

# **2003-04 Campus-Wide Assessment Report**

by the Communication Caucus

Throughout this academic year, the following members of the Communication Caucus voluntarily gave of their time and expertise to improve the assessment of student learning at MCTC, going beyond their normal duties to provide guidance, support and insight to their colleagues: Kathleen DeVore, Tom Eland, Joan Felice, Haile Haile, Ginny Heinrich, Laura Jahnke, Jane Jurgens, Andrea Knutson, Michael Kuhne, Tina Langseth, Ann Ludlow, Nancy Miller, Melissa O'Connor, Linda Russell, Deb Wertanen, Darren Witwer, and Kim Zernechel.

**Approved by the Communication Caucus on 9/14/04**

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## Executive Summary

### Accomplishments

- 1. Cultural Change:** Establishing an educational environment in which the collection of data on student learning is central to and integrated throughout all academic processes and endeavors requires that all stakeholders first understand the changes necessitated by the implementation of an effective assessment model, second agree that such changes will benefit them and third participate in the creation, shaping and execution of the model. This year Caucus members began conversations that laid the groundwork for a broad-based understanding of and support for the College's assessment model.
- 2. Faculty Development:** One of the most productive tools used by the Caucus this year has been the offering of Faculty Development sessions, which were effective in establishing a channel of communication with instructors from across the curriculum.
- 3. Advocates:** The formation of a cadre of self-selected instructors interested in incorporating communication skills across the curriculum was a third successful effort. With the knowledge that these Advocates gained, they will act as resource persons for their divisions, thus continuing the process of broadening understanding of assessment.
- 4. Academic Affairs and Standards Council:** The inclusion of the Assessment Co-coordinators as members of this Council has advanced the movement toward integrating the assessment of student learning into all academic processes at the college: instructors will gather data on how well individual students are performing, but also on how well courses and programs are in delivering to students the skills and knowledge they claim to be. Instructors and programs can then use these data in a continual process of redesigning assignments, courses and programs, so that they are more effective in promoting student success.
- 5. College-wide Assessment Tools:** This year the Caucus tried to be very deliberate in the design of its next attempt at conducting college-wide assessments of student communication skills. Two subcommittees were formed to develop tools: Oral Communication and Reading. The Caucus hopes to have the plans for the assessment tools in place by the end of Fall Semester 2004, with the tools being implemented in Spring Semester 2005.

## Recommendations

### The Caucus should

- continue to develop initiatives that stem from faculty interests, while improving the transparency of its work and enhancing awareness of the need for its work, so that more faculty feel that they are included and that their concerns are being addressed;
- build on its cross-campus representation by continuing to offer pertinent training sessions and by involving more faculty from technical programs in its activities;
- continue to work closely with the Faculty Development Committee to offer useful, friendly, peer-led training;
- encourage members to engage in many, many one-on-one and small group conversations with all stakeholders, especially MSCF, to achieve a critical mass of understanding of and enthusiasm for the assessment model;
- continue to survey faculty members on their needs and perceptions while collecting more direct information on student learning.

### The Administration should

- continue to acknowledge the time, effort and expertise provided by participating faculty members (though mostly symbolic, gestures such as the stipends provided to Faculty Development presenters and to Advocates suggest that the institution is aware of the work required by faculty to ensure the success of this effort);
- recognize that grass-roots work is *crucial* to the success of Caucus efforts, measurements of which must be considered in light of the fact that institutional change occurs at an incremental level;
- increase financial support for the efforts of the Caucus, including access to clerical support;
- understand the proposed assessment model and its implications and communicate to academic deans the College's expectations for divisions and faculty members;
- encourage administrators at all levels, especially academic deans, to inform themselves about the assessment model and develop a set of specific guidelines for divisions to follow in conducting assessment activities.

## Goals

The Caucus was successful in meeting the two goals for 2003-04 laid out in the College's AQIP Action Plan. (See Appendix D for more information on how the Caucus's work is described in the College's AQIP Action Plan.)

Year	AQIP Goals	Success
2003-04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect information from 50% of full-time faculty on their perceptions of student communication needs—both in terms of what they believe students should be able to do and what they believe students are most deficient in.</li> <li>Have 50% of full-time faculty attend Faculty Development workshops on the assessment of communication skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey completed by 106 faculty members.*</li> <li>131 faculty members attended sessions on Jan. 8; approximately 90 attended sessions on Apr. 9.</li> </ul>

\*See Appendix G for the results of the all-faculty survey on instructor perceptions of student communication needs.

The College's AQIP Action Plan has laid out the following goals for the Caucus for the next two academic years.

Year	AQIP Goals
2004-05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed the assessment of communication into 20 courses across the curriculum.</li> <li>From those courses collect data that indicate that 60% of participating students are communicating at a satisfactory level or higher.</li> <li>Incorporate the reporting on the assessment of student communication skills into the Annual Program Review of ALL Programs/Divisions across the college.</li> <li>From assessment tools not linked to specific course, collect college-wide data that indicate 60% of participating students are performing in speaking and reading at the appropriate college level.</li> </ul>
2005-06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed the assessment of communication into 30 courses across the curriculum.</li> <li>From those courses collect data that indicate that 70% of participating students are communicating at a satisfactory level or higher.</li> <li>Incorporate the reporting on the assessment of student communication skills into the Annual Program Review of ALL Programs/Divisions across the college.</li> <li>From assessment tools not linked to specific course, collect college-wide data that indicate 70% of participating students are performing in writing and information literacy at the appropriate college level.</li> </ul>

## Building on Past Efforts

As it conducted its work this year, the Caucus was able to achieve some level of success in adhering to the guiding principles (proposed in last year's Assessment Report) for the development of an assessment model. Nonetheless, these guidelines continue to present challenges as work continues.

1. The Caucus had mixed results in acting upon last year's suggestion that the model be "faculty-driven":

- First, the model was to "stem from needs identified by faculty members themselves." Certainly, those instructors involved in the process (members of the Caucus, especially) felt that the model was designed to address faculty concerns. Nonetheless, there was a perception among some instructors outside the Caucus that the model asked them to put extra effort into work that did not meet their needs nor the needs of their students.

**Recommendation: The Caucus should continue to develop initiatives that stem from faculty interests, while improving the transparency of its work and enhancing awareness of the need for its work, so that more faculty feel that they are included and that their concerns are being addressed.**

- Second, the model was to "include only those members who choose to be involved." Here the Caucus did quite well. The Caucus consisted only of members who volunteered and who felt enthusiastic; additionally, only self-selected faculty became Communication Advocates for their departments/programs/disciplines.

**Recommendation: The College should continue to acknowledge the time, effort and expertise provided by participating faculty members. Though primarily symbolic, gestures such as the stipends provided to Advocates suggest that the institution is aware of the work required by faculty to ensure the success of this effort.**

- The Caucus was very successful in following the third guideline: to "represent a wide range of disciplines and programs." Caucus members came from nine departments: Biology, English, ESL, Humanities, Information Studies, Math, Nursing, Reading, and Speech. Advocates represent eight departments: Business Technology, English, Fine Arts, Math, Nursing, Nursing Assistant/Home Health Aid, Science and Social Sciences. Still, few departments and programs from the technical side of the College were represented. Another sign of the range of involvement in Caucus activities was the fact that 131 faculty members attended the faculty development sessions held on January 8.

**Recommendation: The Caucus should build on its cross-campus representation by continuing to offer pertinent training sessions and by involving more faculty from technical programs in its activities.**

- Next, the model was to “support those involved in a non-threatening environment that encourages experimentation.” The bulk of faculty feedback to Caucus efforts this year (faculty development sessions in January and April, surveys, and Advocate training) indicated that the model has succeeded in this effort: attendees stated that they enjoyed the fact that the sessions were run by their peers and that they were organized in a fashion that encouraged participation and questioning, while providing hands-on, practical teaching strategies.

**Recommendation: The Caucus should continue to work closely with the Faculty Development Committee to offer useful, friendly, peer-led training.**

- Unfortunately, the Caucus fared less well in its attempt to “incorporate solutions embraced by all involved”; while the majority of faculty members participated in Caucus sessions and responded positively, a vocal minority resisted Caucus efforts, expressing doubt about the need for assessment work and anger at the perceived amount of work being requested. Also, the complexity of the institution presented challenges to creating workable models that are “practical, easily implementable, and flexible”: the number of stakeholders involved and of existing bodies (unions, committees, administrative levels) to be consulted necessitated a great number of meetings and conversations and a significant amount of patience. This year’s experience demonstrated that achieving true cultural change is time-consuming and challenging.

**Recommendation: Assessment leaders must engage in many, many one-on-one and small group conversations with all stakeholders to achieve a critical mass of buy-in of the assessment model; administrators must recognize that such grass-roots work is *crucial* to the success of Caucus efforts, measurements of which must be considered in light of the fact that institutional change occurs only at an incremental pace.**

- Finally, the Caucus did “involve the conducting of research to collect and disseminate data and solutions.” In January, 106 Faculty members completed a survey on their expectations for students’ communication skills; results were presented to the full faculty on April 9. However, no direct data on student mastery of communication skills was collected; the Caucus is developing tools for the collection of such data (on student reading and speaking skills) in 2004-05.

**Recommendation: The Caucus should continue to survey faculty members on their needs and perceptions; however, more direct information on student learning needs to be collected.**

2. The Caucus also had mixed results in acting upon last year’s suggestion that the model “receive institutional support, without being initiated from the top down.”
  - In terms of the first guideline, that the model “receive funding that is ongoing and lasting,” Caucus members expressed great concern. Certainly, the increase in release time for Assessment Co-coordinators, as well as the providing of funds for faculty members who had to prepare to lead faculty development sessions or to fulfill Advocate responsibilities, indicates administrative support for Caucus

efforts. Nonetheless, members were very disappointed when administrative representatives on the Caucus rejected—for strictly financial reasons—almost all of the suggestions, made by the English Division and based on research collected by the Caucus in the previous year, to improve the quality of student writing at MCTC: to establish an integrated, embedded, and materially supported Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program (with team-teaching, WAC Liaisons, and/or a WAC Teaching Circle); to offer writing intensive courses under either the auspices of the English Department (with subject-area focus) or of the home department (with a writing focus); to institute an English 1110 pre-requisite for select non-English courses; and/or to create a full time College-Wide Writing Consultant. Only the Teaching Circle suggestion was adopted.

**Recommendation: The administration should increase financial support for the efforts of the Caucus, including access to clerical support for Caucus efforts.**

- Second, the model was to “involve faculty development, training and peer support.” Here the Caucus was tremendously successful. Two days of faculty training sessions (January 8 and April 9) were offered by Caucus members and generally received well by the full faculty.

**Recommendation: The Caucus should continue to work closely with the Faculty Development Committee to offer useful, friendly, peer-led training.**

- Third, the model was to “be backed by the authority of the administration.” The facts that Caucus efforts were selected as one of three AQIP Action Plans and that the College President will address assessment issues in the Fall Opening days of 2004 suggest that the Caucus has come far toward achieving this goal. Still, much confusion exists (in the minds of Division Coordinators and faculty members) around assessment expectations: who is responsible for developing models and collecting data, and what are the consequences for not doing so?

**Recommendation: Administrators at all levels should inform themselves about the assessment model; the administration should develop a set of specific guidelines for divisions to follow in conducting assessment activities.**

- Next, the model was to “represent a broad-based change in institutional culture and not a one-time-only approach.” Certainly, the assessment model proposed by Caucus and the Assessment Co-coordinators could lead to such lasting change; however, profound change requires profound effort. The number of stakeholders involved requires that clearly delineated channels of communication be established.

**Recommendation: The administration should understand the model and its implications and communicate to academic deans the College’s expectations for divisions and faculty members. Deans should clearly express to Division Coordinators those expectations. Coordinators should conduct open conversations with faculty about their assessment needs and questions; coordinators should then report back to deans the faculty’s concerns.**



- Finally, the model was to “address all stake-holders in the institution potentially affected.” The sheer number and complexity of stakeholders who have had to be consulted has presented perhaps the greatest challenge this year: AASC, Coordinators, MSCF, administration, AQIP, students, and instructors. The number of conversations to be held and, frequently, repeated, has greatly slowed the pace of implementing change; nonetheless, perhaps the greatest achievement of the Caucus was that the discussions *were set in motion*.

**Recommendation: Assessment leaders must engage in many, many one-on-one and small group conversations with all stakeholders to achieve a critical mass of buy-in of the assessment model; administrators must recognize that such grass-roots work is *crucial* to the success of Caucus efforts, measurements of which must be considered in light of the fact that institutional change occurs only at an incremental pace.**

# Accomplishments

## 1. Cultural Change

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Caucus this year has been its foundational work toward creating cultural change at the College. Establishing an educational environment in which the collection of data on student learning is central to and integrated throughout all institutional academic processes and endeavors requires that all stakeholders first understand the changes necessitated by the implementation of an effective assessment model, second agree that such changes will benefit them and third participate in the creation, shaping and execution of the model. Simply creating an understanding of the various levels of assessment is challenging, not to mention the difficulty of overcoming entrenched resistance to change.

MCTC is currently in the first stages of this process. This year Caucus members *began* conversations with the many stakeholders at the college. In October and March, Caucus members spoke at Division Coordinator meetings, so that Coordinators might better understand their role in helping instructors understand the assessment model. Throughout the year, Caucus members also spoke with MSCF officers and members to promote understanding of the implications of Caucus efforts; in fact, the union survey on the length of the academic calendar resulted from these discussions. Caucus members also met repeatedly with administrators at all levels in an attempt to build broad administrative comprehension of the changes that the assessment model will entail. Additionally, the Assessment Co-Coordinators worked with MCTC's AQIP team to ensure that Caucus efforts are in line with the College's strategic directions. Furthermore, Caucus members participated on the Academic Affairs and Standards Council, so that Caucus efforts would enhance the effectiveness of the Council's work; AASC provided an effective forum for promoting discussion about Caucus efforts. Finally, through its work with Faculty Development in offering workshops on communication skills to instructors from across campus, the Caucus achieved great success in holding broad-based conversations about assessment.

**Nonetheless, the Caucus has more work to do in promoting cultural change. As evidenced by some faculty concerns expressed during in-service sessions and at committee and union meetings, even these preliminary discussions of change provoked sometimes passionate—and legitimate—resistance. While such questioning is crucial to the establishment of a faculty-driven assessment model, the fears underlying some of the resistance suggest a need for more communication. Work with MSCF officers must be more deliberate and frequent. Communication with academic deans must be more intentional and frequent. More instructors from across the disciplines must be involved in Caucus efforts to establish wider understanding and support. Finally, the Caucus should consider how it might involve *students* more directly in its efforts.**

## 2. Faculty Development

One of the most productive relationships developed by the Caucus this year has been with Faculty Development. The sessions held on January 8 and April 9 were perhaps the most effective tools employed by the Caucus in establishing broad-based channels of communication

with instructors from across the curriculum. Attendees were enthusiastic in their response to the sessions, and presenters were satisfied with attendees' participation. Attending instructors gained information on creating effective means of assessing student communication; moreover, they gleaned insight into the overall assessment process. The sheer number of instructors participating attests to the potential of this avenue for promoting change.

**The key reason for the success of these sessions was the commitment of the presenters—in-house faculty willing to share their expertise with their peers. These dedicated presenters expressed gratitude toward the College for supplying them with a stipend, a gesture of recognition for their efforts. Another indicator of the usefulness of the cooperation between the Caucus and Faculty Development was the fact that during these sessions instructors felt empowered both to listen to their peers and to question them, to express concern about the assessment process—such openness will be crucial if the College's assessment model is to be effective.**

### 3. Advocates

The establishment of a cadre of self-selected instructors interested in incorporating communication skills across the curriculum was a third successful effort of the Caucus this year. In May, Advocates representing eight departments (Business Technology, English, Fine Arts, Math, Nursing, Nursing Assistant/Home Health Aid, Science and Social Sciences) met with Advisors from the four communication areas (Reading, Writing, Oral Communication and Information Literacy) to gain an understanding of the College's assessment model and to explore methods of incorporating communication skills into their own classrooms. With the knowledge that these Advocates gain, they will act as resource persons for their divisions, thus continuing the process of broadening understanding of assessment.

**One reason for the success of this effort was the commitment of the Advisors—in-house faculty willing to share their expertise with their peers—and of the Advocates. These dedicated educators expressed gratitude toward the College for supplying them with a stipend, a gesture of recognition for their efforts.**

### 4. Academic Affairs and Standards Council

The inclusion of the Assessment Co-coordinators as members of this Council represented the most crucial step forward in firmly rooting effective change in the College. First and foremost, AASC provides a forum in which faculty and administrators can exchange ideas and conduct conversations about assessment. Second, the character of the Council's activities makes it a natural home for assessment.

**At its first session in Fall 2004, AASC has agreed to consider housing the Assessment Committee under its auspices. In its summer retreat this year, the Council agreed to adapt its New Course Proposal form so that it more clearly addresses assessment concerns. These changes will ensure that the assessment of student learning becomes an integral aspect of academic processes at the college: instructors will gather data on how well individual students are performing, but also on how well courses and programs are in delivering to**

**students the skills and knowledge they claim to be. Instructors and programs can then use these data in a continual process of redesigning assignments, courses and programs, so that they are more effective in promoting student success.**

## **5. College-wide Assessment Tools**

Last year the Caucus conducted a college-wide assessment of student writing; however, the results of the data collected were inconclusive because of the insufficient number of student writing samples submitted. (See last year's report.) This year the Caucus, therefore, tried to be more deliberate in the design of its next attempt to conduct college-wide assessments of student communication skills.

**Two subcommittees were formed to develop tools: Oral Communication and Reading. As the year progressed, members of these subcommittees expressed greater and greater concern that MCTC instructors lack the experience and expertise necessary to develop effective, valid assessment models. These concerns have slowed the process; currently the Caucus hopes to have the plans for the tools in place by the end of Fall Semester 2004, with the tools being implemented in Spring Semester 2005.**

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Two-pronged Assessment Model

<b>Assessment of Student Learning</b>		
<b>Program Assessment</b>	<b>College-wide Assessment of Core Competencies*</b>	
	<b>All-Campus Activities</b>	<b>Activities within Courses</b>
<p>Each division/program/discipline will develop a model to assess some aspect(s) of student learning: What one or two content-area skills or competencies are students expected to master either within individual courses or as a result of their experiences in the program?</p> <p>Divisions/programs/disciplines will then evaluate the data and include information on their assessment process and conclusions in their Program Reviews. Faculty members will use the results of these assessment activities in enhancing course content and curriculum and in designing new course and program proposals.</p> <p>The purpose of these activities is to create an ongoing method of improving curriculum and instruction to ensure that students gain the skills and knowledge needed for success in their chosen fields.</p>	<p>To assess how well students are mastering the four competencies across the campus, the college will conduct assessment tools involving student performances from across the curriculum. For these tools a representative sample of randomly selected student performances will be assessed blindly.</p>	<p>To assess how well students are applying the four skills <i>within</i> content areas (and to ensure that students are gaining mastery of the skills in all programs), data on student performances within specific courses will be collected.</p>

\*The purpose of these activities is to ensure that MCTC graduates demonstrate mastery of the four general education competencies identified by faculty:

1. Communication: Effective listening, speaking, reading and/or writing.
2. Critical Thinking: Ability to think critically and effectively solve problems.
3. Life Skills/Personal Responsibility: Possessing the life skills necessary for leading a responsible life.
4. Social Responsibility: Ability and commitment to contribute to one's community as a responsible citizen.

## **Appendix B: Benefits of Assessment at MCTC**

An institutionalized system of embedded assessment strategies will establish ongoing means of improvement with benefits for all stake-holders at MCTC:

### **Students will**

- demonstrate mastery of course skills and content,
- understand purposes behind tasks they are asked to perform,
- integrate learning across the curriculum and make connections,
- see broader purposes of education by contextualizing course content,
- gain mastery of college's core competencies.

### **Faculty will**

- gain skills to state explicitly why they are asking students to perform tasks and to connect course content to students' educational and career goals,
- develop tools that are clearly linked to course and program goals,
- become adept at creating assessment tools that incorporate many skills,
- improve pedagogical skills and area expertise,
- become empowered by sharing their skills with peers and by learning from their peers,
- gain a broader view of students' experience at MCTC.

### **Divisions will**

- develop an arc of learning for students throughout their experiences in courses,
- implement curricula that help students integrate and increase knowledge over time,
- gather data useful both in demonstrating programs' effectiveness and in creating strategies for continual improvement,
- increase interdisciplinary connections and communication,
- attract, retain and graduate more students.

### **The College will**

- improve student recruitment, retention and satisfaction,
- create a more cohesive learning environment for students,
- ensure that it is meeting its goals and helping students achieve mastery of its core competencies,
- increase communication among faculty members, as well as commitment of faculty to the institution,
- gather data useful both in demonstrating its effectiveness and in establishing avenues for continual improvement,
- increase interdisciplinary connections and communication,
- create institutionalized means of collaboration and unity: Faculty Development, Academic Affairs and Standards Committee, Communications Caucus.

<b>Appendix C: Institutionalized Assessment Model</b>				
<b>Programs/ Divisions</b>	<b>Assessment Co- Coordinators</b>	<b>Academic Affairs and Standards Committee</b>	<b>Faculty Development</b>	<b>Competency Caucuses (i.e. Communications Caucus)</b>
<p>1. Develop and implement an annual assessment tool that examines specific courses and/or skills, gathering data about student learning.</p> <p>2. As new courses are developed and proposed, state (a) how courses address program and college goals and (b) how data will be gathered on effectiveness of courses.</p> <p>3. Design individual courses to fit into (a) the arc of courses taken by students in program and (b) the students' experience in the college.</p> <p>4. Support Competency Advocates who will receive training and act as leaders in embedding college's core competencies into program courses.</p> <p>5. Attend sessions (either from college peers or outside experts) designed to provide skills in addressing assessment concerns.</p> <p>6. Use specified days and funds to achieve these goals.</p> <p>7. Evaluate and act on data gathered on courses.</p> <p>8. Incorporate report on and summary of assessment activities into Program Review.</p>	<p>1. Act as member of AASC.</p> <p>2. Act as member of Faculty Development Committee.</p> <p>3. Chair Competency Caucuses.</p> <p>4. Assist programs and divisions in development of annual assessments.</p> <p>5. Work with Faculty Development in offering sessions and providing expertise.</p> <p>6. Support all others involved by facilitating communication and coordinating efforts.</p> <p>7. Develop new models and strategies based upon data collected.</p> <p>8. Compile and submit to AASC an annual report on program and Caucus assessment activities.</p>	<p>1. Require that every new course proposal have course, program and college assessment tools embedded into it.</p> <p>2. Ensure that courses are contextualized into students' overall experience at MCTC.</p> <p>3. Address issues of pre- and co-requisites from the perspective of assuring that students gain mastery of both course skills and college competencies.</p> <p>4. Assist instructors and divisions in completing course proposals.</p> <p>5. Act as advisory board for Assessment Co-Coordinators and Competency Caucuses.</p> <p>6. Accept annual report from Assessment Co-Coordinators.</p>	<p>1. Work with Caucuses to offer sessions on specified days that address issues of assessment and the embedding of competencies.</p> <p>2. Channel funds and provide expertise on assessment to all divisions.</p> <p>3. Provide individual instructors assistance on improving classroom assessment.</p> <p>4. Provide divisions and instructors assistance in completing course proposals for AASC.</p> <p>5. Bring in outside experts on issues of assessment.</p> <p>6. Respond to the self-identified assessment needs of individual instructors and divisions.</p> <p>7. Work with administration and Grants Team to seek funds for these efforts.</p>	<p>1. Design and implement college-wide assessment tools that address how well the college is helping students master its core competencies.</p> <p>2. Use data collected to propose and implement institutional changes to improve student learning.</p> <p>3. Work with Faculty Development and provide in-house experts to run sessions for Competency Advocates and other peers on assessment.</p> <p>4. Assist faculty in implementing innovative changes in improving student learning.</p> <p>5. Work with administration and Grants Team to seek funds for these efforts.</p>

**Note: For this model to be effective, all stake-holders must first see the benefits of this approach and be willing to find ways of making fundamental changes to the institution. This model has many implications: the academic calendar, our system of pre- and co-requisites, possibilities for team-teaching, number of credits offered for courses, pairing courses, student registration, Edit 59, contractual issues, allocation of funds, use of Faculty Development and Assessment funds and days, etc.**



## Appendix D: AQIP Action Plan for Assessment

A. Give a short identifying title (under 10 words) to this Action Project:

- College-wide assessment of MCTC's general education core competency in communication.

B. Describe the goal(s) of this Action Project (in 100 words or fewer):

- To improve students' communication skills by developing strategies that collect, disseminate and respond to data on student mastery of the general education core competency of communication—including the implementation of broader college-wide tools, the embedding of assessment strategies into individual courses and the training of faculty in the assessment of communication skills across the curriculum.

C. Please Identify the single AQIP Criterion which the Action Project will Primarily affect and other Criteria to which it is strongly related:

<b>Primary</b>	X	Helping Students Learn
<b>Related</b>	X	Measuring Effectiveness
	X	Planning Continuous Improvement
	X	Building Collaborative Relationships

Identify up to four of the AQIP Principles of High-Performing Organizations that you hope this project will enhance.

<b>Principles</b>	X	Broad-based faculty, staff, and administrative involvement
	X	Leaders and leadership systems that support a quality culture
	X	A learning-centered environment
	X	Fact-based information-gathering and thinking to support analysis and decision-making

D. Please describe your Institution's rationale for addressing this *Primary* criterion at this time. Why is this project and its goal(s) one of your "vital few"?

- To know if it is meeting its mission of educating students and to ensure that it offers responsive and effective programs, MCTC must collect and respond to data on how well students are gaining the skills and competencies identified by faculty as vital to the successful education of students both in their chosen program of study and in their core general education.

E. List the organizational areas (or institutional departments and divisions) most affected.

- Divisions, Departments and Programs that provide direct student instruction
- Faculty Development

- Academic Affairs and Standards Committee
  - Deans/Academic Affairs
- F. List and briefly describe the critical processes most affected.

- Faculty Development
- New Course Proposals & Course Alterations
- Annual Program Reviews
- Instructional Approaches and Strategies

G. List the process measures that you plan to track as you work on this Action Project.

- The number of Programs/Divisions assessing communication skills at the course level.
- The number of students involved in assessment activities.
- The number of faculty participating in assessment activities.
- The percentage of full-time faculty attending Faculty Development activities.
- The number of faculty responding to assessment surveys and questionnaires.

H. List the outcome measures that you plan to track as you work on this Action Project.

- Results of college-wide Core Competency assessment activities.
- Results of Program/Division activities assessing Core Competencies.

I. Describe your annual stretch targets for this Action Project.

Year	Quantitative and Qualitative Targets
One (2003-04)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect information from 50% of full-time faculty on their perceptions of student communication needs—both in terms of what they believe students should be able to do and what they believe students are most deficient in.</li> <li>• Have 50% of full-time faculty attend Faculty Development workshops on the assessment of communication skills.</li> </ul>
Two (2004-05)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed the assessment of communication into 20 courses across the curriculum.</li> <li>• From those courses collect data that indicate that 60% of participating students are communicating at a satisfactory level or higher.</li> <li>• Incorporate the reporting on the assessment of student communication skills into the Annual Program Review of ALL Programs/Divisions across the college.</li> <li>• From assessment tools not linked to specific course, collect college-wide data that indicate 60% of participating students are performing in speaking and reading at the appropriate college level.</li> </ul>
Three (2005-06)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed the assessment of communication into 30 courses across the curriculum.</li> <li>• From those courses collect data that indicate that 70% of participating students are communicating at a satisfactory level or higher.</li> <li>• Incorporate the reporting on the assessment of student communication skills into the Annual Program Review of ALL Programs/Divisions across the college.</li> <li>• From assessment tools not linked to specific course, collect college-wide data that indicate 70% of participating students are performing in writing and information</li> </ul>

literacy at the appropriate college level.
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- J. Briefly describe how you plan to keep your institution's attention and energies focused on this Project and its goal(s).
- Involve faculty from across the curriculum through Faculty Development
  - Celebrate in-house experts through Faculty Development
  - Involve faculty through work with Coordinators
  - Involve faculty through college-wide assessment tools
  - Increase resources and time for Assessment of Student Learning
  - Implement a clear model and assessment process
  - Require the embedding of assessment activities into courses through Course Alteration and New Course Proposal Forms of the Academic Affairs and Standards Committee
  - Require Programs/Divisions to report on assessment activities in Annual Program Reviews
  - Recognize and celebrate increased student mastery of communication through all-college events and publications

### Appendix E: Three Year Plan

	Communications Caucus will	Assessment
Spring 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet monthly;</li> <li>• Offer Faculty Development on April 9;</li> <li>• Work with Faculty Development on Teaching Circle on Communication;</li> <li>• Have sub-committees on Speaking and Reading continue to develop college-wide assessment tools;</li> <li>• Announce and respond to results of faculty survey;</li> <li>• Begin report on year's activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs/Divisions will               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. implement individual assessment activities and collect data on student learning;</li> <li>2. have faculty attend sessions on communication skills;</li> <li>3. encourage faculty to become communication advocates;</li> <li>4. compile report on assessment activities.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Brad Foley will gather all reports.</li> </ul>
Summer 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training to communication advocates;</li> <li>• Work on Annual Report;</li> <li>• Plan activities for August 19.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brad will               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. respond to Program/Division reports;</li> <li>2. compile overall report;</li> <li>3. plan August 19.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Fall 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet monthly;</li> <li>• Submit Annual Report to AASC and Cabinet;</li> <li>• Conduct Faculty Development on August 19: "Creating Communication Assessment tools across the curriculum";</li> <li>• Implement college-wide assessment tools for Speaking and reading;</li> <li>• Meet with communication advocates;</li> <li>• Survey employers and transfer institutions (using Program Advisory Boards) on their communication needs and current graduate performance;</li> <li>• Have subcommittees on Writing and Information Literacy develop college-wide assessment tools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-Coordinator will               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. submit Report to Deans, Cabinet and AASC;</li> <li>2. seek structural change to allow Assessment to report to AASC.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• I R will incorporate Assessment Reports into Program reviews.</li> <li>• Programs/Divisions will               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use August 19 to review last year's activities and begin plan for this year;</li> <li>2. Respond to data gathered last year to make changes in courses and/or curriculum;</li> <li>3. If possible, repeat tool from Spring '04;</li> <li>4. Have communication advocate guide them in creating plan to assess communication in one course (or more).</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Spring 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet monthly;</li> <li>• Offer Faculty Development on April 8;</li> <li>• Work with communication advocates;</li> <li>• Have sub-committees on Writing and Information Literacy continue to develop college-wide assessment tools;</li> <li>• Collect data from Programs/ Divisions on communication skills in specific courses;</li> <li>• Collate and respond to data from Employer/ Transfer Institution Survey;</li> <li>• Collate and report on data gathered via college-wide assessment of speaking and reading;</li> <li>• Begin report on year's activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs/Divisions will             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use opening day time to develop schedule for implementing individual assessment tool and communication assessment tool;</li> <li>2. Conduct both assessments;</li> <li>3. Use April 8 to collect and review data;</li> <li>4. Compile a report in conjunction with Annual Program Review.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Co-Coordinator will             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. collect individual reports;</li> <li>2. propose changes to AASC forms.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Summer 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write Annual Report</li> <li>• Plan opening day activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-Coordinator will             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. compile and write annual report;</li> <li>2. plan opening day activities.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Fall 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet monthly;</li> <li>• Submit Annual Report to AASC and Cabinet;</li> <li>• Conduct Faculty Development day;</li> <li>• Implement college-wide assessment tools for Writing and Information Literacy;</li> <li>• Meet with communication advocates;</li> <li>• Have subcommittees on Writing and Information Literacy implement college-wide assessment tools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-Coordinator will submit Report to Deans, Cabinet and AASC.</li> <li>• Institutional Research will incorporate Assessment Reports into Program reviews.</li> <li>• Programs/Divisions will             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use opening day to review last year's activities and begin plan for this year;</li> <li>2. Respond to data gathered last year to make changes in courses and/or curriculum;</li> <li>3. If possible, repeat tool from Spring '05;</li> <li>4. Have communication advocate guide them in revising plan to assess communication in one course (or more).</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Spring 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet monthly;</li> <li>• Offer Faculty Development day;</li> <li>• Work with communication advocates;</li> <li>• Collect data from Programs/ Divisions on communication skills in specific courses;</li> <li>• Collate and report on data gathered via college-wide assessment of writing and information literacy;</li> <li>• Begin report on year's activities;</li> <li>• Disband.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs/Divisions will             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use opening day time to develop schedule for implementing individual assessment tool and communication assessment tool;</li> <li>2. Conduct both assessments;</li> <li>3. Use Faculty Development day to collect and review data;</li> <li>4. Compile a report in conjunction with Annual Program Review.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Co-Coordinator will             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. collect individual reports;</li> <li>2. propose creation of new Competency Caucus (i.e. Critical Thinking).</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
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### Appendix F: Results of Division Surveys with Advocates

**Writing:** English, Law Enforcement, Humanities=3

**Reading:** Nursing, Soc. Sciences, Constr./HVAC, Health, Math/CSCI, Science, Reading, ESL, Dental Ast.=9

**Information Literacy:** Information Studies=1

**Speaking:** Fine Arts, Culinary Arts, Barbering, Apparel Technologies, UPRY, Nursing Asst.=6

Coordinator	Department	Skill	Advocate
Faye Uppman	Nursing	Reading	Nancy Miller
Denise Fenton	Nursing Assistant/ Home Health Aide	Speaking	Pat Reinhart
Linda Russell	Reading/Study Skills	Reading	Ann Ludlow (Advisor)
Gary Reynolds	Film, Video, etc.	Form not received	
Dianna Collier	Human Services/ Addiction Counseling	Form not received	
Gill Creel	English	Writing	Phil Martin
Marcella Jones	Math/CSCI	Reading	Carmen Buhler
Mylan Masson	Law Enforcement	Writing	
Mitch Albers	Science, Astronomy & Physics	Reading	Joan Felice
Jeff Hoover	ESL	Reading	
Jake Jacobson	Graphic Design/ Electronic Publishing	Form not received	
Nancy Mollner	Health	Reading	
Dave Skogstrom	Accounting/ Business	Form not received	
Vicky Johnson	Apparel	Speaking	
Phil Gatto	Culinary	Speaking	
Dean Trisko	Fine Arts	Speaking	Yolanda Williams
Elaine Hauff	Social Science	Reading	Diane Pearson
Mark Lindstrom	Cabinetmaking	Form not received	
Greg Skudlarek	Construction Electricity/HVAC	Reading	
Kim Munson	Machine Tool Tech	Form not received	
Tom Obermeyer	Architectural Technology	Form not received	
Ann Ryan	Library and Info Studies	Information Lit.	Ginny Heinrich (Advisor)
Margret Lydell	Business Technology	Form not received	Margret Lydell
Darren Witwer	Humanities, Languages, Speech	Writing	Tina Langseth (Advisor)
George Hoxie	Aircraft Technician	Form not received	
Tom Buzzard	Air Traffic Control	Form not received	
Kathy Lapham	Dental Assistant	Reading	
Roger Buffalohead	Urban Teacher Program/Child Development	Form not received	
Andy Chrastek	Information Technology	Form not received	
Treka McMillian	UPRY	Speaking	
Denise Clark	Cosmetology	Form not received	
Patrick Carlson	Barbering	Speaking	
Janis Hollenbeck	Jewelry	Form not received	

**Appendix G: Results of All-Faculty Survey on Student Communication Needs**

**I. READING**

Is Reading Assigned in Your Course? (N=106)	"Yes"	Percent
	99	93.40%

**6**

**IV**

6	8	8	1	1
9	5	3	9	9
8	8	8	8	
0	8	8		
8	8			
5	5	8	0	0
2	2			
M	2			
8	9			

Of the 99 Who Said "Yes" to Assigned Reading:	Number and Percent "Yes"					
	Prior		During		After	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Read for Basic Understanding of Ideas	95	96.0%	98	99.0%	86	86.9%
Read to Apply Knowledge	86	86.9%	93	93.9%	82	82.8%
Read to Follow Procedures/Directions	90	90.9%	89	89.9%	80	80.8%
Read for Critical Thinking	61	61.6%	88	88.9%	82	82.8%
Understand Terms and Jargon Specific to Your area	39	39.4%	92	92.9%	90	90.9%
Demonstrate Comprehension of What They've Read By Answering Multiple Choice Questions	73	73.7%	74	74.7%	71	71.7%
Demonstrate Comprehension of What They've Read By Writing Short Answers	74	74.7%	86	86.9%	77	77.8%
Demonstrate Comprehension of What They've Read By Correctly Following a Procedure	77	77.8%	85	85.9%	79	79.8%
Demonstrate Comprehension of What They've Read By Creating a Product	42	42.4%	55	55.6%	56	56.6%
Demonstrate Comprehension of What They've Read By Writing An Essay	51	51.5%	58	58.6%	57	57.6%
Demonstrate Comprehension of What They've Read By Writing An Outline or Summary	51	51.5%	60	60.6%	56	56.6%



II. WRITING

Is Writing Assigned in Your Course? (N=106)	"Yes"	Percent
	84	79.20%

N	E			
0	1	1	0	0
0	5	0	2	0
0	5	0	2	2
0	1			2
1	2	3	9	0
0	5	0	2	0
0	6	0	0	
0	2	2		
0	8	0		

Of the 84 Who Said "Yes" to Assigned Writing:	Number and Percent "Yes"					
	Prior		During		After	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Students Will Write to Record Information	61	72.6%	72	85.7%	66	78.6%
Students Will Write to Report Results, Facts or Observations	55	65.5%	73	86.9%	65	77.4%
Students Will Write to Narrate or Describe	55	65.5%	71	84.5%	64	76.2%
Students Will Write to Analyze	51	60.7%	70	83.3%	69	82.1%
Students Will Write to Express Creativity	33	39.3%	53	63.1%	48	57.1%
Students Will Write to Persuade	34	40.5%	49	58.3%	51	60.7%
Students Will Write to Demonstrate Critical Thinking	49	58.3%	71	84.5%	69	82.1%
Students Will Produce Writing That is Grammatically Correct	56	66.7%	66	78.6%	60	71.4%
Students Will Produce Writing That Organized Appropriately for Purpose	56	66.7%	72	85.7%	72	85.7%
Students Will Produce Writing That Contains Vocabulary Unique to Your Field	26	31.0%	69	82.1%	68	81.0%
Students Will Produce Writing That Requires Research	31	36.9%	55	65.5%	57	67.9%
Students Will Write Short Answers	70	83.3%	71	84.5%	69	82.1%
Students Will Write Letters	34	40.5%	36	42.9%	36	42.9%
Students Will Write Notes	63	75.0%	66	78.6%	62	73.8%
Students Will Write Essays	44	52.4%	54	50.0%	50	59.5%
Students Will Write Lists	57	67.9%	60	71.4%	53	63.1%
Students Will Write Lab Reports	15	17.9%	26	31.0%	28	33.3%
Students Will Write Journals	25	29.8%	35	41.7%	32	38.1%

III. ORAL COMMUNICATION

Are Oral Presentations Assigned in Your Course? (N=106)	<b>"Yes"</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	<b>38</b>	<b>35.80%</b>

	<b>Sum</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>21</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>25</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	

Of the 38 Who Said "Yes" to Assigned Oral Presentations:	Number and Percent "Yes"					
	Prior		During		After	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Students Will Make Oral Presentations With Poise and Clear Articulation	24	63.2%	33	86.8%	25	65.8%
Students Will Make Oral Presentations With Appropriate Vocabulary for the Course	13	34.2%	34	89.5%	29	76.3%
Students Will Make Oral Presentations With Facts and Research Related to Your Discipline	13	34.2%	33	86.8%	29	76.3%
Students Will Make Oral Presentations to Convey Information or Explain	25	65.8%	34	89.5%	28	73.7%
Students Will Make Oral Presentations to Answer Questions	30	78.9%	34	89.5%	28	73.7%
Students Will Make Oral Presentations to Persuade Others	17	44.7%	23	60.5%	17	44.7%
Students Will Make Oral Presentations to Demonstrate Critical Thinking or Problem Solving	24	63.2%	29	76.3%	24	63.2%
<b>Students Will Speak Coherently Enough to be Understood by Instructor and Classmates (N=106)</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>88.1%</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>90.5%</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>85.7%</b>

**SMALL GROUP WORK**

<b>Is Small Group Work Assigned in Your Course? (N=106)</b>	<b>"Yes"</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	<b>72</b>	<b>67.90%</b>

		Prior		During		After	
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Students Will in Interpersonal or Small Groups, Demonstrate Ability to Get Along With Others	4	6	6				
Students Will in Interpersonal or Small Groups, Demonstrate Ability to Resolve Conflicts	1	3	4				
Students Will in Interpersonal or Small Groups, Demonstrate Ability to Offer Appropriate Responses	1	3	6				
Students Will in Interpersonal or Small Groups, Demonstrate Ability to Listen to Others	9	8	0				
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>				

<b>Of the 72 Who Said "Yes" to Assigning Small Group Work:</b>	<b>Number and Percent "Yes"</b>					
	<b>Prior</b>		<b>During</b>		<b>After</b>	
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Students Will in Interpersonal or Small Groups, Demonstrate Ability to Get Along With Others	68	94.4%	69	95.8%	64	88.9%
Students Will in Interpersonal or Small Groups, Demonstrate Ability to Resolve Conflicts	53	73.6%	60	83.3%	57	79.2%
Students Will in Interpersonal or Small Groups, Demonstrate Ability to Offer Appropriate Responses	57	79.2%	69	95.8%	63	87.5%
Students Will in Interpersonal or Small Groups, Demonstrate Ability to Listen to Others	66	91.7%	68	94.4%	65	90.3%

#### IV. Information Literacy

(N=106)	Number and Percent "Yes"					
	Prior		During		After	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
<b>Students Will Ask Questions Appropriate to Setting and Task</b>	66	62.3%	96	90.5%	92	86.8%
<b>Students Will Know Where to Go to Find an Answer</b>	42	39.6%	96	90.5%	96	90.5%
<b>Students Will Know if an Answer is Legitimate</b>	36	33.9%	88	83.0%	88	83.0%
<b>Students Will Know How to Apply the Answer</b>	38	35.8%	92	86.8%	93	87.7%