

# LEARNING CURVE

Northeast  
community college  
Norfolk, Nebraska

## Assessment Newsletter

February 2006

Volume 14

### Heart to Heart

The consultants returned to campus for the final time on January 31 & February 1 to help us prepare for the November HLC/NCA focused visit. The assessment subcommittee, deans, FACS teams, and other programs had the opportunity to visit with consultants. In addition, the consultants held sessions for support staff about their role in assessment and student learning. We have received very positive feedback about the sessions. The visit reinforced our feeling that NECC is on the right track. With less than 10 months (three of those are summer) to finalize our preparation, we ask for careful attention to fulfilling assessment roles. This newsletter offers suggestions and comments for successful implementation and reporting.

~Corinne and Lin~

**Together we assess and achieve measurable outcomes—a win for us all!**



### The Caramel in the Box

Last fall, NECC submitted a monitoring report to the Higher Learning Commission that outlined our progress in general education and faculty credentialing. We finally received good news on January 30, 2006. Our HLC liaison, Mary Breslin, reviewed the report and stated:

*"The college has made significant progress in addressing the recommendations of the team. In fact, it is remarkable that in so short of time such progress has not only been made but implemented".*

This is truly a huge caramel in our Valentine box. Considering that our assessment of general education will be evaluated during the focused visit, it's good to know that we're on the right track. Thanks to everyone who so diligently brought the changes about.

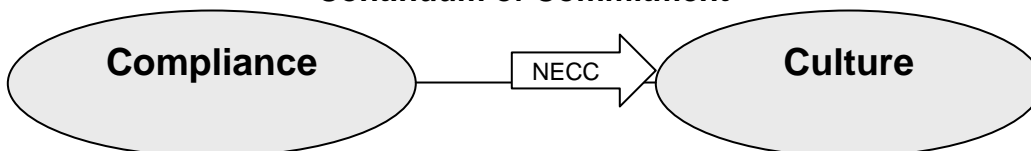
### The Heart of the Matter

Programs and General Education Teams should be collecting data on the learning competencies for this year's matrix. Most, of our assessment plans implement measuring strategies during the spring semester. **This year's data collection (results), analysis, and recommendations are crucial to the success of the focused visit. There is no leeway; we need 100% completion of assessment reports by the following dates:**

- **May 30 FACS teams final reports**
- **August 18 Program assessment reports due to deans.**

Final reporting dates have been accelerated due to the fact that we must submit a self study report to the HLC in September. The focused visit is scheduled for November 13-15. We are showing compliance with HLC/NCA recommendations; but more importantly, we are building a culture where assessment is used to improve student learning.

### Continuum of Commitment



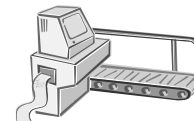


### Heart Beat

Student learning is the heartbeat of the institution. Without students and the importance of learning, none of us would be here. Although the faculty is primarily responsible for teaching and learning, every person in every job on campus has an impact. It is important to realize the contributions made by support staff. The consultants outlined this importance as summarized in the following comments by Rose Ann Rogers.

*From my viewpoint, Jane and Carroll helped college staff understand their role in assessment in the following ways:*

- They discussed what assessment is “not” and what it is.
- They gave concrete advice on how Student Services and other non-faculty personnel should prepare for the visit.
- They gave concrete advice on what Student Services and other non-faculty personnel should do during the team visit in November.
- They helped us understand the meaning of an “assessment culture” and assured us that Northeast is developing that culture.



### Stress Test by Corinne Morris

Recently, I was challenged by a respected colleague to define assessment in 10 words or less and to identify 3 easy steps to accomplish it. One of my goals as the assessment coordinator is to facilitate simple yet meaningful processes for institutional assessment. Unfortunately, there seems to be no ideal 3- step model for assessment that works for everyone. However, I have attempted to answer my colleague’s challenge with the following:

#### **“Define assessment in 10 words or less”**

Assessment: measuring learning outcomes and using results to make improvements

#### **“Tell us what you want in 3 easy steps”**

##### **In General:**

1. **Stay informed** – Pertinent information is shared through the Learning Curve, mail boxes, email messages, the assessment web-page, and face-to-face meetings.
2. **Respond to requests** – A concerted effort is made to only ask for what is needed. Your responses are crucial to the overall success of the college.
3. **Communicate** -- Ask questions, share ideas and information, discuss assessment issues, consider alternatives, attend sessions, serve on committees, etc.

##### **More Specifically:**

Faculty	Technical Programs & General Education FACS Teams	Other Employees
1. Use classroom assessment techniques to improve student learning. (The NECC standardized matrix [available on assessment web page] can be used to record classroom or course assessment efforts & results.)  2. Assist General Education FACS teams and Assessment Sub-committee through service or by supplying requested information or artifacts.  3. Share best practices.	1. Implement assessment procedures that lead to improved learning outcomes.  2. Record plan and results on the standardized matrix.  3. Follow through with requests for information and deadlines.	1. Seek to understand how your job impacts or contributes to student-learning  2. Gather evidence that shows impact on student-learning whenever possible and report.  3. Follow the three <i>In general</i> suggestions stated above.

It is possible that institutional assessment will never be easy; however, as it becomes more of a routine, it should become second nature. By working together, our assessment endeavors will become more meaningful over time.

### Reminders

- CAAP Exam will be administered in 10:00 classes on March 22 (and in a few 11:00 classes)
- Program and General Education Notebooks need to be ready to display for focused visit
- Collect data this spring for your 2005/2006 assessment reports. (See deadlines on front page)