Self-Study Launches at ‘Training Camp’

Inspired by a speech given by retired Detroit Tigers’ broadcaster Ernie Harwell at the Fall Semester Kickoff Breakfast, the Communications and Logistics Subcommittees incorporated a baseball theme into Monroe County Community College’s official Higher Learning Commission Self-Study launch event on October 9. Faculty and staff members – many outfitted in baseball garb – chewed Big League Chew bubble gum and clapped Thunderstick® as they listened to “pre-season speeches” and Self-Study Subcommittee “scouting reports.” Most of the action took place in the Dining Room, which was transformed into a ballpark complete with scoreboards, dugouts, bases and memorabilia of America’s Pastime.

▲Vinnie Maltese addresses the crowd as Cheryl Johnston and Babe Ruth look on. Maltese, Johnston and Paul Knollman are co-chairs of the Criterion Three Subcommittee, Mission and Integrity.

▲Faculty and staff members clap their Thunderstick® as the Self-Study Steering Committee lineups are introduced.

▲Tiffany Wright shows off the latest technology in protective headgear. Wright is co-chair, along with Tracy Vogt, of the Federal Requirements/Compliance Subcommittee.
Meet the Self-Study Steering Team
The Monroe County Community College Higher Learning Commission Self-Study Steering Team is made up of Co-Chairs Dr. David Waggoner and Suzanne Wetzel; Co-Editors Dr. John Holladay and Lori Jo Couch; Ex-Officio members Timothy Bennett, Dr. David Nixon and Dr. Grace Yackee; Recording Secretary Connie Zarb; HLC Liaison Dr. Karen Solomon; and 10 subcommittees. The co-chairs and charges of those subcommittees are outlined below.

Criterion One: Mission and Integrity
Co-Chairs: Lynne Goldsmith, Barbara McNamee and Dr. Joanna Sabo
Charge: Provide evidence that the college’s mission embraces the concept of a diverse community and a global economy. In addition, show that staff, faculty, students, administrators, the Board of Trustees and community members understand the mission and work together with the highest integrity to fulfill it.

Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future
Co-chairs: Randell Daniels and Cheryl McKay
Charge: Utilize both new and existing data to illustrate how MCCC is positioning itself for the future. The HLC is interested in stability, effectiveness and continuous improvement. The goal for the Criterion Two team is to demonstrate how the college will fulfill its mission by establishing a framework for planning, evaluating and strengthening quality in the years to come.

Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching
Co-Chairs: Cheryl Johnston, Paul Knollman and Vinnie Maltese
Charge: Focus on how the college fulfills its mission as an institution of higher learning by detailing how it assesses learning outcomes, supports effective teaching, creates a positive learning environment and provides learning resources for students and faculty.

Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge
Co-Chairs: Dr. Terri Kovach and Brian Lay
Charge: Outline the institution’s commitment to the long-term goal of a life of learning. This includes the college’s internal needs for professional development for its staff, faculty and administration. Criterion Four also addresses the curriculum-wide goal of fostering an attitude toward independent learning on the part of students.

Criterion Five: Engagement and Service
Co-Chairs: James Blumberg, Thomas Harrill and Sandy Kosyna
Charge: Examine how MCCC, according to its mission statement, identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Federal Requirements/Compliance
Co-Chairs: Tracy Vogt and Tiffany Wright
Charge: Assemble and report data for various aspects of compliance, including credits, program length and tuition; institutional compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act; student complaints; advertising and recruitment; federal compliance at off-campus sites; and other professional accreditation.

Resource Room/Data Management
Co-Chairs: Beth Kohler, Steve Mapes, James Ross and Cindy Yonovich
Charge: Provide information and data storage support for the Self-Study Steering Team and each of the Self-Study subcommittees.

Communication
Co-Chairs: Lana Shryock and Joe Verkennes
Charge: Keep the MCCC community informed about where the college is in the Self-Study Process and communicate as-needed with the general public. Handle internal and external communications for the Self-Study Steering Team.

Logistics
Co-Chairs: Penny Bodell and Laurel Johnston
Charge: Arrange for the logistical needs of the visiting HLC Team when they arrive in Monroe, including hotel accommodations, transportation to and from campus, meals and special equipment for after-hour work sessions. In addition, the Logistics Subcommittee also plans, coordinates and executes other HLC-related activities as needed by the Self-Study Steering Team.

Human Resources
Co-Chairs: Molly McCutchan and Penny Naber
Charge: As the responsibilities and functions of the Office of Human Resources are interwoven throughout the five HLC criterion and Federal Compliance, the Human Resources Subcommittee will provide examples of evidence to applicable criterion core components. The human resources function plays a role across all the criteria to assure that staff and faculty service contributes to the institution’s mission/effectiveness. In addition, through the analysis of evidence support/delivery, The Human Resources Subcommittee will help to develop a structured assessment design process that is continuous.
A study in quality assurance, the Higher Learning Commission’s Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) Self-Study involves identifying, gathering and analyzing evidence that assures that Monroe County Community College meets the five PEAQ criteria for re-accreditation.

The 2009 Self-Study is also about collaboration, and the Resource Room/Data Management subcommittee plans to team up with each of the Self-Study subcommittees to provide information and data storage support. Generating institutional data (e.g., student retention rates), researching data sources (e.g., meeting minutes, population trend summaries) and even scanning paper documents into data files are all part of the charge. The subcommittee also plans to create an online resource room that offers the Self-Study Team point-and-click access to a pool of essential data resources that will make the case for re-accreditation.

Initially, two subcommittees with overlapping goals, the combined Resource Room/Data Management subcommittee includes co-chairs Beth Kohler, Steve Mapes, Jim Ross and Cindy Yonovich, as well as Beth Waldvogel and Dan Hamman. Also contributing are data consultants Paul Schmidt, Tim Bennett, Grace Yackee and Randy Daniels; Mark Spenoso, who is assisting with scanning services; and Sue McKee, who created the online data request form used by the Self-Study Team. Finally, the committee would like to extend many thanks in advance to future data consultants on campus who will be asked to supply information in the months ahead.
A Time to Reflect,  
An Opportunity to Participate
By Dr. Grace Yackee  
Ex-Officio, HLC Self-Study Steering Team

The new criteria for accreditation require Higher Learning Commission member institutions to look forward rather than back when documenting evidence of maintaining accredited status. At the same time, the HLC Self-Study process provides a valuable opportunity to reflect upon the many changes and challenges that have occurred at Monroe County Community College since the last visit from the HLC in 1999 and describe their impact on institutional functioning and stability now and into the future.

The self-study process at Monroe County Community College promises to be inclusive and wide-reaching by providing opportunities for all college constituents to evaluate and affirm our continued commitment to educational excellence. Presented here is an opportunity to “touch” the Self-Study. Since the last HLC visit there have been several developments in organizational structure, leadership, personnel, curriculum, facilities, technology and resources that will continue to impact our work. Please forward your observations and comments regarding significant changes in these areas to me at gyackee@monroeccc.edu. Feel free to suggest additional categories.

Organizational Changes: organization, reporting lines, structure
Examples:
Security moved from the Business Office to Student and Information Services; Distance Learning moved from Student and Information Systems to Instruction

Personnel Changes: positions, people
Examples: new administrators, faculty, support staff and maintenance staff; new faculty coordinator for teaching and learning position

Curriculum Changes: programs, certificates, significant course activations/deactivations; significant change in degree requirements; significant change in general education requirements
Example: reactivation of certified nursing assistant course

Facilities and Infrastructure Changes: new buildings, renovations, remodeling
Example: science labs; La-Z-Boy Center; remodeling restrooms for ADA compliance

Technology Changes: technology enhancements
Example: wireless Main Campus and Whitman Center; server upgrades

Resource Changes: funding, grants, natural resources
Example: Upward Bound grant award; reduction in state financial support