Note: The 2011 Annual Report was not completed in the Spring 2011 semester as expected. As a result, some budget-related items may not be achievable, some planned activities will not be possible, and some plans for activities were moved forward pending Assessment Committee approval. We have also taken the opportunity to consider issues that surfaced during the self-study, which was not completed until mid-July.

Approved by the Assessment Committee on September 15, 2011.

2010-2011 System Evaluation

This report complies with a Checklist approved 12/7/10 by the Core Team to standardize the components evaluated and to provide basic benchmarks where appropriate.

1) System Participation

As a result of data findings from last year and a general concern about declining voluntary participation, a complete audit of the Assessment Folder was conducted by Jane Hamilton and of the Assessment Database by Val Wittman. The complete report, which lists names of participating adjunct and full-time faculty, has been submitted to VP Al Pfeifer. Here is a general summary of the findings:

System participation benchmarks:
- 100% of areas and programs have documented projects for the prior year
- 100% of full-time faculty have documented participation at the expected minimum level for the prior year (2 gen eds and 1 area project)
- Determine % of adjunct faculty who have documented participation for the prior year and set benchmark for next year

- Full-time faculty Participation (see Figure 1) in the Assessment Folder for discipline and area projects has steadily declined. The 2009 Gap Analysis recognized the decline and two steps were taken: 1. The database development was given priority; and 2. Area projects
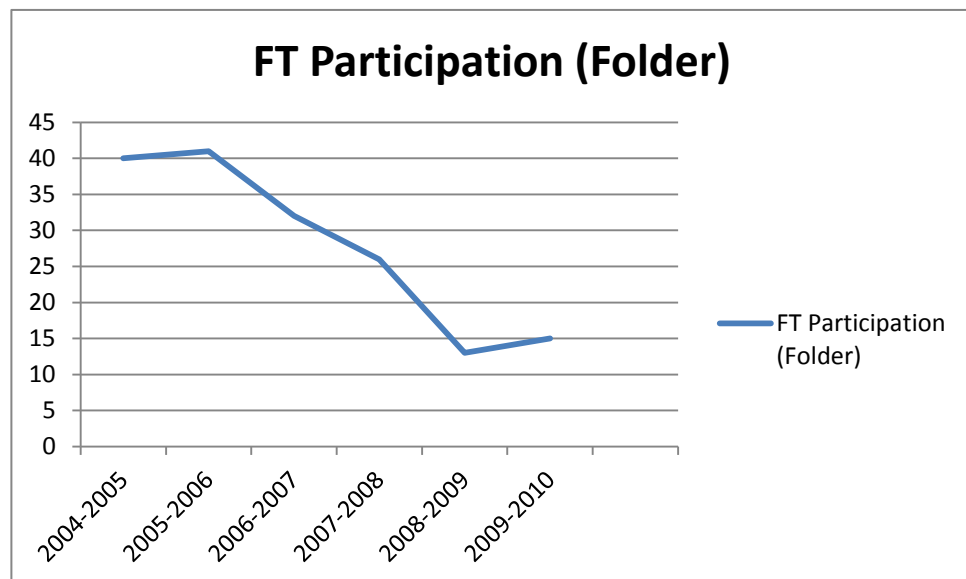

Figure 1: Faculty participation in the assessment folder discipline and area data

supplanted discipline-level projects. It is expected that some level of activity will continue in the folder for complex aggregations like math's 080 data. (Note: Some of the low numbers in 2008-09

appear to be a documentation failure as no data exists in the folder for area projects that were discussed, so spreadsheets may have been stored elsewhere.)

- **Full-time participation in the database** has not met expectations, but appears to be headed back toward desired levels of participation.
- **Adjunct Participation** in the Developmental levels is at almost 100% for submitting data, but documentation and discussion of that data has not been systematically
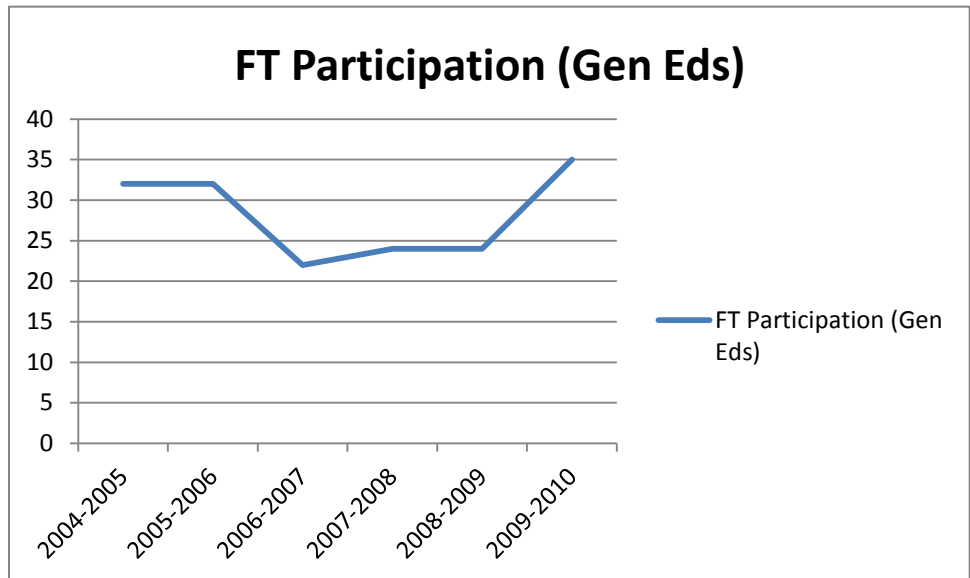

Figure 2: Faculty participation in gen ed competency assessment

accomplished for English and Reading. There are also a handful of adjuncts who regularly submit college-level data. Average participation over the six-year period audited is 12, ranging from 0 to 16 (the year of the technology project).

RECOMMENDATION:

- The discussion and documentation steps for the Developmental language arts data should be a priority so that starting with 2010-11 data, they are clearly being used by faculty as well as administration in decision-making.
- Area Facilitators need to be clear on expectations for adjuncts participating in assessment, working with Dean of Instruction to ensure a higher level of participation.
- Reaching the 100% faculty participation will require changes in accountability. Asking faculty to self-report their level of participation on the annual job evaluation (EV-3) would be a good first step that would be in keeping with the "voluntary" nature of the system.

2) Documentation

Minutes are in place on FAST. Area Facilitators who have been delinquent have been reminded to submit minutes, and these may already be in place by the time this report is approved. An effort to have secretarial help

> Documentation Benchmarks:
> - 100% of areas have minutes in place in FAST (based on sampling dates determined by schedule calling for assessment tasks)
> - 100% of Full-faculty assessment-related discussions have minutes in place in the Assessment Folder/FAST
> - Previous Year's annual report is in place in the Assessment Folder.
> - CAAP report in public place on website and details in Assessment Folder (following CAAP year)

for faculty forums was hampered by the illness of the assigned administrative assistant, so not all records have been posted. However, all of the previous annual reports and the CAAP reports that could be found in digital form are in place in FAST.   No public webpage has yet been developed.

RECOMMENDATION:

- The system would benefit from designated clerical help.

3) Communication of the System:

The Orientation pamphlet was revised hurriedly in time for the fall semester's orientation sessions. A new adjunct pamphlet was created without any reference to assessment, and although some discussion occurred about remedying this in Core Team meetings, no action was taken. No action was taken to create any public web presence for assessment efforts.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Communicating our students' success in achieving learning outcomes needs to be given higher priority and some systematic connection made to our publicity/marketing office. A meeting each semester with the marketing director should be put on the schedule of activities.

Communication of the system (public webpage, news releases, etc) benchmarks:
- CAAP data (in cycle year) or plans for in prior year
- External data (eg. transfer rates)
- Orientation pamphlet
  o current (revise as needed)
  o number distributed provided by Counseling)
- Public Webpage (revise as needed)
- Assessment Plan (revise as needed)
- Adjunct pamphlet (revise as needed)

4) Surveys:

- **2011 Area Facilitator Survey:** Four of the eight Area Facilitators responded to our first survey. (See Appendix A for the full report). Among the primary findings:
  o All agreed that a review of the area objectives to clear out some which have not been measured would be useful.
  o All agreed that the assessments come through on the operational plans.
  o Program area Facilitators noted that they have disparate disciplines and are not able to fully integrate all of the programs assigned into a common area objective.
- **Self-Study:** The comprehensive evaluation of the institution gave us a chance this year to evaluate the system against the HLC expectations. A key finding was that Core Team and assessment materials are not being stored in FAST where the criterion committee could find them. The Core Team reviewed the 3A section of the self-study that evaluates the assessment system and helped to clarify that discussion. The self-study indicates strengths and weaknesses that should be considered by the Core Team. Although these are not in their final form, they merit attention by the Assessment Committee. (See Appendix B for the list.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Core Team should meet to consider the self-study findings and create an action plan to accomplish those areas that need attention.
- Area Facilitators should confirm relevance and value of area objectives and transfer areas confirm IAI connections.
- The Program Review Committee should be requested to work with the Assessment Committee to revise the assessment question to make it more specific and evidence-based.

5) Accomplishments

- **Follow-through on last year's recommendations:**
  1. **Depict system flow graphically:** One new graphic for the Assessment Plan and one new graphic for the strategic planning system, plus the new timeline, are in place to show the connections within and between systems.
  2. **Update system documentation:** The Assessment Plan was approved in the fall and is in place in the Assessment Folder in FAST.
  3. **Continue database development:** The database has been expanded to contain the career program objectives and some of the area objectives.
  4. **Move the Assessment Folder:** The Assessment Folder was set up in FAST and the Assessment Plan and the databases are accessible there. A place has been made for the archived and active Assessment folder data, but in the meantime, the Assessment folder has been moved to an X:// shared drive where Area Facilitators will be able to access it in the interim.
  5. **Improve public reporting:** The plans to create a webpage for an annual assessment results summary did not happen, and the lack has been identified as a weakness by the self-study.
- **Professional Development**
  o On March X, 2011, Heather Dowd, Jane Hamilton, and Val Wittman presented the technology gen ed project ("Anecdote to Antidote") and Tom Gospodarczyk presented the integrated strategic planning system at the Illinois Assessment Fair at Heartland Community College. Also in attendance at the conference were Alan Pfeifer, Chris Shelley, Carrie Conderman, Amanda Eichman, Jon Mandrell, Kris Murray, and Ruth Montino. Despite good intentions, no follow-up to share gathered ideas ever occurred.
  o In April, 2011, Melanie Armstrong presented research information for the faculty at a Wednesday meeting. It was well received by faculty, especially as it pertained not only to use by students but brought faculty up-to-date on digital research resources.
- **Curriculum/Budgetary proposals**
  o Despite various discussions, the technology placement test proposal has yet to reach curriculum committee.
  o No audit has been done of the Operational Plans for assessment-related actions at this time.

6) Recommendations

- **System Changes**
  o No particular progress was made on either improving student awareness of assessment or on adjunct understanding and buy-in. The reason seems to be that no one is particularly accountable to see that it gets done and that neither of these areas are directly Core Team responsibility. (This is a repeat concern from last year!) The system needs to be expanded to create mechanisms for assessment outside of the faculty gathering and use of data.

- o Request that the open position of Administrative Assistant to Institutional Research be expanded to that of Research Assistant in order to include stated assessment-data-related duties to provide support to the Assessment system, including computer skills, statistics, and survey development.
  - o Program rejections at ICCB confirm a suspicion when we redesigned for area projects that not all the "disciplines" can be handled at area level. A taskforce will need to propose a system re-design (possibly a matrix) to account for summative program assessment for career programs and possibly some transfer degrees (e.g. music and education).
  - o General Education competencies are 10 years old. The Core Team should spend some time determining what, if any, review is appropriate by the full faculty (especially given related self-study findings).
- **Tasks and requests for 2011-12:**
  - o Request release time for Val to continue the development of database forms and reports for the remaining transfer areas.
  - o Schedule meetings and discussions as presented in the Assessment meeting proposal (see separate draft in Appendix C).
  - o Schedule an orientation for new faculty, possibly in coordination with (but separate session from) other orientation activities set up by HR.
  - o Request time at each of the 4 in-services for required attendance at assessment activities.
  - o Approve at least 6 attendees to the Illinois Assessment Fair in Spring 2012.
  - o Allow time each semester for in-house professional development on the two gen ed areas for the year (Communications and Problem-solving).

Appendix A: Area Facilitator Survey Questions:
 4 areas responded… Business, Health Careers, Communications, Social Sciences

Area-Level Assessments:
1. Has your area identified program objectives which apply to each discipline in your area? Are there discipline-level objectives which cannot be incorporated into an area-level project? If so, which ones?

> All areas had identified common core objectives for the area. There were some outlying entities which are not fully accounted for by the assessment system, including the fact the CJS and EDU aren't comparable to the other disciplines housed under Social Sciences. Health Careers reported that NION is a separate entity which is collaborating with our campus but has different goals and objectives. Business reported that OAS and CIS do not have the same knowledge objectives as the business courses, but do share career-oriented objectives.

2. Has your area created a project which reflects those objectives? Does your area have multiple projects? Please describe and ongoing or planned projects.

> Three of four areas report having an area-level project in place. The career/internship project was cited as a good example of collecting and reporting meaningful data for terminal degrees and certificates. Business was very satisfied with the results of that project and the resulting database. Health careers notes that the EMS certificate is very much still at the discipline-level and has not been incorporated into the area-level projects. EMS also employs examinations which could be brought easily into other systems which record external measures.

3. Do all disciplines in your area contribute data to this project? If not, why?

> All reported participation by discipline, except EDU has not participated in Social Sciences projects.
> Education is wholly different than the other social sciences, and the objectives are outdated and not being measured. This has been addressed in the EDU program review.

4. How many objectives are currently on your area-level assessment sheet?

> Communications: 5. It is worth noting as the survey-taker that many felt their objectives should be revisited and compared to the new projects and assessments which are being done.

5. How many of those objectives have undergone at least one data reporting and action cycle?

> See above.

6. Do you have objectives which have never been measured? Are they valued? Can they be eliminated?

> All agreed that there were "old" objectives hanging out which had not been measured, and that it would be helpful to trim down objectives even more.

7. Are you ready to move your project from the assessment folder to a database? Does your project have special requirements which are incompatible with the database format? Describe any obstacles to database migration.

> Health careers noted that they will be implementing a new software system and diagnostic tool which may help facilitate their move to database. They also indicated that they would like access to their archives in the database. Others saw no impediments.

College-Level Assessments

7. Describe what you believe to be the connection between assessment and operational planning.

> All agreed that that the assessments come through on the operational plans. Others responses include:
> "program review is part of the assessment process"
> "we have placed assessment things on the operational plan"
General consensus is that the operational plans bring the assessment results to area meeting to be acted upon.

8. Describe your understanding of how our general education assessment cycle creates curricular changes at the college.

> The major example was given about the gen ed discussions coming back to the areas. Two respondents mentioned this scenario and liked it- because it allowed small groups to decide what to do about the data for themselves. Another respondent liked that the gen ed cycle was "open to change" and that there is flexibility in how the data is collected and reported.

Appendix B: Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities for Growth gleaned from the First Review Draft of the Self-Study (as of March 29, 2011):

Lapses

- (C1) Faculty Area Facilitators have operated for several years without an official job description, basing activities on a version that appeared in the 2003 Assessment Plan and which has changed as strategic planning responsibilities have been added. The committee recommends that an official job description needs to be created.
- (C3) Although the developmental courses are expected to ensure that data and discussion results are documented, this area of the assessment system is doing everything required, but not documenting it. The committee recommends that the college explore ways to ensure that data collection for the developmental program is correctly documented.
- (C3) Although there is evidence that students are receiving the assessment pamphlet during Orientation (PSY100), the outline contains no reference. The committee recommends that at the next update of the outline, some documentation of this element be included to preserve it.

Opportunities for Growth

- (C4)The college has made little or no effort to communicate to the public the good work it is doing to assess its student learning and the achievements of those students. The committee recommends that the Assessment Committee revise the assessment plan to create guidelines ensuring the systematic public access to appropriate assessment data.
- (C4) Given the importance of diversity to HLC and other regulatory agencies and the findings of the self-study team that the concept is valued in general by the faculty, the committee recommends that the faculty revisit its original decision not to establish diversity as a general education competency and more clearly define how and where diversity is appropriately an outcome in transfer/career program coursework.

Appendix C: Proposed Assessment Tasks – Fall 2011

August

Area Meeting – Review last year's data and set project for this year.

PLEASE NOTE: As long as we get that August area meeting in, we could postpone September Activities until October to allow for HLC visit prep if needed.

September

Full Faculty – Review Gen Ed database Data (This cycle is communications and problem solving) –in cross curricular groups

Area Meeting - Review Gen Ed Data (and cross-curricular comments) – make recommendations for 1) area/program operational planning and 2) anything related to institutional action.

October

Full Faculty – undesignated

Area Meeting – undesignated

November

Full Faculty – Respond to gen ed recommendations

Area Meeting – undesignated

Note that the undesignated Area Meeting times could become Full Faculty discussion times.

We would like one session of professional development related to the gen

OR we talked about doing a short listening exercise using portions of the audio seminar on benchmarking over a series of meetings.