

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

In Criterion Three, the College examines the ways in which it gathers, evaluates, and uses evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness to fulfill its mission. Assessing student learning outcomes has become an integral part of the SCC culture, and assessment efforts continue to grow in scope, efficiency, and effectiveness. The SCC Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC), of which all department chairs and program directors or their designees are members, guides the assessment of student learning. Current assessment practices include activities at the classroom/course and program levels as well as work conducted by four separate General Education assessment teams, subcommittees of SLOAC, working at the institutional level. In addition, Student Affairs is in the process of developing student learning outcomes for all areas of student services at both the College and the District levels.

CORE COMPONENT 3A

The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

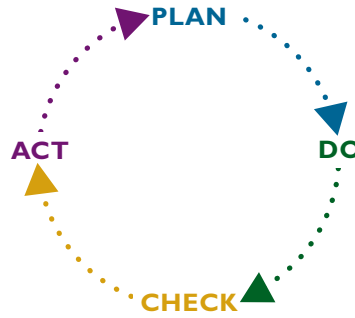
Scottsdale Community College is exemplary in clearly stating student learning outcomes for every course and program it offers and in assessing students' attainment of those outcomes. MCCCDC maintains a course bank of over 8,000 courses, each with a definitive set of learning outcomes (called competencies). Faculty develop these competencies through a systematic curriculum process, as described in Criterion One, and regularly review and revise them.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING AT MULTIPLE LEVELS

SCC assesses student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels on a regular basis. Since the initiation of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) reporting cycle in 2001–02, assessment has become an integral part of SCC culture. Breadth and Depth Surveys administered in 2004 and 2005 gauged the depth to which the various reporting programs were embedded in the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle, with the fully developed cycle feeding back into itself. That is, after checking the action, a new or revised plan is initiated and the cycle repeats.

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Figure 5.1: The Plan/Do/Check/Act Cycle



The table below shows some significant findings of these surveys:

Table 5.1: PDCA Levels of Assessment Projects

	2003–2004	2004–2005
Total Projects Reported	56	84
Number of Disciplines Reporting	30	37
One Full Cycle Completed	26	41
More than One Cycle Completed	25	43
Course-Level Assessment	38	68

The Department Assessment Projects Summary (available in the Appendix) provides an overview of assessment projects, the level at which those projects were administered (classroom, program, or institutional), and the depth to which those particular projects are embedded in the PDCA cycle. This information shows the college-wide growth of a comprehensive and substantive approach to assessment that is integrated in and informs departmental and curriculum planning.

CHALLENGES FOR ASSESSMENT AT SCC

As explained in Chapter 2, the nature of the SCC population provides some challenges to assessment at SCC. Because students typically attend SCC for one year or less, it is difficult to conduct longitudinal assessment studies on an identified cohort. Also, because students often attend sporadically and/or attend more than one college at a given time (called “swirling”), it is often difficult to identify students at different levels of experience on the basis of the number of credits they have earned at SCC, since a student identified as a “new” student to SCC might actually be a college or university student who has come to SCC to complete a few needed credits.

Because of the swirling student issues, SCC faculty often direct the “act” (or intervention) component of the assessment cycle towards pedagogy rather

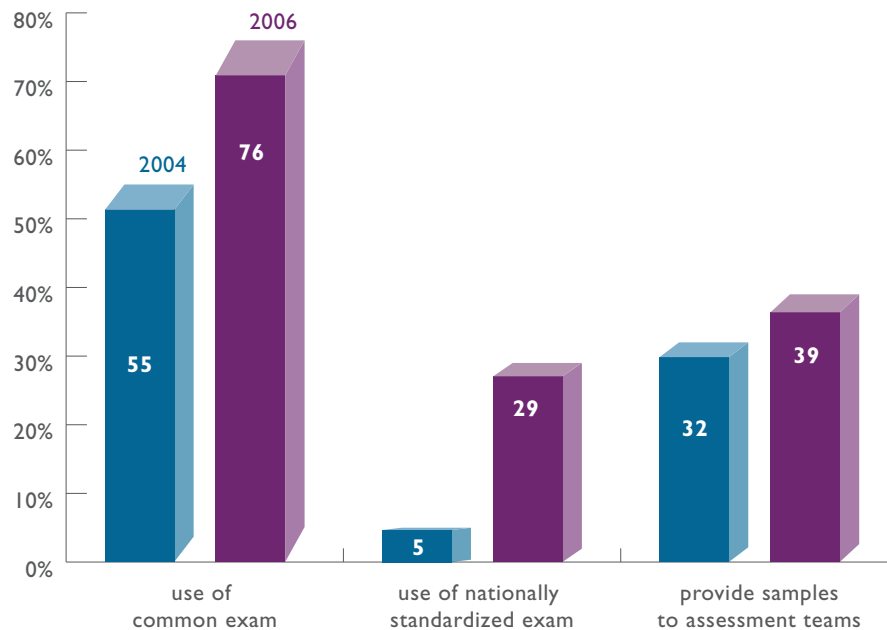
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than students so that informing pedagogical improvements through assessing one group of students benefits learning for following groups. For example, the Written Communications and Critical Thinking teams have developed faculty workshops and written materials that are informed by findings from the previous years' assessments. The Cultural Awareness team also plans to discuss the results of previous years' assessments with faculty and present workshops to help instructors better understand the current developmental stages of many of their students. Again, even though faculty members are targeted in these and similar workshops, the ultimate beneficiaries are students, ensuring that future generations derive benefits from previously assessed groups.

FACULTY KNOWLEDGE OF ASSESSMENT

A Survey of SCC Faculty Assessment Knowledge, Involvement, and Methods completed in December 2004 and again in April 2006 indicated that a variety of multiple measures are employed across campus, and that in many cases those methods are fluid, with faculty adopting different methods from one year to another as awareness grows, results are analyzed, and efficacy is studied. As the following graph shows, the most frequently used methods are common exams, individual and group projects, quizzes, written reports, and oral presentations, and some programs include both internal and external assessment methods.

Figure 5.2: Assessment Methods



This graph highlights three methods that showed dramatic increases between the 2004 and 2006 surveys. The increase in the use of common examinations across different sections of the same class and the increased use of nationally standardized examinations indicate the growing awareness of the value of these tools. The increasing number of student artifacts submitted for institutional-level assessment, in particular for use by the Written Communication subcommittee, informs more accurate analysis of general skill levels across the College. Significantly, direct comparisons between the two surveys again demonstrate not only that the assessment culture lives at SCC, but also that the culture

evolves as it grows. In all, 54 assessment methods were identified in the 2004 survey and 35 methods in the 2006 survey. This drop in the number of methods, in conjunction with the growth of documented assessment activities, indicates an effective consolidation of approaches as faculty communicate successes and disappointments and as departments and programs work to create and maintain effective, uniform, and iterative assessment cycles. Further information is available in the “Survey of Scottsdale Community College Faculty Assessment Knowledge, Involvement, and Methods” in the Appendix and online at www.scottsdalecc.edu/criterion/2006-2.

COURSE-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

The Breadth and Depth Surveys of 2004 and 2005 show a dramatic increase in course/classroom-level assessment activities, rising from 38 to 68 identified examples. While the most common assessment methods are applied internally, five of the 2004 classroom-level examples and 13 of the 2005 examples employed external measurements similar to those employed at the program level, such as portfolio or performance evaluations by industry professionals and nationally-normed tests. Other course/classroom-level assessments included locally-produced rubrics, common final exams, entry/exit tests, and exit interviews. Course-level assessment is described in detail in the annual Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports, available in the Resource Room.

PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

All program-level assessment practices reported in the 2004 and 2005 surveys included internal measures such as the use of common final examinations and evaluation of work produced in capstone courses or projects. Fourteen of the 17 disciplines and programs reporting also provided evidence of external assessment, including the use of nationally-normed tests, results from licensing exams in Nursing and Education, portfolio and performance reviews by industry representatives, and the collection of data pertaining to SCC students’ performance at Arizona State University. Significantly, the 2004 study showed that evolving program-level assessment plans were beginning to embed in a developing PDCA assessment cycle within their respective disciplines, and the report for 2005 showed that 11 of the 17 program-level assessments were completed as part of a continuing, repeating PDCA cycle.

One particularly promising external assessment tool is the Arizona System for Information on Student Transfer (ASSIST) database, through which community college transfers can be tracked through their continued studies at the three state universities. As a significant number of SCC students indicate that they intend to transfer credits to a university (approximately 40% in Fall 2005, including students concurrently enrolled at SCC), the ability to measure the success of SCC students at the junior and senior levels, and particularly the ability to compare the performance of SCC students with that of other students, would offer great benefit in assessing students’ learning at SCC. Prior to 2005, contractual issues prevented state universities from sharing data freely, and the community colleges were not permitted to provide District aggregate data. The system did not allow, for instance, receiving data of “native” Arizona State University (ASU) student



performance compared with SCC student data when they transferred to ASU. In Fall 2005, however, the SCC Institutional Research Office was able to access grade distributions for the ASU courses being monitored. Further information about ASSIST is available at www.asu.edu/assist.

INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

Institutional-level assessment of General Education at SCC currently addresses four identified learning outcomes: Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, and Cultural Awareness. These four outcomes were identified, defined, and refined over several years by the larger SLOAC, and each is administered by a separate subcommittee. The four General Education targets were phased into place, with initial work beginning with the Written Communication assessment subcommittee in Fall 2001 and work beginning on the final component, Cultural Awareness, in 2003–2004. Membership on the various subcommittees rotates among faculty on a staggered two-year cycle to ensure both continuity and widespread faculty involvement. Each subcommittee publishes an annual report of findings and recommended interventions and presents its findings to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the larger SLOAC. Annual Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports are available in the Resource Room.

With the 2004 incorporation of the Cultural Awareness component, SCC reached its initial assessment goals for course/classroom-, program-, and institutional-level assessment. While strategies and reporting, especially at the institutional level, remain fluid as some avenues are eliminated and others explored, general consensus agreed that this last element placed the final block into a viable foundation for assessment. Assessment instruments and annual reports are available in the Resource Room.

Written Communication

As of Spring 2006, the Written Communication assessment team had completed three full assessment cycles, including intervention activities. In conjunction with this work, the subcommittee completed a comprehensive survey to determine the scope and nature of writing assignments college-wide. The team created a rubric to evaluate writing proficiency in student artifacts submitted by faculty across the curriculum following an “institutional portfolio” model. The most recent results show that 69 percent of papers met overall proficiency standards, and proficiency rates in four of the five subscales showed substantial improvement from 2003–2004 to 2004–2005. The remaining area (main idea/purpose; 69% proficiency) was similar to previous years’ figures (70%).

Interventions since Fall 2003 have included panel programs and workshops for faculty on approaches and resources for implementing writing across the curriculum, the development of a web-based resource for students, brown-bag discussions on writing issues, and involvement in new faculty orientation. In 2005–2006, the Written Communication team sponsored faculty workshops on “Creating Effective Written Assignments,” “Correcting Written Assignments,” and “Dealing with Plagiarism.” Long-term strategies have also been identified, including contact with high school instructors, collaboration with other colleges in the District, and establishing a connection to the National Writing Project.

Critical Thinking

After a pilot period, the Critical Thinking Assessment Team began using the Scottsdale Test of Critical Thinking in 2003–2004 to assess critical thinking by administering the test to students in large, multi-section courses including ENG 102, CIS 105, and PSY 101. Results did not support the hypothesis that taking courses at SCC would improve students' scores on the test; rather, the only statistically significant characteristics were reading level and cumulative GPA. In response to these assessment data, the team has made four recommendations:

- Develop an operational definition of critical thinking;
- Develop a central store of ideas about improving the teaching of critical thinking;
- Develop more accurate procedures to assess students' critical thinking across the curriculum; and
- Develop college-wide activities to promote critical thinking in classes across the curriculum.

Because of the relatively short duration of enrollment for most SCC students, the committee decided to focus interventions on faculty rather than students. The goal was to increase faculty members' understanding of critical thinking elements so that they would be better equipped to teach critical thinking concepts to students. To that end, during Spring 2006, the committee presented a faculty workshop focusing on various aspects of critical thinking. In addition, the committee is developing a website to provide resources to help faculty incorporate critical thinking concepts in their classes.

Information Literacy

The Information Literacy subcommittee began work on the third identified General Education target in Spring 2002. Using the Information Competency Standards for Higher Education as a guide, the subcommittee developed a rubric to measure student artifacts gathered across the curriculum against six traits of information literacy. Following a pilot study, the team completed its first assessment in Spring 2004. While providing a baseline for future comparisons, results showed no significant correlation between information literacy at SCC and age or earned academic credits. These results may be tied to the “swirling student” phenomenon.

In Spring 2005, the committee moved to the Educational Testing Service's Information and Communication Technology Assessment. Although the results show only the total score of each participant, the SCC scores are above the national norm. Clearly, SCC and its feeder schools are successful in preparing students for information literacy; because part-time and ESL students scored lower than their counterparts, the College will focus on reaching these groups while maintaining a growth in information literacy among the whole student population. Because of the limitations on test data available from ETS, the committee is seeking another test that will provide information on sub-scores within the test. Detailed test results are available in the Resource Room.



Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is measured using the *Intercultural Development Inventory*, a national instrument developed by Milton Bennett and Mitchell Hammer (Hammer & Bennett, 1998) based on theoretical concepts from Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett, 1986, 1993).

The SCC study employed a cross-sectional design comparing a randomly selected group of newer students (those with fewer than 16 credits) with a randomly selected group of more experienced students (those with greater than 45 credits). Results showed that although the more experienced students had, on average, a higher overall developmental intercultural sensitivity score than less experienced students, the difference was not statistically significant. As a whole, most SCC students were found to be in the "minimization" stage of the DMIS, characterized by the tendency to emphasize the similarities of all cultures and minimize deep cultural differences. In future years, the Cultural Awareness subcommittee plans to collaborate with the SCC International Education Office to administer the IDI to assess the cultural awareness levels of SCC students participating in education abroad.

In addition to the student assessment, during Spring 2006 the Cultural Awareness subcommittee conducted a survey to assess faculty members' thoughts and practices regarding 30 different student outcomes related to multicultural education. Faculty were asked to indicate the importance of each outcome to them, the relevance of each outcome to classes they teach, and whether or not they included each outcome in their classes. Results indicated that on average faculty thought that all of the student outcomes were important, but faculty varied between 25% and 65% when asked about inclusion of the student outcomes in their classes. Complete data from these surveys may be found in the report entitled "Cultural Awareness Assessment Team Annual Report (2005–2006)."

COMMUNICATION OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Results of assessment activities are communicated in a variety of ways appropriate to the College's various constituencies. Each department and program submits an annual report using the PDCA framework, and these reports are summarized and distributed to all residential faculty, administrators, and other constituents. As part of the regular ongoing SLOAC activities, two department chairs and/or program directors address each monthly meeting in order to promote dialog and share best practices. These presentations typically summarize current practices, give examples of assessment tools and strategies, and most importantly, discuss successes and challenges of particular assessment efforts. The presenters invite constructive criticism, comments, and suggestions about current practices. This forum continues to provide valuable insight and feedback on assessment strategies and provides a larger view of assessment activities across the College.

At the institutional level, assessment information is made available to constituents through a variety of practices and in a variety of formats including published reports, oral presentations and discussions, postings on the SCC web site, and a quarterly publication, *The Water Cooler*. In addition, pertinent information relating to current assessment efforts, historical data, depositories for ongoing work and

References

- Bennett, M. J. (1986). Towards ethno-relativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Cross-cultural orientation: New conceptualizations and applications* (pp. 27–69). New York: University Press of America.
- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Towards ethno-relativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 21–71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Hammer, M. R., & Bennett, M. J. (1998). *The intercultural development inventory (IDI) manual*. Portland, OR: Intercultural Communication Institute.

research, and minutes from the SLOAC meetings are posted on the College's assessment website. Sites for each of the four Institutional Outcomes are nested in the site, along with institutional goals, framework for assessment, assessment rubrics, and *The Water Cooler*. Further information is available at www.scottsdalecc.edu/assessment, and copies of *The Water Cooler* are available in the Resource Room.

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Assessment results are communicated to students in a number of ways. For example, syllabi typically include competencies and learning outcome goals for each class, while course outlines and instructional methods reflect interventions resulting from assessment efforts. Some, but not all, faculty discuss outcomes assessment with students the first day of class and throughout the semester. At the classroom level, best practice has students regularly apprised of their progress in meeting stated outcomes. Nevertheless, the degree to which faculty discuss learning outcomes with students, the influence of assessment and subsequent interventions on instruction, and the extent of the students' role in completing assessment activities remain inconsistent. The lack of general student awareness of ongoing assessment activities that in many ways directly shape their learning experience may be viewed as a concern, but it does not necessarily fall outside expectations, given the nature of SCC students. The efficacy of concerted efforts to remedy this situation is, to a certain degree, undermined by the "swirling students" whose short time at SCC prevents their involvement in long-term assessment activities. Regardless of students' awareness of the on-going, cyclical activities, however, the results of outcomes assessment at SCC significantly influence their instruction and learning.

INTEGRATION OF DATA FOR EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

SCC's Institutional Research Office provides a wealth of information to appropriate constituencies, including course completion rates, degrees and certificates awarded, grade distributions, and retention rates. The Institutional Research Office also surveys graduates to determine, among other items, their employment status and their opinion of the effectiveness of their education. Results are distributed to the appropriate chairs and directors for incorporation into their respective assessment work. A list of regular reports issued by the Institutional Research Office is available in the Resource Room.

The Institutional Research Office conducts regular surveys of graduates comparing their educational objectives and the degree to which those objectives were met as well as their current educational and employment status. Responses from Spring 2005 offer typical percentages: 98% of respondents indicated that their educational objectives were met or "partially" met; 58% indicated that they were currently enrolled in a community college or university; 82% indicated that they were currently employed; and 68% indicated that they were employed in a job "directly" or "somewhat" related to their SCC program of study. The Occasional Student Survey (2006) targeted students who were enrolled in at least one



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occupational class, but fewer than nine total credits, during Spring 2006. Of those who responded, 80.9% worked either full or part time, and 85.8% indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their coursework at SCC. Survey results are available in the Resource Room.

Programs that lead to professional licensure, such as Nursing and Education, incorporate data regarding their students' performance on licensure examinations into their ongoing assessment activities. During the period from 1995–2004, 99% of SCC graduates passed the LPN exam compared to a national rate of 88%, and in seven of those years, 100% of SCC graduates passed. Over the same period of time, the average SCC pass rate for the RN exam was 92%, compared to a national rate of 86%. Results of the Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessment for 2002–2003, 2003–2004, and 2004–2005 showed that 100% of SCC graduates passed the state examination. Further information regarding licensure examinations is available in the Resource Room.

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At Scottsdale Community College, virtually all aspects of defining student learning outcomes, developing strategies for assessing those outcomes, developing and applying appropriate interventions, and checking the results of those interventions fall within the faculty's purview. Program assessment plans and individual assessment activities are designed and conducted by faculty within their respective departments or programs. Department chairs, occupational program directors, and division chairs, each playing a role in the development, application, and reporting of assessment activities, are themselves faculty. The SLOAC and the four General Education Assessment subcommittees are likewise composed of faculty who have developed SCC's institutional assessment strategies and conduct the corresponding assessment activities in consultation with administration.

Faculty representatives administered the "Survey of SCC Faculty Assessment Knowledge, Involvement, and Methods" in 2004 and 2006 in part to determine the levels of general knowledge of assessment activities at SCC as well as the level of involvement in College and departmental assessment activities. Participants were asked to rate their knowledge of assessment activities at SCC on a scale ranging from 1 (no knowledge/involvement) to 5 (extensive knowledge/involvement). The average self-ratings are shown below, demonstrating significantly greater knowledge and involvement for full-time faculty, and likewise greater knowledge and involvement in activities within one's respective department or program. Comparisons between the two groups of results show an increase in all categories of assessment knowledge and involvement over the 16 months separating the two surveys.



Figure 5.3: Faculty Knowledge of College Assessment Activities

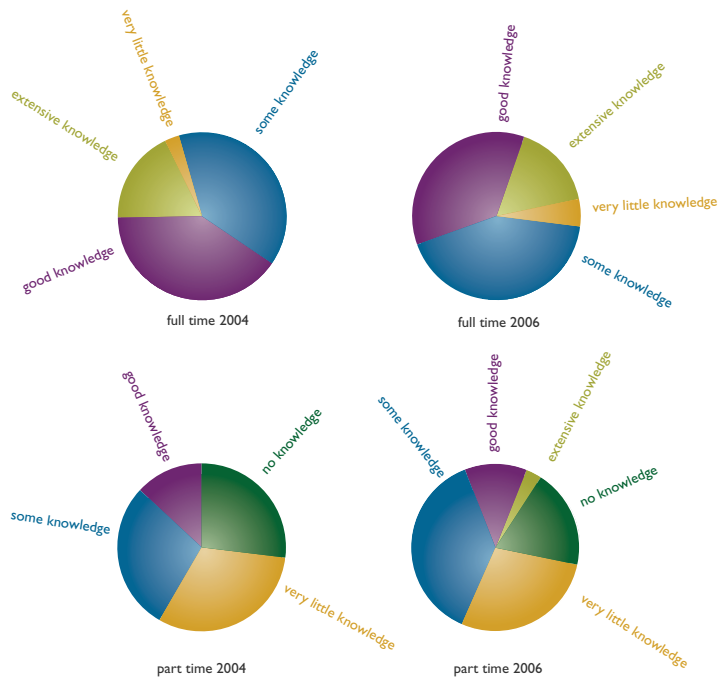
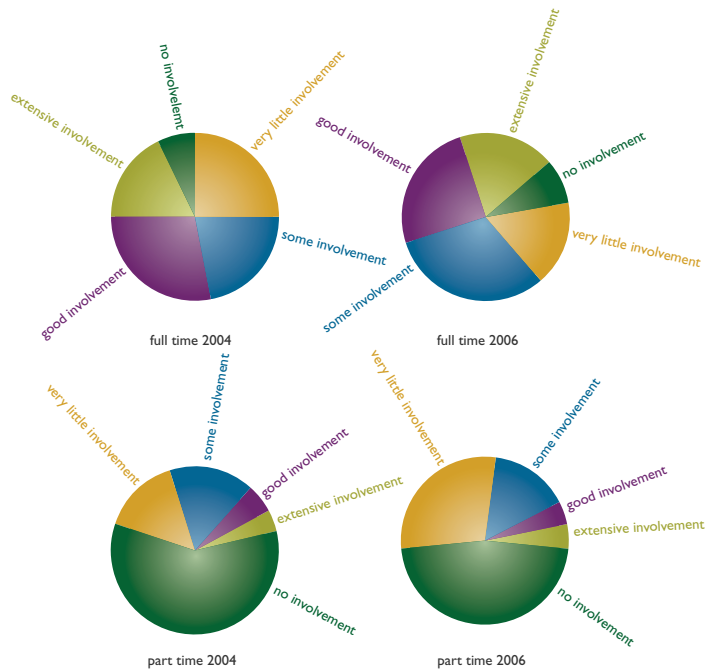


Figure 5.4: Faculty Involvement in College Assessment Activities



While adjunct faculty's average self-ratings are lower than those of residential faculty, it is likely that adjunct faculty are actually more involved in assessment activities than they realize. For example, in some cases adjuncts may be implementing interventions derived from a department's assessment activities without being aware of the motivation for those changes. Adjunct faculty's knowledge of assessment and their involvement in assessment activities are growing, but more work can be done to

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include this important group more directly in the processes through efforts of department chairs, occupational program directors, and the SLOAC. Detailed data from these surveys may be found in the Resource Room and online at:
www.scottsdalecc.edu/criterion/2004-6/feedbackAggregateResults.asp
www.scottsdalecc.edu/criterion/2004-6/feedbackFacultyAggregateResults.asp
www.scottsdalecc.edu/criterion/2004-6/feedbackAdjunctAggregateResults.asp

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

As part of the established reporting cycle at SCC, the efficacy of assessment undergoes annual review at four different levels. At the course/classroom level, faculty review findings determined through completion of their particular role in their respective department/program assessment plan; department chairs and program directors then assimilate and review information, submitting a written report to their respective division chairs; and division chairs summarize the information and report it to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, who publishes an annual College assessment report. Department and division chairs also share ideas and challenges through their participation in SLOAC. These review processes help to ensure not only that assessment efforts continue, but that interventions resulting from previous assessment efforts are evaluated.

CORE COMPONENT 3B

The organization values and supports effective teaching.

Scottsdale Community College demonstrates outstanding support for effective teaching through its employment of highly-qualified faculty, its conscientious evaluation of teaching effectiveness, and its generous support of a wide range of professional development activities for faculty, administration, and staff.

FACULTY EVALUATION PLAN

As described in Criterion Two, SCC takes pride in employing highly qualified faculty. In the MCCC, regular evaluation of residential faculty takes the form of the Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP). Probationary faculty complete an FEP every year; once they attain appointive status, typically after five years, residential faculty complete an FEP every three years. Further information about the FEP is available in Criterion Four.

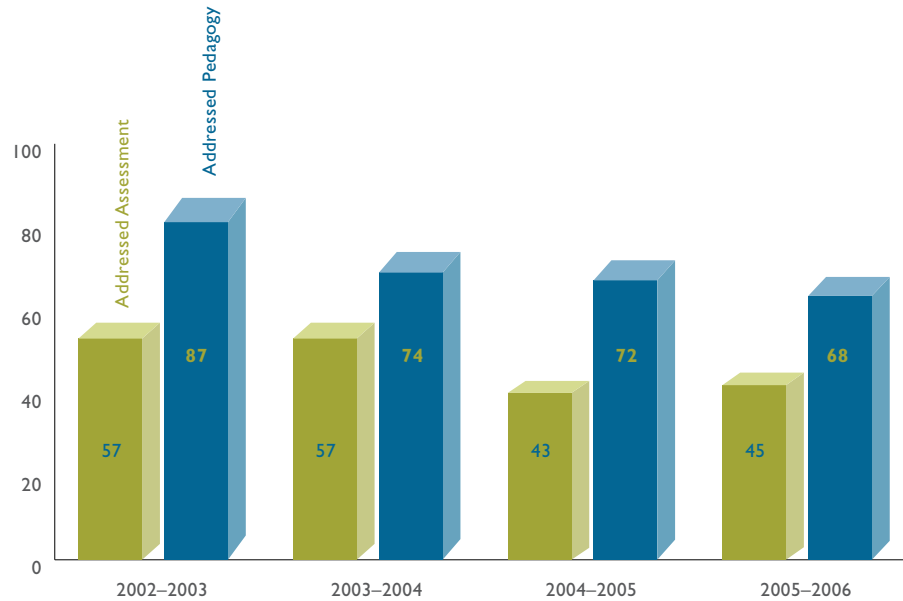
While faculty are free to develop their FEPs in a variety of directions, recent trends show a movement toward focusing on assessment-related activities. On occasion several members of a single department will coordinate their FEPs to target a specific issue, working either concurrently as a team on a broad department-level project, or linking successive FEPs together, building one year's project on work completed during the previous year. A significant indicator of the development of SCC's assessment culture reveals itself in the number of recent FEPs centering on the assessment of student learning, as seen in the following chart:

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Figure 5.5: Assessment FEPs as a Percentage of Total FEPs



Over the last four academic years, 203 documented assessment activities were completed under the auspices of the FEP. Copies of assessment-focused FEPs are available in the Resource Room.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

The Institutional Research Office administers and analyzes a faculty course evaluation developed by SCC faculty. The survey instrument can be customized for specific courses or programs, and the results offer feedback for the particular class evaluated and compare the instructor's effectiveness with his or her own performance for the previous five years, with results from other instructors within the particular discipline (course level), and with all instructors at SCC (institutional level). Individual instructors can use the results to guide interventions, while department chairs and program directors can use these results to compare instructional effectiveness and focus across multiple sections of the same course and, ultimately, to design corresponding interventions at a broader level. Faculty evaluation forms are available in the Resource Room.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Scottsdale Community College actively supports professional development designed to facilitate teaching suited to varied learning environments. The College provides financial support to faculty for such development, funding travel to conferences, teacher training, and professional meetings. The College and the District also award learning grants to faculty for projects designed to improve, advance, and enrich student learning; summer projects for research or professional development activities; sabbatical leave; programs for study, research, travel, and work experience related to professional growth; and salary advancement for



both academic and non-academic work, such as clinics, workshops, or seminars. Professional development is discussed further in Criterion Four.

In support of these and related activities, the College grants released time for two residential faculty members to serve as Staff Development Coordinators, whose duties include coordinating travel requests for full-time and adjunct faculty, facilitating adjunct faculty workshops and “brown bag” discussion groups, and overseeing new faculty orientations. Both coordinators attend District meetings for Staff Development and are ex-officio members of the SCC Staff Development Advisory Committee. Other faculty members coordinate additional aspects of ongoing SCC faculty development efforts, including summer Educational Development Projects, sabbatical applications, and salary advancement through continuing education. The College also maintains and supports an active Instructional Technology department that regularly offers workshops to help faculty and staff improve their use of technology.

CENTER FOR TEACHING, LEARNING, AND TECHNOLOGY

In the fall of 2004, the newly remodeled and refocused Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT) opened its doors to faculty and staff. The CTLT provides learning opportunities to support instructional development and improvement; promotes meaningful dialog and research related to instructional development; and supports development and application of appropriate technology to teaching and learning. Both SCC’s instructional designer and technology trainer work from offices adjacent to the CTLT, and faculty can readily draw on their expertise. Along with a technology training video library, the CTLT also houses a Faculty Resource Room containing materials and information on sabbaticals, summer projects, travel funding, and other sources of support.

While SCC clearly promotes and financially supports professional development and improved pedagogies, the majority of this support addresses instructional technology with lesser emphasis on pedagogical theory and practice. Furthermore, with a few notable exceptions like Instructional Skills Workshops and “brown bag” sessions, on-campus support for non-technical aspects of professional development employs online or video formats rather than formally organized group activities. This concern is somewhat allayed through a variety of “face-to-face” cross-campus developmental programs offered through the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI). Information about MCLI is available in Criterion Four online at www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu.

SUPPORT FOR INNOVATION

Scottsdale Community College demonstrates openness to innovative practices that enhance learning by its support of many projects. For example, the Educational Development Projects (EDP) program fosters innovation and improvement of instruction by providing faculty with summer funding for enhancing instructional methods and programs and, especially, for developing innovative instructional techniques and/or specialized instructional materials. Each summer the College awards between \$15,000 and \$20,000 to approximately ten EDP applicants chosen by a faculty committee.



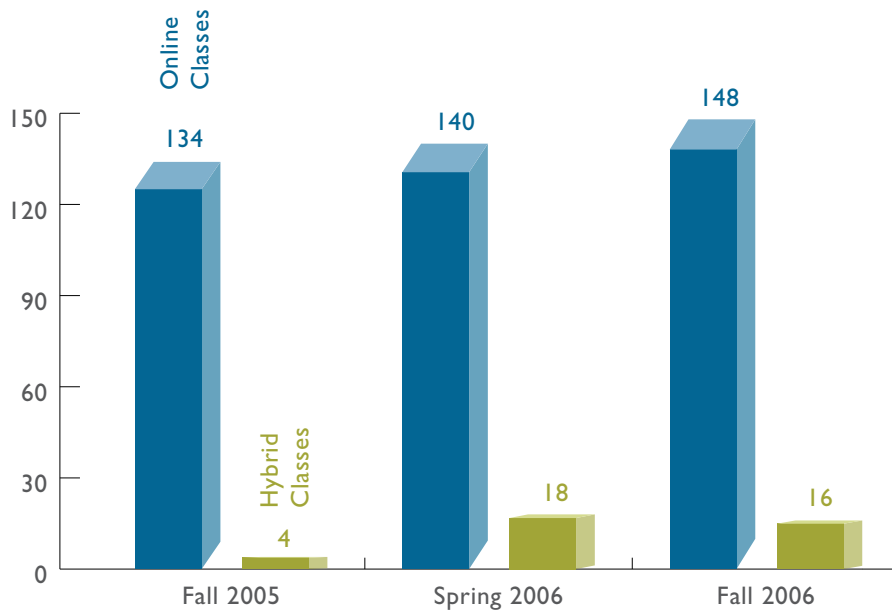
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SUPPORT FOR INNOVATION IN THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The College actively supports a number of campus and District organizations in an effort to develop and communicate innovative practices. For example, faculty, technical staff, and administrators come together on the SCC Ocotillo Committee to develop, monitor, and prioritize the acquisition, maintenance, and support of computer technology at SCC. Ocotillo is discussed further in Criterion Two.

SCC offers a robust electronic-learning program, including internet-supplemented, hybrid, and online courses. As the chart below shows, the number of online courses is growing steadily.

Figure 5.6: Online and Hybrid Classes at SCC



The number of internet-supplemented courses, including those sections using Blackboard, is typically much higher, with an estimated 750 classes using the web-based instructional supplement in Fall 2006. To support the creation of internet courses, SCC offers stipends to faculty who initially develop an online course. Additional support is provided through “Getting Started in E-Learning,” a faculty guidebook adopted in Fall 2004, and a number of other resources. These materials are available online at www.scottsdalecc.edu/scconline.

SCC faculty members presented a workshop on “Leveraging the Power of E-Learning” to the College and to the National Infrastructure Initiative (part of Educause) and the TechED Events conference of the Community College Foundation. Another innovative electronic-learning project, the “E-Learning Travel Guide,” is designed to assist students considering the option of online learning. This student guide is available at www.scottsdalecc.edu/scconline/orientation.

The Online Learning Group (OLG) is a District-wide forum that promotes networking, communication, and information sharing among those who teach online, develop online materials, and otherwise support online learning. Through monthly meetings at college sites, the OLG works to increase members' knowledge and understanding of online learning, use of technology, pedagogy, and

teaching strategies for online environments. An SCC staff member co-chaired this organization for 2004–2006.

SCC faculty members formed a loosely-organized users' group for Blackboard courseware in the late 1990s, and the more formal Blackboard and Learning Tools User Group (BUG) was created in 2004 by faculty and staff who wanted to share their common interest in instructional technology. Attendance has averaged 15 participants per month, which is considered to be an excellent turnout for an optional learning event.

INNOVATION IN OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS

Expanded, enhanced, and innovative programs are also evident in many of SCC's occupational programs, several of which have won national recognition. For example:

- Nursing has created a unique partnership with Scottsdale Healthcare, whereby SCC faculty deliver classes for the organization's employees at their north Scottsdale location (SHC-University).
- Interior Design completed a separate accreditation process with a visit from the Foundation for Interior Design Education and Research (FIDER, now known as the Council for Interior Design Accreditation) in March 2005, making SCC one of only five community colleges in the country at that time to be so accredited. To underscore this recognition, at the time of accreditation only 130 of 330 university design schools across the United States and Canada carried FIDER credentials. FIDER accreditation will enable SCC Interior Design graduates to sit for professional registration exams in all states with interior design licensing.
- Hospitality and Tourism added a multi-disciplined opportunity in conjunction with the Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance division for students to earn an associate degree emphasizing golf within the hospitality industry. Hospitality students can also participate in an international exchange program with Mexico or Canada through US Department of Education learning grants.
- Culinary Arts completed a separate accreditation process in January 2006, gaining a three-year accreditation from the American Culinary Federation. Significantly, both the Certificate and AAS degree programs received the award. The SCC program is one of 32 post-secondary institutions, including public and private institutions, to carry this prestigious status. Also of significance, Culinary Arts students are now required to develop a portfolio of class assignments, including a written journal and a photographic record of their achievements.
- Architectural Technology/CAD, serving both the Architectural Technology and Interior Design Programs, moved toward a greater emphasis on three-dimensional modeling by incorporating AutoCAD Architectural Desktop into CAD classes. This new software works on the cutting-edge principle of building a three-dimensional computer model and extracting the two-dimensional construction drawings from that model.



- The Business Department delivers its highly successful Fastrack certificate program in a fully online format. A pioneer in online learning at SCC, the program moved to this learning format seven years ago.
- The Motion Picture/Television Department uses outside professionals to provide students with critical feedback to improve their skills. In addition, a plan to create an internship program with the Maricopa Community Colleges Television station is in progress.
- The Fire Science Academy brings damaged and wrecked vehicles to the College for realistic training in rescue techniques.
- Administration of Justice Studies has expanded its Forensic offerings into an AAS and two Certificate options. These classes simulate actual crime scenes from which students gather and analyze evidence. In Summer of 2006, faculty conducted a highly successful series of “mini-camps” for secondary school students. Also of note, in 2004–2005, a gas chromatograph was approved for purchase through occupational funds and will be used in both Chemistry and Forensics classes.

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING

SCC sponsors and supports research in teaching and learning, as well as the use of technology to improve student learning. For example, the College supports the Instructional Skills Workshop, a four-day intensive workshop on teaching skills and assessment of student learning, for both residential and adjunct faculty. SCC is the only college in the MCCCDC to offer this opportunity, which is funded by SCC administration at a rate exceeding \$500 per participant. Results of participants’ evaluations overwhelmingly demonstrate the benefit gained. ISW is discussed in detail in Criterion Four.

Distinctive Another significant demonstration of the value the College places on excellent teaching is the New Faculty Orientation program: during their first semester, all new full-time instructors participate in weekly mentoring and orientation seminars addressing instructional strategies, administrative concerns, MCCCDC and College policies, and general campus operations. Begun in 2003, the New Faculty program demonstrates both a philosophical and a financial commitment to improving instruction, helping new faculty understand the daily workings and responsibilities of their jobs, and, significantly, providing opportunities to improve teaching skills. Three hours’ reassigned time for each participating faculty member is granted toward this commitment. This extensive orientation program helps to ensure that new faculty quickly become an effective part of the organization. A schedule of sessions for Fall 2006 is available in the Resource Room.

While the College and the District offer myriad opportunities for faculty to improve their instructional skills, an ongoing challenge is expanding the scope of offerings and motivating more faculty to participate in sponsored events. Numerous learning events are scheduled, but times frequently conflict with widely ranging regular teaching loads and committee obligations. Scheduling remains problematic and appears to be the primary obstacle to wider participation. The



3 Criterion

SCC Ocotillo Committee is currently conducting discussions to try to resolve the difficulties of scheduling professional development activities at times when faculty can attend.

CORE COMPONENT 3C

The organization creates effective learning environments.

Scottsdale Community College demonstrates an exemplary commitment to creating and enhancing learning environments that promote effective teaching and learning.

LEARNING RESOURCES

The standard mediated classroom at SCC contains an instructor's computer station with data projector and appropriate media capabilities. Across campus, as of July 2006, 96% of classrooms that need them have data projectors, and the remaining five classrooms will receive projection systems as part of the ongoing Instructional Technology Master Plan.

The SCC Library balances traditional resource models with current technology. Students can electronically access online learning resources including EBSCOhost, InfoTrac, LexisNexis, and Wilson Omnifile, Gale databases, the National Newspaper Collection and Ethnic Newswatch, four online encyclopedias, three Research Topic Databases, and a growing electronic ebook collection. A complete list of library databases is available in the Resource Room.

The SCC Media Center supports student learning by providing technological support to students, faculty, and staff. In partnership with the Disability Resources and Services Office, the Center offers a Braille reader/transcriber and a voice-activated computer for visually impaired students. Besides managing and maintaining a wide variety of audio/visual equipment, the Center lends computers and/or software, houses the Help Desk, and can perform highly sophisticated graphics operations. The Media Center also assists students and faculty with a wide variety of audio/visual activities, including videotaping and editing for critical self-evaluation and storing/loaning instructional materials on video and audiotape. The Center also duplicates tapes, CDs, and DVDs, and can perform audio and video transfers.

SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Scottsdale Community College provides an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity they bring to the College community. For tutoring and other assistance, the College provides a Writing Center for help with English, ESL, and foreign languages (approximately 22,600 student visits in Spring 2006), a Math and Science Center (approximately 11,000 visits in Spring 2006), a Social/Behavioral Learning Center (approximately 10,000 visits in Spring 2006), and a number of smaller facilities.



Criterion 3

SCC also offers a variety of programs and support mechanisms to help ensure that all students, regardless of their skill level or special needs, have the opportunity to learn and participate in the greater college experience. Included in these advocacy and support groups are the Achieving a College Education (ACE) Program, the Honors Program, the International Education program, the Veterans' Services Office, and many others. A complete list of services is available in the Resource Room.

In 1998, SCC completed a comprehensive facility upgrade to bring the entire campus into compliance with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, to ensure that all students have access to the resources they need, the Office of Disability Resources and Services provides approximately 450 students every semester with special academic accommodations including note-taking, alternate testing, interpreters, adaptive equipment and technology, and appropriate furniture.

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING REGARDLESS OF LOCATION

Along with the wide array of services available on campus, the College provides online access for students wishing to apply for admission, register for courses, add and drop courses, check class schedules, check fee balances and pay fees, verify and correct personal information, check grades, and perform numerous other tasks. Grades are also accessible by touch-tone telephone, and students can register for classes by telephone or by fax. In 2005–2006, 4,560 students enrolled via the internet.

ACCESSIBILITY AND STAFFING OF RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

Scottsdale Community College commits substantial resources to the support of learning resources at numerous sites, including on-campus facilities, off-site locations, and web-based resources. Use, supervision, and technical/instructional assistance vary among the resource sites, from permanently staffed locations for which regular evaluations and assessment activities are performed, to laboratories overseen by faculty volunteers, to open sites with no supervision. Those sites critical to general student success, for example the Library, Writing Center, and open computer lab, offer day and evening hours as well as some Saturday hours; websites are available at all times. More specialized resources, such as nursing clinical sites, are available as required. Effective staffing is maintained for pivotal learning resource sites such as the Library, Open Computer Lab, Writing Center, and Testing Center. Effective staffing is also maintained for technical support through the Instructional Technology department with its staff of over twenty technicians. A survey completed in 2004–2005 showed that six of the 18 identified sites available for student use were without permanent staff supervisors. While these unsupervised sites most certainly support student learning, it is commonly agreed that permanent staffing would at least facilitate, if not enhance, learning. A list of learning resources with their hours of operation and staffing is available in the Resource Room.



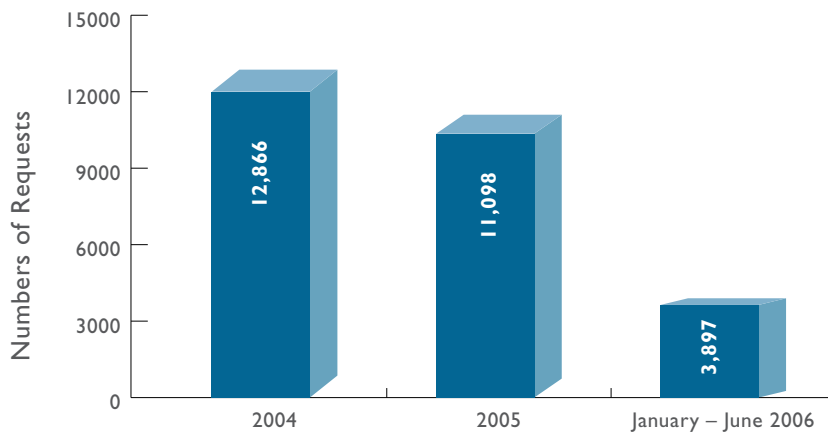
SUPPORT FOR TECHNOLOGY

SCC employs a variety of programs and strategies to use and improve technology in support of student learning. As of July 2006, a total of 990 computers were dedicated to students' use: 598 in dedicated classroom environments, 297 in laboratory or open laboratory environments, and 95 laptops affording mobility within the environment. Faced with increasing technological demands of on-campus and distance-learning modes, SCC has established a Technology Renewal Fund through which hardware and software are replaced or upgraded on a regular cycle. This approach not only helps ensure the integrity of SCC's technological support, but also provides a significant planning tool for faculty and staff. Minimum standards tied to identified learning or operational needs have been established for all computers on campus, and all departments are evaluated semi-annually to identify gaps and shift funding appropriately. Priority is given to computers in classrooms and laboratories, the centers of student learning.

Since Spring 1999, SCC has offered dedicated student accounts with individual server space, and currently an average of 8,000 students per semester use College computing services. Through these accounts, students can access SCC websites from off-campus as well as access their own files from any computer on campus. Recent data show that 5,500 students per semester use on-campus print services, which are offered free of charge. The Student Instructional Resource Entry Network (SIREN) provides students with an integrated suite of productivity tools and a wide range of network resources designed to expand learning, critical thinking, personal development, and civic responsibility. These tools are available to all students at all times. In further support of learning, the Instructional Technology Help Desk provides students, faculty, and staff with a primary point of contact for technical assistance. The Help Desk responded to the following number of requests for assistance from faculty, staff, and students:

..... Learning-Centered

Figure 5.7: Help Desk Requests 2004–2006



The decrease in requests is the result of providing web-based self-service materials and outsourcing Blackboard support to Presidium, which offers 24/7 service.

The Instructional Technology department supports learning and technology in a variety of ways beyond typical maintenance and upgrading, including one-on-one assistance, tutoring, website access, online tips and tutorials, mini-workshops,



“webinars,” brown bag learning events, face-to-face training, and print and audio-visual materials. Online and telephone help is available through the Help Desk, and faculty and staff can also check out a variety of software from this source to support their special technology needs on- and off-campus.

In 2004, five new programs aimed at enhancing e-learning skills were offered to faculty and staff: Blackboard Quick Start Basics, Blackboard Quick Start Intermediate, Leveraging the Power of E-Learning, Online Faculty Partnership (mentoring program), and a Faculty Orientation to Online Learning CD, which received the SCC Innovation of the Year Award for 2003–2004. Resources developed to support student use of technology include a Student Orientation to Online Learning CD, over 20 Open Computer Lab handouts, and a PowerPoint Student Orientation to the Open Computer Lab.

Three specialized web sites meet specific needs of students, faculty, and staff: the Faculty E-Learning Resources website was established in 2004 to provide faculty support for online course content and registered over 2200 “hits” in its first year. The website has expanded considerably since its launch in 2004, and it now serves as a major resource for faculty in creating online course materials with approximately 50 pages and 80 quick reference guides on Blackboard, Microsoft Office products, and other computer software tools designed to enhance instruction and learning at SCC. In addition, the Instructional Technology “Help Yourself Desk” site was developed to provide information on common issues and questions, and the E-Learning Travel Guide provides support information to students enrolled in online and/or hybrid courses. E-learning resources are available at www.scottsdalecc.edu/scconline.

The Faculty Development Advisory Committee and the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT) sponsor numerous learning opportunities for SCC faculty, with special focus on technology. Training workshops offered through the CTLT provide faculty and staff with assistance in such computer technologies as Blackboard, Microsoft Office, web-page creation and editing, and calendaring. Since Summer 2005, the year-round workshop schedule has grown to 15 different offerings, serving over 300 registrants. Assessments by participants at the end of each workshop shows an average overall satisfaction rate of 4.7 on a scale of 1–5, with 5 indicating “highly satisfied.”

ADVISEMENT TO PROMOTE STUDENT LEARNING

Many faculty members function as academic advisors, thus grounding advisement in the teaching/learning framework. Advisors guide students along outlined prerequisite paths to help ensure that students have the required skills to proceed to subsequent levels within the curriculum. Furthermore, advisors follow approved articulation agreements with the state universities, again to help ensure that students are following the best curricular path for their individual goals.

In order to promote student success and instructional effectiveness, SCC requires students who have not otherwise satisfied proficiency requirements and who plan to enroll in English, reading, and/or mathematics (or any course for which these are prerequisites) to complete ASSET or Compass placement tests in those



areas. Students enrolling in any ESL course likewise complete the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA) placement test. Advisors use the results of placement tests to help students identify classes compatible with their demonstrated skill level, and SCC offers a range of developmental classes designed to bring those students lacking prerequisite skills to levels that will help ensure success in college-level sections. In keeping with SCC's open admissions policy, placement tests are not mandatory for all students. Assessment results have demonstrated, however, that students who undergo the process benefit from this effort. Further information about Advisement, which was a concern for the 1997 HLC team, is available in Chapter 2.

COUNSELING SERVICES TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

SCC's counseling services are distinct from advisement. In support of student learning and retention, professional counseling faculty work with individuals and groups of students, assisting across a wide range of educational, occupational, personal, and social issues. The Counseling Department supports students in finding a workable balance among academic, personal, family, and work commitments; developing strategies for coping with personal challenges and crises; exploring and evaluating career options; and developing strategies for academic success. Along with individual assistance, Counseling Services also offers classes in support of learning for students from diverse educational backgrounds, including Strategies for College Success, Career Exploration, Eliminating Self-Defeating Behavior, Stress Management, Native American Pride and Awareness, Introduction to Multiculturalism, and Personal Money Management.

Counseling Services also intervenes with students placed on academic probation, working with them to improve learning and study strategies. Assessment results in 2003–2004 showed that 63% of probationary students who met with a counselor once improved their GPA during that semester. This number rose to 77% for students who met with counselors for at least one follow-up visit. As a result of this finding, systematic procedures were initiated in order to encourage students to attend follow-up sessions with their counselor. Assessment results from 2004–2005 showed that 47% improved their GPA after one visit, while 62% of those who participated in at least one additional follow-up visit improved their GPA. Results from 2005–2006 showed that 36% improved their GPA after one visit, compared to 69% for those who attended at least one follow-up visit.

COUNSELING SERVICES TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The Counseling Department also provides consultation and professional development to promote effective learning environments. Counselors develop and deliver workshops on classroom management for new residential and adjunct faculty each year as part of SCC's effort to enhance classroom civility. This effort is discussed further in Criterion One. In Spring 2006 the department began providing similar training to instructional departments and divisions as well as student service areas in order to facilitate the understanding and use of College procedures in response to disruptions.

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Creation of effective learning environments is also encouraged through partnerships with departments in the instructional and student affairs areas. Counselors participate in orientations for a variety of student groups such as “new to college,” Culinary Arts, International Education, and adult reentry as well as providing presentations and workshops in areas of personal awareness and skill development.

CORE COMPONENT 3D

The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Scottsdale Community College provides exemplary resources to support student learning and effective teaching.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning-Centered

The College regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its learning resources. For example, in 2004–2005 the SCC Library faculty conducted a longitudinal ownership citation analysis in conjunction with the English and Biology departments to determine how effectively the Library was meeting the research needs of ENG101, ENG102, and BIO105 students. As a response to the findings of this analysis, in its instructional sessions the Library increased emphasis on effective web searching and evaluation, the value of scholarly journals versus magazines, and the use of e-books. Further improvements included promotion of Information Literacy instructional sessions offered by the Library, an increase in online full-text sources, and the purchase of additional resource materials. The Library conducts similar assessment activities every year, and results are included in the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment annual reports, available in the Resource Room.

The viability and use of the Open Computer Lab are regularly assessed by user surveys regarding hours of availability, quality of instruction and assistance, and availability and use of support technology/software. This information then informs improvements in services and instructional support. For example, results from the Spring 2005 survey resulted in the addition of workstations and allocation of additional computer laboratory space, more strategic stationing of assistants, and expanded training sessions for laboratory technicians. Additional examples of assessment-driven improvements include an adjustment to monitor heights in the computer laboratories to accommodate students wearing bifocals and the installation of the “cyber-café” area in SCC’s student center to offer students access to computers for personal, non-class-related use.

The College also administers the “Student Survey–Online Courses,” which provides assessment data on distance learning, including the location from which a student works, access, online orientation, course content and presentation, and instructor/instruction. This information directly drives improvements to facilitation as well as pedagogy. Numerous changes in course navigation and course content have been made as the result of feedback received from online students. The Instructional Technology Department is currently working to create an online survey that will provide data to individual instructors and to the institution.

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PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

SCC partners with community members, businesses, and organizations to enhanceConnected learning and strengthen teaching. For example, SCC's occupational programs maintain advisory committees of local professionals who help shape and evaluate curriculum and provide insight on entry-level job skills (competencies and learning outcomes) and employment opportunities. Cooperative Education and internship programs offer students the opportunity to extend their learning experiences into the workplace while receiving college credit. The Director of Cooperative Education oversees the former efforts, while faculty within the specific academic or occupational discipline typically coordinate internships. Employers work in partnership with the student and an identified faculty supervisor in establishing and measuring the desired learning outcomes. Examples of Cooperative Education contracts and requirements are available in the Resource Room.

Along with close relationships with advisory committees and numerous cooperative and internship programs, the College fosters partnerships in a number of other areas. For example, the Nursing program enjoys a long-standing relationship with the Mayo Clinic and added an educational partnership with Scottsdale Healthcare in 2003. The SCC Fire Science Program successfully partners with the City of Scottsdale Fire Department in training emergency medical technicians, firefighters, and paramedics, and officials from the Scottsdale Fire Department currently serve on the Fire Science Advisory Committee.

The SCC Music Department initiated a partnership with Fender Corporation in January 2005, through which Fender has supplied instruments and equipment for student use, partnered to provide guitar lessons at the Scottsdale Boys' and Girls' Club, and maintains a Music Industry Club website for SCC students.

The Director of the SCC American Indian Program coordinates numerous partnerships with various Native American communities and other related organizations throughout Arizona. Examples include the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Education Department, Police Department, Boys' and Girls' Club, Youth Services Division, Phoenix Symphony, Phoenix Indian Center, American Indian Institute, Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs, and Native American Recognition Days Committee. One noteworthy result of such partnerships was evidenced in 2005–2006 with 1307 (duplicated enrollment) Native American students at SCC.

For the past ten years, SCC has maintained a unique partnership with Northern Arizona University (NAU), with offices and classes located on the campus of Scottsdale Community College. The NAU-Scottsdale campus began offering an articulated bachelor's degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management in 1996, and three years later NAU launched a similar Interior Design program. Bachelor's degree programs in Elementary Education and Parks and Recreation Management have since been added. These programs allow students to complete their associate's degree at SCC and then complete their upper-division courses through NAU, all on the SCC campus.



BUDGET PRIORITIES IN SUPPORT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learning-Centered Budgeting priorities at SCC reflect the College's strong commitment to improving teaching and learning. As described in Criterion Two, nearly 70% of the College's annual operating budget is allocated to teaching and learning. In addition, yearly capital requests (including building and grounds requests) generated by division chairs, with the input of faculty and staff within their respective divisions, typically require justification based on their impact on student learning. Subsequent administrative review and capital allotments weigh the educational benefits of the requests, linking allotments directly to the classroom experience as well as to the SCC Strategic Plan.

In Spring 2006, a typical semester, 363.5 hours of reassigned time were budgeted for faculty in support of teaching and learning activities, including Advisement, Orientation, Honors Program, Staff Development, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, and administrative duties (division and department chairs and occupational program directors). While this amount of reassigned time might appear high, the expense is more than balanced by the need for relatively few administrators because of the wide-ranging administrative responsibilities apportioned to faculty through the SCC Governance Plan.

Future-Oriented Rather than tie learning technology to bond issues, SCC administration and division chairs undertook an effort in 2003 to create an independent budget to maintain, upgrade, and replace technology and equipment college-wide. This effort addresses not only replacing and expanding technology needs, but also physical aspects of SCC's learning environments including furniture, finishes, maintenance, and remodeling. The result has effectively removed technology and equipment from the competitive annual capital request cycle and placed responsibility and control for these vital areas under the Dean of Instructional Technology and the Vice President of Administrative Affairs. Significantly, this approach to funding technology and equipment not only frees this aspect of the SCC budget from dependence on future bond elections, but also allows for a coordinated, fair, globally-applied replacement cycle for all instructional and support technology and equipment.

CURRICULAR AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS

At Scottsdale Community College, assessment results inform improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, and student services as well as instructional resources. Of the 203 assessment actions completed through FEP's over the last four academic years, approximately half were directed toward improving pedagogy. As the scope of assessment efforts continues to grow at the classroom, program, and institutional levels, so grows the valuable role of assessment results in shaping learning-related decisions college-wide.

The Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and assessment-related Faculty Evaluation Plans, both discussed earlier in this chapter, provide two vehicles by which SCC faculty identify and apply interventions designed to improve instruction. The widespread use of these vehicles demonstrates not only that the College has established an assessment culture, but that that culture is deepening as faculty progress through the PDCA cycle and conduct assessment studies as part of their individual evaluation plans.

One of the many virtues of the embedded PDCA assessment cycle lies in the “Check” and “Act” components, which drive improvements to curricular structure and content as well as to instruction. As assessment efforts are firmly and appropriately embedded at the course and program levels, the preponderance of evidence shows direct application of corresponding improvements at those levels.

As faculty drive both SCC’s curricular and assessment processes, it follows that curricular activity is closely linked to assessment activities and that activity in this realm provides evidence of interventions derived, at least in part, from assessment activities. This is particularly true for both course and program modifications, which typically result from an identified need for updating, clarifying, and/or changing stated competencies (outcomes). As described in Criterion Two, the process formally requires a stated rationale for modifying existing outcomes/competencies and typically includes a presentation and discussion at a College Curriculum Committee meeting. The process is vital and shows consistent, ongoing efforts to respond to identified shortfalls and/or changing needs at both the classroom and the program levels.

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT IN STUDENT SERVICES

In addition to the vast array of learning outcomes assessment activities in instructional areas of the College, similar efforts are underway in Student Affairs. For many years, SCC Student Affairs directors and managers have included the identification of learning outcomes as part of their annual reports. In February and March of 2006, Student Affairs personnel across the MCCCCD participated in a series of workshops led by a nationally recognized expert in this field, Dr. Margaret Culp, to coordinate their learning outcomes assessment efforts.

As a result, each area of Student Affairs is now charged with developing student learning outcomes and determining how the subsequent knowledge will be used for program review. The College’s Student Affairs learning outcomes are also tied to the MCCCCD Student Affairs learning outcomes, to the SCC academic learning outcomes, and to the respective Student Affairs district-wide councils. The Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle used by the faculty is built into the assessment process for Student Affairs. Annual Student Services Reports are available in the Resource Room.



SUMMARY

Scottsdale Community College fulfills Criterion Three in outstanding fashion through its development and support for an exemplary program of student learning outcomes assessment at the course, program, and institutional levels.

STRENGTHS

- Student learning outcomes assessment is firmly embedded in the institutional culture of Scottsdale Community College, and the results of assessment inform decisions at all levels.
- The framework for institutional-level assessment is in place and operational, and interventions are being applied. The program of institutional-level assessment has been crafted to accommodate the unique “swirling” nature of SCC students.
- Assessment of student learning outcomes at SCC is faculty-owned and faculty-driven.
- The innovative fusion of student learning outcomes assessment with the Faculty Evaluation Plan enhances teaching and learning.
- The College provides outstanding support for effective and innovative teaching.
- The College provides a wide range of learning resources to support student learning, including an exemplary advisement process.
- The College supports a wide range of technology in support of student learning.
- The College recognizes that learning occurs throughout the College, not just in the classroom.

CHALLENGES

- Although a great many course- and program-level changes are made as a result of student learning outcomes assessment, adjunct faculty are not always made aware of the rationale for such changes.
- While information regarding student learning outcomes assessment is available on the College website, the data could be disseminated more proactively.
- Students’ awareness of student learning outcomes assessment is inconsistent.
- Outcomes assessment in non-academic areas is in its initial stages.

