GENERAL EDUCATION REVIEW

In Fall 2009, the College implemented new General Education requirements. The requirements, which were voted on by the full time faculty and went through the College governance process, include requirements in Major Areas of Learning, Major Academic Approaches, Information Literacy, and Technological Competence. A committee of faculty and administrators then developed a model for assessing general education that nested the requirements under core competencies. The competencies are: Responsible Citizenship; Critical Thinking; Scientific Reasoning; Information Literacy; Quantitative Reasoning; Technological Competence; and Effective Communication. The assumption is that by assessing the core competencies, all of the general education requirements are evaluated and decisions can be made about using the information to improve teaching and learning. Our goal was to assess all of the core competencies at least once during a five year period. Additionally, it was determined that once every five years, Department Heads would review the information and make a recommendation to maintain the requirements or revise them. Thus the 2014-2015 academic year meets our timeframe for the first review of general education/core competency requirements.

Department Heads have been reviewing the general education/core competency outcomes as they have become available during the past five years and are charged with sharing the information with their departments before recommending next steps. As planned, each competency has been assessed at least once during the past five years. The outcomes of the assessments are currently available on the Academic Assessment and Evaluation site and will be on the SharePoint repository in the near future. Briefly the outcomes are:

**Responsible Citizenship**—Direct evidence showed students with 45+ credits were strong on this competency. Indirect evidence suggested students do not think the College contributes much to their experience with service or ethics. *(Continued on p.2)*
GENERAL EDUCATION REVIEW

(Continued from p.1)

Critical Thinking—Indirect evidence shows students believe CCP contributes to development of critical thinking. Direct evidence shows students with 45+ credits (vs. 15 or fewer credits) were judged to be stronger on self-reflection; applying information; and ability to synthesize. However, students did not meet the benchmark on ability to synthesize; using multiple sources; supporting conclusions; or taking multiple perspectives.

Scientific Reasoning—Direct evidence was re-calculated based on a decision by Department Heads about the benchmark used. Direct evidence showed students met the benchmark on all subcategories of the rubric. Indirect evidence was gathered Fall 2014 and results will be available Spring 2015.

Information Literacy—English 102 was revised based on outcomes from a direct measure of information literacy. Results of follow-up assessments suggest students still are not scoring at expected levels.

Quantitative Reasoning — Both indirect and direct evidence support that quantitative reasoning is a definite weakness for students.

Technological Competence—Direct evidence provided by the Computer Technologies Department suggests students score well on technological competence by the end of CIS 103.

Effective Communication—Nearly all students in English 101 were above competency on two skills: summary and paraphrase. Higher percentages of English 102 students were above competency on two skills: focus and organization; higher percentages of English 101 students were above competency on three skills: task, central idea, and documentation. Indirect evidence suggests students believe the College contributes to improvements in written communication.

Based on the evidence gathered to date, Department Heads determined that there should be modifications to the current general education/core competency requirements, but not a major overhaul. A sub-group of Department Heads, led by Osvil Acosta-Morales, is creating the process for review of the requirements. Recommendations will then be sent through the College governance process. In the meantime, we will continue to assess and act on data about the core competencies. Scheduled for assessment Spring 2015 are: Effective Communication, Scientific Reasoning, and Information Literacy.
COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

More than 25 faculty and administrators participated in a December 2nd session on competency-based education. The College was one of 14 institutions awarded a grant from the Council for Adult & Experiential Learning (CAEL) to participate in their Lumina Foundation-funded Jump Start Program. CCP joins institutions such as Pace University, Indiana University—Purdue, and the Missouri Department of Higher Education for this initiative. The grant supported the training session to help participants consider options for competency-based education and assessment. In our College application for participation, we identified three current approaches to competency-based education: our general education/core competencies model; our applied studies program; and our options for prior learning assessment. The goal is to determine whether there are ways to expand or improve on our current efforts. The December session will be followed by additional support through webinars. The facilitator from CAEL, Dorothy Wax, commented that CCP had a greater proportion of faculty representatives than other institutions.

For additional information, contact the leads for the initiative, Sharon Thompson (sthompson@ccp.edu) or John Moore (jvmoore@ccp.edu)

SCIENCE AT CCP

The Achieving the Dream national organization asked member colleges to support a White House initiative by sending information about college STEM education. Below is a modified version of the report submitted by Mary Anne Celenza:

The student demographics at Community College of Philadelphia suggest the College can have a particular and substantial impact on underrepresented students in STEM majors. Therefore, Science faculty have created multiple strategies to support students, with a goal of increasing the number and proportion of high need students who persist to graduation.

Initiatives include making sure there is financial support for textbooks so students can fully participate in their education. Science students connect with science faculty prior to the start of the semester so faculty can discuss how to be successful in science courses. Graduate students from Drexel University tutor students in upper-level Physics and Engineering courses. Club activities encourage students to interact with faculty and make it possible for students to attend professional conferences. (Continued on p.4)
SCIENCE at CCP

(continued from p.3)

Professionals describe their trajectories from student to successful STEM careers. This exposure helps students envision the diverse paths people take in science and what it takes to get there.

Our commitment to science education includes thinking about the pipeline into college. We know that involving students in hands-on laboratory experiments increases their grasp of the material and engages them on a deeper level. With this as a premise, the College has extended its work by inviting area high school students to participate in laboratory experiments pertaining to subjects they are studying in their own schools. This has been extended to a summer camp experience and partnering with the Franklin Institute in the week-long annual Science Festival to inform the Philadelphia community at-large about science.

Finally, our college students have opportunities to participate in actual research projects. The Biomedical Technician Training Program deserves particular mention in this regard. This innovative program was started when Dr. William H. Wunner of the Wistar Institute, a national cancer center, approached the College with the idea of providing associate degree-level students with advanced skills and training in the research laboratory. He was trying to address the high turnover of lab technicians who left their positions to pursue graduate or professional education. He reasoned that associate degree-level students could be trained in the necessary skills and would likely persist longer in the positions as they worked toward a bachelor’s degree. In conjunction with this successful program, students have worked in labs at the Fels Institute for Cancer Research and Molecular Biology at Temple University, the University of the Sciences, the University of Pennsylvania’s Perelman School of Medicine and Biology, as well as regional biotechnology and biopharmaceutical companies. Beyond the Biomedical Technician Training Program, our students have worked on research projects at Brookhaven National Laboratories, Children’s Hospital, and Drexel University. Our students will also be working with College faculty on studies of topics such as asepsis and artificial sweeteners.

The work of faculty in the sciences is contributing to the College’s impact in STEM fields. In 2014, 35% of the College’s graduates were in STEM disciplines. The multiple strategies employed by our science departments are examples of how attention to a goal of supporting students along the path to a career can have a major influence on STEM in the region.
Automotive Technology

Many of our career programs make good use of advisory committees to help us maintain high-quality programs for students. Advisory committees may also be part of a program’s assessment plan. Our Automotive Technology program is just one example of effective use of an advisory committee for multiple purposes, including assessment. College standards require advisory committees to meet at least once per year and to have external professionals. Because our Automotive Technology program is accredited by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF), the requirements are stronger. NATEF requires a sanctioned advisory committee that meets at least two times per year and has at least five external members, including “former students, employed technicians, employers and representatives for consumers’ interests.” In addition, committee members are supposed to be from multiple businesses. Advisory committee activities include not only program evaluation, but also a review of student performance. Having an accredited program increases attention to direct and indirect assessment. Our Automotive Technology program uses rubrics for direct assessment of student learning outcomes.

During Fall 2014, the Automotive Technology advisory committee meeting agenda included a review of program learning outcomes. This provided an opportunity for the program to gather indirect evidence on program outcomes in addition to direct evidence. During the meeting, advisory committee members had a chance to review the direct evidence from the program assessments. (Continued on p.6)
Committee members noted a trend for student performance to be just barely above the benchmark in areas related to communication. This feedback provided an opportunity for faculty to identify strategies to help refine communication skills. Advisory committee members also provided feedback on concerns of employers related to new hires in general, not just CCP students. They agreed that what some people refer to as “soft skills” are a priority for employers. While new hires were coming with the requisite technical skills, they were often lacking in professionalism. Committee members identified concerns with employees’ understanding of the importance of showing up on time, working agreeably at a less attractive schedule as a new hire, working in a positive way with other employees, etc. This feedback reinforced the need to ensure that these skills are included as part of the program’s assessment of student learning.

The Automotive Technology program provides an excellent example of how strong advisory committees can be an asset in the assessment efforts of a program. While the advisory committee feedback falls into the indirect evidence category, it serves as a worthwhile complement to the direct evidence gathered and can contribute to the development of strategies to improve teaching and learning.

UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Wednesday January 7, the Computer Technologies faculty led an orientation session for students who are taking distance education courses in their department during the Spring 2015 semester. Although it was 18 degrees outside, there were 54 students in attendance. This was the sixth semester that the Department faculty scheduled the session. Faculty who participated included Ed Baker, Jim Canonica, Barbara Hearn, Chuck Herbert, Craig Nelson, and Joanne Patti. The program included a brief introduction to Canvas and tips for succeeding in distance education courses, as well as an overview of the content and materials that are relevant to their courses. The orientation also gave students an opportunity to ask questions and learn about College support services that are available to them. (Continued on p.7)
Goodwill Industries was recently awarded a start-up grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to begin the development and implementation of The Helms Academy Adult High School. This innovative model will be a partnership between the College, Goodwill, and Drexel University’s Dornsife Center to provide a unique educational program for adult diploma-seeking students living in the Promise Zone-designated area of West Philadelphia. The partnership will be modeled after the current Helms Academy program in Southern New Jersey between Goodwill and Camden County Community College and will provide adult students with college-level courses under a dual-enrollment model which will count toward diploma completion, extensive soft-skills, computer training, and job placement training and support.

The 2015 Women’s Leadership Conference: “Building Your Foundation for Lifelong Leadership,” is scheduled for Tuesday March 24, 2015 in the Winnet Building, Great Hall, Room S2-19. Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to submit proposals that will strengthen students’ personal effectiveness and leadership development and align with the theme, “Building Your Foundation for Lifelong Leadership.” This one-day leadership forum will support multiple viewpoints and empower students to succeed academically and professionally both on- and off-campus.

The Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) notified Frank Alsis that our program meets or exceeds all currently set benchmarks for required outcome measures. CoARC commended the program faculty for their “commitment to continuous quality improvement in education.”

Fay Beauchamp’s (English) article, “Visions of the Sea in Early Japanese Literature” was published in Education About Asia (Fall 2014, vol. 19, no. 2).

Rel Dowdell (English) was interviewed December 29th on WURD radio (900 AM). He discussed the absence of “black and brown faces on screen and behind the scenes” in Hollywood.

Joe Wana Freeman (Computer Technologies) was the featured professional at Drexel’s LSAMP faculty spotlight session Nov 13th. The session was a STEM faculty chat with Dr. Michelle Rogers of Drexel University’s College of Computing and Informatics. The purpose of the series “is to trace the path and the events that have shaped the person and the professional.” (Continued on p.8)
Michelle Myers (Learning Lab and SACC) was awarded the 2014 Leeway Transformation Award for her Spoken Word Poetry. The award is given to women and trans artists living in the Delaware Valley region who create art for social change. Michelle also received honorable mention in the 2015 Loft Spoken Word Immersion Fellowship which is for artists of color and Indigenous artists. The fellowship provides writers financial support and professional assistance to develop and implement self-selecting community learning and enrichment plans.

The College has a booth at the 2015 Philadelphia Auto Show, scheduled at the Pennsylvania Convention Center from January 31 through February 8. If you attend the Auto Show, stop by and say hello to your colleagues who have volunteered to staff the booth.

The Academic Affairs Office welcomed Elizabeth (Liz) Majewski to the staff as an administrative support specialist. Liz is a graduate of the College and most recently worked as a staff person for the College’s Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program.