

**Midlands Technical College
Majors or Concentrations
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Summary Statement of 2000-2001 Assessment Study

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 1999-2000, the following five programs were assessed: Associate of Arts and Sciences (AA/AS), Health Information Management (HIM), Automotive Technology (AUT), Industrial Electricity/Electronics (EEM), and Criminal Justice (CJ). A follow-up on the progress in meeting recommendations from completed program reviews revealed the following program improvements:

- (1) The Advising system was revised to allow new students to be assigned permanent advisors through the New Student Advisement Center. MTC faculty advisors were assigned specific colleges/universities and met with key representatives from the major receiving institutions in South Carolina to clarify transfer questions directly.
- (2) Following the thinking that expanded the AS curriculum to include SPC 209 Interpersonal Communications, the AA faculty is exploring the feasibility of adding the second philosophy course, PHI 106- Introduction to Logic II, as another choice under Analytical Reasoning. This will enable of AA students transferring to both USC's Colleges' of Liberal Arts and Journalism to meet the analytical reasoning component of their general education requirements.
- (3) AA/AS is exploring a strategy to improve the opportunity for its students to graduate prior to transferring.
- (3) The Automotive program developed and implemented new processes to ensure that all students eligible for graduation received the appropriate award.
- (4) To address the need for improving the communication, computer and organizational skill of graduates, the EEM department now assigns class work which requires students to use the computer to access the Internet and use WEB resources to research electrical companies and contractors to ascertain specific information regarding the company and related to the

curriculum. This includes information related to the size, location, salary, and employment possibilities with the company as well as information on how to submit/write resumes, the price of equipment, how to order equipment and how to estimate the cost of doing a small job.

- (5) The EEM department was successful in getting the EEM instructional facility renovation scheduled for summer 2001 to address issues regarding the size and learning environment of the current facility.
- (6) The Criminal Justice program developed a designated section of COL 105, Freshman Seminar, which focused heavily on criminal justice professions, career opportunities, and addressed issues of commitment and loyalty to the Criminal Justice profession.
- (7) The Health Information Management (HIM) program addressed the need to expose its students to new technology by installing the Computerized Patient Record (CPR) MedicWare software in the student lab (SA 124).

Two objectives were identified for the 2000-2001 action plan. They were: (A) 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 (B) monitor the progress of program recommendations from completed program reviews.

Two objectives have been identified for the College's 2001-2002 operational plan. They are (1) assess current processes and data elements to determine relativity of the data elements and develop computer applications to increase the efficiency of collecting and disseminating data germane to the study; and (2) continue to monitor the progress of program recommendations from completed reviews.

Description of Assessment of the Major

Assessment of the majors or concentrations in credit courses, through a complete program review process, closely ties to the institutional effectiveness process at MTC. The outcomes of the program reviews are evaluated for their consistency with the stated institutional mission and the results of the measures are used in conjunction with other institutional effectiveness measures to identify areas for institutional improvement. The assessment of the majors or concentrations in credit courses activity is significant in that it evaluates and measures outcomes of the educational process, which, in turn, helps those involved identify areas in need of institutional improvement and provides a basis for the development of strategic and annual planning initiatives.

The program review process includes the analysis of identified data elements that indicate the effectiveness and efficiency of programs at MTC. Implementation of the review process includes analysis of the following data elements: achievement of goals; mastery of capstone competencies; course progression; mastery of general education core competencies; success at senior institutions; student, alumni (graduate) and employers satisfaction; placement in field (duplicated headcount); annual unduplicated headcount of program majors/FTE; advisory committee participation; percent adjunct faculty in major; percent of adjunct faculty by discipline in general education; faculty credentials; number of graduates; retention of students by program; annual program cost; space

utilization; and average section size. The program faculty and personnel in the Education Unit develop appropriate standards for these elements. Subsequently, the program faculty collects data that can indicate areas for improvement in these elements and make plans for changes that can affect the desired improvement. Although the program review process evaluates data that represents the perspectives of students, graduates, advisory committee members, faculty members, and administrators at MTC to obtain the most complete picture of the institution, a major focus of the process is the analysis of students' learning outcomes and successes. The weighty evaluation of students' outcomes and successes reflects the mission of MTC as a teaching institution and the importance that the faculty, staff, and administration place on teaching excellence. The capstone competencies and the general education core components are representative of the data that indicates students' learning outcomes and successes.

Capstone competencies are defined as stated expectation(s) of knowledge and skills in both occupational/technical and general education areas that a student demonstrates at the successful completion of a program. Capstone competencies serve as a major indicator of student outcomes, combining technical and general education knowledge and skills. Program faculty has typically selected one of the following methods of assessing capstone competencies: a capstone course, a capstone project, an internship, or a licensure examination and/or simulated licensure examination.

Mastery of the general education core component, evaluated in a separate report, indicates the degree of academic success experienced by associate degree students in the general education core course work. A variety of data is gathered on students' academic success in course work that represents a specific competency within each stated general education value. Student performance that does not meet the stated success criterion leads to an evaluation of the process, seeking explanation that might indicate a revision in the course(s) to better represent the specific competency.

In the program review process, data for a three-year period is reviewed to determine trends and program faculty use the data to make recommendations for program improvement. The program recommendations derived from the findings are tied to the institution's annual plan in terms of budget, equipment, facilities, and personnel. The tracking of program recommendations and follow-up action taken to ensure academic program improvement demonstrate the accountability built into the program review process at MTC. Through this annual activity of the assessment of majors or concentrations for specific programs and the generation of this report, the continued emphasis on institutional effectiveness through assessment is reinforced

A formal presentation of the data, findings and recommendations is made to the Vice-President of Education. Feedback from this presentation maybe incorporated into the final findings and recommendations.

Achievement of 2000-2001 Action Plan Objectives

Midlands Technical College evaluated and reported on the institutional effectiveness component of the assessment of majors to the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) in July 2000. The 2000-2001 action plan had two objective related to institutional effectiveness. The following section identifies those objectives and the achievement status for each.

Objective A: 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.

Status: A series of formal oral presentations has been added that requires the program coordinator and Department chair for each program to present the Program Review findings to the Vice-President for Education, the Executive Council and the MTC Commission. The presentation to the VPE is used to develop the next year objectives and recommendations and to finalize the program review document. A copy of the revised timeline for program review activities is included as Attachment A.

Objective B: Monitor the progress of program recommendations from completed program reviews.

Status: The progress on the recommendations for the five programs reviewed was monitored by the Director of Academic Planning and Reporting. Each program was required to report on the achievement of each priority recommendation, ensuring, that each recommendation is completed.

Major Findings of the 2000-2001 Assessment Study

The detailed, major findings of the study of scheduled selected majors through the program review process are contained in the executive summaries of each program and are placed as attachments to this report.

2001-2002 Action Plan Objectives

The 2001-2002 action plan objectives for assessing majors or concentrations at Midlands Technical College consist of the following two objectives.

Objective 1: Assess the current Program Review process, practices and data elements to determine relativity of the data elements and develop computer applications to increase the efficiency of collecting and disseminating data germane to the study.

Objective 2: Continue to monitor the progress of program recommendations from completed program reviews.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program: ASSOCIATE OF ARTS/ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE (AA/AS)

Description of Program/Background Information:

The Associate in Arts program serves students who wish to take courses to transfer into a four-year senior college in such majors as business, humanities, social sciences or others that require more intensive course work in the humanities and/or social sciences than in mathematics and science. A student may take a few courses before transferring or complete a two-year degree program that is substantially equivalent to the first two years of the degree requirements for the chosen major at the student's senior college.

The Associate in Science program serves students who wish to take courses to transfer into a four-year senior college in such majors as computer science, engineering, health sciences, mathematics, science or others that require more intensive course work in mathematics and science than in the humanities and/or social sciences. A student may take a few courses before transferring or complete a two-year degree program that is essentially equivalent to the first two years of the degree requirements for the chosen major at the student's senior college.

Progress Made to Date:

Important Findings

Strengths:

1. AA/AS student and graduate surveys show a very high degree of satisfaction with the MTC experience.
2. Almost all AA/AS graduates stated that they had achieved their educational goals while at Midlands Technical College.
3. Midlands Technical College is the largest feeder institution of transfer students to four-year colleges and universities in South Carolina.
4. The number of AA/AS faculty who have doctoral degrees has increased 11% since the last program review in 1995.

Weaknesses:

1. The graduation rate is very low in spite of the fact that 67% of students stated that they plan to obtain the AA/AS degree while at MTC.
2. Forty percent of students surveyed expressed some dissatisfaction with the advising process.

3. Information is not available on the success of AA/AS students once they transfer from MTC. No concrete data exists on how well-prepared these students are for transfer.
4. The one-year fall-to-fall retention rate for both the AA/AS program (42% and 43% respectively) are significantly below both the national and SBTCE rates (51.5% and 49%).

Priority Recommendations (See Recommendation Section for details):

1. Study strategies to increase the graduation rate of all students, including fall cohorts.
2. Implement assigned advising. Design a plan for better distribution of transfer information directly to students.
3. Design a plan for tracking students transferring from MTC.
4. Investigate underlying reasons that impact and develop strategies to improve the retention rate.

Progress Made To Date

1. Following the thinking that expanded the AS curriculum to include SPC 209 Interpersonal Communications, the AA faculty is exploring the feasibility of adding the second philosophy course, PHI 106- Introduction to Logic II, as another choice under Analytical Reasoning. This will enable of AA students transferring to USC's Colleges' of Liberal Arts and Journalism to meet the analytical reasoning component of their general education requirements.
2. The Advising system was revised to allow new students to be assigned permanent advisors through the New Student Advisement Center. MTC faculty advisors were assigned specific colleges/universities and met with key representatives from the major receiving institutions in South Carolina to clarify transfer questions directly.
3. A Transfer Questionnaire was created to collect information pertinent to tracking potential transfer students. The survey will be distributed directly to the student requesting a transcript be sent to another institution.
4. Information from the transfer questionnaire will provide information about students transferring from MTC to other colleges/universities. Another survey has been developed to investigate reasons that students do not return to continue their education. This survey will be administered to all AA/AS student who enroll Fall 2001 but do not attend Spring 2002. This survey will ask the reasons for their not returning.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program: AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AUT)

Description of Program/Background Information:

Technological advances in the automotive field and the introduction of computer-controlled systems and components have mandated a technician who is highly skilled and professionally trained. Automotive technicians make up the largest service and repair group in the country, and the increasing application of computerized systems in cars and trucks has created a great demand for highly trained professionals.

The Automotive Technology program at Midlands Technical College is designed to provide theory and hands-on training to prepare students to be well-rounded entry-level automotive technicians. Specialization areas emphasize diagnostic and engine performance service, engine overhaul, manual and automatic transmission reconditioning and repair, heat and air conditioning, and all phases of chassis service. Graduates of the Automotive Technology program work in dealerships, independent garages and other related businesses as technicians, parts personnel, services writers and field representatives for manufacturers.

Six separate certificate programs have been developed based on eight A.S.E. (Automotive Service Excellence) categories--engine repair, drive train repair; brake, suspension and steering repair; electrical systems repair; heating and air conditioning repair; and engine performance--to prepare students for the ASE certification exam.

Graduates of this program earn an associate degree in Automotive Technology. Individual certificate programs are also available.

Important Findings

Strengths:

1. The AUT Advisory Committee fully participates and supports the goals of the program.
2. Employer satisfaction with AUT graduates is reported at 100% with 70% indicating they have had contact with AUT faculty.
3. Alumni reported 100% satisfaction with their overall academic program exceeding the benchmark.
4. Students surveyed reported 97.4% satisfaction with the overall academic program especially the quality of instruction, knowledge of the instructors, and interest of their advisors in attaining their goals.
5. All surveys conducted included comments that consistently praised the quality of instruction, relevancy of curriculum, and the commitment of the AUT faculty.

6. Migrated all A.O.T. students to A.I.T. program.

Weaknesses:

1. Decline in graduation rates reported.
2. Decline in retention rates reported.
3. Surveys (Employer and Advisory) indicated a concern for better marketing of the program and to " work more closely with high schools.

Priority Recommendations (See Recommendations Section for details):

1. AUT faculty will compare enrollment records to posted graduation rates to ensure that all AUT graduates receive their appropriate awards.
2. AUT faculty will examine reporting procedures and implement an internal audit procedure
3. Coordinate marketing strategies with the Advancement Division and develop a recruiting package for departmental and employer use.

Progress Made To Date

1. The AUT department has instituted a process that ensures that all eligible students complete the forms required for graduation and that these forms are submitted to the registrar. The implementation of this system resulted in 100% of eligible students graduating.
2. The AUT department has developed and implemented an internal audit process that ensures that the records for all students enrolled in automotive program are reviewed on a semester by semester basis and that all information is correct. Student records are reviewed to ensure that each student is in the correct program in the College's database and corrections are made as necessary. The Program Coordinator will compare a master list of potential graduates from the automotive program to the actual graduates each semester; any student who did not graduate will be flagged for individual review.
3. The Automotive department has combined with other Industrial Division courses to develop a plan to market industrial programs to potential students. The plan has been presented to the College's marketing department.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program: CRIMINAL JUSTICE TECHNOLOGY (CRJ)

Description of Program/Background Information:

The Criminal Justice program is designed to prepare students for employment in the areas of law enforcement, correctional services, the courts, private security and juvenile services. The program covers a broad spectrum of criminal justice concepts and theories including police organization, criminal law, criminal evidence and procedures, correctional administration and criminology, as well as appropriate general education courses. The structure of the program is designed for those currently serving in the various professions related to the Criminal Justice field as well as those interested in pursuing a career in these fields. The Criminal Justice program is also offered for students who are planning to transfer to a four-year college.

Important Findings

Strengths:

1. High satisfaction rate among current students and alumni in terms of program instruction.
2. Alumni who directly entered the criminal justice profession indicated that the program prepared them well for employment.
3. Transfer students indicated that the program prepared them well for study at a senior institution.
4. Employer surveys noted high satisfaction with Criminal Justice graduates.
5. The job placement/college transfer rate for the years 1996-97 and 1997-98 was at 100%.
6. Large majority of students (89.2%) indicated that they had been assigned a permanent Criminal Justice advisor and 94.5% related that they had seen their advisor at least once a semester or more.

Weaknesses:

1. Inadequate attention to issues of realistic job opportunities, career paths, salaries and demanding work duties within various criminal justice professions.
2. Over seventeen percent (17.2%) of students rated the quality of their advisement as being fair or poor.

Priority Recommendations (See Recommendations Section for details):

1. Develop a designated section of COL 105, Freshman Seminar, for entering Criminal Justice students focusing heavily on criminal justice professions, career opportunities, and addressing issues of commitment and loyalty.
2. Develop a plan to improve the system of assigned advisors and to educate advisors about criminal justice professions.

Progress Made To Date

1. During the Fall 2000 semester, two sections of COL 105 were set aside and designated for CRJ students. CRJ issues were discussed throughout the semester and specific information was provided concerning the CRJ program, professionalism, career choices, minimum qualifications and salaries.
2. Initial assessment of the advising process was conducted and some revisions were made. Since the College is migrating to the Colleague software, which will provide more opportunities for improving the process, this recommendation is scheduled for completion in the 2001-2002 year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program: INDUSTRIAL ELECTRICITY/ELECTRONICS (EEM1)

Description of Program/Background Information:

The Industrial Electricity/Electronics Diploma program emphasizes theory and hands-on training in electrical wiring, including the applications to residential, commercial and industrial installations. Although basic installation of electrical components is an important part of the technician's job, increased emphasis has been placed on wiring and programming of programmable logic controllers. Entry-level positions for graduates are available with local electrical contractors, industrial plants, hospitals, power companies, government agencies and other related businesses.

Important Findings

Strengths:

1. Retention rates for the diploma program have increased from 53% in 1997-98 to 75% 1998-99.
2. Employers expressed a high degree of satisfaction with students' math and technical skills. They noted that MTC students work well independently and cooperatively with co-workers. Also, the employers noted that the students were punctual and had high attendance rates.
3. Students that earn certificates and diplomas in Industrial Electricity/Electronics are continuing their education through the A.O.T. degree.

Weaknesses:

1. Employers expressed dissatisfaction with students' communication, computer, and organizational skills.
2. The program lacks a "tracking system" to ensure students are applying to graduate from the certificate and diploma programs.
3. The current facilities are not adequate in size and arrangement for a conducive learning environment.

Priority Recommendations (See Recommendations Section for details):

1. Develop a plan to incorporate additional communication, computer, and organizational skills into the current curriculum courses.
2. Design and implement a departmental "tracking system" that will ensure that students are applying to graduate from the certificate and diploma programs.

3. Arrange a meeting with the department chair, associate vice president, and the vice president of education to discuss facility renovations.

Progress Made To data

1. The EEM department now assigns class work which requires students to use the computer to access the Internet and use WEB resources to research electrical companies and contractors to ascertain specific information regarding the company and related to the curriculum. This includes information related to the size, location, salary, and employment possibilities with the company as well as information on how to submit/write resumes, the price of equipment, how to order equipment and how to estimate the cost of doing a small job.
2. The EEM department adopted the tracking model developed by the automotive department. The EEM department has also developed a tracking form that is maintained for each student. All students who are eligible for graduation complete the appropriate forms and the EEM department ensures that the forms are delivered to the registrar. The implementation of this system resulted in 100% of eligible students graduating.
3. The EEM department was successful in getting approval for the EEM instructional facility to be renovated in summer 2001. This renovation should address concerns expressed regarding the size and learning environment of the current facility.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program: HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (HIM)

Description of Program/Background Information:

In the Health Information Management program at Midlands Technical College, students become skilled in health information systems and procedures. Students are trained to technically analyze, evaluate and manage sensitive data in health records according to licensure and accreditation standards, compile various types of administrative and health statistics and reports for planning and evaluation, code diagnoses and procedures for reimbursement and statistics, design and develop computer-based patient record systems, and supervise the daily activities of a health information management department.

Students learn to release health information according to state and federal laws and to maintain and utilize a variety of manual and automated health information indices and storage and retrieval systems. Students also receive detailed instruction in medical administrative, ethical, legal, accreditation and regulatory requirements for the health care delivery system. In addition to classroom instruction, students begin applying new knowledge in class laboratories and clinical settings at local health care facilities.

Graduates of the Health Information Management program earn an associate degree in Health Science that qualifies them to take the national accrediting examination to become Accredited Record Technicians (ART). The program is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Health Education Programs in cooperation with the Council on Education of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).

Students must complete Phase I with a 2.5 GPA to be eligible for Phase II.

Students must complete all HIM and math and science courses with a "C" or higher and may repeat no more than two technology courses.

Important Findings

Strengths:

1. Student, faculty, and employer survey responses are excellent. All alumni were "Satisfied or Very Satisfied" with the HIM program of study and 90% were "Satisfied or Very Satisfied" with the instruction in HIM. In the survey of the employer of the HIM graduates, 100% of the employers rated the HIM graduates "Average or Above Average" in terms of technical skills and operations of instruments and equipment and 93% rated their on-the job" performance as "Average or Above Average".
2. AHIMA National Exam passage rate for first time candidates is 100% for 1998 and 1999.

3. The average GPA for 1999 and 2000 Phase II (senior students) Professional Development Year is 3.3.
4. Retention and graduation rates have been 100% since the curriculum change in 1998 (Phase I and Phase II).

Weaknesses:

1. Program name needs to be changed from Health Information Management to Health Information Technology.
2. Full-time faculty member to assist program director will be necessary.
3. Student lab software is needed for a computerized patient record in order to expose the students to the new technology.
4. Enrollment in the MRC program at Distance Education sites can be improved
5. There is no program strategic plan in place when the World Health Organization announces the effective date of the new coding system, ICD-10.

Priority Recommendations (See Recommendations Section for details):

1. Acquire a full-time faculty position by January 2000.
2. A letter to State Tech, signed by all three HIM program directors at the South Carolina technical colleges, requesting approval of program name change.
3. Obtain Computerized Patient Record (CPR) software for student lab (SA 124) by January 2000.
4. Information sessions will be held for distance education to increase the number of sites as well as assessing the need for HIM distance education.
5. Release time and funding are needed for the program director and faculty member to attend sessions for ICD-10 coding system. Instructors will need to become proficient in this new system in order to instruct students. (Organizations have been contacting the program director of HIM regarding continuing education sessions).

Progress Made To data

1. A full-time Health Information faculty member was hired in January 2000.
2. A letter was drafted and sent to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education requesting approval to change the name from Health Information Management to Health Information Technology. No further action has occurred. The issue will be discussed at the SCHIMA annual conference in July 2001.
3. Computerized patient record (CPR) MedicWare software for student lab (SA 124) was installed in January 2000.
4. Video/power point presentations were developed and provided to students enrolled in pre-health programs at Horry-Georgetown Technical College, Technical College of the Low Country, and Aiken Technical College. These presentations explain the Medical Records Coder program options available to them via distance education.
5. Action on this has been delayed pending the confirmation of the start date for the change to ICD-10 coding classification systems.