Annual Assessment Activity Report 2020/2021

A Review of Assessment Activities and Progress

Southeastern Illinois College

SOUTHEASTERN
ILLINOIS COLLEGE

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Introduction

In many ways, the 2020/2021 academic year was a continuation of the spring 2020 semester. Educational institutions across the globe were presented with mounting challenges. Some institutions chose to remain remote, some chose a hybrid model, and others chose to return to campus. Regardless of modality, the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic continued to shape and direct the decisions in education. Students, educators, and administrators lived in flux. The goal was the same for all: To make the best of this unprecedented situation and provide quality education to students. There were successes and there were failures.

One of the harshest realities of the pandemic in higher education was, and remains, a decrease in student populations. In their report, "Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students," the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights discusses the impact of the pandemic on education. For community colleges, the report indicates a decline of 13.2% of graduating seniors attending in fall 2020.[1] While not specific to community colleges alone, the report states an 11.4% decrease in high-poverty high school graduates going straight to college in 2020 compared to 2019.[2] Declines in student enrollments have a direct impact on the way assessment is configured and executed. Smaller populations equal smaller sample sizes and less diverse data. While not as drastic as some of the numbers reported nationally, Southeastern Illinois College also experienced a decline in student enrollments.

Despite the decline in student numbers, Southeastern Illinois College remained committed to students, community and the assessment process. While the uncertainty of the present time has been a hindrance in some ways, it has also been a source of inspiration. The faculty, staff, and administration

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[1]"Education in a Pandemic: This Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students." US Department of Education. Office For Civil Rights. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf . Pg 33.

[2] Ibid., Pg 32.

at Southeastern Illinois College are committed to excellence and are working to ensure the best possible outcomes for those we serve.

The Assessment Committee

SIC's assessment committee is a 20-member consortium of administration, faculty, and staff. The committee serves as a major part of SIC's institutional process. The purpose of the committee is to ensure that all instructional and non-instructional programs at the college are routinely and accurately evaluated.

The assessment committee is directed by the "A Team". This group is co-chaired by a Humanities faculty member (Clinton Cory Garmane) and the Executive Dean of Academic Services (Dr. Tyler Billman). Other key members comprise the A-Team, and they include a Math/Science faculty member/Division Chair (Jason Fitzgerald), and a Diesel Tech instructor/Applied Technology Division Chair (Robbie Lindhorst). The group is advised by the Vice President of Academic Affairs (Dr. Karen Weiss). The purpose of the "A Team" is to provide leadership to the assessment committee and assessment processes for the College.

Assessment Report

Scope

Contained within this report is a condensed review of assessment activity from the 2020/2021 academic year. This review will include awards, developments within the assessment committee, an overview of assessment plans from selected programs within the instructional and non-instructional areas, as well as a summary of future assessment endeavors. This report will also address new assessment activities requested for the 2021-2022 academic year as a result of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and general updates.

<center>*Awards*</center>

The "Achievement in Assessment" award for the 2020/2021 academic year was awarded to long-time A-Team member, biology instructor, and division chair, Jason Fitzgerald. Jason is committed to excellence in assessment and to sharing his knowledge with others. The Assessment Team is grateful to Jason for his many years of dedicated service.

<center>*New Assessment Activity for 2021/2022*</center>

Assessment at Southeastern Illinois College is an ever-evolving and improving activity. As such, the Assessment Committee regularly reviews the assessment process, forms, and procedures. For 2021-2022, the A-Team decided to update the General Education Target Areas as well as make modifications to the assessment form. The updated General Education Target Areas include ethics and integrity, critical thinking, technology literacy, and social and cultural awareness. Updates to the form include moving the "Closing the Loop" section of the report to the beginning of the form as well as adding important assessment due dates.

The Assessment Committee requested no pandemic modifications to assessment plans. As the pandemic continues, the Assessment Committee feels confident that faculty and staff will be able to continue with plans appropriately. The Assessment committee recognizes that certain planned activities may not be feasible in the coming months.

<center>*Review of 2020/2021 Instructional Plans*</center>

The following paragraphs will provide an overview of the assessment activities for each instructional division for the 2020/2021 academic year. In most cases, each instructional division will be represented by two individual departments. The information presented below is obtained directly from the completed individual assessment reports. Assessment plans and results for all instructional departments can be viewed on IntrinSIC.

Students taking English courses were tasked with demonstrating proficiency in the written and verbal use of English. One of the intended outcomes was for students to choose a timely topic for a persuasive essay. As stated on the assessment plan, "**English** 109 students will provide clear reasoning supporting the idea that their topic choice for a persuasive essay is timely. To do so, they must connect their topic to current events. Student responses will be formally written and submitted to the drop box." For the assessment to be successful, 80% of students would need to connect their topic to a current event in the news with a "B" or better proficiency. The results showed that 8/9 students completed the persuasion proposal assignment. 7/9 students successfully argued for the timeliness of their topic. One student did not address the timeliness of her topic. A final student did not complete the assignment. Among students who completed the assignment, 88% met or exceeded the threshold for success.

Students in **Theatre** were expected to demonstrate knowledge of the major areas of the diverse, aesthetic expressions and forms of discipline such as music, literature, creative writing, cinema, theatre, and art. An intended outcome of this assessment was that students would be able to analyze and interpret the themes of a variety of plays. To assess this outcome, students were to submit weekly online discussions analyzing the themes of the plays being discussed in class. To be successful, 100% of students would need to make a minimum of 3 weekly posts demonstrating 80% accuracy in identifying themes. Results showed, "60% of students achieved better than the goal of 70% mastery with scores ranging from 83%-95%. However, 40% of students, while the work they did submit was generally well done, were very inconsistent with the weekly commitment to participation in the online discussion. This may have been aggravated by the fact that this normally hybrid course was converted to a completely online course during the pandemic. Some students lack the self-discipline to complete work on a regular, ongoing basis without reminders and my emails were less effective than face-to-face reminders have been in the past."

<u>Social Sciences</u>

Students in **Psychology** are expected to develop insights into personal behavior and one's relationship with a diverse society in the past, present, and future. Students should also develop a basic understanding of cultural, geopolitical, and socioeconomic forces and their impact on society. The assessment plan described the following intended outcome, "Students in PSYC 121 (Introduction to Psychology) will learn the importance of parental involvement, including the three different types of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive), as they reflect on their personal(cultural) upbringing and plans for their future as a parent." To assess this outcome, students were to complete a discussion post comprised of one initial post and a minimum of response post defining parenting styles and sharing their personal experiences. To be successful, all students would need to score a minimum of 80% on the post. The results of this assessment showed that students scored 83% on their discussion posts, thus demonstrating an understanding of the different parenting styles.

Students studying **History** were expected to "locate European countries on a map and be able to name their capital cities. A base knowledge of where various countries are located and which countries they share borders with is essential to understanding Western Civilization." To test this means of assessment, students were given a map quiz. To be successful, all students would need to pass with a score of 80% or higher. Retakes would be given until all students reached the 80% benchmark. Results showed that all students were able to pass the quiz with the established criteria.

<u>Math, Science, and Technology</u>

Students studying **Biology** were expected to meet three life science goals: 1) Students will demonstrate a knowledge of the fundamental laws governing living systems, the composition of matter, and of nature; 2) Students will gain an understanding of the laws that describe energy changes and how they influence changes in nature, living systems, and matter; 3) Students will demonstrate a knowledge of the orderliness of nature as well as develop the ability to evaluate the effects of science and technology on their lives. The assessment plan states, "Students will demonstrate the impact of infectious, genetic, and environmentally based diseases on the human population, and the technology

that is used to address those diseases." A means of assessment established for this outcome states,

"Students in Biology 222 will create slideshow presentations over randomly assigned viral diseases.

Presentations will include discussion and graphics over the structure, viral replication cycle (including

modes of transmission), prevalence, and social impact of the virus, including notable epidemics or

pandemics that have occurred throughout history. Students will also hypothesize a potential treatment

or vaccine based upon the "life" cycle of the virus. The project will be graded upon 3 elements:

aesthetics, accuracy and quality of the information presented, and plausibility of the hypothesized

treatment (i.e. does it make sense that a treatment like that should work)." To be successful, students

would need to earn a minimum of 90% of the available points for aesthetics, as well as a minimum of

80% for content and a minimum of 75% for hypothesized treatments. The results of the assessment

were described by the report author as follows:

> "I expanded the topics to include bacterial historic pandemics as well as viral ones to
> provide some variation in topics from the previous year. Students were assigned in groups of 2
> or 3 to work collaboratively and remotely to complete the presentation. There were 4 groups
> total.
>
> In terms of aesthetic creativity, 3 of the 4 groups met or exceeded the 90% threshold.
> One of those groups opted to do a poster instead of a PPT presentation and did an excellent job
> with it. The one group that didn't reach the 90% threshold had no continuity in the aesthetics
> from slide to slide and used some poor-quality images that didn't present well.
>
> In terms of overall content, all 4 groups met the 80% threshold for including appropriate
> and relevant content in their presentation.
>
> For the last part of the assignment, students were not allowed to work with their partner
> in suggesting a way to prevent a similar pandemic from occurring today. (This portion was
> assigned after the final presentation was submitted.) All 9 students received maximum points
> for their recommendations, far surpassing the 75% goal. The responses were well thought,
> appropriate, and I was pleased to see so many students relate the historical pandemics to the
> current pandemic."

Students studying **Physics** were expected to demonstrate skills in communication, mathematics,

and physical/life sciences. One intended outcome of Physics states that students should apply

appropriate procedures, methodologies and critical thinking strategies to physical, theoretical and

situational phenomena in a logical and sequential fashion. To demonstrate this, students taking PHYS

221, General Physics I, were instructed to apply a specified problem-solving methodology to assigned homework. Success would be achieved if each student had an overall increase of 20% between the first homework assigned and the last. Results showed that the means of assessment were not successful. As stated by the report author, "Students in PHYS 221 went from an average of 54.5% on the first homework to an average of 42.7% on the final homework. This is a marked decrease in performance." The report author provided the following statement on these results and how these results will be used going forward:

> "In PHYS 221 the drop in class average from the first to last homework has two possible sources. The first is that the mode of instruction was online/hybrid due to mitigation strategies for the pandemic rather than face-to-face as is normal. The second is that there was more of an emphasis on testing for the class. This is evidenced by the testing average on the first to last test going from an average of 82.7% to 88.3% which is a marked increase for the same students. Due to this conflicting data, it is presumed that, since the testing covered similar material, the drop in grade is likely due to the pandemic strategies required by state entities. That said, for PHYS 221, students will, going forward, be given more emphasis on homework assignments and successful completion of said assignments."

Nursing and Allied Health

Students in the **CNA** program were expected to model integrity, ethical leadership, and effective management. To prove such qualities, students in the CNA program were given a 25-question multiple-choice exam regarding the desirable characteristics of a Certified Nursing Assistant. This exam was given at the beginning of the semester and again at the end. To be successful, students would need to show a 20% increase in average scores between the first test and the final test. Results showed that the average score of the first test was 73%. The average score for the second test was 79%, an increase of 6%. The goal of a 20% increase was not met. The report author indicated that while the assessment did not meet the criteria for success, there was a measurable improvement.

Students in the **ADN** program were expected to utilize critical thinking skills to solve problems. An intended outcome of completing the ADN program is demonstrating a proficiency in these critical thinking skills in adult medical calculations and patient care simulations. The report author provided the following statement as a means of assessment:

"Students will take an online alternative-style Health assessment pre/post 22 item exam to assess the use of critical thinking skills. Utilizing alternative-style items will assess student's critical skills as they progress through patient interviews collecting/synthesizing subjective and objective data, differentiating sounds, identifying visual assessment findings, while practicing using therapeutic communication. The pretest will be given early in the semester to obtain a baseline of student's knowledge as they begin using Shadow Health- a Digital Clinical Experience that helps bridge the didactic with practice for patient-centered care. The posttest will be given at the end of the semester to measure development in these skills after students have practiced therapeutic communication techniques during the interview and identified correct assessment findings in the digital patient."

To be successful, students would need to increase their scores by an average of 10% between the two exams. Results of this assessment stated that the pretest yielded an average score of 14.05 while the post-test yielded an average score of 14.53. The assessment results did not prove to meet the criteria for success. Though the 10% was not met, students were able to demonstrate the skills required to be successful.

<u>Applied Technology</u>

Students taking **Diesel Technology** were expected to utilize technology, apply academic and technical skills, communicate effectively, utilize critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and to perform tasks proficiently at current industry standards. An intended outcome of the program states that students will demonstrate proper terminology relating to engine lubricants. To test this the students were expected to demonstrate their knowledge of engine lubricant technology by completing a pretest/post-test entitled, "Valvoline: Motor Oil 101". The pretest/post-test consisted of 17 questions related to motor oil terminology. To be successful, students would need to increase their scores by an average of 30% between the pre and post-tests. Results showed that students increased their scores by an average of 40% between the pre and post-test. The report author states, "To better serve the incoming students we will continue to improve their vocabulary in the first semester of classes. This is one thing that separates them from mechanics to professional technicians."

Students studying **Outdoor Wildlife Management** were expected to meet many goals that bridge general education and CTE. An example of these goals is that students should demonstrate a knowledge of the orderliness of nature as well as develop the ability to evaluate the effects of science

and technology on their lives. The following statement by the report author describes an intended outcome of OWL:

> "Students will receive lectures on the ecology, behaviors, and dietary patterns all 13 species of Genus *Lepomis*, members of the sunfish family Centrarchidae, and methods to manage and/or catch them. The general public calls every species within this Genus a "bluegill". However, there are distinct distinguishing characteristics identifying each individual species.   Each species has slightly different water qualities as well as dietary requirements.   Hence, they will be found in different water bodies, and at different depths. They also spawn at different times, and feed at times differing temporally."

To measure this outcome, students would need to "demonstrate an ability to correctly identify living fish using knowledge learned regarding their identifying characteristics." To be successful, students would need to correctly identify 90% of collected specimens. Results showed an average score of 90% was earned thus making the assessment successful.

Review of 2020/2021 Non-Instructional Plans

Co-Curricular

The assessment of co-curricular activities at SIC is key to understanding the entirety of our students' learning experience. SIC defines co-curricular activities to be any student organization on campus that is funded by the institution's Student Government. As with many activities on campus, the pandemic continued to affect the activities our co-curricular programs.

The students in **Circle K** were to participate in a pay-forward event on campus. This event was to bring awareness to the service organization and the guiding principles of our institution. To do this, Circle K planned to distribute $3.00 food coupons to the campus community. These coupons could be redeemed at the Falcon Bistro. The plan was to have 75% of the club members participate in this activity and distribute a minimum of 10 coupons each. Unfortunately, the planned event was not able to be completed due to Covid mitigations.

The students participating in **PBL** faced similar circumstances. The plan was for PBL students to attend the state leadership conference in April 2020. During this event, students would be able to observe and compete in various events. A post-event survey would gauge student learning. Unfortunately, the plan was unable to be executed due to Covid mitigations.

<p style="text-align:center">Online Learning & Educational Technology (OLET)</p>

The goal of **OLET** is to supplement and enhance students' skills and experience through refined instructor effectiveness and evaluation and implementation to improve the LMS and LMS-related services. An intended outcome of OLET is to explore areas to improve upon our current learning management system and explore other potential learning management systems that may improve student success and faculty/staff management. OLET established the following as a means of assessment, "explore alternative learning management systems which might provide an enhanced student, faculty, and staff experience." OLET determined that there was significant interest from faculty and students to make changes to the existing LMS. In the results, the report author states:

> "Canvas was explored, tested, and is in the process of implementation. This LMS has drastically improved the graphical user interface for both students and faculty and reduces the number of steps it takes to manage assignments. Furthermore, it provides faculty with a wide range of tools to increase student engagement while enhancing the learning experience from the first lesson to feedback—Canvas' capabilities were shared with leadership, which led to its purchase and implementation."

<p style="text-align:center">Enrollment Services</p>

Enrollment Services works to ensure that student needs are met in a productive and efficient manner. For the 2020/2021 academic year, the department established the following as an intended outcome:

> "In order to better serve students, the implementation of an electronic system for midterm data gathering is imperative. The institution currently relies on an archaic system where midterm sheets are printed, mailed to individual instructors with return envelopes, which are then mailed back to the institution. Midterms are often not received until the end of the term, where midterm data then negatively impacts federal financial aid and student billing statements."

Enrollment Services and IT were to work together to examine the best options for implementing an electronic system for midterm reports. The plan was to have the electronic system up and running by the spring of 2021. Results showed that despite the collaboration with IT, Enrollment Services was unable to find a better alternative. The report author indicated that, although the college utilizes electronic signature services such as Adobe Sign and DocuSign, neither service provides the ability for

an instructor to assign a WA grade on the midterm forms. Enrollment Services plans to continue their research efforts to find a more efficient system for midterm reports.

<div align="center">Trio/SSS</div>

Trio/SSS established an intended outcome of meeting the Department of Education's required "Funded to Serve" number of 165 students by August 31, 2021. A means of assessment established by TRIO/SSS stated that monthly Blumen reports would be used to monitor the progress of enrollment. The final report, to be run in August 2021, would determine success. Success would be achieved if the number of 165 was met. The following results were presented:

> "The first means of assessment included running Blumen software reports monthly and at the end of the cohort year. The monthly reports of September-June resulted in a total gain of 33 students, with the July report showing a gain of 17, for a total of 50 students. This puts the TRIO program 22 students short of the goal of 165 students."

<div align="center">Business Office</div>

The Business Office established a goal of providing students with the ability to obtain their annual 1098-T form electronically. To do this, a new portal would need to be created that would allow students access to an official electronic version of their 1098-T. The current system on MySIC only allows students to see a total amount. No FEIN nor breakdown of box numbers is provided. A goal of 80% participation in the new electronic 1098-T retrieval was established. Unfortunately, the new portal was not completed in time to give students access to their electronic 1098-T.

Future Steps

Assessment at SIC remains a top priority. Members of the A-Team will continue to attend training sessions offered by the HLC to better enhance assessment. We are also exploring ways to better integrate, streamline, and modernize the assessment process to minimize errors and omissions.

One area that we plan to integrate is re-modeling the ways in which we assess co-curricular programs. As HLC is getting more defined in their expectations of co-curricular assessment, Southeastern will respond accordingly to those needs and make changes where necessary. This most likely will involve more input from Student Services in the collaboration of activities with faculty.

Another area for improvement would be changing some terminology to fit HLC vocabulary. For example, instead of key target areas, the A-Team will need to consider changing to "key competencies." While the idea behind both are the same, this might make it easier for reviewers to understand the purpose of target areas, something that was called to question at the institution's last HLC visit and was defended in 2019 at the institution's appeal.

Closing Statement

Through our assessment process, SIC is able to evaluate the efficacy of its programs and ensure the needs of its students are being met. This report offers a small sample of the 2020/2021 assessment projects for SIC's instructional and non-instructional areas. In reading through this report, one can see SIC's commitment to student learning and academic success despite unexpected challenges.

The 2020/2021 academic year continued to provide unprecedented challenges to our institution. Despite these challenges, the institution was able to adapt and provide our students with quality programs and experiences. The faculty and staff were able to effectively adapt assessment plans to function in this time of flex.

In creating this report, it was of utmost importance to show both the positives and the negatives of the assessment projects. Some projects proved to be successful while others proved to not be as successful. The effects of the Coronavirus are evidenced in some of the feedback given in the assessment results. Regardless of the challenges presented, assessment at SIC remains a top priority. We will continue to grow, educate, and prosper.

Bibliography

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