

The Delta College Academic Assessment Plan

Submitted by

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DELTA COLLEGE ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PLAN 2002-2006

I. Introduction

Delta College is a public, tax-supported community college serving the three counties of Bay, Midland, and Saginaw, Michigan. In 1993, the college reviewed and revised its mission statement as follows:

Delta College Mission Statement

Delta College is a responsive, dynamic community college. We educate, inspire, challenge and support a diverse community of learners to achieve academic, professional and personal excellence.

Academic assessment serves a central role in carrying out the college's mission. Its importance was formalized during the 1995-1996 academic year when the Delta College Academic Council of division chairs gave their support to a mission statement and six specific goals for academic assessment. This mission statement and these goals are as follows:

Delta College Mission Statement for Academic Assessment

This mission of academic assessment is a collaborative, systematic process leading to gathering, interpreting and using information about student knowledge, skills and intellectual development for the purpose of improving student learning at Delta College.

Associated Goals:

1. To have clear academic goals be the cornerstone of what we choose to assess so that the data we collect will have educational value to faculty, administration, and the communities we serve;
2. To think in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom, so that the information will be connected to issues or questions that people really care about;
3. To recognize that learning is an extremely complex process calling for a variety of assessment tools that must be used over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration;
4. To develop formative, ongoing assessment that entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time;
5. To assess the assessment process itself to refine it in light of insights gained;
6. To keep the focus on learning and teaching so as to meet the obligations to students, our society, and ourselves to improve.
- 7.

II. Assessment: A Strategic Initiative of Delta College for 2002-2005

Academic assessment remains as important to the college today as it was in the mid-1990s. In August 2002, the College Executive Council selected Assessment as one of the college's four strategic initiatives for the three year period, 2002-2005.

III. The Philosophy and Approach to Academic Assessment at Delta College

Academic assessment at Delta began through the efforts of faculty to learn and teach others to use the techniques of classroom assessment. From the beginning Delta faculty members have played a central role in academic assessment planning and implementation. Only recently, in May 2000, has the college had a full-time administrator who has been charged with providing support to faculty and staff to advance academic assessment. Even with the addition of this administrator, faculty assessment program and discipline contacts play an important role identifying questions about their students' learning and working with the director of Academic Assessment to design and implement program/ discipline assessment plans that will address these questions. The Academic Assessment Office provides support for the faculty's assessment efforts, but does not dictate to faculty what they should do.

Our approach to academic assessment at Delta College is guided by a deeply held belief that if assessment is to be authentic and improve student learning, it must be "owned" by faculty and embedded in their course activities. Consequently, we have emphasized the importance of experimentation and learning from initial assessment efforts.

It has become an expectation that most faculty, if not all faculty, will participate in discipline or program assessment. Over the last several academic years we have been completing the assessment feedback loop by using results obtained from program/discipline level assessment to modify pedagogy, course prerequisites, program or course content, assessment methods or other factors that we can influence to enhance student learning (see Figure 1).

IV. The Academic Assessment Process at Delta College

Academic assessment is a central component of the process by which the college's academic curriculum is monitored and modified. The information gathered through academic assessment directly influences curricular, budgetary, planning and other decisions made by individual instructors, academic disciplines, divisions, and other academic offices or bodies, such as and the Office of Developmental Education (the Bridge Program) and the General Education Curriculum and Assessment Committee.

The purpose of academic assessment is to provide information that will lead to the improvement of student learning. Academic assessment sheds light on student learning. It is not a means for evaluating individual students or instructors.

The Two Levels of Academic Assessment

Academic assessment at Delta College is planned and implemented at two levels.

Level Two

Discipline or program assessment constitutes the second level of academic assessment. Our assessment process at this level is primarily course-based. Assessment projects examine students' learning in an individual course, in a sequence of courses taken within one discipline or across disciplines, in an academic occupational program, or in a cross-college program such as General Education. Instructors select the discipline content or contextualized general education outcomes and objectives (or both) they feel are most important to assess. The choice of which learning outcomes to assess and the design of an assessment project is the responsibility of discipline faculty, individually or collectively. Faculty may also consult with advisory board members, counselors or advisors, or faculty from other disciplines or divisions as they design assessment projects. The results of single course or larger program or discipline assessment projects are gathered by faculty and used to monitor and modify courses, academic programs, or other parts of the curriculum.

Delta College's General Education Program is assessed by faculty groups that work on a four year cycle to assess students' learning of each of the College's General Education outcomes. Assisted by the Directors of General Education, Academic Assessment and Institutional Research, each faculty group plans, pilots, implements, assesses and analyzes student work to determine students' level of learning on that General Education outcome. Recommendations based on their findings are made by these groups to the General Education Curriculum and Assessment Committee. This body may in turn submit curriculum change and other policy recommendations to Division Chairs, the Curriculum Council, the Dean of Teaching & Learning or to other individuals or groups.

Currently an Ad Hoc Committee is working to strengthen the link between Delta College's graduation requirements and its General Education program. When their work is completed, the General Education program may be modified. This in turn may affect the faculty teams presently working to assess students' learning of the General Education outcomes.

In addition to the information gathered by the direct and indirect assessment of student learning in courses or programs, a number of other types of assessment data are used to inform curriculum decisions. The Assessment and Testing Office, located within the Student Services area, conducts placement tests for students. As new students seek to register for classes most are required to take the COMPASS placement exams. Faculty, working with advisors and counselors, use students' scores on these exams to establish and modify course prerequisites and make other types of curricular decisions.

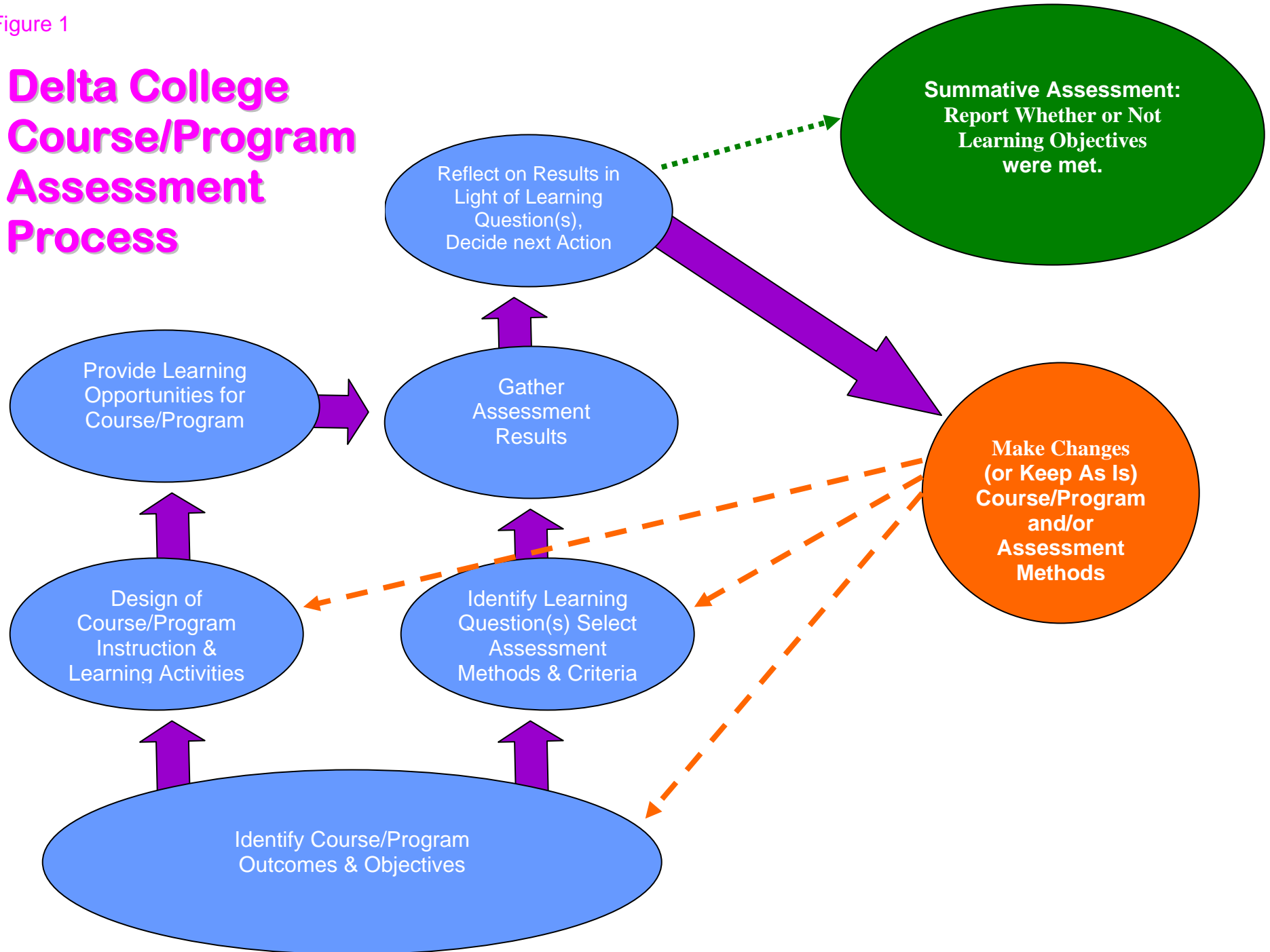
The college's Office of Institutional Research conducts surveys of employers, transfer students, Delta graduates, and current students for use in program needs studies for academic program development and review.

Level One

The first level of assessment, classroom assessment and research, concerns faculty inquiry into student learning as it occurs within a single class session or from class session to class session. Generally assessment at this level tends to be more formative than summative. To learn how to conduct classroom assessment techniques and related assessment projects, Delta instructors can participate in a faculty-level course, Classroom Assessment Techniques (ED 399). This course is offered each fall, winter, and spring term. Approximately 40% of the faculty has taken it since it was first offered in 1997.

Figure 1

Delta College Course/Program Assessment Process



Assessment of Distance Learning

Over the last several years Delta College has offered increasing numbers of distance learning courses. The course assessment projects implemented to examine students' learning in the face-to-face instructional format must also be conducted for students' learning in distance learning formats. This is necessary to ensure that distance learning students receive an equivalent and valuable learning experience as compared to traditional, face-to-face instruction. Some course assessment projects have been conducted on students in distance-learning formats, but we are early in this process. Eventually the assessment of student learning in distance learning formats will occur at the same rate as it does for face-to-face instruction. The results from the distance learning sections of a course will be compared and aggregated separately from the assessment results obtained in traditional format sections. Assessment information about variation in student learning according to instructional format will be able to be used to improve learning in all formats.

Academic Assessment Professional Development Opportunities

Delta faculty can develop an awareness and understanding of classroom assessment and assessment research and an appreciation for their value to students and teachers through several types of activities. The most significant of these is working with the Director of Academic Assessment to design a discipline or program assessment plan. Each discipline and program has a faculty member who serves as their "Assessment Contact" Assessment contacts are not the sole faculty responsible for their discipline's or program's assessment; instead they serve as a representative for their colleagues. They meet with the Academic Assessment director at least once a semester to design or enhance assessment plans or consult on issues that have arisen. They work with the director to ensure that assessment plans and report information are correctly entered in the assessment database.

Participation in the faculty development course Using Classroom Assessment (ED 399) provides another avenue for faculty to learn effective ways to assess their students' learning. Full and part-time faculty as well as division chairs and administrative staff have taken this 2 credit hour academic course. Currently approximately 35% of Delta's full-time faculty have taken this course.

In addition to ED 399, other development activities shorter in duration and scope are held throughout the academic year. While not as thorough as the assessment course, they nevertheless provide meaningful ways for faculty and staff to enhance their knowledge of academic assessment. During the annual Fall Conference faculty and staff can attend workshops or poster sessions highlighting academic assessment projects, methods or issues. In most years several hours of this conference time are scheduled for faculty to meet with discipline colleagues to discuss the assessment activities conducted the prior year and planned for the upcoming academic year.

New full-time faculty members learn about the college's assessment processes as they participate in a year-long orientation program, "The Faculty First Year Experience." In this program, organized by the director of the college's "Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence" (F.C.T.E.), faculty attend sessions in which the college's General Education Program and the methods of classroom, course, and program assessment are introduced.

All faculty and staff are invited to attend a monthly one and one-half hour session in which diverse topics related to general education and assessment are presented and discussed. In addition to these activities open to all faculty, each year adjunct faculty are invited to attend one or more workshops on assessment geared especially to their needs and interests.

In May, at the close of each academic year, a "Spring Assessment Retreat" is held for faculty and staff. The focus of this retreat has changed from year to year, but it is intended to provide faculty and staff across the college an opportunity to learn together about specific topics involved in academic assessment and to share what they learned from their academic assessment projects.

By meeting with director of Academic Assessment, taking the ED 399 course, participating in assessment workshops or retreats, working on classroom, course, and discipline or program assessment projects throughout the academic year, and/or by using college funding to attend assessment conferences, Delta faculty and staff are developing greater expertise in the methods of academic assessment. They are using this knowledge to monitor and, at times, modify their class sessions, courses, and academic disciplines or programs to try to improve their students' learning.

V. The Current Roles and Responsibilities of the Delta College Faculty in the Academic Assessment Process

Faculty members are expected to continually assess and document the assessment of their students' learning by participating in discipline course or program assessment projects. In doing so they are to work with their discipline colleagues to identify questions about students' learning that can be addressed by assessment projects. Together discipline faculties are to document what they learned from their assessment work and decide upon actions to take to respond to what they learned to improve their students' learning. The guidelines for planning, implementing and reporting discipline/program assessment projects are presented in Appendix A.

To ensure faculty have a clear understanding of academic assessment and develop meaningful assessment projects, they are strongly encouraged to attend the monthly Gen Ed Assessment sessions, academic assessment sessions scheduled for the annual Fall Conference, the annual Spring Assessment Retreat, and to take the ED 399 course, Using Classroom Assessment, as soon as possible upon beginning teaching at Delta.

VI. The Current Structure, Rationale, and Responsibilities of the Delta College Academic Assessment Committees

The Leadership/ Decision Making Structure for Academic Assessment

The Academic Assessment Committee (AAC)

The Rationale:

The AAC was first constituted in the fall of 2002 as an advisory board. In October 2004 it was revamped and established as a standing committee. As such, it provides recommendations to the Director of Academic Assessment who is responsible for leading the College's academic assessment efforts, identifying the approach the College is taking for academic assessment, and communicating this to the faculty, staff, students and other constituencies of the College.

The AAC also supports the Director's efforts to ensure academic assessment is linked to and, therefore, informs and is informed by the College's curriculum, planning, and budgeting processes. This strengthens the College's "culture of evidence" in which knowledge produced by academic assessment informs decision-making at all levels of Academic Services, resulting in improved student learning.

Responsibilities of the AAC:

The AAC provides suggestions to the Director of Academic Assessment on seven critical areas of assessment responsibility:

1. Provides feedback on revisions, made when necessary, to the College's Academic Assessment Mission Statement and goals;
2. With the Director and members of the Faculty Student Assessment Review Committee, provides faculty discipline/program representatives and the members of General Education Assessment groups with guidance/professional development on the design of assessment plans, particularly the selection of assessment appropriate assessment methods, the implementation of the corresponding assessments, the interpretation of assessment results, and decisions on appropriate action responses.
3. Provides feedback on the degree to which Academic Assessment processes are linked to other College processes, especially the, Planning, Budgeting, Curriculum and Staff Professional Development processes, and makes recommendations on ways to improve these linkages;
4. Makes suggestions to the Director on criteria for the allocation of resources to faculty members/groups to support their academic assessment work and gives input to the creation of the annual budget for academic assessment;

5. Provides suggestions on planning the annual Spring Assessment Retreat, the academic assessment sessions of the annual Fall Conference, and other events and workshops organized to promote and educate faculty, staff, students and other College constituencies on academic assessment.
6. Supports the Director's efforts to guide faculty, academic divisions, disciplines, offices, and college academic committees on issues involving assessment methods and interpretation of results, as well as other assessment matters that arise.
7. Provides feedback to the Director on the assessment of the Academic Assessment processes and makes suggestions for their improvement.

The AAC is constituted by:

1. an Academic Officer on the college's Executive Council;
2. the Associate Dean of Career and Continuing Education;
3. the Faculty chair of the Curriculum Council;
4. the Director of General Education;
5. the Director of Institutional Research;
6. one of the faculty members who teach ED 399 (the course for faculty and staff on introduction to classroom assessment)
7. additional faculty members;
8. two student representatives, one studying in an occupational program and the other in a non-occupational program;
9. the Director of Academic Assessment *(chair);

*The Academic Assessment Director, who chairs this committee, serves as the liaison between it and this committee's subcommittees, the Curriculum Council and Sub-Council, and the academic leadership of the College.

Sub-committees of the AAC

Most of the work of the AAC is conducted by smaller Subcommittees. The Director of Academic Assessment will establish Subcommittees as is necessary. These Subcommittees, chaired by the Director, will establish their own meeting schedule. Standing Subcommittees of the AAC will include: the Faculty Student Assessment Review & Curriculum Committee (FSARCC); the Academic Assessment Budget & Planning Committee (AABPC); and the Academic Assessment Professional Development & Event Committee (AAPDEC).

The Faculty Student Assessment Review Committee (FSARC)

FSARC reviews, discusses and provides constructive suggestions on program and discipline assessment reports. In doing so it promotes communications about assessment methods, report results and actions planned and taken in response. Over time its work

will enhance the quality of academic assessment at Delta College. The criteria FSARC uses to review discipline/program assessment reports are presented below in Appendix B (pg. 15).

The Academic Assessment Budget & Planning Committee (AABPC)

AABPC assists the Director of Academic Assessment in developing an annual appropriations plan for academic assessment work. This plan is used to guide the annual College budget request for the Academic Assessment Office. It also is used to establish criteria for providing funding to support academic assessment work conducted by the faculty. A second important function of this Subcommittee is its role in ensuring academic assessment efforts are well integrated into the larger budget and planning processes of the College.

The Academic Assessment Professional Development & Event Committee (AAPDEC)

The third Standing Subcommittee of the AAC is the Academic Assessment Professional Development & Event Committee (AAPDEC). This body assists the Director in planning the annual Spring Assessment Retreat, sessions of the annual Fall Learning Days Conference, and other conference and events agreed to by the AAC in consultation with the College's Academic leadership. A second critical function of this body is to work with the Office of Organizational Success, the FCTE, the Division Chairs, Student Services staff and others to schedule, plan, and assist in professional development activities to educate faculty, staff, and students on academic assessment.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Discipline Academic Assessment Guidelines

Delta College Assessment Project Guidelines

1. Identify Questions about Student Learning:

Discipline faculty identify questions they have about their students' learning that they will examine in their assessment projects.

The range of topics projects address include:

- ✓ General Education process ability outcomes
- ✓ Discipline program/course content outcomes
- ✓ Activities promoting learning in a course/program
- ✓ Students' use of certain texts
- ✓ The instructor's pedagogical style
- ✓ Course/program prerequisites
- ✓ Course/program organization
- ✓ Other important curriculum/learning issues.

2. Develop Discipline Program Assessment Projects:

Faculty work with their discipline colleagues (or if there are none, alone) to develop and implement useful program assessment projects. Faculty teaching in the same program or the same course will obtain more meaningful information if they assess the same program or course outcomes, using the same assessment methodology and tools. However, if faculty can or will only assess student learning by assessing different learning outcomes, using different methods, or using different assessment tools, this is preferable to not doing any documented academic assessment. If you have questions or concerns about how to design or conduct an assessment project, contact the Director of Academic Assessment.

3. Gather Assessment Results and Complete the Feedback Loop:

Once the program (or course) assessment projects are implemented and the results obtained, discipline colleagues share and reflect on their projects' assessment results. They decide what, if any, changes should be made to their curriculum, instruction, teaching materials (etc.) and assessment methods.

4. Document and Report the Program/Discipline (and course) Assessment Process in the Academic Assessment Database:

As faculty plan program/discipline assessment work such plans should be entered in the Assessment Database. As assessment results are obtained, this information can be entered into the database as well. Discipline/Program faculty should enter the majority of their assessment plan and report information into the

database by July 1 following the academic year when it was implemented. Because it may be difficult for discipline faculty to schedule meetings during July and early August to discuss assessment results and make decisions about actions to take in response to those results, assessment reports may not be completed in the database until early in the fall semester. Faculty should complete the entry of information in the assessment database by October following the year the assessment was implemented. Failing to do so may stall the discipline/program faculty's plans to implement assessment work in the next academic year.

Appendix B. FSARC Review Criteria

FSARC Presentation/Discussion Criteria – June 2006

Each Presentation & Discussion Session is allotted 35 minutes. The Agenda & Presentation/Discussion Criteria for each is as follows:

- I. Presentation on Background Information on Discipline /Program Assessment
Presenter presents (15 – 20 minutes):
 - A. Background Info on:
 1. Information on curriculum & students
 2. Information on what has been done prior to this
 3. Rationale for current program assessment
 - B. Review of Discipline/ Program Assessment Work. Review Poster (if available) and/or Assessment Plan/ Report (printed off database if available)
- II. Peer Sharing Forum on Program/Discipline Assessment Practices
Suggestions & Comments
Discussion addresses (15 – 20 minutes):
 - A. Linking prior years' assessment results to current assessments
 1. Do the current assessments build on prior years' assessments/results?
 2. What is the rationale for current assessments?
 3. What questions related to student learning were the program/ discipline faculty trying to examine by doing their assessment work?
 - B. Assessment Methods
 1. Do the methods allow the assessment questions to be examined?
 2. What are the strengths/weaknesses of the assessment methods used?
 3. What other assessment methods might the discipline/program consider using?
 - C. Conclusions and Linkages
 1. Do the assessment results support the presenting discipline's/ program's conclusions? Are the results and conclusions adequately linked?

2. Do their conclusions support the presenting program's/ discipline's proposed actions? Are the conclusions and proposed actions adequately linked?
- D. Follow-Up on Proposed Actions Resulting from Assessment Results Obtained
1. How will the presenting discipline/ program learn if the proposed actions will have the desired impact (improving student learning and improved assessment methods)?
 2. Do the Discipline's / Program's Upcoming Assessment Plans include methods to assess the impact of these proposed actions?

Appendix C. The Relationship of Curricula Design and Improvement to the Assessment of Student Learning and Development

College curricula should reflect the college's mission statement and educational philosophies. "Curricula are academic plans 'purposefully constructed to facilitate student learning' (Stark and others, 1990, p.2). They exist at many levels, including the course, program, and institution. Several authors have noted differences between the designed curriculum, the taught curriculum, and the learned curriculum. A coherent curriculum is one where aims, design, implementation, and evaluation work together, one where 'most students will encounter logical sequences of coursework leading to useful and long-lasting skills and insights about the world' (Ratcliff, 1997, p.143)." (Palomba and Banta, 1999, p. 271).

"Curricula Review" is conducted by faculty to determine the ways and the degree to which the "designed curricula" correspond to the "taught curricula." These, in turn, can be examined in terms of their relationship to the "learned curricula" as demonstrated by the assessment of student academic achievement. Examination of the coherence between the designed and taught curricula are addressed at a program level, beyond a focus on individual courses. Through curricula review, faculty "determine whether goals and objectives for learning are adequately addressed in required and elective courses and whether requirements for courses within particular disciplines are appropriate. Faculty also examine whether learning goals are appropriately reinforced, ensure that courses are appropriately sequenced, and determine whether prerequisites for courses are appropriate given course content. Unnecessary overlap between courses can be examined and addressed. Faculty can also look at student credit hours assigned to various courses to see if they make sense,"...."A review of curricula can address the types of courses that are being offered, such as lectures, seminars, and discussion sections."....."Instructional activities and types of assignments for students can also be studied. Expectations about out-of-class activities can be reviewed" (Palomba and Banta, 1999, pp.272-3).

Evidence about the "learned curricula" is obtained from program and course assessment. The focus of such assessment activity is not on "learning outcomes," which implies a finality rather than improvement, nor on individual students (Palomba and Banta, 1999, p.5). "Assessment provides information about students as a group---information that can

be aggregated across sections of a single course and is meaningful across courses. Assessment indicates what the experiences of students add up to, and what these experiences, in turn, imply about educational programs. Assessment enables educators to examine whether the curriculum makes sense in its entirety and whether students, as a result of all their experiences, have the knowledge, skills, and values that graduates should possess. Programmatic assessment helps determine whether students can integrate learning from individual courses into a coherent whole. It is interested in the cumulative effects of the educational process.” (Palomba and Banta, 1999, pp.5-6).

Assessment and curricula review are continuous processes that produce information that “enrich each other” (Palomba and Banta, 1999, p.280). “An understanding of curricula will lead to better assessment questions and will improve the ability to understand and use assessment results” (Palomba and Banta, 1999, p.280). These are distinct, iterative processes that together are used to improve students’ education.

The approach faculty take to linking curricula review and assessment activities may vary. “Some faculty find it very useful to conduct a thorough review prior to embarking on traditional assessment activities. This review can help identify important issues for assessment. Other faculty find it more useful to begin by collecting information about student learning and development and to use this information to raise questions about their curriculum” (Palomba and Banta, 1999, p.280).

Appendix D. The General Education Course Audit

The primary body of knowledge, abilities, and skills that all Delta faculty value for our students’ education are the learning outcomes we have established in our General Education program. Two general education outcomes, *Wellness* and *Writing Effectively*, are linked to graduation requirements. The remaining general education outcomes are integrated or infused across the disciplines and courses.

During the 2002-2003 academic year a voluntary general education audit was conducted to determine how successful this integration of outcomes has been. (A general education course audit is a necessary step in the general education assessment process. While the audit in itself did not determine if Delta College students are achieving the general education outcomes, it did reveal the extent to which students are exposed to these outcomes.)

Faculty from 72 of the 81 (or 89%) disciplines participated in the audit. Of the 1,337 total courses listed in the *College Catalog*, 959 (72%) courses were audited. Another 135 (10%) courses were identified as inactive courses. Of the 959 audited courses the following results are noteworthy (as of June 12, 2003):

- 877 (91%) contain a reading outcome
- 850 (89%) contain the listening outcome
- 846 (88%) contain a critical thinking outcome

- 751 (78%) contain the interacting productively with others outcome
- 715 (75%) contain an access, analyze, and use information outcome
- 680 (71%) contain a writing outcome
- 630 (66%) contain a technology outcome
- 361 (38%) contain a citizenship outcome
- 318 (33%) contain the diversity outcome
- 207 (22%) contain a speaking outcome
- Out of 26 audited general education outcomes, the number of outcomes in the 959 courses range from 1-26 with an average of 13 outcomes.

More detailed summaries of the audit data can be found on the web site:

<http://www.delta.edu/gened/audit2003>.

General education outcomes are (for the most part) integrated across the curriculum, therefore, they appear in every degree and certificate program.

To date, the audit data has been used for the following purposes:

1. To make revisions in the general education outcomes. The *speaking effectively* outcomes were revised to better reflect the types of informal speaking opportunities that are nurtured in many college classes. Plans to revise the *diversity*, *international/intercultural*, and *citizenship* outcomes are also being considered.
2. To evaluate the general education exposure in occupational programs. An analysis of the general education content was completed for the *Dental Hygiene* program. This analysis will be cited in program review and self-study accreditation reports.
3. To provide evidence to transfer institutions that Delta College students are exposed to and are partially achieving the general education outcomes of the transfer institution. The audit data was shared with the Saginaw Valley State University Registrar, who agreed that the audit data revealed evidence that Delta College students with 30 credit hours were achieving the SVSU *communication intensive* general education requirement.
4. To assist in the renewal of the commitment to the “W” graduation requirement. Selecting a writing outcome in the general education audit was the first step in declaring the course to be a “W” course.

Beginning Fall, 2003 all new or revised courses must complete a general education audit. (A plan to periodically audit all College courses is being considered.) The most recent audit data will continue to be used to make improvements to the College’s general education program. These uses include the following:

1. To provide one piece of evidence for justifying changes in the College curriculum, including changes to the basic degree requirements and changes to the MACRAO courses.
2. To conduct additional program or degree analyses (like the one for dental hygiene).

Appendix E. The History of Academic Assessment at Delta College, 2006 – 1993

Fall 2005- Spring 2006

Overall

In 2005-06 faculty members in many disciplines and programs advanced their development of program level learning outcomes and the design of methods to assess students' learning of these. Increasingly faculty members are working collaboratively to assess program level outcomes in multiple sections of a large enrollment course as well as in multiple courses offered in an academic program. In some disciplines, however, faculty members are unwilling to work collaboratively with colleagues on academic assessment.

Application to AQIP

Delta College's new President, Dr. Jean Goodnow, is leading us to apply to the Higher Learning Commission to participate in the AQIP accreditation process. This will help us shift the College culture in the direction of continuous improvement.

Assessing General Education

We also moved forward in the assessment of student learning of our general education program outcomes. A four year cycle for the assessment of the general education outcomes has been established. Three groups of faculty are preparing to conduct assessment of one of the general education outcomes in the 2006-07 academic year. The outcomes to be assessed are "Writing Effectively," "Speaking Effectively" and "Reading Effectively." This year these groups have planned and given professional development workshops to help faculty learn how to teach students in their courses and assess those students' learning of a general education outcome.

2006 Fall Conference

In August 2006 Dr. James Zull gave the Thursday plenary speech at Fall Conference on "How the Brain Learns and Implications for Assessing Learning." Dr. Zull gave presentations to smaller groups of faculty Thursday afternoon and Friday. Faculty found the content of what Dr. Zull presented interesting, but were critical of his presentation style.

Dean Karen Wilson and Assessment Director Edwards-Ham gave a presentation on involving students in assessment for one of the concurrent sessions of Fall Conference.

Consulting with Faculty

Throughout the academic year, the Director of Academic Assessment met with academic assessment contacts and division chairs to assist them in academic assessment work. This involved a diverse set of activities: assistance in the creation or revision of scoring rubrics, assistance in the creation of discipline and program learning outcomes, analyzing assessment data in a statistical software package and providing the resulting information to faculty, identifying methods for program or discipline assessment, providing some budgetary support for discipline or program assessment work.

Conferences

This year two took teams of faculty and staff who serve on the Academic Assessment Committee went to two national assessment conferences (the I.U.P.U.I. Assessment Conference and the N.C. State University Assessment Symposium). Attending these conferences enhanced AAC members' understanding of different methods to use to plan and implement academic assessment. In addition to these trips, a faculty member who has just become a division chair went with the Director of Academic Assessment to a third a national assessment conference at Texas A & M University.

Creation of a new Assessment Database

The academic area's Database Analyst, Pat Randall, worked with the Director of Academic Assessment to design an access database to manage and store assessment plans and reports in a central, secure site. Throughout the April and May, 2006, training sessions have been held to instruct faculty assessment contacts on how to use the database.

Participation/Observation of Norming/ Scoring of Writing at SFU

In May the Director of Academic Assessment visited Dr. Terrie Flateby at the Southern Florida University to observe and participate in the work she is leading on designing writing assessments and training faculty to norm and score student writing on a scoring rubric for writing and critical thinking that Dr. Flateby developed. Dr. Flateby is completing the writing of a book on this topic for Stylus Press; it will be published in 2007.

2006 Spring Assessment Retreat

We held the fifth annual Spring Assessment Retreat for faculty at the Horizons Conference Center on Friday, May 19. Approximately 104 people attended this year's Retreat. Twenty-seven presentations were given by faculty from 7 of the 8 academic divisions. To encourage student participation in the assessment process, we invited students from 3 spring courses to attend this year's Retreat. A preliminary report of Retreat Evaluations has been shared with the Academic V.P, Dean of Teaching and Learning, the Division Chairs, and the Academic Assessment Committee members who helped plan the retreat. The evaluation response rate was almost 50%. The evaluations indicated that attendees satisfaction with most aspects of the retreat was in the 90 to 100% range. The one area that was a significant issue was the ability of attendees to hear presentations without distracting sounds. This is an issue that will be addressed in planning the 2007 Spring Assessment Retreat.

Additional Activities in Spring Semester 2006

Three students studying in the Electronic Media Broadcasting Program are doing an internship with the Academic Assessment Office this Spring 2006 semester. For their internship the students are creating a DVD and a video on "Academic Assessment at Delta College."

The charge to the Academic Assessment Committee was revised. We are in the process of updating the College's Academic Assessment Plan and the Academic Assessment Mission Statement and Outcomes. We are also creating 3 subcommittees that will

perform the work for the AAC. One of these subcommittees, the Faculty Student Assessment Review Committee (FSARC), will begin to review discipline/ program assessment reports and provide suggestions for improvement in June 2006.

Fall 2004 - Spring 2005

2004 Fall Conference

Consultant and former Director of Assessment for the AAHE, Dr. Peggy Maki, is a plenary speaker on Thursday of 2005 Fall Conference and leads faculty workshops on assessment for the remainder of Fall Conference. At these meetings with faculty Maki emphasizes the importance of creating a map (spreadsheet) indicating the courses in a program/discipline where students are first exposed to program/discipline and general education learning outcomes and the courses in which students are expected to demonstrate learning of these program level learning outcomes. Maki notes that mapping the program learning outcomes is a first step in developing a program/discipline assessment plan.

Discipline/ program faculty began to create maps of the general education outcomes and the program/discipline courses. Some faculty members became frustrated by the number of general education outcomes (32). I assisted division chairs and faculty in four divisions to develop program level learning outcomes for their disciplines and programs. The Humanities division was the first to develop program level outcomes for every discipline and program and post these to their websites.

Ongoing work with Consultant Dr. Peggy Maki

Maki returns to Delta for 2 days in November and consults with faculty discipline and program representatives on their assessment work. At this time Maki reviews discipline/program outcomes faculty have developed, reviews program/discipline outcome maps and assessment plans.

Faculty created discipline/program maps that indicate which general education outcomes are “practiced” by students or “demonstrated” (and thus assessable) by students in the discipline/program courses. These P (practice) and D (demonstrate) tables served as updates of the earlier general education course audits first conducted in the 2002-2003 academic year.

Maki was scheduled to return to campus and meet with faculty representatives again in April 2004. She became ill and cancelled her visit, but provided her notes on discipline and program assessment work.

2005 Spring Assessment Retreat

In May 2005, the Spring Assessment Retreat was held at the Doubletree Hotel in Bay City. Twenty-eight presentations were given on General Education outcomes assessment (9 presentations), Discipline/Program assessment (16 presentations) and classroom assessment (3 presentations).

General Education Workshop with Dr. Chris Anson

In June 2005, Dr. Chris Anson, Director of the Writing and Speaking Center at North Carolina State University, leads a one-day workshop with faculty on assessing general education outcomes using an course embedded approach. Anson meets with a majority of the general education assessment groups. For those he met with, Dr. Anson provided valuable feedback and suggestions on the general education assessment plans and work to date.

Fall 2003 -- Spring 2004

At the beginning of the fall 2003 academic year, instructors returned to working on course academic assessment. The academic reporting forms were streamlined to make documenting academic assessment work easier for faculty.

The 1992-2003 NCA Accreditation Report was completed and submitted to the NCA, prior to an NCA evaluation team's visit in October 2003.

NCA evaluation team came to Delta in late October 2003. Once the report of the evaluating team's visit was received, plans were formed on actions to take to advance academic program assessment. The decision was made to bring in an outside consultant to work with Delta to formulate and implement a plan to advance discipline and program assessment. In April Dr. Peggy Maki was hired to work with Delta the following academic year.

In December 2003 Vice-President Winnie Black resigned; Dean Don Halog became the next Academic V.P. Professor Karen Wilson became interim Dean of Teaching and Learning.

The General Education Advisory Board was changed to a standing committee, the General Education Curriculum and Assessment Committee (GECAC). It is given a new charge.

Fall 2002 – Spring 2003

The Academic Assessment Advisory Board (AAAB) was created. A new Academic Assessment Plan was developed.

Faculty Work Slow Down in October 2002. A majority of the faculty use this as reason not to submit assessment plans and reports to the academic assessment office. Many faculty use the work slow down as reason not to participate in any formal course or program level academic assessment. The exception to this was the occupational program faculty who are required to assess their program outcomes and report these on a regular basis to their occupational accrediting body.

The General Education course Audit is first initiated this academic year. Because many faculty had communicated that they would not conduct course assessment during the

work slow down, the director of General Education told members of the General Education Advisory Board that completing the general education audit of their discipline/program courses was the only expectation the academic assessment and general education directors had of faculty for the 2002-2003 year.

In February (2003) a task force to study and make recommendations on ways to improve the curriculum process is established by Dean Don Halog. The charge of the task force was "To review and make recommendations for improvement to current policies and procedures related to curriculum; to examine ways to connect curriculum, curriculum development, assessment, general education, and program review; and to develop a system for disseminating information on curriculum (with ties to assessment, general education, and program review if possible) to the College." The task force is constituted by the Director of Academic Assessment and the Assistant to the Academic Dean. The final report and recommendations were submitted to the Dean Halog in August 2003.

Teams of faculty and staff were established to draft separate chapters of the 1992-2003 NCA Accreditation Report, prior to an NCA evaluation team's visit in October 2003.

Fall 2001 -- Spring 2002

Feedback on Academic Course Assessment Projects Implemented in 2000-2001

By the end of the 2000-2001 academic year, the Academic Assessment Office had received final course assessment project reports from each academic division. The Director of Academic Assessment reviewed these reports and provided feedback on them to each division's DAP representative, division chair, and faculty members who have led work on each course project. Plans were made to place several of these course assessment project reports on the Academic Assessment Office's web-site so that faculty would have some samples on which to model future course assessment projects.

Academic Assessment Budget for 2001-2002

With the full-time ongoing appointment of the Academic Assessment Director effective May 1, 2001, the budgeted funding of release or supplemental time for DAP representatives was discontinued for 2001/2002 by agreement of the Academic Council of Division Chairs with the support of the Academic Dean and Vice-President of Learning Services. However, \$29,000 was allocated to the Academic Assessment cost center to be managed by the Assessment Director and used for assessment activities in the eight academic divisions.

ED 399 "Using Classroom Assessment"

This past year an additional 18 faculty and staff learned how to do classroom assessment and assessment research projects by taking ED 399. To date, the academic divisions that have the largest percentages of ED 399 graduates include the English (20%) and Health & Wellness (20%) divisions. The Social Science and Science divisions are also represented by large percentages of ED 399 graduates (17% and 16%, respectively). The Business division ranks below these in ED 399 graduates (12%). Bringing up the rear in representation among ED 399 graduates are the Math division (8%), the Technical division (5%) and the Humanities division

(3%).

Assessment Work at Fall Conference 2001

In August 2001, general education assessment was again a featured part of the College's annual Fall Conference. Each academic division spent half of one day of this conference reviewing the course assessment project results obtained in 2000/2001, noting any course changes recommended by these project results, and planning for the upcoming year's course assessment projects. To facilitate greater discussion of and learning about general education assessment across the College, the Directors of Academic Assessment and General Education encouraged discipline/division faculty to focus their 2001/2002 course assessment projects on the assessment of Thinking Critically and/or Reading and Writing Effectively outcomes.

Simpler Reporting and Communications for Academic Assessment Projects

General course assessment report forms were developed by the Academic Assessment office and placed on its web-site so that faculty could more easily submit their assessment results. One of the goals of the Director Academic Assessment has been to streamline the communications and reporting processes for academic assessment and to reduce the workload of the DAP representatives. Providing a common electronic file form for reporting assessment results to all faculty should facilitate the attainment of this goal.

Faculty and Staff Presentations on Academic Assessment &/or Attendance at Conferences.

Presentations

Delta faculty represented the College well by presenting their work on academic assessment at several national and international academic conferences this year. To name just a few, last November the team of three members of the Nursing faculty gave a presentation on their methods for assessment in the Nursing classroom, courses, and program at the I.U.P.U.I. 2001 Assessment Institute's Post-Institute Event, the "6th National Conference for Nurse Educators: Assessing Program Outcomes and Clinical Reasoning," which was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on November 7-8, 2001. In the same month the Director of General Education director (who is a member of the Math division) gave a presentation on assessing the learning of mathematics at the annual meeting of the AMATYC Association held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. In February 2001, the Director of the FCTE (who was is a member of the Science division) gave a presentation on assessment methods in the Biology classroom/course at the Michigan Science Teachers' Association. The Health & Wellness Chair was instrumental in organizing several panels of faculty to give presentations at the First (annual) "Multiple Approaches to Generic Learning" conference held in May 23-24, 2002 at George Brown College in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. One panel was constituted by two of our Nursing faculty. They gave a variation on the presentation "How to Make Assessment Fun, Exciting and Practical" which they and a third Nursing faculty member had given the prior November in Indianapolis. The second faculty panel presented the work they and other English faculty have done teaching and assessing students' learning in Delta's

newer Mediated English program. These are just some of the presentations related to learning and assessment given in the 2001-2002 academic year.

Conference Attendance

We had an outstanding number of Delta College representatives attend the 2002 AAHE Assessment conference that was held in Boston, Massachusetts in late June. Seven faculty from three divisions and one associate dean attended the Assessment conference. They have noted that Delta is far, far ahead of many colleges and universities in using assessment data and observations to improve classroom sessions and courses. We still have work to do in the area of discipline and general education program assessment, but in this we are in good company. These AAHE Assessment conferees returned to Delta with numbers of good ideas on how we can use course, discipline, program, and institutional assessment to improve student learning. A summary of their reflections will be posted on this web-site this fall.

Earlier in February Delta five staff and faculty members attended The "General Education and the Assessment of Student Learning: A Working Conference on Issues, Models, and Faculty Leadership" held in Dallas, Texas. This was an outstanding conference. It provided attendees with the opportunity to both gage where Delta College is with its work on the assessment of general education as compared to other colleges and universities and how improvements might be made to current assessment projects.

Plans for General Education Program Assessment.

Groups of faculty members from divisions across the college have been planning projects to assess students' learning of several of the general education learning outcomes "Reading & Writing Effectively," "Critical Thinking," and "Basic Skills in Technology." Pilot projects that will assess students' learning of these outcomes will be implemented in the Fall 2002 term. These projects will produce information that will be used to examine these areas of the College's general education program. Faculty participation in such projects will vary as their schedules and other responsibilities dictate.

The Second Annual 2002 Spring Assessment Retreat.

This retreat was held May 17 at the Horizons Conference Center in Saginaw. The retreat began with talks given by the Senior Vice-President for Instruction and Learning Services and the Dean of Faculty. They addressed the reasons for conducting academic assessment at Delta College. For the remainder of the morning, the approximately 125 Delta faculty and staff who attended participated in cross-college discussions of Delta's Mission and Vision statements and how their work in their division/work unit aligns with these. Ms. Kathy Conklin, Executive Director of the Saginaw County Business & Education Partnership, lead the morning working session of the retreat. In their assessment of the Retreat, attendees indicated that they felt this opportunity to discuss Delta's mission and vision statements and our daily work to promote student learning was valuable. They noted that they particularly enjoyed being able to discuss these topics with others from across the College.

At the 2002 Spring Assessment Retreat the first annual "Outstanding Work on Assessment Awards" were given to the members of the Learning Outcomes Steering Taskforce by the Sr.

Vice-President Winnie Black. The members of this taskforce received this award for their creation of an initial list of 19 "Learning Outcomes" that state the "expected results and achievements of Delta College as a learning centered institution." The taskforce members are: the Interim Assistant Dean of Academic Services; an Administrative Technologist for Financial Aid; a professor of English; the Manager of Distance Learning; and the taskforce chair, a professor of Political Science and Social Sciences Division Chair. Following the awards presentation, participants organized into groups based on their division, service, or office and discussed methods their unit might use to assess how well they are accomplishing Delta's mission and vision.

Dr. John Schuh's June 7, 2002 workshop on "The Assessment of Student Affairs."

Dr. John Schuh, chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at Iowa State University and author, co-author, editor of over 175 publications on assessment and student affairs, lead a half-day workshop for our student services staff and a few faculty at Delta. Dr. Schuh is one of the two co-authors of the two major books that have been written on assessment and student affairs. The Academic Assessment office has made copies of these texts available to lend to faculty and staff. Dr. Schuh's presentation was videotaped and has been made available for borrowing from the Academic Assessment office.

2000-2001

The first of the two goals of the general education and assessment work for the 2000/2001 academic year was to coordinate the activities of the two types of faculty groups, the General Education Ability Group Chairs (ability chairs) and the Delta Assessment Project representatives (DAP rep.s). This coordination involved integrating general education outcomes and objectives into the list of learning outcomes and objectives belonging to each division's core or large enrollment courses. A second goal was to begin the systematic assessment of these General Education Outcomes and Objectives in division (and discipline) courses.

The College's annual three day Fall Conference, held in August 2000, was focused on general education assessment. The guest speaker for the conference was Jeffrey Seybert, who addressed how to use assessment data to improve student learning and enhance a community college's academic decision making processes. Each academic division spent one day of this conference identifying several general education outcomes implicit or explicit in their discipline's core or large enrollment courses. After identifying these outcomes, they began planning a course assessment project that would enable them to assess student learning of the course general education outcomes. Overall, faculty indicated this was a useful activity that improved their understanding of how to proceed with course assessment projects.

Following the 2000 Fall Conference, faculty from each of the College's nine (now eight) academic divisions submitted a total of 155 course assessment project plans to the Academic Assessment office for review, suggestions, and consultative follow-up. The projects detailed in these plans were implemented in the fall 2000 and/or winter 2001 terms. Overall, 65 different courses across disciplines and divisions were included in the assessment process. All five of the ability areas in the College's general education program were assessed. Of these the most

frequently addressed ability outcome areas were “thinking critically,” “reading and writing effectively,” and “access, analyze, and use information.”

To facilitate the course assessment process, the web-site for the College’s office of General Education was revised and a second web-site for the office of Academic Assessment was created. In March 2001, the Director of General Education and the Director of Academic Assessment wrote and distributed a college-wide “General Education Assessment” newsletter to faculty and some staff. This newsletter addressed questions and concerns faculty had raised about academic assessment and explained the status of the general education assessment process and plans for the upcoming academic year.

Two months later, a Spring Assessment Retreat sponsored by the Academic Assessment Office was held for faculty and staff. In all, 78 faculty, AP and Support staff attended the retreat. The results of several course assessment projects implemented in the fall 2000 and winter 2001 terms were showcased. In addition, retreat participants shared their experiences and ideas on ways to improve the College’s academic assessment process.

This year the ED 399 course ran in the Winter 2001 term only. Altogether 6 faculty from 5 divisions participated

1999-2000

Throughout this academic year, faculty continued to develop student learning outcomes and objectives for each of the five general education ability areas.

The DAP project was extended for an additional year of funding by the College’s Budget/Planning Cabinet. Each DAP representative received 4 hours (for fall and winter terms) of supplementary or release time to support their assessment work in this academic year. In anticipation of the hiring of a full-time Director of Academic Assessment, the support provided to the Faculty Assessment Team Leader was also reduced to 4 credit hours for the academic year.

The DAP representatives led their divisions in planning assessment activities for the academic year. The nature of these projects varied from division to division, but generally the focus was on the assessment of course content outcomes. The primary objective of this year’s assessment work was to continue to develop expertise in classroom assessment research and to interest larger numbers of faculty in this assessment activity and provide them with some opportunities to develop greater expertise in assessment. A general education assessment notebook was distributed to all full-time faculty.

In February 2000, Dr. Janice Denton, the faculty leader of assessment at the Community College of the University of Cincinnati, led a one day faculty workshop on course and program assessment. Videotapes of Dr. Denton’s presentation were made available to faculty and staff for borrowing from the FCTE library.

The ED 399 course ran in the fall, winter, and spring terms. Overall, 19 full-time and 2 adjunct faculty completed this course this academic year. Finally, in May of 2000, the full-time position of Director of Academic Assessment was filled.

1998-1999

Under the leadership of the general education ability chairs, faculty worked throughout this academic year to formulate a list of student learning outcomes and objectives for each of the five general education ability areas: Critical Thinking; Access, Analyze and Use Information; Reading and Writing Effectively; Speaking and Listening Effectively; and Value and Practice Citizenship/ Interact Productively with Others.

The Delta Assessment Project was continued in this third year of its planning and implementation. Project leaders worked with academic divisions to develop divisional plans for assessment. The College/Budget Cabinet continued with its support of released time for the Faculty Assessment Team Leader and the Division Assessment Representatives. It was too ambitious to move from classroom assessment to discipline/division assessment this academic year. Instead, faculty were invited to work with their DAP representatives to continue to develop assessment and to “build an atmosphere of trust where colleagues open up their classrooms to one another, in a spirit of collegial discussion aimed to improve student learning” (B. Allen 6/1/99 report to VPILS).

In March, Dr. Doug Eder, Associate Professor (Neuroscience) and Director of Undergraduate Assessment & Program Review at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, gave a presentation to Delta faculty and staff titled “Divisional Assessment and Program Review: Where Do you Fit In?” In his talk Dr. Eder urged faculty to identify the major questions they have about their students learning and focus assessment projects around these “big rocks.” Those attending Dr. Eder’s presentation indicated they found it very helpful in clarifying how to approach the assessment of their students’ learning. Videotapes of Dr. Eder’s presentation were made available to faculty and staff for borrowing from the FCTE library.

Ten full-time faculty and 2 “other” participants took ED 399 in the fall 1998 term. Thirteen full-time faculty completed this course in the subsequent winter 1999 term. In the following spring 1999 term, 13 full-time faculty took ED 399.

A plan to establish an Academic Assessment Office was approved. The position for Director of Academic Assessment was approved and posted.

1997-1998

The planning and implementation of pilot classroom assessment projects were continued this academic year. The College/Budget Cabinet again gave its support of released time for the Faculty Assessment Team Leader and the Division Assessment Representatives. It allocated \$72,500.00 for academic assessment for the 1997-1998 academic year.

The Delta Assessment Project entered its second year. During Fall Conference 1997, the pilot project assessment plans to be implemented in the upcoming academic year were presented. These projects were developed based on the experiences and data obtained from the pilot assessment projects implemented in the 1996-1997 academic year. As a result, faculty assessment leaders planned and implemented 11 pilot projects in the fall 1997 and the winter 1998 terms. The assessment leader from each division who led a pilot project summarized the project and the results obtained in a report form that was disseminated to each academic division, the library and the academic office at the end of the winter 1998 term.

In October of 1997, the College held a two-day workshop led by assessment expert Barbara Walvoord, Professor of English at Notre Dame University, to provide faculty with an opportunity to enhance their understanding of assessment. The workshop focused on general assessment and the use of primary traits analysis (P.T.A.s) to improve grading and gather assessment data on students' writing performance. Videotapes of Dr. Walvoord's presentation were made available to faculty and staff for borrowing from the FCTE library.

In 1997 the College submitted a progress report to the N.C.A. on the implementation of the Delta Assessment Plan. Nearly 1 year later, in September of 1998, Delta received formal approval of the 1997 report. In their communication to the College, the N.C.A. noted, "Delta College faculty and administration have made significant investments and strides in advancing their assessment vision and program" ("Staff Analysis of Institutional Report," September 23, 1998, by Rodolfo Garcia Z., Associate Director, N.C.A.). No additional reporting to the N.C.A. was required before the College's 2003-04 comprehensive evaluation.

As of December 1997, the faculty had written and documented learning outcomes for 90% of the College's academic courses. The deadline for faculty to complete the outcomes for the remaining 10% of the "hardship case" courses was extended to May 1, 1998.

In the spring 1998 term, 9 full-time faculty and 1 adjunct faculty member took ED 399.

During this 1997-1998 academic year course outcomes were completed by faculty.

1996-1997

In response to the Delta College statement of vision and outcomes, the College Planning/Budget Cabinet identified Academic Assessment as a college planning priority for 1996/1997. Altogether approximately \$127,840.00 was allocated for academic assessment for the 1996-1997 academic year. One-third of this amount (\$42,000.00) was paid to the Clarus Corporation for a marketing and community needs assessment study. The College Planning/Budget Cabinet funded 12 hours of released time for the Assessment Team Leader and 72 hours of released time for the faculty representing the ten divisions and two cross-college programs, learning communities and developmental education (the DAP leaders). This project developed faculty expertise and initiated collaborative planning for assessment pilots in ten areas of academic instruction, developmental education and learning communities. Additional resources were allocated in the 1996/97 instructional budget to fund faculty attendance at conferences and other sources of professional development.

In 1996 Delta's faculty adopted a model of General Education across the disciplines. Over the next four years, faculty from the eight, formerly nine, divisions formed two types of groups, Delta Assessment Project (DAP) representatives and General Education Ability Group Chairs (ability chairs), to plan and facilitate academic assessment, in general, and the assessment of Delta's General Education Program, in particular.

In 1996 the three-year "Delta Assessment Project" was initiated by the Assessment Leadership Team and supported by the Academic Office, with a Cost Center in the Instructional Budget. Approximately 14 faculty members were appointed division assessment representatives (DAP leaders). These division assessment representatives were teaching the course being assessed in their academic area. They were to lead the planning and implementation of each classroom assessment pilot project and to work collaboratively with the Assessment Leadership Team as they planned their assessment projects.

Responding to an observation of concern made by the N.C.A. about the College's 1995 Assessment Plan, the Assessment Leadership Team recommended a revised development plan for assessment that would advance the pilot approach more quickly toward a critical mass of leadership and acceptance among the faculty. The revised plan called for a delay in the startup of an Assessment office and Director to invest in faculty awareness, expertise, and governance in assessment. The revised plan was approved with the support of the V.P.I.L.S. and the College President.

As a result of the Assessment Project, 13 pilot assessment projects were developed and documented in 1996/97. These pilot projects varied in terms of the outcomes and objectives and the types of student performances that were assessed. The pilot assessment reports produced from these projects provided a means to inform other faculty members about the benefits assessment provides for improving student learning and examples of how they might plan and implement such projects. These reports were disseminated to the College community at the end of the Winter 1997 term.

A class in Classroom Assessment Techniques (ED 399) was initiated and implemented at Delta in Winter 1997. This class was initially developed and led by the Faculty Team Leader for DAP, a Mathematics professor, and the faculty Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence, a Psychology professor. By taking this class, faculty and staff could learn how to apply classroom assessment techniques (CATS) and primary trait analysis (PTAs) or other scoring rubrics to elicit student feedback as assessment data for improved quality in learning in a class, course, discipline or program.

That first term, 14 full-time faculty, 1 adjunct faculty, and 5 "other" participants took ED 399. This course has been offered to faculty and staff members each fall, winter, and spring term since Winter 1997. Since that initial term when this course was first offered, approximately forty percent of the College's full-time faculty has taken it. The DAP representatives, drawn from the pool of ED 399 graduates and instructors, have developed sets of assessment tools and led other faculty in planning and implementing pilot assessment projects.

Faculty began writing course outcomes.

1995-1996

Delta College began to make a significant commitment in leadership and resources to academic assessment in 1995. The Budget Cabinet allocated approximately \$18,200.00 for academic assessment related expenditures for the 1995-1996 academic year.

In Fall 1995, the “Assessment Leadership Team” was formed. The team was composed of seven faculty members, including the highly committed faculty leader and former Director of the Faculty Center on Teaching Excellence who was chair of the team; the (then) current Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence; the Chair of the General Education Task Force; the Pilot Leader of the Learning Communities Assessment project; the Pilot Leader of the Writing Assessment project; the Pilot Leader of the Surgical Technology Assessment project; the Community Research Institute Consultant. The Vice-President for Instructional and Learning Services and the Director of Research and Development were the administrators on this team. They were to provide a beginning base of faculty leadership to design and promote faculty development and empowerment in planning, shaping and implementing assessment within the academic culture at Delta. Along with the initial plan to assess and document the learning outcomes of general education at Delta College, the team wrote a mission statement to guide academic assessment, with supporting goals to move the College through its next three phases of planning. Their work served as the basis for the College Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement submitted that July to the NCA for their approval.

The Assessment Leadership Team chose to use a pilot program approach to assessment planning. A classroom assessment pilot project was planned for each of the (then nine) divisions as well as the Learning Communities and Developmental Education programs. Together these projects constituted phase one of the Assessment plan as submitted to the N.C.A.

The General Education Advisory Board worked in conjunction with the Developmental Education Task Force to establish criteria for the assessment of basic skills competencies.

1994-1995

In April 1995, a small team of three faculty and the Director of Research and Development came together to brainstorm how the College could collaboratively develop a meaningful academic assessment program. With the support of the President and Vice-President for Instructional and Learning Services, they attended the National Center on Post-secondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment Institute, which gave them some time and a framework to build upon. They developed a preliminary assessment plan, which was shared with the academic community the following fall. The draft of this plan and accompanying thoughts on the proposed philosophy of academic assessment were

included in the Instructional and Learning Services' October 1995 issue of the *Grapevine* newsletter.

In Winter 1995, a Conference on Critical Thinking and Classroom Assessment was co-sponsored by the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence. More than 80 faculty attended this conference with Lucy Suchman from the California Institute on Critical Thinking and consultants on classroom research applications from other institutions.

As a result of academic leadership and development activities, by 1995 the College's faculty appeared to be making the transition from the stage of "consideration" to "experimentation" in the N.C.A.'s six stages toward institutionalization.

1993-1994

The College Budget Cabinet established a \$10,000 budget to support assessment activities in the 1993-1994 academic year.

In May 1994, a three-day conference on teaching, learning, and assessment was held to link faculty interest in classroom assessment with an institutional assessment plan. More than 100 faculty attended over the weekend. This conference proved to be a turning point in the faculty climate surrounding assessment. After that May, small groups of faculty came together to explore assessment of student learning in their areas. Such groups were documented in the 1995 Division reports from English, Math and Computer Science, and Science.

Prior to 1993-1994

In 1990, except for evaluation and grading of individual student achievement in the classroom, the Delta faculty thought very little about assessment of student learning. A skills assessment for students entering the college had been developed through the use of ASSET.

In Fall 1991, outcomes assessment was identified by the academic council and administration as a developmental goal.

In Winter 1992, the Vice-President of Instruction and Learning Services sponsored a team of eight, including academic faculty, chairs, deans and student services staff, to attend the Alverno Workshop on Outcomes Assessment. This group provided a core of leadership to initiate and guide the assessment movement on campus in collaboration with the Faculty Center on Teaching Excellence (FCTE).

By Fall 1993, a strong belief had become evident among the faculty that assessment of student learning should provide feedback and information on those learning outcomes which were most important and added the greatest value to the student educational experience. This belief was reinforced by the faculty socialization to the Cross and Angelo model for classroom research using assessment techniques. In 1993, the Academic Office supported three faculty to attend the Cross and Angelo Classroom

Assessment Institute to return as leaders in teaching other faculty classroom assessment techniques and the benefits of this approach in assessment of learning outcomes.

Between Fall 1991 and Fall 1997 ten workshops on classroom assessment were offered on campus. Approximately 50% of the full-time faculty participated.

Our assessment activities have developed from the “grass roots up,” meaning assessment efforts at Delta College began when a few faculty members led others in learning about and embracing classroom assessment techniques (CATs). From the fall of 1996 through spring 2000, these classroom assessment techniques were used as the basis for the design of pilot assessment projects by one faculty member in each academic division. These faculty assessment leaders received supplemental pay or release time for their leadership efforts. The early division assessment pilot projects were intended to serve as models and catalysts to advance academic assessment efforts across the College. This pilot approach required that faculty be given sufficient flexibility in their approaches to assessment to allow them to take risks and conduct projects linked to the educational questions they care about. Doing so meant that sometimes assessment results indicated that students had not met course learning outcomes or that the assessment methods needed refinement. This flexible approach has helped to ensure that assessment is integral to what faculty and students do.

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The Delta Assessment Project was continued in this third year of its planning and implementation. Project leaders worked with academic divisions to develop divisional plans for assessment. The college’s Budget Cabinet continued with its support of released time for the Faculty Assessment Team Leader and the Division Assessment Representatives. It was too ambitious to move from classroom assessment to discipline/division assessment this academic year. Instead, faculty were invited to work with their DAP representatives to continue to develop assessment and to “build an atmosphere of trust where colleagues open up their classrooms to one another, in a spirit of collegial discussion aimed to improve student learning” (B. Allen 6/1/99 report to VPILS).

The DAP project was extended for an additional year of funding by the college’s Budget/Planning Cabinet. Each DAP representative received 4 hours (for fall and winter terms) of supplementary or release time to support their assessment work in this academic year. In anticipation of the hiring of a full-time Director of Academic Assessment, the support provided to the Faculty Assessment Team Leader was also reduced to 4 credit hours for the academic year.

The DAP representatives led their divisions in planning assessment activities for the academic year. The nature of these projects varied from division to division, but generally the focus was on the assessment of course content outcomes. The primary objective of this year’s assessment work was to continue to develop expertise in classroom assessment research and to interest larger numbers of faculty in this assessment activity and provide them with some opportunities to develop greater expertise in assessment. A general education assessment notebook was distributed to all full-time faculty.