PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, EVALUATION & REVISION

Program Development

Illinois Central College is a strong institution based on the quality of its programs. The community through enrollment, advisory councils, financial and in-kind gifts, and adjunct faculty supports the programs offered by the College. Additionally through collaborative efforts with business and industry partners, the College has been able to respond to the changing program needs of the community. Illinois Central College has made program creation, evaluation, and revision a priority, as evidenced by the instructional services personnel and processes dedicated to the endeavor.

The *Curriculum Committee Procedural Guide*, updated annually, is the formal tool used by faculty members to develop programs. Program development procedures are clearly documented and provide faculty members with adequate support for new course and program development. Throughout the year, the Coordinator of Instructional Services receives recommendations which are taken to the curriculum committee, voted on, and, if approved, incorporated into the guide. Copies of the procedural guide are disseminated to departments at the beginning of each academic year. In addition to the formal guide, the Coordinator of Instructional Services provides informal tutorials to faculty and staff members who are writing program proposals as needed.

A detailed procedural handout entitled "Beginning New Programs" is available from the office of the Coordinator of Instructional Services. The handout provides instructions that outline procedures for faculty members planning to begin a new program. The process of contacting the Coordinator of Instructional Services and following the curriculum development procedures is known and followed by faculty members who are program coordinators. Sixty percent of the full-time faculty members indicated on the Self-Study questionnaire that they have been involved in the development of a new course or program while 66% are familiar with the guidelines or procedures for development. In contrast, part-time faculty members have not been as involved with program development since only 12.2 % have developed a course or program, and only 22% are familiar with the guidelines. Eighty-seven percent of the full-time faculty members and 38.7% of the part-time faculty members surveyed felt the procedures for new program development are "effective" and/or "efficient." Of significance was the 30% of the part-time faculty members who did not respond. The Curriculum Committee procedures seem to meet the changing needs of the College through regular updates and annual publication and distribution.

Eighty percent of full-time faculty members and 86.2% of part-time faculty members "agree" or "strongly agree" that faculty members are in control of curriculum changes. When developing new programs, faculty members felt they received the most support from department chairs with full-time answering 37.3% and part-time indicating 18.6%. Interestingly, 68.1% of part-time faculty and 51.8% of full-time faculty members felt this question did not apply to them.

Noncredit workshops developed by the College's Professional Development Institute do not require approval by the Curriculum Committee. Each workshop is treated as contract training with an individual or business. Workshops are developed to respond to a business' request or to be marketed to a targeted audience with spelled-out objectives. Training welders for a specific process is an example of designing around a company's request while training for *Microsoft Office 2000* would be offered to the greater audience.

Community Input to Programs

Illinois Central College programs are developed in response to the needs of the community, as indicated by advisory committees, labor analysis statistics, workforce needs analyses, and the American College Testing/ American Association of Community Colleges *Faces of the Future* survey. Advisory committees provide feedback from businesses that regularly employ graduates. In addition, the significant number of faculty members who participate in local business and industry communities listen and respond to the community needs. Trends in employment, derived from state employment data and workforce needs analysis conducted at the State and local levels, provide the impetus for new program development. The *Curriculum Committee Procedural Guide* has documented procedures for including these data in new program proposals.

Both formal and informal exchanges of information occur among faculty members of Illinois community colleges. For example, the agricultural faculty members belong to the Illinois Association of Community College Agricultural Instructors, which discusses program issues. Many mathematics faculty members belong to the Illinois Mathematical Association of Community Colleges, and many English faculty members belong to the Illinois Association of Teachers of English, both of which discuss program issues.

As evidenced by the numerous proposals for program and course revision submitted to the Curriculum Committee, faculty members are proactive in keeping the College's programs up-to-date. Faculty members are assisted by information gathered through advisory councils, industry partners, and the community as they review curriculum. On the Self-Study Advisory Council Questionnaire, 93% of respondents reported that they informed the College of current needs of the business, industry, or profession. On the same survey, 92.8% reported that they informed the College of opinions of the community and/or constituencies served. Advisory council meeting minutes and comments are included as attachments to program and course modifications, as detailed in the *2000-2001 Curriculum Committee Procedural Guide*.

Not only do advisory councils have a positive and ongoing impact on program development with participants benefiting by understanding program goals and graduate skills, but participants also feel:

- membership is representative of the constituency (91.2%),

- committee recommendations are realistic (86.6%),

- the College listens to committee advice (86.8%).

Advisory councils provide a check and balance system and "win-win" situation for the school, programs and courses, students, and community at-large.

Program Evaluation

Documented program evaluation procedures exist for two types of evaluation with the first being the required Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Accountability/Program Review report (formerly known as the Priorities, Quality and Productivity) and the second being to meet the requirements and procedures of an external program accreditation. All programs are reviewed for the Accountability/Program Review report on a five-year rotation basis, according to their Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. The procedures for conducting the report are well laid out. This report, completed by department chairs and the Coordinator of Instructional Services, produces qualitative data and employment statistics. All programs requiring external certification also follow documented procedures required by their respective accrediting bodies. Additionally, informal feedback is gathered from faculty members, students, advisory councils, and business and community partners. The data is not readily made available to faculty and public, but plans to include the information in the *Institutional Data Book* have been made.

As mentioned earlier, Illinois Central College participates in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). After evaluations of several transfer programs and transfer information was reviewed, the College revised the Arts and Science curriculum to bring it in line with IAI. As a result, the General Education requirements were increased by an additional three hours in math and three hours in the humanities/fine arts. The College is also constantly monitoring its transfer students to determine if the College's programs are preparing students for transfer. When program evaluation discovers a problem, the curriculum is changed to keep program requirements up to date.

The Curriculum Committee also oversees the proposed deletion of courses or programs from College offerings if they have not been taught for five years. Seventy-seven percent of the full-time faculty members and 36.3% of the part-time faculty members are familiar with the curriculum review process.

The Institutional Research Office (IR) conducts numerous student assessment surveys, queries the IR data warehouse for other pertinent data, and collects results from 4-year institutions on transfer student outcomes. The *Occupational Follow-up Study* is a survey that is mailed to every occupational program completer each year. The findings include data on employment, preparedness for employment, quality of General Education, quality of instruction in program of study, and completer perceptions of positive programmatic revisions. These findings are published and sent to every department chair, every occupational program coordinator, the executive cabinet, and the Board of Trustees.

The IR office also administers the *Faces of the Future Survey*, a standardized survey developed jointly by the American College Testing Service (ACT) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), each year. The survey is completed by a random sample of current students and includes information on general background, employment background, educational background, current college experience, and satisfaction with instruction and student services of the College. These data are published annually and presented in the *Institutional Data Book*, which is made available to all College stakeholders via hardcopy, and is soon to be available on the College's web site. Data are gathered from numerous other sources regarding population demographics, labor market trends, employment rates, high school graduation and college-bound rates, and community and workforce needs. Deans, department chairs, coordinators, and faculty members consider results from the aforementioned assessment measures along with student grades, retention rates, transfer data, and completion data in evaluating the programs at Illinois Central College. Course and program revisions might include everything from adding new media to the creation or elimination of a course or program.

Historically, the data from occupational program evaluations and the graduate follow-up survey have not been made readily available to all faculty members. In a recent faculty survey, 57.3% of the full-time faculty members and 72.6% of the part-time faculty members report being unfamiliar with their program's evaluation and graduate follow-up results. Yet 60% of full-time faculty members and 51.3% of part-time faculty members answered that they find program evaluations to be helpful. The Institutional Research Office published the first annual *Institutional Data Book* in fall 2000. Future plans are to publish this information on the College web site so that it will be available not only to faculty but also to the community.

Participants in every workshop offered by the Professional Development Institute (PDI) are asked to fill out an evaluation of the instructor, content, and facilities. These evaluations are collected and analyzed by PDI staff. Changes to training methods, content, and/or location are then made following the recommendations of participants. Likewise, businesses receiving training from PDI provide input that influences the manner in which workshops are offered.

Program Accreditation

The following College programs are accredited through institutional and specialized accrediting bodies recognized by the Secretary of the United States Department of Education:

- National Association of Schools of Music; NASM: Community and Junior College Programs

- American Osteopathic Association: Occupational Therapy Assistant

- American Dental Association: Dental Hygiene

- National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences: Clinical Laboratory Technician/Medical Laboratory Technician

- Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology: Radiologic Technology

- American Physical Therapy Association: Physical Therapy

- National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission: Nursing, Associate Degree Programs; Nursing, Practical Nursing Programs

- American Bar Association: Paralegal

- Automotive Service Excellence

The following programs are not associated with a formal accrediting body; however, they are subject to quality control audit by external organizations:

- CISCO Networking Academy: CISCO certified networking certificate program

- State Board of Banking and Real Estate: Real Estate Certificate Program

Some programs require accreditation before students are permitted to take qualifying exams. In these cases the College ensures that accreditation standards are being met. For example, the AAS degree in Dental Hygiene is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation. Also, various programs have sought external certification, if they exist, to validate curriculum. One example is that Illinois Central College is one of only 16 National Association of Schools of Music certified community colleges in the country. The *2001-2003 College Catalog* identifies the external accreditation body in the program descriptions.

Other Evaluative Measures

Illinois Central College is a participant in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), which was established to ease student transfer. Students who fulfill the general education requirements for the Arts & Science degree have fulfilled the lower divisional general education requirements at more than 100 higher educational institutions within the State of Illinois. Both Illinois Central College's graduation and transfer rates are above the state average. In 1997, the College evidenced a graduation rate of 25.7% as compared with the state rate of 20.9%. Similarly, transfer rates in 1997 at Illinois Central College were at 19.7 % as compared with a statewide rate of 16.9%.

The *Curriculum Committee Procedural Guide*, as part of an evaluative measure, requires workplace career program goals to meet the Occupational Standard Review, which is a comparison to the Occupational Skill Standards. This is required for new programs.

Although some programs have identified prerequisites and unique admission criteria, other programs allow any student to declare that program as his/her major area of study. Though a program of study may be open to all, prerequisites are required for individual courses within the curriculum. Faculty members check the

student's curriculum code printed on the roster to insure that he or she is registered in the correct program and receiving proper advisement. The final mechanism that insures a transfer student has met the requirements of a program is the process of course evaluation completed by the graduation office. Also, in this way, a program completion is evaluated.

Evaluation of Off-Campus Courses

Department chairs and coordinators evaluate full-time and part-time instructors regardless of whether they teach on- or off-campus with these evaluations placed on file in the departmental and the Human Resources Office. The Self-Study student questionnaire reported that 93.5% of students were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with classes at other locations. When asked whether teaching methods off-campus were different than on-campus, only 13.3% and 3.3% respectively, of the students reported that they believed teaching methods were "not similar" or "dissimilar" to on-campus. All current indicators reinforce that off- and on-campus offerings provide students with very similar experiences.

Retention/Program Completion Rates

Examination of enrollment numbers in comparison with degree/certificate completion indicates that most programs are within norms-based state and federal data. Student enrollment data analyzed by the Student Retention Coordinator compares fall 2000 retention rates to a 1994-1996 baseline group and indicates no significant trends in full-time student retention. In addition, the majority of both transfer students and occupational graduates are successful in their endeavors subsequent to graduation and see the College as assisting them in preparing for transfer or employment as per their self-report. A 1997 survey of transfer students indicates that 58% were then enrolled at a four-year institution in a major related to their Illinois Central College course of study, and 91% reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with preparation for further education. Likewise, a 1999 survey of occupational graduates indicated that 80% reported being employed in jobs related to their program, and of that group, 77% were employed full time.

Although Illinois Central College's program completion rates continue to be higher than the State, the College has pursued initiatives to increase the numbers. These initiatives include the Title III Program Improvement Grant awarded in 1999, projects funded by the Carl Perkins legislation, and an early warning referral system for "at-risk" students. The Title III Program Improvement Grant lists among its major objectives to increase the number of graduates and decrease the attrition rate in the skilled trades and informational technology program areas. Perkins programs such as technology preparation and the program improvement grant promote collaboration between the College, secondary education, and other institutions of higher education. The Early Warning System, a form that is disseminated to faculty members during the third week of semester, allows instructors to identify students who are in need of additional assistance. The College's counseling and advising staff use the Early Warning System form to offer students additional services. In addition to these current measures, the College will continue to strive for initiatives that promote the completion of students' aspirations.

Budget Impact

Changes in the budget are based on data collected from enrollment management, external accrediting body review, assessment activities, and program advisory council minutes. Enrollment trends and assessment activities cause instructional supply budgets either to increase or decrease accordingly. Program requirements dictated by externally accrediting bodies are also accommodated in the budgetary process. Advisory council minutes include recommendations for capital expenditures for individual programs and are incorporated into the budget.

Strengths

- Illinois Central College is serving the community through the programs it offers. The College is poised to respond to community needs when they arise in an advisory council meeting; instructor/business conversation; employee, graduate, or community survey; or other means.

- Program completion rates for the College are higher than State rates.

- The Coordinator of Instructional Services, the *Curriculum Committee Procedural Guide*, and other formal and informal tools used for curricular creation or revision are more than adequate and the College is constantly working to improve them.

- Faculty members feel they are in control of the curriculum.

- The College has procedures in place for evaluation of programs and courses.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The *Institutional Data Book* is not readily available to all faculty and community members.

- Few part-time faculty members have been involved in developing a course or program, nor are they familiar with course or program development procedures.

- The curriculum committee process for approval of noncredit courses occasionally creates problems for development of new ones.

Recommendations

- The Coordinator of Instructional Services should maintain and update the "Beginning New Programs" handout to incorporate changing state requirements.

- The *Curriculum Committee Procedural Guide* and forms should be made available to faculty members via the College's web pages thereby providing online access.

- An overview of all the advisory councils, their members, and meeting schedules should be compiled. Each should identify its members and propose meeting dates at the beginning of the fall semester each year. A College-wide form for reporting advisory council accomplishments should be considered. On committees where students are not represented, at least one student member should be included.

- The procedures for gathering information for the Accountability/Program Review report should be better documented. Forms for soliciting faculty and advisory council members' input should be formalized. For example, annual advisory council reports might include community representatives' responses to the Accountability Report.

- The Institutional Research Office should explore the possibility of gathering and publishing data of success rates of students in accredited programs who take certifying exams, publishing the results of the Occupational Survey, and announcing the availability to faculty members.

- The *Institutional Data Book* should be published annually and made available online.

- The College should consider updating procedures for assigning program codes to entering students in order to prevent miscoding. The College needs to develop a more user-friendly method of accurately monitoring student aspirations.