ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE CHARGE (2013)

The Harold Washington College (HWC) Assessment Committee is charged with developing, supporting, and expanding a learning-focused, evidence-based campus culture. Achievement of these results is only possible through, and so predicated upon a vision featuring broadly shared faculty ownership of assessment activities, meaningful student input, and strong support from the Administration.

Given those conditions, the committee’s work should result in:

- A common understanding of the meaning, purpose, and utility of the assessment of student learning, shared among faculty, students, staff, and the administration;
- Documented evidence of student learning (in terms of students’ progress and achievement) that can be used to improve instruction, support, services, processes, and most importantly, student learning outcomes;
- Important evidentiary bases for college priorities, including new initiatives, policy development and resource allocations.

The HWC Assessment Committee understands their central activity to be engagement in a comprehensive process that is ongoing, systematic, structured, and sustainable. The HWC Assessment process involves:

1) Establishing faculty expectations for a range of student learning outcomes and attainment that are explicit and public, setting qualitative and evidentiary standards for student learning;

2) Aligning institution-wide assessment activities, methods, and instruments with the learning outcomes expected by the faculty;

3) Gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence of students’ development and attainment to determine how well their performance aligns with faculty's stated expectations and standards;

4) Catalyzing and supporting department and program-level assessment processes that align with, inform, and are informed by institution-wide practices, findings, and responses;

5) Using assessment information from both direct and indirect measures:

   a) To understand how, when, and where learning takes place;
   b) To identify in what areas and for which students learning needs to be improved;
   c) To encourage efforts to make changes in modes of instruction, program curricula, learning resources, and support services designed to improve student learning;
   d) To create and sustain an institutional culture in which it is the College’s priority to assure and improve the quality of education each academic program promises and offers;

6) Sharing results and cultivating dialogue regarding assessment issues, findings, and action-responses at a range of stakeholder levels.

7) Creating and sustaining a strong culture of assessment in three specific domains:

   a) The general education curriculum;
   b) Coherent units of assessment at department or discipline levels, beyond the individual classroom;
   c) College to Careers programs (C2C).
DELIVERABLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A). Create and maintain a yearly Assessment Plan covering a minimum of a five-year assessment span;

B). Provide assessment consultation and expertise to a range of faculty development initiatives as required;

C). Develop and disseminate assessment resources:
   1. Maintain the Assessment Website;
   2. Develop and maintain Assessment Newsletters for a range of audiences;
   3. Create widely disseminated assessment artifacts derived from findings targeting diverse stakeholders;

D). Form interdisciplinary work groups on an ad hoc basis as needed;

E). Assessment Week activities:
   1. Include planning for at least one Assessment Week in the yearly Assessment Calendar;
   2. Administer assessment tools during Assessment Week;
   3. Coordinate data collection and analysis;
   4. Disseminate results;

F). Support department assessment activities through the work of the Department Assessment Coordinator
   1. Provide guidance and feedback on department progress through the assessment cycle;
   2. Provide the assessment report format;
   3. Collect and compile annual departmental assessment progress reports;
   4. Provide feedback to the departments;

G). Compile an Annual Assessment Report and formally submit to the CAO, President, Department Chairs, and Faculty Council before sharing the relevant sections with key constituents.

H). Contribute to District Wide assessment activities to build collegial expertise in assessment across our sister colleges.

MEANS OF SUCCESS

I. HWC Assessment Committee Membership

A. Eligible Voting Members
   1. At least one and not more than two full-time faculty members from each department appointed by the respective Department Chair, including designated “Department Assessment Liaisons” and officers;
   2. Dean or Associate Dean of Instruction or representative of Office of Research and Planning;
   3. One student member recommended by the faculty;
   4. One representative from Faculty Council, appointed by the Faculty Council.

B. Ex Officio
   1. Any and all interested members of the HWC Community;
   2. Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs (Chief Academic Officer).

II. Relationship to the Faculty Council

A. The purpose of the Faculty Council’s representation on the Assessment Committee is to ensure open communication regarding the accomplishments and concerns of the faculty with respect to assessment while continuously reinforcing the connection between the body responsible for academic recommendations (Faculty Council) and the activities and findings of the committee;
B. The Assessment Committee will collaborate with Faculty Council to nurture a college culture that honors Assessment and a focus on learning, to communicate plans and findings, and to monitor the general effect of assessment activities on the academic culture of the college;

C. The Assessment Committee will support the work of Faculty Council to provide opportunities for faculty to discuss and debate issues of academic importance by providing expertise regarding various assessment components, suggesting topics and recommendations for consideration, and offering evidence to inform deliberations.

D. The Assessment Committee is an ad hoc, stand-alone committee that recognizes the importance of its collaborative and informative relationship to the Faculty Council.

III. Relationship to the Academic Departments

A. The purpose of cross-departmental membership on the Assessment Committee is to access disciplinary expertise with respect to committee activities and ensure open communication regarding the accomplishments and concerns of the departments with respect to assessment while continuously reinforcing the connection between the academic departments and the activities and findings of the committee;

B. The Assessment Committee will collaborate with the departments to nurture a college culture that honors assessment and a focus on learning, to communicate plans and findings, and to monitor the general effect of assessment activities on the academic culture of the college;

C. The Assessment Committee will support the work of departments by disseminating information on current trends in assessment, regularly communicating and gathering feedback on committee plans, activities, findings, and recommendations, and providing assistance and support to Department Assessment Liaisons and departmental assessment activities through the offices of a Department Assessment Coordinator—see below for details;

D. The Assessment Committee recognizes its relation to the departments as one of collaborative peers with overlapping and complementary interests in a single domain—student learning. As such the Committee understands its responsibility to be one of sharing expertise and not directing or encroaching on departmental priorities or activities.

IV. Relationship to the Students

A. The purpose of student membership on the Assessment Committee is to access students’ perspective with respect to committee activities and promote open communication regarding the accomplishments and concerns of the students with respect to assessment while continuously reinforcing the connection between the student body and the activities and findings of the committee.

B. The Assessment Committee will collaborate with students to nurture a college culture that honors assessment and a focus on learning, to communicate plans and findings, and to monitor the general effect of assessment activities on the academic culture of the college.

C. The Assessment committee will support the work of the student body toward attainment of faculty defined learning outcomes by regularly communicating and seeking student input on committee plans, activities, findings, and recommendations, making evidence based recommendations regarding all aspects of student learning, and sharing observations and recommendations on the improvement of student learning through pedagogy, curriculum and instructional resources;

D. The Assessment Committee recognizes its relation to the students as one of collaborative inquiry and support. After all, since it is their learning with which we are concerned, any inquiry thereto requires both informed consent and participation on the part of students. Furthermore, the students are not mere objects of inquiry but agents of their own learning and, as such, should have a voice in the activities and recommendations of the committee.

V. Relationship to the Office of the Chief Academic Officer (CAO)

A. The purpose of administrative membership on the Assessment Committee is to access administrative expertise and logistical support with respect to committee activities while ensuring open communication regarding the accomplishments and concerns of the college administration with respect to assessment while
continuously reinforcing the connection between the leadership of the college and the activities and findings of the committee;

B. The Assessment Committee will collaborate with the administration to nurture a college culture that honors assessment and a focus on learning, to communicate plans and findings, and to monitor the general effect of assessment activities on the academic culture of the college;

C. The Assessment Committee will support the work of the administration by regularly communicating and gathering feedback on committee plans, activities, findings, and recommendations, making recommendations to the CAO for modification in current college processes, procedures and policies, contributing evidence for consideration with respect to planning and budgeting, and offering observations and recommendations on the improvement of student learning through pedagogy, curriculum and instructional resources;

D. The Assessment Committee recognizes its relation to the administration as one of informative symbiosis. It is only with the administration’s trust and support that the Committee can fulfill its charge and in fulfilling its charge the Committee necessarily supports and provides the basis for informed leadership. Consequently, the Committee recognizes that we must work closely with the administration to provide them with information about student learning that will be helpful to the administration of the college and that the process must, to be truly effective and informative, be driven by faculty interests and under faculty control.

VI. Committee Leadership

A. The Assessment Committee Chair (6 hours of release time)
   1. Requirements:
      a. Must be a tenured, full-time HWC faculty member;
      b. Nominated and elected by members of the Assessment Committee during the spring semester and serve for one year;
   2. Duties:
      a. Set the agenda for regularly scheduled Assessment Committee meetings;
      b. Preside over Assessment committee meetings using procedures in Robert's Rules of Order;
      c. Oversee the development, distribution and implementation of the Assessment Calendar working with the CAO or representative;
      d. Provide oversight for persons and offices charged with collecting, analyzing and disseminating assessment data;
      e. Coordinate the processes involved in acting on assessment data;
      f. Coordinate and maintain lines of communication between the Assessment Committee and internal HWC constituents;
      g. Act as liaison between the Assessment Committee and the HWC Administration;
      h. Write the public Annual Assessment Report, which describes the year's outcomes regarding the assessment of student learning at HWC;
      i. Formally submit the Annual Assessment Report to the CAO, President and key constituents;
      j. Work with the CAO to implement evidence based changes identified by assessment data;
      k. Attend District-Wide Assessment Committee Chairs meetings on a regular basis.

B. Vice-Chair (3 hours release time)
   1. Requirements:
      a. Must be a full-time HWC faculty member;
      b. Nominated and elected by members of the Assessment Committee before the end of spring semester;
   2. Duties:
      a. Provide direct support to subcommittee work;
      b. Coordinate the dissemination of assessment resources to the Harold Washington College community;
         i. Maintain and revise the HWC Assessment Website;
         ii. Coordinate the creation and maintenance of a periodic Assessment Newsletter targeting faculty, administration, students and professional staff for the purpose of informing the college community of ongoing assessment activities;
         iii. Support the Assessment Committee Chair in communicating with the Department Chairs regarding assessment results at the departmental level;
      c. Attend District-Wide Assessment Committee Chairs meetings as required.
C. Secretary and Archivist (3 hours release time)
   1. Requirements:
      a. Nominated by members of the Assessment Committee on an annual basis;
      b. Elected by members of the Assessment Committee on an annual basis;
   2. Duties
      a. Take minutes during the Assessment Committee meetings and disseminate to Assessment Committee members;
      b. Disseminate information generated at Assessment Committee meetings;
      c. Maintain current Assessment Committee roster;
      d. Sustain a searchable archive of Assessment Committee documents and communications.

D. Department Assessment Coordinator (3 hours release time)
   1. Requirements:
      a. Appointed by Committee Chair in consultation with Vice Chair and C.A.O.;
      b. Affirmed by majority vote of the committee;
   2. Duties
      a. Provide assistance and weekly consultation with the Department Assessment Liaisons regarding their development of Department Assessment Plans (for the purposes of suggestions only);
      b. Support the implementation of department assessments, and the collection, analysis, and reporting of data;
      c. Collect bi-weekly progress reports from Department Liaisons and collate for (alternate) bi-weekly reporting to committee leadership and C.A.O.;
      d. Create semester reports of Department Assessment activities for wider circulation.

E. Assessment Research Analyst (3 hours release time)
   1. Requirements:
      a. Appointed by Committee Chair in consultation with Vice Chair and C.A.O.;
      b. Affirmed by majority vote of the committee;
   2. Duties
      a. Manage large data sets created by Assessment Committee activities;
      b. Provide a range of relevant statistical analyses and reports from assessment data;
      c. Ensure ethical and professional human research requirements are sustained;
      d. Consult with the Office of Research and Planning as appropriate;
      e. Meet on a regular basis with Assessment Committee Officers and sub-committee members as required for each specific assessment;
      f. Contribute statistical data and analyses to each assessment report and to the Annual Assessment Report, as required.

VII. Responsibilities of Departmental Assessment Liaisons (3 hours release time)
   1. Requirements:
      a. Appointed by Committee Chair in consultation with Department Chairs and C.A.O.;
      b. Affirmed by consent of the committee;
   2. Duties
      a. Attend regular Assessment Committee meetings;
      b. Attend specific department and discipline sub-committee meetings as required;
      c. Provide regular reports of assessment activity to Assessment Committee and host department;
      d. Contribute statistical data and analyses to specific assessment reports and to the Annual Assessment Report, as required.
      e. Select, in consultation with department faculty, coherent units of assessment at the department or discipline levels (beyond the individual classroom);
      f. Design and sustain a departmental assessment plan, comprised of units of assessment, that includes protocols and processes for assessing student learning outcomes at these levels;
      g. Partner with faculty to utilize assessment results to improve student learning.

VIII. Election of Officers - Officers are elected for the academic year prior to the end of the previous spring semester following procedures adopted and agreed upon by the committee.

Harold Washington College Assessment Committee
Approved by HWC Assessment Committee March 20, 2013