

## **Institutional Effectiveness Summary Report 2001-2002**

The Technical College of the Lowcountry, Beaufort, South Carolina, has a formal process for assessing student learning outcomes and the effectiveness of various administrative and educational support units and programs. Each Spring faculty and staff members identify the various student learning outcomes and support programs to be assessed during the following academic year. The following Spring the program faculties and unit managers each complete an Institutional Effectiveness summary report. The summary reports – all of which are written using a common format -- identify the student outcomes or support programs assessed, the means used to assess them, and the results of the assessment.

The college reports the results of the Institutional Effectiveness assessments in several ways. The Planning and Research office compiles all of the summaries into a formal college-wide Institutional Effectiveness (IE) report, binds it, and makes it available. Results of IE activities are used to support budget requests. In addition, due to State requirements, portions of selected summary reports are submitted to CHE and posted to the college's web page. Those portions required for year 2001-2002 are below.

### **GENERAL EDUCATION**

The College Transfer program provides the student with the first two years of college or university work. Students in this program can earn an Associate in Arts (AA) or Associate in Science (AS) degree. Transfer blocks also facilitate transfer when a student can identify a particular field of study in which he/she is interested. Included under the umbrella of the Associate of Arts degree are transfer blocks for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; General Education and Business; Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education. Included under the umbrella of the Associate of Science degree are transfer blocks for Science and Math and Engineering. Students completing the requirements for an AA or AS degree or one of the transfer blocks will be prepared to transfer to a senior institution to complete a baccalaureate degree. In addition, the General Education certificate is also included in the college transfer area and the arts and science courses provide the general education requirements in support of degree programs offered through other academic divisions.

#### **Assessment**

The assessment of competencies utilizes multiple measures including the following: Core Course Enrollment/Completion data, comparison of delivery methods, student evaluation of courses and instructors, class size and retention, graduate placement and follow-up, and graduation rates.

#### **Findings**

In summary, the General Education/transfer program at TCL received positive, substantive scores on a number of measurements for 2001-2002. Core course completions, SUMMA Data System information, transfer rates, graduate placement and follow up data, comparisons of course delivery methods, and other measures indicate that the program is making progress, effectively meeting students needs.

#### **Changes**

The Arts and Sciences faculty identified the following program/service changes based on the results of the assessment outcomes.

- Need to address placement and retention issues
- Need to study course competencies/prerequisites skills needed for each content sequences and/or related courses; for example, ENG 032 (and its related lab 012) to ENG 100 to ENG 101 to ENG 102 to higher level courses
- Develop/implement assessment plan for institutional competencies
- Identify best delivery strategy for all courses offered
- Continue to monitor syllabi to insure all courses/instructors have common objectives and course components
- Continue to track post-TCL education enrollment/activity

### **MAJORS AND CONCENTRATIONS**

The Technical College of the Lowcountry does not offer any majors or concentrations in the CHE-specified reporting areas this year.

### **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

For several years TCL has relied on a two-tiered system for academic advising. New students were tested (using Compass, Asset and other standard tests), advised, and registered for their first term of classes by the college's student services staff. Transfers in, continuing students, and others were advised and registered by their assigned faculty adviser.

During the Spring term, 2000, Student Services and Academic Affairs jointly decided to assign all new students directly to a faculty adviser for advising and registration once Compass, Asset and other standard testing is complete. In that way, the new student might be better informed of the rigors and requirements of their chosen academic programs.

### Assessment

During 2001-2002 several methods were used to assess the success the advising change. First, the college administered an advisor availability survey to all students registered for classes. This would help determine student satisfaction with the new system, particularly advisor availability. Second, during the Summer and Fall terms, the Student Development staff informally reviewed probation lists and interviewed faculty advisors to help determine the success of new students in their first term course work.

### Findings

The survey revealed no difference in student satisfaction between the old system and the new. More than 90 percent of students indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their academic advising, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the new system.

There was an increase in the number of students on probation following Fall term, compared with the previous Fall term. Student service staff members identified two reasons for the increase. First, newer faculty members were not always aware of course prerequisites and testing requirements needed for course entrance, hence sometimes did not advise new students on a consistent basis. Second, TCL's computer system during academic year did not effectively screen for prerequisites or pre-test scores, hence students sometimes were not notified when they registered for courses for which they were not prepared.

### Changes

The new Datatel system has been programmed to ensure course sequences, prerequisites, and pre-test scores are considered during the faculty advisement/registration process. In addition, some pre-test qualifying scores are being reconsidered.

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## ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM TWO TO FOUR YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) has an effective college transfer program featuring the A.A. and A.S. degrees and articulation agreements with colleges throughout the state and region. However, the number of TCL students actually transferring to South Carolina senior public colleges remains small. The reasons:

- 75% are part time
- the average age, term by term, ranges from 28 to 30
- nearly 50 % are married or single parents
- 16 % are active duty military or their dependents, hence can be transferred anywhere in the world
- the nearest campus of a S.C. public senior college, the College of Charleston, is 90 or more miles away
- two public senior universities in Savannah (Armstrong Atlantic and Savannah State) are within 50 miles
- the tuition charged at these two Georgia universities is substantially less than charged by the closest S.C. public college, the College of Charleston
  - CoC tuition for Fall term, 2002, is \$2278 (instate)
  - Armstrong Atlantic Spring term 2002 tuition is \$1157 for Beaufort and Jasper county students; no Fall fees yet announced
  - Savannah State Fall term tuition is \$1314 for Beaufort and Jasper county students

### Assessment

The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) required each of the public four year colleges in South Carolina to provide information on the number of applications for admission they received for the Fall term, 2001, from students wishing to transfer from the State's two year colleges. The colleges also provided comparative Grade Point Average (GPA) data. The table below is a compilation of data for TCL.

Institution: Technical College of the Lowcountry										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Four year institution (student transferred to)	Total Transfer Applications	Total # Students Accepted	Total # Students Rejected	# Student Applications Incomplete	Total # Students Enrolled	% Applied who Enrolled	% Completing Applications and Accepted	% Accepted who Enrolled	GPA of TCL Transfers	GPA of Native First time Fall 2001 Students
The Citadel	1	1				0	100	0		

<b>Clemson</b>	2	1		1	1	50	100	100	2.46	2.34
<b>Coastal Carolina</b>										
<b>College of Charleston</b>										
<b>Frances Marion</b>	1			1	0	0	0	0		
<b>Lander</b>										
<b>South Carolina State</b>	8	6	1	1	3	37.5	85.7	50	2.46	2.39
<b>USC - Aiken</b>	5	3	1	1	1	20	75	33	2.63	3.00
<b>USC - Columbia</b>	22	7	6	9	0	0	53.8	0		
<b>USC - Spartanburg</b>	1	1			0	0	100	0		
<b>Winthrop</b>	1	1			1	100	100	100	1.13	2.18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>71.4</b>	<b>51.3</b>		
(1) Total Fall 2001 two-year college, first-time transfer applications, including complete and incomplete										
(2) Of total number of students having applied in Col. (1), the number accepted (excludes incomplete applications)										
(3) Of total number of students having applied in Col. (1), the number rejected (excludes incomplete applications)										
(4) Of the total number of students having applied in Col. (1), the number of applications never fully processed or completed										
Columns (2) + (3) + (4) = Column (1)										
(7) Of the total number of students having been accepted and rejected in Fall 2001 -- columns (2) + (3) -- the percentage accepted										

### Findings

The Technical College of the Lowcountry has few students who wish to transfer to senior level institutions in South Carolina. This pattern is consistent with the overall age of the student body, their stated goals, and the proximity of four year colleges in nearby Savannah, Georgia. Of those who apply, 68% complete the application process and, of those who complete applications, 71.4 percent are accepted for admission. Again, however, of those who were admitted to South Carolina public colleges, only 30% actually enrolled, because of the distance and cost factors.

### Results

Faculty advisors will continue to provide information to students about four year college opportunities at state-supported institutions in South Carolina. Renewed emphasis will be made on assisting those students to complete all application requirements. The change in status of USC-B to a four year institution should improve the in-state transfer rate for TCL graduates. [back to top](#)

## PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

The Technical College of the Lowcountry provides a comprehensive set of student services in line with the the college's staffing, funding, and student body size. Each of these services is evaluated every year, in an effort to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness to student and prospective student needs. The ASSET/Compass program helps determine individual needs and abilities of students in order to place them in appropriate level courses. The primary purpose of the assessment is to match the academic readiness of the student with the academic requirements of the curriculum.

### Assessment

The current assessment study consists of implementing strategies that contribute to the quality of life and learning for students by a) revising the new student orientation program and b) reviewing data collected through ASSET/Compass to expand abilities to identify and track students needs and initiate strategies for success.

A revised student orientation program was designed to increase participation rate and provide students with valuable

information and resources vital to their college success. Student surveys, input from Student Service professionals, and assessment results highlight success and identify areas of improvement.

**Findings**

New strategies were implemented to increase student participation rate for the fall student orientation program. Orientation 2001 program participation rate resulted in an 8% increase as compared to the 2000 orientation program. The survey results indicated that 95% of the students were satisfied with the program and rated the information presented as excellent. However, students also reported informally that they were confused because the online orientation session and new student orientation were held on the same day but at different times which could have had a negative impact on the attendance of the Orientation 2001 program since it was scheduled an hour earlier than the Online Orientation session.

**Changes**

The revised format of the new student orientation was a success but the planning committee should include more representation from the college community including students and faculty. A survey needs to be conducted of new students to determine not only the best time for the program but also what additional information students would like to see included as part of the program. [back to top](#)

**LIBRARY RESOURCES**

The Learning Resources Center assists in the fulfillment of the mission of the Technical College of the Lowcountry through its support of the intellectual and cultural environment of the College, and provides information resources and services to meet the curricula, research, and self-development needs of students, faculty, staff, and community. Through this philosophy the Learning Resources Center reflects the educational purpose of the College and functions as an integral part of the learning process.

**Assessment**

The LRC uses several assessment instruments, including user surveys, to obtain input. Data on satisfaction with library resources from student course evaluations is an especially useful assessment. The LRC also maintains a suggestion book for library users to make constructive comments or suggestions for improvement. In addition, the LRC receives input from academic departments at regular meetings of the Academic Management Committee.

**Findings**

Comparison of the assignments survey to one performed in 1997-98 shows an increase from 30.8 to 33.7 in the percentage of TCL courses having some library research assignment. The percentage of distance learning courses with library assignments has declined in the same period from 57.8% to 41.6%. This probably reflects the huge growth in Internet courses, many of which are in curriculum areas which typically do not require library assignments. This percentage will probably increase as more general education courses become available online. Review of current library assignments from syllabi show that about 31.8% of the library assignments were for research papers, about 45.4% for written or oral projects, about 16.6% for reserve reading, and about 6% for other.

Because of changes in the methodology for collecting information through the course evaluation process, students were not surveyed during this year regarding overall satisfaction with library and computer lab services. Data reported last year remain the most current.

Students remain satisfied with LRC orientations, which are conducted primarily for English 101, secondly for English 100 & 102, and also for other departments as needed.

The Orientation's Purpose was explained prior to the class:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Total	68	64	3	2	137
Percent	50%	47%	2%	1%	
The Librarian appeared knowledgeable					
Total	97	44			141
Percent	69%	31%	0%	0%	
The Librarian was well prepared					
Total	97	46			143
Percent	68%	32%	0%	0%	

<b>The presentation was well organized</b>					
Total	87	55			142
Percent	61%	39%	0%	0%	
<b>The amount of material covered was appropriate</b>					
Total	77	63	1		141
Percent	55%	45%	0%	0%	
<b>The length of the orientations was appropriate:</b>					
Totals	71	66	3		140
Percent	51%	47%	2%	0%	
<b>The overall quality of the session was high</b>					
Totals	79	59	2		140
Percent	56%	42%	1%	0%	

### Changes

While analysis of library assignments did not provide any clear directions for collection development, review of course syllabi shows that faculty are increasingly aware of Internet resources, and are expecting students to make use of them. Based on this, and also because of direct student feedback, the college has improved access to periodical databases by providing easy links from the LRC web page. Most, but not yet all, of TCL databases are accessible from off campus with the use of a password. E-books from NetLibrary have also been added to the collection making it easier for students who are unable to come to campus to obtain needed resources.

A new DRA automation system has been implemented through membership with the SCILS Consortium, which includes 9 other South Carolina Technical Colleges. This new system provides better tracking of overdue items and delinquent patrons, and also provides extensive report capability. A new online catalog is also available as part of the system. Both changes to circulation status and the addition of new items are available on the web/public access catalog within 24 hours. Currently the college is running the old and the new systems simultaneously so that we may close all transactions on the old system and put all current transactions on the new DRA system.

Because only partial funding of the DRA/SCILS conversion costs was available and because of significantly increased costs in some subscription and database services, it was necessary to reduce book expenditures approximately \$7,000 from the preceding year.

Although the LRC will receive a state ITT grant of \$6,250 to defray the cost of transitioning from the DRA Classic to the successor SIRSI library system, any cost in excess of that will have to be borne by the LRC. Current estimate is approximately \$2,500 (level 3).

The current fiscal emergency plan (10% cut) for the LRC calls for another year of drastically reduced book expenditures. The fact that it is hard to document the effect of such reductions on student achievement does not mean that there are no effects. Students will have to "make do" with fewer and less current materials. [back to top](#)

### Policies and Procedures to Provide a "Technologically Skilled Workforce"

The CHE-approved mission statement of the Technical College of the Lowcountry emphasizes the important role the college plays in the economic development of the state and the Lowcountry region:

#### Our Mission

The Technical College of the Lowcountry is one of sixteen colleges comprising the South Carolina Technical and Comprehensive Education System. Tracing its origin to the Mather School founded in 1868, the Technical College of the Lowcountry is a rural, comprehensive, public two-year college dedicated to serving the diverse educational needs of

Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties.

An open admissions institution, the College annually serves approximately 5,000 credit and continuing education students representing a mix of traditional, nontraditional, full time, and part time students. The Technical College of the Lowcountry provides quality affordable transfer and career programs leading to Associate Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates in an environment conducive to achieving excellence in teaching and learning. The College serves as an effective partner in economic and human resource development in the Lowcountry by offering vocational and technical education, including programs in industrial technology, business, public service, and health sciences; general education; developmental education; career development; specialized courses for business and industry; continuing education; and community service.

Committed to quality, affordable instruction, the Technical College of the Lowcountry offers comprehensive student development services in support of its educational programs and services to all who seek to better their lives through education. The College prepares graduates with knowledge and skills for careers in industrial technology, business, health science, and public service and for transfer to senior colleges and universities. In addition to responding to local and regional needs, the College recognizes that state, national, and international issues affect the lives of the citizens of the Lowcountry and has responded to these issues by developing alliances with state, national, and international organizations.

In an open atmosphere of shared values, the College encourages creativity, innovation, and resourcefulness among its students, faculty, staff, and administrators. With a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, the Technical College of the Lowcountry creates a positive, student-centered environment. The College empowers individuals by enabling them to learn and to develop throughout their lifetimes.