

PROGRAM REVIEW AND LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT UPDATE

A periodic report on work and activities from the Office of Academic Program Review and Assessment – Ellen Wentland, Director

April, 2008

THE FIRST EDITION!

This is the first edition of what is planned as a periodic newsletter. The major goal is to share with the entire campus community the significant work – significant in terms of the commitment of time and effort as well as in the results - that is being done by NECC faculty and administrators on program review and outcomes assessment activities. Individuals from outside NECC have also been engaged, including representatives of area four-year colleges and employers. It is hoped that through sharing, the work that has been done will be supported, and the work that will be done will be encouraged and better informed.

Other purposes of this newsletter are to:

- *Provide information about the program review work being done at NECC, and the findings and recommendations flowing from this work.*
- *Describe the various program learning outcomes assessment activities conducted by NECC faculty, and how assessment results have been used for program improvement.*
- *Share ideas and information concerning assessment in general and regarding specific assessment methods.*
- *Promote awareness of the large number of faculty, administrators, and external advisors who are participating in NECC's program review and learning outcomes assessment efforts.*
- *Encourage members of the NECC community to become more involved and volunteer to participate on review and assessment teams.*
- *Increase awareness of resources available to assist faculty in their review and assessment work.*

TO INVITE YOU TO THE 2008 PROGRAM REVIEW SUMMIT ON TUESDAY, APRIL 22! (See page 2 for details.)

PROGRAM REVIEW

What's Happening Now

Programs with reviews in process are:

Liberal Arts: Computer and Information Sciences Option
– George Medelinskas
Liberal Arts: Earth Science Option – Marc Reinhold
Liberal Arts: Philosophy Option – Meredith Gunning
Liberal Arts: Theater Option – Susan Sanders

You can help (and learn)! If you are able to help your colleagues in the above programs by participating on their review teams, please let them or me know!

Did you know that 66 NECC faculty members (full-time, part-time, and DCE), 2 academic area administrators, 5 non-academic area administrators, 6 department heads and faculty members from four-year colleges, 11 area business representatives, and 2 area high school representatives – 92 individuals in all - participated as team members in the program reviews completed to date! (See program list on page 2.)

Program Review Summit – You're invited!

For the past several years, coordinators who completed program reviews presented their findings at a program review summit, to which members of the college community are invited. ***This year's summit is scheduled for Tuesday, April 22, in TC103A from 4 to 6:30. Refreshments will be served.*** Presenters include:

Jane Gagliardi – Human Services
Electronic Technology: Computer Systems Option –
Lori Heymans and Paul Chanley
Computer Networking Systems Certificate – Lori
Heymans and Paul Chanley
Liberal Arts: Biology Option – Ruth Young

Please plan to attend to support your colleagues' hard work. They will appreciate it, and what you learn can help you in your program improvement work.

Following their presentations, there will be an opportunity for comments and questions, including concerning progress on recommendations made during previous years' program reviews.

What's Already Happened

Self-studies are continuously being conducted at NECC by many programs, most particularly by those with outside accreditation, certification, or approval. Self-studies are part of external agencies' requirements and are ongoing activities for the affected programs.

The NECC Institutional Program Review Handbook, finalized in the spring of 2005, is intended to provide structure for internal self-studies, so that the benefits of such a study could be extended to all NECC programs. Since that time, **sixteen programs have now completed detailed program reviews following this internal process.** These programs and the coordinators who led the work are:

Accounting – John Sabbagh
Business Management – Bill Zannini
Business Transfer – Bill Zannini
Computer Networking Systems Certificate – Lori Heymans and Paul Chanley
Dental Assisting – Kerin Hamidiani
Early Childhood Education – Gail Feigenbaum
Electronic Technology – Lori Heymans and Paul Chanley
Electronic Technology: Computer Systems Option – Lori Heymans and Paul Chanley
Elementary Education – Jeri Bayer
Graphic Design – Patricia Kidney
Human Services – Jane Gagliardi
Liberal Arts – Bill Heineman
Liberal Arts: Biology Option – Ruth Young
Liberal Arts: Journalism/ Broadcasting Option – Amy Callahan
Polysomnography – Chris Rowse
Radiologic Technology – Nancy Garcia

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Many programs are developing learning outcomes assessment plans, usually in connection with their reviews. Other programs, most commonly those with external accreditation, certification, or approval, already have these type plans in place. Once outcomes are identified, programs conduct various activities to assess those outcomes. ***Have students learned what we are intending them to learn? What is the evidence in this regard? What information do assessment activities provide that can be useful in improving our programs?***

To date, five programs using the new internal process have conducted assessments of selected program learning outcomes. Following is an example of the work of one of these programs.

Outcomes Assessment in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program

Following the outcomes assessment plan that was developed in connection with their program review, ECE faculty selected four outcomes for assessment in 2006-07. The products used were the models of early childhood classrooms designed by students as part of program requirements. This assignment included an oral presentation.

A rubric was developed to assess the model projects and the students' presentations. This rubric included various criteria and a three-point rating scale. One criterion was "speaking skills," which included such factors as enunciation and audience eye contact as well as appropriate use of English.

When the results were analyzed, speaking skills emerged as an area in which students may need more support, but it was unclear as to whether this would concern the use of English, or audience presentation abilities.

The action taken by ECE faculty was to revise the rubric, separating out audience-related behaviors from grammar. When the projects are assessed this year, faculty will be better able to determine the area in which to focus.

Other Outcomes of Outcomes Assessment

- **Suzanne VanWert's SoTI project**, focusing on engagement and retention of male students; and
- An intention in the **Graphic Design Program** to provide more help to students in developing their resumes, for example, by inviting a representative from Career Development to come to a class.

ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

Faculty often express interest in **rubrics**. A very good website for examples of rubrics is: www.winona.edu/AIR/rubrics.htm. Please share any assessment methods or ideas you have found useful. You can email me at: ewentland@necc.mass.edu. For program review and outcomes assessment activities at NECC, see <http://www.necc.mass.edu/facultystaff/programreview.php>.