

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College

Assessing Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness

An Assessment Progress Report

2000-01 Academic Year

2000-2001 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Mesabi Range Community
& Technical College

**Assessment of Student Academic
Achievement and College Services:
A Progress Report**

Introduction

Since the inception of the formal assessment process as a college-wide program in 2000-01, Mesabi Range Community & Technical College (MRCTC) has made considerable progress. The institution has been and continues to be firmly committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure that assessment will be embedded into its institutional processes.

This report records the activities undertaken to implement the Assessment Plan, the results and use of assessment, an evaluation of the structure and process, and information about the College gained through the assessment process. The current Progress Report will serve as a report to the college community regarding our progress to date and is compiled and disseminated to assist all areas of the College as they set goals and plan for improvements. The report acknowledges that ongoing progress will continually be made and the College has established a strong foundation through faculty and staff participation and ownership.

The documentation will show that

- Mesabi Range Community & Technical College's (MRCTC) Assessment Plan has a strong relationship to its mission.
- assessment of student learning includes multiple measures.
- the Plan has been developed by faculty and staff.
- appropriate learning goals have been developed for our student audience.
- the loop is being completed on assessment of student learning and a systematic plan is in place to continue the progress in this area.

Background

In October 1999, Mesabi Range Community College underwent its periodic comprehensive accreditation visit by the North Central Association. Although the College was granted continued accreditation through 1999-2009, a Focus Visit was scheduled for 2003 to address the implementation of an acceptable assessment plan pursuant to commission requirements. The NCA Focus Visit in October of 1999

stressed the need for the institution to increase its efforts to meet the commission's assessment initiative.

Dissemination of the Plan

The college-wide assessment plan for Mesabi Range Community & Technical College directly addresses the mission of the college. The comprehensive and systematic approach to assessing student learning will determine the extent to which we are achieving this mission.

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College continues to make progress in integrating its assessment plan into the institutional processes. The College's *Plan and Handbook for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement and Institutional Effectiveness* prescribed a structure built on the principle of a faculty-driven process because that principle seemed to guide most successful assessment plans at other institutions. The plan was developed by the College-wide Assessment Committee to create a culture of assessment.

One of the goals of the MRCTC Assessment Steering Committee has been to ensure that the assessment process is not only designed and implemented by faculty, but that the development of the process is made clear to the entire college community. To that end, copies of the plan were made available to all faculty, staff and administrators in September 2000. A response form was included with the draft to encourage faculty and staff comments. The Assessment Coordinator's e-mail address was also supplied. In addition, the plan and its implications were discussed in faculty meetings through the Meet and Confer process. The Assessment Coordinator solicited comments from those unable to attend meetings. The plan was approved by all college constituencies, and the implementation of the plan began in October of 2000.

The *Plan and Handbook for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement and Institutional Effectiveness* continues to be a working document upon which the College builds its assessment activities. The degree of participation in this process indicates the growing awareness of assessment's importance, not simply as an accrediting requirement, but as a tool with great potential for helping programs and departments improve their student learning and services.

Achievements: Successes and On-going Activities

Strategic Planning

To ensure stakeholder input in development of the Strategic Plan, Mesabi Range College engaged a broadly representative group in an initial review and planning-go-plan workshop and conducted an extensive review of all core documents and statements that formed the history of the College. The College invited representatives from business and industry, social services agencies, local governments, state agencies, public school districts, and campus students in a review session and workshop. Following the first day workshop, faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders from the community worked together through a structured process facilitated by a

professional consultant to review and revise the core concepts and statements. Offices of MnSCU, state agencies that have conducted demographic studies and surveys of the environment, and other sources were used as background.

New Mission, Vision, Goal Statements, and Guiding Principles

The mission, vision, goals statements, and guiding principles drafted at the workshop were reviewed, challenged, and discussed. After two drafts were reviewed, all major stakeholder and constituent groups voted on their preference. Reviewing bodies included faculty, staff, and administration of the College, the Student Senate, the Mesabi Range Community & Technical Foundation Board, and the Mesabi Range Community & Technical College Advisory Board. The process of consultation, review, rewriting, and comment has been achieved with steady work in a four-month period beginning September 15 and ending December 21, 2000.

The mission and vision move the College to view itself as a vital member of the inclusive community it services with education, training, and lifelong enrichment. This view of service gives the College a unique niche and distinctive role within the region and the state.

Mission

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College provides high quality education resulting in rewarding employment, lifelong learning, and the enriched lives of our students and community.

Vision

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will lead Northeastern Minnesota in accessible, innovative, and high quality learning and educational opportunities.

Purposes

1. **Comprehensive courses and programs**, including **general education, associate degree programs in the liberal arts and sciences** that are transferable to four-year colleges and universities, and cooperative programs with other colleges and universities.
2. **Technical programs** including associate in applied science degrees, diplomas, and certificates enabling students to acquire skills and knowledge leading to employment or transfer to four-year college and universities.
3. **Developmental education** including student assessment and course placement enhancing students skills in reading, writing, and mathematics to improve their success in college programs.
4. **Continuing education**, providing credit and non-credit classes and workshops for professional advancement, retraining, upgrading of skills, and community

services, providing cultural forums and lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens.

5. **Customized training** for business and industry addressing present and emerging needs of employees and employers.
6. **Collaborative partnerships** with higher educational institutions, business, industry, labor, and governmental agencies, which serve the educational and economic development needs of the student body.
7. **Student support services**, including counseling, advising, financial aid, assessment of basic skills, childcare, and a range of student life programs that serve the diverse makeup of the student body.
8. **Planning, evaluation, and development of programs that enhance institutional improvement, effectiveness, and accountability.**

Goal Statements:

The Higher Learning Commission (NCA) approved statements of purpose have been further refined in the Master Academic Planning process with Goal Statements that sets Mesabi Range Community & Technical College on a consistent and specific course.

1. Focus on Learning and Learners

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will focus on the learning needs of Northeastern Minnesota by serving a high percentage of local high school graduates and by diversifying its student profile through enrollment increases of non-traditional, out-of-area, and international students. The college is committed to fostering a nurturing environment with responsive services supportive of a quality education.

2. Curriculum and Program Innovation

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will create flexible curriculum and program initiatives to meet the varied learning needs of the region in the global community.

3. Partnerships at Work

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will create mutually rewarding partnerships with regional school districts, businesses and industries, student and community groups, governmental agencies, and other higher education institutions.

4. Technology Integration

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will develop a technological infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of courses and services using emerging technology.

5. Growing Our Resources

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will maximize and leverage state resources and increase the amount of grant funds and revenue through mutually

beneficial agreements with external partners.

6. Leadership Development

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will create and support leadership opportunities for all stakeholder groups to fulfill the potential of the college and the community it serves.

Guiding Principles

The College's mission and vision are based on its Guiding Principles. Mesabi Range College firmly believes that knowledge rewards and enriches lives; thus, the College is committed to the following guiding principles:

1. Access

We honor and preserve geographic, low-cost, and timely access to higher education and services to a culturally diverse population.

2. Excellence

We strive for excellence in all that we do.

3. Opportunity

We provide opportunities for student success and community growth.

4. Responsiveness

We respond promptly and effectively to the needs of our stakeholders.

5. Community

We are committed to the preservation of Northeastern Minnesota as a strong, viable collection of communities of Minnesota and the world.

6. Innovation

We seek to be a center of progressive, intellectual, and technological growth.

MRCTC is moving toward a culture of assessment.

One of the principles underlying the Mesabi Range Community & Technical College assessment program states that assessment is an on-going, cyclical process. This is true both within departments and throughout the institution. The assessment process has resulted in many activities which have proved extremely important in helping both the institution and individual faculty members effectively serve our students.

The College has adopted a more comprehensive view of assessment, including classroom, course, department/program assessment and assessment of college services. Programs and departments have developed assessment instruments to ensure that their students know what is considered essential for their field.

The College Services departments have established results-oriented statements regarding their own operations in their Assessments Plans. The staff in each unit has worked together to establish outcomes for the unit as a whole. Assessment has become their tool for improving their operation, and they have designed their assessment plans and process so their data are meaningful to them.

Faculty and administration have adopted assessment as a means to improve student learning.

Outcomes assessment is first and foremost a faculty responsibility. Faculty is active in assessment through the following activities:

- 1) **Classroom Assessment:** Faculty focuses on student learning and implements instructional strategies supportive of improving student learning outcomes.
- 2) **Classroom Assessment Records:** Faculty shares ideas and strategies with colleagues and support institutional documentation and accreditation efforts.
- 3) **Discipline and/or Program Assessment:** Faculty participates in planning and conducting discipline/program assessment and then works with colleagues to improve discipline and program outcomes.
- 4) **General Education Assessment:** Faculty cooperates with college-wide efforts through active support of general education, transfer, career development, and other college-wide assessments.

Instructors have incorporated expected course outcomes and detailed information regarding the assessment of those outcomes in their classroom and department/program assessment plans. In addition, a large percentage of the faculty is now using ongoing methods of classroom assessment (many of which are found in *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* by Angelo and Cross) to gauge students' learning processes and overall mastery. Creating a culture of assessment has benefited from this established foundation of classroom assessment.

Structures supporting assessment are securely in place.

Responsibility for assessment is an institution-wide process that is shared by faculty, administration, and staff. While the primary responsibility for classroom and discipline/program outcomes assessment rests with faculty, administrators' role in management, delivery and support of resources makes them central to effective responses to challenges identified through the following assessment duties:

- 1) Encourage and support outcomes assessment at all levels, including faculty and discipline and program planning.
- 2) Facilitate faculty, discipline and program changes as designed by faculty in response to classroom and discipline assessment findings.
- 3) Encourage cross-division dialogues and activities supporting development of assessment efforts and faculty skills across the curriculum.

- 4) Support curriculum changes in classroom, disciplines or programs where challenges have been identified through institutional assessment activities.

The *Plan and Handbook for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement and Institutional Effectiveness* for faculty, college services, and administration has been established and serves as a foundation for the assessment process at the College.

The written assessment plan provides structure for the implementation process. It is accompanied by ample documentation and a how-to guidebook aimed at the various constituencies. The Plan is widely distributed and is used as a reference book.

Assessment exists on a variety of levels.

Use of numerous course and college services' assessments show that assessment has an important presence in departments, programs, and college services. The Assessment Coordinator has mentored faculty in classroom and course assessment, departmental and program assessment as well as the college services' staff in their departmental assessment. Thus, assessment has served, and continues to serve, as a process for institutional renewal and the reexamination of institutional purposes.

The entire faculty became involved in an examination of General Education competencies.

MRCTC established a statement of General Education and adopted a set of four core abilities. These core abilities have been examined by the faculty and provided an incentive for faculty to examine goals and current practices, as well as to exchange theoretical and practical suggestions about teaching, course development, and assessment of competencies.

The process of discussing how the Core Abilities are being taught and assessed in the College's courses is continuing. Matrices will be completed and evaluated on the technical campus in fall 2001 to determine gaps and allow faculty to work together to make adjustments to the curriculum.

Measures have been taken to ensure that assessment will be separate from evaluation of faculty and staff.

Recently, the College has developed a new faculty and administration evaluation procedure. Unlimited full-time faculty is routinely evaluated on a three-year rotation; probationary faculty is evaluated at the midpoint of each semester in the first year and adjunct faculty is evaluated during the first and second semester of their employment. While the evaluation system increases support for assessment strategies in the classroom and courses, the two systems are not connected or interchangeable.

Through the College Services' assessment process, the units have an opportunity to refine their operations or to stretch without fear of failure. These units focus on results in their assessments.

Addressing Assessment Concerns of the North Central Association 1999 Accreditation Visit

We have made many advances in the Assessment Program at MRCTC since the North Central visit and we are working hard to use the results to improve student learning and institutional effectiveness. This section will address the **concerns** expressed in the October 1999 accreditation exit report and detail the **progress** of assessment at MRCTC.

1. Assessment Concern (page 53, #2 of the report)

Efforts toward implementation of a plan for assessment of student academic achievement have begun; however, progress remains slow. A timeline for continuing this critical activity must be developed, must be accelerated, must become more comprehensive in identifying and measuring student outcomes, and must use the results to strengthen educational effectiveness.

Assessment Progress

The new mission, vision, and goal statements of the College suggest a commitment to putting learners and learning first in all matters concerning the operation of the College. Continuing to widen the scope of institutional assessment leads to the processes that involve multiple units, disciplines, and programs at the College. Many of these institution-wide processes are expressed in the mission. These include transfer preparation, career education, cultural opportunities, technological growth, and low-cost, timely access to higher education and services, general education, and life-long learning.

What is most obvious to those at MRCTC is that assessment now has a strong foothold. The College has created what was needed for assessment to take place and will continue to take place in the future. The *MRCTC Assessment Plan and Guidebook* for faculty, college services, and administration was written during the 2000 spring and summer semesters, presented to and approved by faculty and staff in September 2000, and currently serves as a foundation for the assessment process at the College. The heart of the Plan was developed by the MRCTC's Assessment Committee to focus on assessment of student academic achievement and learning improvement. The Plan implements a workable assessment process that demonstrates a feedback loop into instruction and clearly shows that instruction is changing in relationship to the learning of its students.

Much has been done in the first stages of our efforts to complete a college-wide program assessment during the 2000-01 academic year. Faculty members in academic disciplines re-evaluated their course outlines and outcomes, means of assessment and use of results for courses in their discipline, and developed an assessment plan consistent with the other elements of the College's Assessment Plan. Also, units were

identified to undertake program assessment: career, developmental, general education, plus the college services.

Assessment processes are now at the core of the institutional planning activities. The Assessment Plan provides a process where feedback collected through outcomes assessment provides empirical support for the decisions made in planning activities.

After the October 1999 accreditation visit, the College designed a reporting process with deadlines based upon completion within an academic school year. A timeline was set in fall 2000 which recognizes that effective assessment must develop in a deliberate and thoughtful way, allowing time for faculty to appreciate the importance of assessment and the variety of its methodologies.

2. Assessment Concern (page 54, #3 of the report)

There are inadequate human and financial resources allocated to the assessment of student learning outcomes. The District must provide resources sufficient to fully implement its assessment plan.

Assessment Progress

Responsibility for assessment is an institution-wide process that is shared by faculty, administration and staff. Administrators' role in support and delivery of assessment has been evident. Administration has encouraged, supported, and participated in outcomes assessment at all levels. They have also endorsed dialogues and activities supporting development of assessment efforts and faculty skills across the curriculum. It is the administration's goal to amplify and support curriculum changes in classrooms and disciplines or programs where challenges have been identified through institutional assessment activities.

The College's commitment to its assessment program is validated by a released time faculty member serving as the **Assessment Coordinator** of the College, working with the Assessment Steering Committee. The Coordinator has guided the College through the first stage of its institutional process. The Assessment Coordinator led discussions of assessment in departmental faculty and staff meetings and met with the faculty on a one-on-one basis as needed. The position of MRCTC's Assessment Coordinator is a 50% released time position filled by an English faculty member who also teaches several writing courses during the fall and spring semesters. This person serves as a chairperson of the College Assessment Steering Committee; reports directly to the campus provosts; mentors all faculty in classroom, course, program, and general education assessment; writes articles on teaching and learning that appear in the faculty and staff newsletter; assists the college services' staff in total quality improvement assessments, and has the responsibility to publish reports of the College's progress in assessment.

During the past year, the Assessment Coordinator has received assessment plans from all but four departments of the College—evidence of MRCTC’s involvement in assessment. The Coordinator provided an ongoing, updated tally of all this assessment activity on a monthly published spreadsheet sent to all college constituencies (See Appendix A).

The **Assessment Steering Committee** at MRCTC is a standing committee that helps to cultivate and advocate assessment on the curriculum and institutional levels in a way that is meaningful for the students, faculty, and staff. The Committee consists of 16 members representing faculty, college services, institutional research, and administration. The Committee is a task-oriented group that works with and monitors the College’s Assessment Plan, general education core abilities, and institutional effectiveness. It is primarily responsible for exploring various assessment methods, educating faculty colleagues, and bringing information to the institution as a whole. It is the responsibility of the Assessment Committee, and the academic administration, to monitor, stimulate, coordinate, and provide resources for a systematic, on-going process of realistic and manageable assessment. The Assessment Committee meets monthly throughout the academic year.

The Assessment Committee is well organized and understands its tasks. It is sensitive to the immediate institutional need for an operating assessment plan and understands the faculty’s dedication to classroom teaching, college services’ contributions and support, and the institution’s mission, values, and purposes.

Assessment Contact Persons (ACPs) have been selected in each academic discipline, career program, and college service division. Most ACPs volunteered, primarily because of their interest in assessment, while some assumed the position at their program or department’s request. Most of the ACPs have relied on training provided by the Assessment Coordinator. These resources provide necessary leadership in directing assessment within the specific disciplines, programs, or services. Reporting lines are established so that faculty and staff report their classroom, course, or service assessment activity consistently and directly to the ACPs.

Thus, implementation of assessment at all levels and attempts to create a culture of assessment have benefited from assessment leaders in each discipline, program and college service. Widening the scope of assessment to include multiple-section, discipline, and program assessment involves extensive collaboration. Assessment has brought together faculty, college services, and administrators to examine outcomes from multiple, coordinated activities.

3. Assessment Concern (page 54, #3 of the report)

The District must develop a coherent general education philosophy upon which assessment of student achievement of general education competencies in technical and transfer programs can be built.

Assessment Progress

General Education is the lifelong learning endeavor to become a well-rounded person who appreciates and contributes to the human community. MRCTC's general education philosophy reads: *Mesabi Range Community & Technical College provides an appropriate general education component in all degree, diploma and certificate programs as an essential intellectual and practical foundation to students' life-long learning.*

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College has identified four major goals for student success in order to assist students in developing abilities that will help prepare them to succeed in the world today and meet the challenges of the future. The College has developed its own instruments and has selected some standardized instruments to assess its general education goals.

Assessment of general education is now a cross-disciplinary project assessing the General Education Core Abilities: **Communicate Effectively** and **Think Critically**. Two new core abilities were added during the 2001 spring semester: **Demonstrate Mathematical Skills** and **Use Information Technology**.

During the 2001-02 school year, each technical program will reexamine general education within their curricula. Currently, the Graphic Arts career program is using a Portfolio Project to assess its courses and the MRCTC's General Education skill areas of Communication and Critical Thinking.

One of the ways to assess general education outcomes for students at MRCTC is the administration of CAAP testing during the spring semester. General education skills in *Communication* and *Critical Thinking* of MRCTC students are compared with nationally-normed performances utilizing a nationally recognized test. At the present time, the College is using the ACT-Collegiate Assessment of Academic Performance (CAAP). This test assesses two of our four abilities. This is the third year that a sampling of MRCTC students have been tested in Communications and Critical Thinking through a stratified sampling of sections of courses. This requires both student and faculty cooperation. Faculty supports these assessment activities as a way to gather information, which is critical to monitoring and improving students' skills in general education outcomes. A pilot project to assess the General Education skills areas *Use Information Technology* and *Demonstrate Mathematical Skills* will begin during the 2001-02 academic year.

The plan for general education assessment at MRCTC consists of using a wide variety of techniques. In addition, assessment will be performed at several points throughout the curricula (entry, in-progress, graduation, and post-graduation). The College Assessment Committee, with faculty endorsement, added the General Education Graduate Survey and an Employer Survey during the 2000-01 school year. All graduating students were given the survey that asks questions relevant to the general education they received at MRCTC. The General Education Employer Survey is sent to employers of MRCTC career program students 180 days after graduation asking the

employers about the quality of the students' general education skills. These surveys appear in Appendix B.

The College will continue to develop assessments and explore outside assessments as it determines which ones will be most useful in helping improve general education.

Assessment Steering Committee

The Assessment Committee at Mesabi Range College focuses on issues related to improving student learning. To fulfill Mesabi Range College's commitment to quality and success, the institution encourages continual assessment of its efforts. MRCTC's overall objective is to provide outstanding education and excellent support services which will enable students to accomplish individual goals.

The Assessment Steering Committee supports achievement of the institution's purpose by optimizing implementation of the Assessment Plan through developing tools, facilitation, communication and monitoring. It supports assessment at the classroom, discipline/program, general education, and college services' levels. The Committee reviews the Assessment Forms on which outcomes, means, the results, and use of results are recorded, and educates the college community concerning the assessment process.

At present, the Assessment Committee is composed of nine faculty members, two employees from the student support services, two provosts, an institutional researcher, and two administrative assistants. The Assessment Coordinator, working with the Assessment Committee, has guided the College through the first stage of our institutional assessment process.

The Assessment Committee advances the institution's effectiveness in achieving its purpose by contributing to the critical areas of **continuity**, **acceptance**, and **decisions**.

Accomplishments in 2000-01

◆ **Continuity**

The Committee helped to develop, communicate, and measure/enforce understandings regarding

- ◆ the role of a shared vision, strategy and Assessment Plan in ensuring continuity. Support of the Assessment Plan and its requirements helped to guide the implementation of assessment at various levels;
- ◆ defining, communicating and achieving broad acceptance of the role and relationship of the Committee to the Assessment Plan and the rest of the institution;
- ◆ the role of General Education and the Institution's Core Abilities;

- ◆ the addition of two General Education core abilities: *Demonstrate Mathematical Skills* and *Use Information Technology*;
- ◆ the implementation of various general education assessment instruments and continuance with CAAP testing.

◆ **Acceptance**

Recognizing how vital it is that the Assessment Plan be accepted and commonly understood, the Committee carried out a special responsibility to provide and communicate constructive answers to questions such as these:

- ◆ **Who owns the Plan?** (Everyone; the Committee was seen as facilitating rather than owning assessment—seen as steering vs. the source of all answers)
- ◆ **Who does assessment help?** (Everyone, starting with the students)
- ◆ **Who does assessment?** (Anyone and everyone involved in any process needed to accomplish the College's Mission and Goals.)
- ◆ **When does assessment take place?** (Throughout the academic year)
- ◆ **How is assessment accomplished?** (Core abilities and outcomes are clearly defined and measured at all stages. Data are gathered at the classroom discipline/program, general education, and college services' levels to discover if the outcomes have been met. The Assessment Committee reviewed this data.)

◆ **Decisions (to be completed in 2001-02 based on 2000-01 data)**

- ◆ Evidence that the decision process is data driven and the Plan referenced;
- ◆ Demonstrations that decisions are validated via assessments and that local ownership of assessments produces ownership of the resulting decisions;
- ◆ Evidence of assessments and the Plan as positive influences in providing support for needed resources.

The Structure of Assessment

Appendix C charts the various institutional assessment measures used during the 2000-01 academic year. The exhibit in the appendix illustrates MRCTC's multiple measure approach.

Levels of Outcomes Assessment

Institutional effectiveness is determined by the assessment of all units of the College—academic programs and departments, college services, and student support services. The learning process directed by the academic departments involves classroom, course, and program assessment, while the college services are involved in program assessment.

Syllabus Assessment Statement

Through the Meet and Confer process, it was agreed that an assessment statement should be included in all instructors' course syllabi. The following generic model could be used or modified as is most helpful to the instructor.

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College is committed to the continuous improvement of student academic achievement. The College undertakes assessment of its academic programs and courses to assure that student learning is not only occurring but improving. Further, classroom assessment by individual instructors discovers what is working in the particular classroom to facilitate learning. At each of these levels of academic achievement—classroom, course and program—you, the student, will be asked to participate to enable the College to improve its product, which is your learning. Assessment is a means to evaluate the learning process and is separate from the grading process. Your participation will be solicited and appreciated.

Classroom Assessment

Faculty, working individually, administered classroom assessment projects focused on student learning at the level of the course, unit, lesson, or assignments. The assessment activity is the choice of the instructor, selected to assess the particular outcome identified by the instructor for that day's class. The assessment device may be of the instructor's own creation or one selected from the many already in use by others. Many instructors at MRCTC selected activities from *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teacher* by Angelo and Cross.

Faculty was encouraged to incorporate classroom assessment techniques into instructional delivery. It is in the process of classroom assessment that changes will occur within the culture of the college. The information derived from classroom assessment can only be used by the instructor to improve learning as she or he sees fit. Many of these projects which were initiated in fall 2000 were completed and shared with faculty and the college community as a whole through assessment newsletters.

All faculty members, full-time and adjunct, are required to conduct a minimum of one classroom assessment each semester and use the results to improve the learning process. Faculty members were asked to conduct that classroom assessment early enough in the semester to be able to informally share the results with students. Faculty members were also urged to discuss with other members in the program/department in a collegial and academic manner the results of their classroom assessments as a means to collective improvement of the learning of their students. Following the assessment, each was asked to complete a **Classroom Assessment Record** of the activity and submit it to the Assessment Coordinator. The assessment record provides documentation that assessment was done, not whether it meets a standard.

Fifty faculty members submitted Classroom Assessment Records in fall 2000 and in spring 2001, 45 faculty participated for a total of 95 Records submitted for the academic year.

- **50 (approximately 80%)** faculty members submitted Classroom Assessment Records for the fall 2000 semester;
- **45 (approximately 71%)** faculty members submitted Classroom Assessment Records for the spring 2001 semester.

Course Assessment

Course assessment is the assessment of individual courses. Faculty worked together to determine outcomes, means of assessment and use of results for courses in their discipline, developing an assessment plan consistent with the other elements of the MRCTC Assessment Plan. As the documentation proves, faculty participation in assessment is high.

This was the first academic year in which academic and career programs were required to conduct course assessments. Each department and program is to assess two courses each year with the long-range goal of assessing all courses in the unit over time. Each department and program was asked to assess two courses with the highest enrollment. In instances where more than half of the department's enrollment is in specific courses, the department has been urged to assess those courses every two or three years. . .not waiting until all other courses have been assessed to re-assess the core courses.

During the 2000-01 school year, faculty of career, transfer, and developmental programs participated in a process to define plans for assessment of outcomes. These plans were to include intended educational outcomes, means for assessment and criteria for success, and a plan for use of the results. At the same time, the college services and student support services were conducting assessment using the same model.

Assessment plans were received for course assessment from 10 career programs and 17 academic units. College Services submitted 18 plans.

- **17 (83%)** academic departments filed course assessment plans.
- **10(100%)** of the career programs filed course assessment plans.
- Course assessment forms (A-D) are labeled in a notebook, located in the reserve section of the Virginia library.

Developmental Programs

During the 2000-01 academic year, the developmental programs—English, Math, and Reading—wrote assessment plans to examine the status of developmental education at MRCTC and to formulate recommendations for changes in curriculum and procedures. They examined the status of their developmental courses through the compilation and review of performance data.

The representative developmental education departments undertook assessment activities such as: (1) comparing ASAP pre and post test performance data in Basic English and Efficient Reading I; (2) exit writing samples from Basic English and information about the academic performance of developmental students in mathematics and reading classes.

The departments will be examining their developmental course outlines to assure that the courses prepare students to work toward mastering the college-level competencies. All programs share the objective of identifying what program elements will contribute to the retention and academic achievement of developmental students.

- **Three programs (100%)**—English, math, and reading—**submitted course assessment plans**, identifying outcomes and the means of assessment, reported results, and the feedback loop by reporting use of the results.

Career Program Assessment

The technical programs, by the nature of their design, have developed assessment methods to evaluate program goals, objectives, and outcomes. Quite often, competency needs are dictated by the industries, companies, and governmental licensing agencies. Based on these needs and dictates, the programs have developed assessment methods.

All faculty in the technical college submitted assessment plans during the 2000-01 academic year, results, and use of results used in at least two of their respective program courses. The increase in assessment awareness throughout the technical area has brought about positive dialogue among faculty concerning outcomes, evaluation, and sharing of various techniques and successful methods.

Assessment within the programs has produced increased documentation of assessment methods in the various programs. This will allow for more in-depth review of overall program assessments. The continuous processing of feedback will lead to improved assessment techniques. This will in turn lead to improved program outcomes.

College Services Program Assessment

Each of the 19 college services was expected to do program assessment. Staff in each service were to select two outcomes to be assessed and for each outcome, two means

of assessment. Participation in college services' assessment is high and the overall staff attitude is positive.

- **18 (95%)** of the services submitted a plan of assessment, identifying outcomes and the means of assessment;
- **9 (47%)** have reported results of their assessment projects; and
- **9 (47%)** have completed the feedback loop by submitting Form D which reports the use of assessment. Data is pending with many of the programs and will be completed during fall 2001.

Assessment Forms A-D and assessment reports from all college services are in a notebook located in the Virginia library resource room. The College Services will continue to conduct annual assessment, thus establishing an annual cycle of assessment in their departments.

Improvement Through Assessment

The following changes and improvements in the learning process and the provision of services at Mesabi Range Community & Technical College are taken from the reports from career programs, academic departments, and college services of the Use of Results (Form D) for the year. They are evidence that assessment is producing improvement.

Classroom Assessment

The following are selected statements taken from instructor records submitted to the Assessment Coordinator during the 2000-01 academic year.

- ❖ **Muddiest Point:** As I gained a better awareness of where the students were in their learning, I acquired specific and immediate directions for my teaching rather than relying on my own ill-founded guesses at what they already knew and didn't, what came easily and didn't, when they understood and didn't. I, therefore, became dependent on *muddiest point cards* and refer to them in planning to teach the same material to new students in subsequent semesters. In short, I now know I need their questions more, perhaps, than they need the specific answers to them.
- ❖ **Minute Paper:** I have learned that I can't do too many example problems that keep hammering home the same techniques.
- ❖ **Goal-Focused Assessment:** I plan to present the results graphically, rather than simply orally and spend more on in-depth discussion.

- ❖ **Questionnaire:** I learned that student reaction to the exact *same* presentation can vary widely. I discovered a couple areas that created confusion and were not entirely clear to all students. I plan on incorporating more clearly defined instruction.
- ❖ **Minute Paper:** I was surprised that 11 out of 17 students had no question. I will try to create an atmosphere that will perk the curiosity of each student.
- ❖ **Instructor Assessment Sheet:** I need to have the students work more with “practice” outlines. I will also have the librarian work with students as a group to hone their research skills.
- ❖ **Groupwork Assessment:** Groupwork assessment makes performance expectations visible to all. It allowed students more readily to state the concerns—and recognize the strengths—that they collectively bring to a group.
- ❖ **Written Report:** I think it focuses individuals in specific areas and when presentations are made, the class, as a whole, is more attentive.
- ❖ **Cognitive Assessment:** The students are beginning to learn that application of knowledge is critical in the technical field. I have shown the transmission frame route to cognitive and tried to develop critical thinking skills.
- ❖ **Minute Paper:** Students commented they understood the need for review; in fact, some thought more would be better.
- ❖ **Muddiest Point:** I was able to reinforce and encourage the concept of asking questions during the lecture sessions. I will try to spend more time on concepts that seem to be “slipping by” unlearned.

- ❖ **Muddiest Point:** I discovered that
 - ❖ lab time needs more focus
 - ❖ I must provide better explanations of lab assignments
 - ❖ department must improve lab equipment
 - ❖ I must include additional review
- ❖ **Pre-class Assessment:** I must be willing to sacrifice traditional pedagogy and custom for the class and the lesson.
- ❖ **Groupwork Evaluation Assessment:** (1) Students have unique learning styles and some do not learn in this type of setting; (2) I will continue to provide several different teaching methods; (3) I will validate the effectiveness of groupwork within the classroom setting.
- ❖ **Muddiest Point:** This assessment made me aware of material that was not covered in class but needed.

- ❖ **Pre-test/post-test:** What was illustrated most clearly by this assessment (to both my class and me) was that developing language competency is easier and less strenuous when we can begin with what we already know and narrow our focus to problem areas only.
- ❖ **Five Minute Write:** Prior to using Five Minute Write, I would ask for verbal feedback and get little, if any. . .now students ask me questions; I share their questions regarding the assignment in a more anonymous fashion with the classroom. Based on responses, I have created new visuals and a variety of techniques which help the students be more successful.
- ❖ **Questionnaire:** I have learned that students may not be as aware of certain things that I more or less take for granted. I keep forgetting that students need to know how/where they stand. I need to do a better job of communicating that to students formally and informally.
- ❖ **Minute Paper:** I discovered that in certain subject areas I have to slow down my pace of instruction.
- ❖ **Muddiest Point:** The students said they had to stop and think about what was clear and what was unclear while still in the classroom. They usually didn't think about that until they started their homework.
- ❖ **Five Minute Paper:** I learned that it is helpful for student learning to provide a summary of where the lecture will go before actually commencing coverage. It is this exact result I was looking for—to corroborate a quality teaching method.
- ❖ **Muddiest Point:** We have both learned that visual, verbal and haptic (kinesthetic and tactile) learning combined is more effective than utilizing only one approach.
- ❖ **Muddiest Point:** I realized that the basic knowledge students should have learned in previous classes was lacking and (they) need review.
- ❖ **Minute Paper:** It confirmed that most of the students are reading the text and they seem to grasp the major concepts. It also encourages them to ask questions about concepts/skills that need more explanation.
- ❖ **Minute Paper:** I have learned that I must continue to reinforce what they do understand and try another approach so all students will be able to graph by inspection. Maybe I need to use the “storytelling” technique so students will remember graphing.
- ❖ **End of Class Assessment:** I discovered a couple of areas that created confusion or were not entirely clear for students. I was able to incorporate more clearly defined instructions on the assignment sheet and allowed more time to cover these areas in the lecture and demonstration.

- ❖ **One Paragraph Prompt:** The exercise confirmed my expectations regarding writing as a process. A few students misunderstood the assignment, but this too is expected.

Course Assessment Form D: Use of Assessment

The following comments were extracted from *Form D: Use of Results*. This form describes the use of the assessment results and data (the feedback loop) which includes changes and improvements in the courses or that no change was needed.

Academic Discipline Course Assessments: *Use of Results*

Art 1531: Drawing I: The department was able to determine who in the class was not making progress and devote attention to individual problems as well as general classroom problems. All in the course completed with a “C” or better. The instructor found that all students improved but at different rates regardless of initial ability. Motivation was a key factor. Most students are not Art Majors. As a result of the data, the instructor will increase the number of reviews of the I.E.P. and record areas of individuals skills that need work or in some cases, the student may choose to work for more specific problems. Next year, the department will identify problems, work toward developing individual goals.

Art 1532: Art History: The department was able to determine which students retain information, facts, or key concepts after one class period. About 80% of students improved in their responses and also the instructor was able to review concepts that were not understood by students. All received a “C” or better except for two students who did not complete the course. The questions the instructor will ask next year will be two-fold: *What are the facts?* And *What is the significance in Art History?* The instructor will then be able to determine which students retain facts and which understand the significance.

Biology 2552: Anatomy & Physiology: The class met the objective but we found many errors in their urinary system answers. Apparently, this traditionally difficult chapter needs some revising in the way we present the material. We believe students may need more visual learning tools and we can improve in this area by using the Interactive Physiology modules in class rather than having students check these out from the library.

Economics 1557: Principles: Macro: The tax types and burden assessment had good results with 90% of students scoring 95%+ on the post test; results on the exchange rate post test were not as good with 90% of students scoring 88%+. However, both met criteria. Improvements in student performance is needed in understanding exchange rates, time allotment and test instruments. I will redo both the tax types outcome and improve exchange rate outcome.

Basic English 0091: Sixty percent of the students who completed Basic and took the Accuplacer test passed the cut-score, which placed them into Refresher or College Writing I. Forty percent of the students who completed Basic and took the Accuplacer test did not pass the cut-off score and would be repeating Basic. The department is not convinced that the results of this assessment can be considered conclusive. Only one Basic class was tested this semester and of the 9 students who completed Basic, only 5 took the Accuplacer. We need to do an anonymous survey to ask students the number of classes they had missed, the amount of time they spend practicing the skills they are developing, the background they've had in regard to these skills. In developmental classes, student success is dependent on so much more than classroom methodology and preparation. We believe that this step is still in progress because we don't have enough data to analyze. Also, the Action Phase is still in progress because now that we have SOME data, Basic English instructors will be able to try different strategies for the improvement of methodologies, curriculum, and structure. It will be imperative next year that we assess ALL sections of Basic, and that we have students take the assessment at different, unannounced times during the last week of class in order to get as many responses as possible. Next year's assessment plan should include assessment of other learning factors such as attendance, study time, and student commitment. Also, all Developmental instructors should meet at the start of the semester to get pre-instruction assessment data, mid-semester data to discuss the implementation of assessment and the assessment plan, and, of course, around the end of the semester.

English: College Writing I (1511): Although we were pleased with the results of the exit paragraphs, they did indicate that we might need some additional emphasis on specific detail. Instructors, did state, however, that they do spend a great deal of time and energy encouraging students to "show not tell." Awareness of this particular weakness in student learning is likely to prompt many of us to look for new methodologies for presenting and facilitating the learning of this concept.

Library Instruction: Student feedback indicates that there is "too much" information delivered in a one-hour lecture and demonstration. Students want more time to ask questions and work on the assignment during class time. Lecture and demonstration sessions should be broken into two or three one-hour sessions in order to sufficiently cover all the information in a thorough and unhurried manner. This will require the cooperation of College Writing I instructors who will have to give up more of their class time for additional bibliographic instruction sessions. Also, students who receive less than 100% on their written assignments are allowed to re-do or correct their papers for a higher score. The point is to make sure students understand how to do the research to get the information they need.

Fire Training #1906: Implement a final, written exam in addition to unit tests for FFI program. Need work in the Forcible Entry and SCBA classes and some extra skills time in ventilation class. Student final exams averaged 88% in Biwabik TSP class; 94% in Grand Rapids. Instructors of these specific classes will be notified of findings. Perhaps we need to rotate subject areas with instructors so they don't become "stale." We will evaluate instructors annually. This assessment was very productive for our department.

Health & Physical Education 1459: In summarizing Outcome #1, the department found that 87% of the students showed improvement in three or more areas of fitness from the beginning of the semester to the end. In response to Outcome #2, 85% of the students turned in a log of their 30 workouts. In summarizing the Outcome #2, 94% of the students performed two weight training sessions per week during the semester. 92% of the students logged their workout sessions. In analyzing the results, the department would suggest that both courses enable the students to improve their fitness level throughout the semester. They also suggest looking at ways to increase the motivation to complete the workout logs for Hlth 1459 and PHED 1415. As a department, we would suggest that we continue to assess participation in our PHED activity courses and fitness levels in our Hlth 1450 courses.

History 1566 & 1556: Improvement is needed in communication between the assignment and what the student believes is the assigned work. Clearly, the student who does the assigned work is more able to comprehend and understand the lecture. The instructor has no intention of changing his approach. I clearly relate to the students both the significant as well as the insignificant parts of their assigned readings. He will continue to take the student comments seriously.

Human Services 1232 – The Helping Process: The results were predictable and consistent with over 30 years of originating, designing and constant revisions in teaching this course. The results of this assessment verify that the intended purposes of this course are being accomplished. This is the base course for the Human Service Program to either encourage or discourage students to continue or not. The instructor has no intentions of changing his approach. He finds that the current course requirements and content are necessary.

Human Services 1233 – Interviewing: The assessment results indicate that this class did not meet the established criteria for success in terms of passing two comprehensive examinations with a score of 70. In the other, more skill-oriented areas, the results were positive. It would appear more class time should be spent in reviewing the more academic text book material. The instructor will be reducing the number of videotapes to one while requiring the second to be replaced by a live action role -playing situation in the class. This will allow more time to apply textbook information directly to critiques and possibly raise the academic test scores.

Developmental Math 0091, 0092, 0093: In the two outcomes to assess Developmental Mathematics, both criteria for success were met. The completion of course outcome exceeded the criterion by 13%. The survey of teaching quality and support criterion was exceeded by 0.7 As a department, we were very pleased with the results. Students are satisfied with the overall quality and support they receive in their departmental courses. No improvement needed. Course completion criterion was met. No improvement needed.

Mathematics 1511 – Foundations of Math: 61% of the students scored a 3-5 on the truth table outcome. 45% of the students scored a 3-5 on the operational properties outcome. The department needs more data to make a statement of improvement. The Math Department needs another year of data collection before it can make any

statistical analysis and set criterion for success. The department will keep assessment plan the same for the next academic year for relevant data.

Mathematics 1521 – College Algebra: 34% of the students scored 3-5 on the function outcome. 30% of the students scored 3-5 on the graphing outcome. The department needs more data to make any kind of statistical analysis for improvement and to set criterion. The Math Department needs another year of data collection before any statistical analysis can be made and any criterion set for success. The department will keep the assessment plan the same for relevant data.

Physical Education 1416: Aerobic Fitness: The department was pleased to see the results early in the semester because the instructor normally does an evaluation at the end of the semester—too late to make adjustments. The instructor liked student input on wanting a variety of aerobics. Most were so pleased with the class that they wanted to take it again for credit. Many suggestions were made for the instructor to offer a different type of aerobic exercise for them to get another PE credit. The instructor plans to do a variety of aerobics in class and assess very often on intensity level, so the instructor will know if the students are at the right speed.

Political Science 1559: International Relations: On both learning outcomes, the criterion of success was 80% of students receiving an A or B on an examination. Course outcome #1 “to analyze specific international problems” – students did not attain the level of proficiency that the department intended. On course outcome #2: “to describe political, economic, and cultural elements that influence relations of states. . .” the department is satisfied with 71%. . .’they can live with that.” The department must improve the third unit of the course dealing with specific international problems – methodology, pedagogy needs to be changed somehow. The department is thinking of how to do that: should the objectives and curriculum be changed?

MSHA Independent Contractor 1909: Safety & Health: The department felt it chose a poor assessment method for this class. The program is geared toward 100% successful completion of quizzes and 100% attendance. The quizzes and practicals are used as interactive activities, not assessment. We suggest updating the outdated subject and produce a quiz that assess knowledge of all subjects broken down and given at the beginning of the class, review, and talk more about the subject they did poorly on.

Psychology 2551: Students were given a pre-announced in-class essay asking them to detail the basic principles of Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of personality. The criterion of success was 80% of the class receiving a C or better and results placed 94% at C or better. The instructor will spend more time on the material to get a higher percentage of A’s and B’s.

Reading: Efficient Reading I: Results will be determined pending the outcome of the CAAP post-test on 5/7/01 and the final exam given on 5/17/01.

Sociology 1452: Form D was not submitted.

Speech Communication 1555: The results of the videotapes and written critiques of the students' first and final speeches have substantiated improvement of their organizational skills and delivery techniques. The instructors have found that some students need improvement in movement and gesturing through the use of target projects. Additional time needs to be spent on developing voice movements and gestures through the use of target projects. Instructors will keep doing pre and post videotaping of speeches; compare instructor's critique sheet for each student's pre and post speech, paying special attention to voice, movements, and gesture.

Theater Arts/Beginning Acting 1565: Percentages of students successfully meeting the criterion are below the intended levels. This course is designed as a process-oriented course. The process is clarified as the course progresses. The final presentation including the rewriting of the character development paper and creative process paper has not yet been completed. The results from these activities should bring the percentages in line with the criterion stated. Clarity of materials can be improved through greater incorporation of lecture materials. Students enjoy the interpersonal approach and find the material enjoyable as well. The results of the assessment show that the instructor should keep his format with slight adjustments in the presentation of materials. More classroom time to work on scenes would also be valuable. As a result of these findings, the instructor will continue with the hands-on approach to learning, incorporating more lecture materials pertinent to the subject area. He will continue to personalize the course for students. More time will be taken in discussion and participating in structure rehearsal setting throughout the semester. The instructor will focus on character development, rehearsal techniques, and script analysis.

Career Program Course Assessments: *Use of Results*

Automated Control Technologies 1231 & 1265 (First Year): Data collection and analysis procedures were consistent with normal record keeping practices. Results indicated that improvements are required in the teaching/learning process. Analysis showed that improvement is needed in both lab and written test areas. Specific details for improvement will be difficult to provide at this point due to an ongoing curriculum revision project that will result in a change in outcomes. It should also be noted that teaching/learning is a partnership between students and instructors and, as such, requires student improvement that may be "out of the hands" of faculty.

Automated Control Technologies 2277 & 2258 (Second Year): Most students did well or satisfied criteria in the lab setting. Percent of student achieving 80% or better on written examination was poor. Students need additional lecture, reading assignments, and study guide material to improve knowledge-based information. Additional text-based material or assignments to improve learning will be considered. Pre-test quizzes may identify student short-comings. A worksheet requiring recitation of terminology is needed. More homework reading and worksheet assignments will reinforce lecture.

Automotive Technician Program (First Year): The results show below acceptable levels of learning. These results indicate that more work is needed for better understanding of transmissions/transaxle operation and computing transaxle gear

ratios. Testing will not occur until all students have completed the lab sheet. This will promote better understanding of inputs, outputs, and ratios.

Automotive Technician Program (Second Year) 2276: Results are pending.

Carpentry Program (First Year) 1242: The results were very good, especially on item 1A. They also did well on 1B and 2A. In fact, students did so well we skipped 2B. In past years the students only laid out three or four stringers as in 1A. This year the students spent more time and laid out at least six. Students did great on their test piece with 100% getting at least 80%. On the other hand, we robbed some time to spend extra on stair layout. I am not so sure we did this on purpose but just happened that way. Actually, it proves repetition is great to improve scores, but when do you rob Peter to pay Paul? The instructor would not change the layout problems as in 1A, but probably spent less time. Since repetition is so good, the instructor suggests laying out 4-5 stringers so that gives some time for other instruction and yet should have students achieve good scores in stair layout.

Carpentry Program (Second Year): For the past three years, our students have averaged a C or better in 90%+ according to records. We have 100% placement in the last two years. Last years data have not been compiled. The Advisory Board has reviewed and backed up our course descriptions. Next year, the instructor hopes to have a follow-up on students. Employers will be contacted earlier. Also, I hope to continue having student input from graduates in the form of a survey. The instructor feels his instruction results in a good job at covering all phases of construction with the house project. Students gain interest and ownership of their construction abilities and what types of work they might specialize in.

Computer Networking Technologies: Forms C and D were not submitted.

Graphic Arts 1225 (First Year): The instructor found the students who attended lecture and lab and followed through with demonstration successfully completed the task at 100%. If the student missed any part of lecture/lab, he or she usually did not perform as well. This is largely student-driven. However, if the instructor allowed students more time, results may improve. This year's assessment project was ongoing with results. The instructor would like to incorporate successful step-by-step into results.
Lecture → learned outcome; lab → learned outcome.
The instructor would like to see more flexibility, if possible, for programs to do accreditation-related outcomes for assessment.

Graphic Arts 2276 (Second Year): One hundred percent of students must and will achieve accurate results. They cannot progress until it is completed properly. The instructor will work the process through to see the end result before and after.

Information Management Specialist Program 1285: One hundred percent of students reached Pinpoints of 94-100%. The program is satisfied with the results. They will use on-going assessment with the same Pinpoints and materials still in progress.

Maintenance Mechanics 1237(First Year): Through lecture and practical demonstrations the results of student applications in lab areas met the program's expectations. The criterion were met and were well-accepted. They will continue to expand as is required in industry. Possible reevaluation as needed.

Maintenance Mechanics 2262 (Second Year): 100% of students met the criteria.

Nursing Assistant Program: Students are very successful on the environmental safety unit as demonstrated by the 97% in the written quiz and 100% in the skills demonstration. Also, students are successful overall in passing the certification test which allows them to seek a job as a nursing assistant: (97%) on both skills and written. The program will continue current methods with lecture, instructor demonstrations and/or video presentations. Skill practice time and then return demonstrations on each learned skill. The curriculum was written by MnSCU and approved by the Minnesota Department of Health. The only potential change would be focusing more time on a specific unit depending on the results of the certification testing.

Practical Nursing Program 1227 & 1232: In almost all areas (except Medical Terminology) the department is meeting its expectations; of course, they have to in order to have students be "safe" and meet minimal competencies for graduation and licensure. 1) For *Medical Terminology* – actual results for 1A compared to rest of results indicated more work with students is needed in that area. 2) CATs give positive and negative feedback so we all can strive to improve in teaching techniques. 3) Wording of some assessment areas needs to better to reflect actual data obtained. For Medical Terminology class sessions the program will include more actual "putting together" of word parts. Curriculum has been changed partially as a result of CAT for Maternal Child Health; this data supported the change desired. They will continue with CATs and assessment plan as developed. It is recommended to continue with same or similar plan to better evaluate over more than one year's time.

Welding Program 1221 (First Year): These two assignments, Unit 2 & Unit 4, written review and exams, were successfully completed by percentages of students higher than expected. Unit 2 written assignment – 50% scored better than 75%; Exam 65 scored 75% or better. Unit 4 written assignment: 69% at 75% or better and Exam 65% at 75% or better. The teaching and learning seemed to be successful. However, due to the various levels of students who enter the program, the program will track this again next year to monitor any variations that may be significant. They plan to continue to evaluate and analyze this course during the next school year.

Welding Program 2242 & 2282 (Second Year): Assignments are handed in, usually on time. Assignments are done for the sake of doing and not doing well. Retention past immediate teaching is poor. Doing homework and learning homework are two different things. Cognitive skills need improving as well as the effective use of past experiences and reference more work is needed on basic learning skills (reading, interpretation, math, perception). Strategies: daily quizzes and review; more classroom time. *Projects:* better preparation of materials and assignments. *Steps* involved to achieve better results: develop a written criteria for evaluation and self evaluation by student.

Program Assessment in the College Services: *Use of Results*

Administration: Data are pending; collection date is 2002.

Administrative and Institutional Support: On the performance review, all three members in this department were rated 100% “fully meets standards or above” by their supervisors. In the faculty survey, out of 744 possible positive responses, 691 or 93% agreed or strongly agreed that all three members were doing an excellent job. Areas where improvement was needed: to treat all constituencies fairly and equally in a courteous and respectful manner; be more helpful and approachable. The department was able to see the areas in which they could improve. All three members have had job description changes during the past year and are now dealing with additional constituents. All members understand that there is always room for improvement. The performance review is given yearly and will be used next year. As the members deal with staff and administrators, a survey of one or both of these constituencies is a possibility.

Advising & Counseling: The completed surveys indicate that the respondents were extremely pleased with the information presented during the orientation process (96%) and the manner in which the registration process evolved (100%). The results indicate that this area is extremely effective and efficient according to the respondents. The scores were very high; no improvements appear necessary at this time. Despite the positive responses, the department will continue to evaluate the process for effectiveness and efficiency. It will continue the survey throughout the new student registration and PSEO registration session to ensure continued performance reviews. The results indicated that the respondents were pleased with the services provided by the advising and counseling services. The scores were quite high with the lowest satisfaction score at 89.9%. At this time, the staff will continue with its present actions and initiatives. Despite the very favorable responses, the department will continue to evaluate for effectiveness and efficiency.

Athletics Department: The survey showed that all students said they had a positive experience during the men’s basketball season. In response to the question on students having a favorable feeling that the facilities, equipment, supplies, and uniforms have fulfilled the expectations of the student-athletes at the college level, there were only 8% of the students who were favorable to this question. In analyzing the results, the department would suggest that it complete a survey for each sport so it has feedback on the experience all of our students have in athletics. In regards to the facilities issue, they are limited in what improvements they can make due to financial limitations. They will continue to strive to improve their facilities in small increments. As a department, they will begin surveying all six intercollegiate sports teams. They will also look at changing the format of the survey to more accurately determine specific results. One of the suggestions is to go to a 4-point scale of – strongly disagree (4), disagree (3), strongly agree (2), agree (1).

Bookstore: Results will be compiled in the 2002-03 year.

Business Office: Results will be compiled in the 2001-03 year.

Disability Services: Results will be compiled in the 2001-03 year.

Enrollment Services: The assessment results for 1A came in at about what the service thought they would be. Enrollment Services believe that the campus visit is very important to a student making a final decision to attend Mesabi Range College. The Service takes time in giving the prospective student what he/she needs to enroll here. The number of high school visits did not increase by 2% because the other duties that the Director of Enrollment Services had to take on. The Service needs to start at the beginning of the academic year (2001) with assessment, and, secondly, to remember to give the survey to all visitors, especially when the Service gets busy in our area. They will take time to have everyone fill out the survey. And when they hand out the survey, it makes the department more aware of the quality of the prospective student's visit. Maybe they will attach the survey to something—like the application or campus visit give-away.

Financial Aid: Surveys were provided to counselors to have students who were registering for Spring term. The question was asked: *During your initial contact with the Financial Aid Office, do you feel that the information you received was relevant to your needs?* The following are the results: 85% Satisfied to Very Satisfied (Virginia Campus); 71% Satisfied to Very Satisfied (Eveleth Campus). The goal was to have 80% of the students respond that they were satisfied to very satisfied. As such, the average of 78% for both campuses falls outside the service's goal. A preliminary consideration of not fully meeting the goal at both campuses is that the Eveleth campus was short-staffed for a portion of the period. There is now a half-time person to assist with Eveleth campus concerns. Therefore, a second survey may result in results that meet or exceed our goal.

Food Service: Results will be compiled in 2001-02 year.

Human Resources: Results will be compiled in 2001-02 year.

Learning Center/Tutor Services (Eveleth Campus): Results are pending.

Learning Center/Tutor Services (Virginia Campus): Faculty, staff and students rated the Learning Center as being an inviting and comfortable place to work. Students who sought tutoring also reported being helped. The number of students tutored per tutor

needs to be increased. The Learning Center is not equally inviting to all students. The Learning Center needs to make the tutors more visible: 1) Have tutors introduce themselves in classes and check back occasionally; 2) Encourage instructors to share tutor schedules with students; 3) Have tutors check in with instructors periodically to see if there are students in need of tutoring; 4) Place flyers on the tables in the Commons; 5). Set up study groups for specific classes; explore reintroducing Supplemental Instruction. A private office will be made available for tutoring for students who request it. They will continue to assess the number of students seeing tutors; assess other avenues for offering study aids to students.

Library/AV Services: Students and faculty are pleased and satisfied with Library Services, proximity of library to Learning Center, ITV room, and computer lab increases activity in the library and expands the services they can provide. This results in increased interest in the library, higher rates of circulation and ILL, higher profile for us as a Service area and greater awareness of what we have to offer. Improvement is needed in the following areas: 1) Feedback indicates patrons would like extended hours of service, especially on weekends. Staffing issues complicate their ability to serve patrons beyond those currently established. 2) AV room also needs additional staffing to serve increased activity. Currently, there is no staffing for evenings or weekends to serve college or off-campus events. Minimal weekday staffing leaves many critical hours without service. We used the results of our assessment data to improve the service: 1) Greater outreach was made to non-traditional patrons- AUC students, students on graduate level programs, community members; 2) Greater efforts made to inform faculty and students about new resources available, both on-line and “on the shelf,” and how to access and utilize these resources; 3) Changes made to library web page for electronic access. Changes reflect new on-line resources and make Internet searches easier for students doing course-related research and projects. 4) New databases added on a trial basis to gauge faculty and student interest. Feedback will indicate if these should be purchased for next year. Next year’s assessment plan will include: 1) Continued collection development efforts involving faculty to improve and update on-site collection; 2) Update the Training Manual for student workers so it reflects new policies and procedures; 3) Focus on improving resources and services to Eveleth Technical campus; 4) Encourage more faculty to schedule class time for lecture and demonstration in bibliographic and information literacy instruction; 5) Improve support geared to other campus areas including Center for Economic Development, Capella University and other college partnerships, workforce retraining programs, custom training and Fire School.

Maintenance Department: No assessment plan submitted for 2000-01 school year.

Minority Services: Goal #1- Results of the Minority Services Students’ Survey question *How satisfied were you with the services received today?* Reflected a 94.7% response of *Very Satisfied*. The data suggests that the goal of providing satisfactory services to students have been met for this year. The results of survey question asking if the services were helpful in reaching their educational goals indicate the goal to be underachieved. A 79% positive response rate did not match the projected 85% goal rate as stated. Goal #2- Results of Class Presentation Evaluations on the subject of Diversity were very good. Students indicated they had received new or different

information regarding diversity by a 96.7% response rate. The students also responded a strong 98.9% satisfactory rate for the presentations. Seventy-three point six percent of the students were *Very Satisfied* with the presentations while 25.3% were *Satisfied*. The results of Goal 1, Outcome #1 is a measurement of student satisfaction regarding service received. Although the Minority Student Survey only measured the satisfaction levels of students enrolled in the spring semester, it represents a good indicator of satisfactory service provided to a small segment of overall student population (10%) for the entire year. The results can also mean that because not all students were surveyed, the survey instrument should continue to be used next year to ensure a more accurate measure of services for all students. The results of Goal 1, Outcome #2 measuring the services in helping students reach their educational goals indicates a need for improvement in program planning and student advising. Additional training in International Student advising will vastly improve services for international students as an increasing number of international students are beginning to utilize the services the program has to offer. Also, the results point that a deficiency in service provision toward educational planning may account for a significant turnover of Native American students this year. The survey instrument measuring student satisfaction in academic advising, financial aid assistance, information and referral, educational planning, scholarship assistance, intervention services will be revised to include international student services. The survey instrument will be used again beginning in the fall semester 2001 with more student participation and active data collection. Program initiatives will be developed over the summer in the areas of academic advising, international student advising, activities planning, student club advising, financial aid assistance. Also, the program director will take a more active role in academic advising and registration of the minority students beginning in the fall of 2001. Additional ISRS training will be sought by the program director for improved academic advising for Native American students. Assessment activities will begin promptly in the fall semester 2001 measuring student satisfaction in services provided. Data collection processes will be improved to ensure a more accurate count and the survey instrument will be revised to include international student services. New goals regarding International student advising will be developed as well as international student service programming.

Records Office: A transcript ledger was kept on turnaround times for getting the transcript to the student in a timely manner. The Graduate Survey was given to students. Doug Olney is contacted by college staff for data on this satisfaction of the recent graduates. The Records Office received positive responses for 90% of the time on the survey. By using the information on the Graduate Survey it helped the office make changes. By keeping a transcript ledger, it make the office more aware of the time it takes to get the transcript request, process the transcript, log the information, and send it out. The Records Office will survey the faculty next year to find their satisfaction of this service.

Student Services (Eveleth Campus): Upon review of the data, we determined that we had either met or exceeded our goals when assessing services received immediately upon receiving services. The following data is based on a scale of 1 being the lowest and 5 representing the highest to the following questions: *How helpful were the services you received in meeting your needs?* 4.9 (very satisfied); *How satisfied were you with the services received today?* 4.9 (very satisfied); *Will the services received today assist*

you toward developing skills for your technical career field? 4.7 (very satisfied). Upon review of the data assessing students' level of satisfaction with academic advising, personal counseling, job placement, orientation, and disabilities services, we computed an average of 3.47 (neutral). This is an area where further improvements could be made. The outcome targets that addressed placement of technical program students were based on 1999 data. The system in place reviews graduates two years behind the current year. This may present somewhat of a problem until this assessment tool has been in place for two years. Improvement is needed in the area of data collection. They found that they had not surveyed all of the students they work with on a daily basis (i.e. off-site campuses, registration process). Students were generally satisfied with the services they have received and we will continue to provide and improve services to students. One hundred percent of students surveyed stated that they would utilize these services again, which indicates a strong overall satisfaction of the services received. When surveyed as a group, the results did not fair as well when surveyed immediately upon receiving services. Students indicated a neutral/average satisfaction with academic advising, personal counseling, job placement, orientation, and disabilities services they received. The department will continue to assess this area for potential growth. The data for graduate placement is behind 2 years. This may present a problem until the assessment process has been in place for two years. No action needs to be taken at this time: however, they will address how to improve the data collection process for the upcoming assessment year. Assessing the data next year (2001-02) will be more accurate due to time, data, and the initiation of the above stated improvement areas.

Student Support Services (Virginia Campus): Results were within the required guidelines associated with the Student Support Services Grant. Improvements can be made in identifying the participants and their needs or criteria for program acceptance. These results can be used to ensure that we are serving the at-risk population of our student body. We will assess the completion rate and academic standing of our participants during the next academic year.

Technology: Out of 283 possible students in the College Writing I and II classes on both the Eveleth and Virginia campuses, 130 completed the surveys. Overall for questions regarding the Internet and e-mail the department received a 94% approval rating. As far as network service, an 87% approval rating was received. Fifteen percent of the students didn't use the college Internet or e-mail services, as there are a vast number of alternative services available in the area. Improvement was needed in the Network Services (Printing and Storage) area. The major complaint is that the printers in the labs are too slow and that there just aren't enough of them. They were able to find out who uses the services and their feelings on what is being offered. The department did receive over three pages of comments from their survey. The majority of the comments were positive and many gave useful ideas of how technology may improve or expand its services. Next year, technology plans to assess the faculty and staff and their usage.

College-wide Assessment of General Education Core Abilities

Institutional level assessment of general education at MRCTC, or any community college, is a challenging task. All courses and educational experiences throughout the college are responsible for supporting General Education outcomes. General Education assessment is accomplished using a wide variety of techniques. In addition, assessment is administered at several points throughout the curricula (entry, in-progress, graduation, post-graduation). We will use General Education assessment information to improve both the process of assessment and the effectiveness of General Education at MRCTC.

As a result of college-wide agreement, Mesabi Range Community & Technical College has identified four major core abilities for student success in order to assist students in developing abilities that will help prepare them to succeed in the world today and meet the challenges of the future: **Communicate Effectively, Think Critically, Demonstrate Mathematical Skills, and Use Information Technology.**

Demonstrate Mathematical Skills and Use Information Technology were added during the 2001 spring semester. These goals are addressed in courses across the curriculum, and methods of instruction and assessment are varied. The technical campus will pilot a project identifying how the General Education Core Abilities are incorporated and assessed in their courses using matrices (Appendix E).

MRCTC General Education Philosophy

Mesabi Range Community & Technical College provides an appropriate general education component in all degree, diploma and certificate programs as an essential intellectual and practical foundation to student's life-long learning.

MRCTC Core Abilities

Communicate Effectively

Students of Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will use oral and written language appropriately and effectively in the various contexts of personal and professional life.

Students will be able to

- ◆ write a clear, well-organized document appropriate to audience and purpose.
- ◆ present a well-organized speech appropriate to audience and occasion.
- ◆ choose, use and assess appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior in job and personal situations.
- ◆ apply appropriate listening skills in various situations.
- ◆ participate effectively in groups in order to achieve a common goal.
- ◆ read a document and demonstrate an understanding of its content.
- ◆ research and use information appropriate to the task.

Think Critically

Students of Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will apply effective critical/creative thinking and reasoning skills to personal and professional decision-making, problem-solving, and evaluative reasoning.

Students will be able to

- ◆ apply knowledge and skills to new problems and situations.
- ◆ make informed decisions.
- ◆ recognize and apply an appropriate model of problem solving.
- ◆ acknowledge and incorporate a value framework in various personal and professional situations.

Demonstrate Mathematical Skills

Students of Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will demonstrate the ability to solve quantitative problems and draw conclusions within various contexts.

Students will be able to

- ◆ perform basic math calculations and applications.
- ◆ read a mathematical problem and extract relevant facts.
- ◆ interpret data and draw logical conclusions.
- ◆ perform math functions necessary in coursework and career fields.

- ◆ perform math functions necessary in daily living.

Use Information Technology

Students of Mesabi Range Community & Technical College will demonstrate the ability to employ information technology in various disciplines/programs and professional life.

Students will be able to

- ◆ demonstrate skill in basic computer technology and applied computer skills.
- ◆ perform word processing/keyboarding skills.
- ◆ apply current technology to learning and occupational situations.
- ◆ demonstrate the ability to access information electronically.

CAAP Testing

Since one goal of general education assessment was to provide a comparison to other institutions, members of the Assessment Committee chose the College Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP). The Assessment Committee endorsed three years of CAAP testing of two general education core abilities: *Communicate Effectively* and *Think Critically*.

Participation and Motivation

One issue of concern in considering student outcomes assessment when measured in a low stakes setting, such as CAAP testing at MRCTC, is the impact of participation, motivation and effort by students. Because we concluded that mandatory college-wide testing was not financially feasible, we used voluntary testing efforts that resulted in low participation. During the 2001-02 academic year, the Assessment Committee will design a response to these challenges.

Findings

The CAAP test was given to 36 students on the Virginia and Eveleth campuses. Students were randomly chosen from those who had completed 45 plus credits. Students who took part in the testing were required to take the writing and critical thinking skill tests.

Approximately two thirds of the students who took the test this year were from the Eveleth campus. An equal number of male and female students tested. Twenty-three tested students were over 21.

Self reported:

- 33 reported they had enrolled as freshman
- 35 reported they were full-time students
- 4 reported they tried their best on both tests
- 17 students reported they were in the trade and industrial major
- 12 students reported they were in the health profession

Writing Skills

The National Mean Score for two-year colleges is 62.6 (62.6) (62.7).
The Mean Score for Mesabi Range was 60.8 (64.1) (63.3).

Test sub-scores

Usage/Mechanics

National mean score is 16.3.
Mesabi mean score was 15.3 (16.9) (16.8)

Critical Thinking Skills

The National Mean Score for a two-year community college is 61.1.
Mesabi Range mean score was 59.5 (62.1).

General Education Student and Employer Surveys

Indication of student and employer satisfaction in this area of general education prompted the assessment committee and college community to endorse satisfaction surveys. A General Education survey was administered to all graduating students in May 2001. The results of this survey can be read in Appendix B.

Observations and Items to Improve

At the Assessment Committee's final meeting, observations and refinements were noted to improve the College's assessment process based upon its evaluation of assessment structures and projects.

Observation 1 – Involve and train the ACP (Assessment Contact Person) to provide necessary leadership in directing assessment within their specific disciplines. Reporting lines should be clearly established so that faculty and staff report classroom and course assessment activities consistently and directly to the ACP.

If an individual leader supports assessment and urges or celebrates assessment, the unit is more likely to embrace and thrive in an assessment-enriched department. However, if leaders show little interest or fail to follow-up or encourage those engaged within the process, those who support the process stop participating or do not share their practices and accomplishments.

Observation 2 – Inform students as to the various ways they may participate in assessment, e.g. as a classroom student, as a graduate working in the community, and as an alumni observer.

Students should understand why assessment is important. Many students still confuse assessment with on-going tests and final exams for their classes.

In general, students have been left out of the assessment process in all ways other than as classroom respondents. Consequently, communication to students of their role in assessment is lacking or largely inconsequential. Our goal should be that after several years, a culture should exist in which students expect assessment, according to existing policies and procedures clearly and frequently announced in all College publications. A start in this direction occurred in February 2001 when UTCE and MCCFA adopted the policy of an assessment statement as an inclusion in all course syllabi.

We should appoint students to serve on the Assessment Committee. We could also consider establishing an ongoing process whereby students, alumni, and individuals from the community serve as ad-hoc members of the assessment committee to expand student involvement and institute a culture of assessment. Through such forums, students, staff, faculty, administrators, and community members could work together to identify assessment issues, goals, and recommendations.

Students should be informed at the fall Orientation sessions about the difference between assessment and evaluation. Students need to know that quizzes and tests are evaluation when they count toward their grades, but assessment is an opportunity to provide feedback to the instructor about their learning.

Observation 3 – Encourage and further educate and train the College community in assessment theories and methods as well as the use of assessment results.

There is a need for more training and education for faculty, staff, and students in assessment as well as designated times of the year when faculty and staff can work on their Assessment Plans and analyze their data and use of results.

Observation 4 – Encourage the consistent use of results in the classroom and within departments and programs.

There needs to be improvement in the doing of assessment and the use of the results across the College. Individual faculty members using CATs to improve their performance must use the results to refine their teaching. Departments, programs, and services must apply what their assessment results dictate. Assessment must not live

within a vacuum. Shuffling assessment forms from one desk to another is a tragic waste of time if we do not use assessment results to improve instruction and student learning.

For assessment to work, it is essential that faculty, staff, and administrators apply what was learned through assessment. Getting and sharing assessment results are obviously essential steps in this progress toward a culture of assessment.

Observation 5 - Coordinate activities between the curriculum and assessment committees with a member of both committees acting as an official liaison between the two committees.

Observation 6- Include an official "Assessment Day" on the college's official calendar.

On this day, no classes would be scheduled; however, students and faculty would participate in a variety of assessment activities, such as, student testing, focus groups, assessment workshops, and program/department assessment meetings.

Summary

Based on this year's assessment efforts, we conclude that substantial progress has been made in the implementation of assessment at Mesabi Range Community & Technical College based on

- ◆ assessment initiatives completed during the 2000-01 academic year;
- ◆ assessment activities that are ongoing;
- ◆ participation of faculty and staff in assessment initiatives.

In our judgment, we are generally at Level Two of the Higher Learning Commissions (NCA) Levels of Implementation, the level designating an emerging culture of assessment, and moving toward Level Three, a maturing culture of assessment that uses the results for institutional improvement.

As the assessment process continues at Mesabi Range Community & Technical College, it is continually being revisited and revised. The College's plan is an ongoing and cyclical process, defined by what we do and by the continuous conversations which we create and which help to transform our teaching and thereby improve learning.

The first cycle in our assessment was completed in the spring of 2001. Many departments and programs will be involved in analyzing the data that have been collected throughout the 2000-01 year. During the 2001-02, we will be able to match student performance with expectations. The results will help the individual teacher, the department or program, and the institution improve student learning and college services.

Clearly, assessment is a work in progress wherein we learn as we go along. We recognize our shortcomings and areas for improvement and growth, but we do not lack direction. We will use our lessons learned and new initiatives as we continue assessment at Mesabi Range Community & Technical College during the 2001-02 academic year.

Appendices

Appendix A.....Faculty and Staff Participation

Appendix B.....Graduate/Employer Surveys & Results

Appendix C.....Inventory of Assessment Methods

Appendix D.....Institutional Research

Appendix E.....General Education Core Abilities Matrices