Montgomery College

Spring 2012

Outcomes Assessment Update

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Questions? E-mail: Outcomes@montgomerycollege.edu

General Education Course Assessment

The College's accreditation agency, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, noted last year that it has been possible for a Montgomery College student to fulfill all general education requirements and graduate without having achieved all general education competencies. In order to bring the College into full compliance with Standard 12 of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the College's General Education Committee and Collegewide Outcomes Assessment Team have reviewed the general education program and have instituted changes to address the issue and to ensure that our general education program is designed so that every student, regardless of whatever general education courses are selected, will achieve general education competency by the time of graduation. Thus, in fall 2012, Montgomery College will implement a revised general education course assessment process. The revised process will ensure that general education competencies are integrated in all general education courses and will provide a systematic structure to demonstrate that the College is assessing and improving student performance in all the competencies.

Beginning in fall 2012, all Foundation and Arts Distribution courses will collect data based on course assessment plans being developed this spring. The other distribution areas will begin developing course assessment plans with data collection coming up over the next three years.

For more information about the revised General Education Assessment plan, including competency coverage, rubrics and data collection schedule, please visit: http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/outcomes/gened. Contact Samantha Veneruso, Nawal Benmouna, or email outcomes@montgomerycollege.edu for any discipline specific questions.

Spring 2012 OA Courses

I.	**Planning phase**	69 General education courses - Foundation and Arts distribution courses Programs and their core courses (more on pg. 4)
II.	**Assessment phase**	11 courses - AC 202, BA 101, EC 201, EC 202, EL 102, EL 110, SP 108, FR 101, GR 101, IT 101, SN 101
III.	**Analysis and Recommendation phase**	12 courses - AC 201, MA116, RD 095, RD 099, AR 101, AN 101, CH100A, EL 101, EL102, HE101, HE 107, MA101
IV.	**Recommendation Implementation**	18 courses - AR 103, BA 101, BI 107, BI 204, EC 201, EL 103, EL 104, FM 103, MA 110, MA 160, MA 182, MU 110, PS 101, PY 102, PY 203, RD 099, RD 103, SO 101

OA Made Simple

1. *Determine learning outcomes*
2. *Align instruction*
3. *Assess outcomes*
4. *Review data*
5. *Recommend changes based on assessment*

More OA information on: www.montgomerycollege.edu/Outcomes

Update on General Studies AA

Currently, the general studies A.A. consists of the College's general education requirements plus free electives, which students could choose without an articulated academic plan. Middle States Commission on Higher Education stated that such a program fails to comply with Standard 11 in two ways.

First, it is entirely possible for a student to complete the program without taking any 200-level courses—a level of rigor inappropriate for an associate's degree. Second, the program lacks the coherence, integration, and synthesis that the commission expects. Middle States was also concerned that it appeared that there was no process to assess the general studies A.A. learning goal that students make connections between what they have learned in the program and their academic plans.

Thus, in fall 2011, the general studies A.A. task force represented by faculty from various disciplines and convened by Dean Carolyn Terry has been designated to lead the review of the program and recommend curriculum changes in order to meet Standard 11 requirements. There is still ongoing discussion regarding the curriculum design, assessment details and the implementation of the revised program. Stay tuned!

Outcomes Assessment…A Blessing or a Curse?

What's your story?

"I hate outcomes assessment!", "Outcomes is a pain in my %*#!", "Why the hell do I have to do this?", "All I want to do is teach and now I *have* to put *these* questions in my exam? Ugh!", "Are they going to fire me because my students did poorly?" These are things that some faculty have thought, heard someone say, or even said themselves. Well, outcomes assessment is here to stay and you *are* required or will be required to do it!

Whether you are teaching a general education class or a class required in a degree program, you care about how your students are performing, but more importantly you care about your effectiveness in the classroom.

Outcomes assessment provides a wonderful platform to enhance our instructive abilities by forcing us to recognize our shortcomings and also celebrate our accomplishments. It provides the opportunity to see how effective we are at doing what we do. It facilitates

discussion amongst colleagues in hopes of making us as individuals better but, more importantly, our institution as a whole.

I write this in effort to solicit comments, suggestions, concerns, whatever you want to throw at us. Send your letters to myself cory.newman@montgomerycollege.edu or to the outcomes assessment mailbox outcomes@montgomerycollege.edu.

Outcomes assessment is here to stay and will become more integral in the future. Let's take advantage of any and all opportunities to become better in our professions. Much more importantly, be the best instructor that you can be for both your students and yourself!

- Cory Newman, OA Cadre, November 2011

Your OA Recommendations: From Words to Actions

Over the past several years since OA started at MC, the OA process has involved (a) developing an assessment plan, (b) implementing that plan to collect data, (c) analyzing that data, and (d) generating recommendations to update aspects of courses and maximize instructional effectiveness. Course groups consider such issues as instructional methods, teaching materials, final exams, and other instructional issues based on OA data and discussion by instructors in participating course groups. However, the next crucial step - acting on recommendations - has been the weakest part of the process. Previously, there was little or no documented evidence of actions taken based on recommendations, or at least, no actions that programs took were shared publicly. In the past few years, however, documented progress reports became part of the process. TracDat became this part of the OA process last year, and now, many reports are accessible online.

Unfortunately, the perceived lack of documented follow-through is still a potentially serious problem for our college. Middle States' evaluation of our assessment process has been less than generous. Lack of demonstrated actions based on recommendations is a critical issue that threatens our college's accreditation.

We need to change Middle States' perception. At this point in OA history at MC, we are expected to document what progress we have made concerning the recommendations, to show our college is in the process of improving teaching and learning. These reports need not be lengthy descriptions, but they must show some attempt at improving our instructional programs. Acting on recommendations and documenting that activity naturally require time beyond teaching and departmental duties. Yet it does not have to—and should not—take too much time. Below are some approaches taken by programs acting on their recommendations.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION SHARING: All faculty in departments must know up front what the OA recommendations are and what impact they could or should have on their classrooms. Information sharing can happen briefly at departmental and course group meetings, through individual discussions, and through short emails. CC'ing colleagues at other campuses is also necessary.
2. COURSE GROUP DISCUSSION: Course group meetings with both full-time and part-time instructors are times for all to contribute ideas as to how to act on the recommendations.
3. SURVEYS: It can be helpful to utilize anonymous surveys, such as the free online Survey Monkey, to ask faculty how faculty are or are not acting on recommendations. Surveys collect information from faculty, but they also share information with respondents. Resulting statistics and comments from faculty can be easily added to OA progress report documentation.
4. NOTES AND JOURNALS: Notes can be gradually collected. This information can be touched up, used as the core of OA documentation, and shared with departments.
5. UPDATES: At departmental meetings, faculty can discuss recommendations and provide updates on actions taken. Again, this should involve faculty at all campuses.

Separately, each method takes little time, but cumulatively, they can help programs accomplish their goals and satisfy their responsibilities to the college. Some faculty must take initiative to do this, but considering how important this is to our college's accreditation, hopefully, those who do so will receive support from colleagues.

As educators, we are doing what we should: check on student progress, advance student learning, and contribute to higher education and the mission of our college. We are in a position to help our college maintain professional accreditation, with obvious implications for our jobs. It is clearly beneficial to act on our recommendations and document that professional progress.

- Mark J. Alves, OA cadre, Feb 2012

2011-12 Status update for OA recommendation is due on May 4, 2012.

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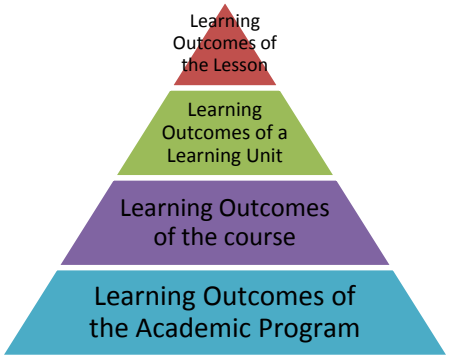
Questions? E-mail: Outcomes@montgomerycollege.edu

Program Outcomes Assessment



In fall 2011, 42 degrees and certificates programs completed a Program-Course Outcomes Alignment Form as required by the College Area Review (CAR) process. This form contains all the program outcomes, program courses, course outcomes, and the general education competencies for each program. Three steps were required to complete the form:

1. Review course outcomes and program outcomes and take any needed curriculum actions
2. Align course outcomes to program outcomes.
3. Identify 1 to 2 core courses that support the program outcomes.

In Spring 2012, the lead deans will appoint faculty workgroups responsible for the courses' assessment identified by on the Outcomes Alignment Form. The faculty workgroup will then conduct OA assessment process for the program outcomes in the following year.

2011-12 disciplines and their lead deans are:

1. Building Trades: Dean Roberts
2. Construction: Dean Roberts
3. Food and Hospitality Management: Dean Bartlett
4. History: Dean Campen
5. Interior Design: Dean Roberts
6. Landscape Technology: Dean Michaelian
7. Physical Education: Dean Pickwick
8. Photography: Dean Preston
9. Physics: Dean Chang
10. American Sign Language: Dean Terry
11. TV-Radio: Dean Preston
12. Women's Studies: Dean Terry

Be proactive in the program outcomes assessment process. Contact the lead deans to join a faculty workgroup.

Professional Development Opportunities

Assessment Expo at Stevenson University, Owing Mills on Friday, March 23. Ms. Linda Suskie is the keynote speaker.

Also, the following professional development opportunities are available via CTL:

- Arts and Aesthetic Awareness Forums
- Personal, Civic, and Social Responsibility Forums
- Developing a General Education Course Assessment Plan
- Using the Montgomery College General Education Rubrics for Learning

Go to CTL webpage at http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/ctl/gened/ to learn more about these opportunities and sign up this spring!