RESULTS FORUM IMPACT REPORT

The Impact Report should be analytical rather than chronological; that is, it should focus on trends and implications rather than sequences of events or participants. The questions below are intended to assist in that process of analysis, but they should not be seen as restricting your right to expatiate on significant issues or trends. Institutions should use the questions to structure their responses, either by answering them fully and directly or by incorporating them in a narrative. If your institution has used the Academy to prepare for an upcoming accreditation evaluation, you may frame your responses so that they are easily transposable to a PEAQ Self-Study Report or an AQIP Systems Portfolio.

Your report should be no longer than eight to ten pages (13-15 pages if addressing follow-up recommendations) and should reflect the collective thoughts of those most closely involved in the Academy process.

1. Describe your Academy project(s) as developed at the first Roundtable in 2006-08. Be as detailed as possible about the issues it was intended to address as well as the content and strategies of the project itself. Include in your discussion your reasons for joining the Academy and the degree to which you have dealt with those reasons. If you enrolled in the Academy in response to the recommendation of a site evaluation team, explain how you Academy work addressed the issues raised in that report.

The project – MOVING FROM COURSE BASED TO COMPETENCY BASED GENERAL EDUCATION.

MCCC has a long history of course-based general education that was established by means that were not always faculty driven. Even when the existing general education outcomes were defined, there was a lack of assessment of student learning to determine if students were meeting the standards and goals established by these outcomes. Faculty did not really embrace the goals and objectives of General Education and often simply viewed it as part of the puzzle that students had to solve as they worked their way toward an associate degree.

The overarching philosophy on campus was that assessment was basically an activity of making sure students completed the coursework as assigned and received evaluation of their work, mostly in the form of grades earned. A true philosophy and culture of assessing student achievement at the student learning outcome and competency level did not exist. By using general education as our project focus, the entire campus could be brought into the discussion to not only help establish what the goals, competencies and outcomes might be, but what tools and strategies could be employed to assess the students’ success at meeting these challenges. Once the strategy for assessing the general education outcomes has been put in-place, processes developed, and the culture massaged, faculty will be more comfortable with, and more knowledgeable about how to participate in appropriate assessment functions.

Membership in the academy did a number of things, not the least of which was to help us set deadlines, timelines, and benchmarks for progressing toward our goals. The membership acted as a match-stick...
which could be used to light the fire within the campus...not only to review our general education outcomes (which was important in itself) but to influence a change in the culture of assessment, not overtly, but in a comfortable, logical, almost undetected manner. Also participation in the Academy has allowed us to share some of our progress, thoughts and ideas with others who could provide some input and guidance. Participation in the various forums, meetings and activities has helped the team help the campus as a whole as we move toward a better understanding of the importance of assessment and strategies for how to make it an accepted component of the entire institutional effectiveness strategy.

SPECIFICS OF THE PROJECT:

A number of goals –

1. Enhance and improve the general education structure of the college.

2. Assure that the outcomes established and directions for general education are faculty driven with faculty buy-in.

3. Inspire the entire college to embrace the concepts, culture, and philosophy of assessment as a vital element in any institutional effectiveness strategy.

4. Structure an example of, and a framework for, future assessment activities on the degree, program, and course level.

5. Confirm through effective assessment strategies, that the students who graduate from MCCC truly leave with the knowledge, skill, and understanding that we feel should be evident in every degree recipient.

2. Describe any changes that you made to the project(s)—or that had to be made to it—other than personnel changes. What were the reasons for these changes? Did the changes improve the project?

There were really very few changes to the initial strategy formulated by the MCCC Academy Team at Lisle in 2007. There were some personnel changes, but the general structure and format of the project remained steadfast. One of the changes to the structure of the project, which turned out to be more of an outcome, was the formation of a General Education Task Force. This is the work-group that embraced the task of working with faculty as a whole to determine what the specifics of the “new” general education goals and outcomes for MCCC were going to be. Once this task force reached consensus on what these would be, then the newly formed Learning Assessment Committee took over to oversee the process for establishing the Learning Objectives… and the entire strategy for how these objectives would be integrated into the fabric of the educational opportunities offered to our students. The Academy Team was at the heart of the LAC and was an integral part of guiding the planning and establishment of the assessment strategy.

3. What challenges to the success of your project arose in your four Academy years? How did you deal with those challenges?

- Soliciting participation from across campus
  - Formalized assessment of student learning at MCCC is a philosophy which has been slow to gain ground over the past decade. While significant starts have been made toward embracing this philosophical belief and strategy, for many reasons the efforts have been short lived and weakly supported. Attitudes of many faculty and staff members were tainted by the challenge of documenting and gathering data related to
various assessment plans and projects as they came forward. Faculty “know” they assess student learning, but they were hesitant to define and develop assessment strategies which were different from the traditional methods of testing, grading projects and homework, and simply assigning a grade. The faculty needed a project and an example to help them realize the importance of really assessing student learning at a competency level; to help them see that they could do all the assessment they have always done to determine grades and student levels of understanding of material presented, and still participate in assessment of the over-arching competencies for courses, programs and degrees. Using the project selected by the Academy Team (Review and Revision of General Education Outcomes) allowed the team to start to move attitudes toward a more global view of assessment of the whole student and the competencies we all have agreed upon. The project reached and impacted every faculty member from every department; it was not a project that was isolated to one discipline, one course, or one division. Using General Education as the “heart” of this project helped bridge the waters of indifference among faculty. It was a strategy which in essence forced all faculty to participate, no matter how little, in the activities, discussions and meetings which were held focusing on the project and its ultimate goals. This was the real magic in this project selection.

- Educating and convincing experienced faculty that the review and revision of General Education outcomes was going to be different from years past and that the “new” requirements are based on research and consensus.
  - While MCCC has had a clearly defined General Education Requirement strategy and policy for decades, the basic structure of the program for general education was essentially a laundry list of courses that faculty believed should provide a good foundation for our graduates. The development of the general education program has met with numerous challenges starting as far back as 1990 when the NCA/HLC “encouraged” MCCC to review and consider enhancing our strategies regarding the general education program. While there has always been a general education component within our degree structures, the concept of actually assessing whether students comprehend the knowledge and skills that we believe are crucial for their success was never honestly put in-place.
  - The CHALLENGE for the Academy Team was to convince and excite the entire college to embrace a review of our general education philosophy and strategy in a new way. To look at general education, not from a course-based – laundry list of required courses, but from a COMPETENCY BASED philosophy of GOALS, COMPETENCIES, AND OBJECTIVES all which could be assessed in a cross-campus, cross-disciplinary effort. After four years, this work of educating faculty continues. While the project has been well thought out and great strategies have been put in place, there are still faculty members who are hesitant to believe that the “new” goals and competencies are truly going to result in more than a pre-selected/pre-determined list of courses that are going to impact “their” students. A strategy is in place now which will broaden the view of general education, and more importantly provide for an excellent methodology for assessing student learning of these competencies. When the implementation of these efforts reaches full song within the next few years, hopefully those who are skeptical and challenged by this new direction will see the light.
• Reworking the Board of Trustee’s view of this General Education area, moving away from the board having oversight of the specific procedures and processes of implementing General Education requirements, to a position where the Board simply approved “Policy” regarding General Education Goals.
  
  o Working with the Vice-President of Instruction, the Academy Team realized that a possible challenge could arise when the “new” general education strategy was presented to the MCCC Board of Trustees. Historically the Board made a determination that all of the basic elements of the general education requirements for the college would need to be reviewed by and approved by the Board as a matter of POLICY. This lead to the Board actually being in a position where it would have to review specific, individual courses which would become part of the general education curriculum. The Academy Team felt that this was an unnecessary and inappropriate procedural task for the college’s Board to have to deal with and suggested that the Board would be more comfortable focusing on the “bigger picture” of reviewing and approving the overarching philosophy of General Education for the college and embracing the GOALS of general education as a matter of POLICY. Through a great effort of the V.P. for Instruction, working with the Academy Team and the General Education Task Force, this goal of having the Board embrace and overwhelmingly accept the G.E. GOALS was achieved. Without the Board’s support, effort and diligence in focusing on the needs of our MCCC graduates, this project would have been “stopped in its tracks.” The Board’s efforts and support are greatly appreciated.

• Attempting to reach consensus on the “Objectives” for the Using Numbers and Quantitative Relationships competency provided a significant challenge.
  
  o As outlined in the description of the project presented later in this document, the process for MOVING FROM COURSE-BASED TO COMPETENCY-BASED GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES was at the heart of our efforts. For over two years there were meetings of the Academy Team, the General Education Task Force, and the faculty as a whole who met more than three times to discuss the question – What exactly should the General Education Goals, Competencies and Outcomes look like? These various groups, and later the Learning Assessment Committee, were comprised of members from all corners of the college. Every academic division was represented, as well as the student advising/counseling area. Many, many discussions were held at the individual division levels. Once the Goals and Competencies were determined, again after about three years of discussion, the individual LEARNING OBJECTIVES for each of the nine competencies needed to be established. These represent the “final” breakdown…the last bricks to be laid, of the specific, defined, measurable/observable tasks, skills, abilities, or activities that students need to demonstrate to prove competence in any outcome. Individual OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT TEAMS were established, with a member of the Learning Assessment Committee being designated as the “captain” of each team. This individual assembled faculty from across campus, both via direct invitation and through an all-campus solicitation for participation, and met to discuss objectives which would be appropriate for each of the nine competencies. A vital and important fact to realize is that these objectives are to become the key elements against-which the student’s performance in any satisfying course will be assessed…this is the heart of the assessment process for each competency. These objectives are identified on the General Education Assessment Rubrics which have been built. (attachment #2) After more than a year working on these objectives, the teams for each competency presented their work to the Learning Assessment Committee for review, comment and approval.
Once these were approved by the LAC, they were forwarded to the MCCC Curriculum Committee for final approval and submission to the V.P. of Instruction for signature. The CHALLENGE - eight of the nine competencies/outcomes and associated objectives were approved by the Curriculum Committee and forwarded to the V.P. One of the competencies met with significant objection by some elements of the campus faculty - “Using Numbers and Quantitative Relationships” was not approved by the curriculum committee. The reasons and challenges are beyond description here in this document, but as of this writing this competency with associated objectives has not been approved. Discussion, research, debate, and review of this continues (3/6/2012).

- Continuation of the time-line for addressing this particular challenge: As of May 1, 2012, a “new” set of Student Learning Objectives was presented to, and approved by the Curriculum Committee. Attachment #1 now includes all 9 of the approved Competencies with associated Objectives.

- Even though question #2 states that personnel changes should not really be considered as challenges for the purpose of this report, the significance of the changes to the Academy Team have posed major challenges to the success of this project. In the four years of participation the team has endured: -retirement of a team member, -replacement of another team member, -major health issue for a team member, -resignation of a team member = four membership changes in 3 years. Maintaining continuity of effort has been a challenge.

4. What have you achieved as a result of your work in the Academy? Consider the range of these achievements, from the very specific (development of a rubric) to the more general (outcomes-based curriculum approval processes). To what degree have these achievements been institutionalized?

- Review of General Education outcomes as researched and compared to national standards and benchmarks.
- Establishment of the “new” General Education philosophy for MCCC: (attachment #1)
  - Goals
    - Competencies
    - Outcomes
  - Objectives
- Formation of Teams to establish the Learning Objectives for each of the competencies and the team-work and cross-campus cooperation to establish these goals for the benefit of all degree seeking students
- Approval by the MCCC Board of Trustees – of three new general education goals: Critical Thinking, Communication, Social and Cultural Awareness
- Creation of Assessment Rubrics for eight of the nine G.E. Competencies. On the rubrics are the specific Learning Objectives for the competencies and the defined level of accomplishment that is achieved by each student for each objective. These rubrics have been developed to be used for all courses which have been approved as competency satisfiers, regardless of what department, division, or area the courses are offered. This consistency and commonality of rubric based assessment will lead to confidence that regardless of where a satisfier is offered, the basic objectives are being instructed and assessed. A sample General Education Competency Rubric is presented as (attachment #2)
- Development of a strategy to solicit, review, and approve academic courses within the College course inventory which would be determined to be “satisfiers” of the particular competencies.
- A plan to launch the first assessment activities for three of the nine competencies
  - Goal 1 Critical Thinking, Competency 3 – Assess and evaluate information from credible sources.
  - Goal 2 Communication, Competency 2 – Speak Effectively.
Goal 3 Social and Cultural Awareness, competency 3 – Demonstrate knowledge of responsible citizenship

The first assessment of these three will take place at the conclusion of the winter 2012 semester.

- Establishment of a strategy to “roll-out” three additional competency assessment activities each of the next two winter semesters (2013 & 2014) (attachment #3)
- The agreement within this strategy that at the end of the first three years of assessment activities the initial three competencies will be reviewed for effectiveness, appropriateness, process efficiency, and other factors that might come to light to enhance the overall plan.
- A new individual (Coordinator of Research, Evaluation and Assessment) was hired to assist with the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the assessment activities. As part of this person’s duties, a reporting methodology has been established. Appropriate forms have been developed for gathering and reporting the data collected at the end of each semester. This data will present information regarding the success of each student in satisfying the General Education Competencies as they have been developed. These competencies will be assessed in EVERY SECTION, OF EVERY SATISFIER COURSE, EVERY SEMESTER. A significant amount of data will be gathered and copious amounts of statistical analysis can be developed and presented to inform future decisions regarding the effectiveness of our General Education strategies.
- At the conclusion of the Assessment Academy participation, there will be a continuation of the newly formed Learning Assessment Committee. This committee, along with the new Coordinator, Faculty, Deans and Vice-President of Instruction, will continue to oversee the General Education Assessment strategy. Using the lessons learned from the Academy project, we will move into strategizing plans to improve and enhance the effectiveness of assessing programs and courses in a more formalized manner.

5. What effect has your time in the Academy had on institutional commitment to the assessment of learning on campus? How broad is that commitment? How has institutional capacity for assessing student learning changed?

- When the Academy team returned from their opening session in 2007 and presented the idea of revamping the General Education structure of the college as the heart of enhancing the assessment of student learning efforts at MCCC, while many folks were shocked and nervous, the focus and commitment toward assessment of student learning started to change.
- The majority of campus was supportive of the project target – general education. This being the target, the entire campus would have a stake in the outcomes of the efforts.
- Using general education as the raw material, the Academy Team could work to assure that the focus on the underlying desired goal—enhancement of assessment of student learning—would be sustained.
- As the project has moved forward, all faculty members were involved in considering General Education outcomes and the assessment practices which would have to be introduced. Nearly half of the faculty was directly involved in the process by either serving on the Academy Team, The General Education Task Force, one of the General Education objective teams, or the Learning Assessment Committee.
- Now as the project is being put into motion, individual divisions and departments are reviewing their course offerings to determine if they might satisfy a general education outcome. Additionally many faculty members (including adjunct faculty) are becoming involved with the first implementation of the assessment process starting at the end of the winter 2012 semester.
- The concepts, goals, philosophy, and focus on assessment of student learning have started to become a fundamental part of the milieu of our academic endeavors. Additional success will be evidenced by the transference of this philosophy into assessing programs and courses.
6. What effect has your Academy work had on institutional culture, structures, and processes?

- Culture and impact on faculty and the campus addressed in #5 above
- Structures and Processes:
  - Establishment of formal General Education Goals, Competencies, Outcomes, and Objectives
  - Creation of the Learning Assessment Committee which will now steer the future of assessment strategies for the College
  - Development of a process by the Learning Assessment Committee, for presenting and seeking approval of various courses to become General Education “Satisfiers.” This process was further sanctioned by the Curriculum Committee
  - Creation of structured, rubric-based process for assessing General Education within the competencies. A plan is also in-place for gathering the data collected for each course where competencies have been assessed. This data will be analyzed and presented to the college to start to indicate the effectiveness of our strategy.
  - Preparation of a “roll-out” calendar for introducing competencies for assessment activities. This is a 3-year plan where in the next three winter semesters three competencies will be introduced and assessed. At the end of the Winter 2014 semester, all nine General Education Competencies will be in the process of being assessed.
  - Development of a review process and feedback loop for assessing the assessment strategy. At the end of the first three years of assessing our first three competencies, the Learning Assessment Committee will suspend the assessment activities for them. The Committee will do a review and analysis of the competencies to evaluate them for appropriateness, student achievement, relevance, structure/process effectiveness.
  - Hiring of a full time Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness, Assessment and Research was a major accomplishment, and necessary.

7. What effect has your Academy work had on student learning?

- To date, the process has really not been placed into the stage where there has been a direct impact on students. The first assessment of student learning activity/process will take place near the end of the winter of 2012 semester. This will be the launch for the general education assessment process which will lead to review and enhancement of the instructional efforts in the general education areas. The future of the assessment strategy will center around students’ performance being assessed, and analyzing where the important understandings that we have agreed upon as a college are being effectively received, and where there are shortcomings and less success in reaching the students. At that time the goals and competencies can be reviewed and discussions held to address how to alleviate those shortcomings.

8. What concrete evidence do you have to demonstrate the affects you described in questions 5-7?

- Part of the Academy Project was to propose an activity or project that would bring the assessment of student learning into the forefront of academic pursuits at MCCC. To make the faculty more aware of the philosophy of assessment that exists beyond simple course and grade
based strategies. To provide faculty with a plan and process where-by assessment of student learning, and the collection of the associated assessment data, could be actually accomplished as an integrated part of every-day life at the college. This has happened and is starting to become an accepted part of discussions around campus. No longer does the concept of cross-disciplinary assessment surprise or confuse anyone. Meetings have been held for more than four years, focusing on assessment strategies, all due to the efforts of the Academy Team and the project selected.

- As described in detail above, structures, procedures, processes, documents, and timetables have been put in place which will guide the assessment of general education for years to come. Through the great work of the General Education Task Force, the Learning Assessment Committee, and the faculty as a whole, the project outcome – MOVING FROM COURSE-BASED TO COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT is on the verge of becoming standard operating practice for MCCC.

9. What do you see as the next logical steps for continuing the work you have begun in the Academy? In particular, what new student learning initiatives do you see developing from your Academy work?

- Continue the roll-out of the General Education Competencies and associated assessment activities as described above.
- Continuation of the Learning Assessment Committee which will review and implement the “new” campus Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning. This plan is in the draft stage with final review and adoption within the next few months. They will commence to address the needs in the area of Program assessment, course-level assessment and classroom-based assessment opportunities. These activities will come about as a direct result of the efforts of the past four years and the Academy Team project. The foundations, structures, and strategies will be established and ready to be utilized and modified to impact future work on assessment at MCCC.

10. What plans have you made to sustain the energy and momentum of your Academy work?

- The sustainability of this project and the Academy work has been described within the responses and narrative above.
Goal One: Critical Thinking

Students will think critically using purposeful, reasoned, objective, and goal-oriented processes in a variety of contexts.

Competency: Understand the elements of scientific inquiry
Learning Outcome: Students will use the scientific method to define a problem, utilize appropriate methods to solve the problem, and propose and evaluate a solution the problem.
Learning Objectives:

1. Observe and describe natural phenomena and formulate hypotheses.
2. Plan and implement scientific experiments to test hypotheses.
3. Utilize scientific laboratory skills for data collection within a college laboratory setting (if the class has a laboratory component).
4. Evaluate experimental data and propose solutions based on this data.
5. Evaluate the proposed implications of a solution.

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Competency: Use numbers and quantitative relationships
Learning Outcome: Students will apply mathematical concepts and methods to understand, analyze, and communicate in quantitative terms.
Learning Objectives:

1. Recognize, describe, represent and work with numbers and their relationships to solve, estimate, calculate and check solutions of equations and systems of equations.
2. Use the language of algebra to model and evaluate the nature of relationships between variables in algebraic and transcendental functions; analyze and interpret the graphs of these functions; and communicate the results in a meaningful way.
3. Organize and interpret data using appropriate methods to draw conclusions and make predictions.

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Competency: Access and evaluate information from credible sources
Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the structure of the information environment and the process by which information is produced, organized, and disseminated.
Learning Objectives:

1. Determine the scope and type of information needed to effectively analyze and support a thesis.
2. Access a variety of databases, references, and other sources appropriate for the information needed.
3. Demonstrate that the accessed information has provenance, logic, validity, relevance, and credibility.
4. Demonstrate the ability to use accessed information ethically and legally through proper attribution.
5. Demonstrate an ability to synthesize the accessed information into written or oral presentations appropriate to the academic discipline.
Goal Two: Communication

Students will effectively exchange ideas and information using multiple methods of communication.

**Competency:** Write effectively

**Learning Outcome:** Students will write Standard American English in a clear, correct, and organized manner for a variety of purposes and audiences.

**Learning Objectives:** In order to achieve the learning outcome, the student will be able to . . .

1. Write clear and concise sentences using Standard American English with appropriate syntax and mechanics.
2. Write paragraphs that demonstrate unity and coherence; paragraphs have appropriate details and examples that support the topic and thesis.
3. Develop written compositions using organizational patterns or rhetorical modes appropriate for the desired audience and purpose.
4. Combine the composition skills of prewriting, revising, and editing to complete a final, college-level draft.

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**Competency:** Speak effectively

**Learning Outcome:** Students will speak in a clear, precise, coherent, perceptive, and correct manner for a variety of purposes and audiences.

**Learning Objectives:** In order to achieve the learning outcome, the student will be able to . . .

1. Prepare outlines for different types of oral presentation that show appropriate organizational skills.
2. Deliver a variety of oral presentations that demonstrate an understanding of the material and an awareness of delivery skills appropriate to the type of presentation.
3. Demonstrate the ability to effectively take part in group presentations.
4. Demonstrate an ability to use technology and/or audio-visual aids appropriate to the topic and type of presentation.
5. Demonstrate the importance of audience when developing and presenting an oral presentation.

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**Competency:** Use current and appropriate technology tools and resources

**Learning Outcome:** Students will use computer technology to retrieve and communicate information.

**Learning Objectives:** In order to achieve the learning outcome, the student will be able to . . .

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the functionality and terminology associated with information technology tools and resources.
2. Demonstrate the ability to use document processing software.
3. Demonstrates the ability to use presentation software to communicate information and ideas.
4. Demonstrate the ability to use information technology to conduct online research to locate and retrieve relevant information or raw data from credible sources.
5. Demonstrate the ability to utilize current and appropriate information technology and communication software, like email, to communicate information.
Goal Three: Social and Cultural Awareness

Students will understand the broad diversity of the human experience.

**Competency:** Recognize expressions of the human experience

**Learning Outcome:** Students will explore, share, and reconstruct expressions of the human experience within the context of the past and present.

**Learning Objectives:** In order to achieve the learning outcome, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze key events (including historical, social, economic, and/or personal) that influenced a particular form of creative human expression.
2. Analyze key events (including historical, social, economic, and/or personal) that demonstrate how a particular form of creative human expression influenced other works.
3. Evaluate a particular form of creative human expression in the context of the appropriate academic discipline.
4. Create or reconstruct an expression of the human experience and share with others (*if the class is performance based*).

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**Competency:** Recognize the interrelationship of social factors on human thoughts and action

**Learning Outcome:** Students will examine the impact of social factors on personal beliefs, while considering alternatives to the dominate culture’s viewpoint.

**Learning Objectives:** In order to achieve the learning outcome, the student will be able to:

1. Define socialization within the context of social institutions.
2. Recognize and explain the significance of the key agents of socialization.
3. List differences in societies across cultures.
4. Describe some characteristics of a culture outside the student's own.

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**Competency:** Demonstrate knowledge of responsible citizenship

**Learning Outcome:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of responsible and participatory citizenship.

**Learning Objectives:** In order to achieve the learning outcome, the student will be able to:

1. Define citizenship.
2. Identify the processes and institutions that influence participatory citizenship in the United States.
3. Describe the student’s rights and responsibilities as a citizen under the United States Constitution.
4. Identify the basic civic duties of every citizen.