

Goal 5: Illinois colleges and universities will hold students to even higher expectations for learning and will be accountable for the quality of academic programs and the assessment of learning.

What is Joliet Junior College now doing that advances this goal and related actions?

Joliet Junior College is currently in its third year of participation with the Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP) accreditation process offered by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges (now the Higher Learning Commission). As such, the college has examined the effectiveness of all its programs including student, student support, and administrative offices. Priorities for formal evaluation are currently being established. A key focus area of the AQIP effort is “helping students learn” and as such has focused the college effort on the improvement of student learning. Key focus areas for 2002-03 have been developmental education and helping student navigate the new technologies. The college organized and executed a Trailblazer in technology support (through CQIN – Datatel) and is awaiting results for planning purposes. JJC is firmly committed to academic excellence and began producing “results” reports for NCA-HLC as part of their AQIP process.

During the past year the Assessment Committee has upgraded its efforts across campus. The Committee developed a revised handbook, reached out to departments who were doing the five year program review process, and agreed upon a philosophy.

The purpose of assessment at Joliet Junior College is to continually improve learning outcomes. The main focus of the Assessment Committee at JJC is to support quality assessment at the program level. Program assessment provides opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators to examine the current needs and expectations of the college’s stakeholders. As such, systematic academic program evaluation can determine the college's current ability to meet these needs and expectations as well as indicate the areas that should be improved.

Systematic assessment of student learning has yielded excellent results in several departments and curriculum changes have followed. Areas like Nursing, Veterinary Medical Technology, and Emergency Medical Technology have made substantial changes to curriculum in response to assessment of learning and in conjunction with national standards of testing. Other programs have incorporated assessment into the restructuring of courses. Example of this occurred in both the Mathematics and English Departments. In mathematics the delineation of placement testing into its component parts allowed the department to take two four-hour developmental courses and divide them into four one-hour modules. For those students who placed near the “cut-off” scores, but still lacked one critical skills, enrollment in one one-hour course took the place of having to sit in

a four-hour course. The byproduct of this work produced satisfactory results in the first year as over 80% of the students who qualified and attempted the one-hour modules passed (20% higher than the standard developmental math). In composition the faculty used placement test scores to place students in a six-hour English and reading course which was team taught, coordinated, and designed to produce good results for students with both developmental deficiencies. Not surprisingly the first year grade and completion results were excellent and students rated the experiment positively. Both of these designs “hold students accountable for learning” by putting them in an environment in which they can succeed.

Class sizes at JJC average about 16 and one-half students, over one-half a student below the state average. Maintaining class sizes, even when your institution is experiencing record growth, is an important indicator of the value placed on academics. JJC will hopefully be able to continue to maintain these numbers even as enrollment continues its near double digit growth rate.

A major change occurred in the General Education program for those students pursuing an associate degree in agriculture or horticulture. The Curriculum Committee voted to require all departments to satisfy their General Education requirements for the Associate of Applied Science degree from outside of their major department. This change will require the Agriculture/Horticulture students to complete nine new hours of coursework from outside of their major department. Following a consultant’s work on degree requirement for agriculture and horticulture students, it was decided that a committee of faculty would assist in developing a wider range of General Education courses for AAS students. Following successful courses like Technical Mathematics, Technical Writing and Communications, Math for Culinary Arts, etc. this committee will promote and help develop a wide range of “integrated” curriculum to integrate the philosophy of general education with the practical application in occupational fields. Assessment of these courses will be critical to developing a quality integrated curriculum for AAS students.

Three Common Institutional Indicators (CII) are recognized for Goal 5. The graduate alumni surveys find an 89% satisfaction ratio at JJC which places in securely with the state average. The ratio has ranged from below average (81%) to above average (95%) over the last three years.

The pass rates on professional licensure exams has shown excellent results at Joliet Junior College. In the Veterinary Medical Technology Program all 21 graduates (spring 2003) passed the Vet Tech Boards. There have been three graduating classes (2001,2002,2003) from the Vet Tech Program and **all** (100%) of the students have passed the boards on their first attempt. The Nursing Program had good results for students taking the certification exam to become a Practical Nurse. The results for Nursing students trying to enter the Registered

Nursing profession the results were not as strong. The pass rate was equal to the overall national average although for some periods fell slightly below the average.

Number of Nursing Students Passing the NCLEX-PN Exam

Oct-Mar 2000	Apr-Sep 2000	Oct-Mar 2001	Apr-Sep 2001	Oct-Mar 2002	Apr-Sep 2002	Oct-Mar 2003
13/15	17/19	16/16	34/37	29/31	31/33	32/37
87%	89%	100%	92%	94%	94%	86%
National norms		85%		84%		87%

Number of Nursing Students Passing the NCLEX-RN Exam

Oct-Mar 2000	Apr-Sep 2000	Oct-Mar 2001	Apr-Sep 2001	Oct-Mar 2002	Apr-Sep 2002	Oct-Mar 2003
42/48	34/41	27/34	40/50	30/42	41/45	39/47
88%	83%	79%	80%	84%	91%	83%
National norms		82%		84%		85%

Although not necessarily a best practice, the continuing work of the college’s assessment committee (described at length in Section IV of this report) has produced excellent results and continues to move the college forward in the area of accountability with respect to student learning.

What specific actions does Joliet Junior College intend to undertake in the coming year (or two) to advance this goal and related actions?

The retention committee conducted an institutional wide retention survey to uncover what program and services students rely on to remain in school. Overwhelmingly, the faculty play a vital role in the academic endeavors of JJC students. Faculty contact outside the classroom, convenience of faculty office hours, and the friendliness of the faculty were the three most cited factors in the successful achievement in educational goals. The continuance of the full-time faculty post-tenure review fuses the commitment to teaching excellence and provides an effectual venue for recognizing the use of new pedagogies and technologies in the classroom.

The “Integrated” General Education Task Force will help develop the standards and monitor the progress in a series of new courses designed to bridge the gap between theory and application. A fully integrated curriculum will need to be developed in the 2003-04 academic year for agriculture and horticulture students. This coursework and newly developed ones will hopefully begin to be phased into

other occupational departments in the 2004-05 academic year. Resources from Perkins III and other college sources will be designated to assist in funding this initiative.

The new and improved Student Code of Conduct was unveiled in the 2002-2003 academic year and used as a student development discipline tool. Some thirty students were “charged” under the student code and appropriate sanctions given for proven infractions. Many faculty now hand out the code brochure at the beginning of a semester.