

2018-2019

# Annual Assessment Activity Report

SOUTHEASTERN  
ILLINOIS COLLEGE

**2018-2019 Assessment Annual Report:  
A Review of Assessment Activities and Progress**

**Introduction**

The subjectivity of higher education assessment is a double-edged sword. On one hand, there is no wrong or right way to do assessment, but rather methods to fulfill what the HLC Commission requires and to assess student learning in ways that make sense for the institution. On the other hand, as any assessment article or presentation on the subject will share, everyone has a different perspective on what effective assessment looks like.

Mindful of this reality, the assessment committee at Southeastern Illinois College prepared for the Higher Learning Commission's April 2019 accreditation site visit. Given the importance of such a visit, the assessment committee was active in the process of preparing evidence and showcasing the work in assessment. Much of the new assessment activity involved that preparation and many of the steps toward future development are a result of that meeting. Overall, the assessment committee agrees with the HLC team's recommendation to identify additional evidence that students are learning what we say they are learning in our General Education and CTE goals.

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 Diesel Tech

instructor/Applied Technology Co-Chair (Robbie Lindhorst). 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 describes progress in assessment during the 2018-2019 academic year. This report will address new assessment activity, instructional assessment by division, non-instructional assessment by department area, and specific information regarding future plans.

### **New Assessment Activity for 2018-2019**

The following highlights new assessment activity during the 2018-2019 academic year. While assessment has been ongoing at SIC for decades, there is constant innovation and new ideas in the process. For the 2018-2019 academic year, new assessment activity included preparation for the HLC accreditation visit and awarding a new winner for outstanding work in assessment.

### **HLC Visit, April 2019**

Beyond ongoing assessment of individual courses, much of the A-Team's 2018-19 work focused on the HLC accreditation visit in April 2019. While most of the work was gathering evidence, working on visualizing the assessment process at Southeastern and writing the actual argument for Criterion 4B, which focuses solely on assessment, the committee also underwent a mock interview with Dr. Kim Linduska ( De Moines Area Community College) in fall 2018. At the mock interview, Dr. Linduska sat down with the assessment committee and asked pointed questions to help us verbalize all the work the College does with assessment. Overall, the work completed prior to the HLC visit presented many opportunities for learning among the assessment committee membership as well as those on the A-Team. As a result, faculty and staff indicated they felt more informed and more invested in the assessment process.

### **Achievement in Assessment Award**

While the Achievement in Assessment award was established during the 2016-2017 academic year, it is important to highlight the achievements of the 2018-2019 academic year winner as it is awarded annually. To review, the award is given to reward good work in assessment. The winner is based on number of nominations. The nominee does not have to be on the assessment committee. The 2018-2019 Achievement in Assessment Award winner went to Allan Kimball. Mr. Kimball, who retired in May 2019, was the long-time Director of Theatre at SIC. Kimball served a number of years on the A-Team and helped with new employee orientation. Kimball earned the award because of his valuable assistance with projects in humanities and co-curricular activities.

### **Review of 2018-2019 Instructional Assessment**

The following narrative highlights assessment activities for the 2018-2019 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**

In **Art**, students used drawing techniques to illustrate a design that addressed a social issue. The first intended outcome was to have students demonstrate their role in communicating with their viewer for social awareness by creating a drawing and by creating a sculpture. The drawing was extremely successful with 100% of students scoring a 20/25 or above. The sculpture was less successful, with only one out of four successfully completing the carving project. Since this was not effective as an assessment this last year, the instructor switched the prompt to another object sculpture for the 19-20 academic year.

**English** students created a written document which anticipated a problem they encountered during their education. This exercise demonstrated a proficiency in the writing process analysis, but also solved a self-identified obstacle in their educational journey. This met the criteria with 100% of students who completed the assignment doing so with a score of 80% or better. The instructor found that utilizing personal experiences helped students freely write, instead of stressing about the writing process, allowing learning to occur. This assessment also informed the instructor of how stress affected students during the writing process.

### **Social Science, Business and Education**

**Early Childhood** majors showed competency through the rubrics set forth by the Gateways Competencies Assessment, with students completing the Family Engagement and Collaboration Plan and 80% of the students scoring in the proficient level. The instructor noted, “while most students successfully met the criteria, two did not initially meet the criteria. Since passing these assessments is linked to students earning Gateways Credentials, continued emphasis and support will be provided to students. Opportunities will be offered for them to revise assignments so that they can pass with a ‘Proficient’ rating.”

**Psychology** students watched Philip Zimbardo’s *Discovering Psychology* series, which engages the author’s aesthetic of the structure and function of the brain. Students were then asked to write an analytical discussion post, which engaged the author’s aesthetic of the structure and function of the brain as well as taking a pre- and post-test. The students performed better on the discussion post, concerning the structure and function of the brain, scoring a 96% average, as compared to the pre-test, which averaged 53%, marking a 43% difference. The instructor will continue to use current instruction, tools and activities to further promote aesthetic creativity

about the structure and function of the brain and intelligence testing, decision-making, and creativity.

### **Math, Science & Technology**

The results of the 2018-2019 assessment involving **Biology** 221 students creating an accurate representation of a color spectrum observed during lab has led to the improvement of student focus and assignment completion during class-time. For the first time, students were required to show the instructor their completed color spectrum before concluding that day's activities. This forced the students to work on the drawing during class where there were plenty of available colored pencils to accurately re-create the spectrum. No more will students save that part of the activity for homework, which often times was forgotten and resulted in no spectrum drawing or an inaccurate spectrum being submitted. It was also highly suggested that students take a picture of the samples and the spectrum that was created after adding the pH indicators.

In the 18-19 assessment for **Mathematics**, the first intended outcome was that students in MATH 162 (Calculus I) work problems at the beginning of each class meeting in a very short amount of time to be assessed by the instructor with a goal that 85% of the students would fall into the "adequate" category before moving to a subsequent topic. Results of this first intended outcome varied, but on average 80% of the students were successful on quizzes before they moved to the next topic. Of the students who were repeatedly unsuccessful on the quizzes, 95% of them were not doing the required homework needed to learn the topic, based on interviews with those students. The reasons for this included things out of their control and things within their control. This formative assessment activity will be continued. Motivating students to work for two hours after each class meeting continues to be the single biggest challenge for the instructor and the daily quizzes have proven to be a highly successful means to that end for most

students. This assessment assisted with the improvement of students' ability to use proper mathematical notation and techniques while solving practical applications and/or performing complex theoretical calculations.

### **Nursing and Allied Health**

One area of focus for the **Practical Nursing** (PN) assessment was on social awareness. Therapeutic Communication is key to interacting with patients, residents, and their families. However, it is not easy to grasp the concept. The exercise regarding therapeutic communication saw a rise in scores from the first exam to the second exam of 22%, which is above the intended goal of 20%. The exercise regarding providing a nursing diagnosis for a variety of scenarios saw a marked rise in scores from an average score of 2.4 out of a possible 10 points to 9.4 out of a possible 10. The nursing diagnosis and the rationales for using specific ones are extremely important in the nursing arena. This exercise provides proof that learning is indeed taking place in the practical nursing program. Instructors plan to implement similar exercises in their lectures so future students will be proficient in this topic as well.

### **Applied Technology**

In **Diesel Technology**, students were administered the ASE Student Certification Test. The test given was diesel electricity. This test was administered in fall and spring to obtain data for comparison. The students were tested and scored against national standards in the diesel technology field. The student is considered ASE student certified upon passing individual areas and the certification is good for two years, aiding the student in employment potential. In 18-19, the students exceeded the goal of passing the certification and proved they are learning the material and surpassing national standards. This assessment indicated that learning has not only

occurred in the program, but national standards have been met and Southeastern's Diesel Technology program is upholding the promise it makes to students upon enrollment.

### **Review of 2018-2019 Non-Instructional Assessment**

The following narrative highlights assessment activities for the 2018-2019 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**

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. While many groups focused on presentations post conferences and other forms of engagement, **BASIC (Brothers and Sisters in Christ)** focused their assessment on growing membership to the club. Due to a change of sponsors and implementing new ideas, such as guest speakers, the club grew from 0-1 in FY 18 to an average of five in FY19. Lunch was brought to each meeting to make sure the students were able to attend the meeting without missing a meal. Club sponsors will continue to provide food to the students in attendance by donation. Sponsors will look for additional ways to engage students and promote the club to continue to grow attendance. Club sponsors indicated they plan to invite more guest speakers and consider changing the club's meeting day to better accommodate members' participation in other clubs.



**Student Affairs**

**Advisement** assessed its involvement in the new student orientation process to see if learning was occurring in high school students on the college advisement process. On a paper survey, high school senior students attending an orientation day will indicate they have a better understanding of the advisement process after they attend an advisement session and register themselves for fall classes. Ninety percent (90%) of students taking the survey indicated they have a better understanding of the advisement practice after orientation. All students surveyed marked 4's and 5's on the survey pertaining to understanding the advisement process. However, students did provide comments on ways to improve the advisement process in orientation, which included students wanting to meet with the same advisor every time throughout their degree at Southeastern. Some students indicated they did not like that the person advising them during orientation was not a full-time advisor. Orientation generally requires anywhere from 5-7 advisors to adequately take care of the student traffic efficiently and effectively. Student comments from the survey data will be shared with Administration.

**TRIO/Student Support Services** assessed the importance and relevance of personal improvement plans (PIP) and found that these in-house assessments play a vital role in helping students identify academic goals and meet and/or exceed those goals. PIPs helped students identify areas in their academic performance in need of improvement. Based on the assessment results, students were referred to appropriate resources including tutoring, academic advisement, financial aid information and assistance, and mentoring. Students also identified and indicated they felt PIPs were important to their success at Southeastern. PIPs will continue to be used as tool to assist in meeting the students' academic goals in the TRIO/SSS program.

**President's Office, Business Office and Services**

**Human Resources**, in conjunction with the Diversity Committee and Student Government, successfully demonstrated competence in cultural diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in support of the College's mission and strategic plan to create a learning and working environment where all have an opportunity to succeed. This was a great start on increasing awareness of the diversity and inclusion initiatives done on campus. This includes TRIO/SSS, Nursing, Faculty, HR, among other groups. The HR office will continue to assess and develop additional plans to continue a culture based on diversity, equity and inclusion. The HR office determined a need for leadership training based on age and experience in the current workforce. As a result, the office is implementing a five-year plan, staggering different employee groups for leadership training. The hope is that the leadership training provides administration with the effective tools they need to succeed in their positions.

**Foundation/Alumni** focused their assessment on a joint fundraiser between the SIC Foundation and the Archery team to increase awareness of the archery center and archery range in hopes of additional enrollments in addition to increased revenues from the event for both parties. In total, \$1,140 was raised prior to the money shot payout and the final amount raised was \$1,035. Nearly 60 archers attended the event. This provided just over \$500 to help the archery students attend nationals and \$500 for SIC scholarships. The event brought two TV stations – one as a preview and one on the day of the event. Additional promotion included three newspaper ads and radio spots with our regularly scheduled ad rotations. SIC Marketing found the Zombie event mentioned in newspapers eight different times (in addition to the three ads placed), including a regional paper. Enrollment in 19-20 will be closely watched to see if these events aided in recruitment and promotion in that capacity.

### **Moving Forward: Next Steps in Assessment**

In September 2019, Dr. Karen Weiss (VP of Academic Affairs), Dr. Tyler Billman (Co-Chair of Assessment) and Cory Garmane (Music Instructor) attended an HLC workshop on General Education assessment in Detroit, MI. The workshop provided many new ideas for the future of assessment at SIC, including building on our assessment vocabulary, mapping current assessment plans, revising General Education goals, and revising target areas from four to five on the assessment form.

### **Language Barriers**

At the HLC workshop on General Education in Detroit, it became clear the terminology the College was using was not necessarily the same vocabulary that HLC was utilizing at the workshop. For example, Southeastern refers to target areas in the same way that HLC refers to competencies. This is one example of many in which the language barrier might prove confusing to outsiders. For this reason, the committee should consider making formal changes to rhetoric surrounding assessment. Such a project will be tackled in the 19-20 academic year by the A-Team and the assessment committee and will be posted on the team's website and assessment form.

### **Curriculum Mapping**

A point of contention at the April 2019 HLC visit was that the College needed a clear visual representation of how assessment projects cover all General Education goals and target areas utilized across the curriculum. From the September 2019 HLC workshop in Detroit, Dr. Weiss and Dr. Billman have created a chart that will show over a span of time how assessment projects have tested student knowledge in general education goals. It is not only important to be able to communicate, both verbally and visually, how the College knows students are learning

what the College indicates they are learning via General Education goals. This project will be completed in fall 2019.

### **Implementation of CTE goals**

CTE goals will be implemented on the assessment form. CTE goals were added to the assessment form in May 2019, ready for the 19-20 assessment form. The CTE goals are as follows:

- Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management
- Utilize technology to enhance productivity
- Apply academic and technical skills in the workforce
- Communicate clearly and effectively
- Utilize critical thinking skills to solve problems
- Incorporate new and emerging foundation skills needed to perform tasks proficiently at current business and industry standards

Those instructional units considered CTE will be utilizing these goals to formulate their assessment projects in the future.

### **Revision of General Education goals and assessment form**

General Education goals are up for revision in 2020-21. The A-Team will assist in this process by providing specific ideas for improving SIC's current list of goals. Additionally, the assessment form will be updated with new General Education goals, once approved by the Board of Trustees, as well as a fifth target area to better capture all general education goals.

### **Conclusion**

This report reviewed instructional divisions and non-instructional unit assessment projects over the 2018-2019 academic year. This summary 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.

As this evidence shows, assessment is an ongoing, living, breathing cycle at Southeastern. It influences the ways SIC employees engage, interact and communicate with students, and it helps ensure 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 effort it requires. While there are improvements to be made to meet state and national standards, the A team's goal is to make sure SIC students receive quality education that is affordable and accessible, helping them reach their goals and become engaged, productive people.