STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT

Hagerstown Community College
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Part One: Summary of Assessment Activities

Outcomes assessment of student learning provides feedback to faculty members and professional staff for the purpose of improving academic programs, teaching and learning. The involvement and leadership of faculty as the content specialists is essential as they bring relevant experience, useful interventions and strategies for change, and expertise to the outcomes assessment process. It is through the analysis of student learning that Hagerstown Community College (HCC) improves learning in a systematic and effective manner. Assessment has fostered communication between full-time and adjunct faculty to help create uniformity across course sections. Student learning outcomes assessment is a primary component of the institutional effectiveness model at HCC and, as a result, faculty and staff have become more familiar with the importance of data analysis, accountability and quality assurance. Assessment, curriculum development and review, and planning are interrelated processes that foster accountability at all levels.

Written in 2004, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan includes strategies for assessing all courses and programs, as well as procedures and timelines that encompass eight academic years from 2004 to 2012. It also includes methods and tasks for the assessment of general education. The initial emphasis of the plan was at the course level. Major impact courses in each academic division were selected by faculty to be assessed in the first cycle. Assessment priorities are now focused at the program, as well as continuing at the course level.

The SLOA cycle at HCC is a continuous cycle of plan, do, assess, and adjust - developing outcomes, assessing the outcomes and using the data obtained to improve student learning. Faculty in every academic division developed student learning outcomes for courses and programs. Working in teams, they determined and sought external validation for assessment instruments and methods to measure achievement of outcomes. In addition, academic divisions incorporate follow-up information on transfer and career program graduates into assessment reports and unit planning.

Continuous data-driven assessment occurs in both academic and non-academic units and provides for formative review of established targets, as well as an overall institutional effectiveness. Assessment activities and key performance indicators align with the Middle States accreditation standards. Specifically, Standard 7 addresses institutional assessment, Standard 12 covers general education and Standard 14 addresses student learning outcomes assessment.

The College's vision, mission, strategic goals, and annual institutional priorities serve as the foundation of HCC's integrated planning, assessment / evaluation and budgeting system. Through its planning process, the College ensures efficient utilization of institutional resources and receives significant feedback related to planning, assessment and resource allocation activities. The achievement of strategic goals commences with unit planning meetings, which involve each area of the College. As each unit addresses strategic goals and action plans delineated in the 2012 strategic plan, the unit planning system improves effectiveness, efficiency,

the teaching and learning process, enhances communication, contains costs, and redirects resources to support mission-based priorities that have strategic importance.

The SLOA Leadership Team is comprised of five faculty members. The five faculty members of the team receive alternative faculty assignments (either teaching overload or a course release) each semester for their work. A major responsibility of the team is to serve as a resource to faculty for outcomes assessment projects. The team supports, monitors, and directs the academic divisions' progress toward assessment goals. The team reports directly to and meets monthly with the Vice President of Academic Affairs. They also report monthly to faculty in two formats, division meetings and faculty assembly, which provides an opportunity for faculty to express their ideas and concerns. This provides assurance that each academic division is considered in the process. Student learning outcomes assessment processes are reviewed at many levels of the College – by the faculty, by the academic chairs and directors, by the Vice-President of Academic Affairs, and by the College President and Board of Trustees. SLOA is also a unit planning component for the Vice President and the entire division of Academic Affairs. Finally, an annual progress report is presented to the President and Board of Trustees. During each of these stages, the processes are evaluated and modified to align with the needs of the College.

HCC uses ten key institutional performance indicators (KPI) that are integrated into the College's strategic plan and its action plans. The documentation of the use of evaluation results closes the loop in the College's assessment and evaluation processes for academic and non-academic units of the College. Over 480 data measures that broadly demonstrate how well the College operates as an organization were developed to measure the ten KPI. The data measures are the foundation for institutional renewal, which is defined as the improvement and/or enhancement of effective teaching and learning, and educational and administrative support services. As outcomes results become available, they are analyzed at all levels to determine how the College can best direct its attention to achieving its strategic objectives. Assessment results are reviewed, analyzed and discussed as a part of the College's unit planning process. Additionally, analyses by groups such as the SLOA leadership team, academic officers and Academic Council, faculty and executive officers may result in revisions to strategies, increased or decreased resource allocations and further new or refined assessments.

Part Two: Assessment of Major General Education Competency Areas

Work began in 2006 with courses that were considered high impact, which are defined as courses that offered more than three sections per semester. Faculty refined their course level outcomes and are at various stages of assessment of these outcomes. Courses taught by more than one faculty member incorporate common student learning outcomes within their syllabi. Syllabi are reviewed by division chairs and directors to ensure the inclusion of student learning outcomes. Faculty report progress in course level outcomes assessment in a standard template, the Course Outcomes Guide (COG), which is stored in the locally-developed SLOA database.

Once faculty developed common student learning outcomes, they developed a common assessment to measure the outcomes. Groups of faculty, with oversight and facilitation provided by division chairs and directors, as well as the SLOA Leadership Team, meet to analyze the results of the common assessment and to determine how to improve student learning.

Programs coordinated by full-time faculty have program level student learning outcomes. The program outcomes have been aligned with course outcomes to ensure they are being met through the program's required courses. Matrices aligning program and course outcomes are a component of the SLOA database. Program student learning outcomes are measured with a variety of evaluation tools. For example, measures used by career programs are results of licensure and national certification exams. Students typically complete these exams in the months following program completion and results are reported to HCC. Transfer programs often use many sources of data to determine achievement of student learning outcomes. For example, the Music program assesses student progress at the end of the academic year in a departmental jury. Faculty report program progress to the SLOA Leadership Team in a standard format, using the Program Outcomes Guide (POG) on the SLOA website. Student performance on these program level assessments is shared with faculty and community advisory councils, in an effort to increase stakeholder awareness of student success and the College's commitment to accountability. Faculty use these data to improve student learning, through professional development, revision of curricula, or requisition of appropriate resources.

The six areas of study, which align with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and MHEC standards, that have been identified to ensure that students achieve the desired general education goals include English, Arts and Humanities, Information Literacy, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Mathematics, and Biological and Physical Sciences. Since General Education assessment attempts to evaluate a student's overall academic experience, multiple sources are used for each competency. Competencies are measured using multiple processes, instruments, or methods to assess expected outcomes. For brevity and convenience, a process will be described only once.

The SLOA Leadership Team worked with divisions in 2009 to examine and modify the General Education outcomes and the way these are assessed. The first step in this review was to revisit the outcomes. This recent review of the outcomes revealed that many were flawed, not assessable, or only measured lower level learning. In the past year, faculty have reviewed the general education outcomes and, in many cases, revised them.

I.   <u>**Competency: Written and Oral Communication**</u>

A.   **Definition:** The ability to express ideas orally and in writing

B.   **Level(s) at which competency is assessed:** Broad, cross discipline/program and course levels

C.   **Processes used to evaluate competency:**

1. Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) – Also used to measure *Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning and Critical Analysis and Reasoning*
2. Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) - Also used to measure *Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning*
3. Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) - Used to measure all four competencies
4. Introduction to Sociology (SOC 101) capstone activity - Also used to measure *Critical Analysis and Reasoning*
5. English Composition (ENG 101) research paper rubric – See CAAP; Also discussion of this measure is found under *Critical Analysis and Reasoning*
6. Graphic Design Technology Program Portfolio – Discussion of this measure is found under *Technological Competency*.
7. Criminal Response Emergency Assessment Scenario (CREAS), a capstone interdisciplinary assessment activity in which graduating students from the registered nursing (RN), practical nursing (PN), radiography and medical imaging, paramedic emergency services (PES), and administration of justice (ADJ) programs participate - Used to measure all four competencies; Discussion of this measure is found under *Critical Analysis and Reasoning*.

D.   Describe results of assessment work related to this competency:

Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)

One instrument that HCC uses to measure all general education outcomes is the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) test available through the American College Testing Program, Inc. (ACT). The CAAP test is a nationally normed assessment instrument which allows colleges and universities to evaluate the outcomes of general education programs. There are six independent test modules that can be administered to students to measure achievement levels either independently or as a group. From 2004 – 2009, the College administered the CAAP tests to student groups who had completed the majority of their general education courses. General education areas assessed were essay composition, mathematics, reading, critical thinking, science and writing skills.

Students did not take the critical thinking component until 2006. Annually since then, individual faculty volunteer class sections to take the critical thinking component of the CAAP exam. These faculty members use the results of this exam to develop and refine classroom activities and assignments which encourage and develop critical thinking skills in HCC students. The topic of developing critical thinking in students is very important, but provides many challenges for assessment. Critical thinking skills are developed in students over time while taking many courses; it is difficult to use CAAP data to identify one point in time where students obtain these skills. While the students who completed the critical thinking component of the CAAP exam scored at or slightly higher than the national average, there continues to be a

college-wide push to improve critical thinking in the classroom. The College's next goal is to reevaluate and revise the general education outcomes in order to highlight critical thinking skills across the curriculum and to assess these at the course level.

The national CAAP exam scaled score for composition is approximately two points higher than HCC's scaled score. English faculty members continue to work to improve student writing. The research paper serves as a common assessment to evaluate English 101. Faculty use a common rubric to grade these papers and are regularly examining data collected to refine the class. Norming sessions are periodically conducted with both full-time and adjunct faculty to insure common standards across English 101 sections. An administrative review of faculty assessment occurs every semester. Efforts to promote writing skill development have been initiated by faculty across the disciplines.

College Algebra (MAT 101) is the primary course students take to complete their mathematics general education requirement. Faculty members in College Algebra use two common assessments to measure student learning. One is a five question common assessment developed by full-time faculty which is given every semester to every student and the other is the mathematics component of the CAAP exam which is administered to a sample of classes every fall semester. HCC students have consistently scored approximately two points higher since Fall 2008.With the support of a National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) grant, the College Algebra faculty members redesigned the curriculum beginning in fall 2006. The goal of the redesign was to improve student learning while increasing student engagement and increasing retention.

The science department has systemically tested samples of all science courses which meet the general education requirement with the science component of the CAAP exam. The science module emphasizes scientific reasoning skills rather than memorization of content and uses different science areas (biology, chemistry, physics and physical science) to measure these skills. Overall, students from all the different general education science disciplines scored at or above the national average.

MAPP

In an effort to streamline and validate assessment of general education outcomes at HCC, the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) exam, available through the Educational Testing Service (ETS), was administered in the spring of 2006 - 2009. The MAPP is a single exam that measures reading, writing, mathematics and critical thinking in the context of the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) has selected MAPP as a way to measure general education outcomes.

HCC students who applied for graduation with an associate's degree were asked to volunteer to take the exam. Completing the exam was not mandatory for graduation. MAPP results on the following page. Although this data has been collected on a voluntary basis and may not accurately represent the entire student population, the same methods have been used to obtain volunteers for the past four years. It is interesting to note the slight increase in the mean

student score over the past four years. All years, except for 2006, have been above the national average.

2006-2009 MAPP Average of Individual Student Scores

Year	Scaled Score (400-500 possible)
2006	439.14 ± 14.86 (n=77)
2007	444.06 ± 17.51 (n=52)
2008	445.37 ± 20.34 (n=79)
2009	447.03 ± 21.07 (n=36)
Comparative Data: National Average of Sophomores	441.0 ± 17.9 (n=18,559)

When proficiency data is compared across years, with the exception of 2006, there is a slight increase in students who are proficient in higher order reading, writing and mathematics skills. While these results allow benchmarking of student General Education achievement, it is challenging to connect these general results with performance in one course. MAPP is no longer the primary method of assessing General Education outcomes. Examining these results has led the administration and the SLOA Leadership Team to the conclusion that it would be better to focus on achievement of General Education outcomes at the specific outcome level.

CCSSE

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is administered every other spring to randomly-selected classes. Participation in CCSSE has been used to benchmark student perceptions of engagement at the College since 2004. CCSSE results are shared with the College administration, as well as academic chairs and directors and faculty. When examining the students' perceptions of their educational growth at the College, HCC students reported less memorization of facts than other Maryland community colleges. However, they also perceived fewer activities in higher order thinking and less reading of assigned course readings than other Maryland community colleges. At the same time, students reported that their experience at the College contributed to their ability to ability to think critically and analytically. Significant informal discussion of these concerns occurred in Academic Council, as well as in the Curriculum Excellence project, an important multi-year College priority, which began in FY 12 and is continuing into FY 12. For next year, the emphasis will be on outcomes assessment and student perception of academic rigor in courses. Other goals of the project will continue to include a comprehensive review of various aspects of curriculum quality, with a greater focus on outcomes assessment to include courses in the general education. Student perception of

academic rigor in courses is a newly added focus based upon student perceptions regarding academic rigor in the 2008 and 2010 CCSSE survey.

Capstone: Introduction to Sociology (SOC 101)
       A "capstone" exercise is used to measure outcomes beyond course content to assess behavior and cognitive growth. This exercise involves a series of "real world" scenarios that student groups work on and complete during the final exam period. A normed rubric developed by faculty is used to grade this final assignment.

II.   <u>**Competency: Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning**</u>

A.   **Definition:** The ability to use numerical data and apply mathematical concepts appropriately, as well as the ability to access, process, analyze and synthesize scientific information

B.   **Level(s) at which competency is assessed:** Broad, cross discipline/program and course levels

C.   **Processes used to evaluate competency:**
1. Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) - See *Written and Oral Communication* for description.
2. Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) - See *Written and Oral Communication* for description.
3. Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) - See *Written and Oral Communication* for description.
4. Human Anatomy and Physiology Society National Competency Exam for Human Anatomy and Physiology I (BIO 103) and II (BIO 104) – Also used to measure *Critical Analysis and Reasoning*
5. Common five-question supplement to all final exams/rubric in College Algebra (MAT 101)
6. Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) Examinations - Practical Nursing
7. National Council Licensure Examination – Practical Nursing (NCLEX-PN)
8. Criminal Response Emergency Assessment Scenario (CREAS): Interdisciplinary Assessment Activity (Capstone) for Administration of Justice, Nursing and Paramedic Emergency Services students – Used to measure all competencies; *See Critical Analysis and Reasoning* for description of activity.
9. American Chemical Society (ACS) exams: General Chemistry (CHM 101, 102)
10. National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) data

D. Describe results of assessment work related to this competency:

Human Anatomy and Physiology Society (HAPS) National Competency Exam for Human Anatomy and Physiology I (BIO 103) and II (BIO 104)

Human Anatomy and Physiology I (BIO 103) and II (BIO 104) are high impact courses in the Division of Mathematics and Science. Student learning outcomes were written by faculty members in Fall 2004, using the learning objectives developed by the Human Anatomy and Physiology Society (HAPS). In Spring 2005, faculty developed a cumulative exam based on the HAPS learning objectives. All BIO 103 sections have taken this exam since Spring 2005. The HAPS National Competency Exam, which covers both BIO 103 and BIO 104, has been given to all students completing BIO 104 since Fall 2005. These results are also used by Health Sciences faculty to ensure that BIO 103 and 104 outcomes meet the needs of the Health Sciences curriculum.

On the HAPS exam, HCC students have consistently scored higher than the national mean for community colleges. There is a positive correlation between the HCC first semester exam and the HAPS cumulative exam, as well as between exam scores on both exams and course grades. Areas where student consistently struggled were identified and curriculum strengthened as a result.

Common Five-question Supplement to all Final Exams/Rubric in College Algebra (MAT 101)

College Algebra (MAT 101) Division uses a common five-question supplement to all final exams across all sections of the course. Since 2005, the process of using this supplement has been refined. Every student completes a comprehensive five-question supplement with their final course exam.

A normed rubric was developed by faculty in 2006 to give partial credit to students and to enable faculty to see where the students had difficulties in solving the problems. A positive correlation exists between scores on final exam supplement and course grades.

Practical Nursing (PN): Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) Examinations and National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX – PN)

ATI Testing Company is a resource in offering criteria that follows the NCLEX-PN examination plan. Since 2005, the PN program has used the nationally normed standardized ATI testing instrument to evaluate course content and the graduating students with a comprehensive predictor to determine probability of passing the NCLEX-PN exam. ATI examination criteria, found to be a reliable predictor of student success at HCC, are reviewed immediately after administration to determine any changes in course content and content delivery. The table below indicates the NCLEX-PN pass rate of HCC students compared to all PN graduates in Maryland, as reported by the Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON). Improvement in HCC scores can be seen since faculty began to review and compare test results to courses content and expected outcomes.

Practical Nursing Program
NCLEX Results

Admission Year	Total Graduates	Total Passed NCLEX-PN (All Students, First Attempt)	% Pass Rate NCLEX-PN Exam: HCC Graduates	% Pass Rate NCLEX-PN Exam: All Maryland
2008 - 09	21	18	95%	95%
2007 - 08	22	20	100%	100%
2006 - 07	17	17	100%	100%
2005 - 06	18	17	94%	95.45%
2004 - 05	25	21	84%	90.91%
2003 - 04	22	13	59%	86.67%

An example of strengthening course outcomes as a result of test scores, the PN faculty reviewed the curriculum, course content and clinical/laboratory criteria in 2008 and 2009 to determine if any changes are to be undertaken. They determined that that the experiences in the clinical laboratory needed to increase, along with the increase in the use of technology. Beginning in 2010, classes are allotted more open laboratory practice and experiences with the computerized mannequins to promote critical thinking in case scenarios.

Additionally, student learning outcomes were reviewed to correlate with the areas of content needing improvement in scoring on the ATI content mastery examinations. For example, the Pharmacology content examination scores indicated improvement in teaching cardiac medications in the lecture content. Faculty now provide more time and information on the cardiac medications using cardiac scenarios with use of clinical laboratory experiences using the computerized mannequins as well as additional assignments in cardiac medications affects and functions. The clinical adjunct faculty increased discussion of medications during medication administration in the clinical arena to provide the experience of applying lecture content to observation and data collection at the client's bedside.

Each spring the PN faculty with the Director of Nursing (DON) review the curriculum, document outcomes and clinical/lab criteria. The use of the ATI Testing standardized examination criteria are reviewed immediately after administration to determine any changes in course content and content delivery.

The RN Program also utilizes the ATI program to validate their curriculum outcomes and to seek improvement in the NCLEX-RN examination pass rates. Both the RN and the PN programs use the TEAS program, a nationally normed standardized test on English, Math, Reading, and Science. These scores are benchmarked to the select nursing students who will be successful in the nursing programs. Data is collected to compare the students GPA with the TEAS scores, comprehensive predictor results, and the NCLEX pass rates of the graduates.

American Chemical Society (ACS) exams: General Chemistry (CHM 101, 102)

The Chemistry program has a common assessment in place for each course. Introduction to College Chemistry has a common final exam that was developed at HCC. All sections of the course are required to administer the exam. The results are collected and analyzed by a full-time chemistry faculty member, who shares this information with the rest of the chemistry faculty. Individual faculty look at strengths and weaknesses and modify their teaching as a result of the exam. As a result of using the exam and meeting with all faculty teaching Introduction to College Chemistry, recommended course guidelines were developed and implemented. Students in CHM 101 and 102 complete standardized American Chemical Society Examinations for each semester.

The mean score of HCC students on the ACS exams are close to the national mean score. Since many of the current textbooks emphasize the molecular viewpoint, faculty updated the ACS exam in 2010 to a more current version. The item analysis of questions on the ACS exam helps pinpoint which topics need more work in class or lab.

National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP)

Since 2007, the College has participated in the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP), a nationwide consortium of community colleges that report outcome and effectiveness data in such critical performance areas as percentage of withdrawals, percentage success, and transfer success. The College receives a report of the benchmark areas, which compares HCC results with those of other colleges, a summary of which is available on the SLOA website. Division chairs and directors use this information to determine areas of concern and to develop interventions to increase student achievement in those areas. For example, NCCBP data was used to develop a plan to decrease the number of walk-away "F" students in developmental mathematics and college algebra. Current plans are to expand the use of the NCCBP data to all appropriate areas of the College, and to incorporate available data into benchmarks for the key performance indicators contained in the of the Institutional Effectiveness model.

III.   Competency: Critical Analysis and Reasoning

A.   Definition: The ability to use technology to gather, evaluate, process and communicate information

B.   Level(s) at which competency is assessed: Broad, cross discipline/program and course levels

C.   Processes used to evaluate competency:

1.   Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) – See *Written and Oral Communication* for description of activity.

2.   Capstone activity using scenarios and rubrics: Introduction to Sociology (SOC 101) – See *Written and Oral Communication* for description of activity.

3.   Research paper rubric: English Composition (ENG 101)

4. High impact course assessment: Introduction to Information Technology (IST 102)
5. Human Anatomy and Physiology Society National Competency Exam for Human Anatomy and Physiology I (BIO 103) and II (BIO 104) – See *Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning* for description of activity.
6. Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) - See *Written and Oral Communication* for description of activity.
7. Portfolio – Graphic Design Technology Program
8. External validation and departmental juries – Music
9. Criminal Response Emergency Assessment Scenario (CREAS): Interdisciplinary Assessment Activity (Capstone) for Administration of Justice, Nursing and Paramedic Emergency Services students

D. Describe results of assessment work related to this competency:

Research Paper Rubric: English Composition (ENG 101)

Since 2006, the English Division has actively assessed student learning in ENG 101 and made progress toward better standardization among ENG 101 class sections and more clearly aligned outcomes and assessments in developmental English and ENG 101. The common assessment for ENG 101 is the argumentative research paper, which is graded using a common rubric. For several semesters, a random third of all ENG 101 research papers were collected for analysis. Along with the papers, faculty members submitted rubrics and questionnaires about the strengths and weaknesses of the papers. The data showed that for 38% of students, the actual writing quality was the weakest part of the research paper, and for 20% of the students, documentation and formatting were the weakest parts of the research paper. Only 10% of the students did not have a weakness in the research paper. Furthermore, the data showed a need for more standardization and consistency among instructors. To meet these needs, the Division developed an English Composition Instructors' Manual. The manual includes newly revised 2009 course outcomes/content objectives; a revised common grading rubric for essays and research papers; standardized requirements for ENG 101, including research essay guidelines and a pre and post diagnostic essay to determine student growth and achievement; HCC's composition philosophy; standards of a "C" paper, sample syllabi, etc. All faculty teaching ENG 101 receive a copy of this manual. Additionally, based upon finding of this measure, full-time faculty chose a new textbook that better fits the outcomes of ENG 101.

Also as a result of data collected through research papers, both full-time and part-time faculty participated in periodic norming sessions and "composition conversations." Through assessment of the collected research papers and collaboration during the composition conversations, faculty determined a need to foster better communication with the Developmental English faculty. As a result, faculty from both divisions collaborated on assessment procedures, rubrics, common challenges, and expectations at each

level of instruction. Comparing data from Spring 2009 and Fall 2009, the Student Success Center reported an increase in ENG 101 faculty satisfaction with the placement of students into 101.

Criminal Response Emergency Assessment Scenario (CREAS)

   The disciplines of Nursing (NUR), Radiography / Medical Imaging (RAD), Paramedic Emergency Services (PES), and Administration of Justice (ADJ) take an integrated approach to teaching to the extent possible so that when students move into the workforce, they are familiar with working together as part of a cooperative team. HCC faculty annually hold a Criminal Response Emergency Assessment Scenario (CREAS) activity, in which graduating students from the registered nursing (RN), practical nursing (PN), and ADJ participate together for a day of mock mass casualty practical assessment based on real-life scenarios. The CREAS event includes a mock triage unit, which consists of an Urgent Care and an emergency room (ER). NUR students work in conjunction with RAD students to diagnose and treat more than 100 volunteer "patients" for a variety of ailments. Throughout the day, PES students continually bring in trauma victims by ambulance and at least one manikin patient is usually brought in via Medevac by Washington County flight paramedics. ADJ students settle domestic disputes in the ER, interview patients who have witnessed a crime, and handle a staged campus incident.

External Validation and Departmental Juries – Music

   At the program level, all music majors are assessed at the end of each academic year in a departmental jury, which serves as external validation of the instructor's assessment of the student's progress. The student is assigned his or her applied level at this time. HCC belongs to the Council for Higher Education in Music, whose membership is comprised of most of the colleges and universities in Maryland with music programs. Regular meetings with counterparts from these member institutions, including the sharing and critiquing of syllabi, topical outlines and assessments helps to keep course level requirements and outcomes consistent throughout music programs in Maryland.

IV.   <u>**Competency: Technological Competency**</u>

A.   **Definition:** The ability to use technology to gather, evaluate, process and communicate information

B.   **Level(s) at which competency is assessed:** Broad, cross discipline/program and course levels

C.   **Processes used to evaluate competency:**
   1.   Online common exams for content units: Introduction to Information Technology (IST 102)
   2.   Common online assessment questions

3. Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) – See *Written and Oral Communication* for description of activity.
4. Portfolio – Graphic Design Technology Program – See *Critical Analysis and Reasoning* for description of activity.
5. Interdisciplinary Assessment Activity (Capstone) - Mock mass casualty practical assessment for Administration of Justice, Nursing and Paramedic Emergency Services - See *Critical Analysis and Reasoning* for description.

D.   Describe results of assessment work related to this competency:

Introduction to Information Technology (IST 102)

Introduction to Information Technology (IST102) continues to be a high impact course. Several modifications have occurred in this course since 2006 due to ever-changing technology and overall course improvement. The application software was changed from Microsoft Office 2007 to 2010 and the operating system was upgraded to Windows 7.

In previous semesters, the Texas Information Literacy Tutorial (TILT) was used to introduce information literacy. However, this was replaced with a Financial Literacy component that was developed by HCC faculty using a government website. To insure that students were able to apply these skills, the course was modified to include modules on refinancing, loan amortization, and an understanding of credit options. Students were asked to apply these skills in an additional component in the required capstone project which is graded with a rubric.

In IST 102, students are required to take three online unit exams. All questions are drawn from a database that has been mapped to the IC3 certification. The course is revised as the national certification is updated. As a result, the original three outcomes for this course were re-evaluated and revised.

Common Online Assessment Questions

In order to ensure success in IST 102, students are required to complete an online assessment of their existing computer skills. A mandatory 70% is required to pass. If a score is lower, the one-credit IST100 Computer Basics course, which does not count towards a degree, is required to help insure student success.

Data from common HCC on-line assessment questions pertaining to information literacy are also collected. After giving these exams, faculty are considering the addition of common projects to the course as another outcomes measure. As a result of analysis,

One important result of the IST 102 SLOA project has been the development of an on-line computer skills placement exam. In 2006, faculty developed an on-line placement exam for IST 102, which is used in IST 100 (Basic Computer Skills) and IST 102 to develop cut-off scores for placement into IST 100.   Faculty review the results of both these assessments and make modifications to the course curriculum to improve student learning.
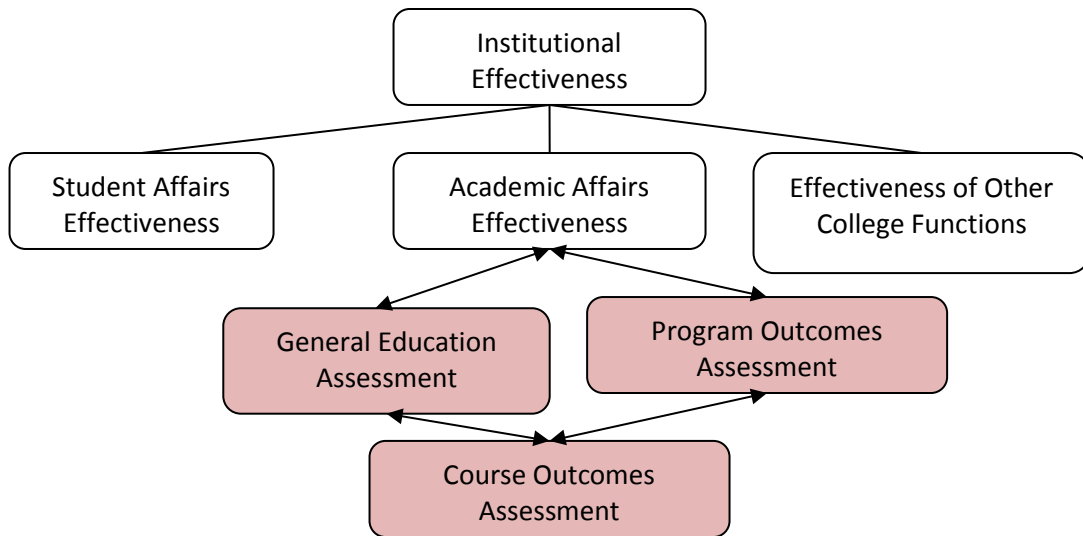
Portfolio – Graphic Design Technology Program

Since Spring 2006, the Graphic Design Technology (GDT) Advisory Committee, which is comprised of graphic design professionals from the community, reviews student portfolios with them using a rubric. The portfolio grading rubric was adjusted to equally divide the examples between Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. It includes web design and multimedia samples as well. This has made a significant difference in the quality of the program and the attainment of its learning outcomes. For example, when it was identified that the prints from the review were not of a high quality, HCC purchased a printer increases the depth and tonal range of the portfolio prints. Funds have been included in the GDT budget annually to keep the printer supplied with high quality paper and inks. Another year, focus was on illustrator graphics, typography and visual layout in the portfolios. Additionally, the Two –Dimensional design course content and outcomes were revised based upon advisory committee feedback through the portfolio review process as well. This provides additional opportunities for students to practice composition skills in a non-computer environment.

Part Three: Evolution of Assessment Activities

With its limited resources, the College focuses on its mission-based functions and related vision, carefully choosing strategically important directions that support all mission-based areas. The College's integrated planning, budgeting and evaluation model is the central process for the College's future growth and development. This "plan, do, assess, and adjust" model is the foundation for strengthening and continuously improving the institution. Major institutional change is being effected through the Institutional Effectiveness model and implementation of the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan. The original SLOA Plan evolved into a model that guides the assessment process. As the College has continued to work to establish a culture of assessment and accountability, most faculty are now active participants in outcomes assessment work, with a goal to improve student learning, and by extension the effectiveness of the institution as a whole.

SLOA is a key performance indicator of the Institutional Effectiveness model which was implemented in FY 07. Key performance indicators are integrated in the College's 2012 Strategic Plan and its action plans. The following chart shows the relationship between institutional effectiveness and SLOA. Areas highlighted in red are components of SLOA.

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General Education Assessment

Program Outcomes Assessment

Course Outcomes Assessment

Institutional resources support SLOA in several ways. A budget is maintained for SLOA testing supplies and materials, faculty professional development, and consultants. Academic division chairs and directors also offer leadership to course- and program-level assessment. The Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness provides data support and serves as a repository for assessment information. Faculty and division chairs and directors routinely examine assessment data for ways to improve student learning. Whether improvement involves additional professional development, updated materials and equipment, or modifying curriculum, results are used in the unit planning and budgeting process as part of productivity reports and resource requests. Review of academic programs is also conducted in a systematic manner and used as part of planning and budgeting.

The SLOA Leadership team has accomplished much over the last few years, including:

- **Positive Communication**
  - *Teaching and Learning Newsletter* (http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/academics/outcomes-assessment): These newsletters are published once a semester and include examples of best practices in teaching and learning, as well as OA updates, for example expectations and deadlines.

  - *Monthly SLOA reports at academic division meetings and at Faculty Assembly*: These provide two opportunities when all faculty are expected to be present to discuss topics pertaining to SLOA at the division and College level.

  - *Professional development activities during Workshop Week*: The SLOA Leadership Team has presented and facilitated extensive activities during faculty professional development days. These include: poster presentations of best practices in SLOA on campus; course redesign

presentations; presentation of MAPP and CAAP data as well as critical thinking best practices; the NCCBP project and how it can apply to the College; and time for faculty teams to work on SLOA when a team member is available to answer questions.

- **Outcomes Assessment Training for New Faculty**: All new faculty are required to attend this training which takes place every fall semester. Training includes an introduction to SLOA and its role at the College; how to conceptualize and write outcomes; introduction to assessing outcomes; and introduction to the resources available for SLOA.

- **Facilitation of Faculty Development of Course and Program Level Outcomes Assessment**:   The SLOA Leadership Team works with individual faculty and groups of faculty to help them develop outcomes for their courses and programs. The team also provides guidance in developing assessments, collecting data, and using the data to improve teaching and learning. Often, the team must provide deadlines to faculty and encourage and urge faculty to work on outcomes assessment.

- **Development and Maintenance of an Outcomes Assessment Database** (http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/sloa): The database is a repository of course outcomes guide, program outcomes guide and matrices that faculty have completed. The team collects the information from the faculty and stores it in the database.

- **Facilitation of general education outcomes assessment**: The SLOA Leadership Team coordinates administration of the MAPP and CAAP exams with the faculty and Academic Testing Center. The team is also facilitating the revision of the general education outcomes and is in the process of developing local assessments.

- **Regular meetings with Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Academic Officers and College President, if deemed necessary**: These meetings are used to present SLOA progress and to discuss future goals.

- **Yearly Outcomes Assessment Report to the Board of Trustees**: Each year, the SLOA Leadership Team writes an annual progress report and presents it to Board of Trustees, providing an opportunity for communication between Board members and the team.

Outcomes assessment and accountability are part of the culture of the College. An important aspect of assessment and accountability is the realization that its establishment is a long term process, not a single event. Moreover, it must become an ongoing cycle of modification and improvement. Since 2006, the College has successfully established a system for maintaining positive momentum in its progress towards assessment and accountability. During the best economic times, the full realization of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment goals is a challenging and continuing endeavor. Over the past two academic years, HCC, as has

virtually every college, confronted a difficult fiscal climate. During that time, however, the College has continued to demonstrate strong support for the establishment of a culture of assessment and accountability. The College believes it has made significant progress in student learning outcomes assessment and intends to maintain its commitment to achieving that culture.