

**Harold Washington College  
Assessment Committee Annual Report  
Fall 2011 – Summer 2012**



CITY COLLEGES of CHICAGO

**Harold Washington**

Education that Works

## Introduction

This has been a year of significant change for the Assessment Committee, predominantly focused on the broader contexts of our work. This report summarizes and comments on the activities and achievements of the committee. Attention is paid to faculty participation in this important activity of the college. Tasks, results and challenges are presented. Particular emphasis is given to the major changes that have occurred surrounding the work of the committee and the significant leap in investment attached to our work.

## Participation Data

These data are presented to give a sense of the scale and scope of faculty and staff involvement in the regular work of the HWC Assessment Committee. Comparative data is presented from 2009 and 2010 so that this weekly committee activity can also be viewed in the longer-term context of a sustained, committed culture of assessment at Harold Washington College.

Activity	Fall Semester 2009	Fall Semester 2010	Fall Semester 2011
Committee Meetings	13	12	14
Lowest Weekly Attendance	12	9	10
Highest Weekly Attendance	18	18	17
<b>Average Weekly Meeting Attendance</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
Number of Departments and Offices represented	10	11	8 (9)*
Regular contributing departments and offices were: Advising, Applied Science, English, Library, Mathematics, Physical Science, Humanities and ELL/WL. *Faculty from Social Science was also active in committee work but not present at regular meetings because of Reinvention participation.			
Again during the fall semester there was a drop in participation noticeable after midterm. First half semester attendance average was 15 attendees with an average 4 apologies, second half semester attendance average was 12 with an average 7 apologies.			
Activity	Spring Semester 2010	Spring Semester 2011	Spring Semester 2012
Committee Meetings	13	12	14
Lowest Weekly Attendance	10	11	9
Highest Weekly Attendance	15	14	16
<b>Average Weekly Meeting Attendance</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
Number of Departments and Offices represented	10	11	8 (9)*
Regular contributing departments and offices were: Advising, Applied Science, English, Library, Mathematics, Physical Science, Humanities and ELL/WL. *Faculty from Social Science was also active in committee work but not present at regular meetings because of Reinvention participation.			
In the spring semester there was only a slight drop in participation after midterm. First half semester attendance average was 14 attendees with an average 4 apologies, second half semester attendance average was 12 with an average 4 apologies.			

Perhaps the most pertinent issue, beyond the fairly consistent nature of attendees over these past three years, is the drop in the number of departments represented on the committee. This will be revisited in the conclusion of the report. This year we also welcomed a strong group of new faculty to the committee: in the fall, Ray Tse, Samar Ayesh and Phillip Vargas, all of Physical Sciences. In the spring semester we also gained Erica McCormack from Humanities. All were welcomed and have begun to make their impact on our collegial work.

### **Key Activities and Issues Fall 2011**

There were six major areas of activity during the fall semester, which were predominantly handled through our effective subcommittee structure. Key officers were charged with heading up subcommittee work and taking responsibility for outputs and outcomes from these diverse groups of seasoned and new committee members. This has proven to be a very effective methodology for sustaining a complex and demanding range of tasks within a one-hour weekly meeting time. It also helps new faculty with a safe, rapid and open orientation to our work and faculty committed to improving student learning outcomes through assessment.

### **Effective Writing Assessment**

A primary task for the committee was the preparatory work required for our Effective Writing assessment data gathering during this semester. A range of tasks were undertaken including such things as: running a pilot, rubric formulation, inter-rater reliability training, report writing planning, and the all-important collection of a representative sample of authentic student writing samples.

This is the first time we have attempted to gather student assessment data from within 'standard' classroom produced artifacts. Our more usual procedure has been to gather student assessment data from faculty volunteered student sections that come to a specific location during Assessment Week. This new process required considerable planning and required a different kind of investment from broader faculty in our assessment activities. This new process ultimately resulted in 714 authentic student writing samples requiring time-consuming grading and some unusual challenges for us to handle.

Data collection across campus is a significant logistical undertaking, which was well managed by the primary subcommittee charged with this responsibility. An important indicator of Assessment Committee strength was how we managed the process during the unexpected illness of the Vice Chair who had key responsibility for this assessment. Other committee members stepped up and took over the data collection process to ensure we followed through on our plans. We set a target of 1,000 writing samples for this assessment and we clearly fell short of this; but this was a new methodology and one that required more and different investment from participating faculty. Specific reflection and analysis of this process will be reported in our upcoming full report, "Effective Writing at Harold Washington College" which should be distributed before the end of the fall

semester 2012. If this report meets this dissemination target, this will be the fastest turnaround we have achieved for these large-scale, college-wide assessments.

### **Social Science Assessment**

Data were originally gathered for this assessment in Assessment Week of fall 2010 and our capacity to handle all of this data was somewhat challenged by two key changes in committee membership and support systems. Our key faculty member heading up this assessment was appointed to the Reinvention team and thus a key driver was lost. Secondly, the Research and Development Office had changes in personnel that resulted in the loss of our research assistant, who in reality carried a major workload on our behalf, specifically in data processing and management.

A systematic grading plan, which involved faculty members outside of the Assessment Committee and from the Social Science Department, was designed to handle the potential 4,000 narrative student responses. Funding for these special assignments was not approved at District and we were told the costs for this needed to be much reduced. We produced and delivered on a new plan in which committee members only carried the workload. An opportunity to pull in broader faculty engagement in college-wide assessment work was lost.

Our capacity for statistical analysis was greatly enhanced by the addition of Phillip Vargas of Physical Sciences at the outset of the fall semester and he has begun to handle all of our statistical work on the large data sets we collect. Historically, this has perhaps been one of the most challenging areas of our work and one where our capacity and expertise is stretched. Work on data analysis and report writing was progressed during this semester but hampered by our lead faculty been appointed to the Reinvention team.

### **Website work**

We have invested considerable time and energy updating and redesigning our website presence. This work has fallen into two key areas that support each other: seeking to both become more rigorous in our archival activities and build a stronger public presence for our work. Jeff Swigart, of Mathematics, has spent considerable time tracking down Assessment Committee artifacts and organizing these in a coherent electronic format. John Keiraldo, of the Library, has taken the lead on redeveloping our web presence. This became more complex with our new District-wide format and untested protocols about what was within the remit of individual colleges to change and what needed to remain consistent within a coherent District graphic format. John and Jeff worked well with District staff as these needed protocols were developed. District staff was positive and supportive in balancing HWC and District requirements. There is still work to do here in elevating assessment work to more prominence within our web presence.

It appears that this drive to really advance our web presence had some broader implications across the District, when it became clear that some of our sister

colleges did not have an assessment web site. A directive was issued from District with guidance on placeholder content, but it was clear that our previous website and our newly developing one, would exceed the minimum requirements that were now being asked for by District across all seven campuses. Our web presence also became an issue before the end of the fall semester, as we submitted an application for an institutional assessment award from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), something that District had been encouraging us to do for some time. It was believed that this application would be aided by a strong and detailed HWC assessment website.

### **District Wide Assessment Committee**

In last year's annual report we noted the following about campus wide assessment activities:

*"It remains vital that individual colleges maintain and build independent, autonomous, context-specific assessment strategies but it is also important to ask how as a unified college system we can become system-wide knowledge builders to improve systemic student learning outcomes. Harold Washington College Assessment Committee is interested in exploring how we do this in an empowering, collegial and voluntary way."*

*HWC AC Annual Report Fall 2010 – Summer 2011 page 12*

We were very pleased when in November the first meeting took place of the new District Wide Assessment Committee. A monthly meeting schedule was established and the committee began working together and sharing our experiences and expertise. HWC's Chair and Vice Chair of Assessment regularly attend this meeting and actively contribute to its growth. The Appendix to this report contains the Charge of the District Wide Assessment Committee, which has been informally approved by all campuses and forms the background to this developing area of our work. This has added additional work and time to the tasks of both Chair and Vice Chair, which will require revisiting the job descriptions for these roles. A key early area of work for this committee has been developing an effective response to the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile. This work would progress at an unexpected pace during the spring semester and broaden our assessment work in ways that again will lead to a need to revisit our charge, workload and roles.

### **Key Activities and Issues Spring 2012**

The spring semester saw us move from some disappointing news through to some exceptionally positive news about HWC assessment and District investment and support for our work. Our CHEA application was not successful, however we learned a great deal in the process, which will serve us well in the future. We began the process of grading and analysis of our Effective Writing student samples and we continued to work on finalizing our report on our Social Science assessment. Since we had now completed, for the first time, a full cycle of assessment of our general education goals, we took time to debate future areas of assessment in the light of the changing external environment for

assessment and the impacts of our work. This changing environment culminated at the very end of semester with a huge vote of confidence from President Laackman and District who approved a new budget for expanded assessment roles and responsibilities at HWC under the leadership of the Assessment Committee. This expansion of our activity will be discussed in more detail in the conclusions of this report.

## **Future Assessments**

We had considerable debate about developing an assessment for Civic Learning, which was in part stimulated by the Lumina Foundation's Degree Profile. While this is of great interest to us, it is, as yet, not part of our general education goals, and so some additions need to be made at this level before we can undertake an assessment in this area. We decided to next revisit our successful diversity assessment. This would give us some comparative data for our 2005 diversity assessment using our well-regarded, self-created tool. The mass of data we had collected in 2005 was relatively unexplored, and using the tool again would give us a chance to revisit and update our diversity findings. This seemed appropriate since the District has added a 'diversity requirement' to graduation for all students. This assessment will happen in week twelve of fall semester 2012 and is headed up by Jeff Swigart, Secretary of the Assessment Committee. It is also planned to undertake this assessment with other colleges in our system. At the time of writing, Olive Harvey College will join us in the diversity assessment, using the same tool and process. This provides a wonderful opportunity for cross-campus collaboration and shared expertise.

We are also scheduled to take part in our third use of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in spring of 2013. This is part of a district initiative to have all seven colleges complete CCSSE, so that some benchmark district data can be established. We would also like to assess, for the first time, Civic Learning in the fall of 2013 during our regular assessment week. This should give us enough time to make the required adjustments to our general education goals and work on establishing the consequent student learning outcomes for this new and intriguing area of investigation. This new assessment area would also allow us to tune in to one of the key areas of the Lumina Foundation's Degree Profile. This might prove an interesting opportunity to allow some of our newer Assessment Committee members to expand their committee capabilities. In the upcoming fall 2012 semester we will also need to establish a new multi-year assessment plan that will take us up to and beyond our re-accreditation in 2018. It is understood from District that we are the only college that has achieved one full cycle of assessment covering all of our general education goals. Since fall 2003, we have undertaken eleven college-wide assessments involving over 9,000 student participants. A one-page summary sheet of all this assessment activity is provided in the appendix to this report. It stands as a positive testament to the many faculty and staff active in the committee work, faculty who participate in Assessment Week, and a very strong, supportive administration with a deep understanding of how to sustain assessment cultures.

It should also be noted here we supported HWC administration in the completion of the Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS), a new tool from the same home as CCSSE (University of Texas at Austin). We have not as yet received any results from this, but it will give us an interesting broad look at wider institutional assessment strategies across diverse community colleges.

### **Data Management Systems**

We spent considerable time this semester discussing and exploring options about what electronic data management systems might best suit our purposes. We had already painfully learned through our Social Science Assessment that Blackboard was not useful for the kind of assessments we are predominantly involved in.

This debate was also brought into sharper focus by the loss of our research assistant on the eleventh floor. Will Edwards, the new Assistant Director of Institutional Research appointee, helped us work through some of these issues and establish that we could utilize our institutional Survey Monkey license if we wanted to continue to develop our electronic data collection processes. We decided that the fall iteration of our diversity assessment would use this electronic format. Will was also personally instrumental in ensuring all Effective Writing demographic and affective survey data from 714 students was processed using the bubble reader and converted into excel spreadsheets. The challenge of these data processing tasks consumed a great deal of committee conversation and highlighted the significant issues we continue to have in this specific aspect of any assessment cycle. This specific challenge will also be encountered and multiplied when our future work unfolds in an expanded departmental assessment profile.

### **Presidential Challenge**

Toward the end of spring semester, President Laackman visited the committee and presented us with the challenge of thinking bigger and expanding our role within the college. HWC Assessment work has a long history of very strong administrative support, and President Laackman was clearly invested in continuing and expanding this. The Assessment Committee had already discussed the fact that departmental assessment was an area in which we certainly needed more investment and activity. This initial challenge would ultimately lead to some detailed work with our new Dean of Instruction, Armen Sarrafian, on a new assessment budget proposal being added to HWC's overall budget for 2012/2013 to be submitted for approval by District. President Laackman presented a very strong case for these important additional resources for our assessment work. He was obviously very persuasive, as District approved HWC's budget with these specific expansions of our assessment resources. Most of the work on this took place outside of committee time, at the very end of semester and into the summer months. This is a huge positive investment from the District, through our supportive administration, in our collegial assessment culture. The timing of all this activity means that Assessment Committee members will have considerable work to do early in the fall semester of 2012 to adequately debate, embed and manage these large

changes to our work. Our challenge will be to expand into these new areas and roles while maintaining the closeness, clarity and collegiality that has marked our work to date.

### **Community College Consortium**

The District Wide Assessment Committee, under the auspices of Dr. Cecilia Lopez, also supported expanded work with the Lumina Foundation for developing specific proposals relevant to our world of community college assessment. Two developments worthy of noting here, are the inestimable support and skill provided by Dr. Lopez at District which preceded her appointment to the new role of Vice Chancellor for Accreditation and Assessment, and secondly that the City Colleges of Chicago is now part of a new community college consortium. This new group is called the Lumina Community College Consortium for the Degree Qualifications Profile (CCCDQP) and the lead college will be Central Wyoming College. The new group will begin working to submit a proposal to the Lumina Foundation for continued work on their Degree Qualifications Profile. HWC's Assessment Committee will be represented in the first webinars for this new consortium. It is important to note that the Lumina Profile concentrates on degree-level student learning outcomes; something we have never assessed. Our Assessment Committee Charge makes clear our focus is on general education goals and their related student learning outcomes. While these form the major part of any degree award from HWC, they do not represent degree level outcomes.

### **Effective Writing Assessment**

This semester we had a team of ten faculty who stepped up to grade our student writing samples. We were able to broaden faculty engagement beyond committee members and involve three other English faculty in the grading process needed to handle 714 writing samples from across very diverse disciplines. We would specifically like to thank Rosie Banks, Sarah Liston and Megan Ritt who joined us in this important task. In the light of our previous experience of District rejecting our requests for special assignments for this heavy and additional grading work, we offered faculty a 20-hour reduction in their registration hours requirement. This was a creative, no-cost option that allowed us to continue to get assessment work processed and extensive additional faculty work acknowledged. Two different faculty graded all student writing samples and 92 of these writing samples required a third read to finalize a grade. This whole process was managed through the auspices of the Applied Science Department and our faculty assistant. The grading schedule was mostly on time and on target with minimal disruptions. It should be noted that an unexpected illness took out one of our graders and two English faculty, one a committee member and one not, picked up the extra work without hesitation. Again, another indicator of a strong and supportive assessment culture at HWC. The data analysis and report writing were supported by special assignments for summer work for two committee members. These special assignment approvals came alongside support for archive work, website work and social science assessment final report writing. It is to be hoped that this most recent shift in



District approvals for the detailed tasks that go into sustaining the work of college assessment requires considerable extra resources. Perhaps, the strong support for assessment activities from President Laackman has broadened District acknowledgement that, even in times of restricted resources, a strong sustained and fiscally supported assessment profile is one important lever in successful reaccreditation.

### **District Wide Assessment Committee**

This new committee continued to meet during the spring semester and our dialogue and inter-collegiality continued to build as new working relationships were established. Perhaps the most startling learning to emerge from this group was the reality of hugely different investments, supports and practical assessment strategies between the seven sister colleges. This led to a cross-college motion being discussed at our March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. This was subsequently circulated electronically and approved by all seven-college Assessment Committee officers. The motion reads:

*“The seven-college Assessment Committee Officers group urges the District to evaluate the administrative and structural supports provided at each campus for college-level assessment activities and requests that the District make recommendations to ensure systemic policy and practice across each independently accredited college and to advocate for each college’s consistent investment in growing, embedding, and sustaining strong faculty-driven cultures of assessment at the program, college, and degree levels.”*

### **Departmental Assessment Pilot**

Assessment at the Departmental level has always been somewhat of a challenge across campus. Departments have a variety of systems in place and have had very different contours of success in implementing assessment at this level. In partnership with the Dean of Instruction a detailed pilot plan was designed to begin a faculty-driven systemic approach to Departmental Assessment using the auspices and expertise of the Assessment Committee as guides for this new initiative. A whole new budget line was developed to account for this pilot implementation in the fiscal year of 2012/2013. It was felt that department assessment lacked the kind of systemic resources and structure that could support this additional sustained departmental activity. The pilot will begin with a small selection of departments committing to take part in this new assessment activity. Each selected department will need a Departmental Assessment Liaison; this faculty member will receive teaching remission for one class for the full academic year, to allow them the important time to undertake this assessment role. It was acknowledged that departments were all at different stages of assessment readiness and that finding key faculty interested and capable of undertaking this new role would be important.

In support of this new initiative, the Assessment Committee would also receive the resources for a new role of Departmental Assessment Coordinator who would also initially receive teaching remission from one class. The plan is to

slowly increase the number of departments involved in this activity and thus increase the scale of the role of the Departmental Assessment Coordinator. The first year budget for this new initiative was supported at District and we have begun, as much as possible, aspects of the roll out over the summer months. Beginning departments, selected on assessment committee commitment or departmental readiness were: Art, Applied Sciences, Humanities and Physical Sciences.

Clearly, this work has major implications within the Assessment Committee and will require considerable work early in the fall semester of 2012 to appropriately manage and locate this additional work within what has been a successful committee structure. There is much to debate and finalize here. Obviously, there are also significant implications for Departments too, and again the fall semester will allow these conversations to occur. In this way, we may also find a newer way of expanding the number of academic Departments actively involved in our collegial assessment activities.

There is much to learn here and much that will have to be tried and tested. Departments have cultures, traditions and protocols that need to be respected while pushing for expanded assessment practices to be developed.

## **Conclusions**

Towards the end of the spring semester all three Assessment Committee Officers were reappointed to their positions by acclamation. Mike Heathfield will continue as Chair for a further year, Jennifer Asimow continues as Vice Chair and Jeffrey Swigart as secretary. This is a leadership team that has been in place for a few years now and the new developments in departmental assessment and the wider District and Consortium work will certainly be a test of their skill and capacity to broaden and deepen our assessment work.

Over the past year there has been a small reduction in the number of departments actively contributing on a regular basis to assessment committee meetings. While the new department assessment pilot initiative is planned to eventually involve all academic departments, this is an issue that should be addressed at the administrative and chair levels. No-one wishes assessment committee participants to be mandated; indeed, one of our strengths is the choice of faculty to become active in this aspect of college life. However, it is not clear whether departments have expressly decided not to participate in the Assessment Committee. In some ways, this information may also be part of the missing loop of connectivity between the assessment committee and departments of the college. We know from our new District Assessment Committee work that, at one campus, this issue is addressed by having the Chair of Assessment attend Department Chairs meetings. This is a structural response to the issue of connection, not one that we necessarily endorse, but an area for further discussion across college. It is also true that some departments are over-represented on the committee, an issue that we certainly have never found a problem and one that we would not wish to change with any more formal requirements being placed on departments about assessment committee

engagement. Voluntarism and consensual faculty buy-in has been a hallmark of HWC's assessment committee for many years. We also know this is not the case across all seven campuses.

The world of assessment is changing, with an increasing focus on evidence of change based on the use of assessment findings. This is both a political reality and an accreditation reality which will require a strengthened focus on the one aspect of our cyclical assessment process that we have always found the most challenging. Again, resources and capacity will need to shift if we are to meet this newer agenda on assessment driven evidence of change.

At this point in our history, superficially it might appear that all we need to do is circle round and repeat the general education assessments we have used before. Even for the 'satisficers' amongst us, this would not do. Our external environment has changed very substantially over the past decade. This has sharpened especially over the past few years. There are new rules and requirements for reaccreditation and accountability. Responsibility structures have tightened considerably and the quantifiable publically available outcome reigns supreme.

Outside of our walls, we are now committed to looking, in partnership with others, at degree level student learning outcomes. Within our college, we are now committed to establishing coherent, systemic departmental and discipline-specific assessment practices to add to our general education assessment program. These are big changes in scale and scope in which there will be many challenges. As we enter the fall semester of 2012, our charge, our structure, membership, reach and roles, are all in need of renegotiation and development. Positive change is always a challenge. So it seems apropos here to emphasize that in fact there are key *processes* that have allowed us to reach this point in our communal history with some strong successes behind us. In our final meeting of the 2012 spring semester we undertook a reflective exercise, in part to close out our major work for the academic year, but also to bring some articulation and clarity about what capacities we had to face our collective future. The results of this reflective exercise demonstrate the strong awareness of committee members.

Assessment Committee members believe that we have considerable bench strength; we have many supporters ready to volunteer time at a moment's notice. We have a very strong work ethic and a variety of experience, expertise and length of committee membership. We have good humor, collegiality, a welcoming atmosphere, strong leadership, and critical self-reflection. Committee members also believe we are well connected to what is going on throughout HWC and District.

We agreed also on some areas of improvement, such as seeking more institutional changes in response to committee recommendations, and better tracking of these changes. We also wanted to balance out the workload more evenly across our subcommittee structure and membership. We still want to get

more faculty involved in assessment activities and were particularly interested in how this could be achieved with adjunct faculty. We would like to explore how we could develop incentives for adjuncts to become involved in our Assessment Committee work. Finally, we wanted to invest in helping more students and faculty become familiar with the meaning of “assessment”.

We are embarking on a year of major changes; we approach this with considerable experience behind us, yet with a heightened awareness that uncharted waters will be choppy and smooth, and everything in between.

Mike Heathfield  
July 2012

## APPENDIX ONE – HWC AC Ten-Year Meta Assessment Review

<b>Assessment Domain &amp; Instrument Category</b>	<b>Data Gathered</b>	<b>Student Respondents</b>	<b>HWC Sample Size</b>
<b>CCTST – Critical Thinking</b>	<b>Fall 2003/Spring 2004</b>	<b>1,688</b>	<b>22.4% (7,522)</b>
<i>Standardized externally produced direct measure – California Critical Thinking Skills Test</i>			
<b>SAILS – Information Literacy</b>	<b>Fall 2004</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>9.72% (7,987)</b>
<i>Standardized externally produced direct measure – by Kent State University</i>			
<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Fall 2005</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>11.79%</b>
<i>HWC faculty created indirect measure – now utilized by other institutions</i>			
<b>Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)</b>	<b>Spring 2005</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Random Sample</b>
<i>Externally produced indirect measure – national 3-year cohorts: University of Texas at Austin</i>			
<b>CCTST – Critical Thinking</b>	<b>Spring 2006</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>9.12% (7,885)</b>
<i>Standardized externally produced direct measure – California Critical Thinking Skills Test</i>			
<b>Humanities</b>	<b>Spring 2007</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>10.23%</b>
<i>HWC faculty created hybrid direct/indirect measure</i>			
<b>Physical Science</b>	<b>Fall 2008</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<i>HWC faculty created indirect measure – sourced from Epistemological Beliefs Assessment for the Physical Sciences - University of California at Berkley</i>			
<b>Quantitative Reasoning</b>	<b>Fall 2009</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>14.65%</b>
<i>HWC faculty created direct measure</i>			
<b>Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)</b>	<b>Spring 2009</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>Random Sample</b>
<i>Externally produced indirect measure – national 3-year cohorts: University of Texas at Austin</i>			
<b>Social Science</b>	<b>Fall 2010</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>12.3%</b>
<i>HWC faculty created hybrid direct/indirect measure</i>			
<b>Effective Writing</b>	<b>Fall 2011</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>7.89%</b>
<i>Direct measure collecting authentic writing samples across college departments and disciplines</i>			
<b>Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)</b>	<b>Spring 2013</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Random Sample</b>
<i>Externally produced indirect measure – national 3-year cohorts: University of Texas at Austin</i>			

## **APPENDIX TWO – District-Wide Assessment Committee**

### **Mission**

The Mission of the District-Wide Assessment Committee is to support and build the autonomous institutional assessment activities of each campus by expanding cross-collegial expertise and complementary best-practice strategies.

### **Values**

The District-Wide Assessment Committee is committed to sharing, listening and learning in the context of mutual trust, support and the validation of both experience and expertise. The key processes of our work are embedded in the important values we subscribe to:

1. Respect for our colleagues, their unique perspectives and experiences.
2. Recognition of both the crucial differences in each campus and their commonalities.
3. Honesty and integrity in how we conduct ourselves and the work we do together.
4. Responsiveness to professional and academic critiques of our work.
5. Understanding that our learning is a mutual experience of value in its own right.
6. Acceptance of diversity of thought, practice and experience.
7. Acknowledgement of the complexity of working within a large seven-college system in which data has a range of motivations, purposes and impact.
8. Trust that our work together will only be used for aggregate expertise building from which we all benefit.
9. Openness to challenge and change that puts improving student learning, and the subsequent student outcomes, at its heart.

### **Membership**

All seven campuses of the City Colleges of Chicago are expected to be represented at the District-Wide Assessment Committee. This should include, but not be limited to, Assessment Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs. Membership can also be granted to other interested and engaged faculty and staff as appropriate. The District-Wide Assessment Committee is convened and supported under the auspices of the office of the Associate Vice Chancellor, Liberal Arts.

### **Objectives**

The committee is in the early stages of development and these key objectives reflect the initiation stage of our development.

- A. Establish a regular schedule of meetings to a maximum of four in each of the fall and spring semesters.
- B. Ensure meetings are timely, productive and well documented.
- C. Communicate membership requirements, processes and expectations to all our college colleagues.

- D. Provide a regular forum in which institutional assessment strategies and experiences are shared for mutual benefit.
- E. Establish an electronic network through the auspices of Blackboard, in which assessment related artifacts can begin to be shared.
- F. Build a City Colleges of Chicago database and repository of assessment artifacts and best practice exemplars.
- G. Create pathways to cross-campus collaboration for improving the quality of institutional assessment for the City Colleges of Chicago.
- H. Advocate for institutional support within and across campuses to improve assessment practices and outcomes.
- I. Increase innovation and expertise at individual campuses by providing key assessment players with wider resources and an enhanced supportive network of colleagues.
- J. Distribute electronically national assessment resources that add tools, artifacts and practices to our institutional assessment repertoires.
- K. Investigate resources and opportunities for additional investment in quality assessment work at the City Colleges of Chicago and the seven sister colleges.

DRAFT - 11/9/11

## **APPENDIX THREE**

### **Harold Washington College Departmental Assessment Pilot - Fall 2012**

Harold Washington College (HWC) has secured considerable additional funding from District to pilot and establish coherent, successful and sustainable assessment of student learning at the departmental level. HWC has a strong institutional assessment culture in which the college-wide assessment of general education student learning outcomes is well established.

The new resources are designed to build on this faculty-led assessment culture and expertise to allow selected departments to begin to expand legitimate units of assessment, student learning outcomes, assessment metrics and processes, data management and dissemination processes. All of this activity seeks to support faculty through the use of department level relevant data from which both student learning outcomes and student success can be improved. The longer-term goal is to cumulatively add departments to this process until we have all departments regularly assessing student learning outcomes, at levels beyond the individual classroom unit, as students build towards a coherent college award.

These new departmental initiatives should be faculty-led and work in partnership with the institutional expertise in assessment that HWC already has. Departments should see this pilot as the initiation of support for important practices that will have increasing resonance in our re-accreditation process. This is also seen as a vehicle for expanded faculty engagement in assessment practices that can directly impact teaching and learning. Learning from each department will be shared amongst those participating and within the College-wide Assessment Committee, so that our institutional assessment knowledge grows alongside impactful practice changes. District has high regard for HWC's assessment work, as seen by the support for this expansion, and this new work will certainly be watched closely at District for lessons that can be utilized beyond HWC.

#### **Implementation**

In partnership with the Assessment Committee and the Dean of Instruction, a small group of initial departments will lead the pilot. A faculty member from each of these departments will act as Department Assessment Liaison who will be a key player in the pilot on behalf of their department.

Department Assessment Liaisons will work within their own department structure and culture to deliver on a range of outcomes. They are also expected to contribute to the building of our departmental assessment knowledge as we expand and deepen our assessment practices across the campus.

The first task must be to establish appropriate, educationally coherent and manageable, units of assessment. This must be beyond one class level and could be a sequence of courses, a capstone experience, at the summative point in a concentration, or any other level that would inform practice within a department or specific discipline. Multi-



discipline departments will need to decide if there are over-arching or under-pinning student learning outcomes that transcend disciplinary boundaries or whether they will need discreet assessments for each or some of their contributory disciplines.

Once the unit of assessment has been established, specific, measurable student learning outcomes must be formulated and agreed. These outcomes should then guide the process for finding an appropriate assessment tool. Assessment tools can be acquired from other HE institutions, adapted from a range of sources, or created by department faculty themselves. They should assess our specific student learning outcomes, be appropriate in level and accessibility for our students. They should also be brief and collect only data relevant to their key departmental tasks. If there are ways to embed the assessment process within current assessment activities, then these should be encouraged.

Department Liaisons will be encouraged to make this process as inclusive and collegial as possible but also be guided by the need to deliver on the outcomes attached to these additional resources. It is expected that by the end of the fall semester units of assessment and student learning outcomes will have been agreed and codified. Also by the end of fall semester, the assessment tool investigation should have made strong progress, the data gathering process and procedures should have been outlined for a full departmental assessment to occur early in the spring semester of 2013. Ideally, a small pilot should have occurred before the end of the fall semester 2012. We may want to bullet this so the deliverables are clear.

Department Liaisons will work alongside the Assessment Committee and specifically report to the Department Assessment Coordinator as a key point of contact, feedback and advice. At this stage in the pilot Department Assessment Liaisons should attend regular Wednesday Assessment Committee meetings. At this stage in the pilot, they will form a specific sub-committee of the larger Assessment Committee and Departmental Assessment will run in parallel with our more usual general education assessment program. As the scale and scope of Departmental Assessment increases, different coordination and organization strategies may replace these initial pilot structures.

In spring of 2013, participating Departments are expected to run a full assessment and gather appropriate data from as many students as possible. Also during spring 2013 it is expected that data gathered are processed, analyzed and their meaning communicated within the department. An expectation would be that recommendations for any evidence-based changes that are within the department or HWC domain could be implemented in the fall semester of 2013. Additional research support services will also be used to support the data processing and analysis stages of this new assessment cycle.

#### **Department Assessment Pilot: Tasks and Timescales**

<b>Timespan</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Required Outcome</b>
<b>August 2012 – September 2012</b>	<b>Establish coherent unit or units of assessment.</b>	<b>Map of Departmental Units of Assessment.</b>

October 2012	Formulate specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for associated units of assessment.	Written, agreed SLOs for appropriate units of assessment.
October 2012 – November 2012	Research, adapt or create appropriate tools and metrics.	Draft assessment tool for review.
October 2012 – November 2012	Outline assessment process and how faculty and students contribute to the assessment process.	Plan of engagement and data gathering strategy for full assessment.
October 2012 – November 2012	Run small pilot to test tool and assessment process.	Small student sample and completed data set.
November 2012 – December 2012	Use pilot learning to adapt tool and assessment process.	Finalized assessment tool, full assessment process plan produced.
January 2013 – February 2013	Create full assessment process, procedures and data gathering strategies for full assessment.	Produce all communications, recruitment materials for full assessment.
March 2013	Maximize faculty and student involvement in department assessment.	Conduct assessment: gather full data set on specific outcomes from relevant sample students.
March 2013 – April 2013	Process and analyze collected data. Work with Assessment colleagues and Institutional Research to produce operational findings.	Review implementation findings, assist in data processing queries where needed.
April 2013 - May 2013	Disseminate findings, create dialogue in department and beyond, to improve student learning outcomes.	Create department materials using findings. Table discussions on practice changes.
May 2013	Use outcome findings and methodological learning from full process to design improved assessment process for second iteration.	Report to Assessment Committee about next assessment for Department.

Mike Heathfield July 2, 2012