

**Florida Community College at Jacksonville  
AAC&U Institute 2008  
Final Report**

**Team Members**

- Christopher Twiggs -- Communications
- Bill Meisel -- Mathematics
- Andrea Thaxton – Humanities
- Patricia Bell – Social and Behavioral Sciences
- Maria Oehler – Natural Sciences
- Ron Wolf –Workforce
- Nancy Yurko – Liberal Arts and Sciences

***What are the team's specific curricular, pedagogical and/or process plans once it returns to campus for advancing the project worked on at the Institute?***

***In particular, how does the team plan to share the knowledge, insights and/or process plans once it returns to campus for advancing the project worked on at the Institute?***

In 2007, Florida Community College at Jacksonville sent a faculty team to the AAC&U Institute in Rhode Island to lead a General Education Assessment initiative for the College. The team became the core mentors of the General Education Assessment Taskforce which addressed developing a College-wide plan that would not only meet the needs of accountability to state legislators and our accrediting body, but would also help guide the College into a culture of assessment for program improvement. During the academic year, the Taskforce sponsored multiple professional development workshops for faculty and staff on models, rubric development, and in particular, assessment of communication skills. A draft of an overall plan for General Education assessment was developed for submission to a state-wide taskforce this summer. This plan included not only the area of communication skills, but also did a preliminary review of the other four areas of General Education competencies identified by the state - critical thinking, information literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and global sociocultural responsibility.

One of the College's goals for the 2008-2009 academic year is to complete the planning stages of assessment of these four other areas as well as to implement at least three pilot projects for the assessment of communication skills. To carry out this ambitious plan, a clear need for additional faculty who possess the knowledge of, and commitment to, authentic assessment was recognized.

The faculty team sent this year to the Institute have been eager to assimilate the knowledge presented and now are looking forward to integrating with the existing Taskforce and enhancing their work. In light of the presentations on planning for successful assessment projects and discriminating between measurable and

immeasurable outcomes, the team has reviewed the drafts of definitions and outcomes associated with the four additional competency areas. While all are representative of the traits the faculty value in our students, the team noted that additional work would be needed to make them more concrete and enable faculty to derive useful information from their assessment for program improvement.

The team also recognized the value of information given on the critical aspects of transparency of assessment planning and the need for mechanisms of consensus building to ensure a desirable outcome for their work. There was extensive discussion on the scope of faculty involvement during the previous academic year in the Gen. Ed. assessment process. While many of the professional development sessions on general aspects of assessment and models of assessment were well attended by faculty from both the Liberal Arts and Workforce areas of the College, many fewer were actually involved in the process of defining the areas of General Education competencies and developing the rubrics for communication.

Since evidence for levels of competency may ultimately be drawn from any discipline for program or College-wide assessment, dissemination of information to the maximum number of faculty, both full-time and adjunct, will be one of the most important tasks for the team as the project moves forward. The team was deliberately drawn from faculty who represent each of the five areas of General Education and the Workforce programs at the College, and who also represent multiple campuses. They plan to take advantage of this geographic and discipline-based diversity to enhance this communication.

Upon returning to the College, a meeting will be arranged between the newly minted Assessment Mentors and their more seasoned counterparts on the existing Taskforce to debrief from the Institute and discuss the plan to address faculty during discipline meetings at convocation in August. The campus-based organization of the College is such that these discipline meetings are often the sole opportunity for faculty to hear of current initiatives and respond as a collective entity. These meetings will serve as a personal invitation by respected faculty for involvement in the efforts.

A regular schedule of Taskforce meetings has already been developed for the next academic year, including College-wide professional development opportunities. It is anticipated that these meetings will result in the genesis of workgroups to address the revision of the outcomes for the four remaining General Education areas and rubric development for each. The products of these workgroups will be distributed to all faculty for their review, input, and revision.

The team has already committed to involvement in the pilot programs for assessment of communication skills. Included in these pilots is a venture into the use of e-portfolios as both a mechanism for evidence collection and an outlet for student self-confidence and creativity. Other pilots may include course-embedded or capstone experiences. Capstones have already been planned for certain workforce programs.

The newly expanded General Education Assessment Taskforce will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the review and revision of outcomes for critical thinking, information literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning and global sociocultural responsibility
- Overseeing the implementation of pilot programs for assessment of communication skills
- Developing the mechanisms for analysis of any data collected during this time period
- Sharing the data and the analysis with the General Education subcommittee of the
- Curriculum committee, from which it derives its charge
- Sharing the data and analysis with the faculty at large and ultimately, the upper-level administration through the Assessment webpage already developed
- Forwarding any proposed curriculum changes resulting from these efforts to the General Education subcommittee for preparation of formal items
- The office of the Associate Vice President for Liberal Arts and Sciences will take responsibility for support functions for the effort including:
  - Garnering administrative support including reassigned time where necessary
  - Coordinating technology support to include the maintenance of the Assessment Website
  - Providing updated information on the State-wide Taskforce criteria for General Education accountability
  - Providing the services of a research analyst for assistance with research design and data analysis
  - Providing assistance in acquiring consultants for faculty professional development opportunities
  - Reporting of data to State and SACS
- Developing resources and strategies for sustainability of year-round assessment efforts
- The Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) and Florida Community
- College University (FCCU) will be responsible for the professional development aspects of the project including:
  - Assessment workshops for new faculty
  - Workshops on effective use of rubrics and development of inter-rater reliability
  - Other workshops as needed