

ACADEMIC
QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM

The Wright

AQIPment



College Accreditation Visit

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) recently notified Wright College that its re-accreditation/reaffirmation will be accelerated to meet federal requirements. The AQIP Quality Checkup Visit is scheduled to take place on October 10, 11, and 12, 2012. If all goes well, the college AQIP reaffirmation will be conferred by December 2012. The AQIP Quality Checkup is a formative evaluation activity that:

1. aims to help an institution accelerate its continuous improvement journey
2. helps the institution discover where and how to invest its energies in the future for maximum payback (compliance versus improvement)
3. determines if there are any gaps in the evidence that the institution meets the criteria for accreditation
4. alerts the institution to these concerns and help it identify strategies that can remedy issues

The HLC expects that AQIP institutions look forward to the visit with anticipation, enjoy it while it is happening, and look back on it as a turning point in their institutional



Governor Quinn and Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon at the bill signing ceremony, accompanied by Wright's representatives: Kevin Li, Vanessa Verceles, Rachel Manluco, and Mohammad Alyagoob

journeys. The visitation team will meet with various groups of people on critical topics such as leadership, planning, and institutional performance evaluation, and ask probing questions, listen critically, and respond with follow-up questions that cut to core institutional issues, assumptions, and values.

Submitted by Kevin Li

Math On Demand at Bill Signing Event

On June 25, 2012, three Math On Demand (MOD) tutors and Kevin Li, Dean of Instruction, attended an event in which Governor Pat Quinn signed Senate Bill 3244 into law. By requiring the Illinois State Board of Education to work with educational institutions and stakeholders to create and coordinate math curriculum models, the new law is intended to help students in Illinois excel in college classrooms. The MOD program and its measured success serve as a notable example of responsive and effective math curriculum development, consistent with the new law and the learning needs of a diverse student body.

In 2010, Wright College received a Gates Foundation grant from the *National Center for Academic Transformation* for its MOD

program, which also aided District 508 in obtaining the *Next Generation Learning Challenge Grant* for all seven colleges.

With an advising component and contextualized math instruction based on student academic goals and career interests, instructors and tutors are on hand to answer questions as they arise. Students are recognized for their individual learning needs and goals. The MOD program is offered on-site in a computer lab and seeks to improve remedial math outcomes by increasing student, faculty, and tutor interactions using active learning strategies and best practices.

Students have responded positively in the following ways: "This format is great"; "This MOD course has helped to increase my understanding in math. I have been getting A's and B's on all my assignments"; "In the previous semester with my traditional math course, I was struggling. This new design not only increased my grades, but has increased my motivation and self-confidence in math." In the program design, instructors and tutors work closely with MOD students, interact directly with them, and take pleasure in witnessing their students empower themselves in the

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learning process.

Using the MOD framework as a successful foundation, Wright College launched a 6-week summer bridge program for students whose average ACT scores were 14 and/or had placement scores below the college credit level. All participants demonstrated test gains, with 21% of participants successfully testing out of developmental math courses entirely in Fall 2011. Additionally, students who demonstrated competency on their end-of-semester COMPASS test are eligible to bypass one or two developmental math courses for direct placement into college credit-level math. From 2010 to 2011, the course success rate increased from 65.5 percent to 81.6 percent. In Spring 2012, the MOD program achieved higher retention and course success than traditional lecture math courses. As stated by another MOD student, "I learned more math during these past few weeks than all those years in high school."

While the MOD program is not an implicitly self-paced course, students can advance through their weekly assignments and potentially complete the three levels of developmental math within one semester, allowing them to save tuition, time, and meet their degree and career goals more efficiently and effectively. "I like that there is an online text book that walks you through all the materials. Just by clicking a button, it will give you step-by-step instructions. I prefer this over the traditional math course."

The feedback from MOD instructors and tutors has also been well received as a positive and enjoyable method of instruction and learning. "The MOD program is great. The computer based program can diagnose student errors and the Help Me Solve This feature guides students through problem solving. There is

also a vocabulary and definition section. MOD empowers students to take greater control in their learning process, identifying their strengths and weaknesses relative to their goals and career interests."

"It has been a gratifying experience to be a part of this bill signing. As a MOD tutor, it's very rewarding to work with MOD students as they develop and master their math skills at Wright College. Their success is our success!"

Submitted by The Tutoring Center

Recent Developments at Wright-Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center

1) In October 2011, the Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) program at Wright-Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center (HPVEC) earned accreditation by the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS), the most recognized credentialing agency in the nation in the manufacturing sector. Employers in the manufacturing sector increasingly are looking to hire candidates that hold industry standard credentials as tangible evidence of possessing specific skills. Individuals who hold one or more credentials in NIMS have the competitive edge in the job market. Wright-HPVEC saw the value added to each student-trainee in the Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) program and therefore began to introduce the training, exam, and certification process through NIMS in the coursework of the program. After initially being introduced in 2006 as optional for students, this credentialing process has since been embedded in the CNC curriculum since 2009. Students in the CNC program earn a minimum of three NIMS credentials as part of the coursework

Assessment Committee Members

Alicia Anzaldo - *Biology*
 Darlene Attiah - *Biology*
 Vince Bruckert - *English*
 Susan Colon - *VPA*
 Vinay Duggal - *Math*
 Adrian Guiu - *Humanities*
 Fred Hernandez - *Business*
 Charmaine Jake-Matthews - *Social Science*
 Karen Jefferies - *Radiography*
 Adrienne Leyva - *OTA*
 Noah Marshall - *Biology*
 Greta McGhee - *Nursing*
 Linda Neil - *Library*
 Krzysztof Ochwat - *Physical Science*
 James Papademas - *Business*
 Helen Rarick - *Biology**
 James Redlich - *Paralegal*
 Suzanne Sanders-Betzold - *English*
 Johannah Silva - *VPA**
 Andrew Spiropolous - *Physical Education*
 Philip Virgen - *Physical Education*

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toward earning the advanced certificate upon program completion. The ultimate goal is to place these students in gainful employment in manufacturing.

2) Since embedding the NIMS credentialing process in the CNC curriculum, placement rates have increased. Placement rate of the 2009-2010 cohort was 92% at time of program completion and 100% for the 2010-2011 cohort. The 2011-2012 cohort, scheduled to complete in Summer 2012, is expected to place between 95-98% at the time of completion. Additionally, CNC Program Advisory Committee members have consistently voiced their support of the NIMS credentialing process in the CNC program and they have been consistent in hiring our program completers.

2) In August 2011, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) conducted an Additional Location Confirmation Visit to HPVEC based on the recent addition of the Associate Degree in Nursing program (the RN Nursing Completion program) in the Nursing Career Pathway. Based on their unanimously positive findings and, according to the Additional Location Confirmation Visit Report sent by the HLC, HPVEC has been confirmed as an Additional Location that

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can award the Associate Degree in Nursing. This distinction places HPVEC as a sub-campus, distinguishing it from other satellite sites in the City Colleges of Chicago system.

3) A \$5,000,000 capital funding bill was passed by the Illinois State Legislature for the expansion of HPVEC. The proposed expansion will seek to increase capacity by 50%, bringing in much needed additional classrooms, specialty labs, and a resource center.

Meetings started in Spring 2012 to bring the process from proposal to fruition.

4) \$1,000,000 has been awarded to HPVEC by the Department of Labor as part of a 3-year, \$3,000,000 grant to partner organizations in the Carreras en Salud (Careers in Health) project; Wright-HPVEC, National Council of La Raza, Instituto del Progreso Latino, and Association House of Chicago. Carreras en Salud is a comprehensive medical career pathway program which encompasses the Basic Nurse Assistant (Basic Certificate), Practical Nursing (Advanced Certificate), Registered Nurse Completion (Associate in Applied Sciences Degree), and, through an articulation with Northern Illinois University, the Bachelor's of Science Degree In Nursing. The most recent medical career program offered at Wright HPVEC, the Medical Assistant program (Advanced Certificate), is also part of the Department of Labor grant. Carreras en Salud has received numerous national awards and recognitions over the past several years. The program was most recently cited with the Example of Excelencia in Education Award at the Associate Degree Level, presented to the Carreras en Salud partnership team by the Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis in November 2010 in Washington DC.

Submitted by Marc Smierciak

Wright College Receives Grant as a Hispanic Serving Institution

This summer Wright College was awarded a significant grant from the Department of Education under the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program. The grant, in the amount of three million dollars, will be dispersed over a five-year period and will be used to support the "Wright Start" program.

Hispanic students account for 48% of

Wright's student population and this program is designed to increase Hispanic student success in the first year of college through a variety of strategic implementations. These include developmental-level Learning Communities, a redesign of the remedial math sequence, changes to the Passport to Careers Program to increase employment outcomes, a Bilingual Writing Center, outreach to high schools, improved articulation with four-year institutions, and enhanced support for active and collaborative learning and assessment.

Submitted by Noah Marshall

Assessment: Answers in the Library

Having trouble implementing an assessment plan in your classroom?

The Wright College library holds an outstanding collection of resources designed to answer your assessment needs. We have books, DVDs, and online sites that highlight assessment techniques for every discipline. If you're having trouble developing an assessment program that works in your classroom or if you want to expand or enhance your current assessment plan, then you need to visit the library. Find out what assessment practices have been most effective for other teachers, past and present, by reviewing the case studies we have available online and in print.

There is no single solution to assessment. Determining what works for you is not always easy. Each classroom has a unique personality and learning style. If you need a boost finding the right plan for your classroom environment then drop in and check us out. We have multiple resources that introduce new ideas, current practices, and old methods of assessing student learning.

Have you visited the Faculty Resource Room (FRR) in the library yet? Why not exchange assessment ideas with other faculty in the Resource Room? Even better, stop by on Thursdays and have a cup of coffee while you work.

Submitted by Linda Neil

2011 – 2012 Assessment Projects

Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) Department

The VPA Assessment Project I will focus on in this article is in the discipline of Art.

Other assessment projects are being conducted in the other disciplines that comprise the Visual and Performing Arts Department (Architecture, Speech & Theatre), all focusing on critical thinking. Art 131: General Drawing was chosen as the subject to be assessed in Art because many students take this course as their first art course, the majority of whom come in with not much background or experience in art and art making. The assessment project involves a writing assignment in which students are shown an image of a painting to write about. This writing assignment is given during the first week of the semester, and again during the last week. Essays are evaluated on whether students have achieved a particular learning outcome: "Students will be able to use and demonstrate understanding of art vocabulary terms through application of these terms in their verbal and written critique of artworks." During the use of this assessment assignment/project last semester, students clearly demonstrated an understanding of the terms. This is shown through 80% of students using the terms the second time the essay was given versus approximately 40-50% the first time. Art terms that were assessed included those related to concepts such as genre of art, composition, media, value, contrast and texture.

Submitted by Johannah Silva

Biology Department

One of the assessment projects in the Department of Biology is "Assessment and Enhancement of Students' Critical Thinking Skills in STEM classes." Dr. Helen Rarick and Dr. Joseph Oyugi are participating in a National Science Foundation funded faculty development program between CCC and Northwestern University's Searle Center for Teaching Excellence. The goal of the program is to enhance students' critical thinking skills in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math classes) by creating course specific assessment of critical thinking. Two classes are involved: Biology 226 (Rarick) and Biology 121 (Oyugi).

During Spring 2011, both professors attended a Searle Center workshop and developed critical thinking questions that are course specific as well as rubrics to grade these questions. At the beginning and the end of Fall 2011, both professors administered the *Critical Thinking Assessment Test*, a standardized test developed by Tennessee Technological University, and the course-specific critical thinking questions. Currently, the tests are being graded by the Searle Center. The

results are still being analyzed. At this workshop, both professors will learn new strategies to increase critical thinking skills, implement these techniques in their classes in the next academic year, and re-administer the assessment tests to measure critical thinking outcomes. It is hypothesized that students will increase their critical thinking skills after implementation of new critical thinking strategies into the classroom.

Submitted by Helen Rarick

Paralegal Program

The following are the four components involved in the Paralegal Program assessment project:

- The Entrance/Exit Knowledge Assessment Survey: This survey covers ten topic areas and is tied to student learning objectives. It is designed in a multiple choice format. The same survey is given to students at the beginning of their first semester in the program and just prior to graduation. Comparison provides a measure to assess success in achieving program objectives.
- The Student Comprehension Survey: Surveys students, upon completion of the program, concerning their confidence in achieving the program's student learning objectives and thereby indicating their satisfaction with the education they received
- The Employers survey: This instrument is designed to survey those lawyers and others who have worked with our students in an employment environment. It is intended to assess how well our students are prepared for the real world expectations of those employing paralegals.
- The Legal Community survey: This survey is intended to assess what the legal community wants and needs in regard to preparation of paralegal professionals. The results will be used to determine if program objectives need to be revised and curriculum adjusted.

The paralegal program at Wright College is structured to comply with the guidelines of the American Bar Association paralegal education approval process. ABA requirements include assessment and the Wright program incorporates those requirements into its assessment efforts.

Submitted by James Redlich

Social Science Department

The Social Science Department assessment projects for the 2011-2012 academic year were conducted in multiple sections of Psychology 201. The projects, conducted by Professors Joseph Mustari and Charmaine Jake-Matthews, focused on the incorporation of a variety of pedagogical techniques with the goal of enhancing student learning. Specifically, Dr. Mustari utilized diary entry assignments and review questions while Dr. Jake-Matthews utilized service learning. Initial data suggest mixed results. Neither completion of diary entry assignments nor participation in service learning were reliable predictors of student success. However, completion of review questions was strongly associated with academic success and retention. Participation in service learning was also associated with retention.

Submitted by Charmaine Jake-Matthews

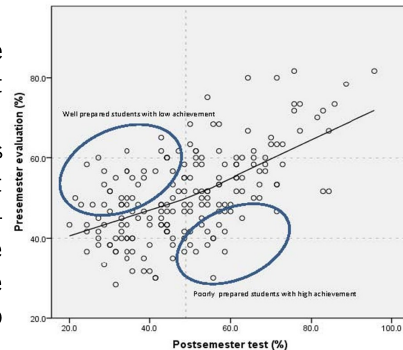
Physical Science Department

The Physical Science Department (PSD) has a long history of

formally monitoring student learning outcomes. As the understanding and importance of assessment evolved over the years, so did the scope and depth of our efforts to grasp the task in the PSD. Past assessment efforts involved more or less analysis of the results of quizzes and exams, including the summary of the final/exit test results. This kind of data analysis comprises so called Descriptive Statistics. Recently, the PSD began exploring factors that determine, or, at least, influence the level of success in the courses offered by the PSD. Therefore, an attempt to interpret differential inferential statistics was made.

The General Chemistry I, Chemistry 201 is the flagship course of the PSD with the enrollment of approximately 300 students in 9 sections. Like in any other course in the PSD, Chemistry 201 includes a cumulative final/exit test at the end of each semester. However, for the last two regular semesters, the assessment of the course was enriched with a pre-semester math and basic chemistry skills evaluation. The purpose of this analysis was to gauge the usefulness of the pre-assessment as an early warning system for students that might have difficulty succeeding in the course. One of the original plans was to offer such students tutoring from the Pre-pharmacy club. There was no success with this yet. Nonetheless, the following is a brief summary of a statistical analysis of the correlation between the pre- and post-semester assessments.

What is evident in the following example is that there is a strong correlation. The Loess-Gaussian shows that, the higher the pre-test result, the better the correlation between the two. The data also suggests that the majority of students, who have an average preparedness level with low to medium (40-60%) scores do not pre-determine the level of success they're going to experience in the course. That group of averagely prepared students entering the course is the most abundant.



A natural question that follows is: *Why do students with good preparation for the course achieve low success, and how do students with poor preparation outperform the well prepared ones?*

An attempt to answer that question has been recently undertaken in the department. An investigation of what seemed to be obvious factors, including: attendance, evidence of maturity, intellectual ability, work ethic, level of motivation, participation and communication skills, had been conducted. That expedite, and survey based, thus subjective to certain degree, research did not return any concrete answers to the above questions. A new, more systematic and data-oriented pursuit had been planned and will be implemented in the near future.

As always, the Assessment Committee with all the members of the college's Assessment team, are eager to receive suggestions from all the stakeholders of the institution. Please share your ideas with us.

Prepared by Maria Valentino and Krzysztof Ochwat