

The above model reflects the connection among budget, planning, and assessment.

The *Student Academic Assessment Model*, a key component in the overall planning process, reflects the following major purposes found in the Mission:

- To provide a broad general education curriculum for students in all programs as a basis for further study and specialization.
- To offer the lower-division requirements and prerequisites in preparation for transferring to pursue the baccalaureate degree.
- To provide a broad spectrum of vocational and technical programs which reflect the characteristics and employment opportunities of the citizens of the District.
- To provide developmental and remedial-level studies for students with academic deficiencies.

The *Student Academic Assessment Model* is also a key component of the overall College planning process.

History of Student Academic Assessment at Illinois Central College

Academic assessment at Illinois Central College has been an ongoing process since its accreditation, but in the last 12 years it has become a formalized plan. Before the Self-Study in 1992, the North Central Association mandated that each college have a formal plan of assessment. Illinois Central College's plan, centered around the Mission and the effectiveness of the institution, was written in 1991-1992. It was submitted and accepted by NCA in fall 1992. In spring 1994, the first Institutional Outcomes Report was prepared and distributed by a full-time faculty member. During fall 1994, the assessment plan was revised, resubmitted, and accepted. The second Institutional Outcomes Report was prepared in October 1996 and focused more on assessment of student academic outcomes. The College began revising its assessment plan in Spring Semester 1997. The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services initiated the process by assigning a full-time faculty member to work with a committee to review student academic assessment at Illinois Central College. In Fall Semester 1997, an additional faculty member was assigned to work with assessment. At that time, a North Central Association liaison presented a workshop for faculty members on the importance of classroom and student assessment.

During Spring Semester 1998, a pilot project of classroom assessments was conducted by 21 faculty members. Two faculty members, working as assessment coordinators, served as resource persons for any faculty member who requested help in planning a project or reporting on classroom assessment activities. A report, a brief summary of each assessment project, conclusions, and recommendations, was prepared and presented during orientation week August 1998.

This project is now ongoing with volunteer faculty participation. During the 1998-1999 academic year, 14 classroom assessments from seven academic departments were completed. The reports were assembled into a booklet and copies distributed to all academic departments in 2000. During the 1999-2000 academic year, 21 academic assessments from six academic departments were completed. These reports were also assembled into a booklet with copies distributed to all academic departments. The information for academic assessment projects for the 2000-2001 academic year is currently being collected and is incomplete at this time.

Additionally, the IR office works with faculty members, program coordinators, and department chairs to develop, administer, and analyze student-outcome assessment instruments such as pre/post tests, rated essays, and portfolios. Results are then distributed back to all those involved with the project. Each year, all of these student outcomes assessment projects are prepared and published for distribution to faculty and administration. New teaching ideas and assessment concepts are shared across all disciplines, programs, and departments. Faculty members are able to borrow effective ideas and methodologies for incorporation into their own courses or programs.

During Fall Semester 1998, a steering committee, consisting of two administrators and two faculty members serving as assessment coordinators, met bi-weekly to rewrite the *Student Academic Assessment Model* with input from various faculty and staff members. A standing assessment committee was formed during Fall Semester 1998, and a draft of the plan was presented to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services during Fall Semester 1999.

Formation of Outcomes Assessment Committee

STRUCTURE

The Outcomes Assessment Committee, charged with overseeing the institution-wide assessment of student academic achievement, exists as a standing committee of the College and provides support to faculty members involved in classroom assessment.

A member of the faculty was appointed in summer 1997 to act as Coordinator of Academic Assessment with an Academic Assessment Steering Committee composed of two faculty members and two members of administration. The Outcomes Assessment Committee was also formed during Fall Semester 1998 and reconstructed in Spring Semester 1999. The committee is currently composed of seven faculty and eight administration members. The meetings are open to everyone at the College, with members of the College community encouraged to attend by invitations in periodic memos and newsletters.

PURPOSE

The committee is charged with entering into an ongoing dialogue with the College community about the assessment of student academic achievement. As a result of this dialogue, the committee oversees and encourages the implementation and continuous evaluation of student academic achievement.

OBJECTIVES

The principle objectives of the Outcomes Assessment Committee are to:

1. Enhance the knowledge of the faculty members at Illinois Central College about the assessment of student learning, significant elements of assessment terminology, and major elements of the assessment process and structure at the College by
 - a. conducting meetings and workshops,
 - b. distributing materials such as the Assessment Updates, Student Academic Assessment Outcomes Reports, etc., and
 - c. providing resources.
2. Spearhead the progress of assessment at the College by producing, if needed, by September 30 of each year, an updated plan for assessment.
3. Facilitate and implement feedback loops and information dissemination about assessment at the College by
 - a. producing an annual report,
 - b. producing 2-4 issues of the *Illinois Central College Assessment Update* each academic year,
 - c. providing all faculty members access to the Student Academic Assessment Report,
 - d. having at least one joint meeting with the Faculty Senate every year and giving a presentation at faculty orientation at the beginning of the fall semester, and
 - e. developing a student assessment handbook.
4. Oversee the implementation of the *Student Academic Assessment Model*.

Student Academic Assessment Model

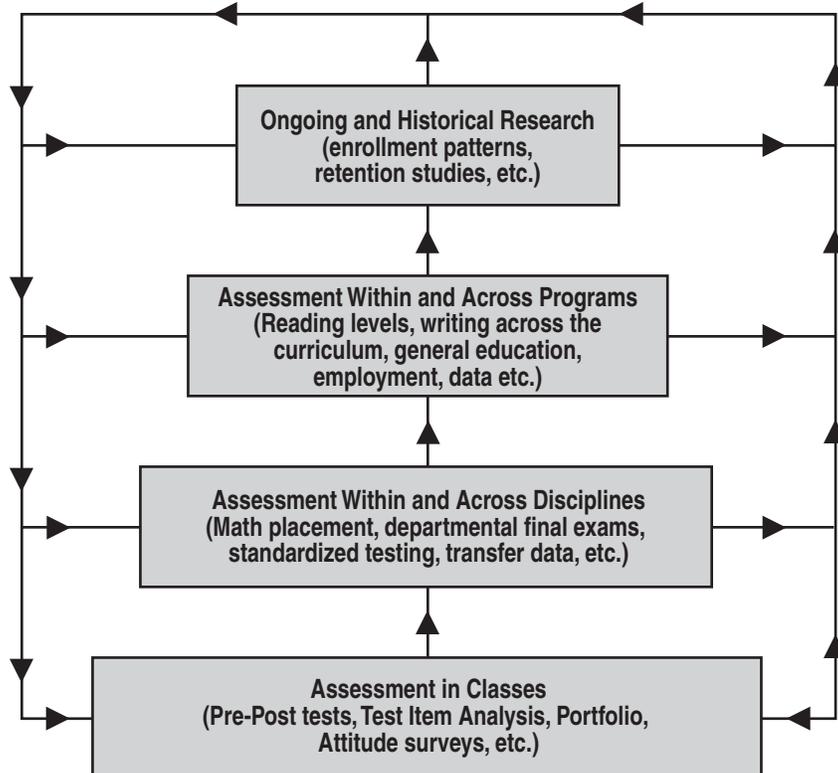
The *Student Academic Assessment Model* emphasizes the following:

1. Assessment should occur periodically during a student's academic progress at the College.
2. Assessment should occur at all levels of the institution.
3. Assessment should occur in both direct and indirect measures.
4. Assessment should focus on student achievement as opposed to student participation, student satisfaction, student retention, or student success.

Student academic outcomes assessment is intended to review, evaluate, and change techniques, processes, communication, presentation, and delivery used throughout the College to provide quality education to students. It is the intent of the College that student academic outcomes assessment occurs at all levels so that students are provided with an education of the best possible quality. The assessment process is cyclical with each cycle, including data collection, review of data, analysis of results, conclusions, and implemented changes. Table 8-A gives an overview of the hierarchy of assessment levels. All assessment activities for a given year are compiled into a report and distributed College-wide so that the institution benefits from the assessment process.

TABLE 8-A

Student Academic Assessment Overview Conclusion/Reflection Change Loop



Ongoing and Historical Assessment

Ongoing and historical assessment research focuses on assessment as part of a College-wide, ongoing process of data collection, statistical analysis, and program analysis relative to student potential, student success, and student retention.

STUDENT POTENTIAL

A primary objective at Illinois Central College is to improve student success and retention with the first step being the identification of student potential. Student potential has its basis in certain academic, socioeconomic, and personal characteristics. A student potential profile for a cohort of new, full-time students was developed for each of the past eight years based on three academic variables: High School Percentile Rank, Academic Placement Test Scores, ACT Reading and Composite Test Scores. Undecided Curriculum Status was a fourth variable included in the studies. Eight years of data on approximately 15,000 new, full-time students provide some consistency and patterns relative to student potential. Based on established criteria relative to the three academic variables, the percentage of academically at-risk students has increased 4% (32%-36%), from 1993 to 2000. At the same time the percentage of undecided students has increased 11% (25%-36%), as noted in the *At-Risk Students' Profile 1993-2000* available in the Resource Room.

These findings indicate a major challenge for the College in the development of appropriate instructional programs/methodologies and support services. An example of using this student potential information in program development is the Academic Discovery Program initiated by the Counseling Office in cooperation with the Social Science Department in 1993. Twenty-five sections of a course in career planning are conducted annually for approximately 350 students. Follow-up studies indicate the course completion rate as 87% with student satisfaction rate 97%. Undecided students participating in the program had a fall to spring retention rate 12% higher than those undecided students not participating.

STUDENT SUCCESS – GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Grade Point Average (GPA) has been one method of looking at student academic performance. Table 8-B indicates the number and percentage of students in each GPA category for 1996-2000. The categories reflect basic decision points in the academic standards policy. For example, students with fewer than 28 semester hours attempted must have a 1.70 GPA to be in good standing. Students with 28 or more semester hours must have a 2.00 GPA to be in good standing. Thus, Table 8-B indicates the number and percentage of full-time students beginning their college career with a “successful” or “unsuccessful” experience, as defined by the academic standards policy. Using this definition during 1996-2000, the College has averaged 74% of the students in the successful category, which is 2% more than the base year of 1984. Since 1984, the percentage of students in the 3.00 - 4.00 GPA category has increased from 25% to 36%, which provides data for discussion of such topics as increased student learning/grade inflation.

TABLE 8-B

FRESHMAN CLASS FALL SEMESTER GPA 1996-2000

GPA Categories	1996 Total %	1997 Total %	1998 Total %	1999 Total %	2000 Total %	Composite
.00 - .99	284 16	328 17	278 14	277 12	247 13	1414 15
1.00 - 1.69	199 11	224 11	200 10	203 11	201 11	1027 11
1.70 - 1.99	109 6	86 4	105 5	97 5	93 5	490 5
2.00 - 2.99	645 35	741 37	699 36	632 34	640 34	3357 35
3.00 - 4.00	581 32	603 30	639 33	672 36	685 36	3180 34
	<u>1818</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1886</u>	<u>9488</u>

Student Retention Report 1984-2000

A second methodology for documenting student success using GPA and several other enrollment factors is the annual report of students enrolled at Illinois Central College for each high school in the College district. This report provides each high school with group data on students' success for the two fall semesters following graduation from high school. In addition to providing feedback to the College for marketing and program planning, this project extends the feedback loop beyond the College to its high school partnership schools.

STUDENT SUCCESS – GRADUATES

The following Table 8-C provides an overview of graduates for a five-year period in four degree/certificate categories and the total number of graduates. The most significant trend has been an increase in the number of certificates awarded, which may reflect a positive response to the short-term learning needs of community residents.

Many students come to the College with goals other than obtaining a degree or certificate; therefore, this variable is not a definitive indicator of student learning.

The Institutional Research Office collects reports on Illinois Central College transfers from all of the Illinois public universities. The better of these reports reflect a comparison of fall semester GPA between ICC transfers, all community college transfers, 4-year college transfers, and native students. Over the last several years, the College's transfer students, overall, have consistently outperformed all other transfer students and have achieved at a level equal to or greater than native students. In many cases, these reports include a breakout by discipline, which allows department chairs, coordinators, and faculty members to evaluate the preparedness of their students for the next level. These data are published each July in the *Transfer Study Report*, which is distributed college wide.

TABLE 8-C

GRADUATES 1996-2000

Year	Transfer	Applied Science	General Education	Certificate	Total
1996	540	469	101	273	1383
1997	474	363	74	234	1145
1998	606	519	132	366	1623
1999	547	459	110	310	1426
2000	573	418	97	380	1468
5-Year Avg.	548	445	102	312	1409

In summary, student success is influenced by many variables, which could be clustered into three general areas: student potential, quality instruction, and quality support services. The extent to which the College can have positive impact on these variables is the key to student success.

STUDENT RETENTION

Student retention provides another form of documentation of student academic achievement for which the College has longitudinal data covering the past 17 years. As indicated in Table 8-D, the College has maintained a 79% retention rate from fall semester to spring semester over the past five years for a population defined as new, full-time students. The literature on student retention indicates that the College's retention rate compared to other community colleges is above average. Compared to the base line year of 1984, there has been a 6% gain in student retention. The most significant increase was for the undecided student subgroup, which gained 18% over the same time period. Specific programming implemented for this group through the Academic Discovery Program seems to be a key factor in contributing to this gain.

TABLE 8-D

**FRESHMAN CLASS, FALL SEMESTER TO SPRING SEMESTER
STUDENT RETENTION 1996-2000**

GPA Categories	1996			1997			1998			1999			2000			Composite		
	Total	Returning Spring		Total	Returning Spring		Total	Returning Spring		Total	Returning Spring		Total	Returning Spring		Total	Returning Spring	
.00 - .99	284	97	34%	328	66	20%	278	74	27%	277	72	26%	247	68	28%	1414	377	27%
1.00 - 1.69	199	143	72%	224	159	71%	200	144	72%	203	164	81%	201	140	70%	1027	750	73%
1.70 - 1.99	109	94	86%	86	70	81%	105	93	87%	97	77	79%	93	82	88%	490	418	85%
2.00 - 2.99	645	573	89%	741	667	90%	699	625	89%	632	579	92%	640	561	88%	3357	3005	90%
3.00 - 4.00	581	526	91%	603	560	93%	639	581	91%	672	606	90%	685	626	91%	3180	2899	91%
	1818	1433	79%	1982	1522	77%	1921	1517	79%	1881	1498	80%	1866	1477	79%	9488	7449	79%

As the retention rates by GPA categories indicate, student retention is a byproduct of student success. This emphasizes the positive impact and importance that quality instructional programs and support services can have on student success.

General Education and Transfer Programs Assessment

General education is an integral component of all programs at Illinois Central College, and to ensure its effectiveness, the General Education Review Committee was reactivated in 1994. The General Education Committee is composed of 9 faculty members, 3 administrators, and 1 student. The committee meets once a month during the fall and spring semesters with minutes of the meetings prepared and distributed throughout the College.

A variety of assessment instruments and measures are utilized in the determination of general education and transfer program success. Illinois Central College recently instituted a General Education Survey in which students were asked to provide their perceptions of improvements in areas such as writing, computation, and critical thinking. Additionally, the IR office collects transfer and GPA data provided by 4-year schools in the preparation of the annual *Transfer Study Report*. A more detailed listing of all that is involved in the assessment process can be found in the *Student Academic Assessment Model* in the reference room.

As previously noted, each year, student outcomes assessment projects are prepared and published for distribution to faculty and administration. New teaching ideas and assessment concepts are shared across all disciplines, programs, and departments. Faculty members are able to borrow effective ideas and methodologies for incorporation into their own courses or programs.

Illinois Central College participates in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). Under the terms of IAI, a student who fulfills the general education requirements for the Arts and Science degree, as listed in the Illinois Central College catalog will also fulfill the lower divisional general education requirements at more than 100 colleges and universities, both private and public, within the State of Illinois. The IAI is intended to make the transition to a four-year college or university easier. Illinois Central College has also articulated various other transfer courses with several colleges and universities to ensure ease of transfer of credits. The current general education requirements for a transfer degree are detailed on page 8 of the *2001-2003 College Catalog*.

With approximately 1,500 students transferring to Illinois public universities each year, feedback from those universities is a very important part of the documentation of our students' academic success and is an essential part of the feedback loop for departmental evaluation, planning, and budgeting. Reports from six state public universities indicated that the Fall Semester 2000 semester GPA performance for Illinois Central College graduates was higher than all community college transfers at each of the six universities. In addition, the mean fall semester GPA for Illinois Central College students was 3.15 compared to the mean fall semester GPA of 3.12 for native students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT IN CLASSES

Student academic outcomes assessment is a faculty initiative to collect feedback on student learning. The collection of such feedback provides a continuous flow of accurate data that can be used to modify and refocus faculty teaching to improve student learning. Student academic assessments at all levels allow Illinois Central College students to have an education of the best possible quality. The assessment process is cyclical in nature with each cycle including data collection, review of data, analysis of results, conclusions, and implemented changes, as indicated by the results.

Reports of academic assessments in classes are compiled annually into *Student Academic Assessment Outcomes* booklets with the first being the pilot study from Spring Semester 1998 of 21 assessment reports from full- and part-time faculty members representing seven academic departments. The second booklet for the 1998-1999 academic year included 14 assessments from both full- and part-time faculty members representing seven academic departments. The 1999-2000 classroom assessments included 21 reports from six academic departments.

The academic assessment report forms, which have been revised annually, include information about the assessment activity, findings from the data, analysis of the data, and faculty members' use of the analysis results. Possible results are changes in teaching methods, changes in content, or changes in the assessment activity. For example, a faculty member teaching English 110 changed the process of research paper writing by breaking it into discrete units with more short assignments after analyzing the results of an exit test given to English 110 students.

In response to the Illinois Central College 2000-2001 Self-Study Full-time and Part-time Faculty Questionnaires, 56-66% of the full-time faculty respondents and 46-66% of the part-time faculty respondents indicated they used pre-post tests, skill demonstration, test item analysis assessments, and portfolio review assessments. Twenty to twenty-nine percent of the full-time faculty respondents and 17-25% of the part-time faculty members used self-assessment surveys and one-minute papers while 15% of the full-time and 7-16% of the part-time faculty respondents used other forms of assessment. Furthermore, 45% of the full-time faculty and 23% of the part-time faculty respondents reported using informal assessments that may be of use to the Outcomes Assessment Committee.

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT WITHIN AND ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Eleven assessment reports were completed within disciplines for the 1999-2000 academic year: a pre- and a post-test in all sections of Reading 106, a portfolio assessment for SurgTk 110 in the Fall Semester 1999, and nine assessment reports from nine disciplines of four academic departments in the Spring Semester 2000. Copies of these reports are in the *Student Academic Assessment Outcomes* booklet for Fall 1999-Spring 2000. During Fall Semester 2000, there were four assessment reports from three departments. For example, an intensive study was conducted in English 110 classes to determine learning growth for 123 students using pre-post writing samples. Faculty members developed an assessment rubric to standardize the scoring of the writing samples as well as to define common measurable objectives. Average scores increased from 2.3 to 2.7. In the Social Sciences Department, the psychology faculty members developed common measurable objectives and an instrument to measure them. The pre- and post-test assessment of students in Psychology 110 showed improvement in student knowledge and understanding of the subject, but the analysis also indicated needed improvements in the assessment instrument. As a result, the assessment instrument was shortened, made more specific for general education requirements, and only paired pre- and post-test results will be used in the future.

The Outcomes Assessment Committee sponsored two Assessment Workshops in January 2001 that were attended by a total of 35 faculty members and a few administrators. Two presentations were on departmental assessments, and one was on classroom assessment. The intent of the workshops was to provide feedback to other interested faculty members regarding the mechanisms for assessments, techniques for evaluating the results, and implementing changes indicated by the results.

In response to the Self-Study questionnaire, 36% of the 110 full-time faculty respondents to the survey and 34-38% of the 112 part-time faculty respondents indicated their department systematically gathers classroom assessment data for use in curriculum development and/or program change decisions. In addition, 45% of the full-time faculty and 38-45% of the part-time faculty respondents indicated their department encourages teachers of multisection courses to share assessment data in order to coordinate course requirements/procedures.

ASSESSMENT WITHIN AND ACROSS PROGRAMS

In response to the Self-Study student questionnaire, the majority of students responding indicated that the general education courses have improved their competency “very much” or “some” in the twelve areas listed. Between 60% and 80% of the students rated the following improved: speaking skills; reading skills; mathematical skills; understanding and appreciation of art, music, or literature; creative thinking; understanding other cultures; and “understanding my values” and the “values of others.” More than 80% of the student respondents reported improvement in the following skill areas: working cooperatively with others, writing skills, understanding science and technology, critical thinking/problem solving, and intellectual skills needed for continued learning. Nearly identical results were obtained through a General Education Student Self-Assessment Survey mailed to students in January 2001 from the office of the Vice President of Academic and Student Services.

Illinois Central College faculty members were asked in the Self-Study questionnaire to indicate the level of effectiveness of general education courses in attaining the following objectives: able to read and think critically; able to communicate clearly and effectively; has an awareness of/appreciation for his/her own culture as well as other cultures/viewpoints; has an awareness of own values as well as an understanding of/tolerance for others’ values; works collaboratively; has the attitudes and skills required to function in a technological society; has the intellectual skills needed for continued learning; has an awareness of world knowledge and the tools necessary to gain information needed to function as a responsible, productive, and ethical member of society; has learned knowledge building skills; and has the ability to use mathematical skills. The mean result was between 3.25 and 3.90 for all categories where a three indicates “neutral” and a four indicates “effective.” Five to eleven percent of the full-time faculty members and 4%-21% part-time faculty members rated the level of effectiveness for all categories as “very effective.”

Illinois Central College administered the *Academic Profile Exam* (Short Form) to 125 volunteer students. This exam, jointly sponsored by the College Board and Educational Testing Service, provides data regarding the level of competence of students in general education and provides comparison with standard reference group reports for students at various colleges nationwide. The results of the testing suggest a significant degree of student achievement in general education as compared to other colleges. In all seven of the test areas, the Illinois Central College sample scored significantly higher than freshmen and sophomores from other Associate of Arts two-year colleges, according to the *Academic Profile Report 2000*.

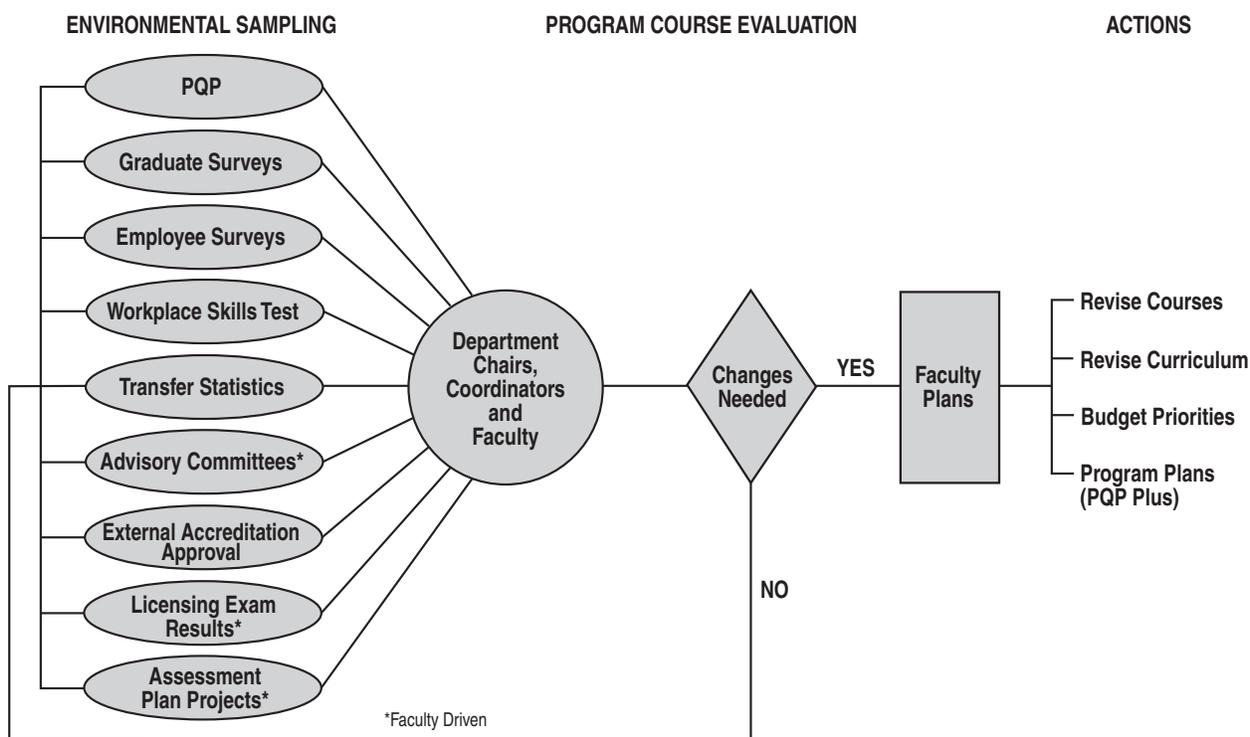
Applied Science and Certificate Program Assessment

Illinois Central College offers career programs to students seeking specialized training for employment after completion of the two-year Associate in Applied Science degree or a certificate program of fewer than two years duration. The majority of the career programs are in Agriculture and Industrial Technologies, Business and Information Systems, and Health and Public Services. Assessment of student learning in these career programs is described within the framework of the *Student Academic Assessment Model*.

CAREER PROGRAM QUALITY PROCESS

A variety of methods are used to insure the quality of career programs, as illustrated by the following diagram, which codifies the Career Program Quality Process. This process sought to identify the major activities that are routinely used to gather data and sample the environment. The information gathered is then directed to department chairs, coordinators, and faculty members for review and evaluation. If changes are needed, faculty members create a plan that results in the revision of individual courses, entire curriculum, program plans, and budget priorities.

TABLE 8-E

CAREER PROGRAM QUALITY PROCESS

The following information provides examples of how the Career Program Quality Process obtains assessment data relative to the *Student Academic Assessment Model*.

ASSESSMENT IN CLASSES

Faculty members within their classes conduct assessment of student learning through a variety of outcome measures such as pre-post testing, criterion-referenced testing, test item analysis, portfolio review and weekly feedback. Nine pre-post testing faculty projects were conducted in a variety of courses in the departments of Agriculture and Industrial Technologies, Business and Information Systems, and Health and Public Services. All projects documented increased student learning and provided faculty members with valuable feedback for curriculum improvement.

The second most popular outcomes assessment measure for faculty members in their classrooms was criterion-referenced testing, which compares end-of-the-class test scores with previously defined objectives and an absolute standard of achievement. For example, instructors of five registered nursing classes use the National League for Nursing's achievement exams for end-of-the-class standardized assessment of student learning and have documented positive outcomes. Another example of criterion-referenced testing was the use of the ACT Work Keys Assessment Program in Mechanical Design and Criminal Justice.

ASSESSMENT WITHIN AND ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Addressing the need to agree on goals, measurable objectives, and instruments to measure student learning by all faculty members teaching a particular course is a high priority and reflected in the following examples.

Two faculty member projects involving all sections of DATPR 142 – Introduction to Windows and BUS 110 – Introduction to Business documented increased student learning based on pre-post testing using departmental exams developed by faculty members in the two disciplines (Student Academic Assessment Outcomes Annual Report – Spring 2000).

ASSESSMENT WITHIN AND ACROSS PROGRAMS

In 1999, the Education to Careers Committee, which consists of representatives of all the departments with career programs, established a subcommittee to create the overall goals for the career programs. The subcommittee identified soft skills common to all the career programs rather than specific technical or job skills, which included communications, problem solving, coping with change, work ethics, teamwork, and technical literacy as goals. The Education to Careers Committee adopted these for all the career programs.

The Education to Careers Committee then recommended that the Illinois Workplace Skills be used to assess students' achievement of the skills. In fall 2000, all career programs administered the Workplace Skills test to 772 students who were approximately two-thirds of the way through their program. Since the test was administered during class time, there was a high rate of participation. The test results determined that the Illinois Central College student passing rate was 78%, the same as the State average. The intent is to continue testing annually.

Table 8-F provides the standard scores for the six workplace skills:

TABLE 8-F

WORKPLACE SKILLS

	ICC	STATE
Communicating	58	58
Adapting and Coping with Change	59	60
Solving Problems	58	59
Work Ethics	59	60
Technical Literacy	61	60
Teamwork	61	62

Fall 2000 Illinois Workplace Skills Test Building Report

Since no statistical differences exist between Illinois Central College and the Illinois State average scores, it can be assumed that students are learning. The results were also broken down by career clusters with Business, Paralegal, and Health clusters scoring above the State average in all categories. Social Sciences scored above the State average in communication and teamwork while Graphic Design students were above the State averages in solving problems and technical literacy. The Agricultural and Industrial Technology students were above the State average in technology.

As part of the feedback loop, results were made available to individual faculty members in the programs participating in this project to assist in curriculum development. Individual students were also provided with a profile report and supplementary materials to assist in their own personal development.

A second assessment of outcomes across programs is the Illinois Community College Board Occupational Follow-up Study. The following Table 8-G compares the 1999 student survey results with the 1990 survey.

TABLE 8-G

SKILLS COURSES STUDENT SATISFACTION

INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENT	SATISFIED 1990	SATISFIED 1999
Content of Courses	92%	96%
Lectures, Lab, and Projects	88%	91%
Equipment, Facilities, and Materials	86%	91%
Job Preparation	77%	86%
Further Education Preparation	82%	86%
Current Employment Opportunities and Trends Information	65%	82%

As noted, there is a positive satisfaction level for the six indicators with levels ranging from 82% to 96% with increased satisfaction rates for each instructional component, especially Current Employment Opportunities and Trends Information.

External organizations also assist the College in documenting student learning by using third-party testing and outside endorsements. For example, the Cisco program includes extensive third-party testing with the Cisco Certified Networking Associate exam after program completion. The Real Estate program, approved by the Office of Banking and Real Estate of the State of Illinois, allows the College to receive reports from the State on the number of students who pass the Real Estate exam. Finally, the web curriculum has been endorsed by the World Organization of Webmasters.

Another measure of program quality and student learning is the pass rates on professional licensing examinations. The data in Table 8-H indicate a very successful pass rate on licensing examinations for health students (Health Careers/Public Services Report 1999-2000).

TABLE 8-H

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL LICENSING PASS RATES

PROGRAM	YEAR	YEAR
Dental Hygiene	1995-2000	92%
Physical Therapist	1997-2000	88%
Registered Nursing	1997-2000	95%
Respiratory Therapist	1996-2000	94%
Radiography	1995-2000	98%
Medical Lab/Phlebotomy	1996-2000	96%
Practical Nursing	1997-2000	95%
Surgical Technology	1996-1999	83%
Occupational Therapy	1995-1999	96%
Nurse Assistant	1997-2000	98%
Emergency Medical Technician	1997-1999	99%

Health Careers/Public Services Report 1999-2000

Developmental/Remedial Education Assessment

To provide developmental and remedial level studies for students with academic deficiencies is one purpose in the College Mission. To meet this purpose, Illinois Central College offers a wide range of developmental courses through several offices. The 2001-2003 *College Catalog* describes developmental/remedial course offerings in 15 separate departments/divisions.

Not all of the courses are offered every year, but they are available to meet the specific programming needs of the College and community organizations. Data collected regarding assessment within these classes, across programs, and across these disciplines as outlined by Illinois Central College's assessment plan indicate that assessment evidence is used to improve student learning.

ASSESSMENT IN DEVELOPMENTAL/REMEDIAL CLASSES

A fall 1999 report documented that of 126 Reading 106 students given pre- and post tests, 65% showed improvement in vocabulary, and 59% showed improvement in comprehension. A related study of Reading 100 for 19 students using a pre-post test indicated 63% of the students improved in vocabulary, and 79% improved in comprehension. ENGSK 103-104 grammar students participated in a pre-and post-test, and 20 of 21 students (95%) indicated improvement. A portfolio study was used for ESL 103 - English as a Second Language. Although there was not a broad pattern of assessment in individual courses, there appears to be potential for improved documentation in this area, for when surveyed, 45% percent of faculty members teaching in developmental courses responded that they "have done informal assessments that may be of use to the Outcomes Assessment Committee."

ASSESSMENT WITHIN AND ACROSS DISCIPLINES

The most comprehensive assessment component within and across disciplines is the Academic Placement Testing Program measuring student achievement in English, mathematics, and reading as students begin the learning process at the College. Individual student scores and established cut-off score criteria for specific courses are used in course selection within the discipline and related disciplines. Over 10,000 placement tests are administered annually in English, mathematics, and reading. A variety of follow-up studies are conducted to verify the placement criteria for courses on a developmental/remedial-program-required continuum.

A comprehensive study involving reading test scores for 441 students taking transfer courses considered to be intensive reading courses was conducted in 1994. The study indicated there is a definite relationship between success, as measured by grades, and the reading test score. This information became part of the feedback loop to advisors and students to be used in building a student's semester schedule. A related study looked at the relationship between reading level scores and success in Psychology 110 and Sociology 110. The report revealed an almost perfect positive correlation between reading scores and success in the course as measured by the grade received. Students who scored between stanine 1 and 4 on the Illinois Central College placement tests earned, on average, a 1.63 (D) in Psychology 110 or Sociology 110. Students who scored 5 or above on the placement tests earned, on average, a 2.63 (C) in these classes. This information resulted in several recommendations regarding reading courses prior to or concurrently with the Psychology 110 and Sociology 110 courses.

Another form of documenting student learning is the tracking of students, after taking a developmental level course, to the next level in the discipline. A study from the Institutional Research Office indicates that in FY99 and FY00, 80% of students who completed English 105 were successful in English 110, the transfer-level course: 18% passed with an "A," 41% percent passed with a "B," and 22% percent passed with a "C." These outcomes indicate that the experience in English 105 prepares most students successfully for the next transfer-level course, English 110.

Illinois Central College's Institutional Research Office used a similar methodology for a second study. According to figures from FY99 and FY00, two-thirds or better of the students who completed Math 108 were successful in Math 115, the transfer-level course: 11% passed with an "A," 20% passed with a "B," and 33% passed with a "C." While these numbers are not as strong as the first study, they suggest that developmental courses adequately prepare a majority of students for transfer course success. Because of this information, advisors encourage students to required developmental classes.

ASSESSMENT IN DEVELOPMENTAL/REMEDIAL PROGRAMS

Under the umbrella of the Adult Education Program, funded through the Illinois Community College Board, student learning gains are assessed in two programs. The amount of assessment required and data reported to the funding agency has increased significantly from FY 92 - FY 01 with a budget line item for assessment.

Students enrolled in the General Education Development (GED) program or the English As A Second Language (ESL) program are measured for learning gains by comparing pre-post test scores using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Comprehensive English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA). These standardized assessments are mandated by the funding agency. For the years 1998-2000, 67% of the GED students had measured learning gains on the TABE while 83% of the ESL students had measured learning gains on the CELSA, as noted in the Student Outcomes Reports FY 98 - FY 00. A second measure for GED students is the number with a passing score on three of the Official Practice Tests, which resulted in a 68% passage rate. Illinois Common Performance Management Systems data, which is used for funding allocations, show that Illinois Central College is consistently higher in employment placement and in welfare reductions and cancellations than the State average. In addition to data collected in required reports, teachers use a variety of practice testing which is collected by the program but not reported formally; students are surveyed for class/instructor satisfaction. There is some documentation of the tie between the results of assessment and program improvement in the grant proposals for the Adult Education Program; however, formal College reports have not been prepared.

Strengths

- Illinois Central College has an overall assessment plan in the *Student Academic Assessment Model*.
- Classroom and departmental assessment has strong support from both full-time and part-time faculty members, department chairs, deans, and vice presidents and is reflected in a departmental budget line item.
- The Outcomes Assessment Committee provides a record of all formal assessments in the annual *Student Academic Assessment Outcomes* booklets, available to faculty members and administration.
- Assessment workshops are planned as a regular part of the inservice training for all new faculty members, as well as additional workshops for all currently employed faculty members.
- The results of the first Academic Profile Exam, the student survey, and the faculty member surveys suggest a significant degree of student learning in General Education.
- Soft skills common to all career programs have been identified, and the Illinois Workplace Skills test has been implemented to measure these skills.
- Key student data relative to student potential, success, and retention have been collected and analyzed over an extended period of time, thereby providing a longitudinal perspective.
- The Institutional Research Office has greatly enhanced the process of data coordination, collection, and analysis.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Not all of the disciplines within each department are participating in formal classroom and departmental assessments.
- There is a limited amount of feedback among the various levels of assessments at Illinois Central College along with limited evidence of changes to program planning and budget planning based on assessment data.
- Additional assessment is needed on employer satisfaction with career students' learning and skills.
- Additional data and assessment activity are needed to support that developmental/remedial education assists students who lack appropriate academic skills in their transition to college-level courses.

Recommendations

- While Illinois Central College has established an excellent plan for academic assessment, there needs to be broader support for and participation in formal classroom and departmental assessments. Greater demonstration of the short-term and long-term value of assessment in improving student learning through regularly scheduled assessment workshops planned by the Assessment Committee will enhance support. The *Student Academic Assessment Outcomes* booklets should be distributed to all full-time faculty members, and additional copies should be placed in each academic department for part-time faculty members and administrators.
- Illinois Central College needs to document more clearly when analysis of assessment data results in changes to program planning and budget planning beginning at the academic department level.
- A systematic collection of employer feedback on the effectiveness of career preparation as part of the formal program review process should be incorporated.
- Illinois Central College should continue to implement the *Student Academic Assessment Model* to have greater feedback among the various levels of assessment. Broader distribution of the *Student Academic Assessment Outcomes* booklets will help this effort.
- The Academic Profile Exam should be administered by each academic department to students in sophomore-level classes at least once a year to provide ongoing data and a larger, more representative sample of the student population at the College.
- A proficiency measure for each developmental/remedial course as it relates to next-level courses and a tracking system for ongoing follow-up should be established.

