, and civic leaders are gathered. The faculty member submits a 250-word statement describing his or her philosophy of education. Recipients of this award include John Hoagland in 2003 and Kathy Sturgeon in 2006.

The second is the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) William H. Meardy Faculty Award. ACCT presents five regional faculty of the year awards annually throughout the United States and Canada. The five regional winners are then the sole nominees for the prestigious national award. DACC has had five Central Region winners, Marilyn Satterwhite in 1995, John Hoagland in 2001, Lori Garrett in 2003, Kathy Sturgeon in 2006, and Glenda Boling in 2007. As the Central Regional Award recipients, these DACC faculty then became nominees for the William H. Meardy Faculty Member Award. Each time the College sent the regional winner, along with the president, several board members, the appropriate dean, and a guest of the winner’s choice, to attend the awards ceremony banquet where the winner was announced. Only one community college in the U.S. and Canada has had two Meardy Award winners. DACC has had four: Hoagland, Garrett, Sturgeon, and Boling.

Core Component 3c:
DACC creates effective learning environments.

Assessment results inform improvements in instruction.

Evidence:
Employee Survey Fall 2007
Course-level Assessments
Writing Exit Exam
Program-level Assessments
Social Science Writing Rubric Project
The assessments faculty and staff members have conducted for the past several years have helped them better understand what they need to do to improve student learning. In the employee survey administered fall 2007, 74 percent of the respondents said assessment had led to changes in curriculum, instruction, resources used, and student services. One respondent wrote, “Division assessment has made writing, student presentations, critical thinking, and technology an important part of the class.” Another wrote, “Paying more attention to assessment has helped me to give more individualized instruction.” Yet another wrote, “Writing program assessment tools have impacted the way I teach.” One wrote that assessment has led to a “much stronger awareness of student learning,” in reference to corporate training, an instructor wrote, “Each customized program is assessed, and the curriculum is changed if recommended.” One faculty member summed it up best with this comment: “Student assessment drives instruction.”

The results of the employee survey are available in the Resource Room.

The course-level assessment reports provide numerous examples of changes made as a result of assessment. In the Business and Technology Division, the marketing faculty were interested in finding ways to improve the completion rate for the Advanced Marketing class. In that class, the students were given a reflective paper assessment after they concluded their primary projects for the class. It gathered student feedback both on the project assignments and the overall class. The instructor used the findings from the reflective feedback paper to develop a timeline for the class projects, where progress deadlines are established to ensure that students are staying on task with the project assignments. In the Liberal Arts Division, the Arts and Humanities faculty were interested in determining whether or not infusing critical thinking lessons into the ethics curriculum would increase overall course success rates. Two sections of Ethics were assessed. The results showed that by integrating critical thinking components into the curriculum, overall content retention of course materials increased and grades on tests and papers increased one-half letter grade. In the Math and Science division, faculty were concerned that so many students were failing Anatomy and Physiology I. This course is a pre-requisite to many of the College’s allied health programs. In order to improve the success rates of these students, the faculty implemented a new placement pre-requisite. Students must successfully complete Principles of Biology (BIOL 102) before they can register for Anatomy and Physiology. Students who feel they have proficiency in this subject matter may take the proficiency exam. It is too soon to evaluate the overall effectiveness of this change, but the faculty teaching Anatomy and Physiology report that they can now incorporate more rigorous material into the coursework because the students have the prerequisite knowledge to be able to master it.

Perhaps the best example of course-level assessment that has had impact over many years is the Exit Exam for Rhetoric and Composition. The English faculty at DACC are committed to assuring that students completing the writing courses have
the skills needed to be successful in future classes and in the larger society. The Rhetoric and Composition I Exit Exam was instituted in fall 1998. Every semester, the exam assesses student performance across all sections of the course, including those taught online and as dual enrollment classes at area high schools. The exam is not currently administered at the two correctional centers served by the College. The exam is always scheduled for Monday and Tuesday. Late the week before students are given and instructed to read three articles on issues that should be of relevance and, hopefully, interest to them. Recent exam topics have included the freshman experience on college campuses, “helicopter” parenting, and the efficiency (or not) of multitasking. When students sit for the exam, they are handed a sheet with one prompt for each of the three articles. At that point they must decide which of the three they will address.

Students are expected to be able to summarize a writer’s thesis and the main support for that thesis in one paragraph of approximately 150 words. They then must respond to the specific question the prompt asks in two or more paragraphs totaling at least 300 words. Their responses must show sensitivity to audience and some original thought on the issue at hand. A typical prompt would be:

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in which you summarize Laura Vanderkam's article “You Don't Have to Hate Your First Job” in one paragraph (approximately 150 words) and respond, in two paragraphs (approximately 350 words), to the following: Vanderkam largely ignores the issue of money in her article, which gives job-seeking advice to recent college graduates. What part should money play in thinking about careers? Put rather simply, which comes first, money or happiness?

The faculty teaching the course provide ample instruction in the skills needed to pass the exam and also give practice tests to help the students prepare. In addition, the three-hour Exit Exam Workshop is offered at least twice each semester, a few weeks before the first take of the Exit Exam and once again for those retaking the exam.

All exit exams are read by experienced DACC writing instructors who are “normed” in training sessions prior to reading. Every exam is read by a minimum of two readers. The readers do not confer ahead of time, and they do not read their own students’ exams. The students are identified only by a number assigned by the division office assistant. The evaluation levels are high pass, low pass, and fail. Any two “pass” evaluations, whether high, middle or low, produce a passing exam. If one reader gives a student a pass, and the other fails the student, a third reader evaluates the test and gives it a pass or a fail. The exams are recorded only as “P” or “F”. Students are given two chances to pass the exam, with the second sitting falling approximately one month after the first.
Since its inception, the Exit Exam has experienced an 80 to 90 percent final pass rate (averaging at 84 percent). The writing committee meets regularly and continues to assess the effectiveness of the exam and ways to better prepare students for the exam. Currently faculty are interested in finding out whether or not there is a correlation between how students came into the class (placed in via ACT, SAT, or COMPASS; came in through successful completion of ENGL 121; or started the writing sequence in DEVE 098). Faculty are also interested in overcoming the barriers to administering the exam at the correctional centers. This has been difficult, due to logistical issues. It has been impossible to date to get the faculty from the centers on campus to train them on how to prepare students for the exam.

Students taking Communication Skills and Developmental English must also prove competency before they can move on. Communication Skills students must pass the Competency Exam, which is not as extensive as the Exit Exam but is modeled after it. Students in Developmental English 098 must pass the Mastery Test and submit an acceptable final writing assignment before moving on to the next level. Students in Developmental English 099 must score high enough on the COMPASS test and complete an acceptable writing assignment before moving on. Information on the Exit Exams and Competency Exams, including sample packets, workshop materials, completed exams, and passage information, are available in the Resource Room. Information on the Mastery Test, COMPASS, and writing samples are available in the Developmental Education Department.

As discussed earlier, beginning in fall 2006 the College required faculty members to identify program-level outcomes and then to assess to what extent those outcomes had been met. Program-level assessment reports were completed by all divisions and are on file in the Institutional Research office and in the appropriate division offices. Copies are on file in the Resource Room. Following are examples of how assessment data were used in the various programs of the College to improve student learning.

Many changes were made in the Business and Technology Division programs as a result of assessment activities. Faculty in the accounting program concluded that student success was dependent on the development of strong analytical and foundation skills earlier in the curriculum. They noted that students had difficulty throughout the program in form and report preparation. They also saw that students were successful in working in groups in selected courses only. This is a skill that needs to transcend into all Accounting classes and was integrated into all Accounting classes beginning in the 2008 academic year. The Accounting faculty were pleased to see that students were able to employ sound problem solving skills in all courses of the program. They observed that the lack of new technology in the Business division was beginning to hinder the overall success of many students in the program.
Though relatively new to the College, the Automotive Technology program identified and implemented changes as a result of the 2007 assessment activities. The faculty in the Automotive Technology program have placed new emphasis on the importance of schematics, flowcharts, multi-meters and other traditional methods of diagnostic work, along with the computer scanner. They also have placed more emphasis on teamwork, building this skill set into each of the course curricula. They now also stress the importance of communication skills, especially in the use of slang, proper grammar and spelling. Faculty in the Electronics program now emphasize circuit troubleshooting techniques and have embedded more current technology practices into the curriculum. They are also working to make more contacts in the community and are seeking additional internship opportunities for students in the program. In the Information System's Program, new emphasis has been placed on problem solving, and special attention was given to provide students with the opportunity to understand the importance of maintaining legacy systems as well as developing systems with current technologies. The Marketing faculty determined that the students in the program did not consistently have the print design skills required to be successful. Without these skills, the critical thinking and reasoning aptitude of marketing students was limited. The program no longer emphasizes the design software applications but rather emphasizes planning, strategy, and evaluation skills.

Many changes have been made to the programs within the Liberal Arts division as a result of assessment. For example, in arts and humanities, several of the philosophy courses went “textless” and incorporated public domain philosophy materials in order to streamline classroom delivery and reduce the high cost of textbooks to students. In music, a midterm quiz was integrated into the courses to assess student learning based on program outcomes. This quiz allows the faculty to make adjustments to curriculum during the semester rather than at the end. Several changes were made in communications. In English, assessment data revealed that 83 percent of students taking the writing exit exam passed. In order to prepare students better for the exit exam, more study sessions have been built into the courses of the program. The speech faculty began implementing more listening skills into the curriculum by using peer response and workshops. Students analyzed, interpreted and presented information by way of role play and problem solving groups to illustrate critical thinking skills. Students used film and reading to discuss various opinions of others. In speech, 80 percent of the students received a grade of C or better on the oral rubric. Moreover, 85 percent of students in the speech classes were able to listen to students’ speeches and assess criteria correctly. Library workshops are now being incorporated into most communications classes.

Program-level assessment has led to many changes in the Math and Science Division, also. In engineering, industry-based labs have been implemented in Physics-Mechanics and Physics-Heat/Magnetism and an operation manual or budget report
is required. Two industry projects have been added to Physics-Mechanics, and one industry project has been added to Physics-Heat/Magnetism. In nursing, student learning styles were assessed utilizing the Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic (VARK) sensory learning style framework. Students were informed verbally and with handouts of techniques to improve learning, increase knowledge and decrease stress with respect to their particular styles. NCLEX- style practice questions were used in group and individual format with discussion, including instructor, to clarify answers including rationales, and journaling was instituted as a clinical tool to facilitate student self assessment of learning.

One of the best examples of a programmatic change made as a result of assessment crossed departmental and division lines. At DACC economics is housed in the Business and Technology Division, while all of the other social sciences (anthropology, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology) are housed in the Liberal Arts Division. In fall 2007 the faculty teaching the social sciences collaborated on an assessment project to improve student writing. They used a common essay grading criteria rubric for all writing assignments and targeted two assignments for student interaction. The rubric clarified what constituted an “A” essay, a “B” essay, and so on. Students graded themselves with the rubric and then turned in the assignment and the rubric, with a grade, to the instructor. The student responses were compared to the instructors’, and in many cases the students graded themselves lower than the instructors did. In their report, instructors indicated that they felt the project was a success. One wrote, “Students really responded, when asked, to the idea of using a rubric. It helped them understand grades.” Another instructor felt as though the 18 percent grade increase he saw from exercise one to exercise two was directly attributable to the use of the rubric. The students were invited to participate in an online poll, and 33 percent of them did. Of those, 100 percent said they found using the rubric helped them to think more about how to get a good grade, 75 percent said they felt using the rubric made a positive impact on their exam preparation, 50 percent said they applied what they learned about grading to work in another course, and 87 percent said this was an exercise that should be used again in the class.

The faculty agreed with the students. In their spring 2008 program-level assessment report, the four full-time and three part-time faculty who participated in the rubric project continued to express great satisfaction with it. One instructor wrote that “basic competence and familiarity with terms and concepts” increased and that “statistics indicated a 17 percent increase in grades.” Another reported that more emphasis on other types of guides, such as study guides for tests and quizzes, would be used in future semester. Instructors felt the rubric created more individualized attention, which tended to “help to correct or inspire performance and grades.” The grade improved 12 percent from the first assignment (the much easier lab work) to the more difficult second assignment.” Another instructor also reported a statistical increase in grades
attributable to the rubric exercise, and yet another said, “The rubric tool gives the student a clearer understanding of what is expected of them in respect to writing papers. At the very minimum this is a good communication tool. The student and the instructor are on the same page. The student knows what he/she has to do to acquire a certain grade and the teacher has made it very clear what is expected to get a particular grade.”

The faculty reported that they would be integrating the essay grading rubric into all courses in the social sciences. The essay exam grading rubric and fall 2007 and spring 2008 assessment reports are available in the Resource Room.

Assessment results inform institutional practices.

Evidence:

- 2004 CCSSE Data
- 2006 CCSSE Data
- Course-level Assessment Reports
- Program-level Assessment Reports
- Fall 2008 Online Faculty Survey
- Student Artifacts

Research has shown that students who are actively engaged in their educational experience learn more and are more likely to complete their programs of study. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is a tool to help an institution measure how engaged its students are and how well it is addressing their needs. The Community College Student Report (CCSR) consists of 38 questions and takes approximately half an hour to complete. DACC administered the CCSSE for the first time spring 2004 to a total of 442 students, 99 (22 percent) of whom were part-time and 343 (78 percent) of whom were full-time. The baseline data provided was very encouraging. In the five areas identified as benchmarks by the CCSSE staff (active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners), the College fared well compared to the four colleges in its consortium and to the other 151 colleges who participated in the national study. DACC scored just over the benchmark score in every category compared to the colleges in its consortium and over the benchmark score in three categories for all colleges in the study.
Benchmark Scores 2004 CCSSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>DACC</th>
<th>Other Consortium</th>
<th>CCSSE Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active &amp; Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Effort</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Challenge</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Learners</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DACC Institutional Research Office

In the following table, the up arrows indicate where DACC scored higher than other colleges, and the down arrows indicate where DACC scored lower. The College was significantly lower than the cohort college on just two measures, which were under active and collaborative learning.

Comparison of Selected Items 2004 CCSSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Full-time Students</th>
<th>Part-time Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Colleges</td>
<td>Consortium</td>
<td>All Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made a class presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>▼</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-based project</td>
<td></td>
<td>▼</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency skill labs</td>
<td></td>
<td>▲</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency computer lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>▲</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used e-mail instructor</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed grades with instructor</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about career plans</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed ideas from readings</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities other than coursework</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with non-academic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing financial support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DACC Institutional Research Office

The College administered the CCSSE for the second time in spring 2006 to a total of 510 students, including 157 (31 percent) part-time and 353 (69 percent) full-time. There were 10 other colleges in the consortium, and 447 colleges overall in the study. The College did not fare as well this time in comparison to the consortium college.
or all other colleges. Compared to the colleges in the consortium, DACC placed below the benchmark score in all of the five areas. Compared to all of the colleges in the study, DACC placed below the benchmark score in all of the five areas except student-faculty interaction.

### Benchmark Scores 2006 CCSSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DACC</th>
<th>Other Consortium</th>
<th>CCSE Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active &amp; Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Effort</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Challenge</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Learners</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DACC Institutional Research Office*

In the following table, the up arrows indicate areas where the College was significantly higher than other colleges in a particular area, and the down arrows indicate areas where the College was significantly lower. In 2004 DACC was significantly higher on several items and lagged behind other colleges in just two areas. In 2006, however, the College was significantly higher on just two items and was significantly lower on four items.

### Comparison of Selected Items 2006 CCSSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Full-time Students</th>
<th>Part-time Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consortium</td>
<td>All Colleges</td>
<td>Consortium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made a class presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-based project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared two or more drafts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency computer lab</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing basic elements idea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used e-mail instructor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DACC Institutional Research Office*

The College was concerned that it scored lower than the colleges in the consortium and all other colleges in just about every area. This time the comparison groups were
much larger, however, and this could perhaps account for the lower performance. What the College was really concerned about, however, was the comparison between its own scores in 2004 and 2006. Its score in every area – active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners – had declined. In 2004 DACC was significantly lower on just two measures, while in 2006 it was significantly lower on ten. Moreover, the College was still significantly lower in the same areas in 2006 that it had been in 2004, specifically class presentations and community projects as part of a course. Granted, DACC had surveyed a higher percentage of part-time students in 2006 (31 percent) than it had in 2004 (22 percent), but this difference had already been factored in by CCSSE. The 2004 and 2006 CCSSE reports, as well as an extensive table comparing the results from both years, are available in the Resource Room.

The results of the CCSSE data were shared with faculty at the August in-service in 2006. They were strongly encouraged to require students to make more presentations and to make assignments that would require students to collaborate on projects in the community. They discussed ways they could encourage more part-time students, who are on campus less hours each week, to use the labs and other resources available to them more frequently. A review of the course- and program-level assessment reports since August 2006 indicates that faculty have incorporated more classroom presentations, both formal and informal, into their courses. For example, students in Physics-Wave Motion/ Optics/Modern Physics complete a PowerPoint presentation on an assigned question from Flying Circus of Physics. In the chemistry series, more lab time is used to allow students to work chemistry problems at the board and on the over-head projector. Students are chosen randomly and present before the lab lecture. After the presentation other students are asked to comment and make recommendations. In Industrial Electricity students also report their lab experiences orally, especially in the area of theory of control circuit operation.

Although there are a few examples of students working on community based projects as part of a course, they are not as abundant as the examples of classroom presentations. For example, in fall 2008 the students in the Technical Writing class created the flyers and table tents for the Global Warming Debate held on November 24 in the Bremer Theater. While this was a campus-based activity, it was cross-divisional and the community was invited to attend. The debate was between two professors in the Math and Science Division and was moderated by a professor in the Liberal Arts Division. Students in this class also created the flyer that was used to promote the showing of Birth of a Nation on February 2, 2009. This activity, which was sponsored by DACC and the Liberal Arts Division, was part of the national Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration (ALBC). The students in the Technical Writing class are primarily completing degrees in the Business and Technology Division. An activity that was truly community-based involved five students from one of the American
History classes. They conducted the research that was used in a pamphlet describing the history of railroads in Danville. This pamphlet was part of a special holiday display at the Vermilion County Museum. **Examples of the flyers, table tents, and pamphlets created by these students are available in the Resource Room.**

A concern with the CCSSE data is that, since they reflect student perceptions only, they do not give the entire picture. Students may not realize, for example, that a presentation might be as formal as a prepared speech or as informal as being the spokesperson for a group activity that was conducted in class, or that a class assignment is in reality a community-based project. The College determined that it would benefit from information gathered via the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE), along with the CCSSE. The CCFSSE, which is administered online, asks about faculty teaching practices, how they spend their professional time, what do they think about their students’ learning. It can be compared directly with the CCSSE data. The College had intended to administer the CCSSE for a third time spring 2008, but because faculty and staff were still heavily involved in the change from Legacy to Datatel/Colleague and with the self-study, the College opted to delay administering the CCSSE again until spring 2009. At that time it will also invite faculty to participate in the CCFSSE.

Meanwhile, in order to get a sense of what faculty were doing to address some of the issues identified in the 2004 and 2006 CCSSE data, full-time faculty were invited in fall 2008 to participate in a brief online survey that asked just five questions, three of which related directly to the results of the CCSSE surveys. A total of 60 percent completed the survey, with all of the divisions well represented: 25 percent were from Business and Technology; 34 percent were from Liberal Arts; and 38 percent were from Math and Science. One respondent did not indicate a division. The results suggested that faculty do indeed require presentations and collaborative learning projects in the classroom, but they do not require students to do something in the community.

**Online Survey of Full-time Faculty Fall 2008 (n=12)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you require a collaborative learning project in your class?</td>
<td>29 (90.6%)</td>
<td>3 (9.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you require student presentations?</td>
<td>26 (81.3%)</td>
<td>6 (18.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you require a service learning project, or any other type of project, which places students in the community?</td>
<td>6 (18.8%)</td>
<td>26 (81.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Richard Pate, Lead Instructor Liberal Arts*
The College is looking forward to administering both the CCSSE and the CCFSSE in spring 2009. It is hoped that this will provide a clearer picture of how engaged students are at DACC. It is hoped that surveying faculty will also encourage a wider discussion of the CCSSE results and how DACC and its faculty can use these data to improve student learning. Meanwhile, faculty are continuing to discuss ways the College can connect students in meaningful ways with the larger community without overwhelming them. Obviously not every class can, or should, have a requirement that students do something in the community. When faculty reviewed the 2004 and 2006 data at the January 2009 in-service, one suggestion on the evaluation form was that this topic specifically be included on the agenda at the August 2009 in-service.

**Assessment results inform improvements in non-academic areas to positively impact student learning.**

**Evidence:**

- Department-level Assessment Plans
- Department-level Assessment Reports

Beginning in fiscal year 2007, DACC required all departments in the non-academic divisions of the College to complete a planning document to determine how they were tied to student learning and what impact they were having. Six student learning outcome areas were identified. Access to student learning/diversity of support was defined as providing service (in person, online) and opportunities at different times and in different ways. Examples of departments pertinent to this were networking, student services, and instructional services. Communication support was defined as supplying information on classes, programs, policies, and procedures. Examples of departments particularly impacted by this were Marketing, Student Services, and the Athletic Program. Structural Support was defined as where the learning takes place, whether it be in building or online. Examples of departments most affected by this were Maintenance, Building Services, Security, and Instructional Services. Functional Support was defined as the processes required for the College to provide learning services. Examples of departments most reflective of this were the Business Office, the MIS staff, Human Resources, and Counseling. Integrity Support was defined as whether or not the department had student learning as a part of its mission and was truly assessing what it was doing. Student Persistence (Retention) Support was defined as identifying those services/functions/processes that might hinder a student from registering and/or persisting in class and assessing student satisfaction. The last two areas were determined to be pertinent to all departments on campus.

Assessment Planning Chart templates were given to each department to complete. Departments were to identify their mission and goals, objectives, and/or functions. They were then to develop specific and measurable outcomes, methods for evaluating those
outcomes, and a calendar for when they would assess the outcomes. There was a column to include the results of their evaluations, as well as columns where they could indicate how they used the information to improve and whether or not the improvements made actually worked. Each department was to submit the completed chart to the Director of Institutional Assessment. It is important to note that, under the leadership of the Associate Vice-President, the Student Services Division had produced an Operational and Assessment Plan beginning in 2003. Copies of these reports, which contained much of the information required in the new process, were distributed to other departments and divisions on campus. **They are available for review in the Resource Room.**

Department/office-level assessment report templates were also distributed to each department. Staff members were asked to identify themselves and to indicate the semester, fiscal year, and program year they were reporting on. They were to describe what they had learned from their assessment activities and what changes they had made based on their assessment results. They were to identify which Student Learning Outcomes they had assessed and which Student Learning Outcomes had actually been impacted, based on their assessment results. Finally, they were asked, based on the results of their assessment, what additional institutional support (funds, personnel) would help to improve student learning. The reports were to be submitted to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness by June 1.

These reports, which provide examples of how the departments are assessing their impact on student learning, were not available at the time the self-study was written. **The templates are available online at [http://www.dacc.edu/assessment](http://www.dacc.edu/assessment) and on file in the Resource Room.** While the departmental reports were not yet available at the time of this writing, the student services spring 2009 activity schedule was. Entitled **Student Learning: Campus and Community Engagement,** this schedule identifies the student services leadership team and the student services team members. It lists the seven student learning principles adhered to by the Student Services Division. These are: engaging students in active learning; helping students develop coherent values and ethical standards; setting and communicating high expectations for student learning; using systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance; using resources effectively to achieve institutional missions and goals; forging educational partnerships that advance student learning; and building supportive and inclusive communities.

The activity schedule also identifies and defines the core competencies sought. These are: content knowledge; critical, creative and analytical thinking; communication and comprehension; professional and personal growth; and community and collaboration. In addition it lists and defines five Student Learning Outcomes: academic success, cultural competence, leadership, self-actualization, and partnerships/community engagement. The schedule then provides a calendar of “... activities designed to expand a student’s
leadership skills, sense of civic responsibility, life-long learning, self-advocacy, decision making, core ethics, values, campus safety, and career development opportunities.” Each of the activities will be assessed to determine how effective it was and to identify areas for improvement. **Hard copies of this schedule are available all over campus and online at** [http://www.dacc.edu/selfstudy](http://www.dacc.edu/selfstudy). **It is also available in the Resource Room.**

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**Core Component 3d:**

DACC’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

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**Evidence:**

- Admissions and Records Office
- Counseling and Advising Office
- Financial Aid Office
- Career Services
- Student Success Center
- Mandatory Placement
- New Student Orientation
- Online Course Orientation
- Success in College

DACC realizes that students need more than just access to higher education in order to be successful. They need access to a variety of support services and resources to assist them in their educational endeavors. DACC provides excellent service to its students through the Student Services Division. All of these offices maintain extensive webpages.

The Admissions and Records Office maintains an extensive website that is useful for prospective and current students, as well as alumni, parents, and high school guidance counselors. Staff in the Admissions and Records Office work diligently to make sure that area high school students are aware of the programs and services available to them at DACC. This office regularly visits the high schools served by the district and each spring, accompanied by DACC counselors, goes on site to register graduating seniors for classes. Like the Admissions and Records office, the Counseling and Advising office maintains a highly informative website that is useful for prospective and current students, as well as alumni, parents, and high school guidance counselors. In addition to academic counseling, this office provides personal counseling to assist in students’ success.
Students are assisted in the financial aid process by a very competent staff with many years of experience. The Financial Aid office, which is conveniently located near Admissions and Records and Counseling, provides one-on-one assistance to students applying for financial aid. The staff also holds numerous Financial Aid workshops on campus and throughout the district, primarily at the area high schools. The office maintains a very useful website that provides students with valuable, timely information in regards to financial aid deadlines and requirements. This office is very important to all students on campus, not just the ones eligible for financial aid. Students applying for scholarships through the DACC Foundation are required by that department to apply for financial aid, even if they know they will not be eligible. The Financial Aid staff is there to assist them, as well. The FAO maintains an extensive website at http://www.dacc.edu/finaid. Please refer to the 2008 Institutional Effectiveness Report, available online at http://www.dacc.edu/selfstudy and in the Resource Room, for an in-depth look at what this office does.

The Career Services office is an excellent resource for students, as well as for community members. This office assists individuals in making career and life-planning choices through counseling and testing as well as career planning workshops. A variety of career information is available, including interest and personality assessments, computerized career guidance programs, and job search tools. Career Services provides one-on-one or small group help with job search, resume writing, and the application and interview process. The office publishes the weekly JOBFLASH, where local businesses post their job openings. The office is also responsible for maintaining DACC’s presence on College Central Network, an online career services program available to both businesses and students. JOBFLASH and the online service are designed to connect students and community members with potential employer contacts. This office works with community members, as well as students. The Career Services webpage is available at http://www.dacc.edu/depts/stuserv/career.

The DACC Student Success Center, located just down the hallway from Career Services, offers a variety of services to support student success. These services include a computer lab, the Tutoring Lab, the Academic Accommodations Office, and the TRiO Student Support Services Program. The Student Success Center provides tutoring for students encountering difficulty with a wide range of subjects. The SSC utilizes ten professional tutors and eight peer tutors on the average. The actual number of tutors may vary from semester to semester. The Tutoring Lab offers a diverse set of tutoring options to meet the needs of DACC students. Both individual and group tutoring is available. While the majority of students who request tutoring seek help with math, English, or science, students needing help with almost any subject can receive help.

The Academic Accommodations Office processes requests for academic accommodations for students with disabilities, provides adaptive auxiliary aids and
coordinates interpreter and note taking services. The appropriate accommodation is determined on disability and individual need. Examples of academic accommodations include auxiliary aids, extended testing time, note takers, interpreters, adaptive equipment, and reduced course load. During fiscal year 2007, 114 students were served. Examples of disabilities accommodated included visually impaired, hard of hearing, attention deficit/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, traumatic brain injury, and learning disabilities. This office provides three handbooks, one for incoming students, one for current students, and one for faculty. These handbooks are available in the Student Success Center and in the Resource Room.

The TRiO Student Support Services is a competitive grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education. TRiO is designed to increase college retention and degree completion rates. DACC achieved continued funding for three grant cycles spanning the last 10 years. The DACC TRiO Student Support Services program offers support to 160 first generation, low income or students with disabilities each year. Services include transfer visits to four-year institutions, academic and financial aid advisement, personal and career counseling, tutoring, special workshops and academic enrichment activities, access to computers, and supplemental grant aid.

The College makes considerable effort to be sure students are ready for the rigors of higher education. Although DACC maintains an open-door policy, it requires that students provide evidence they are ready for college-level coursework before they can register for classes. Students will be placed in the appropriate English class, based upon their writing and reading scores, and the appropriate math class, based upon their math score. Placement scores not only determine which English or mathematics class students may register for, but also determine whether or not they are eligible to register for other classes. For example, students wishing to take Chemistry I must place into College Algebra. Students wanting to register for American Government must place into Rhetoric. Students wishing to take Life Science I must place into both Rhetoric and Basic Algebra. Accurate placement into courses ensures students a greater pathway to success. DACC accepts ACT, SAT, or COMPASS scores for course placement. In certain instances the College will still accept ASSET scores. In the case of students who have scores from more than one of these tests, the College uses the scores that place the students at the higher level. Students who need to take the COMPASS test may do so on campus in the Assessment Center, at no charge. Students who wish to take the ACT test may do so on the campus, also. The ACT test is offered at DACC on each of the six national test dates in September, October, December, February, April, and June. During the 2007/2008 academic year, DACC served over 300 individuals by offering this testing service. A DACC representative works directly with ACT to provide this public service.
Students who are enrolling for 9 credit hours or less may register by phone or in person with the Admissions and Records office. Students registering for more than 9 credit hours, however, must meet with a Counselor or Advisor. This practice helps to assure that students are enrolled in the right classes and aren’t wasting valuable time or resources taking courses they do not need. The College does other things to help assure student success. It offers new student orientation sessions each semester. At these sessions counseling and advising staff discuss a variety of topics including: academic planning, scheduling for success, accessing and using support services, navigating the financial aid process, and much more. Success in College, a one-credit hour course taught by DACC full- and part-time faculty, is a graduation requirement. The course, which covers the basic survival skills needed by all first-year college students, is taught in a traditional format and online. The College also requires students taking an online course for the first time, whether they are first-time freshmen or returning students, to participate in an orientation for online learning. This orientation is offered both in the traditional format and online.

**DACC ensures access to the academic resources necessary to support learning and teaching.**

**Evidence:**

- Clinical Sites
- Writers' Room
- Library

The nursing and allied health programs at DACC offer students a wide range of clinical sites. For example, the Nursing program uses Carle Clinic, the Fountain/Warren County Head Start in Indiana, Provena United Samaritans Medical Center, the Public Safety Building, and the Veterans Affairs Illiana Health Care System. The Radiologic Technology program uses the Danville Polyclinic, the Hoopston Community Memorial Hospital, St. Clare Medical Center and St. Vincent Hospital in Williamsport, Indiana. The Health Information Technology program finds practical sites at Aunt Martha’s, Colonial Manor, Hawthorne Inn Assisted Living Center, the Regional Cancer Registry and the University of Illinois Department of Veterinary Medicine. Other locations and sites are also used in these programs. A comprehensive list is available in the Resource Room.

The Writers’ Room provides assistance to any student on campus who needs help with writing. While most of the individuals who use this resource are DACC students, member of the community may also get assistance, depending upon availability. Staff provide students with one-on-one consultation, handouts, and workshops and proctor make up exams. Student may use the computers available in the Writers’ Room to complete assignments. **Usage reports are available in the Writers’ Room.**
The DACC community enjoys the services of one of the best libraries of any community college in the state of Illinois thanks in part to the generosity of Frank and Mary O’Neal, who donated more than $1 million dollars specifically for the benefit of the library. The facility includes two state of the art computer labs providing 29 public workstations for users. The book and audiovisual collection contains approximately 47,000 titles; while the library’s print periodical collection consists of 200 titles, combining both academic journals and popular magazines targeting student interests. The library also houses the College Archives, which includes a work and storage area as well as displays. Materials dating back to the College’s beginnings are stored there. A special feature of the library is the Ansel Adams’ portfolio on display in its main room. The portfolio is entitled What Majestic Word (in Memory of Russell Varian), and is the fourth of the portfolios that Adams created in collaboration with the Sierra Club. Published in 1963, it is one of which only 260 copies were produced.

The library participates in several consortial relationships as a means of providing students with cost-effective access to both print materials and electronic resources that would otherwise be financially out of reach. As a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), DACC’s library offers students, faculty and staff direct access to the collections of 75 other academic libraries throughout the state. Users may directly request books and other materials be sent from those libraries, which include the multimillion volume collection at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, to DACC. Often items arrive in 3 days or less. The library also provides users with an excellent selection of electronic resources, all accessible via the web to DACC community members off campus. This e-resource collection is on par with those provided by the largest community colleges in the state, giving DACC students access to approximately 17,000 newspapers, magazines and scholarly journals in full text as well as a rich cross-section of electronic reference encyclopedias and other reference materials, primary source collections, a test databank and e-books.

Reference librarians provide several ways in which users can request help. In addition to traditional face-to-face and phone reference, users can contact the librarians via email or by means of instant messaging chat through the library’s home page. Users’ feedback enables the library to adapt its services to meet users’ needs. Patrons are encouraged to offer suggestions for magazine subscriptions in advance of that selection period each year, and their book and video requests are used as a means of modifying ordering decisions. Library staff provide instruction in face-to-face workshops and online via a research methods class. Students assess bibliographic instruction sessions each semester, while faculty does so once a year. The results are used to adjust teaching strategies to best meet student needs. Feedback is also invited through the library’s blog, which draws users’ attention to new library resources, assignment materials, or topical information sources. In order to improve student success, library staff encourage faculty to coordinate research assignments with library instruction and place copies of
assignments on file in the library to assist students who have forgotten or mislaid their own copies. They frequently liaison with faculty in relation to particular assignments or lab needs.

The library is open an hour prior to the first class of the day and doesn't close until after the last scheduled class ends. It is also open on Saturdays, when classes are not in session. Thus students have access to library resources no matter what their class schedule. In addition, the reference librarians are frequently available outside of the regular hours of operation via the IM chat.

*DACC ensures access to state of the art technology to support learning and teaching.*

Evidence:

- Computer Labs
- Computer Classes
- Smart Classrooms
- TV Studio
- Ceramics Lab
- Electronics, Welding, Machine Shop Labs
- AutoCAD/Cisco, Automotive Labs
- HVAC, Hydraulics/Pneumatics Labs
- Radiologic Technology, Nursing Skills Labs
- Cadaver Labs

Preparing students with the latest technology is of tremendous importance, so keeping up with technology is an on-going priority at DACC. Students have access to computers in a variety of buildings and departments across campus, including Cannon Hall, Clock Tower, the Library, Lincoln Hall, Mary Miller, Prairie Hall, and the Technology Center. With this availability, computers are accessible in the early morning, throughout the day and into the evening hours. While the campus is not yet totally wireless, students have wireless access in selected areas in every building.

Students have many options if they wish to learn more about technology. In any semester over 200 credit classes will be offered on campus relating to technology. The Corporate and Community Education department offered over forty computer-related workshops. The library offers research assistance including the use of Noodle tools for creating bibliographies for research papers. The Success in College course addresses the use of technology in all subjects across campus. The Online Orientation course helps students understand the use of technology in online courses and helps the students be able to start the course with ease and be more successful as the online courses progress.
Technology includes more than just traditional computer labs and computer instruction, however. Technology includes what is used in the classroom, too, to make the learning process more meaningful. As stated previously, nearly 100 percent of the classrooms are smart classrooms, equipped with a computer with internet access, a video projector, a DVD player, a VCR, and an overhead projector. Several classrooms have interactive whiteboards, also known as SmartBoards. The College has a fully equipped ceramics lab with three kilns and eight electric pottery wheels. The Instructional Media Department at DACC houses a fully equipped studio which offers three digital broadcast cameras, digital switching capabilities, various chroma-key options, digital editing capabilities, and eight channel audio mixing potential. Mastering is available to Digital Video Tape (DVD), as well as conventional tape. Duplication capabilities include DVD and video tape formats.

Many classrooms are equipped with specialized technology. For example, the Technology Center has several teaching labs that are equipped with the tools to teach students on equipment similar to what they would experience within the industry. Of the two electronics labs, one is general electricity and electronics test equipment and another is a programmable controller lab containing Allen Bradley and Siemens equipment. The Allen Bradley Equipment was just upgraded for about $45,000. The machine shop lab contains eleven manual lathes, ten manual milling machines, three surface grinders, two computer numerical control (CNC) lathes, and two CNC mills. The welding lab contains eight gas welding stations, eight arc welding stations, eight MIG welders, and four TIG welders. The AutoCAD/Cisco Lab contains twelve computers for AutoCAD, twelve Cisco work stations, and assorted routers and switches. The automotive/collision lab contains three overhead lifts, a four wheel alignment machine, a frame straightening machine, two paint booths, assorted tools of every size and shape to fix cars, and a 16 computer lab for auto students. The heating ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) lab contains four combination AC/heat units, a walk in cooler, and numerous AC window units. The hydraulics/pneumatics lab contains four festo training units and one tensile strength machine.

The radiological technology skills lab has a fully functional mock up of a typical radiographic room. It has an energized Summit Amrad HF 300, a darkroom with a Konica SRX101 table top automatic film processor, a Kodak/Carestream Point-of-Care 120 computed radiography (CR) system with version 2.5 software, 10 film/screen cassettes in 5 different sizes and 4 CR cassettes in 2 different sizes. In addition, the lab has a full complement of accessories such as $15,000 worth of anthropomorphic radiographic phantoms, lead shields, dosimeters, densitometers, sensitometers, positioning sponges, positioning markers, viewboxes, radiographic grids and cassette holders. It also maintains various patient care equipment such as an IV pole, Mayo stand, venipuncture devices and a venipuncture practice arm. Sonography has an ATL 3000 sonographic unit for student use.
The Nursing program’s goal is to create an environment that is very similar to what the students will see when they go out to facilities to complete their clinical hours. The same faculty that teach in the clinical setting also teach in the skills lab. The nursing skills lab is used to teach basic (bedmaking) to advanced (vascular access devices) nursing skills to those students enrolled in the program. There are three basic nursing skills manikins and one Advanced VitalSim Simulator Manikin designed for simulation and practice of a complete range of patient assessment and care procedures, including sounds auscultation, vocal sounds, and blood pressure. A heart and lung sounds adult simulator that teaches site specific heart and lung sounds when a student places a stethoscope at correct locations is also available. The lab also houses a life-like model of a human torso, including a detachable right arm that enables the students to learn and demonstrate competency with the most common types of long term vascular access devices (VAD’s). One stretcher is also available such as those used in an emergency department or for transporting to and from an operating room. In addition, the lab is equipped with seven hospital beds, bedside tables, oxygen, and medical gas and suction, and over bed tables. Additional equipment includes a medication cart and laundry cart similar to those seen in health care settings.

Students have access to the ATI Skills Modules Series – an assessment-driven, self-study approach to nursing skills that verifies learning at the completion of each module. Using a variety of techniques, the students explore content prior to performing the skill in the lab and in a clinical situation. The students work on their nursing skills in the lab with the necessary supplies and equipment prior to performing the skill for their instructor. Students must first successfully complete the nursing skill in the lab before they can perform the skill in the clinical setting.

The Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) is a seven-week program designed to prepare students to provide basic health care in hospitals and nursing homes. The program uses three classrooms and one clinical lab. The lab contains five patient units with hospital beds and mobile tables, one manikin, one wheelchair, three linen cabinets, and one equipment cabinet that includes blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, and thermometers. The students learn twenty-one skills in the lab, including bed making, patient bathing, patient range of motion, patient bed pan assistance, patient transfer, and personal hygiene.

DACC provides a unique opportunity for students in anatomy and physiology to learn human anatomy from the real thing—human cadavers. The College’s cadaver program began in 1985 when the College was able to procure the first of four prosecuted cadavers from the University of Illinois College Of Medicine in Urbana. The anatomy and physiology lab was built specifically for housing human cadavers, with a separated and secured area within the lab for holding up to four human cadavers. The College also purchased state-of-art stainless steel submersion tanks for optimal storage and
maintenance of the cadavers. A special ventilation system was later installed, and a few years ago additional lighting was installed in the lab to benefit students during cadaver dissection. In 1994, DACC faculty developed two human cadaver courses with dissection, the first of their type to be offered by any two-year college in Illinois. In these courses, students learn regional anatomy and physiology by performing dissection of intact cadavers, thus preparing new specimens to be used in the lower level introductory anatomy and physiology courses while offering students the rare opportunity to learn from the outside of the body inward. These specimens have not only benefited students at DACC, but they have also been put to good use for other training as well. For several summers, surgical tech students from Ivy Tech in Lafayette, Indiana, attended several days of hands-on cadaver training in DACC’s lab because their college lacked cadavers. The College has also hosted counselors from public schools within the district and provided them the opportunity to view the cadavers if desired. Additionally, the cadaver lab tour has become an end-of-year highlight for many area high-school anatomy and physiology classes.

DACC regularly assesses the effectiveness of its learning resources to support learning and teaching.

Evidence:

2004 and 2006 CCSSE Data
Fall 2007 Student Survey
Departmental Assessment Charts and Reports

In the 2004 CCSSE survey, DACC scored 52.1 on the benchmark support for learners, higher than the 48.4 for colleges in the consortium and the 50.0 for all of the colleges. In the 2006 CCSSE survey, DACC scored 47.6 on this benchmark, slightly lower than the 49.3 for other colleges in the consortium and 50.0 for all colleges in the cohort. More importantly, the College scored 4.5 lower on this benchmark in 2006 than it scored in 2004. The scores for the other colleges in the study had not dropped significantly since 2004. What happened? The College looked closely at the 2006 data to see if there was a significant difference in the frequency with which DACC students used support services, as compared to the other students in the study. There were no significant differences.
Support for Learners 2006 CCSSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Service</th>
<th>DACC</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing the support to help you succeed at this college.</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing the financial support you need to afford your education.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Academic advising/planning</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Career Counseling</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Peer or other tutoring</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Computer lab</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DACC Institutional Research Office

The College then looked at how satisfied students were with support services at DACC. One of the first things noted was that in some instances a high percentage of students responded they didn't know (N.A.) in regards to a service. This suggested that a high percentage of students had not accessed those particularly services or resources. Clearly the majority of students who “knew” a service or resource were very or somewhat satisfied. For example, of the 23 percent who “knew” services for students with disabilities, 70 percent were very or somewhat satisfied. Of those who “knew” peer or other tutoring, 75 percent were very or somewhat satisfied.

Level of Satisfaction with Support Services 2006 CCSSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Service</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>N.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer or other tutoring</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill labs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid advising</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer lab</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for students with disabilities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DACC Institutional Research Office

A high percentage of students responded N/A on just two items, both having to do with online learning. In regards to whether or not the services provided for online courses met their educational needs, 8 percent of the students did not respond to this statement. In regards to the statement, “The College’s online offerings (courses) meet my educational needs,” 10 percent of the students did not respond. These percentages indicate a significant number of the respondents may not have taken online courses.
The results of the Student Survey administered in fall 2007 suggest that the majority of students are satisfied with the services and resources the College provides. Of the respondents, 77 percent said the admissions services, 73 percent said the academic advisement services, and 68 percent said the financial aid services mostly or fully met their educational needs. In regards to technology, 81 percent said the technologies provided in the classroom and 88 percent said the computer labs mostly or fully met their needs. Of the respondents, 88 percent said other academic resources, including the library, student support, and tutoring, mostly or fully met their needs. Students indicated that the cashier services met their needs, with 75 percent responding mostly or fully, and that the classrooms, labs, and common areas met their needs, with 88 percent responding mostly or fully. Only 66 percent of the students said the services provided for online courses met their educational needs. It should be noted that 8 percent of the students did not respond to this statement, and 10 percent did not respond to the statement “The College’s online offerings (courses) meet my educational needs”, indicating a significant number of the respondents may not have taken online courses. Overall, the students believed faculty and staff were interested in whether or not they were learning, with 78 percent responding mostly or fully.

**Student Survey Fall 2007**

*(n=200)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Fully</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Vaguely</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions Services</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advisement Services</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Services</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology in the classroom</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (labs, library, student support, tutoring)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashier Services</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms, labs, common areas</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services provided for online courses</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College’s online course offerings</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and staff are interested if I’m learning</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DACC Institutional Research Office*

As the College continues to focus on ways to improve student retention, it will evaluate the 2004, 2006, and upcoming 2009 CCSSE data and the data generated from the department level assessments to determine the extent to which each of these services and resources helps students persist in their educational endeavors. DACC will continue to look for ways to connect more students with the specific services and resources that may help them. While the CCSSE provides excellent information for
the academic side of the institution, the staff involved in other departments do not feel this instrument provides them with the level of information they need. The Assessment Committee is looking at the feasibility of administering the CCSSE one year, and another survey more directed to assessing student services the next year. One possibility would be the Noel Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI). DACC used the CSI several years ago to measure student satisfaction levels and was pleased with the information that instrument provided.

**Conclusion**

As per its mission statement, DACC is committed to providing quality, innovative, and accessible learning experiences for those it serves. To ensure that it is doing just that, the College has nurtured a culture of assessment and has transformed itself from a teaching to a learning institution. The commitment to assessment is evident at all levels, from the Board of Trustees who allocate the funds for assessment activities to faculty, staff, and students who participate in those activities. This transformation has not been neat and tidy, as the narrative describing DACC’s journey clearly indicates. Neither is it complete. The institution itself is learning, and as it learns, it evolves, it changes, and it continuously improves.

**Strengths**

- Assessment permeates the institution. Student learning is assessed at the course, program, departmental, and institutional levels.
- An assessment plan and timeline have been in effect for several years.
- Learning outcomes have been identified for all program areas.
- DACC has a comprehensive system in place for the evaluation of teaching that takes the students’ perspective into account.
- DACC provides ample resources to help full- and part-time faculty improve pedagogy and incorporate innovative practices that enhance student learning.
- Faculty have used assessment results to improve practice and instruction. There are numerous examples of changes that were made to curriculum or the delivery of curriculum as a result of assessment activities.
- Assessment results are used in non-academic areas to positively impact student learning. DACC provides extensive resources to help students be successful.
- The College provides ample resources to make authentic assessment possible.
**Challenges**

- The assessment plan calls for assessing one general education outcome each year but the College has not clearly identified when it will pre-test for each specific outcome, and what tool it will use to measure certain outcomes.

- While program-level outcomes have been identified, the format across programs is not consistent, and outcomes are not always stated in measurable terms.

- CCSSE data suggest that the College is not performing as well as it would like on measures of student engagement.

**Planning for the Future**

- The College will continue to investigate ways to better utilize the assessment data generated each year. One idea is to develop a calendar for reporting on the data. Just as ICCB’s program review is set up on a five-year cycle and the College’s general education outcomes are assessed on a four-year cycle, DACC could use a similar system for reviewing course, program, and departmental level assessment data. Data would continue to be collected every year, but specific indicators would be evaluated based on the calendar.

- The College will investigate ways to make course and program level assessments, program review reports, student satisfaction and engagement results and all other assessment data more available to all DACC constituents.