Annual Assessment Activity Report

2017-2018

Southeastern Illinois College

Faculty | Students | Staff

· Working together to improve daily ·

2017-2018 Assessment Annual Report:

A Review of Assessment Activities and Progress

Introduction

Assessment ensures improvement and accountability. Southeastern Illinois College firmly believes that assessment provides an opportunity for an entire campus to engage in self-reflection of its learning goals and to measure the degree to which these goals correspond to student needs. The process of assessment also offers an evaluation of activities, products, performances, and strategies to determine if they meet, exceed or fall short of expectations. Assessment provides information to students about the knowledge, skills and other attributes they can expect to possess after successfully completing coursework. Additionally, assessment provides SIC faculty and staff with evidence that remains helpful in determining what works and what needs modification for student improvement and success. SIC regularly participates in assessment to remain accountable to its students as part of an effort toward consistent improvement.

SIC's assessment committee is a major part of the institutional process and serves as a regulatory and review committee whose responsibilities include the assurance that all aspects of the college are routinely and accurately assessed and evaluated. The assessment committee is a college-wide committee comprised of 20 members, including a mix of administration, faculty, and staff. The assessment committee is led by the "A Team", which is chaired by an Academic Advisor (Dr. Tyler Billman), the Executive Dean of Academic Services (Gina Sirach), a Math/Science faculty member/Division Chair (Jason Fitzgerald), and a Humanities faculty member/Division Chair (Allan Kimball). The Vice President of Academic Affairs (Dr. Karen Weiss) serves as an advisor for the "A Team". This group provides direction and leadership for the committee, keeping the assessment process on track and ensuring quality.

This annual report will give a review of the assessment activities and progress that occurred during the 2017-2018 academic year. This report will detail new assessment activity specific to the 2017-2018 academic year, highlight instructional assessment by division, display non-instructional assessment by department area, as well as provide specific information about future plans in assessment for the institution.

<div align="center">New Assessment Activity for 2017-2018</div>

The following highlights new assessment activity specific to the 2017-2018 academic year. While assessment has been ongoing at SIC for decades, there is constant innovation and new ideas in the process. For the 2017-2018 academic year, new assessment activity included a focus on co-curricular assessment and the implementation of an e-newsletter, *Assessment in Action*.

Co-Curricular Assessment

Co-curricular programs play a significant role in student learning, make a difference in academic success, promote retention and persistence, as well as enhance cognitive and affective development (Bates, Lundquist, Robertson, Urban, & Voss, 2014). Co-Curricular assessment provides SIC with a broader picture of our students' total and wide-ranging learning experiences. Specifically, SIC has defined its co-curricular assessment to be any student organization on campus that is funded by the institution's Student Government. These organizations will have a rotation and will undergo a peer review process each time it is their year to assess. The co-curricular peer review schedule operated in the 2017-2018 academic year as follows and will continue to do so as shown from this chart:

Co-Curricular Programs (rotation)	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Art Club	X		X
Cosmetology Club	X		X
Education Club	X		X
Math and Science Club	X		X
Student Government	X		X
Theta Sigma Phi	X		X
B.A.S.I.C.		X	
Early Childhood Club		X	
Nursing Club		X	
PBL		X	
PTK		X	
Circle K		X	

Outstanding assessment projects for co-curricular programs will be highlighted under the non-instructional assessment section of this document.

Assessment in Action

Although higher education institutions often engage in assessment practices, open communication about specific plans to improve student learning is rare. In fact, "higher education professionals benefit from having applied examples of demonstrably improving student learning at the academic program level" (Smith, Good, Sanchez, & Fuller, 2015, p. 16). Because of this, the Assessment Chair compiles plans from a specific division or department and sends an e-newsletter, *Assessment in Action*, to keep the campus community aware and involved on the current happenings in assessment on the SIC campus. The e-newsletter has had a positive response from faculty and staff, many of which are utilizing the communication tool to enhance division and department meetings. Additionally, this tool is vital in making sure rich conversations about assessment stay active between colleagues.

Achievement in Assessment Award

While the award was established during the 2016-2017 academic year, it is important to highlight the achievements of the 2017-2018 academic year winner as it is awarded annually. To review, the award was given to reward good work in assessment. The winner was based on number of nominations. The nominee did not have to be on the assessment committee. The 2017-2018 Achievement in Assessment Award winner went to Clinton Cory Garmane. Mr. Garmane is the Director of Music at SIC and was selected because he, as his nomination letter stated, "embraces assessment for student learning. His plans are very thorough and it is obvious that he views assessment as an integral part of instruction and crucial for student learning." The assessment committee plans to continue to implement the award on a yearly basis.

<div align="center">

Review of 2017-2018 Instructional Assessment

</div>

The following narrative highlights assessment activities for the 2017-2018 academic year for each instructional division. This is a brief snapshot of every instructional division at SIC. While not every assessment project within those divisions is featured in this document, complete plans and results for every department and academic discipline can be viewed in IntrinSIC.

Humanities

Music students who were part of the SIC concert choir demonstrated the ability to sing respective vocal parts in both sectional and mixed-part rehearsals as well as improving upon concepts in proper choral singing. Scheduled small mixed-group performance rehearsals were scheduled periodically throughout the semester. The director listened to ensure that each individual choir member was able to maintain his/her part while performing with other singers. Students were asked to peer-review what they have observed during selected rehearsals and were asked to provide a rating. In addition to the rating, the students were asked to provide a constructive critique of the ensemble and a self-critique of their personal involvement. While sections grew stronger as weeks progressed, the instructor felt the students never gained the full

independence desired. As the instructor noted, "these results prove that more time needs to be given to sectional rehearsals. Students who show great strengths in leadership will be selected to head up each section and to direct individual rehearsals with their sections."

Students demonstrated proficiency in drafting interesting, creative written introductions in **English**. In groups, students developed written introductions, which could have been used in a descriptive essay regarding a prop provided by the instructor. Based entirely on the written introduction, classmates were able to match written introductions with the provided prop with 100% accuracy, more than achieving the criteria for success. In groups, students edited their written work to eliminate vague and abstract language in written introductions. As the instructor noted when describing their use of results, "Students seemed to easily grasp the concept of concrete and specific language when describing concrete, tangible objects. It seemed also to help that the objects were anthropomorphic toys, which pointed writers toward familiar interactions such as fights and friendships. It may help to begin discussions of narrative using simplified prompts and props before students create personal narratives based on their own ephemeral memories."

Art students demonstrated an understanding of their role in communicating with their viewer social awareness, using the principles of design and collage techniques. This was presented in the form of a design problem lesson involving aesthetic creativity. Additionally, students created a painting that challenged modern ideas of aesthetic creativity. The connotation or denotation must relate in some way to the environment. A written critique was used to score the paintings along with a 50-point rubric, in which the students ranged from 40-50, attaining criteria for success. Finally, students engaged in an in-class discussion of an artist that challenged modern notions of aesthetics. The instructor noted that "the students were very creative and successful with their role of communicating social awareness to the viewer."

Social Science, Business and Education

The **History** department focused on using educational assessment methods to demonstrate social awareness and an awareness of aesthetic creativity. In History 122, Western Civilization I, students demonstrated an awareness of aesthetic creativity by composing essays on Sophocles' *Antigone*, which demonstrated a cognizance of his "Aesthetic of Authoritarianism" and successfully scored 2.26/3.0 in an analysis of their written papers. Students in the same class also demonstrated their mindfulness of aesthetic creativity by composing a paper in which they demonstrated an awareness of Shakespeare's "Aesthetic of Individual Consciousness" by scoring 2.41/3.0 on their paper.

Early Childhood Education students demonstrated competencies for ECE levels 2, 3 and 5 in the Gateways Competencies Assessment by completing the "Ages and Stages Questionnaire" assessment and "Child Study Post Reflection." The students in ECE 141 Child Development successfully met the assessment criteria with 100% competency. Since it was the first time the assessment was used and the stakes were high to meet the criteria for Levels 2, 3 and 5, the instructor provided more than usual guidance and technical writing support in advance of the submission of the assignments to make sure everyone was aware of the specific criteria they needed to meet. The online ECE 141 section received regular written notes for clarification and guidance. The instructor met with students who needed assistance via phone and the online platform, JoinMe. Students were encouraged to send drafts of the assignment so the instructor could proofread and return for revisions.

Sociology 121 students demonstrated an understanding of a broad cross section of the discipline of sociology (which directly translated from Greek means the study of society) with a special focus on the sociological imagination. Students in Sociology 121 were given a pre-test/ post-test instrument that measured the level of content mastery at the beginning and then again at the end of the course. A baseline of the students' awareness of a broad cross section of the discipline of sociology with a special focus on the sociological imagination was established via a

pre-test through test-embedded questions. The overall class average on the questions was 37%

(while students averaged a 58% on the post-test.)   A 21% improvement but falling short of the

stated goal of 25% improvement.

Math, Science & Technology

Biology students in BIOL 222 created color sketches of several different organisms viewed

in lab using a microscope. Student sketches were evaluated for five different labs: Prokaryotes,

Protozoa, Algae, Fungi, and Lower plants. Most students performed above expectations on their

sketches, however not all students exceeded the criteria for success. To remedy this, the instructor

plans to have the students show him their sketches prior to leaving the lab to ensure that their

sketches are accurate.

Physics students in PHYS 221 constructed a working trebuchet from scratch, using the

problem solving skills learned in class. Students used four general qualities for the project, but had

to rely on problem solving and critical thinking to produce a trebuchet that had all four qualities.

The trebuchet project was completed by students who fulfilled rubric requirements at an average of

100%. This is well above the 90% expected results.

Students in **Information Technology** increased knowledge of IT topics, including social

awareness, by targeting the area of professional standards and ethics. This pre and post-test

assessment showed that there was an average gain of 16.38%, exceeding the targeted goal of 15%.

The instructor noted that the results indicated that students are learning ethical and professional

behavior at an acceptable rate. This information is critical for students to know when entering the

work environment.

Nursing and Allied Health

Students in the **Practical Nursing** program completed an Entrance *Medical Terminology*

exercise during the Fall Assessment Day in October 2017 and an Exit *Medical Terminology*

exercise at the end of the program in June/July 2018. The *Medical Terminology* exercise included

two case scenarios with short answers in addition to defining abbreviations and terms utilized in the case scenarios. Fifty three (53) students completed the *Medical Terminology* exercise on the Fall Assessment Day in October 2017. The class average was 83% with the lowest score being a 40% and three (3) students with a 100%. Twenty seven (27) students completed the *Medical Terminology* exercise at the end of the program in June/July 2018. The class average was a 93% with the lowest score being an 80% and eight (8) students with a 100%.

Cosmetology students completed a basic manicure service that included application of base coats and two coats of polish. The rubric includes steps for correct assembly of supplies, preparation of the client's nail and skin, and professional application of nail color. The students initially completed the skill in September of 2017 with an overall course average of 35%. The skill was repeated at the end of COS 172 in October of 2017 with an overall course average of 100%. The students felt that the step-by-step rubrics were useful in instruction of the correct order of the steps of the skills. Similar rubrics will be used for future skills.

Review of 2017-2018 Non-Instructional Assessment

The following narrative highlights assessment activities for the 2017-2018 academic year for each non-instructional area. This is a brief snapshot of every non-instructional unit at SIC. While not every assessment project within those units is featured in this document, complete plans and results for every department can be viewed in IntrinSIC.

Co-Curricular

Student Government engaged problem solving by improving the Student Food Pantry (Freddie's Pantry) on campus. Campus hunger continues to be a problem both nationally and locally on campus. Despite this problem, few of Southeastern's students utilized the pantry during its first year of operation. To address this issue, Student Government took over the responsibility of Freddie's Pantry to gain student traction. The Student Senate, with direction from advisors and administrative Cabinet, revised the pantry's policy and procedures to respond to student needs on

campus. From this, new policies and procedures were developed and helped to improve student use of the food pantry.

Members of **Theta Sigma Phi** participated in their "Learning on Location" trip to New York City and demonstrated a greater understanding of professional theatrical productions. The instructor provided a discussion forum, in which all students responded to the productions they saw. The majority of the students were performers in the SIC theatre department, and felt that having performance experience enhanced their watching of a Broadway show. Students, however, felt they had little insight into the inner workings of a professional production and were not disappointed in what they learned, gaining a chance to go backstage after one of the productions to learn about the technical elements of the show.

Student Affairs

Enrollment Services studied the waitlist process to ensure sufficient opportunity for students to enroll in courses. From the number of courses with students waitlisted, Enrollment Services determined the number of instructors who allowed extra seats to be added to their respective courses. Of the 24 instructors emailed by Executive Dean Gina Sirach asking permission to accommodate the waitlisted students, 21 instructors (87.5%) allowed additional seats to be added, two instructors (8.33%) did not allow extra seats, and one instructor (4.27%) was able to move the waitlisted students to an open section. By allowing the waitlisted students to be added, the institution was able to generate tuition and fee dollars, as well as equalization and reimbursement to students who likely would not have had a seat in his/her respective waitlisted courses.

Efforts in **Recruitment and Dual Credit** focused on Welding and Diesel Technology courses. The goal was to maintain and increase the number of dual credit students in the CTE afternoon Welding and Diesel Tech programs from 2017 to 2018 to sustain opportunities, completion and retention rates for dual credit students. From Fall 2017 to Fall 2018, there was an

increase of zero Diesel Tech dual credit students to 16 total, well above the two percent increase

projection. With Welding dual credit, the number decreased from 14 students in fall 2017 to 9 in

fall 2018, not meeting the two percent increase. Using these results, this data will be re-evaluated

for 2018-2019 to see that numbers remain at or increase by one percent from what they are now, to

account for class size.

Students in SIC's **TRiO/Student Support Services** program who met with the TRiO SSS

Advisor completed a Personal Improvement Plan and discussed four year institutions they were

interested in attending, with several submitting applications and being accepted. According to the

Blumen system, more than 17% of TRiO/Student Support Services students submitted applications

to a four-year university, meeting the criteria for success.

President's Office, Business Office and Services

The **IT Office** focused their assessment on student, faculty and staff safety, enhancing

notifications in the event of an armed intruder on campus. Some faculty and staff were assigned to

an Armed Intruder Launch Group and were trained to participate in test launches. Nineteen faculty

and staff, representing a geographic cross-section of the campus, were trained on launching an

armed intruder emergency notification. The IT office utilized character counts when scripting

messages to make sure the message did not exceed the recommended limit for SMS text messages.

All (100%) of the emergency notification messages launched were received as scripted by the

college.

Marketing focused their assessment on connecting with district high schools via website

links. A spreadsheet was created listing school websites, SIC link present or recommended,

location of the link on the HS website and contact information. As research commenced, it was

found that in some cases, there was an appropriate place for www.sic.edu/scholarships to be added

to the pages. Even though the results of the web analytics were not as promising as hoped, SIC

marketing has created a bit more awareness with counselors to have the scholarships link available

on their websites.

Foundation and Alumni worked to increase fundraising and community involvement by hosting a joint event with a local hospital to help fund scholarships. A "Friendly Feud" – a spin off of "Family Feud" – between SIC and Harrisburg Medical Center at a local establishment. While the criteria for success was $8,000 and the total income for the event was $7,532.50, the assessment of the activity proved that positive relations between HMC and SIC will help in other fundraising measures. There was also a post-interview with HMC employees with positive feedback with areas for improvement for future events indicated.

The **Business Office** focused their attention on reducing the amount of sales tax paid by the College on tax-exempt sales on credit card purchases in order to remain fiscally conservative to better serve students. A copy of the Sales Tax Exemption Certificate was emailed to all credit card users on September 13, 2017. Because of this notification and monitoring, there was a 62% decrease in the amount of sales tax paid on tax-exempt sales. The Business Office will continue to monitor sales tax paid on tax-exempt sales.

Moving Forward: Next Steps in Assessment

SIC Employee Assessment Training

One area of improvement that Southeastern will be enhancing is the ways in which we train our employees on assessment. In Spring 2019, Southeastern will upload a video to our website that will feature a lecture on the importance of assessment and also how to navigate our assessment form. Additionally, the video will be a tutorial on best practices in assessment and how to get started on an assessment project. This video tutorial will not only help full-time employees, but will also benefit adjunct instructors who might not live close to campus or have access to full-time employee help. This video tutorial will not only be beneficial due to accessibility, but it will also give those watching the opportunity to work on their assessment project while going through the tutorial step by step. The ability to start and stop a video, versus a live lecture, might prove

beneficial for those employees that need additional time and attention.

Visualizing the Assessment Process

While documents such as this one will help communicate the importance of assessment at the institution, the A-Team will also be constructing a visual representation of the assessment process at Southeastern. This model will be displayed in a location where students, faculty and staff can clearly see the steps of assessment that Southeastern takes in order to make improvements daily. This effort is not only important to remind faculty and staff of the process, but to notify students that their success is our top priority and SIC employees are wanting to continually improve their practices to better serve them.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

</div>

This report reviewed instructional divisions and non-instructional units assessment projects over the 2017-2018 academic year. This summary detailed findings that showed student improvement in a variety of ways across the Southeastern Illinois College campus. Additionally, new improvements and future steps toward advancing assessment at the College were established. Assessment is an ongoing, living, breathing cycle that influences the ways employees of Southeastern engage, interact and communicate to students. It is an important facet to ensuring quality to the students of the College and to the community. Assessment is critical to Southeastern Illinois College and its employees and staff are committed to the efforts it requires.

References

Bates, K., Lundquist, A., Robertson, C., Urban, E., & Voss, C. (2014). Beyond Satisfaction: Assessing (Learning and Other) Outcomes in Co-Curricular Areas. Western Michigan University assessment in action conference. Retrieved from: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_day/30/

Smith, K. L., Good, M. R., Sanchez, E. H., & Fulcher, K. H. (2015). Communication is key: Unpacking use of assessment results to improve student learning. *Research & Practice in Assessment. 10,* 15-29.