

Community College of Allegheny County

Case Study: Integrating Planning and Assessment

Middle States
Special Topic Conference

May 2008

1



Introductions

Kevin G. Smay
Executive Director Strategic Planning

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Learning Assessment Analyst

2



CCAC Fast Facts

- Allegheny County: 1.3 million residents
- 4 campuses & 6 centers serving
- 29,799 Credit students
- 35,016 Non-credit students
- 58% women
- 59% part time
- 53% in occupational technical programs
- 2nd largest producer of registered nurses - 462
- 4th largest producer of health professionals - 654

3

Mission

Provide affordable access to quality education, and offer a dynamic, diverse and supportive learning environment that prepares the region's residents for academic, professional, and personal success in our changing global society.

4

Being Placed on Warning

5

Self-Study Synopsis

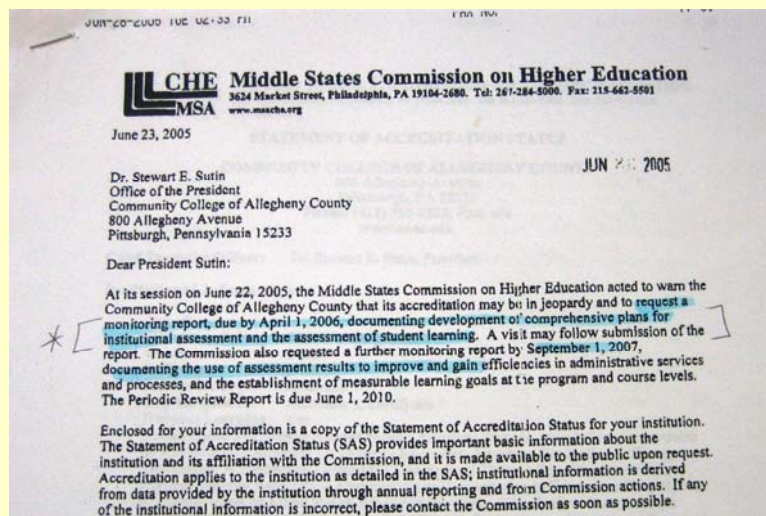
- ...the Team could not affirm compliance with Standard 7 due to:
 - the absence of a written assessment plan
 - the absence of evidence of periodic assessment of institutional effectiveness that addresses the total range of educational offerings, services and processes
 - the lack of evidence indicating the use of assessment results to improve and gain efficiencies in administrative services and processes
 - the absence of a written institutional (strategic) plan that reflects consideration of data use from assessment outcomes

SOURCE: Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees and Students of the Community College of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania by An Evaluation Team Representing The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, April 2005

Self-Study Synopsis

- The institution does not meet Standard 14.
 - "CCAC, by its own admission in the Self-Study, has not instituted a comprehensive assessment plan or process that measures student learning"
 - "In a report dated June 6, 1996 the findings of a self-study document and the visitation team's report indicated the need for CCAC to assess student learning"

SOURCE: Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees and Students of the Community College of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania by An Evaluation Team Representing The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, April 2005



Warning

- The Commission acts to Warn an institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy when the institution is not in compliance with one or more standards
- A monitoring report is required to demonstrate that the institution has made appropriate improvements to bring itself into compliance
- Warning indicates that the Commission believes that...the institution has the capacity to make appropriate improvements within a reasonable period of time and...has the capacity to sustain itself in the long term.
- The institution retains its accredited status while the warning is in effect.

9

Assessment Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive institutional **strategic plan**, linking planning to decision-making, budgeting and institutional assessment.
2. Develop appropriate **metrics** that will clearly link strategic objectives to indicators of effectiveness
3. Give a high priority to developing an **Institutional Assessment Plan** that will include details as to how the College will assess its institutional effectiveness as well as the effectiveness of its educational offerings and support services.
4. Develop a comprehensive method of institutional assessment that effectively incorporates measures of student learning outcomes so that appropriate resources can be dedicated towards **positive change**.
5. Develop a plan to assess and **systematically collect learning outcomes data** for academic programs and courses.
6. Use **program review** results continually to assess and improve teaching and learning in support of student success.
7. Assess and **systematically collect the learning outcomes data for the College's General Education program**.
8. Track and monitor the improvements made to teaching and learning that result from the **assessment of the General Education program**.
9. Establish an official college **definition of assessment** of student learning.

10

How did this happen to us?

- Confusion about assessment
- Unclear ownership internally - hot potato
- Lack of mandate internally
- Waiting around for the “right time” to start
- No written plan
- Could it happen to you too?

11

What does it mean to be placed on warning?

- Confuses your constituents and stakeholders
- Messy
- Stressful
- Focusing
- Opportunity for new leaders to emerge within the organization

12

The First Year

Developing Assessment Processes

13

Assessment Processes Answer Fundamental Questions

- **#7 Institutional**
 - As an institutional community, how well are we collectively doing what we say we are doing?
 - How do we support student learning, a fundamental aspect of institutional effectiveness?
 - Is the institution fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals?
- **#14 Student Learning**
 - Are our students learning what we want them to learn?

14

Characteristics of Assessment Processes

- Useful
- Cost effective
- Reasonably accurate and truthful
- Planned
- Organized, systematized and sustained

15

Changes in Standard 7 (Institutional Assessment) between 2004 and 2006

2004	2006
Builds upon the six previous standards	Builds upon <u>all</u> other standards
A written assessment plan and process	A documented, organized and sustained assessment process

16

Getting Back on Our Horse

- Formed Two Teams
 - Institutional
 - Student Learning (faculty driven)
 - (Eventually adding a third for Student Services)
- Began with an Education Period
 - Reading and discussion for several months
 - Agreed on terms
 - Attended conferences
 - Local Middle States Workshops
 - Other regional and national conferences
- Advice: Find your way to Baltimore Dec 7-9
- Note: It will take resources!

17



First Year Actions

- Institutional
 - Strategic Plan
 - Formed committee
 - Web site
 - Assessment Inventory
 - Information gathering
 - Defined institutional assessment
 - Articulated an assessment philosophy
 - Conducted campus workshops
- Student Learning
 - Formed committee
 - Adopted an official definition of assessment and defined terminology
 - Created a process for program assessment
 - Created General Education goals
 - Offered campus workshops:
 - program assessment process
 - classroom assessment
 - Conducted assessment at the class-level

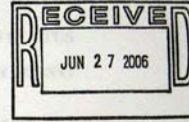
SOURCE: Monitoring Report to the Middle States
Commission on Higher Education, April 2006

18



June 23, 2006

Dr. Stewart E. Sutin
President
Community College of Allegheny County
800 Allegheny Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15233



Dear Dr. Sutin:

At its session on June 22, 2006, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted:

To accept the monitoring report, to thank the institution for receiving the Commission's representatives, to remove the warning, and to reaffirm accreditation. To remind the institution of the monitoring report due by September 1, 2007, documenting the use of assessment results to improve and gain efficiencies in administrative services and processes, and the establishment of measurable learning goals at the program and course levels. The Periodic Review Report is due June 1, 2011.

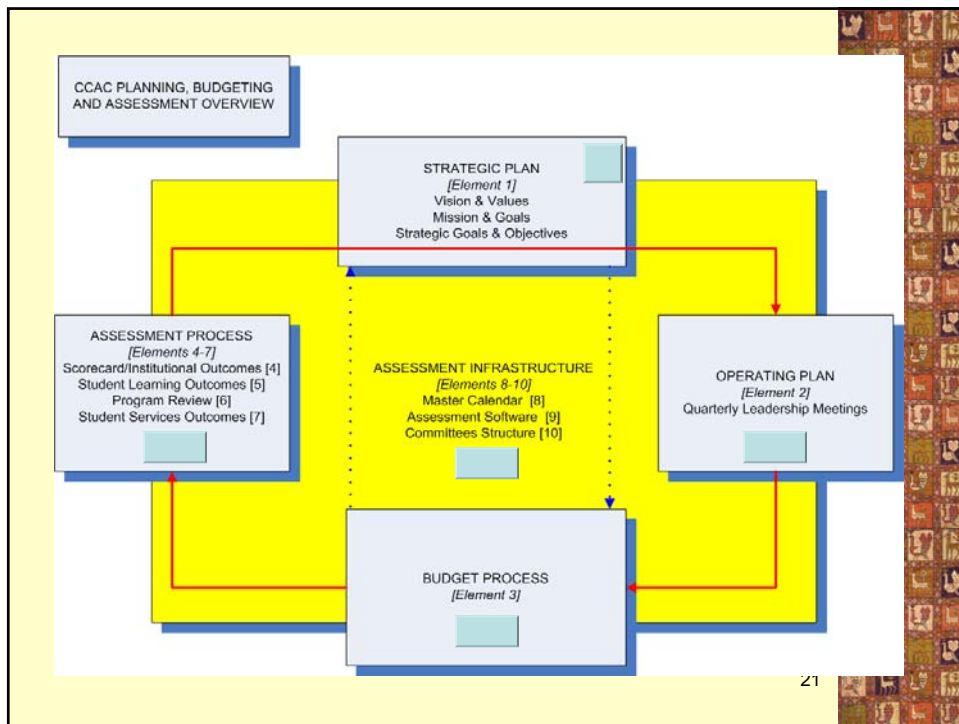
Enclosed for your information is a copy of the Statement of Accreditation Status for your institution. The Statement of Accreditation Status (SAS) provides important basic information about the institution and its affiliation with the Commission, and it is made available to the public in the Directory of Members and Candidates on the Commission's website at www.msche.org. Accreditation applies to the institution as detailed in the SAS; institutional information is derived from data provided by the institution through annual reporting and from Commission actions. If any of the institutional information is incorrect, please contact the Commission as soon as possible.

19

The Second Year

Integrating Assessment and Planning

20



Assessment Plan & Process Template

Element #:
Description:
Linkages:
Status:
Action Items

22

Element 4: Scorecard

Description:

The April 2005 Middle States evaluation team visit yielded the following recommendation: Develop appropriate metrics that will clearly link strategic objectives to indicators of effectiveness. In addition, an objective of the College in its 05-06 operating plan was the development of a "dashboard" of performance indicators. To meet these expectations the college has adopted a scorecard approach [Appendix 4.A] derived from The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). The scorecard represents a constant set of "vital signs" or strategic indicators that are institutional in scope. The scorecard is organized into six measurement categories that are aligned with the college enduring goals from the strategic plan. These are 1. Learning 2.Student service 3.Community outreach 4.Workforce 5.Lifelong and 6.Resource stewardship. An additional three categories, referred to as institutional imperatives were established by the college president. These are: 7. Diversity 8.Technology and 9.Integrity. These indicators tend to take a long range perspective and function more like lagging indicators. Scorecard measures are of interest to the college's external stakeholders. They may be shared with the board of trustees and be referenced in the College annual report to the public. The scorecard builds when possible upon existing data collection efforts such as IPEDS and the National Community College Benchmarking Project and the accountability mandates of Act 46. Scorecard data are used in quarterly planning progress meetings of the President's cabinet.

Linkages:

The scorecard contains strategic indicators and is thus most closely connected with the strategic plan (Element 1). It also supports the annual assessment, planning (Element 2) and budgeting cycles (Element 3).

Status:

The last full update of the scorecard produced in January 2008. The scorecard is being actively updated and revised based on dialog with college senior vice presidents and the availability of fresh data from IPEDS and the National Community College Benchmarking Project. Update and maintain scorecard according to a production schedule [Summer '07]

Action Items

- Finalize and develop consensus on scorecard contents [Fall '07]
- Develop protocols to improve integration of the scorecard and the quarterly review meeting process. [June '08]
- Establish protocol for scorecard review by trustees on an ongoing basis. [June '08]

23



November 16, 2007

Dr. Stewart E. Sutin
President
Community College of Allegheny County
800 Allegheny Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Dear Dr. Sutin:

At its session on November 15, 2007, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted:

To accept the monitoring report submitted by the institution. The Periodic Review Report is due June 1, 2011.

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the Statement of Accreditation Status for your institution. The Statement of Accreditation Status (SAS) provides important basic information about the institution and its affiliation with the Commission, and it is made available to the public in the Directory of Members and Candidates on the Commission's website at www.msche.org. Accreditation applies to the institution as detailed in the SAS; institutional information is derived from data provided by the institution through annual reporting and from Commission actions. If any of the institutional information is incorrect, please contact the Commission as soon as possible.

Please check to ensure that published references to your institution's accredited status (catalog, other publications, web page) include the full name, address, and telephone number of the accrediting agency. Further guidance is provided in the Commission's policy statement *Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*, which can be obtained from our website.

24

Moving Forward

25

Where are we today?

- Off warning
- Closed the loop
- In leadership transition
 - Slows the change process
- Looking down the road toward PRR

26

Periodic Review Objectives

1. To assess the impact of significant major developments, changes, or challenges subsequent to the last evaluation
2. To assess the institution's **response to recommendations** resulting from the previous evaluation
3. To review the institution's enrollment trends, financial status, and enrollment and financial projections
4. To determine the current **status of the implementation of plans for the assessment of institutional effectiveness and the assessment of student learning outcomes** (accreditation standards 7 and 14)
5. To assess the extent to which **linked institutional planning and budgeting processes** are in place

27

Conclusions

- Assessment is not just for accreditation
- It is the right thing to do
- Institutions of our complexity need organized methods:
 - to move us from the past
 - position us to fulfill our missions and serve our constituents in the future
 - to make best use of the substantial resources in our trust
- Don't wait. Start small and build on success.

28


Contact Info

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29

Element 1: Strategic Plan

- Middle States evaluation team recommendation:
 - *Develop and implement a comprehensive institutional strategic plan, linking planning to decision-making, budgeting and institutional assessment.*
- assessment begins with defining clearly articulated institutional goals.
- Strategic Planning
 - defines the institution's most important goals
 - basis for other college planning endeavors and change initiatives
 - a disciplined, coordinated, systematic and sustained effort to achieve the institution's mission and goals.
 - process also included an update of college mission, vision and values statements. [Standard 1: Mission and Goals]
- The Destination 

30

Element 2: Annual Operating Plan

- The Journey
- Translates vision into action.
- Achieves long term strategic goals in the strategic plan one year at a time
- Must be a replicable and learnable process
- Aligned with institutional assessment thru:
 - Templates
 - Process documentation
 - Master Calendar
 - Quarterly Reviews



31



Element 3: Budget Process

- Middle States has provided clear indication that planning, assessment and resource allocation are to be integral processes.
- Middle States evaluation team recommendations:
 - Develop and implement a comprehensive institutional strategic plan, linking planning to decision-making, budgeting and institutional assessment.
 - Develop a comprehensive method of institutional assessment that effectively incorporates measures of student learning outcomes so that appropriate resources can be dedicated towards positive change.
- Aligned with assessment and planning thru Master Calendar



32



Element 4: Scorecard

- Middle States evaluation team recommendation:
 - Develop appropriate metrics that will clearly link strategic objectives to indicators of effectiveness.
- scorecard approach
- a constant set of "vital signs" or strategic indicators
- institutional in scope.
- tend to take a long range perspective and function more like lagging indicators
- organized into six measurement categories that are aligned with the institutional goals in the strategic plan
 - Mirrored in our assessment MIS
- The scorecard when possible uses benchmarked data
Scorecard data are used in quarterly reviews of operating plan



33

Element 5: Assessment of Student Learning

Institution-level	ASL committee conducts assessment of six General Education goals
Program-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each program/discipline conducts an annual assessment• Each program/discipline completes a comprehensive program review once every five years
Course/Classroom-level	Voluntarily reported by faculty



34

Element 6: Program Review

- Faculty and administration and external stakeholders review each program and academic discipline on an ongoing basis
- Forms basis for Academic planning
- The findings and recommendations of program review are advanced through the college governance process.
- Program review includes:
 - Ongoing annual review and outcome assessment.
 - Extensive review of each program and discipline at least every five years.



35



Element 7: Assessment of Student Services

- Student Services staff and administrators review each unit of student services on an ongoing basis.
- Annual Program Assessment
 - Focus: student outcomes based on their use of the service
- Comprehensive Program Review
 - Focus: the effectiveness of the changes made as a result of annual program assessment
- Both are based on the processes used by programs and disciplines



36



Element 8: College Master Calendar

- Sequence Matters
- generic 12 month calendar
- documents the sequence and interaction of planning, assessment and budgeting processes in relation to key institution decision points such as
 - quarterly plan review meetings
 - board of trustee meetings



37

Element 8: College Master Calendar

	ASSESSMENT	ECONOMIC STIPEND	CAPITAL BUDGET	OPERATING BUDGET	OPERATING PLANNING
Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact book (Bottom Lines) updated • Conduct ACT student survey (on alternating year cycles) 			2) Baseline budget instructions and worksheets sent to campus departments via business offices	Q1 Operating Plan Review
Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin collection of licensure and certification exam data. • Conduct graduate survey (May grads) 		1) Analysis of campus capital outlay requests by budget office	3) The department head completes budget request and justifications and submits it to the business office	
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensure and certification findings available 	CCAC receives PDE decision on September petition	2) Analysis distributed to campuses with worksheets	4) Campus budgets reviewed, possibly modified and approved by campus CEO	
Jan		Enter December list into Datatel	3) Campus process creates prioritized capital requests	5) Campus draft budget finalized	Scorecard Updated Q2 Operating Plan Review



Element 9: Assessment Information System

- Process and document management
- Resources (money and people)
- Inevitable (alternative = managing paper)
- Option did not exist when we began
- Partnership with info tech division of your college



39



Element 10: Committee Structure

- Institutional Assessment Planning Committee
 - focuses on assessment of institutional effectiveness and the development of a comprehensive assessment plan
- Assessment of Student Learning Committee
 - chaired by a faculty member on release time.
 - focuses on learning outcomes
- The committees
 - collaborate where needed
 - have several key members in common
 - have representation from faculty and administration from all CCAC locations.
- Defining committee role in assessment of student services



40

