

## PROGRAM REVIEW AND LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

### Thirteenth Edition

A periodic report from the Office of Academic and Institutional Effectiveness – Ellen Wentland, Associate Dean

May 2014

*This is the thirteenth edition of what is planned as a periodic newsletter. As noted in the first April 2008 edition:*

**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.**

To view all editions of the newsletter, go to:

<http://facstaff.necc.mass.edu/faculty-resources/program-review-outcomes-assessment/newsletters/>

### HIGHLIGHTS – INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ❖ **SPRING 2014 PROGRAM REVIEW COMPLETERS AND SUMMIT PRESENTATIONS**
- ❖ **THE SPRING 2014 INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC PRESENTATION**
- ❖ **PLANS FOR THE FALL 2014 INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**
- ❖ **NECC'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FALL 2014 DHE'S VISION PROJECT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PILOT STUDY**
- ❖ **UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF NECC'S INTENSIVE CORE ACADEMIC SKILLS COURSE INITIATIVE AND PIF GRANT SUPPORTED CORE SKILLS ACTIVITIES**
- ❖ **NECC'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DHE'S VISION PROJECT RELATED AMCOA REGION 3 FACULTY ROUNDTABLE**

### **PROGRAM REVIEW**

#### **Spring 2014 Completers**

The three reviews completed in spring 2014, and the program review team leaders, are:

General Studies: Movement Science Option (formerly General Studies: Physical Education, Exercise Science, and Sports Studies) – Rob Parker

Laboratory Science – Marguerite White

Liberal Arts: Biology Option – Ken Thomas

The total number of programs reviewed to date is now 46, including 36 degree and 10 certificate programs. Of the 46, nine (7 degree and 2 certificate) have completed second reviews, following the NECC cycle which is approximately every 5-6 years.

#### **Spring 2014 Program Review Summit**

The ninth annual college-wide Program Review Summit was held on April 16, 2014. Sample Summit PowerPoint presentations, which highlight review findings and recommendations, can be found at <http://facstaff.necc.mass.edu/faculty-resources/program-review-outcomes-assessment/785-2/>



## Program Review Reports

Following are highlights from this spring's reviews.

### General Studies: Movement Science Option



What started as a review of the General Studies: Physical Education, Exercise Science, and Sports Studies Program resulted in revisions and the creation of a new program - **General Studies: Movement Science Option** – which will be offered beginning in the fall of 2014. The revisions, which include changes to current courses and the development of new courses, were made considering NECC resources and student interest, and to ensure that students are well-prepared for transfer to programs offered at four-year colleges. **While transfer agreements for the new program are in place at Salem State University and Springfield College, plans going forward are to develop additional agreements with other area colleges.** Other goals include:

- *Expand the Movement Science Program to the Lawrence Campus and Lawrence YMCA.*
- *Increase opportunities for students to earn professional certifications.*
- *Investigate adding evening courses.*

### Laboratory Science

This program was first offered at NECC in fall 2008. Program strengths identified include the curriculum, developed with industry and transfer institution input.



The Laboratory Science program includes a very successful externship component in terms of the number of externship sites, and the performance of NECC students in the externship setting. Sample externship supervisor comments include:

- *The student "would be an excellent lab technician in any lab."*
- *The student "would be an asset to any facility that hires her."*

Challenges include better using program strengths to promote the program. A need to "...Replace or completely overhaul the autoclave on the Haverhill Campus" was also noted.

### Liberal Arts: Biology Option

A number of recommendations were put forth during the summit presentation. These include:

- *Reinstate Biology Program Coordinator position.*
- *Develop autonomous department website.*
- *Provide incentives for ongoing faculty research programs that involve students.*
- *Replace Liberal Arts: Biology with A.S. in Biological Sciences.*

The proposed program would have 4 separate tracks including PreMed/ PreVet, Cell/ Molecular, Ecology/ Evolution/Behavior, and Marine.



Regarding the last recommendation for an A.S. program, support presented includes that an A.S. in Biology would ...*lead to the creation of additional courses leading to more science options for major and non-major students.*

## **OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

# Institutional Assessment of Core Academic Skills

## **Spring 2014 Assessment of Public Presentation**

This spring's institutional assessment focuses on Public Presentation, one of NECC's six core skills. In the fall of 2013, faculty were informed concerning this spring's assessment plan so as to give them an opportunity to include a Public Presentation assignment in their class(es). The NECC Public Presentation rubric was included.



Early in the spring term, we notified faculty with students in their classes who had earned between 45- 60 credit hours. These students are the focus of the assessment efforts. Faculty with identified students who agreed to participate were asked to evaluate their students using the NECC rubric, and then to return the rubrics to this office. Rubric scores will be analyzed and full reports made available on the Department website.

For reports of prior years' institutional assessments, see:  
<http://facstaff.necc.mass.edu/faculty-resources/program-review-outcomes-assessment/institutional/>

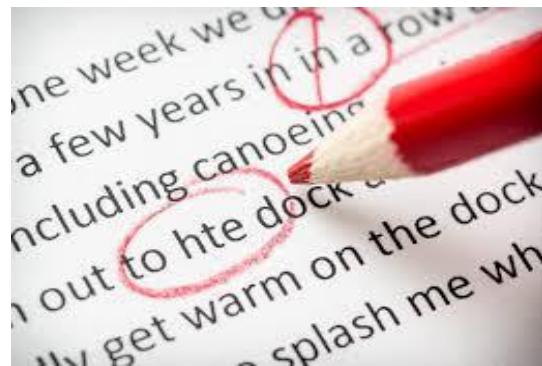
## Fall 2015 Institutional and State-Wide Assessment

In the fall of 2015, NECC will participate in the second Massachusetts Vision Project pilot study of state-level learning outcomes assessment. Suzanne Van Wert is NECC's representative to the Massachusetts Task Force, which reviews the pilot study plans. In this study, Massachusetts has partnered with nine other states in an effort to determine the feasibility of a process to evaluate students' success in achieving certain learning outcomes through examining student artifacts. The outcomes to be assessed are critical thinking, quantitative literacy, and written communication.

Artifacts collected from institutions within the state will be aggregated by segment (e.g. community college), and then compared with similarly aggregated results from the multi-state group members.

NECC will be participating as a member of a three college consortium, which will include **Middlesex Community College** and **North Shore Community College**. **Ellen Wentland** is the lead on this consortium effort and, following a recent meeting of consortium representatives, drafted and submitted a “sampling plan” to be reviewed by leaders of the multi-state effort.

To take advantage of the state pilot study artifact collection, NECC's AY 2014-15 institutional assessment will also be in the fall of 2014, and will focus on Written Communication.



Faculty have been notified about the fall plans to again provide them an opportunity to develop assignments related to one or more of the outcomes.

#### **June 4 Faculty Symposium – Critical Thinking**

**In the 2009 Vision for Core Academic Skills at Northern Essex Community College, critical thinking was described as an essential student learning outcome which required the development of the specifically defined core academic skills. The June 4 Faculty Symposium is designed to support faculty in their work assisting student development of critical thinking skills, and to increase faculty familiarity with the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric used by the state to evaluate student artifacts collected in the pilot studies.**



**This symposium is co-sponsored by the Office of Academic and Institutional Effectiveness and the Center for Professional Development.**

## CORE ACADEMIC SKILLS INTENSIVE COURSES

### Where We Stand

We're ready to launch!

Beginning in the fall term 2014, any associate degree student new to NECC – whether a first time student or a transfer student – will as a graduation requirement need to take at least one course intensive in each of the **six core academic skills**. Before this new graduation requirement could be set, every degree program had to have a full complement of core skills intensive courses, a goal which has now been achieved.

### Activities in AY 13-14

The success of the intensive course efforts owes much to the resources provided by a **DHE Performance Incentive Fund (PIF) grant**. AY 2013-14 marked Year 2 of the grant, and enabled the holding of core skills related faculty workshops throughout the year to encourage faculty to create assignments, work with rubrics, and make applications for intensive course status. As of May 2014, 161 courses have been approved as intensive in one or more of these skills. (See: <http://facstaff.necc.mass.edu/faculty-resources/program-review-outcomes-assessment/core-academic-skills/core-academic-skills-intensive-course-status-by-program/>)

The workshops were facilitated by the core skills “coaches”, who also met with faculty outside of the workshops to provide guidance and assistance. **Suzanne Van Wert** serves as the core skills coaches’ coordinator. This AY’s core skills coaches are:

Global Awareness – **Marcy Yeager**  
Information Literacy – **Gail Stuart**  
Quantitative Reasoning – **Lori Heymans**  
Public Presentation – **Amy Callahan**  
Science – **Ken Thomas**  
Technology – **Paul Chanley**  
Written Communication – **Elle Yarborough**



## MASS DHE VISION PROJECT

One focus of the **Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Vision Project** is system-wide and campus-level assessment of student learning.

To support these efforts, the AMCOA (Advancing a Massachusetts Culture of Assessment) team was formed, consisting of assessment leaders from each of the Massachusetts public undergraduate campuses. NECC's AMCOA representatives are **Ellen Wentland** and **Suzanne Van Wert**.

### Region 3 Roundtable

The most recent AMCOA initiative involved dividing the state into regions, with each region asked to work as a “mini-AMCOA”, in discussing assessment practices, developing and implementing assessment related projects, and perhaps even planning regional conferences. NECC is in Region 3, which includes Bunker Hill Community College, **North Shore Community College**, the **Massachusetts College of Art and Design**, **Roxbury Community College**, **Salem State University**, and the **University of Massachusetts- Boston**. The region Chair is **Ellen Wentland** of NECC with **Saradha Ramesh** of **North Shore Community College** serving as co-chair.



The project developed by the Region 3 campus representatives involved having faculty from each of the campuses attend a “Faculty Roundtable” at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design on March 6. Region representatives, including **Suzanne Van Wert**, developed assignment Guidelines based on Critical Thinking, Quantitative Literacy, and Written Communication VALUE rubric criteria which faculty participants were asked to apply to sample assignments. Faculty then provided feedback on the usefulness of the Guidelines for developing outcomes related assignments for students.

NECC faculty members who participated in the Roundtable were **Michelle Carter**, **Ginger Hurajt** and **Patricia Machado**.