HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

THE ASSESSMENT TIMES

FALL 2009

Assessment Week!

Quantitative Reasoning

During Week 12 (11/9-11/14) of the Fall 2009 semester, the Assessment Committee will administer a Quantitative Reasoning Assessment. The goal is to assess our students' abilities in computation, reasoning and problem solving.

As with previous assessments, the AC has solicited faculty to volunteer their sections. Unlike previous assessments, students will be able to volunteer themselves to take the assessment. We hope to gain some insight into student interest in voluntarily participating in an assessment measure.

To make the assessment more inviting for students, each student who completes the assessment will be **entered into a raffle for 10 iPod Nanos and 20 iPod Shuffles!**

The assessment will take place **11/9-11/14 in Rooms 203d/e**. Please ask your students to take the assessment very seriously. Also, they will not be allowed to use calculators.

Look out for more advertisements and please remind your students.

EBAPS Results Are In: Preliminary Findings Look Promising

In 2008, the Assessment Committee set out to determine where our students are regarding the natural sciences portion of the HWC General Education Objectives. Those SLOs are:

> Students who satisfactorily complete the Natural Science classes at HWC will be able to 1) Formulate reasonable explanations of natural phenomena based on thorough observations, 2) Interpret and articulate scientific results that are presented in verbal, graphic and/or tabular form, 3) Critically evaluate scientific resources and scientific claims presented in the media, and 4) Apply steps of the scientific method to solve problems.

To assess student learning, the Assessment Committee used the *Epistemological Beliefs Assessment for Physical Science* (EBAPS). The analysis of students' performance shows *significant improvement* as they progress in their science

(EBAPS cont'd)

education at HWC. Students' performance changed from an overall mean score of 47% among students who have taken 0 natural science courses to 55% among students who have completed three or more natural science courses at HWC. Moreover, students' performance, regardless of an interaction effect from taking science courses at other institutions, showed statistically significant improvement: groups of students who have *only* taken natural science courses at HWC are comparable to those who have *only* taken natural science courses at other colleges.

Additionally, the results show that our students have a generally positive attitude about science, with 17% indicating that they are "highly comfortable" and 57% indicating that they are "comfortable" with science. Similarly, ~50% agreed to some degree that the study of science has useful applications to their every-day lives, helps them to become more rational and logical, gives them important skills that they can use in other classes, and influences them to read science books.

As students progress in their natural science courses at HWC, their scores improve on SLOs 1, 3, and 4. However, the students' performance on SLO 2 (interpret and articulate scientific results that are presented in verbal, graphic and/or tabular form) show a trend of improvement that is not very significant. Faculty members are therefore encouraged to work those skills into their classrooms whenever possible.

Humm: Humanities Assessment

In the spring of 2007, the HWC Assessment Committee utilized a two-part assessment with a survey designed to probe student attitudes toward and behaviors with respect to the arts, and a second section that would allow students to choose one of three artifacts (a poem, an image or a musical piece) to utilize and respond to in short essays probing their ability to respond affectively, interpret, contextualize, and evaluate a work of art.

In response to the numerous findings of that measure, the Assessment Committee recommends that instructors at HWC consider:

> Spending additional time working with students to develop their vocabulary as it relates to affective and interpretive tasks

> Increasing student opportunities to provide evidential support for their reasoning

(Humm cont'd)

Introducing students to a wider array of critical tools for explaining, interpreting, evaluating, and contextualizing humanistic artifacts

Requiring students to habitually support assertions with textual (or observed) evidence

Beyond these core recommendations, we urge the Humanities department to consider:

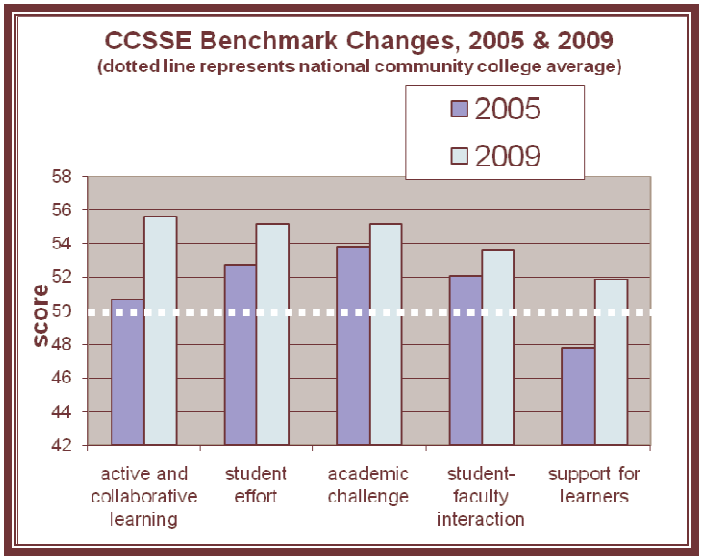
Creating a "humanities toolkit" of vocabulary words, critical tools, and examples of evidential support to be used by instructors in the department and across the curriculum when applicable to ensure that all of our students are more successful at achieving desired outcomes

Increasing efforts to engender student attendance at arts events by developing a means of informing faculty and students of arts opportunities on or near campus, such as a listing of arts groups (theatre companies, dance troupes, museums, etc.)

Demanding the use of sophisticated vocabularies in students' description of emotional responses and artistic disciplines and developing educational materials and/or training sessions for their colleagues with respect to the latter

CCSSE Shows Improvement!

In 2005, HWC ran the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The Assessment Committee is pleased to announce that we repeated the measure in 2009 and found improvement in all five major benchmarks. The sampled students reported increased satisfaction in the following areas: Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Academic Challenge, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Support for Learners. Naturally, we are pleased by these improvements and look forward to others.



Assessment Outreach

You may have noticed the new Assessment posters on every floor. Whenever we have new information to share about our activities or findings, we will post it for all to see.

We'd Love to Hear from You

The purpose of assessment is *not* to collect reams of data, but to inspire pedagogical change. Let us know what you are doing in response to the Assessment Committee's findings. Contact Michael Heathfield at mheathfield@ccc.edu or Todd Heldt at theldt@ccc.edu.

We're Already Looking Ahead

In Spring 2010 we will be assessing student progress toward the Social Science general education objective. Please reserve the week April 12th – 17th in your schedule to bring your class down for the measure.

New Members

If you want to be a part of a great committee that does important work and meets every Wednesday from 3:00 to 4:00, please contact Todd Heldt at theldt@ccc.edu.

2009 Assessment Committee Members

Michael Heathfield -- Applied Sciences
Todd Heldt – Library
Chris Sabino – Mathematics
Jennifer Asimow – Applied Sciences
Margarita Chavez – FL/ESL
LaRhue Finney – English
Betty Harris – Social Science
Lynnel Kiely – Social Science
John Kieraldo – Library
Chao Lu – Mathematics
Liliana Marin – Physical Science
Charles McSweeney – Advising
Jaime Millan – Physical Science
Willard Moody -- English
Farah Movahedzadeh – Biology
Nick Pietrowski – Applied Sciences
Dave Richardson – Humanities
Kurt Sheu – Mathematics
Jeffrey Swigart – Mathematics
Matthew Williams -- ESL
Allan Wilson – Physical Science
Loretta Visomirskis -- English