

# LEARNING CURVE

## Northeast

community college  
Norfolk, Nebraska

### Assessment Newsletter

October 2006

Volume 16



#### Lights, Cameras, Action!

With the focused visit less than two months away, we are ready to cast Northeast Community College in the best light. The 2005/2006 institutional report provides the best picture ever, of Northeast assessment. Thank you all for your contributions! If you are interested in seeing the report, it is available in the NECC library. Copies are also available through the members of the Assessment and General Education Sub-committees, as well as the Academic Deans. In addition, parts of the report are posted on the website. This newsletter zooms in on information and activities that will assist in obtaining glowing reviews from HLC Critics (Evaluators) next month.

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

#### Director's Comments

I think everyone understands the importance of our upcoming focus visit from the Higher Learning Commission on assessment. From my perspective, the faculty and administration have worked together to create an assessment plan that places learning squarely at the top of our institutional priorities. I am looking forward to our divisional meetings which, by the way, are taking place at every level of college, including with our Board of Governors. It is our final preparation activity and I am actually thinking we will all have some fun with them. I'm certain our exchanges will be lively and I'm hoping that we will all feel even more confident about the outcome of our visit when they are concluded.



~ Sarah J. Dempsey~

#### Schedule for Academic Division Meetings

CE/DL – Tuesday, October 10 – 10:30am- LLC, ESU Conference Room  
AHS – Monday, October 9 – 3:30pm in AAH 134  
APT – Tuesday, October 10 – 11:30am in UL 105  
BMT – Wednesday, October 4 – 3:30pm in Maclay 131  
HASS – Wednesday, October 18 – 3:30pm in WB 109

#### Premier Dates—November 13 and 14

The reaccreditation assessment focused visit will occur on November 13 and 14, 2006.

The HLC evaluators are:

Gary Wheeler - President of Gogebic Community College in Ironwood Michigan

Sharon Katterman - Director of Resource Development & Institutional Effectiveness at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills Illinois

#### The General Education Scene—We all Play a Part!

The analysis of general education assessment results identified areas that we can all address in our classrooms and our departments. Please consider the following recommendations as you assist students in developing the fundamental academic competencies and skills.

- **Writing:** This year's report identified basic grammar as an area of challenge for NECC students. Encourage your students to proofread their writing assignments. Consider pointing out the importance of composition in all careers. Students profit from program instructors' support for this general education goal. Also, continue to emphasize effective thesis writing.
- **Speaking:** Source citing was identified by the speaking team as an area of concern. In order to avoid plagiarism, students need to understand the importance of documenting sources. When giving an oral presentation, it is important for students to tell the audience the names and dates of their sources in conjunction with the information. If you require students to give oral presentations, please encourage them

to verbally identify their sources. Rule of thumb---if the speaker did not think of it, the information requires a verbal citation.

- **Math:** Results of the CAAP indicated that NECC students scored below the national norm in intermediate algebra or higher levels of math. Keep this in mind when advising students into math classes. Also, please help us challenge students by including mathematical applications and problem solving as part of your course content.
- **Social Skills:** NECC students indicated that they did not feel prepared to work with diverse populations. In the United States today, the workplace is very diverse. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women make up about 47 percent of the workforce. Minorities and workers from other countries occupy 26 percent of jobs. White males have only 15 percent of new entrants to the workforce. Please continue to stress the importance of diversity in your curriculums. If the Social Skills Team can help you in any way, let us know.
- **Problem Solving:** The 2005-2006 assessment report indicates that NECC students were strong in the first two stages of problem solving, i.e., identifying the problem and reviewing appropriate information. They were weaker in stages 3 & 4, i.e., developing and evaluating a solution. We hope you will continue to provide problem solving projects in your classes and emphasize the importance of selecting and evaluating the most appropriate solution.

Volunteers are needed for problem solving assessment. We encourage instructors to use assignments already in place. Scoring for assessment purposes can be easily accomplished on the rubric that is available on the website, or from Roger Gipson.

### Transfer Education: Take One Scene Three



Now that program and general education assessment are fully implemented, the next step in our institutional plan is to implement course assessment for transfer programs. By the May of 2008, every department that offers an AA, AS, or cooperative degree, is expected to submit a course assessment report for at least one course within the transfer program. This plan was outlined during the Wednesday afternoon session at the August In-service. It provides evidence that every program of study listed in the College catalog has developed, or is in the process, of developing assessment plans. Academic Programs expected to implement course assessment include:

Art	English	Pre-Engineering
Behavioral Science	Health, Physical Education, & Recreation	Radiologic Technology
Biology	Journalism	Surgical Technology
Chemistry	Library Technical Assistant	Social Science
Criminal Justice	Mathematics	Speech
Education	Music	Theatre



### Character Begins New Career as a Columnist

You know her as Assessment Annie—the lead character of the Annie skits from NECC past in-services. Although the skits will not be returning next season, you can continue to hear from Annie Assessment by writing to *Dear Annie*. If there is something you need to know about assessment, Annie will try to help. No need to reveal your identity, questions can be submitted anonymously online at <http://www.northeastcollege.com/AN/Assessment/index.php>

*Dear Annie,*

*I always thought we were accredited by North Central Association-NCA, now people are talking about the Higher Learning Commission-HLC. Are these two different organizations or What??*

*Confused by Acronyms*

*Dear Confused,*

*The North Central Association is a membership organization of colleges and schools in 19 states; American Dependents' Schools operated overseas for the children of American military and civilian personnel; and schools and colleges in sovereign U.S. tribal nations within the 19 states. Two independent corporations, the Commission Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI) and The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), also hold membership in the association. The two commissions hold the legal authority to conduct accrediting activities for educational organizations. CASI accredits schools below post-secondary and the HLC accredits higher education organizations.*

**Historical Note:** *In the year 2000, when the institutional members of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools agreed to a corporate restructuring of the association, the "Commission on Institutions of Higher Education" changed its name to the "Higher Learning Commission".*