

To: **New England Associate of Schools & Colleges, CIHE**

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From: **Manchester Community College**

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Date: **August 15, 2013**

Re: **Progress Report in Response to 2.13.2013 Letter**



Institutional Overview & Introduction

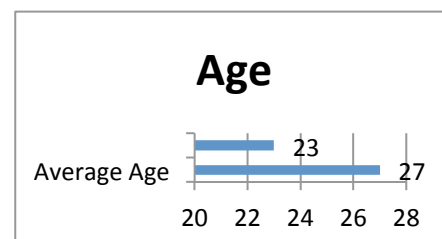
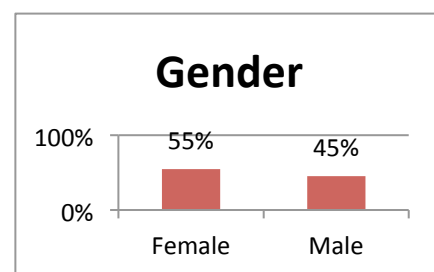
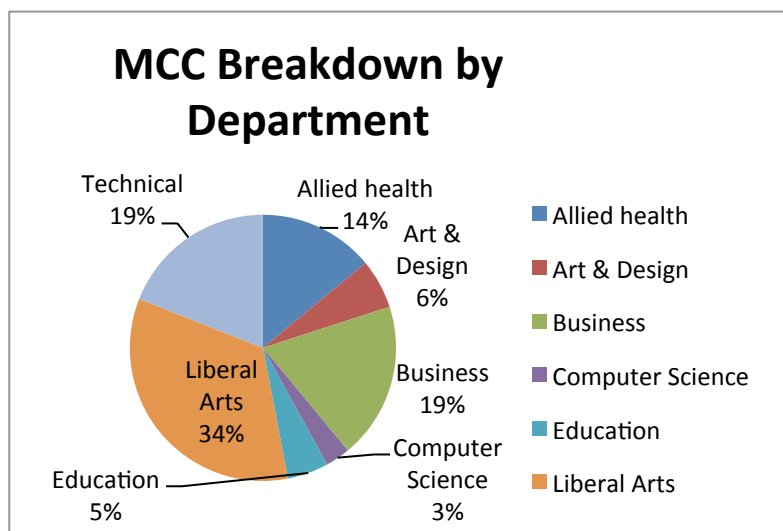
Manchester Community College is one of seven colleges in the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH) and offers more than 50 associate degree and certificate programs designed for transfer and entry into specific careers. Associate degree and certificate programs are offered in the areas of allied health, art and design, automotive technologies, building construction technologies, business studies, computer sciences, advanced manufacturing, education, and liberal arts. MCC also offers professional training opportunities and customized corporate training through its workforce development office.

Located in NH's largest city – a designated Refugee Resettlement Center – the College strives to respond to the educational and civic needs of the diverse communities that comprise the Greater Manchester area through partnerships with businesses, social service agencies, non-profit and cultural organizations.

In the 67 years of its operation, Manchester Community College, like the community it serves, has undergone substantial growth and change. Founded in 1945 to meet the educational needs of returning veterans, the College has evolved from a State Trade School to a comprehensive community college and, with more than 3,000 students, the second-largest of the seven colleges in the CCSNH.

The purpose of Manchester Community College is articulated in its mission statement: 'Being responsive to the diverse communities we serve, our mission at MCC is to be an accessible, student-centered, comprehensive community college that promotes and fosters the intellectual, cultural, and economic vibrancy of our region.'

The student body at Manchester Community College reflects that ideal of accessibility and diversity. The table below shows the demographic breakdown of the College's student body.



Manchester Community College (MCC) completed its 5th Year Report in August 2012 as the midpoint in the 10-year accreditation process. In response to MCC's report, the Commission requested that MCC submit a report "that gives emphasis to its success in implementing its institutional effectiveness plan and using the results of assessments for improvement. . ."

As highlighted throughout this report, there has been an increased amount of discourse and action surrounding student goal setting and learning outcomes throughout the campus community. While learning outcomes have traditionally been defined and measured through metrics such as retention, graduation, and completion rates, there is a growing need to understand how these outcomes have been reached.

Through the institutional effectiveness discussions, the approach to learning outcome assessment at MCC has taken shape as assessing student goal setting. The requested report offers a comprehensive perspective on the institutional effectiveness, assessment and evaluation efforts underway, in addition to discussing future implications and systematic endeavors.

Areas of Focus: Response to NEASC Requested Updates

Systems efforts to systematically collect and analyze retention, transfer, and graduation data

Over the past year, MCC leadership convened four work groups that included staff, faculty and administrators to develop an institution-wide Work/Strategic Plan. The four themes framing the work of the work groups include:

- A. Create an institutional effectiveness plan for the College
- B. Identify an effective method to promote a culture of professionalism and communication
- C. Develop a holistic advising approach
- D. Develop a process/program that offers students accurate, current information regarding student services

The Institutional Effectiveness work group developed three major areas to further narrow the scope of need. The "track team" was developed as a result of the expressed need for better understanding of 1) where our students are coming from, 2) what the goals are upon entrance, 3) how student goals are being supported through institutional efforts, and 4) are students reaching the goals upon degree/program completion. To date several pilot instruments have been developed and piloted. One, a pre-entrance student survey, has been distributed at College Open Houses and Orientation events. An alumni survey was also created and distributed to both 2012 and 2013 graduates. Both instruments were

designed to look at student motivation for attending MCC, the goals that they set for themselves, and if the goals were met, and how MCC helped shape/foster the goal attainment process. Preliminary results indicate students are setting the goals prior to attending MCC and approximately 83% are reaching the pre-determined goals- whether that is a career, acceptance at a 4-year institution, or simply to graduate from a program.

Professional development for faculty and staff to acquire the skill sets integral to the research processes needed for assessment

Since the final report in August of 2012, several professional development experiences have been crafted and scheduled with the beginning of the 2013-2014 Academic year for all Academic faculty. For example all faculty will be attending a 'Program Review 101' during the scheduled faculty work week in August of 2013. The initial session will include:

- An overview to the process as well as begin to introduce faculty to the meaning and importance of qualitative and quantitative reporting method
- Development of programmatic needs statements
- Writing reflective narratives and implications of the findings.

In addition to sessions on Program Review, faculty and staff will be attending sessions on the following assessment topics:

- Using Noel-Levitz and Course Eval (September 2013)
- Assessment through advising (August 2013, October 2013)
- Capstone Creation: Setting the course for Learning Outcomes (January 2014)

Assessment of the use of peer mentors in the College Success Seminar

In the fall of 2012 a pilot study was conducted to assess the retention of students who were provided peer mentors through MCC's INT 102 College Success Seminar course. Quantitative metrics were examined for the overall retention rate of students who received a mentor. Preliminary analysis has revealed an 83% retention rate of students that started in the course, succeeded, and continued on with academic efforts in the following semester. The peer mentor study is still in process and has been expanded to look at qualitative measures.

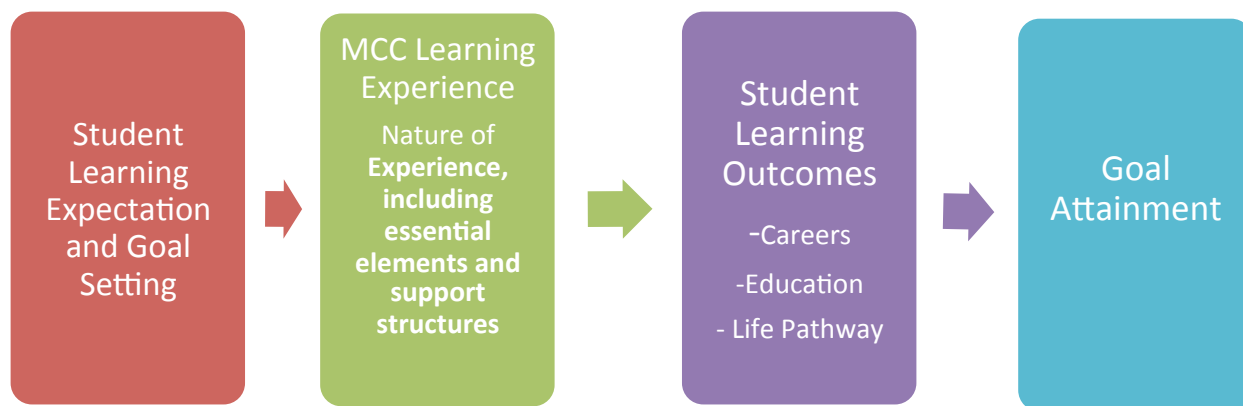
Looking Forward: MCC Institutional Assessment, Benchmarking & Data Initiatives

As MCC leadership discussed the success and implication of the previously discussed assessment initiatives, a large discourse evolved around the area of assessment at MCC. The following section shares some of our efforts since the 2012 report as well as the implications for institutional and programmatic level.

In April of 2013 Manchester Community College enrolled in the National Benchmarking Assessment Project to better understand how the institution compares to other 2-year institutions, while also providing a baseline for future assessment initiatives. Additionally, MCC has joined 77 other institutions as a beta-test participant for the new Voluntary Framework for Accountability (VFA) assessment process, which will provide the College with additional empirical support for understanding how the institution is currently positioned in the realm of student success in higher education.

The results of the national assessment initiatives coupled with MCC leadership discussions have prompted the development of the Manchester Assessment Action Plan (M.A.A.P.) that involves the creation of a system that consistently uses instruments such as Noel-Levitz, coupled with qualitative methods to establish concrete, applicable implication planning strategies on part of the academic program areas. Please see Figure 1 below:

Figure 1.



The overall approach to understanding learning outcomes at MCC now includes an analysis of what a student establishes as their expectations and goals upon entering the college, an examination of what types of structures are in place to support their goals from an institution as well as programmatic level, and ultimately a method of determining where our students “end-up” after completing our programs and degrees; ultimately obtaining their goal.

In order to support MCC's newly evolved assessment goals and objectives, a multi-level approach has been adopted. Over the past decade Manchester Community College has evolved in its capacity to capture student learning. There are formal and non-formal methods used to capture students' initial student learning goals including Advising discourse, intermittent climate studies conducted on the student experience (occasional surveys capturing student perspectives) and collection of post-graduate information via student report at the time of graduation. However, there has been little to no reflection, debrief, or formation of action steps as a result of these assessment findings, and slowly a culture of inquiry and evaluation is being built.

The M.A.A.P. has been designed to help complete the assessment process cycle, emphasizing the need to not only conduct assessment "projects," but to also create meaning through completing task analysis (need identification) and determining outcomes (action steps). Through the infancy stages of M.A.A.P. several institutional and program level needs were identified and action steps were developed, several of which have already been implemented. A table is provided outlining the various evaluations and planning areas of focus requested by NEASC as well as additional MCC assessment initiatives. (see page 6) Implications for each of the initiatives are further discussed within the appendix document.

Summary

As we reflect on the progress of MCC in the areas of evaluation and planning just over the past year we have seen a number of great launching pads for future assessment initiatives. While we further encourage our program faculty to consider the future implications of their assessment opportunities, we as an institution are completing that essential step in the assessment loop as well- better articulating implications and application. As a result of and through the impetus of the 2012 NEASC progress report MCC can identify several implications for existing and proposed initiatives.

- New approaches to assessing general education
- Practical application of institutional core attributes
- Building the assessment capacity of program faculty
- Deeper understanding of the structures and supports we have within our institution that helps support student success
- Ability to identify, define, and measure student learning outcomes through the lens of student goal attainment

As discussed by Bracke (2013)¹, in order to help shape the institutional culture we need to adopt more consistent approaches to assessment throughout the learning experience, not just on the last day of class.

MCC Assessment Task Analysis, Action Steps & Timeline

Task Analysis	Action Step & Timeline
<i>-Institutional Level-</i>	
<i>Build a Culture of Institutional Improvement</i>	-Hiring a new Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs (Completed by 12/2012) -Hiring a new Director of Online Learning (completed as of 6/1/2013)
<i>Provide Systemic Professional Development to Faculty</i>	-Evaluation tools discussions (to be completed monthly beginning 8/2013)
<i>Conduct Formal Studies and Undertake Evaluation Specific to Student Learning Outcomes</i>	-“Track team” created; assessing student goal planning and attainment (completed 2/1/13; continual implementation)
<i>Program Level</i>	
<i>Ensuring Cross Disciplinary General Education Conversations specific to Pedagogy and Outcomes</i>	-Book-ends approach to Student Outcomes -Program Review Renovation (completed 6/1/2013, initial implementation 8/28/13) -Accreditation implications for Program Level change (completed 9/2012; ongoing)
<i>Move from Anecdotal to Descriptive Perspective on Developmental Education</i>	-Preliminary Research on Developmental Mathematics - Center for Academic Planning and Support (CAPS) Assessment Initiatives

**See Appendix for description of each action steps*

¹ Bracke, D. (2013). A new way to assess student learning. *The Teaching Professor*, 27 (2)

Manchester Community College NEASC Appendix

Outcome: Hiring a new Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

Starting December 2012, MCC hired Dr. Kate Guerdat as an Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. She has provided leadership and oversight for the areas of assessment, program reviews, online learning and academic technology, as well as institutional research. Kate arrived at MCC with both undergraduate and graduate teaching experience, program development and evaluation expertise, as well as a lengthy tenure with Cooperative Extension in North Carolina. She has taught online, and has extensive perspective with various learning management platforms. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Fordham University, a Master's of Science in Therapeutic Recreation from UNC-Chapel Hill, and her doctorate in education is from North Carolina State.

Kate has had an immediate impact on re-launching both assessment efforts as well as systematic program review at the College. For example, with the adaptation of the current MCC Program Review process, Faculty will be attending a Program Review 101 session during the preparation weeks preceding Fall Semester 2013. The initial session will include a process overview, as well as begin to introduce faculty to the meaning and importance of qualitative and quantitative reporting methods, development of programmatic needs statements, and technical assistance with the writing of reflective narratives. Additionally, Kate will facilitate Faculty sessions on using Noel-Levitz and Course Eval.

Outcome: Hiring Full-time/year-round Director of Online Teaching/Learning

Online registrations now represent approximately 15% of all credits at the College. From a start in 2007 with 37 sections and just under 600 registrations, the Fall 2012 Semester offered 71 sections with just under 1,200 registrations. This represents a change of over 1,500 credits (please see figure 2.)

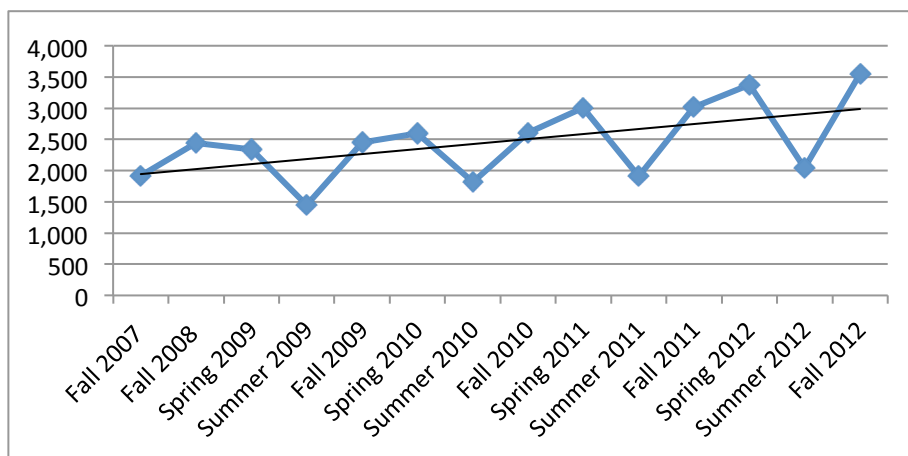


Figure 2.

It was clear from these data that MCC could no longer rely on a faculty instructional release to manage the needs of online teaching and learning. As a result, Melissa Muszynski was hired Summer 2013 as the first full-time, year-round Director for Online Teaching/Learning in the history of the institution. In 2009, Melissa began at Great Bay Community College as an Assistant Professor, and was then promoted to Associate Professor in 2012. She has also served as Adjunct Faculty with MCC and Southern NH University, teaching online at each respectively. Melissa holds a B.A. in Communications from Bridgewater State University, an M.A. in English/Professional Writing from UMass-Dartmouth, a C.A.G.S. in Educational Leadership from Plymouth State University, and was recently accepted into the doctoral program in Educational Leadership at Plymouth State University.

Melissa has also had an immediate impact and has not only begun creating a system of systematic technical assistance and instructional design strategy for both Full-time and Adjunct Faculty, she has also overseen the creation of a refined and revamped course template for all online courses.

Outcome: Preliminary Research on Developmental Mathematics

With required placement testing, students enrolled at Manchester Community College may be obligated to complete two developmental math courses before beginning required math electives within degree programs. A preliminary study examined two cohorts of students with the question as to how well students at MCC persist in this sequence. While there are some encouraging findings, including success as evident by passing grades that exceed typical national norms of 50%, of the 217 students in the sample, after taking the first course, 54% did not attempt another Math course in the period under review at MCC. Ultimately, of those students in the sample, only 25% persisted and passed three math courses during the window of consideration.

Outcome: Center for Academic Planning and Support (CAPS)

The MCC CAPS program is currently assessing several of their program components specifically the Peer Tutoring Success Model and the Accuplacer Accuracy Analysis. Each of these program delivery strategies are in place to support student learning and success within MCC. From an entrance exam primer (Accuplacer Analysis) to a developmental student retention initiative (Peer Tutoring), CAPS has focused their attention on the effectiveness and implication of their programs.

The *Peer Tutoring* program is in the preliminary stages of examining its impact on student completion rate in individual courses. Assessment plans include looking at amount of time tutoring versus completion rates as well as looking at cost benefit analysis of the overall peer tutoring program.

Accuplacer placement credibility has long been questioned by faculty, students, and administration. The pilot study has looked at 100 students and found an insignificant predicted misplacement rate of approximately 5%. Final course grades from Spring 2013 are currently being examined. Fall 2013 assessment plans include a faculty climate survey

surrounding the Accuplacer experience as well as the development of a process of examining the Accuplacer score in relation to the High School Transcript (particularly around the math area).

Outcome: Systematic Program Level Assessments

Program Review Renovation

The Program Review process while valuable for program growth and development is often met with animosity and contention. In an effort to re-engage the program faculty in Program Review and help show them the functionality of the process, an adopted model has been developed and will be implemented beginning in August of 2013.

A committee of MCC leadership alongside departmental faculty was convened to craft the essential elements of the process. In keeping with the newly stated mission of MAAP, all information included within the Program Review must not only be relevant, but applicable action plans must be developed. Through solidifying the Program Review process there not only becomes benchmarks for program effectiveness and growth, but the review itself is represented by a living document- one that has consistent form as well as function. The living document will be devised in 5 sections:

- Establishing Context: History, Mission, Vision & Growth Plan
- Program Goals, Objectives & Delivery
- Measuring Student Learning: Narrative and Numbers
- Sustainability Planning: Advisory structures, fiscal planning tools and resources, programmatic community and industry engagement
- Faculty Engagement

Program faculty will work in cross-disciplinary cohorts throughout the review year to develop and strengthen their review process. Each section will highlight the strengths, needs, and implications for program success, as well as institutional effectiveness.

BookEnd Approach to Student Outcomes

As the focus of outcomes continues to narrow, the sub-committee formed through the Institutional Effectiveness workgroup discussed the need to capture the subjective components of student learning. Steps included in the bookend approach to assessment include:

- Restructure existing Freshmen College Success Seminar
- Creation of a program Capstone course
- Combination of student self-report and established rubric criteria examining where students want to go with educational experience, what they gleaned as valuable during the process, and ultimately producing a final product that supports their future educational and professional interests

While a natural fit for many of our technical program areas, the bookends approach will help our Liberal Arts and Science students better connect their personal goals with

industry potential. For example, the Psychology student who knows s/he are interested in the subject however uncertain of where to go with it will be required to explore and reflect on professional and educational pathways that will help them frame their future goals. The Capstone approach also allows for faculty to create Learning Communities, ultimately establishing a way to assess general education outcomes coupled with practical application.

Accreditation implication for Program Level Change

The accreditation process for many of MCC's technical program areas often brings about revolutionary change and is a prime example of how program level change is being initiated. The MCC Automotive Technologies program was one of the technical program areas that underwent a program-specific accreditation process and have made important program changes as a result. The Automotive program hosted an accreditation visit in the fall of 2011 that was designed to highlight areas of need as well as growth. Below is a summary of the programs key findings during the process and some of the ways in which the program faculty made changes to support the results.

Automotive Key findings and program adaptations (sample)

- 2011 T-10 Accreditation visit prompted changes within the Toyota program as well as within the overall Automotive program. Enhanced the use of the T-10 portfolio as well as creating a grading scale to measure skill level as well as competency. Through the creation of lab sheets a consistent approach to measuring student learning of objectives as well as core attributes; enabling educators to look beyond the typical performance indicators. Success with lab sheet rubric influenced the use in other auto program areas as well (Ford, Chrysler).
- Following a re-accreditation with NATEF (National accrediting body for automotive program), the automotive program leadership team worked with the NH Department of Education (NH DOE) to devise a streamlined approach from secondary to post-secondary opportunities in automotive technology education. Marc Bellerose, Automotive Department Chair, worked with secondary institutions to re-write curriculum to more accurately reflect the 3 levels of NATEF certification. Originally secondary automotive programs were infusing some of the credentialing lessons for level 1- Maintenance and Light Repair. Through MCC Automotive's collective efforts with NH DOE and several area secondary institutions, the course curriculum for the technical high school programs now offer a curriculum completely aligned with the level of NATEF accreditation. As a result of the MCC Automotive leadership team's work students will be better prepared upon High School Graduation as well as provide an easier transition to the post-secondary automotive technical program. Articulation agreements have been improved from a quantity as well as quality standard.

The results of the Automotive accreditation visit and subsequent amendment process is a sample of how results and reflection from structured accreditation will create implications and action. The reflection and action approach taken on part of the

Automotive faculty has motivated one of the major amendments within the Program Review Process at MCC. All programs that undergo an industry-sponsored accreditation review will be asked to provide a “behavior change” summary, detailing the anticipated implications of the accreditation report findings and create action plans with completion timelines.