Meet as a team attending the Academy Roundtable
and answer the following questions

1. What are your institutional needs related to assessing and improving student learning?
Please write a one page reflection on these needs using the following questions as prompts. These questions are not meant to be answered directly, rather, they should be used to help guide your thinking and conversation.

- Are some needs more important than other needs?
- Are some needs more immediate than other needs?
- What data exists that suggests these are needs?
- Are these external needs (accountability/accreditation) and/or internal needs (student improvement)?

**Response:** From about 1995 - 2002, Monroe County Community College (MCCC) had a somewhat developed process for collecting data to assess institutional effectiveness. Most often, however, the evaluation loop was not closed in terms of the use of data for improvement and feedback. There is no record of consistent, comprehensive, and on-going assessment of student learning at the course and program levels at MCCC.

Currently, evaluations of effectiveness at the College are inconsistent and incomplete at the institutional (Instruction, Business Affairs, Student Services, and Institutional Advancement), program, and course levels. Accredited occupational programs, including Nursing and Respiratory Therapy Assistant, are mature in assessment of student learning. With the exception of writing, assessment of learning in general education (which includes science, mathematics, writing, political science, and computer science) is inconsistent and incomplete, both within the core general education program as well as within general education competencies across the curriculum (i.e., embedded).

Evaluation activities at MCCC cut across all areas within the current committee structure. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee includes evaluation activities within the areas of Business Affairs, Student Services, Institutional Advancement, and Instruction, including assessment of student learning activities within the academic divisions of Humanities/Social Sciences, Science/Mathematics, Health, Industrial Technology, Business, and Corporate and Community Services.

Individual faculty, departments and divisions have undertaken assorted assessment activities with varying levels of success and results. These activities may be defined as inconsistent, at best. In fact, on-going attempts to
develop and implement a comprehensive plan for assessing student learning have stalled, resulting in the lack of a defined culture of assessment at the college. Currently, the underlying assumption that assessment is the sole responsibility of a committee continues to permeate the institution. This is a delicate balance between individual responsibility and a campus that remains vigorous in its commitment to committee control and oversight.

Of late, the College adopted the Worldwide Instructional Design Systems (WIDS) in an effort to manage its curriculum. Faculty participated in workshops involving hands-on-activity at documenting course and program level outcomes and using WIDS. Additional workshops are planned for the future. Still, many remain skeptical of “assessment” as an added burden. An anticipated “grassroots” (faculty) generated approach to a comprehensive change in the outlook of documentation and processes to move towards an outcome-based learning are envisioned over the next few years.

**Bottom Line: Needs and Benefits**
In short, the College is in need of help with the process for assessing student learning in a way that is STRUCTURED, SIMPLIFIED, AND SUPPORTED.

**Structured**
Develop an institution-wide plan for assessing student learning that includes

1. creating a culture of assessment,
2. developing systematic data collection and analysis procedures and practices,
3. defining a clear process for evaluating the plan and the effectiveness of assessment activities in an effort to ensure progress and sustainability of activities.

**Simplified**
1. Develop a clear understanding of the difference between program and course level outcomes and how both tie into the big picture of assessment.
2. Clarify how existing practices can be incorporated into assessment.

**Supported**
1. Provide professional development, training, and assistance in the area of assessment for faculty and staff.
2. Create a culture of accountability for assessing student learning that supports the College’s current strategic planning initiative which focuses on data-driven decision-making.

**2. Good Practices to share with other institutions.** Write about a half-page response to each of the questions below. These will be complied into a “Good Practice Report” and shared with other institutions at the Roundtable.

- What are 1-2 good things you’ve accomplished in assessing student learning that might be of interest as good practice to other institutions? These could be instruments (surveys, tests), processes, and/or structures (groups, resources, people).

**Response:** The College began coordinated writing assessment efforts in 1996. A committee with representation from several different academic areas created a rubric for scoring written work and a process for collection, scoring and reporting of results. A coordinator (a person who came from administration and has since moved to faculty) solicits samples of student writing, identifies readers (from among the faculty), allocates work assignments and compiles a final report. Report results are distributed to participating faculty, the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences and Vice President of Instruction, and are kept in a binder available for inspection (copy will be included in the resource room). Following a one-year evaluation period, writing assessment resumes in the winter semester, 2008.

**Learning Assistance Laboratory (LAL)**
1. Supplemental Instruction (SI: National Office at University Of Missouri Kansas City) has a great evaluation comparing the performance of students in SI vs. students who did not use SI. The LAL has conducted these evaluations since 1991.
2. The LAL developed qualitative evaluations for SI- from the student satisfaction point of view together with that of the instructor. The College also surveys non-attendees in an effort to better understand why they didn’t use the service.

3. The LAL conducts on-going evaluations by faculty on the LAL’s ability to cooperate on testing accommodations, disability notifications, and classroom accommodations. (A simple survey may be clipped to the test accommodation when returned to the faculty member.)

Counseling / Admissions
1. The Counseling and Admissions Area conduct focus groups of students who attended New Student Orientation. Data is compiled and improvements are made.
3. The academic basic skills assessment policy requires the College assess readiness in English, reading, and math. The results are used to aid in appropriate placement into courses requiring one or more of the basic skills. There are 3 different ways a student may be assessed: COMPASS testing, ACT testing or transferring in 12 or more college credits.

- What are 1-2 good things you’ve done to get your institution (or groups/ stakeholders) thinking and talking about student learning and assessment?

Response: The College adopted the Worldwide Instructional Design Systems (WIDS). This electronic data base, because it is built on courses, “forces” one to develop measurable learning outcome statements for courses and programs. Further, it allows the user to develop course and program related matrixes so that it is easy to detect learning outcomes within courses and programs across the entire inventory and how those earning outcomes are measured. It is relatively inexpensive ($2,100 for an unlimited user’s license), user- friendly, and robust.

The College recently awarded release time to support the work of faculty learning assessment coordinators, one in the occupational program area and one in the transfer/general education core area. The main purpose of identifying and remunerating faculty for these leadership roles is to reinforce the College’s commitment to an assessment program that is truly faculty-driven.

3. Please identify instruments that you use on your campus to assist your assessment of student learning efforts. Standardized tests such as: CLA, ICT, etc; Survey instruments such as NSSE, CSSE; Services and/or software such as Blackboard Outcomes, Weave Online, etc. We will compile a list of who’s using different technologies/products,...etc. and provide a time during the Roundtable for institutions to share their experiences they’ve had using these tools. Please list these or anything similar that you use on your campus.

Response:
COMPASS- writing
WIDS- World Wide Instructional Design System
Writing Learning Outcomes Rubric- in-house

Would you be interested in leading a small group conversation with other institutions about your experiences with these instruments? If yes please indicate a topic: _________________________

Would you be interested in leading a small group discussion with other institutions on another area of assessing student learning? If yes, please indicate a topic. ________________________________

4. Identify a team leader for your group. This person will meet one on one with the Academy Mentor to ensure the team stays focused and on task, and to alert the mentor of any concerns.

Response: Paul Knollman, Dean of Business

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