I. 

Describe what has happened in the last six months, and include a description of the specific steps you have taken to implement and maintain your plan in the next six months, being sure to mention any major modifications that you have made.

Since our last report to the HLC academy, the City Colleges of Chicago have formed a district wide committee for assessment, with representatives from all of the seven City College campuses. The main purpose of this committee is to consider the adoption of a common set of learning outcomes for all of our students graduating from our Associate Degree programs. Other topics discussed with this committee included:

- Gathering data on Student Engagement district-wide with CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement)
- Sharing resources over a common web platform, such as a Blackboard shell
- Planning professional development events for faculty members across the district
- The role and scope of student services in providing measures of student learning
- The uniqueness of the collaborative roles played by the academic deans, institutional researchers, faculty leaders, and all faculty members in the assessment process.

While we hope to continue discussion on all of these topics, using a resource for sharing over the web, our meetings focused on the Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP). So far, we have formed a strategy for communicating with the faculty and receiving feedback. We are being very deliberate, thoughtful, and thorough with this communication. Our priority is to take on the task of assessing student learning using the Lumina SLOs at the degree level only when, and if, we have received maximum faculty buy-in and feedback on how that process of assessment should look.

Ultimately, adopting the Lumina DQP would mean mapping curriculum in our various courses across all disciplines onto the high level student outcomes. We would then be collecting evidence for each student throughout their tenure of having achieved the outcomes, and to what extent. So far, faculty leadership across the district is in strong support of such a project, contingent of course upon all of the details and important information yet to be gathered.

At Malcolm X College, we are ready to take on such a project, whether we use the outcomes compiled by Lumina or any other set of learning outcomes consistent with our mission, vision, and standards for students completing our degree programs. Having been down two tracks towards assessing Critical Thinking (our Academy project), we now have a solid understanding of what it takes to assess high level outcomes like the ones in the Lumina DQP.
II.

In addition to your standard update, include plans for evaluating your success in developing and implementing your plan in the next six months.

As reflected in our mission statement, our goals as a committee are to assist with the planning, coordination, and implementation of institutional assessment activities, to provide leadership and support for classroom and department assessment efforts, to provide professional development for the faculty in the area of assessment, and to promote awareness of assessment on campus, striving to create a culture of assessment. We plan to collect and analyze evidence of our effectiveness as a committee in implementing our plans over the next six months and as an ongoing process. Our instruments will include:

1. Finalized reports from the Office of Institutional Research on data collected for assessments of high-level outcomes. These will show us how well we, as a committee, planned and carried out the assessment, and whether or not the results were meaningful to the institution.

2. Department Assessment Plan updates, submitted annually to each department’s respective Dean in March. These will show us how well we, as a committee, are supporting the assessment efforts of the faculty, as well as whether or not we are facilitating learning about assessment.

   With committee review of the Departmental Assessment Plans Progress Reports, suggestions will continue to be provided as feedback to the departments if opportunities for improvement are identified. If we identify exceptional activities or outcomes from the reports and feel the college as a whole could benefit from the reported experience, we will ask the department to share their activities, findings, plans for improvement in teaching and learning with the college. Several of these activities were planned for presentation at our Faculty Development Week presentations.

3. Minutes and attendance records for events planned by the committee. These will show how well we, as a committee, are building a culture of assessment, engaging the faculty in the assessment process, and facilitating learning about assessment.

Over the next six months, we will be able to analyze the Department documents expected in March, our finalized report for Track 2 and the CAAP Critical Thinking data, and our meeting minutes and attendance. We can evaluate the success of our semester plan, and in the same way evaluate all of our efforts into the future.

The college is working with the District to identify and implement software to help with early recognition of students at risk of not successfully completing courses. Currently our process does not automatically link academic advisors with students who are performing poorly. Students who have been identified as “at risk” are referred by faculty via a group email address. A team of advisors have
been assigned to manage the shared site and collaboratively work to implement intervention strategies to help students achieve success.

Another welcome addition to our colleges is a Wellness Center that just opened this Spring Semester. It is greatly needed and has been long requested by faculty and administration. We all recognize that students’ inability to be successful in academics often results from other non-academic issues and now those issues can be much more appropriately addressed.

Additionally, we are working on a semiannual way in which to have faculty present best practices. We coordinated a small gallery walk at our last Faculty Development Week and hope to greatly expand on this practice in an upcoming Faculty Development Symposium on Assessment of Student Learning and Best Practices as well as during the fall’s upcoming Faculty Development Week.

The college participated in CCSSEE two years ago and is planning to again administer the survey. The Student Services Department in concert with District-Wide initiatives is making significant changes to the way student advising is taking place and in the registration process. These were two areas we as a district wide system identified as an area where significant challenges existed. Pilot programs have been done and based on the outcomes of those, and in working with other colleges, changes are being implemented. A strong process of looking at the data, evaluating its meaning, planning and implementing changes to improve outcomes has been established throughout our college; thus we have established a culture of assessment.

With a holistic approach to improving student success in mind, we hope to continue to make strides in collaborating with in our college amongst faculty and non-academic services to continue serving our students better. Last, we also believe that increased collaboration with our Institutional Researcher has helped us ask targeted questions that improve our understanding of what our data means and how to make data driven decisions that enhance our teaching and learning yielding models of best practice strategies to improve student learning. We will continue to institutionalize these kinds of collaborative models.

III.

To what extent have you achieved the goals you set for yourselves when you began the Academy?

Having effectively implemented best practice models that support a culture of assessment at the course, department and institutional levels, we have achieved the goals set for ourselves when we began the Academy. For example in addition to the examples already provided, Malcolm X College is invested in the success of its first-year students. An integral part of assuring student success, especially in the first year, is developing a comprehensive vision of the many ways in which we currently support student success in the first year of study at our institution. We seek ways of adopting a holistic approach to the first-year student experience, across all programs, which links the evaluation of needs and effectiveness to a comprehensive plan of action that moves us beyond a “programmatic” outlook to a “college-wide”
vision of ways to improve the first-year experience. Foundations of Excellence will support the aforementioned by facilitating the development of a college-wide conversation about the first-year experience of our students; the enhancement of our institutional intelligence to include the importance of first-year experience to the attainment of our strategic goals and objectives; and, the improvement of our ability to recognize and reduce redundancies that lead to decreased institutional efficiency as it relates to the first-year experience of students.

Finally, we know that the success of our students, especially in their first year, is indelibly linked to our ability to fulfill our mission. Indeed, fulfilling our mission is at the core of our continued accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Thus, we seek to participate in the next cohort of the Foundations of Excellence in order to develop a comprehensive plan to assure student success in the first-year (and beyond), which aligns with our institution's strategic goals and mission and supports our continued institutional accreditation.

Commitment to the First-Year Experience

MXC has forged through a collaborative and inclusive process, a mission statement that seeks to “…empower students of diverse backgrounds and abilities to achieve academic, career, and personal success.” The college views its mission statement as a strategy that it must work consistently to achieve. An integral aspect of MXC’s endeavors to achieve its goals is its ongoing development and implementation of assessment of student learning. While the assessment of the first year experience is still in its developmental stages at MXC, the College is finding the necessary ways to move closer to its goal. As assessment of the first year experience becomes more pervasive and systematized throughout the College, it will serve as the core of curricular and pedagogical reform, which will enhance both student learning and teaching effectiveness within MXC’s educational programs.

Both local and district administrative structures also provide and promote effective leadership towards that end. Locally, College officers, such as President Anthony E. Munroe and Vice President Darryllinn Todd have made assessment a priority. President Munroe is determined that we, as an institution, deliver on our promises to students, and Vice President Todd has been at the forefront of the assessment efforts. For example, budget monies have been allocated to the first year experience as evidenced by the support of PREMIER, the first-year experience at MXC.

The College also actively involves faculty and staff in the support of first-year students at the College, and it continues to solidify assessment efforts to include a systematic approach that will engage multiple levels of assessment between general education programs and career programs. At the district level, the CCC Board of Trustees and district administration also support the college’s local administration through established policies and procedures that are revised regularly.

The First-Year Experience at Malcolm X College

Making the transition to college is an exciting yet challenging time for students. First-year college students often face difficulties acclimating to and navigating through college life. Malcolm X College has
recently launched PREMIER, a new first year experience program for all new students to be actively engaged in for their first academic year at the college. As the institution recognizes and understands that the needs of college students have changed, so must the attempts to retain and successfully support the students. The primary goal of PREMIER is to create a positive and supportive first year experience to support academic success and retention. The program is designed to assist first-year college students to successfully navigate the college experience. The program creates a systematic way to provide opportunities for all first-year students at the college. The PREMIER program is designed to ensure that all new students complete a mandatory orientation, are assigned an academic advisor, and registered for the freshmen seminar course. PREMIER students participate in various college activities during the year, including New Student Week, mandatory advising, and workshops for long term success.

Although we have achieved the goals as set forth upon entering the Assessment Academy, other areas of improvement have been noted resulting in Key Performance Indicators (KPI) being established that are focused on student success and retention. Recommendations to help us address the KPI’s are:

1. Formally adopt a first year philosophy statement, approved by the Board of Trustees and accepted by all CCC
2. Disseminate the philosophy statement regarding first-year experience to all new students
3. Align the findings from FoE self-study with Reinvention – Mission/Vision of CCC
4. There is a strong need to establish learning communities inclusive of course offerings that foster growth, student engagement and social learning during the students freshman year.
5. A comprehensive orientation structure needs to be established to ensure coverage of critical items students should be aware of.
6. A retention strategy inclusive of staff and financial resources should be developed to ensure sustainability of this effort and to also effectively monitor students beyond their first year.
7. Transition plans should be established to effectively transition students from one academic career to the next, depending on the students’ academic intent/goal.
8. Stronger partnerships and communication must occur between academic affairs and student services.
9. Introduce funding sources to support existing efforts aimed at servicing new students.
10. Creation of an Engagement Survey - The involved disciplines should begin assessing the engagement of students.
11. Dual Enrollment and Transfer Centers - Introduce dual enrollment programs with other institutions. Opening Transfer center at college lead students to achieve goals for careers.
12. Review SLOs - Departments should ensure that SLOs are consistent across the faculty and, more importantly, that faculty are actually addressing all SLOs in their courses.
13. Review Placement Testing - The placement test should be compared to SLOs for different classes, to ensure that students are placed in the appropriate class.
14. Increase Awareness - Students should be made aware of the Honor's Program, honor societies, and other options for advanced work.
15. Teaching Excellence Recognition - Effort should be made to identify and recognize excellent teaching of full-time and adjunct faculty.
16. Implement a curriculum specifically designed to address the academic needs of students taking entry level courses.
17. Establish a comprehensive First year experience program
18. Centralize Retention Effort
19. Develop models to ease transition to advanced level of educational tracks
20. Introduce new-student Orientation Family Night
21. Incorporate the use of CAN-TV For Students