DSAAAC Report, 2010-2011

Estrella Mountain Community College (EMCC)
Submitted by the Student Academic Achievement Committee (SAAC)
Co-chairs: Michelle Breaux (Mathematics Faculty) and Erik Huntsinger
(Economics Faculty)

Executive Summary

The 2010-11 academic year can be best characterized as building on the success established in the prior year. During the 2009-10 academic year, SAAC put into place new ideas and procedures that have been implemented and expanded over this current year, such as the Team EZ form, the general education abilities assessment cycle, and the curriculum-integrated approach to assessing general education abilities.

After the faculty approved the expanded general education abilities in spring 2009, it became necessary to understand which courses focus on these abilities. This has helped us look for gaps in coverage and provide a ready source of likely course participants for future program-wide assessment. In fall 2010 the curriculum mapping initiative began, consisting of a survey distributed to faculty to determine the frequency and level of degree the abilities were taught in their classes.

Also during the 2010-11 academic year, the EMCC residential faculty approved two amendments to the General Education Abilities Matrix. The first change involved splitting Information Literacy and Technological Literacy into their own abilities, instead of combining them as they had been in the previous edition (the faculty were concerned that these were two separate abilities that were artificially combined). The second change to the matrix was the integration of critical thinking into the assessment of all other general education abilities, instead of it being its own ability (the faculty believe that students demonstrate critical thinking when operating at the higher ends of the Bloom's Taxonomy, where they analyze, evaluate, or create, regardless of the ability assessed). There were corresponding changes made to the General Education Abilities Assessment Cycle in order to align it with the changes made to the General Education Abilities Matrix.

According to the revised assessment cycle, EMCC was scheduled to assess two general education abilities during 2010-11, Communication (fall 2010) and Information Literacy (spring 2011). During the prior academic year, with special attention from communication faculty and SAAC member Roselyn "Ro" Turner, SAAC developed a standard communication rubric that was piloted and disseminated to the faculty who assigned formal public speaking presentations in their classes. Rubrics were completed by the instructor as part of the students' grade and returned to the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OPIE) for analysis (see summary findings below for results.)

In fall 2010, with special attention of librarian faculty and SAAC member Terry Meyer, SAAC developed the Information Literacy rubric.   In the subsequent spring 2011 semester, information literacy was assessed across the college. Faculty from across disciplines who assigned papers or projects that required students to use and cite sources participated by providing a copy of each students' bibliography and thesis

statement to Terry Meyer, who assessed each artifact for mastery of the components information literacy (see Summary Findings below for results).

In addition to the assessment of the two general education abilities, SAAC developed assessment tools that will be used in the 2011-12 academic year. For Scientific Inquiry (scheduled for assessment in fall 2011), faculty members will choose to use a common scientific inquiry assignment or create an assignment based on common criteria that will require students to inquire scientifically. With the latter option, instructors are free to develop the specifics of the assignment to be assessed so that it aligns with their course content and students can be awarded grades based on results (this is in alignment with SAAC's philosophy of taking a "curriculum-integrated" approach to assessment as the best way to ensure student complete the assessment to the best of their ability). In fall 2011, instructors will use a standard rubric to assess their students' work, and return the results to OPIE for aggregation and analysis. In addition, SAAC began working on the Social, Civic, and Global (SCG) Responsibility assessment. Similar to the Scientific Inquiry assessment, SCG Responsibility will be assessed through a common rubric but course-appropriate assignments that conform to a set of common criteria.

Assessment didn't just occur at the college level or throughout general education program, but also at the course level too. 62 faculty members began or amended a SAAC EZ form, and 59 faculty members participated in a Team EZ assessment in the Fall 2010 and/or Spring 2011 semester.

SAAC did not stop at developing and coordinating assessment activities during the year; EMCC celebrated the 2nd year of Assessment Awareness Week events, during both the fall 2010 and spring 2011 semester. Events included an ice cream social to discuss assessment results and their implications, the "15 Minutes of Assessment Fame" event where faculty showcase assessment studies that they are conducting, luncheons where faculty discussed how they foster and assess critical thinking in their courses, and an assessment related trivia contest with prizes for winners.

In addition to Assessment Awareness Week, SAAC also promoted the awareness of assessment through their semi-annual Assessment Happens event, held at the beginning of each semester. This is a chance for faculty, administration, and staff to learn about the newest assessment data (and what it means for our teaching and students' learning), as well as the plans for assessment in the coming year.

SAAC launched the updated version of its homepage. The new webpage has the capacity to be updated more frequently, directly by the co-chairs, and contain the most up-to-date information and resources in support of assessment across the college.

Summary of Findings

Communication Assessment – Fall 2010

A total of 392 valid communication assessments were completed in fall 2010 and spring 2011. The fall 2010 sample include 15 sections, representing 9 instructors. The majority of sections included communication and English courses (COM 100, COM225, ENG102, and ENH259); other courses included ARH101, CIS105 and SOC130, ENG/RDG091). See "Communication Ability Fall 2010 Findings" for more details.

Overall students did well on the communication assessment. For sophomore students, only one area in the introduction section "Stating the credibility of the speaker" fell below a 3.0 mean on 0-4 point scale. Both freshmen and sophomore level students were strongest in vocal delivery.

The most challenging sections in the assessment included the "introduction and conclusion" areas requiring higher level thinking. Areas which related the topic to the audience and those leaving lasting impressions proved most challenging. In these areas and others, sophomore students outperformed freshmen by the widest margin. All rubric scores are included as Appendix A.

Information Literacy Assessment – Spring 2011

The Information Literacy assessment comprised 13 unduplicated courses (BIO 105, BIO 160, CIS 105, COM 225, ECN 211/212, EDU 222, ENG101/102, ENH 285, PSY101, PSY 290AB, and SOC 212). The sample included 14 individual instructors who provided student assessment data from 24 sections. A total population of 562 students provided 346 valid assessments. Course delivery mode for the valid assessments showed 71% of students in a face-to-face setting, 14% internet, and 15% in hybrid. Students of freshman status represented nearly 68% of assessed participants and sophomores 32%.

In the spring 2011, Estrella Mountain assessed student information literacy ability across the college using an Information Literacy rubric. The assessment occurred in classes where research assignments (essays, projects, presentations, etc.) were used. Participating instructors sent a copy of the students' main idea/thesis and bibliography to librarian Terry Merry who assessed each artifact for mastery of the information literacy components using the rubric.

The Information Literacy rubric assessed four common areas: a) *framing the research question*, b) *assessing sources*, c) *evaluation of information resources* and d) *create original work*. A score of one, two, or three was assigned each area (3=exceeds 2 = meets 1=below standards). Overall, students performed well in *framing the research question* and *create original work* assessments with a good majority exceeding or meeting expectations. Performance on *assessing sources* and *evaluation of information resources* indicated approximately one in three students not meeting standards. Overall, sophomore students performed better than freshman in all assessment categories.

Overall the fall 2011 semester, the Information Resources Division will be doing further in-depth analyses of the assessment information collected. The faculty will hold discussions about the implications of these findings for teaching, learning, and recommendations for college budget allocations.

<u>Course Level Assessment</u>
EMCC is entering into its second year of offering faculty two methods for tracking assessment data online, either using the SAAC EZ form or TEAM EZ form. The traditional SAAC EZ form is suited for individual faculty who plan on completing a terminal semester-to-semester assessment within a particular course. The Team EZ form allows for more collaboration and tracking of multiple semester of data collection and analysis. It also provides the flexibility to assess across multiple sections of a course, across multiple courses within a division, or even across divisions for courses in learning communities.

The SAAC co-chairs continued to work with individuals and divisions on campus to help identify collaborative assessment projects and train them on how to use the Team EZ form. During 2010-11, 62 faculty began or amended a SAAC EZ form, and 59 faculty members participated in a Team EZ assessment in the Fall 2010 and/or Spring 2011 semester. Disciplines as diverse as Chemistry, Art, and Mathematics and EMT Training used the Team EZ form to document assessment across semesters and across instructors. For example, an assessment was documented for a learning community between MAT092 (Introduction to Algebra) and CPD150 (Strategies for College Success).

Highlights
<u>Program Review</u>
Estrella Mountain Community College has fully implemented a new Program Review process for all academic, occupational, student services, and operational divisions to review their program or service area in relation to the institutional mission and strategic directions. Program Review highlights the importance of assessment through specific questions in the program review template that focus on student learning outcomes, program alignment with the General Education Abilities Matrix, and course level assessment through the use of SAAC EZ and Team EZ forms. Program Review not only provides the basis for division planning, but the results for all college Program Reviews are evaluated and discussed at the annual August Leadership Retreat. Findings from the retreat are identified and prioritized as institutional action items for college-wide planning and the Budget Development Process.

<u>Building a Learning College, Strategic Directions & SAAC</u>
Creating a Culture of Assessment continues to be a strategic direction within EMCC's strategic plan. EMCC is committed to "assessing and documenting learning outcomes across divisions that result in strategies to improve learning."

The priorities related to that commitment are:
- Strengthen assessment of learning outcomes at the college, program, and course level to ensure accountability and continuous improvement

- Integrate learning college principles in program evaluation processes
- Incorporate community and student input as part of the assessment process

The SAAC co-chairs worked to accomplish the current strategies and objectives and also update the existing strategies and objectives with input from campus leaders.   The new and modified strategies and objectives relate to increasing awareness of assessment efforts on campus and obtaining student feedback.

Community and Student Input
To ensure that all constituent groups have input regarding assessment at EMCC, SAAC has done the following:
1. In fall 2010, in conjunction with Student Life, SAAC held an "Assessment Week Forum", to educate students on the purpose and ways we assess student learning at EMCC, and to seek feedback on how well this is meeting their needs and expectations.
2. Produced the Assessment Happens Newsletters (in conjunction with the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness) to communicate assessment efforts, results, and plans to across the college.
3. Held campus-wide Assessment Happens events at the beginning of both the fall 2009 and spring 2010 semesters.
4. Held Assessment Awareness Week on campus to promote awareness of and participation in assessment activities on campus in both fall 2010 and spring 2011 and to seek feedback from constituents.
5. Participated in campus leadership meetings such as Faculty Senate, Leadership Council, and the Budget Development and Steering Team (BDST).

Preparing for the Future
During the 2010-11 academic year, SAAC took steps to develop the assessment tools that the faculty will use to assess Scientific Inquiry (Fall 2011) and SCG Responsibility (Spring 2012). The plan is to give enough time for faculty to provide feedback on the tools and to plan accordingly for them in their upcoming semester's syllabus.

Assessment Awareness Week and Assessment Happens
During the weeks of September 20th, 2010 and April 4th, 2011 EMCC celebrated Assessment Awareness Week, which included a wide range of activities targeted at students, staff, and faculty to increase the awareness of the importance of assessment of student learning, and to share examples and results of assessment occurring across the campus. Some of the activities that occurred during assessment awareness weeks this academic year include
- Assessment Forum with students
- Luncheon discussing critical thinking in the classroom
- Ice cream social reviewing and discussing communication assessment results
- "15 Minutes of Assessment Fame"- showcase of faculty assessment projects.

- Assessment Open House, where faculty can find ready assistance on any assessment projects they wish to develop.
- Assessment trivia quiz

In addition to the weekly assessment events, SAAC sponsored our regular pre-semester "Assessment Happens" event for all faculty members and administration, including complimentary refreshments. This is a time for faculty members to be updated on assessment data and assessment projects occurring during the upcoming academic year.

New Website

The college website system was completely redesigned for the 2010-11 academic year, which gave SAAC an opportunity to revamp its online face to students, staff, faculty members, and the broader community. The new website will allow more timely updates, more documentation of assessment tools and results for added transparency. The website could be found at
http://www.estrellamountain.edu/employees/committees/saac.

2010-11 SAAC Co-chairs and Members

Faculty Co-Chairs: Erik Huntsinger (Economics Faculty) & Michelle Breaux (Math Faculty)

Members:
Terry Meyer (Library Faculty Representative)
Becky Baranowski (Math, Physics, & Engineering Division Chair)
Polly Miller (CTL Faculty Representative)
Stephanie Fujii (Counseling Faculty Representative)
Valerie Akuna (Instructional Computing Representative)
Bronwen Steele (Science Division Chair)
Susan Malmo (Arts, Composition, & Literature Representative)
Pete Turner (Occupational Education Representative)
Roselyn "Ro" Turner (Behavioral Sciences and Cultural Studies Representative)
Bryan Tippett (Vice President of Academic Affairs)
Sylvia Orr (Dean of Academic Affairs)
Joyce Jackson (Dean of Academic Affairs)
Marianne Smith (OYO Math Faculty)
Kerry Mitchell (Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness)
Rene Willekens Dean of Planning, Research and Effectiveness
Sandy Hill (Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness)