

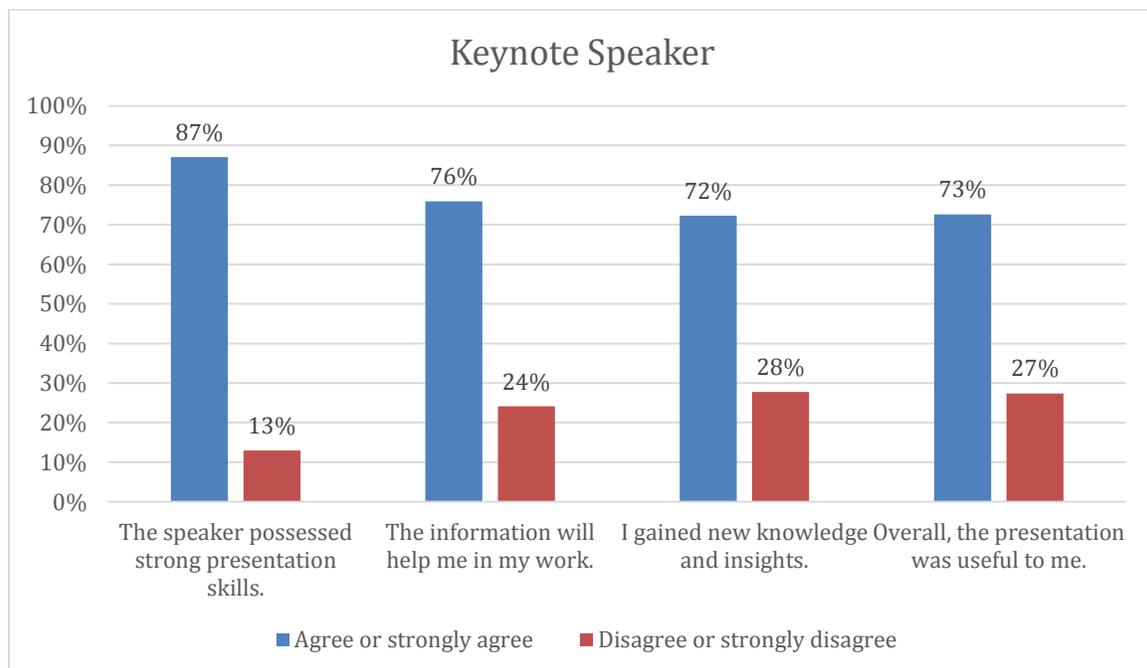
**Northern Essex Community College
Annual Report from the Assessment of Student Learning Committee
Academic Year 2015-2016**

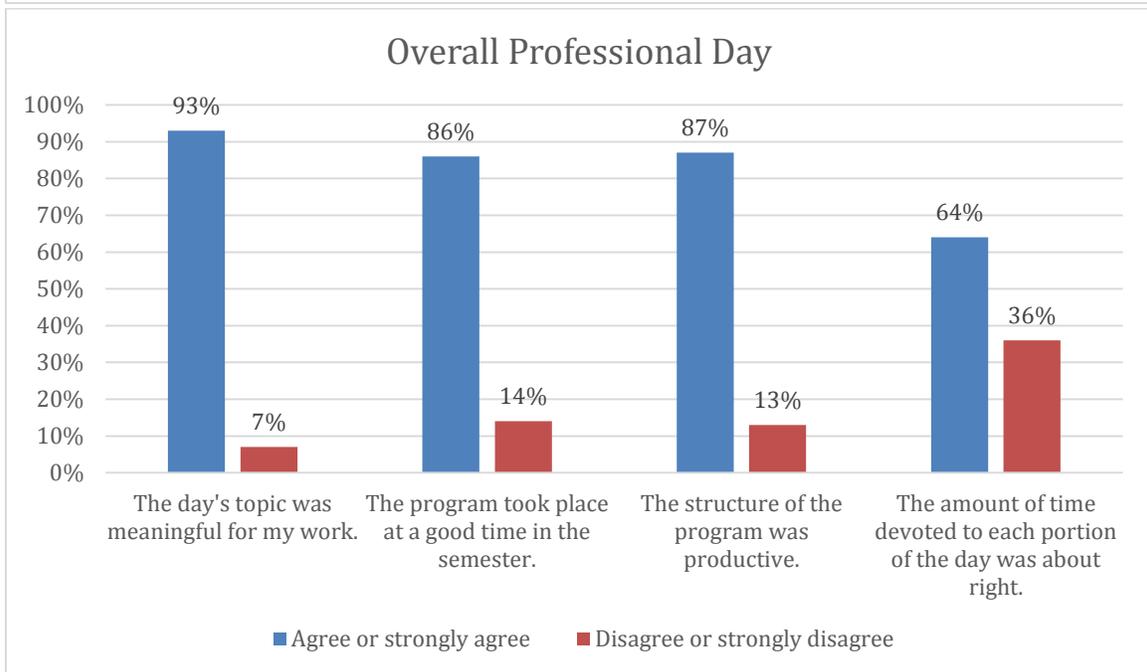
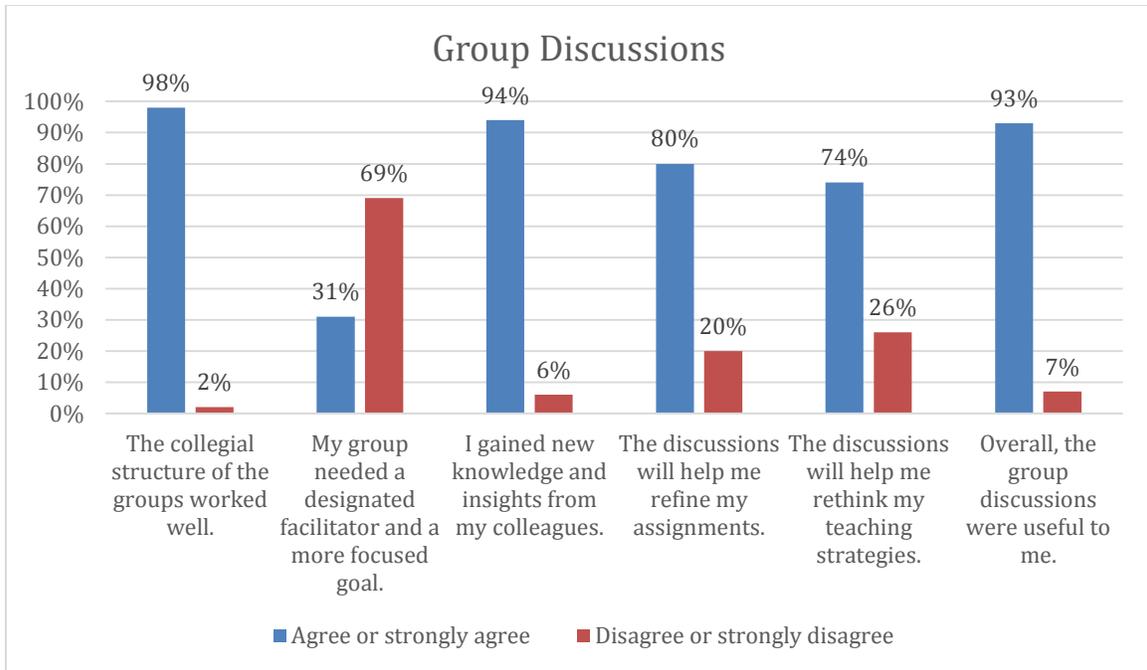
The Assessment of Student Learning Committee was formed in the fall of 2014 with the goal of creating a more faculty-driven approach to assessment. Comprised of faculty and administrators from across the college, the committee was charged with overseeing policies, methods, and procedures to guide our educators in assessing student learning. The committee is pleased, in its second year, to report the following accomplishments.

A Professional Day for Assessment

The committee organized and sponsored a full-day professional development workshop to give faculty the opportunity to work together on various aspects of program assessment. This Assessment Day, entitled *A Student Learning Workshop: Closing the Loop*, took place on Friday, October 30th, from 8:30 – 3:00. Martha Stassen, Assistant Provost for Assessment and Educational Effectiveness at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, offered a one-hour interactive presentation to begin the day and to focus the conversation. Participants then attended planned break-out sessions to work on program-specific needs, including defining program outcomes, revising outcomes, collaborating on creating instruments to assess students, and/or planning their next assessment initiative.

Conversations with faculty indicated a positive response to the day. A follow-up survey sent to faculty after the event again returned overwhelmingly positive responses, particularly regarding the opportunity for discussions.





In order to continue the momentum generated by Assessment Day, a small pool of funds was set aside to support the work begun on Assessment Day. Departments and programs were invited to make specific proposals to advance their assessment work in the spring semester. The Departments of Business and of Criminal Justice each applied and received \$1500 grants for their projects. The Human Services program requested and received \$362.50.

Capitalizing on the success of our inaugural Assessment Day, planning is underway for Assessment Day FA16, entitled Academic Rigor: A Panel Presentation, and scheduled to take place on Friday, October 28, 2016.

Participation in Multi-State Collaborative

During the AY2015-16, Northern Essex, along with several other Massachusetts public colleges, participated in the Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment Demonstration Study. The purpose of this second year of the initiative was to test “the feasibility and sustainability of a common statewide model of assessment using actual student work.” With 12 states participating, the study again asked contributors to collect and submit student samples for Written Communication, Critical Thinking, and Quantitative Literacy.

Following the model of the MSC pilot in AY14-15, NECC students in this year’s Demonstration Study would need to have completed at least 45 credits prior to the start of the fall semester, excluding credits earned for developmental classes.

- **535** instructors were identified as having eligible students in their classes
- **102** instructors (19%) responded (yes or no) to our initial contact
- **57** instructors (11%) agreed to participate, representing **542** eligible students/products for all 3 MSC outcomes
- **38** instructors (7% of the original number contacted) actually participated in the process, forwarding a total of **95** products

The 95 student products collected for the MSC pilot are represented as follows:

Met the criteria for Critical Thinking	5
Met the criteria for both Critical Thinking & Written Communication	64
Met the criteria for Quantitative Literacy	2
Met the criteria for both Quantitative Literacy & Written Communication	0
Met the criteria for Written Communication	24
Met the criteria for Critical Thinking, Quantitative Literacy & Written Communication	0

It should be noted that while the collection window was 2 semesters rather than one semester, as it had been the previous year, the number of products collected was unusually low due to a job action initiated by the faculty/professional staff union over stalled contract negotiations. Because this same job action resulted in little faculty participation in extra-contractual initiatives, the Assessment of Student Learning Committee elected not to implement an institutional assessment in SP16.

AY2016-17 Institutional Assessment

The committee chose Science & Technology for our next institutional assessment because it is the only Core Academic Skill which has not yet been assessed. A rubric was developed based on the criteria outlined in the Science & Technology intensive application, and was sent to key department chairs and program coordinators for their input before it was finalized. The institutional assessment of the Science & Technology core skill will be conducted in FA16. The new rubric was sent to all faculty at the end of SP16 in order to facilitate planning and/or tweaking of assignments to align with the criteria.

Information Management

In its 2014-15 annual report, the committee recommended that the college consider purchasing a software package that would streamline the collection and management of student products for assessment. In March of this year, led by Melba Acevedo, Director of Instructional Technology & Online Learning, some members of this committee and other interested individuals participated in the process of evaluating software packages for this purpose. The ad hoc group participated in multiple demonstrations with 3 software providers and ultimately recommended that the college purchase a program called TK20.

Summary and recommendations

- Institutional assessment was not performed in AY 15-16 due to Work-to-Rule
- The college did participate in the Multi-state Collaborative assessment of writing, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning
- Science & Technology was chosen for our AY16-17 institutional assessment
- A successful Assessment Day effectively engaged faculty in program assessment efforts and is recommended to become an annual event
- A software management package was recommended for purchase