Midlands Technical College

Introduction

This summary report for Midlands Technical College includes: Majors or Concentrations, Academic Advising, Achievement of Students Transferring From Two-to-Four Year Institutions and Procedures for Student Development.

The following components will be reported in the annotated year: General Education (2002) and Library Resources and Services (2002).

1. General Education

This component was last reported in 1998. Based on the report schedule, this component will be reported next in 2002.

2. Majors or Concentrations

Midlands Technical College (MTC) assesses specific majors on a three-to-five year cycle that typically coincides with self-studies and visits from external accreditation agencies. The assessment of majors determines the degree to which specific programs provide specialized knowledge, skills, and attitudes leading to employment in the field or discipline and/or success in a transfer senior-level program.

The program review process, which generates the assessment of majors, includes an analysis of the specific data elements identified to evaluate the effectiveness and the efficiency of programs at MTC. The effectiveness component of the process focuses on the learning outcomes, clients' satisfaction, and the vitality of each program. The efficiency component focuses on quantitative data that indicates the program cost, the space utilization rates, and the section size of courses.

In 1998-1999, the following five programs were assessed: Dental Hygiene (DHG), Dental Assisting (DTA), Nuclear Medicine (NMT), Practical Nursing (PNR), and Radiologic Technology (RAD). A follow-up on the progress in meeting recommendations from completed program reviews revealed the following program improvements:

(1)   installed the Thompson Dental Company Management software in the Dental Clinic that enables students in the Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting programs to utilize intraoral camera photo captures.

(2)   incorporated additional computer skills into the Nuclear Medicine curriculum.

(3)   implemented a Volunteer Program to provide additional clinical practice for students in the Radiologic Technology program.

(4)   upgraded the curriculum in the LPN program to include the study of Maternal Infant Nursing (PNR 150) and the Nursing Care of Children (PNR 160).

(5)   conducted training for the LPN adjunct faculty on "Using Technology in the Classroom."

(6)   provided a "Nurses Day" program for service area high school students. This program provided the high school students with hands-on experiences with various practice situations in the LPN program.

(7)   developed and distributed a LPN information packet to local area high school counselors.

Academic Council participated in a workday to review the entire program review process. This included a review of the specific data elements identified to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and a review of the alumni, employer, and student surveys. This process resulted in the addition of survey questions, data element revisions, and the development of a new reporting process. The new process requires that Department Chairs/Program Directors report the major findings of their program review to the Vice President of Education, Executive Council, Academic Council, the Curriculum and Faculty Relations Committee of the Commission and the full Commission beginning with the 1999-2000 programs undergoing a program review. The details of the new process are being developed.

Two objectives were identified for the 1999-2000 action plan of the assessment of majors or concentrations activity at MTC. All objectives were achieved and a description of each objective and its achievement are included in a later section of this report.

Two objectives have been identified for the 2000-2001action plan. They are: (1) establish a process to systematically review the program review findings that includes the Vice President for Education, Associate Vice President for Education, and other upper level groups of the college's administration and (2) monitor the progress of program recommendations from completed program reviews.

3. Academic Advising

The assessment of academic advising at Midlands Technical College (MTC) includes the use of surveys and qualitative assessments to determine student perceptions of satisfaction with the effectiveness of the advisement process. To enhance advisement effectiveness and student progress toward achievement of academic goals, assessment occurs at various points during and after the student's college experience. MTC continues to conduct an annual review as well as a tri-annual program review of the Advisement and Scheduling Center's effectiveness. Resulting trend data on student perceptions are compared to established standards.

The College has set an 85 percent standard for sophomore-level student satisfaction with the College's advising system and established a quality rating standard of 3.4 or higher on a 5.0 scale. To provide a comprehensive picture of academic advising at MTC, student perceptions are assessed after initial advisement in the Student Advisement Center, at graduation, and as

alumni three years after graduation. Students also were surveyed during the Spring 1997-98 term to determine their satisfaction with advisor availability. Academic program review surveys provide program-specific advising information, non-returning students give feedback in telephone interviews, faculty/staff provide input through surveys and college committees, and an external review committee comprehensively evaluates the Advisement and Scheduling Center every three years using the Council on the Advancement of Standards (CAS) criteria. Student/advisor ratios are also assessed. When appropriate, comparisons are made with other two-year colleges and to earlier data, for trend analysis.

In 1999 entering, graduating, non-returning students, and alumni satisfaction with advising met or exceeded the 3.4 quality standard and 85 percent satisfaction level. Students rating the availability of advisors (82.2%) expressed satisfaction slightly below the standard of 85%. Similar results (81.9%) were also reflected in the MTC Student Self-Study Survey (Availability of Advisor). Utilizing a 7.0 scale, the priority rating given to advising/counseling by faculty, staff and administrators was (6.56) which exceeded the rating 6.45 rating of two-year colleges nationally and equaled the 6.53 rating for the S.C. Technical College system. These results are from the Institutional Priorities Survey, which was administered in 1999. Advisement satisfaction ratings in academic programs participating in the academic program review process between 1997 and 1999 varied widely. The program review of the Advisement and Scheduling Center yielded an overall rating of 4.9 on a 5.0 scale. Student/advisor ratios have increased steadily over the past six years.

MTC has made significant progress in its use of technology to support academic advising. This includes:

- An advisor list-serve was established in 1998 for academic advisors to share information and effective advisement strategies. This initiative was a component of the 1997-99 Action Plan Objectives that relates to improving the quality of advisor training.

- A pre-requisite checking system has been implemented and is fully operational. A process for an on-going evaluation of the system was implemented to identify and rectify problem areas as they occur. A pre-requisite checking function is included in the Datatel system to which the college will transition in Spring 2001. Also, an automated de-enrollment system was developed and implemented for the Spring 2000 registration period. Letters were generated and mailed to all students not meeting pre-requisites for Spring 2000 courses, based on Fall 1999 grades. The course de-enrollment system and letter generation system is operating successfully. These activities are accomplishments that relate to 1997-99 Objective E, which focused on the implementation of an audit tracking system and prerequisite controls.

- An orientation video was developed and is distributed to all new students. A component of the video focuses on student advisement.

- Degree audit tracking, a component of Objective E of the 1997-99 Action Plan Objectives, continues to be utilized for tracking in a number of academic areas.

To assist in improving advisor training, a comprehensive training program was developed and implemented. All new advisors are now required to participate in advisor training sessions, which are a component of the new employee orientation program. Advisement and Scheduling Center personnel continue to conduct training sessions on a regular basis. The Advisement Action Committee, composed of faculty from all education departments and key staff from Student Development Services and Education, continues to assess advisement needs and recommend improvements in areas such as training, evaluation and processes. Spring 1999 in-service activities focused on developmental academic advising. A leader in the field of developmental advising was the keynote speaker. Concurrent sessions included:

✓ Need To Make an Appointment? A Primer for Administrative Assistants
✓ Freshman Seminar – COL 105
✓ New Developments in Academic Advising
✓ Issues in Financial Aid
✓ Advising Tools To Help the At-risk Student
✓ The Basics of Academic Advising

A session on academic advising was also offered at the Spring 2000 In-Service. The session provided faculty and staff with relevant information related to the implementation of a system for assigning advisors. The advisor training initiatives outlined above are accomplishments relating to the 1997-99 objectives to continue to implement activities to improve the quality of advisement training.

The 2000-2003 action plan contains five objectives: (1) The Office of Assessment, Research and Planning will continue to collect trend data on student satisfaction with the effectiveness of advising on surveys at different points in the college experience. (2) Coordinate the redesign of the Scheduling Center to accommodate the Datatel Colleague System. (3) Assist in the transition of course prerequisites from the SCT system to the Colleague system. (4) Incorporate Colleague System materials into the new advisor training program. (5) Train all part-time temporary advising personnel in the use of the Colleague System.

4. Achievement of Students Transferring From Two-to-Four Year Institutions

The Academic Program Review Process at Midlands Technical College (MTC) has stimulated several initiatives to improve the transfer experience for students seeking baccalaureate degrees. These initiatives have focused on three areas: articulation with four-year institutions, the Associate in Arts (AA) curriculum, and advising of transfer students. In addition to these areas, this report summarizes the findings from the data provided by the senior colleges regarding the performance of former MTC students at those institutions.

MTC now has articulation agreements with all of the four-year institutions in its service area. Most recently, MTC and Allen University for the first time have jointly developed a comprehensive course equivalency list. In April 2000, the presidents of MTC and Benedict College signed a new articulation agreement that resulted from two years of Benedict's careful scrutiny of MTC courses. Agreements with Columbia College in Criminal Justice/Public Affairs and Computer Technology and Computer Information Systems have been submitted to Columbia College faculty for approval. MTC and the University of South Carolina College of Engineering

sealed an agreement that enables engineering technology graduates to transfer into the College of Engineering after completing transition courses. MTC continues to be the largest feeder of transfer students to both Columbia College and the University of South Carolina (USC).

Several curricular changes have been implemented in order to improve the fit between the AA degree and the general education requirements in the colleges where most MTC students transfer. Because the Darla Moore School of Business accepts BIO 112 and CHM 105, those two courses were added to the choices of laboratory sciences. Also, because several colleges at USC, including the College of Liberal Arts, offer students the opportunity to take logic courses instead of mathematics courses, PHI 105, Introduction to Logic, was added as a choice among mathematics/analytical reasoning courses.

Efforts to smooth the transfer process for MTC students include a comprehensive plan to assign each new student to one faculty member who will advise that student throughout his or her MTC career. In-service training sessions have focused on helping advisors to be more effective. Other innovations which are helping transfer students include:
- four-year college- and major-specific Associate in Arts and Associate in Science (AS) program plans.
- links on the MTC website to transfer guides of many four-year institutions.
- advisor Internet access to CollegeSource, an on-line compilation of most college catalogs in the United States.

To evaluate the success of the College's transfer students, MTC reviewed the information provided by the Senior Institutions in their Annual Transfer Reports. These reports provided limited information on the acceptance rate of MTC students at senior institutions and on their academic performance for one term. These data are found in the attached Table A. The reports do not provide the detailed information needed in order to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the success of transfer students.

The state's 11 senior institutions reported that 1062 MTC transfer students applied for enrollment for the first time in fall 1999. While the probability of students applying to more than one college must be considered when assessing the overall applied-accepted rate, 74 % of the MTC students who submitted complete applications to the 11 senior institutions were accepted. Of the 570 transfer students accepted, 269 (47%) actually enrolled. As expected, the largest number of transfers (174) enrolled at USC-Columbia. MTC was the only college within the Technical College System to have first time transfers enrolling at all 11 senior institutions in fall 1999. This information suggests that the college has successfully implemented strategies to achieve its mission of allowing students "to transfer to senior colleges and universities."

The data provided by the senior colleges does not show the gender/sex of applicants, but does provide these data for those students who enrolled. Twenty-two percent of the MTC first time transfers in fall 99 were non-white students and 56 percent were female.

The actual number of transfers at 10 of the 11 colleges, ranged from 2 to 16 students. These *n* values therefore; were too small for any meaningful analysis to be conducted for reporting. While information on the 174 students enrolling at USC Columbia offers some insight on actual

student performance, it is tempered by the fact that only average GPA's data by gender/ethnic/class categories are provided. Overall, the USC-Columbia Native Students (2.89 GPA) did slightly better than the MTC Transfer Students (2.46 GPA).   In terms of ethnic-gender-class categories, the only USC-Columbia transfer category that had a higher GPA than the corresponding native student category was the Non-White Male with 20-59 hours completed.

The following objectives should be initiated in 2001-2002

Objective A: Design a system for tracking transfer students to get information to supplement data provided by the four-year institutions.

Objective B: Design a system for evaluating assigned advising when it is fully implemented in the AA and AS programs.

5.   Procedures for Student Development

Midlands Technical College (MTC) assesses the effectiveness of Student Development Services (SDS) every three years, conducts an in-depth review of each SDS department on a five year cycle, and regularly assesses student personal development. There are three levels of assessment: (1) user satisfaction with services and service usage; (2) in-depth departmental reviews; and (3) student self-perceived growth and development.

User satisfaction is based on a series of perception surveys, with ratings compared against a standard of 90 percent or a rating of 4.0 on a 5.0 scale (3.2 on a 4.0 scale, 4.8 on a 6.0 scale and 5.6 on a 7.0 scale). Departmental reviews consist of an in-depth self-study by the department and assessment by an external review team comprised of students, faculty and staff outside the department, and a departmental director from a peer institution of similar size and mission. Ratings are based on a 5.0 scale, using guidelines adapted from the Council on the Advancement of Standards (CAS). Student growth and development is determined from a series of student self-perception surveys at points through and beyond the student's college experience. When appropriate, self-perception survey information stimulates the use of more in-depth qualitative interviews and focus group assessments. No standard has been set for student personal growth, although survey ratings at or above the national norm for two-year colleges are desired, where applicable.

With few exceptions, students, alumni and college employees remain satisfied with services, with 1997-2000 ratings similar to those of 1994-96. During 1997-2000, MTC-constructed student satisfaction surveys were replaced by two nationally referenced surveys, the Noel-Levitz *Student Satisfaction Inventory* and the Noel-Levitz *Institutional Priorities Survey*. MTC scored below national averages on student knowledge of campus information and some areas of advising. Most other areas were above the national averages for two-year colleges. Targeted surveys to actual departmental clients were conducted in some areas not on national surveys. For example, external survey evaluations of job training clients conducted by the Employment Security Commission resulted in ratings above the 90 percent standard, and internally conducted ratings on TRIO programs revealed over 90 percent satisfaction by clients.

Departmental reviews were conducted for Disability Services, Student Assessment, SDS Administration, Job Placement, Admissions, Student Records, Advisement, Counseling, Student Activities, Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search and Student Support Services. These

reviews revealed ratings well above the 4.0 standard. The minimum overall rating received by any single department was 4.6, with lowest functional ratings in the areas of adequate staffing, financial resources and facilities. Midlands Technical College received a commendation for assessment of Student Development Services from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) visiting team during its 1998 re-accreditation visit. This commendation was based on the thoroughness of assessment and the use of date for improvement.

Approximately 90 percent of graduating students felt that Midlands Technical College had contributed to their personal growth on dimensions such as "learning on their own," "working cooperatively with others," and "setting life directions." Ninety-seven percent of graduating students reported that the college had helped them achieve their goals and 88 percent of non-completing students felt that MTC had contributed to their quality of life. On ACT's *College Outcomes Survey*, a nationally standardized instrument administered in the sophomore year, Midlands Technical College exceeded national norms on most areas of personal development and college satisfaction, when compared with other two-year colleges.

Findings from the 1997-2000 assessment studies resulted in (1) additional trend data on the college's contribution to completing and non-completing students (2) completion of the first cycle of student development service reviews and commencement of the second review cycle; (3) evaluation of the CONNECTIONS customer service training program for front-line personnel; (4) evaluation of student referral services and targeted interventions for probationary students, resulting a new freshman orientation seminar course for first-time freshmen and automated course pre-requisite checks; (5) increased publicity on services to students, including web pages for all service areas; (6) continued collection of data on student services usage and satisfaction, using several national norm-referenced assessments; (7) increased use of part-time personnel and training to offset staff short falls; and (8) quantitative follow-up assessments on areas with low or declining ratings, such as Student Activities.

Seven objectives identified for the 2000-2003 action plan are: (1) continue to establish trend data on the college's contribution to the personal development of completers and non-completing students, using quantitative and qualitative input in the analysis; (2) complete nine additional Student Development Services program reviews; (3) evaluate the effectiveness of the freshmen seminar course for first-time freshmen; (4) evaluate the effectiveness of student referral services and interventions for targeted groups of students, to include probationary students, first-generation students, first-time freshmen and students with disabilities; (5) continue to increase publicity on services to students; (6) transition to on-line web-based services and a new student information system; and (7) assess the effectiveness of services to distant learners.

6. Library Resources and Services

This component was last reported in 1998. Based on the report schedule, this component will be reported next in 2002.