Summary of 2014 ARC Report

Participation:

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<th>Program Plans Submitted</th>
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<td>Instruction: Transfer and Basic Skills</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Geography and Meteorology</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>Geology/Oceanography/Environmental Sciences</td>
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<td>Instruction: Career Technical Education</td>
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<td>Instruction: Library</td>
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<td>Student Services</td>
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Commendations:

- ARC salutes the Geography Department for an excellent and sophisticated analysis of their assessment results. They detailed specific issues faced by students and the department’s creative solutions to meet them, which led to concrete goals and recommendations for the program plan overall.

- ARC lauds the Chemistry Department for a superior analysis of assessment results and creative solutions to student learning issues.

- ARC commends the Accessibility Support Center for implementing a new and highly successful process (a pre and post test) to assess their outcomes.

- ARC applauds the Counseling and Education Support Services Division for an excellent use of assessment tools to get actionable results.

Successes:

Instruction: The faculty learned that most students were successful at mastering the course and certificate SLOs as well as each of the college core competencies. Some successes were directly linked to classroom activities and student support:

- Peer tutoring and hands-on activities were shown to positively correlate with improved student learning.
- The length of time spent in lab sessions positively correlated with higher student success.
• Students who received individual attention from student assistants performed better.

Student Services:
• Students greatly benefited from in-person information provided by the Accessibility Support Center.
• A pre and post test revealed that students knew how to challenge a pre-requisite on their own after being assisted in completing the process the first time.

Administrative Units:
• An assessment of Assessment, Orientation and Counseling by the Counseling and Educational Support Services Division revealed great success from the new BYMA (Before Your Make An Appointment) efforts.
• The Warehouse discovered that users were very satisfied with their services, but many campus faculty and staff were unaware of what the department had to offer.

Challenges

Instruction: When students struggled with SLOs, some common themes appeared.
• Problems with writing and grammar, especially the writing of lab reports. Proposed solutions included giving more writing assignments in science courses, requiring drafts of papers, creating a one-unit writing course for the sciences, working with the English department and more referrals to Writing Center.
• Lack of basic math and other numerical skills in non-math classes. Proposed solutions included working more closely with the Math department.
• Issues in critical thinking, especially applying concepts to problems and situations. Proposed solutions included creating activities that require more hands-on learning, using clicker response systems to monitor student comprehension, and more field work where students would be required to apply what they’ve learned in the classroom.

Student Services:
• Students revealed that faculty and staff were not uniformly aware of the steps involved in challenging a pre-requisite. Proposed solution: Post more materials on the web and in Division offices to help faculty, staff and students be more aware of the steps required.
• Students with disabilities need more support classes to help them succeed. Proposed solution: The Accessibility Support Center proposes to work with Counseling to create a section of CG 51 for this population.

Administration:
• The CESS Dean identified a need for regular direct communication with all members of some small departments, to improve awareness of and involvement in new campus issues and changing requirements.
• Students coming to Tutorials benefit less from their sessions if they come unprepared (without an assignment etc.). Proposed Solution: Tutorials will develop pre-semester
communications and increase in-class visits to better inform students of their role in the tutoring process.

**ARC’s Analysis of Campus SLO/AUO Assessment Processes**

- In Instruction, all departments are robustly participating in assessment activities, but some are analyzing its results with greater sophistication and depth. Some departments could use additional support in undertaking assessment activities.
- In Student Services and Administrative Units, departments are struggling to find the right assessment tools and could use some help with analyzing the data that they generate.

**ARC’s Recommendations**

For teaching and learning:

- A critical issue in all courses (transfer, CTE and basic skills) is a deficiency of basic reading, writing, and numerical skills. This on-going, critical issue, which ARC has noted for the last seven years, negatively impacts student success across the campus. Efforts to address this issue (including the Equity Plan, the Student Success and Support Program and campus professional development) should be coordinated, with on-going dialogue between all involved parties, including transfer and CTE faculty.

For Improving SLO/AUO Assessment Processes

- Create Best Practice guides for Instruction, Student Services and Administration.
- Undertake an informational campaign to help Instructional departments to better analyze assessment results.

**Analysis of Past ARC Recommendations**

One of ARC’s recommendations last year was to undertake an analysis of all its previous recommendations. The committee found that of 63 total recommendations over the last seven years, 44 had been completed, 13 were in progress, 5 were on-going and one was abandoned since it was found to be impossible. ARC also noted the following trends:

- Academic issues noted as a result of SLO assessment have remained constant. Students are underprepared academically, and do not possess the habits of mind to enable them to be successful students.
- Efforts to improve these academic issues have changed, moving from a focus purely on professional development to some solutions across disciplines. A college-wide approach is emerging through the Equity Plan and the focus on Habits of Mind by the Professional Engagement committee for the next academic year.
- Recommendations demonstrate a constant effort to build an infrastructure for campus-wide outcomes assessment. That effort has been a success, but there is still an uneven quality in assessment across departments.
- How we talk about assessment efforts has changed, shifting from a focus on the instructors to a focus on what students do. This is a significant paradigm shift.