

HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

THE ASSESSMENT TIMES

FOR STUDENTS — FALL, 2012

To All of the Wonderful HWC Students

A hearty “Thank You” to all _____ students who participated in last week’s Human Diversity Assessment. The faculty, administration, staff, and the members of the Assessment Committee are grateful for your gracious willingness to support us as we strive to better support you. Early results from this survey will be available soon and a full report will be available next semester.

For some of you, this was your first opportunity to partake in the ongoing work of Assessment. At HWC we are committed to a culture of improving student learning through meaningful assessments of our general education goals and student learning outcomes. As you spend more time at the college, you will see evidence of our work in the classes you take, in the learning processes you engage in, and in the ongoing conversations throughout the building about how we can make this the best college experience available. None of this would be possible without your willingness to help and participate, so once again, THANK YOU!

From Michael Heathfield, Chair

From the Chair — Michael Heathfield The Faculty Four C’s at HWC

As the daylight grows shorter and we all look towards the end of semester, I thought it would be good to let you know why I appreciate my faculty colleagues who serve on the Assessment Committee. I chair this committee - we spend a great deal of time looking at what you learn, when you learn, how you learn it, and how we can work together to improve all those things. Probably, just like you, we juggle a great many tasks all at one time. We all teach and in addition to our assessment work this semester we are also:

Analyzing all the great data you provided for our Human Diversity assessment last week;

Putting the final graphic touches on our Student Learning in the Social Sciences report;

Finalizing the writing and analysis of our Effective Writing at Harold Washington College report;

Working with Humanities, Applied Sciences and Art faculty on a new discipline assessment pilot;

Planning a new 7-year assessment timetable – we really do plan that far in advance; and,

Contributing to new District-wide Assessment meetings with our colleagues across Chicago.

All this work rests on our ability to work together as a diverse team of people. These are essential skills in any job. I call these the four faculty C’s at HWC.

Collegiality is central to how we work. In an academic environment, “collegiality” is the teamwork term. Every week, sixteen or more faculty come together to talk, listen and get tasks done. Sometimes we disagree, we often have some fairly heated debates, but we always move our agenda forward with *great respect* for each other. Is that the environment you study in? Is that how you see your ideal workplace?

We also have **Capacity** that is broad and deep. This means we have a really good range of talents and skills. In all our work together, we try to tap into these skills and talents to get everyone to use them to meet our goals. In our committee, new faculty work alongside those of us who have been in the classroom a long time. Everyone gets to practice listening, leading, following, and using their skills to make things work well. Is that how your group work happens on campus? Can you help your peers feel valued *and* not sure what you are trying to say here, but this doesn’t sound right.?

Capability. HWC’s Assessment Committee is very well regarded in the City College system and we also support assessment work at our sister colleges. We have strong leaders and administrators who get us the resources to do our work well. Have you ever worked in a place where you know your boss has got your back? When you work in groups in your classes, do you always feel your instructor has given you all the supports and resources you need to get the job done well?

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The last C is **Control**. Everyone needs some control in his or her life. We also know that having a sense of control in your own life, in as many ways as possible, is very good thing. Part of stepping out on your own life journey is about becoming more in control of your destiny. That is part of the reason you are in college and we truly want you to succeed in this. You do really control a great deal of this, even though you may not feel it when grades are being handed out! In your college life, your family life, and your working life, how can you feel *more* in control as you drive toward your important goals?

A good place to start building your own “C” power is to look within yourself. Even better, start a conversation with someone else about the four C’s. Better yet, make it a conversation with your classmates and instructors.

Effective Writing at HWC

Last spring, we conducted an assessment on writing. Some of you may remember completing a survey that had loads of questions about writing. You may also have known, but maybe not, that a writing sample was submitted with that survey (all names were removed and nobody knew who the writing samples belonged to) and was assessed by faculty from around the college.

We looked at writing in terms of the following: Focus, Organization, Voice, Development, Conventions, and Style. Not surprisingly, our students’ strengths in writing were in the areas of Voice and Focus. The area that was most challenging for our students was in Conventions (spelling, sentence structure, grammar, etc.).

A full report of the Effective Writing Assessment is currently being finalized. Once complete, we will share the results with you.

The Social Sciences at HWC Gets National Attention

We are putting the final touches on the report from the Social Sciences Assessment. Our very own Lynel Keily of the Social Sciences Department recently went to the National Social Science Conference in New Mexico to speak about our Social Sci-

ence Assessment and its results. Once the report is final, we will share the complete results with you, but for now, here are a few tidbits.

- Students have great latitude in selecting SS courses
- SS survey courses dominate in enrollment
- Students value their SS learning and see it has utility in understanding the world
- Students are less certain of its utility to future careers or coursework.
- Students understand that SS learning is complex and not dependent on factual recall of retained knowledge
- Students tend to compartmentalize their SS learning and are weak in identifying strong interdisciplinary connections
- Students who complete more SS classes demonstrate a greater knowledge base and greater comfort level for the SSs

Assessment in the Departments

A new assessment initiative has begun at the departmental level at HWC. Under the leadership of Dave Richardson, Ericka McCormick (Humanities), Carrie Nepstad (Applied Sciences), and Paul Wandless (Art and Architecture) have begun working on assessment projects in their respective departments.

According to Dave Richardson, “The best outcome of this project would be if it were to spark lots of conversation about student learning among colleagues and create new ways of looking at student learning while expanding the scope and awareness of our college-wide assessment activities.”

The Assessment Committee is made up of faculty, administrators, and professional staff. We are always looking for more interested members, including students. If you have any questions about becoming a member of the committee or about anything else concerning assessment at HWC, please contact Michael Heathfield, Chair @ mheathfield@ccc.edu (office 712) or Jennifer Asimow, Vice-Chair @ jasimow@ccc.edu.



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