CCP Hosts Assessment Conference

On January 9th, about 100 of CCP’s full time and part time faculty members came together for a day of presentations and round table sessions showcasing the College’s work with assessing student learning. President Generals welcomed the group, and John V. Moore delivered a lunchtime plenary session. With 25-minute presentations running through five concurrent sessions, CCP faculty focused on issues such as the use of pre- and post-testing, national benchmarking, student metacognition, online norming activities, general education, the challenges of assessing speaking and listening, approaches to assessing library and tutoring services, and more. After lunch, attendees participated in any one of seven roundtable discussions. If you didn’t get to attend every session that interested you, or if you’d like to review a presentation, please visit CCP’s newly redesigned Assessment Website at http://path.ccp.edu/assessment and click on the link to “Resources.” You’ll find links to review each of the presenter’s materials.

Middle States Team to Visit

The Middle States visiting team is scheduled for a visit to CCP’s campus on March 31 - April 1. The team members, from Schenectady County Community College (NY) and Essex County College (NJ) will spend March 31 meeting with selected individuals and groups, and will be delivering their oral report on the morning of April 1. They will be accompanied by the College’s MSCHE Liaison, as well as an observer. The Chair of the visiting team was also a member of last year’s visiting team.

According to their mission, the Commission “is a voluntary, non-governmental, membership association that is dedicated to quality assurance and improvement through accreditation via peer evaluation.”
A Redesigned Assessment Website

CCP’s Assessment Website is newly redesigned! With the aim of better showcasing the work being done at the College, the site also explains the assessment processes that are in place at all levels: course, program, and institution. In addition, the site infuses faculty voices about the impact of assessment into its pages. Visit the site yourself and check it out. You’ll find snippets of the faculty and other key assessment voices residing on the sidebar at the right. http://path.ccp.edu/assessment. Whether you are new to assessment or an experienced practitioner, the site is designed to be your resource.

The first two tabs of the website provide some of the basics: the overview of CCP’s Office of Academic Assessment and Evaluation services and general guidelines for conducting productive assessment initiatives. The third tab, Assessment at All Levels, drills down to explain CCP’s procedures and practices, along with illustrative examples.

Continued on Page 4

SL0’s & Financial Aid

After finding that 21% of students were being dropped for non-payment (Fall ’13), the Financial Aid office worked on learning outcomes that would result in students being better informed and more capable of navigating the often complex FAFSA and student aid processes. By developing and delivering Financial Planning workshops, sending targeted email and automated phone messages, and by investing in Financial Aid TV (which provides 24/7 access to financial aid information), the number of students being dropped for non-payment fell to 14% for Fall ’14 and 9% for Spring ’15.

ESL Online Norming Project

The ESL online norming project is an in-house resource developed by ESL faculty committees. It is a self-paced online professional development activity, the goals of which are to provide the English department with another means by which it can continue to foster consistency in grading standards in ESL writing courses and, in the process, support conversations about assessment and student success. To date, the committees have built online norming sessions for three out of the four courses in the ESL writing series. Users can compare their measure of final exam essays submitted by colleagues for this project with a committee of their peers’ measure of the same as informed by official course documents. The sessions can be accessed 24/7 via the Internet from the privacy of one’s home or office at one’s own pace.

“Participation in the project has provided me with another way to be a part of a collective effort to achieve consensus on what constitutes the grading standards in ESL writing courses, and it has sharpened my understanding of the writing standards that I am to uphold and help my students to achieve.”

Ramon Diaz, speaking of the ESL Online Norming Project
CCP Launches Customized Assessment Repository

In September of 2014, the College determined to develop a customized, centralized, web-accessible repository for its assessment records and related documentation. In order to do this, the Implementation Team reviewed all of CCP’s assessment practices and forms, conducting a full current practices inventory in order to develop its templates. The resulting repository, with appropriate templates and document libraries, was built using Microsoft SharePoint, and was designed to both reflect and shape CCP’s best practices. The Document Libraries represent a striking feature of the repository. They can hold any number of catalogued files providing details about the sources of evidence used, the actions taken, and the ways in which the findings were disseminated. Program-level assessment reports have been input into the system, and in February, approximately 60 newly-trained faculty members began entering the course-level assessment reports.

Faculty Voices

In January, President Generals reached out to FT and PT faculty asking them to share their assessment stories - not the data - but stories of the difference that assessment has made. Faculty members responded and many of these stories have now become part of the tapestry of the newly redesigned assessment website http://path.ccp.edu/assessment. Visit the website and look in the light blue sidebars on the right side of each page. The voices heard in these stories tell the very human story of assessment at CCP.

Enjoy a few such snippets here.

“The process of using the metacognition sheet ensures that I am not creating clones of myself as a poet. A student can still do quite well even if I do not ‘like’ his or her poems. This was not always the case.” Elizabeth Catanese - Creative Writing.

“An unexpected benefit of engaging in the assessment process is that the concrete activity gave us a stronger sense of community.” Craig Strimel - Communications.

“For the music department, I was able to create templates for assessment of both our applied music juries and ensembles. This has helped ... by having instructors reporting their courses in exactly the same manner, which allows us to see trends in student performance ....” Paul Geissinger – Music and Sound Recording

“I would say that the assessment data is useful in helping to focus my attention on areas that students need more attention and help to learn.” Melissa Altman-Traub – Allied Health

Making Changes: CCP’s Early Alert System Expansion

The College’s Early Alert System was designed to increase student persistence by providing faculty with a mechanism for identifying students at risk of failing their course. Through the Early Alert system, faculty can report low class attendance, missing assignments and poor class participation. As a result of the continuous assessment of this initiative, a rolling alert system was implemented in 2013-2014 to increase the effectiveness of the system and ultimately the faculty’s ability to submit an alert throughout the semester. This additional feature provides faculty with more flexibility and an opportunity to identify students at risk of course failure at any point in time, and enables the Office of Student Success Initiatives greater opportunity to address defined learning outcomes related to student support.
A Redesigned Website

Continued from page 2.

This Assessment at all Levels section details the processes that occur at the institution level, the program level, and the course level. The visitor to this section can find CCP’s Core Competencies/General Education Outcomes, along with the corresponding rubrics and the recent reports of student outcomes. Also on display are the policies and practices related to program and course assessment. Visitors will find information about direct assessment of student learning, annual and 5-year assessment practices, the QVI (Quality - Value Indicator) form, and the PA Chapter 335 review form, as well as the program audit schedule.

The In the Spotlight section is really a showcase of CCP’s recent work in assessment. You’ll find news about CCP’s newly launched SharePoint Assessment Repository and you can read the highlights of January 2015’s Assessment Conference. There is an article about the culture of assessment at CCP, as well as details about the CAT team. You may also link to the latest newsletters.

The Resources section showcases college presentations (including those from the January 2015 Assessment Conference) and is a repository for CCP’s Assessment documents and forms.

But it’s more fun to visit than to read about. Reading your colleagues’ commentary is inspiring in and of itself! So go ahead and visit your new Assessment Website, and bookmark it for future reference. http://path.ccp.edu/assessment

CCP’s Culture of Assessment - A Study

To assess the College’s culture of evidence and its development on campus, Academic Affairs conducted a survey in 2008 with a follow-up in 2013. The surveys were administered to three groups on campus: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and other areas.

Generally, the responses demonstrate, for almost all areas, large and important increases in the campus’s understanding, use, and support of assessment on campus. Within Academic Affairs, the largest jumps were in an understanding of the difference between faculty evaluation and student learning outcome (SLO) assessment, recognition that assessment audits were conducted, and developing a plan for creating a culture of evidence. Other topics experienced more than two-fold increases in agreement: believing that everyone is responsible for creating a culture of assessment, the use of assessment data to strengthen courses and programs, and the opportunities to identify assessment skills and update them.

To learn more, visit the new Assessment Website and click on “In the Spotlight.” http://path.ccp.edu/assessment