

# **1995 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

## **ASSESSMENT REPORTS**

### **CAMPUS SUMMARIES**

**April, 1996**



# **MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**

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**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**

**1995 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**ASSESSMENT REPORTS**

**CAMPUS SUMMARIES**

**MARYLAND'S PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

**APRIL, 1996**









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## **PREFACE**

The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports are submitted by the two- and four-year public institutions to the Maryland Higher Education Commission each year. The purpose of the report is to present the results of the previous year's assessment activities. This report is the fifth submitted by the colleges and universities since the process was initiated in 1991.

In the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report, each institution is required to respond to designated performance indicators that measure student learning outcomes. The inclusion of additional campus-specific indicators is encouraged but not required. The institutions were asked to organize the information in an appropriate format, in accordance with their individual assessment plan. The reporting of each indicator is expected to be accomplished with relevant interpretation and analysis, and with multi-year trends, when possible. In addition, the institutions are asked to include information on recommendations and actions they have taken or plan to take as a result of their findings.

This document contains the summaries of the 1995 Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports of Maryland's public two- and four-year postsecondary educational institutions. The following information is provided for each institution:

- Institutional impact of student learning outcomes
- Staff summary
- Indicators of student learning outcomes









**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
Annual Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report  
Reporting Guidelines (June 1995)

**Background**

The 1988 Reorganization of Maryland Higher Education Act gave the Maryland Higher Education Commission the responsibility for coordinating the efforts of public colleges and universities to evaluate their performance and provide accountability reports. The assessment of an institution's effectiveness in terms of student learning outcomes is identified in the Maryland Plan for Postsecondary Education as a key component of accountability.

Accordingly, the Commission required each two- and four-year public campus in 1991 to develop a plan for the assessment of undergraduate student learning outcomes and to submit annual progress reports indicating the status of the plan's implementation. The Commission's goal was to encourage institutions, and particularly their faculty, to improve student learning, instructional effectiveness, and curriculum.

The Commission approved these plans and has received progress reports from the campuses for 1992, 1993 and 1994. Each report was to 1) provide data on common and institution-specific indicators of student performance, 2) analyze the significance of the data to student learning outcomes, and 3) discuss the implications of the assessment process for innovations and changes at the campus.

The following guidelines should be used by the institutions in preparing the student learning outcomes assessment report due to the Commission on December 15, 1995.

**Format**

The student learning outcomes assessment reports will be submitted in two parts:

- Part I will include an executive summary which clearly discusses Institutional Impact. Institutions should succinctly report the impact of assessment upon teaching and learning, curriculum, academic planning and decision-making.



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**Format (Cont'd.)**

- Part II will include discussion of the Common Indicators and the Institutional Indicators. The report shall include an explanation of the significance of the findings to the enhancement of student learning outcomes particularly in relation to the mission of the institution. Trend data in the form of tables and/or charts shall be presented in the narrative of Part II. Each indicator (common and institutional) should include:
  - a) Analysis of the Indicator The analysis shall include reference to trends during the past three years and a discussion of possible causes of the findings.
  - b) Planning for Innovation and Change The report shall contain a discussion of the impact of the findings on campus policies, services and educational practices related to student learning outcomes. The review of impact could include areas such as course content and prerequisites, teaching methods, entrance requirements, and student services. The report also should examine the extent to which the assessment effort has had specific educational benefits for students. The information provided may include both actions that have taken place as well as those planned for the future.

**Common Indicators of Student Learning**

The following common indicators shall be included:

1. Effectiveness of general education programs.
2. Student retention and graduation rates for all campuses and transfer patterns for community colleges.
3. Students' evaluation of teaching.
4. Admission of undergraduates to post-baccalaureate study (four-year campuses).
5. Academic performance of students who transfer to a baccalaureate program (two-year campuses).



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**Common Indicators (Cont'd.)**

6. Students' performance on licensing, certification, and graduate admission examinations.
7. Employment rates of graduates.
8. Perceptions of graduates about the quality of their educational experience, as revealed in follow-up surveys.

**Institutional Indicators**

Campuses also may supply data on indicators particular to their institution or segment. These will vary among campuses and should be tailored to an institution's specific circumstances. The following are examples of possible indicators:

1. Basic skills proficiency exams in English and mathematics.
2. Other institutional or national tests designed to measure students' learning and achievement.
3. Capstone courses and senior theses.
4. Portfolios of students' work.
5. Honors and other competitive awards to students.
6. Students' assessment of the curriculum.
7. Surveys of employers' satisfaction with graduates' preparation.
8. Surveys of employment recruiters who interview on campus.
9. Department surveys of graduates.
10. External evaluations of student performance by professional accrediting bodies.









**TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**







## **Allegany College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

Allegany College has made many positive strides toward developing a culture of institutional effectiveness. It measures effectiveness at many levels and has endeavored to maintain a capacity for innovation based on information about consumer needs and preferences. The College intends to continue to expand its outcomes measurement efforts.

### **Staff Summary**

The College appears to be serving its educational mission well. Studies have shown that students, employees, graduates, community residents, and professional accreditation bodies are very satisfied with the quality of the College and its programs.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The premise of building an effective general education program is based on the assumption that knowledge, skills, and competencies which comprise a sound general education area should be integrated across courses in both liberal arts and career/vocational programs. According to the graduate follow-up survey, graduates of AC indicated that their attendance at AC helped clarify goals, improve self-confidence, and increase their enjoyment of learning. Graduates also gave high ratings to their science/technical education and improvement of their writing, mathematics, and reading comprehension skills.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** AC students continue to achieve high success rates. The success rates (students who have graduated, transferred, or are continuing) of AC students are higher than the statewide average for each year of the study. The success rates of the 1988 cohort are 55 percent for AC and 49 percent for the State. For the 1989 cohort, the corresponding figures are 53 percent for AC and 51 percent for the State. For the 1990 cohort, the success rate for AC students is 52 percent and 48 percent for the State.

The academic achievement of AC students at Maryland's public universities continues to meet or exceed State standards. Eighty-five percent of the AC transfers were still in attendance in the Spring of 1991, compared to 79 percent of all Maryland community college transfers and 89 percent of the freshmen native to the institution. AC students academic performance at the public universities out-paced the Maryland community college and native freshmen norms. For example, none of the AC transfers in the Spring of 1991 had GPAs in the failure range of 0.00 to 0.99, and more AC students (52 percent) achieved the highest GPAs of 3.00-4.00 than did students from either of the other two groups.



**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** All AC students complete an end-of-course evaluation to assess the effectiveness of instruction. The results of the students' evaluations of teachers are sorted by individual instructor and by course (i.e., results of all sections of a particular class are combined and examined in aggregate form). Faculty evaluation results which fall one standard deviation below the mean are referred to the Vice-President for Instructional Affairs. The composite scores from student evaluations shows a steady increase from 4.19 in Fall 1990 to 4.36 in Fall 1993 leveling off to 4.33 in Fall 1994. Additionally, the graduate follow-up surveys of 1990, 1992 and 1994 indicates that 9 out of 10 AC graduates rated the quality of instruction as "good" or "very good."

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Students who recently graduated from AC's allied health programs have out-performed national averages in every year since 1990 on every exam, except Dental Hygiene. In 1991, 76 percent of the Dental Hygiene graduates passed the National Board Exam, compared to a 9<sup>2</sup> percent average. Since then, Dental Hygiene students have steadily improved to meet or exceed national test pass-rate averages.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Employers, asked to rate AC graduates on various job attributes, indicated that the highest ratings were given to graduates' abilities to learn on-the-job. Nine out of ten employers of the 1994 graduates indicated that they would recommend other employers to hire an AC graduate from the same program.

**Institutional Indicators:** AC has just completed their Middle States Accreditation. As a part of their self-study, the College has had to carefully evaluate its institutional effectiveness. AC intends to expand its outcomes measurement efforts, particularly in the areas of developmental education, off-campus education, job placement, and academic advising.





## **Anne Arundel Community College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

In 1995, the college launched two key initiatives to support its vision: the Fund for Innovation (FFI) and the Center for Teaching and Learning. The FFI was created to support innovative and creative initiatives by faculty, administrators, and staff. The Center is charged with promoting instructional innovation and instructional effectiveness.

### **Staff Summary**

AACC is committed to the strategic priorities of teaching and learning, technology, student success, enrollment development, funding, and human resources. It appears that the college is on target in all seven areas and is effectively serving students desiring to transfer, earn a formal degree, or prepare for employment.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Effectiveness of General Education Program: On the graduate survey of 1994, AACC's students rated the college's contribution to their personal development. AACC graduates responded that the college contributed most to their increased enjoyment of learning, enhanced self-confidence, and clarification of educational and career goals.

Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates: The success rate of AACC students has been steady at about 50 percent through all four cohorts. The percent of students transferring has also leveled off at about 30 percent. Graduating students have gradually increased from 15.7 percent for the 1988 cohort to 18.4 percent for the 1991 cohort. Students who are still enrolled after three years have remained consistent at about 51 percent.

AACC tracks the percent of students in each of four cohorts who had earned a bachelor's degree within four years of transferring. AACC transfer students have consistently completed at about 55 percent over all three cohorts. Over 60 percent of the students who transferred to Salisbury, Towson, University of Maryland College Park, and University of Baltimore from the 1990-91 cohort graduated within four years. All of the students from the 1989-90 and 1990-91 cohorts who transferred to the University of Maryland Baltimore County graduated within four years.

Student Evaluation of Instruction: The percent of graduates who rated faculty as good/very good has declined slightly since 1988 (from 95 percent to 91 percent in 1994). The evaluation of faculty availability and helpfulness has remained steady at 83 percent since the 1990 graduate survey.



**Licensing and Certification Exams:** AACC graduates' first-time pass rates on 1995 certification exams were generally high. All of the radiologic technology students passed their tests on the first try. Registered nursing students had a 99 percent pass rate; EMT-Paramedic students had an 88 percent; EMT-Ambulance 95 percent; EMT-First Responder had 100 percent; and, Cardiac Rescue Technician had an 81 percent pass rate.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** The percent of graduates employed in their field of study, or related field, declined from 65 percent for 1990 graduates to 62 percent for 1994 graduates. The employment rates varied widely across programs. The percent of graduates employed in a field related to their community college program was high for career areas such as allied health programs and lowest for the arts and science transfer program.



## **Baltimore City Community College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

BCCC has initiated several reforms to confront the issue of student success. In October 1994, the college was awarded a \$1.75 million Title III Grant. The work underway is tangible documentation of the institutional impact of student learning outcomes assessment upon teaching and learning, curriculum, academic planning, and decision-making.

### **Staff Summary**

As a result of data compiled in response to the annual Student Learning Outcomes Report, BCCC has instituted aggressive systemic changes to address the retention issues of its students. The College has taken the position that student success is directly related to student preparation for college-level work and has devoted time, energy, and resources to improving student success.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** BCCC has recognized the significance of an effective developmental program. BCCC has aggressively monitored the student outcomes of remediated students. BCCC has carefully tracked the progress of students enrolled in remedial English and math and has concluded that the results are not to their liking. Likewise, the College closely monitors the success rate of students enrolled in English 101, a cornerstone course required for a successful collegiate experience. Only about 50 percent of the students pass this course, and BCCC identifies this as an area of grave concern. To that end, BCCC has secured Title III funds and instituted other measures to completely reevaluate the remedial education program which are expected to lead to improvements in the English 101 pass rates.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** BCCC's success rate has been rising steadily since 1985. Of first-time, full-time students entering the College in Fall 1994, only 24 percent graduated, transferred, or were retained four years later. In contrast, 39 percent of the Fall 1990 entering class has achieved at least one of these outcomes within four years. While the success rates still lag the statewide average by 10 percent, BCCC has made a commitment to bring the success rates to 45 percent for the Fall 1996 class.

The overall unduplicated success rate has risen substantially since the Fall 1986 entering class. The improvement can be attributed mostly to enhanced transfer and retention activity. The total percent who transferred has risen from 13.9 percent for the Fall 1989 entrants to 19.9 percent for the Fall 1990 entrants. The retention rate has risen from 5.5 percent to 12.6 percent



for the same cohorts. The overall graduation rate has remained fairly stable, ranging from 11.3 percent for the 1990 cohort to 14.2 percent for the Fall 1988 cohort.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** In graduate student surveys conducted in 1992 and 1995, graduates were asked to rate the college in seven areas; such as, quality of teaching, class scheduling, academic advising, and library services. In both surveys, quality of teaching was rated highest, with over 80 percent describing it as good/very good. The lowest rating in 1995 was given to class scheduling. In all seven areas, there was a decline in student satisfaction from the 1992 survey to the 1995 survey.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Overall, BCCC students requiring certification in allied health professions have been successful and have passed licensing exams in high numbers. Passing rates for students have been between 95-100 percent in all areas but two: Dietetic Technician and Health Information Technology. The college has identified those programs for review and renovation.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** The proportion of overall graduates employed in their field within one year after graduation is slightly greater than 60 percent. This proportion varied greatly by program area, ranging for 1994 graduates from 35 percent for human services to 97 percent for nursing. It appears that the low placement rates for human services and business can be attributed to students who are working outside of their field of training together with students who have transferred to senior institutions. Overall, 85 percent of the 1994 graduates rated their preparation for employment as good/very good.

**Institutional Indicators:** In order to systematically address weaknesses among several employment and transfer outcomes, BCCC has developed and implemented a program evaluation process which forms the basis of decision-making. This process is used to evaluate one-third of its programs every year. In evaluating career programs, 21 criteria distributed among seven major areas are used to measure the programs. The review of such student learning outcomes has led to recommendations for suspension of one program, restructuring of another, enhancement and restructuring for two, enhancement for two, and maintenance for nine programs. The continued analysis of student learning outcomes will result in improvements in both employment and transfer outcomes.





## **Carroll Community College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

Carroll Community College is beginning to implement an outcomes model for instructional improvement which will result in data on the transition from developmental to credit courses, student learning in credit courses, student persistence, student goal achievement and student success after leaving the college. Such information will be incorporated in Program Reviews and will have a major impact on the classroom and the curriculum.

### **Staff Summary**

CCC was established as a separate institution in 1993. Data on student learning outcomes is just beginning to be collected. Meaningful data comparisons will not be available until a few more years of information is received and processed.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** A new general education program was implemented for Carroll Community College in the Fall semester of 1994. Data on the effectiveness of this new general education pattern will become available in future years.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** The first identifiable cohort of CCC students entered in the Fall of 1993. Limited data on status of students from this cohort. Of the 2,632 students enrolled at CCC in Fall 1993, 6.1 percent transferred to four-year institutions, 5 percent transferred to other two-year institutions, and 40.5 percent returned to CCC

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Current student evaluation data are obtained from the Student Information Report (SIR) form. Students are asked to rate their instruction on 14 items, using a 4 point scale (4 is highest; 1 is lowest). Overall, the students rate the instructional quality of CCC rather well. All of the disciplines but one show an average rating over 3.00, with half the disciplines rated 3.5 or better and 16 percent at 3.75 or better. Two disciplines received over 3.9. The college-wide average across the fourteen items was 3.51.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Carroll Community College has just begun its own Career Programs. One of the first such programs, Physical Therapist Assistant, is only two years old and will not be eligible for licensing until after the 1995-96 academic year.



Graduate Employment Rates: CCC participated in the biennial graduate follow-up survey for the first time in Spring 1995. Of the 100 graduates who responded, 44 percent were working full-time, and 75 percent of them indicated they were working in jobs directly or somewhat related to their program of study.

Only 21 employers responded to the employer survey. Overall, the employers appear to be satisfied with the graduates they have employed. Fully 84.6 percent rated the oral communication skills and the reading and comprehension skills of the graduates as good/very good. Sixty-nine percent of the employers rated the graduates' writing skills and ability to solve problems related to the job as good/very good.

Institutional Indicators: The college has embarked on an outcomes assessment program which, in part, is based on student achievement of course objectives. Data obtained from this program will enable identification of those objectives which are not being met within a given course. With this information, instructors will be able to design new approaches to promote student learning.



## **Catonsville Community College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

CCC has introduced several initiatives to design, develop, institutionalize, and monitor student learning outcomes. For example, they are advancing a computerized instructional model to include revising the general education requirements to be offered via computer or interactive compressed video. The college intends to expand the use of technology across the curriculum. In addition to an internal institutional assessment program, CCC has undergone a Middle States Self-Study and several other program evaluation and reaccreditation activities.

### **Staff Summary**

Due in large amount to the Middle States Self-Study process and Student Learning Outcomes studies, CCC has been busy identifying its successes and weaknesses. Many improvements and enhancements have been made to cultivate outreach, retention, developmental education, and course and curriculum reviews.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The College's overall course "pass rates" have continued to decline from 80 percent in Fall 1991 to 69 percent in Fall 1994, although students in developmental education courses had generally increasing rates of passing over the same time period. Ongoing efforts to improve tutoring, retention, assessment and placement are all focused on enhancing students' success rates.

Graduate student surveys have provided insights into the satisfactory attainment of general education skills. The most recent class survey indicated that their highest attainment from CCC was in increased enjoyment of learning (66 percent); clarified educational or career goals (65 percent); and enhanced self-confidence (62 percent). The College has also identified those areas on which declines or increases from the 1992 survey were observed. For example, satisfaction with transfer preparation increased from 79 percent to 90 percent, while satisfaction with employment preparation declined from 78 percent to 74 percent. Responses to the "would you attend the College again if you were starting over" and the "would you choose the same program again" questions declined in the proportion of students who answered "yes, definitely" from 93 percent to 91 percent and from 72 percent to 69 percent, respectively.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** The success rate for new full-time students four years later for those students in the Fall semesters of 1986, 1988, 1989, and 1990 were reported. The success rate for all students has remained at about 50 percent since 1988. Transfer students have



been experiencing a slight decline from 55.4 percent for the 1988 cohort to 52.7 percent for the 1990 cohort. Career program students have fluctuated from 45.5 percent for the 1986 cohort to 44.3 percent for the 1989 cohort to 37.9 percent for the 1990 cohort.

Student Evaluation of Instruction: The college requires student evaluation of teaching as a part of the personnel evaluation system. By college policy, the data may not be used to compare programs, departments, or disciplines. The college does, however, conduct graduate follow-up surveys to gauge instructional effectiveness. The 1994 graduate follow-up survey results included an 89 percent "good" or "excellent" teacher effectiveness rating (verses 90 percent in the 1992 survey).

Licensing and Certification Exams: CCC offers several programs leading to licensing or certification. Historically, between 95-100 percent of Catonsville's graduates of the registered nursing program pass their exams. Likewise, graduates of the occupational therapy assistant program typically have 100 percent pass rates on their licensure exam. Additionally, the College meets the added accreditation requirements for Mortuary Science, Nursing, and Occupational Therapy Assistants.

Graduate Employment Rates: 1994 graduates reported in the most recent graduate follow-up survey reasonable satisfaction with the preparation for employment they received (74 percent said "good or "very good"), and 76 percent indicated that their program of study at CCC was related to their job.





## **Cecil Community College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The college is developing a new plan for systematic program review. The criteria will include enrollment trends; retention, graduation, employment, and transfer rates; student and employer satisfaction; advisory council input, and other pertinent indicators. The assessment team has been charged with creating a framework for the college's assessment plan by the close of this academic year, and will include a structure for assessment of general education as well as departmental specific assessment.

### **Staff Summary**

Cecil uses the results of the student learning outcomes report to carefully appraise its programs in meeting institutional, community, and professional goals. The college has instituted measures to better monitor the indicators and develop appropriate strategies.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The college tracks grade distribution information of students who enroll in English, math, sciences, arts/humanities, and social sciences. A review of the three-year completion trends shows a consistent pattern of completion with an overall average of 76 percent of the students successfully completing general education courses. English and math courses (courses usually taken early in the student's academic experience) are consistently lower than social sciences, arts/humanities, and sciences.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** There was a 21 percent increase in total transfer students from 1992 to 1993 and a 6 percent decrease in transfer program students from 1993 to 1994. However, from 1992 to 1994, the increase of students in transfer programs was 14 percent. The data shows that students are continuing to select transfer programs rather than career categories. Cecil transfer students earned a 2.88 overall GPA at receiving institutions, .28 points above the average for all community college transfers, and the highest among all community colleges.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Analysis and comparison of student evaluations of faculty for academic years 1992 through 1995 show little variation. Faculty in the Arts and Sciences Division and Careers Division are consistently ranked as "excellent."

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Students graduating from Cecil's nursing program continue to excel at the licensure exam. Students sat for the exam in three states and 96 percent of those taking the exam passed it. The current national pass average is 91 percent and Maryland's associate degree programs pass at about 92 percent. Cecil ranked fifth out of 24 nursing programs in Maryland (diploma, associate and bachelor) is overall pass rate.



**Graduate Employment Rates:** The graduate follow-up survey offered insight into graduate placement rates. Of those surveyed at the 1995 graduation, 42 percent indicated that they were currently employed full-time; 34 percent were employed part-time; 36 percent had transferred to another institution; and, 18 percent were jobless and still seeking employment. Fully 67 percent of the graduates responded that their job preparation at Cecil was good/very good.

**Institutional Indicators:** Cecil evaluated the effectiveness of the developmental education program. Except for transfer students who have completed comparable course work and transfer students with degrees, all first-time degree-seeking students must take the college's skills assessments. Over the five-year period of 1991 to 1995, first-time degree-seeking students accounted for 59 percent of the first-time enrollment. Of those degree-seeking students, 85 percent completed the college's mandatory skills assessments and 76 percent of those students enrolled in at least one developmental course.



## Charles Community College

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

CCCC has been engaged in several assessment activities to examine institutional impact on enhancing the quality of instructional delivery to the students and further promote student learning. Among those ventures is the delivery of credit instruction between the La Plata and St. Mary's campuses over the Maryland Distance Learning Network in the Fall of 1994. In the Fall of 1995, the Calvert campus taught a wide variety of courses from virtually every department. The distance learning technology has greatly enhanced access to higher education for the tri-county residents.

### **Staff Summary**

CCCC is actively involved in student learning outcomes endeavors. They have requested accreditation from the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs and have received full accreditation from the National League for Nursing. Additionally, the college has developed community partnerships to enhance academic preparation for college and improve the college experience. The college's determined efforts have resulted in steadily improving success rates for its students.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The effectiveness of the general education program is reflected in the graduate follow-up surveys of 1990, 1992, and 1994. Most of the results were stable over time; however, ratings of math, science and technology increased while ratings of artistic appreciation and attentiveness to world events fell.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** The size of full-time freshmen classes has been increasing steadily over the last four years. The overall success rates ranged from 54 percent to 64 percent. The transfer rates of the fall 1989 (28.3 percent), 1990 (29.8 percent), and 1991 (32.8 percent) cohorts have increased steadily; however, it has not reached the rate accomplished by the fall 1988 (38.1 percent) cohort. The data also indicates that students are enrolled at the college longer.

The performance of CCCC transfer students at the four-year institutions have been better than all the community colleges in the state since 1988-89. For example, in 1992-93, 12 percent of CCCC transfer students at the public four-year institutions have earned a 4.0 average. In 1993-94, 10 percent have earned a 4.0 GPA.



**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Over the past three fall semesters, the instructors from at least one-third of the course sections have been evaluated by their students on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent). The level of student satisfaction remains very high. The average faculty rating across all disciplines was 4.37 in 1993, 4.44 in 1994, and 4.43 in 1995.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** From 1991 to 1994, the proportion of the registered nursing students who have passed the licensure exam has stayed around 86 percent. In 1995, the passing rate for registered nurses broke through the 90 percent mark.

The proportion of practical nursing students who have passed the licensure exam has fluctuated for the past five years. During 1992, 1994 and 1995, 100 percent of the students passed the exam. In 1991, 81 percent passed and in 1993, 94 percent passed.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** One year after graduation, 85 percent of the 1994 graduates reported being employed, 11 percent were enrolled in school full-time, and 4 percent were unemployed but seeking a job.

The 1994 employer survey revealed that CCCC career graduates' employers are very satisfied with the graduates' job performance. The overall preparation for employment was rated good/very good by 94 percent of the employers. Likewise, 94 percent of the employers rated their employees' reading and comprehension skills as good/very good. The lowest marks were given for computer skills (82 percent rated good/very good).

**Institutional Indicators:** In addition to the distance learning initiative, CCCC has been engaged in improving instruction through a pilot part-time faculty mentoring project. The successful pilot project has resulted in faculty with better instructional skills, improved strategies for student-centered learning, and increased support for the new faculty.

Additionally, the college has invested in the development of permanent campuses in St. Mary's and Calvert County. The St. Mary's campus in Leonardtown is scheduled to open in Fall 1996. The Calvert campus is scheduled to open in Prince Frederick by 2000.





## Chesapeake College

### Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes

Chesapeake College has focused much effort on its general education curriculum. The College includes a capstone course which integrates learning secured in prior general education core courses. Additionally, English faculty piloted a process to identify which general education objectives were emphasized in ENG 101 and how these objectives were being evaluated in this course. The pilot "course mapping" identified 25 objectives that were strongly emphasized and evaluated in ENG 101.

### Staff Summary

During 1995, Chesapeake's student outcomes project provided outcome indicators to the college's reaccreditation self-study effort. The college has instituted several ventures in response to the outcomes report, particularly in evaluating the effectiveness of general education.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Effectiveness of General Education Program: Graduate and employer surveys also provide feedback of general education. Employers of the 1994 graduates were generally satisfied with the level of general education skills of the graduates they hired. These employers reported highest satisfaction with math skills, ability to learn on the job, communication skills, ability to solve problems, and overall preparation. The graduates rated goal clarification, enjoyment of learning, and improved self-confidence highest.

The faculty continues to revise course requirements and review both individual courses and the core of required courses to ensure all general education objectives are being adequately addressed. Chesapeake requires a capstone course, "The Nature of Knowledge," which integrates learning acquired in previous general education core courses.

Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates: CC measures retention in a number of ways including semester withdrawal rates, course completion rates, and fall-to-spring retention rates. Chesapeake's fall-to-spring retention rates for all students have declined from 62 percent in 1992-93 to 54 percent in 1994-95. At least three-fourths of all full-time students return the following semester, of which only about half the part-time students will return.

The graduation rate since 1982 for first-time full-time students three years after graduation shows an average of 25 percent of the students graduate from CC compared to an average of 18 percent state-wide. The cohort entering in 1987 recorded the high of 35 percent graduating; the low was the 1989 cohort with 19 percent.



The transfer rate of first-time full-time students within three years of entering Chesapeake College has declined from 23 percent for the 1988 cohort to 19 percent for the 1990 and 1991 cohorts. Most students from Chesapeake transfer to Salisbury, UMES, and UMCP.

Student Evaluation of Instruction: Chesapeake currently requires student evaluations of every instructor in the Fall semester. These evaluations are important criteria in professional advancement and in providing feedback to the division and individual instructor.

Licensing and Certification Exams: Graduates of the radiology program continue to have a 100 percent pass rate on the certification examination.

Graduate Employment Rates: Chesapeake conducts surveys of the employers of graduates every other year. These efforts indicate that employers generally think well of Chesapeake graduates and are willing to hire additional program graduates.

Institutional Indicators: Other institutional indicators used by CC include a capstone course "The Nature of Knowledge" which integrates learning acquired in previous general education core courses. Additionally, Chesapeake's five-year self-study was accepted and praised by Middle States. It has served as a source of new initiatives for the college and guided a number of developments. CC completed its accreditation self-study and hosted the evaluation team in Spring 1995.



## **Dundalk Community College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

It has been a year of growth and change at DCC. In July 1995, the Community Colleges of Baltimore County was established to consolidate the direction of the three colleges under one chancellor. The reorganization has forced a close examination of programs and services. Several changes have been instituted in the areas of teaching and learning, curriculum, academic planning, and decision-making.

### **Staff Summary**

Much of the information gathered from studies such as these have helped the college to identify areas of weakness and build on their strengths. They have formed a partnership with their sister institutions to standardize general education policies and offerings. Additionally, DCC has been monitoring the successes of their students and instituting measures to improve their graduation, transfer, and retention rates.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** Dundalk has joined with Catonsville and Essex Community Colleges to form a CCBC Tri-College Committee. The goal is to require the same minimum number of credits in each of the six General Education categories for both the AAS and AA/AS degrees at all three colleges. They have agreed to require all transfer students to take a minimum of 34 credits to graduate with an AA or AS degree. The tri-college number of credits for the AAS degree is 22. The previous DCC minimum for all degrees was 20 credits.

Due to the results of the graduate survey, Dundalk has taken steps to strengthen its general education requirements. The areas with the lowest responses were in the areas of "ability to use math" and "knowledge of cultures and history." Therefore, DCC has increased the required number of credits from three to six in two disciplines: Humanities and Arts, and Behavioral Science. Further, the three credits from math must provide students with numerical, analytical, statistical and problem-solving skills. All degree-seeking students (AAS or AA/AS degrees) must take their general education courses from the same approved list.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** The overall retention of first-time students from fall-to-spring semesters has shown a moderate growth over the five year period of Fall 1990 to Fall 1994, from 50 percent to 54 percent. The retention rate in the transfer programs, however, has taken a dramatic decline from about 70 percent in 1992, 1993, and 1994 to 53 percent in 1995.

An eleven-year analysis of success patterns for first-time full-time students three years after admission was done. DCC has a 44 percent average success rate. The lowest was with the 1983 cohort with 30 percent, the highest for the 1988 cohort with 49 percent. The success rate of the most recent cohort (1991) was 41 percent. The average transfer rate was 13 percent, the average graduation rate was 21 percent, and the average retention rate was 14 percent.

Student Evaluation of Instruction: All faculty are required to administer an 18-item Student Evaluation Form to each class section taught. On a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always), students are asked to rate the quality of teaching and instruction. The college's ratings have improved in all 18 areas since 1990. The overall average in 1994 was 4.56 and the average for each item was over 4.0, with all but four responses averaging over 4.5. The lowest score in 1994 was for textbooks (4.05), and the highest (4.78) was "showed interest in subject matter."

Licensing and Certification Exams: The information about the performance of DCC students on licensing and certification exams was not provided.

Graduate Employment Rates: Based on the annual survey of graduates, the average employment rate of the DCC graduates for the past four years was 85 percent. The employment rate of graduates remain consistently high. The steady increase in employment rates of graduates may have resulted from the joint effort of program directors and the staff of the Office of Experiential Learning to offer graduate placement assistance.

Institutional Indicators: DCC has expanded the study's requirements to evaluate data for as much as an eleven year period. Because of this data, they have included additional general education requirements to improve students' math skills and global perspective. With an eye to enrollment and demographics of their service area, the college has instituted measures to provide strong, integrated support services and enhance the job search/employment preparation of its students.

## Essex Community College

### Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes

Essex Community College has instituted several programs to address student learning outcomes. Among them are a requirement that all new students must be assessed in English, reading, and math (unless exempted). Approximately 6 percent of the college's course enrollments were in developmental courses. Additionally, the college has instituted changes in its general education program to better fit the State requirements.

### Staff Summary

Essex has made strides in addressing retention, graduation, and transfer needs. The college has instituted measures to identify students requiring remediation, improved the general education program, and made necessary curricular revisions. The college appears to have met its mission goals and objectives. Even so, the college continues to monitor its programs and services for continual improvement.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Effectiveness of General Education Program: The effectiveness of the general education program can be assessed from the biannual graduate and employer surveys. Among the 1994 graduates who responded, at least 78 percent reported that they had some or a great deal of improvement in each of the areas included in the survey. In five content-oriented areas, from 35 percent to 52 percent of the survey respondents said that attending the college resulted in a great deal of improvement. The employers of ECC graduates rated them very highly in terms of various skills related to important goals of the college's general education curriculum.

Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates: The college's success rate for first-time full-time students entering in Fall 1990 (46 percent) is similar to the success rate for the comparable statewide cohort (48 percent). The success rate of ECC students had been steadily increasing, from 43 percent for the 1982 cohort, to 51 percent for the 1988 and 1989 cohorts. The transfer rates have averaged 27 percent since the 1982 cohort, and 27 percent of the 1994 cohort transferred. The graduation rate for transfer programs has ranged from 15.6 percent for the 1986 cohort to 27.2 percent for the 1988 cohort, with the 24.8 percent reported for the 1990 cohort. The average graduation rate over the 8-year reporting period was 20.14 percent. In contrast, the graduation rate of the career program students averaged 23.95 percent. The highest was also the 1988 cohort with 30.2 percent and the lowest was the 1990 cohort at 19.2 percent.

The fall-to-spring retention rates appear to fluctuate somewhat. The retention rate for all part-time students was slightly higher than the comparable rate for last year. Eighty percent of all full-time students who entered the college in the Fall 1993 semester returned the following Spring.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** The results of standardized instructor evaluations indicate that as in previous years, students rate their instructors very highly in all areas. The ratings in all 10 categories have remained in the 80-90 percent range for the years 1990 through 1994.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Essex students who sit for certification and registry exams related to their programs of study consistently have high pass rates on these exams. In 1994, students from the nuclear medicine, physician assistant, and radiography programs achieved a 100 percent pass rate. Students in nursing (91 percent), radiation therapy technology (70 percent), respiratory therapy technology (90 percent), and veterinary technology (70 percent) had acceptable completion rates.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Graduates interested in obtaining employment continue to have a high rate of employment, despite the difficult economic conditions in the Baltimore metropolitan area. Fully 81 percent of the 1994 graduates are employed one year after graduation; 51 percent are employed full-time and 30 percent are employed part-time. Half of the students who completed their education at Essex have gone on for additional education; 35 percent are full-time students and 16 percent are part-time students. Nearly three-fourths of the students are engaged in a program of study similar to their field of study at Essex.

**Institutional Indicators:** Essex uses the external evaluations of student performance by professional accrediting associations as one of their institutional indicators. Three programs: Radiation Therapy, Theater, and Physician Assistant have undergone in-depth evaluations by specialized accreditation agencies and all have been awarded full accreditation. Findings from program self-studies and team visits have provided program faculty with information and insights that have been used to update and improve program curricula and strategies.



## Frederick Community College

### Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes

Five academic programs have completed the Institutional Accountability Review Process. Over a five-year cycle, each program in the College will be presented by its faculty to a group of academic administrators and peers. A large component of the report is devoted to student learning outcomes. In light of the large number of adjunct faculty, FCC has allocated professional development funds to establish the Skilled Scholars professional development program. This program is a pedagogically-based series of workshops offered by full-time faculty and administrators whose goal is to enhance teaching beliefs and classroom behaviors.

### Staff Summary

The percentage of students transferring to a four-year institution has increased 26 percent over the past four years. This may be indicative of FCC emphasis on strengthening its general education curriculum.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Effectiveness of General Education Program: Graduate responses to the effectiveness of the General Education Core courses have been increasingly positive. For example, 50 percent of 1990 graduates responded that the general education courses provided good or great results in improving writing skills. For the class of 1994, that percentage was 61 percent.

In addition, prospective graduates are surveyed on the effectiveness of the general education program. There have been some decreases in the percentage of prospective graduates who rated several aspects of the core "good/great." Further information will be necessary before trends can be established.

Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates: Retention rates from semester to semester have remained steady. Three year graduation rates have consistently exceeded the community college statewide average. The number of students transferring to a four-year institution has increased 26 percent during the past four years. Hood College remains the transfer college of choice for non-traditional age students, while Towson State University and Shepherd College (WV) are the top choices for traditional age students. Transfer student are very positive about their preparation at FCC.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Student course evaluations were distributed in all sections of three courses. Instruction was rated very positively. Prospective graduates also rated instruction in a positive manner. Ninety four percent of 1995 respondents rated classroom instruction as "good/very good".

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** FCC offers four programs that require licensure certification: Practical Nursing, Registered Nursing, Respiratory Therapy and Aviation Maintenance Technology. With the exception of one year, at least 90 percent of FCC students pass the State RN and LPN Nursing licensure exam. Respiratory Therapy students pass at a rate at or above the national average. At least 95 percent of FCC students taking the FAA aviation licensure exams pass on the first attempt.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Due to a low response rate, updated information was not provided. Past data indicates that over three quarters of FCC graduates feel that their preparation for employment was either very good or good.

**Institutional Indicators:** FCC provided results of student surveys conducted in the skills development program in mathematics, writing and reading. Over 66 percent of students taking developmental writing felt that their writing ability improved significantly. Students in the developmental reading courses indicated increased satisfaction with their writing abilities after taking the course.

## **Garrett Community College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The assessment of student learning outcomes at Garrett has provided a basis for planning and decision making in several areas throughout the college, including academic programs, curriculum development, and student retention. Academic program planning was influenced significantly by an assessment of changing trends in full-time versus part-time student enrollment. In response to downward trends shown in prior year assessments, initiatives were planned to schedule course offerings at times and locations to make GCC accessible to prospective part-time students.

### **Staff Summary**

As one of the smallest institutions in the public education system, GCC has had to make a determined effort to maintain enrollments and meet community needs while preserving academic excellence. Using their signature state-wide programs to attract students from across the region, Garrett has nearly doubled the enrollment in those programs from 1993 to 1995. Additionally, the college has monitored the enrollments of new students and responded quickly to the changing needs of students desiring part-time studies.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The survey of 1995 graduating students provided an indicator of the effectiveness of educational programs at the college. Ninety-one percent of respondents to the survey rated the quality of education at GCC as good to excellent. Ninety-four percent indicated that the quality of the education they received improved their lives, an increase from 87 percent in 1994 and 73 percent in 1993. Since 1993, 98 percent of the students have stated that GCC prepared them "adequately" to "very well" for their future goals.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** GCC students who transferred to Maryland four-year institutions in the 1993-94 school year out-performed both students in their peer group and from all community colleges. GCC students had a higher percentage of students earning a 4.0 GPA than students from all other colleges. A higher percentage of GCC students also had GPAs falling in the 3.0-4.0 range than all other institutions.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Information on students' evaluations of faculty is captured on a regular basis through the use of a survey questionnaire. In the Spring 1995 semester, students ranked faculty in a total of 66 classes. On a scale of 1 (poor) to 9 (excellent), the average rating for all faculty members was 7.76. All but one of the nine items was rated over 7.50. This rating remains consistent with previous outstanding ratings over the past two years.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** There are no programs offered at Garrett which require licensing or certification.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** No comprehensive measures are currently in place to capture statistical data on graduates seeking employment after graduation. The majority of students are enrolled in programs with the objective of transferring to a four-year institution.

**Institutional Indicators:** The three signature programs: Adventure Sports, Agriculture Management, and Natural Resources and Wildlife Management, have as an outcomes objective the direct employment of students completing the program. An aggressive pilot program for marketing graduates of the Adventure Sports program was recently established. As a result, one of the first two graduates of the program was employed.

## Hagerstown Junior College

### Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes

Hagerstown Junior College has taken several initiatives related to student learning outcomes. Among them was a department-level survey to determine graduates' perspectives of their educational experience and institute changes where warranted. The results of the nursing and radiography surveys indicated that the college was meeting the student's needs to enter their professional fields. Another impact on student learning is the demographic shift of HJC's service population. Approximately 37 percent of the enrollments were full-time and 63 percent were part-time in 1995. Over 60 percent of the students attend class in the evening and on weekends.

### Staff Summary

HJC benefits a rural service area comprising Hagerstown, Washington County and the adjoining states of West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The college is particularly sensitive to economic and demographic fluctuations. In spite of these external factors, the college consistently meets or exceeds the state average for community colleges in transfer rates, student preparation for transfer, and on licensing and certification exams.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Effectiveness of General Education Program: Retention rates in general education courses over the last four years have ranged from 90.8 percent in Fall 1991 to 94.5 percent in Fall 1994. In all semesters, the retention rates have never been below 90.7 percent, suggesting that HJC has an effective general education program.

Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates: There has been a steady overall increase in Fall-to-Spring retention of first-time full-time students in 1995 (67.7 percent) since 1990 (57.5 percent). The college's overall success rate (transferred, graduated, or still enrolled) has seen slight fluctuations from 46.2 percent for the 1990 cohort to 44.2 percent for the 1992 cohort. The number of transfer students from HJC to four-year UMS institutions has increased annually and by 52 percent overall from the 1989-90 academic year to 1993-94. The percent of HJC transfer students who attain bachelors degrees has consistently exceeded the state average.

Preparing students for transfer to a four-year institution is the primary mission for a junior college. The foremost reason cited by students for attending HJC is to transfer to a bachelor degree program. Consistent with that, 86.6 percent of the students who transferred are majoring in the same or a related field as they had at HJC. A valuable measure of the transfer preparation is the performance of HJC students at the four-year institution. Since 1989, students

have acquired a mean GPA higher than the mean GPA for all Maryland community college matriculants. HJC has fluctuated from a high of 2.97 GPA in 1989-90 to a low of 2.35 in 1991-92 to 2.74 in 1993-94.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Evaluations are conducted throughout the academic year for both full-time and part-time faculty. Student evaluations are based on an 80-point system. However, raw scores were converted to a 100-point scale for interpretation. The overall evaluation scores for full-time faculty have steadily improved from 87 in Fall 1991 to 90 in Fall 1994. Institution-wide, the college has also steadily improved from 87.9 in Fall 1991 to 89.9 in Fall 1994.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Two programs at Hagerstown require students to sit for licensing or certification exams: radiography and nursing. The radiography program's most recent reaccreditation visit was in March 1995. Since 1993, over 90 percent of the students have passed the radiologic technology registry examination. Likewise, the students in the nursing program have also achieved exemplary pass rates: from 100 percent in 1991 and 1992 to 96 percent in 1995.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** The college used data from the 1994 Graduate Follow-up Survey to examine employment rates of graduates. When asked if their current job was related to their program of study at HJC, 78 percent responded that it was in the same or somewhat related field. Over three-fourths of the respondents indicated that HJC prepared them for employment. Over 90 percent of the graduates in the college's health science programs were employed within two months of graduation. A large percentage of graduate placements also occurred in information processing, accounting, human services, and customer/business services.

**Institutional Indicators:** The college provided several institutional indicators of student learning. Among them was a comprehensive list of grants and awards earned by HJC students related to academic performance and scholarship. The college also uses employer survey results to gauge the effectiveness of Hagerstown's job preparation. In every category, employer satisfaction as indicated by responses of good/very good increased in the 1994 survey compared to the responses of employers of the 1992 graduates. All of the responses of the 1994 survey were over 90 percent good/very good (except writing skills at 89.5 percent) compared with only one category in the 1992 survey (knowledge of technical skills at 91.3 percent).

## **Harford Community College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

Student learning outcomes and retention rates are encouraging. The college's graduation and transfer rates are very good. Students are achieving their educational objectives as evidenced by their high rating of quality classroom instruction. About nine out of ten transfer students earned a GPA of 2.0 or higher at their transfer institutions. The college monitors the quality of its academic programs through a periodic review process, and a series of education studies conducted on an annual basis.

### **Staff Summary**

HCC has met or exceeded all of its institutional indicators. The students are accomplishing their academic aspirations as measured by the student success indicators. Graduate surveys consistently rate the college highly in areas of instructional effectiveness and job preparation.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The college has explored ways to measure general education student outcomes. According to the Graduate Student Survey, most 1994 HCC graduates feel that the college has positively contributed to their personal development in several general education areas. On a scale of 0 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal), the graduates indicated that the college had a meaningful contribution to their learning (3.9), enhanced self-confidence (3.8), and clarified goals (3.8). This year's results were consistent with previous surveys.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** On average, the Fall-to-Spring retention rates for all students for the last three years has held at about 65 percent. Over the past five years, the percentage of full-time students transferring to a four-year public college or university varied from a low of 25 percent for the 1990 cohort to a high of 33 percent for the 1987 cohort. The overall success rate of HCC students has been gradually declining since the 1987 cohort, from 58 percent to 48 percent for the 1990 cohort.

The academic performance of those HCC students who transfer continues to be encouraging. On average, for the transfer entrants of 1989-90 academic year through 1993-94 academic year, 85 percent of the students earned a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or higher. Fully 7 percent of the students who transferred in 1993-94 earned a 4.0 GPA.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** The students evaluation of teaching is measured using two separate systems. The first is the course evaluation completed by students in each course. The purpose of these evaluations is for faculty to measure themselves for self-improvement and are not used for any other administrative purpose. The second method is accomplished by asking graduates about their perceptions of the quality of classroom instruction. About 85 percent of the 1994 graduates rated the quality of classroom instruction as good/very good. Moreover, the percent of students who rated the quality of instruction as very good in 1994 was 34 percent, up from 29 percent in 1993.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Three programs at Harford require students to pass licensing exams: the associate degree nursing program (registered nurse), the certificate nurse program (practical nurse), and the histotechnology program. For 1995, the pass rate for the registered nurse examination was 95 percent (up from 83 percent in 1993); and the practical nurse exam was 96 percent (slightly below the high of 100 percent in 1993). No information was provided concerning the histotechnology program.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** About 80 percent of HCC's 1994 graduates are employed on a part-time or full-time basis after graduating from the College. Only about 6 percent of the college's graduates are unemployed and job-seeking. This is consistent with previous year's trends. Most employers of HCC graduates indicated that HCC graduates are prepared for employment, and that the graduates possess problem solving skills and the ability to learn on the job.

**Institutional Indicators:** To further enhance student learning outcomes, the college established two administrative committees: the Academic Outcomes Committee and the Student Retention Task Force. These committees are charged with reviewing and suggesting ways to measure student learning and to improve retention strategies at HCC. Additionally, all first-time full-time students are required to have an assessment in reading, English, and math prior to class registration. Other indicators include periodic program reviews for program effectiveness and analytical studies of student retention and transfer.



## Howard Community College

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

HCC has in place a comprehensive assessment system which provides impetus for impacting teaching and learning, curriculum, academic planning and decision-making. The implementation of outcomes assessments at Howard continues to improve the curriculum and subsequently, the learning and competency levels of the students. Some outcomes assessment projects were institution-wide in scope and produced data which formed the base for changes in instructional practices over most divisions. Other projects were targeted at the discipline level and the results were used to make changes which impacted specific courses.

### **Staff Summary**

Howard Community College has taken a comprehensive look at student outcome assessment and instituted several programs to address weak areas. They have an extensive assessment program, from developmental testing for math, reading, and writing that is tracked throughout the student body; to course-specific pre- and post-tests to measure common indicators. By all indications, Howard has met its challenge to deliver quality transfer and career programs.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The General Education Student Self-Report contains information from graduates concerning the various dimensions of general education. All college indicators remained generally constant over the past three years. Also, comparisons to peer and state level data show virtually no differences. It appears that no improvements nor declines at the college and no differences relative to the rest of the State. Goal clarification and enhanced self-confidence ranked highest; appreciation of art, increased attentiveness to news, improved reading, and cultural awareness ranked lowest.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** Transfer and graduation rates contain information about the success of cohorts of first-time full-time students four years after entry. The overall success rate has declined from 62 percent (for the 1988 cohort) to 49 percent (for the 1990 cohort). Even with the descent, HCC's rates are still above the system-wide rates for other Maryland community colleges.

The graduation rate has generally been below the rate for other Maryland community colleges. This may be due to HCC's close proximity to a cluster of four-year institutions and affluent communities. HCC's students appear to transfer without degrees at a higher rate than

other colleges. The graduation rate is also affected by other external factors such as economic conditions, admissions policies at four-year institutions, and other variables.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Student evaluation of faculty is rated quite high, compared to national norms. HCC utilizes the IDEA Student Evaluation System, which is used as the course evaluation instrument for the college. The scores for both full- and part-time faculty are compared to a standardized norm group of faculty from other two- and four-year institutions across the nation. The results are that full-time faculty at HCC are rated highly by the students. Eighty-one percent of the full-time faculty were rated as average or above compared to the 70 percent national norm. Additionally, a sample of currently enrolled students responding to the college's internal survey reveal that students gave an average of 3.9 (on a 5.0 scale) to program instruction since 1993, and have rated the overall quality of instruction as 4.0 for 1994 and 1995.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** The registered nursing program is the only program at Howard to require licensing or certification. For the last three years, HCC students have achieved virtually 100 percent pass rate on their licensing exam.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** HCC reported the employment status of its graduates as well as the percentage of those who are employed full-time in a related field a year after graduation. Data indicates that, in general, graduates who seek employment are successful in obtaining positions. Three out of four HCC graduates have found employment in their field of study. The percent of students employed has fluctuated from 75 percent in 1992 to 83 percent in 1993 to 77 percent in 1994.

**Institutional Indicators:** HCC uses several indicators to aid in measuring student outcomes. Among the indicators used is a criterion referenced skill level to monitor the students' proficiency level in math, reading, and writing. The levels are: below I, levels I, II, and III. Level I refers to basic skills, level II to intermediate skills, and level III to advanced skills. Fall 1993 freshmen scores show that for each skill area, more than two-thirds of the students were either at minimal skill level or below. This number dropped somewhat for Fall 1994 and Fall 1995 freshmen. For the upper levels, Fall 1994 freshmen scores were higher than those in Fall 1993 and Fall 1995. Sophomores in all years out-performed their freshmen counterparts in every skill area. The percentage of sophomores at minimal skill level or below decreased for Fall 1994 and Fall 1995 sophomores in every skill area, while that for sophomores at levels II and III improved over Fall 1993.

## Montgomery College

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

MC recently instituted the first phase of the Appropriate Course Placement, which is designed to ensure that students enrolled in degree-seeking programs demonstrate college level academic skills prior to enrolling in credit courses. Innovative strategies, such as the Learning Community approach for students with multiple skill deficits, have been pilot tested. The college has added two permanent resources: the Center for Teaching and Learning, which provides continual support for faculty and staff development, and the Cultural Diversity Institute, which provides programs and resources for teaching in a multi-cultural classroom.

### **Staff Summary**

Montgomery College has made great strides in identifying and addressing student needs. The college has instituted the Appropriate Course Placement program to ensure that all students enrolled in degree programs have minimal competencies in math, reading, and English. Additionally, the college has poured resources into faculty development, recognizing that quality instruction is the cornerstone of any successful learning experience.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** Montgomery College uses the graduate responses to the biennial survey to assess general education effectiveness. As in previous surveys, 60-89 percent of the 1994 graduates perceived the college as contributing "a fair amount" to "a great deal" to their development in each of the ten areas assessed. However, the 1994 graduates generally responded slightly less favorably than the 1992 graduates.

Graduates most readily identified the college's contribution to their development in areas related to goal clarification, self-confidence, and enjoyment of learning. Over the past three surveys, the percentage of respondents who indicated a high level of contribution in improving their writing skills has steadily increased. Of concern is the consistently low ratings of their appreciation of other cultures, art and music, and world affairs. In response to that, the college has added an additional course in multi-cultural affairs to the general education requirements.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** Data from the most recent cohort of entering first-time full-time freshmen (1990) show a decrease in the percentage of students (51.3 percent) who leave the Maryland reporting system, the smallest percentage in three years. Retention has increased over the three reporting years (1988-1990) and the greatest proportion of students who transfer without a degree occurred in the 1990 cohort at 29.8 percent.

Three measures are used to assess the academic performance of students who transfer from MC to four-year institutions: they are cumulative GPA, cumulative hours earned, and completion of a bachelor's degree. Over 8 percent of the most recent transfer students have earned a 4.0 GPA; nearly 45 percent of this group have a 3.0 or better. After three years the cohort of students who transferred to four-year institutions in 1991-92 have maintained their academic standing. On average, after three years one-third of the students have completed a bachelor's degree. All three indicators show that former MC students continue to progress satisfactorily in their academic pursuits.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Students' ratings of the quality of instruction at MC is consistently very high. The college uses the Student Instructional Report published by ETS, to obtain students' evaluations of teaching. The ratings have improved in every area since 1992, with overall quality of the course receiving the highest mark each year.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Two of the programs which have licensing or certification requirements have small numbers of graduates each year (Medical Records and Medical Lab Technology). Consequently, the passing rates will vary widely, depending on the results of only a few students. Of the programs with high numbers of students testing (Registered Nursing and Radiologic Technology), the passing rate is stable and remains very high, over 90 percent for both programs.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** The rate of full-time employment among MC graduates has been stable over the last three survey years at about 59 percent. Part-time employment has increased from 17 percent for the 1990 graduates to 30 percent for the 1994 graduates. Those unemployed have decreased from 7 percent for the 1992 graduates to 6 percent for the 1994 graduates.

**Institutional Indicators:** Most graduates rate their educational experience at MC very highly. Eighty-five percent of the most recent respondents to the graduate survey rated the overall quality as good/very good. However, the college is concerned that there is a gradual decline in its ratings over the three surveys on some items, including library services, tutorial services, academic advising, student services, and developmental math and English. The most recent graduates' evaluation of job services has shown the most dramatic improvement (from 27 percent in 1992 good/very good to 42 percent in 1994).

## Prince George's Community College

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

PGCC has instituted a longitudinal study to further understand the factors which affect student persistence and success. The longitudinal study has provided invaluable information about the variables which contribute to student achievement. In response to the college's commitment to student success, the president appointed a college-wide retention committee to identify campus strengths and weaknesses, determine retention goals, and establish priorities for resource allocation related to retention.

### **Staff Summary**

The college has faced formidable challenges recently due to the changing demographics of the Prince George's service area and to the open admissions policies under which the college operates. An exhaustive longitudinal study of the 1990 cohort has carefully articulated those factors which contribute to student success, and those issues which seem to work against student persistence. Using this data and additional studies, the college is committed to addressing the needs of its students.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The response pattern to the graduate survey has been consistent. Graduates report that their experiences at PGCC have increased their enjoyment of learning, clarified their educational goals, and enhanced their self-confidence. Graduates as a group have indicated that their attendance has helped them in developing their writing and improving their understanding of science. Of concern, however, is a consistently low satisfaction level with graduates' appreciation for cultural diversity. In response to that, the college has added a course requirement in cultural diversity for all degree-seeking students. The college has also added a computer literacy requirement to ensure that students will graduate with an understanding of and appreciation for technology.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** PGCC has instituted a longitudinal study of the 1990 cohort to evaluate student persistence. Of all the first-time full-time students who enrolled at PGCC in Fall 1990, only 61 percent returned in Spring 1991 (although an additional 12 percent would return at a later time). Over time, the proportion of the initial entering cohort of 1990 that were still attending PGCC has declined steadily. By Spring 1995, only 10 percent of the initial students enrolled in Fall 1990 were still enrolled.

PGCC's graduation rate continues to decline, from 13.1 percent in 1984 to 8.9 percent in 1990, the second-lowest graduation rate on record. However, the transfer rate of PGCC

students has had a generally upward rate, from 15.6 percent in 1984 to 20.4 percent in 1990. The combined transfer and graduation rate for the 1989 cohort was the highest on record. Of the students from the 1990 cohort that transferred to four-year institutions, 84 percent had cumulative GPAs of 2.0 or higher, with 4 percent earning a 4.0 GPA.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** In 1994-95, student evaluations were conducted for 330 faculty. The mean response across all items was 4.3 on a 5-point scale. Only 20 percent of the faculty evaluated received an average mean score of less than 4.0. Those faculty are required to be referred for full-scale evaluation.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** PGCC students sit for licensure or certification exams in five areas: health information technology, nuclear medicine, nursing, radiography, and respiratory therapy. The pass rates for these exams have been generally satisfactory, except for nuclear medicine (46 percent passed in 1995). Of those tested in 1995, 85 percent of the nursing students, 97 percent of the radiography students, and 94 percent of the respiratory therapy students passed.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** When surveyed a year after graduation, 89 percent of the graduates of 1994 were employed. Three-fourths were employed full-time and 78 percent of the employed graduates were working in jobs related to their studies. Graduates of the early-childhood education and nursing programs had the highest success in finding jobs in their fields of study.

**Institutional Indicators:** In addition to the mandated indicators, PGCC has been monitoring basic skills proficiency as measured by placement tests, student enrollment in developmental education, and course pass rates. To ensure a foundation for college-level instruction, all students seeking enrollment in credit courses are required to demonstrate basic academic skills proficiency in reading, writing, and math. Seven in ten students entering in 1995 needed remediation in at least one basic skill. PGCC conducted a longitudinal study of the 1990 cohort to determine the success rates for the students in developmental courses, and the overall success factors for degree-seeking students at PGCC.

According to the longitudinal cohort analysis, nearly two-thirds of the college's degree-seeking students fail to graduate, transfer, or attain sophomore status in good standing within four years. Persisting through the second and third major terms after entry substantially improved the chances of success, while deficiencies in basic college skills, part-time attendance, interruptions in enrollment, and poor grades hampered achievement.

## **Wor-Wic Community College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

Wor-Wic has identified several areas of institutional impact on student learning outcomes. Among them are: focusing faculty attention on the six general education objectives; instituting a list of actions to increase the registered nursing pass rates; sponsoring additional activities to increase student involvement; studying the correlation between student grades and student opinion of instruction; instituting new lower-level developmental writing courses; replacing the "N" grade with the "F" grade; and adding an electronics engineering technology degree program.

### **Staff Summary**

Wor-Wic has identified and implemented several measures to assure student success. The college has set clear goals for each of the indicators and has instituted strategies to address any weaknesses. The college is anxious to involve students more fully in the educational experience and to sustain the campus' small college atmosphere.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** WWCC uses two methods to assess general education: the graduate survey and a comprehensive measure of general education competencies administered prior to graduation. In the comprehensive assessment, students scored particularly low in two areas: math (4.5) and scientific method (4.6) with a score of 6.0 as average.

Graduates rated their attendance at WWCC in helping in the development of their general education skills as generally positive. The two areas rated lowest were in the appreciation of art, music, and literature, and in an understanding of cultures and history. Students are not required to take a fine arts course and literature is required only for general studies and nursing majors. Since over four-fifths of the students at Wor-Wic are enrolled in career programs, they may not have elected to take the cultural appreciation courses.

**Retention/Graduation/Transfer Rates:** From Fall 1989 to Fall 1994, 14.3 percent of those credit students seeking a degree or certificate realized their intentions. The college's goal is to have a 20 percent graduation rate. The Fall 1993 to Fall 1994 retention rate for credit students is 50 percent, meeting the college's goal. The Fall 1992 to Fall 1993 retention rate was 49.2 percent. To improve student retention, the college is planning on strengthening student services and institute other measures to identify and correct student weaknesses.

The college has set as a goal to have WWCC transfer students' cumulative GPA equal to or better than peer resident students. The GPA range of Wor-Wic students transferring to four-year programs is 2.44 - 2.75, whereas the GPA of the peer group is 2.61 - 2.86. The college's goal was realized in two (1991 and 1993) of the past four years.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** All students are given the opportunity to evaluate faculty at the end of the semester. The results of the evaluations are sent to the faculty member, department chair, and vice-president for academic and student affairs. College-wide, for the past three years, student evaluation of instruction has been favorable, with a 92.7 percent rating (agree/strongly agree that instructor was effective). From Fall 1992 to Fall 1994, student evaluations have decreased or been below average in the computer science, general studies, nursing, and science fields.

A concern was raised by faculty that lowering grades would result in a correspondingly lower evaluation. The college conducted a correlation study and found no relationship between grades assigned and instructor evaluation.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** The college had high pass rates in 1995 on the radiologic technology certification exam (100 percent) and on the licensed practical nursing exam (95 percent). The registered nursing pass rate in 1995 was 89 percent, an increase of 12 percent in 1994.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Of the 1994 graduates who responded to the survey, 87.1 percent indicated they were employed full- or part-time. Of those respondents who are working, 81.3 percent indicated they were employed in a job that is related to their field of study. The average yearly salary of the 1994 graduates was \$24,406.

**Institutional Indicators:** Developmental education at WWCC consists of three components: diagnostic testing, instruction, and support services. Students entering WWCC are tested in the areas of reading, English skills, and math. Students who are determined to need remedial assistance are enrolled in one of seven developmental courses. Support services for developmental students include counseling, computerized instruction, learning labs, and tutoring. The success rate of developmental compared to non-developmental students, as expected, is lower by about 10 percent each year. However, once the developmental students pass the introductory courses, it appears they are likely to successfully complete subsequent classes.



**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM**



## **Bowie State University**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The major impact of assessment activities at Bowie over the past years has been in the academic affairs and student services. In particular, the University College of Excellence Pilot program was expanded to all freshmen for the class of 1995. Faculty vacancies were filled and new faculty were hired as a direct result of data obtained from graduating seniors and alumni. This has resulted in a more equitable distribution of committee assignment and faculty non-teaching assignments. A new Student Academic Advising Record containing a comprehensive summary of courses required for graduation, the required courses the student has completed, and an up-to-date summary of the student's academic status was developed. Assessment activities have also influenced the growth and development of a campus-wide technology network.

### **Staff Summary**

Bowie State University has placed a renewed emphasis on student learning outcomes assessment. The University Assessment Council responsibilities have been expanded to include a review of the current assessment philosophy to insure that it is in keeping with University mission; conduct major curriculum review; define core competencies that all Bowie students must demonstrate and present assessment strategies which will evaluate these core competencies; implement faculty development workshops; and ensure that significant findings from the student learning outcomes assessment process are integrated into curricula and program reform efforts.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The University College of Excellence program was piloted in Fall 1994. Academic performance of students in the pilot program were compared with those that were not. The grade point average of the pilot group exceeded that of the non-control group in the spring semester. This program has been expanded to all first-time undergraduates.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** Second year retention rates averaged 71 percent for the classes 1986 - 1993. Six year graduation rates have steadily improved from 30 percent for the 1986 class to 34 percent for the class of 1988.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Student ratings on the Survey of Student Opinion of Instruction between Fall 1987 and Fall 1994 show that on average, students rate instructional quality favorably. Results of alumni surveys consistently rate the quality of undergraduate education as "excellent" or "very good". Over the past two years, however, trends in responses to two survey items (i.e. evaluation of student work and overall quality of instruction) have prompted a review of policies and procedures regarding adjunct faculty.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** An increasing percentage of graduates indicate that they are enrolled in post-baccalaureate studies one year after graduation. The percentage increased steadily from 25 percent of the respondents in 1991 to 41 percent in 1994.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Between 1991 and 1995, 90 percent of Bowie's education graduates passed the National Teacher Exam. Additionally, better than 97 percent of students who took specialty area NTE tests achieved qualifying scores. Because nursing students have already completed the NCLEX exam, Bowie had introduced the Nurse Entrance Exam to establish base-line data against which the program can be assessed in meeting students' assessed learning needs.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Annual alumni survey data show that one year after graduation, 93 percent of the 1994 respondents were employed either full-time (79 percent) or part-time (14 percent) in areas related to their degree program. This was up from 84 percent employed in 1993.

**Institutional Indicators:** Assessment of student learning outcomes in the majors is at various stages of development. Several departments are investigating new and innovative ways to assess learning outcomes while others are using more traditional assessment methods. The university Assessment Council (UAC) will continue to assist departments in their efforts to determine the best ways to assess learning outcomes. The UAC will also provide technical assistance, faculty development seminars and other support needed to assess the University's impact on students.

## **Coppin State College**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The academic departments at Coppin are very active in evaluating student learning outcomes. This departmental review has resulted in increasing passage rates on licensure exams, incorporation of computers and other technology into the curriculum, revising course syllabi, introduction of new courses, and an increased emphasis on advisement.

### **Staff Summary**

The departmental efforts to assess student outcomes is commendable. The College identified several initiatives, including surveys of employers and implementing new student evaluation of teaching procedures that were not undertaken due to budget constraints.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The size of a survey sample for students at various levels did not allow the college to draw conclusions about the performance of students. A Review Committee will develop a plan for administering a survey that will provide meaningful data.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** Second year retention rates have ranged between 65 percent and 73 percent for the classes of 1990 thru 1994. Six year graduation rates have increased from 12 percent (class of 1980) to 25 percent (1988). The six year graduation rate is significantly less than the state-wide average of 58 percent.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** The most recent results of course and faculty evaluation reports (Fall 1994) indicate that 82 percent of those surveyed evaluated their instructor as being an effective teacher and 77 percent rated their course as being excellent.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** Thirty four percent of the class of 1995 indicated that they were enrolled in post-baccalaureate study. This percentage has increased from 27 percent for the class of 1990.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** From the 1991 pass rate of 56 percent to the current passage rate of 88 percent, the Nursing Program has demonstrated dramatic improvement. This increase is a direct result of the Nursing Student Enrichment Program which provides academic support and encouragement. Of the education majors taking the NTE exam in Fall 1995, 67 percent passed the core battery tests. Passage rate for specialty areas were slightly higher. A test taking enhancement course has been developed to help raise passage rates. Information was also reported for the GRE, GMAT, and MCAT exams.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Eighty-seven percent of the 1995 class indicated that they were employed. Graduates continue to be able to find employment and employers are satisfied with the overall performance of graduates.

**Institutional Indicators:** Student learning outcomes assessment activities were provided for the following majors: Adult and General Education, Applied Psychology, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, English, General Science, History, Management Science, Mathematics, Nursing, Special Education, and Social Sciences. In addition, an assessment of the Developmental Education Program has enabled the College to identify academic strengths and weaknesses of incoming students. Peer tutoring and computer software were purchased as part of this effort.

## **Frostburg State University**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The climate for assessment activities has advanced considerably at Frostburg. As a result of an administrative reorganization, significant improvements were realized. Assessment outcomes drove changes in curriculum, teaching, academic requirements, resources and facilities developments. For example, the need for the development of a university-wide faculty evaluation instrument was not only driven by student assessment, but also to insure integrity in the equity pay model within the University.

### **Staff Summary**

Frostburg's progress in institutionalizing student learning outcomes assessment is to be commended. A result of the assessment process is a new University policy which allows academic programs to establish admissions requirements, thereby compelling students to demonstrate preparation and capability to compete and successfully complete the expected outcomes of the program.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The General Education Program (GEP) has 2 components: Basic Requirement courses (emphasizing skill development in communications, foundations to pursue knowledge in any field, problem solving, and health fitness) and a liberal arts component. The GEP has developed course specific outcomes assessment approaches. For example, the English department follows a uniform syllabus and applies explicit exit standards for students enrolled in Freshmen Composition and the advance writing requirement. For the past five years, about 77 percent of the students enrolled in Freshmen Composition have met the exit standards. For those who do not meet the standard, the student must continue to enroll each semester until the exit criteria are met. Several assessment approaches are used to assess the Liberal Arts portion of GEP. Examples include: pre- and post-tests, assessing instructor's ability to develop critical thinking skills through faculty evaluations, and enrollment in other courses related to a topic.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** The second year retention rate for the class of 1991 was 74 percent for all students and 67 percent for African-Americans. Special activities and programs are in place to monitor and enhance retention overall and particularly retention of minorities. After four years, 24 percent of the class of 1991 graduated.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Academic departments have developed discipline and departmental specific instruments for student evaluation of faculty. Overall, students rank FSU faculty very high and consistently so over the years.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** There has been an increasing number of alumni reporting enrollment in graduate and professional programs over the past three years. The percentage of respondents reporting admission to graduate programs rose to 20 for the class of 1994, up from 10 percent for the class of 1992. Alumni consistently rate FSU preparation for graduate school as excellent or good (over 60 percent).

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Data from the LSAT's, MCAT's, GRE's and the NTE's were provided. Since 1991, there have been increasing numbers of students taking the LSAT and GRE. Performance on the NTE has been consistently 96 percent or above in each of the testing areas.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Seventy-nine percent of 1993 alumni responded that they had full-time employment within one year of graduation. Fourteen percent reported part-time employment. Similar percentages were reported for the classes of 1989 and 1991. Sixty percent of alumni rated FSU job preparation as good/excellent.

**Institutional Indicators:** The institution provided freshmen basic skills placement results for English, mathematics and reading for 1989 - 1994. The percentage of freshmen needing remedial work in reading has decreased from 7 percent of the freshmen class (1989) to 2 percent for 1994. Over the past five years, a vast majority of these students who received assistance in these areas passed the required university-level English, mathematics and/or reading course within one year.



## Salisbury State University

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

Student learning outcomes assessment has impacted teaching at Salisbury. In response to student surveys, more off-campus "real life" experiences are mixed with classroom instruction; opportunities to work with various computer software programs are being introduced in to curriculum; and critical thinking skills and writing have been emphasized across departments. These and other efforts have resulted in higher graduate school going rates; increased passage rates on national exams; and, an increased level of full-time employment for its graduates. The University also reported on its comprehensive planning process which links student outcome assessment, academic program reviews and the university's Financial Planning and Institutional Accountability report to policy development and initiatives which strengthen academic programs.

### **Staff Summary**

The results of Salisbury's efforts can be seen in student performance during their time at the University and after. Examples include: higher rates on student enrollment in graduate and professional programs, increased passage rates on licensure exams, increased full-time employment rate of graduates and an increased number of students participating in an undergraduate research symposium.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** Alumni responses indicate that improvements in the General Education program have been positive. The class of 1993 rated the general education programs impact on their personal growth the highest in the areas of written and oral communication skills, critical-thinking skills and insights on human interactions in a social world setting.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** Second year retention rates have averaged 80% for the last three classes. Six-year graduation rates have increased from 49% to 59%. These increases have been attributed to greater academic preparedness of entering freshmen and an awareness by faculty and staff of strategies and services that assist students in achieving academic and social success.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Students have consistently rated instruction highly. Most students agree or strongly agree that instructors convey knowledge effectively, define expectations, present materials interestingly, answer student questions, are available and responsive to their needs, encourage discussion and participation and return graded materials promptly.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** There has been a slight increase in the percentage of alumni entering graduate level work (from 21 percent to 23 percent). A majority of the students enroll in graduate level work in education and social work. Enrollment in first professional programs has remained constant. Alumni consistently rate Salisbury's preparation for graduate study highly.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Passage rates in medical technology and respiratory therapy were 100% in 1994. Ninety seven percent of those taking NTE exams in 1994 passed. Passage rates on the Licensed Social Work Associate exam have fluctuated between 82 percent and 88 percent.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Ninety five percent of the 1993 class responded that they were employed either full- or part-time. The percentage of those reporting full-time employment has fluctuated between 78 percent and 86 percent. This variance may be reflective of the State's economic condition in the early 1990's. Over two-thirds of the 1993 class rated job preparation as either good or excellent.

**Institutional Indicators:** Salisbury provided summary reports from the deans of Liberal Arts, Science and Technology, Business, and the Education and Professional Studies schools. Each of these schools use a variety of measures for evaluating student achievement including nationally normed tests, capstone courses, and critical thinking and writing models. The Perdue School of Business evaluated its assessment program and found that the information was not as useful as anticipated. Therefore, the School is changing its assessment approach and updates will be provided in future reports.

## **Towson State University**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The 1995 report marks the end of the first year of formal assessment of academic majors and the second year of the general education assessment project. Overall, 18 programs described programmatic and/or instructional changes related to assessment activities. The changes included: added or deleted courses, added or deleted elective courses; added capstone courses or senior seminars; resequenced courses in curriculum; changed course content; changed student requirements in a course; increased faculty collaboration and planning; changed teaching methods; and/or other changes in the major.

### **Staff Summary**

Towson has taken a careful and well thought-out approach to student outcomes assessment. From the campus' perspective, the following components are necessary for a successful assessment program: recognition of campus personnel who have contributed to the assessment process; employment of a full-time assessment administrator thus demonstrating a commitment to assessment; the indispensability of faculty initiative, commitment and support; development of a set of guiding principles which provide a strong conceptual basis for assessment; and student support.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The effectiveness of the General Education program was assessed by an ACT survey of 1992 graduates. Alumni were asked if certain portions of the general education program contributed to personal growth. Forty-eight percent responded that the institution's emphasis on writing effectively contributed "very much" to their personal growth. "Somewhat" was the more frequent response for speaking effectively (49%); understanding written information (51%); defining/solving problems (50%); and understanding scientific principles (40%).

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** The second year retention rates varied from 80 percent to 84 percent between the classes of 1987 and 1993. The six year graduation rates increased 4 percentage points between the 1987 and 1988 classes.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Both undergraduates and alumni were surveyed in part to evaluate instruction. Results indicated that 26 percent of undergraduates agreed that the level of instruction was good. "Somewhat" agreeing were 44 percent. Alumni evaluations were more positive, 71 percent were "very satisfied to extremely satisfied" with the instruction they received.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** At least 44 percent of alumni from the classes of 1990-1992 reported enrollment in post baccalaureate course work.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Information given about the results of the NTE's and NCLEX and occupational therapy certifying exams show consistent pass rates of 85 - 100 percent between 1992 and 1995.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Seventy eight percent of 1992 graduates responded that they were employed full-time. Fifty two percent responded that finding a job for which they had been trained was not a problem. Alumni also rated Towson positively in the area of career preparation.

**Institutional Indicators:** The institution reported results on its basic skills proficiency tests. For the first time in the past three years, more first-time freshmen were identified as having writing deficiencies than math deficiencies. Even with the increased number of students with writing deficiencies, a greater percentage corrected these deficiencies than those in the prior two years. In addition, Towson provided a summary of the student outcome assessment activities by academic major.

## **University of Baltimore**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The University of Baltimore campus mission statement emphasizes its role as a transfer institution providing a career-oriented and professionally-based curriculum. One of the goals of the institution is to help students advance in their careers either through increased employment opportunities or through matriculating to graduate or professional programs. Student learning outcome assessment measures confirm that UB is attracting students with individual goals consistent with institutional goals and that UB graduates find their experiences at UB self-fulfilling.

### **Staff Summary**

UB has made marginal progress in using student outcomes in its decision-making process. Areas that the institution has identified for further exploration include: the collective effect of the upper level general education requirements; methods to increase retention and graduation rates of part-time students; teaching effectiveness trends and their relationship to student performance and satisfaction; performance of undergraduate students on graduate admissions exams; and, enrollment and performance of graduates in post-baccalaureate study.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The University requires all undergraduate students to take four of the five following courses: (1) Ideas in Writing; (2) World Cultures; (3) Ethical Issues in Business and Society; (4) The Modern City; and, (5) Arts and Ideas. A student course evaluation survey was conducted in the Ideas in Writing classes during the Fall 1994 and Spring 1995. Overall, the students concluded that the course improved their writing and critical reading and thinking skills. In addition, seniors in the School of Business rated the general education courses positively. Generally, alumni were satisfied with the general education courses.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** Between 1990 and 1992, the percentage of all new students who remained enrolled after three years increased from 20 percent to 28 percent. However, the percentage of students who graduated after three years declined from 43 percent to 34 percent during this same period.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** There is no uniform teacher evaluation instrument used by the University. When students in the Business school were asked to rate faculty and the course in comparison with other courses and instructors, students rated faculty positively.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** The percentage of alumni reporting enrollment at another institution has declined from a high of 20 percent (1992) to 12 percent (1994). This may be a result of employer cut-backs on reimbursement of tuition.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Not applicable - the University does not offer a program that leads directly to licensure or certification.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Eighty-two percent of the respondents to the 1995 Graduate Follow-up Survey stated that they were employed either full- or part-time. Seventy-five percent answered that employment was somewhat or directly related to their major. Most 1994 graduates were employed in the service industry or in the public sector. Alumni are also satisfied with the college's preparation for their first job.

**Institutional Indicators:** The campus provided mathematics and English placement exam results; the number of employment recruiters who interview on campus; departmental surveys of graduates; the use of interactive video in teaching; and, a listing of honors and other competitive awards to students.

## University of Maryland at Baltimore

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

Assessment measures were reported for the 3 undergraduate programs in nursing, medical and research technology, and dental hygiene. Changes in the *Nursing* student population and declining passage rates indicated a need to bolster advisement, use of diagnostic testing to identify students at risk, provide tutorials on standardized test-taking skills and employ other efforts to better prepare the diverse student body for the NCLEX-RN exam. The impact of assessment in the *Medical and Research Technology* program can be seen in high retention and graduation rates, revision of courses, the hiring of faculty in areas which were identified as needing improvement, and several initiatives to improve national certification exam scores. The *Dental Hygiene* program has developed a document which identifies the knowledge, skills, and attitudes graduates must attain for entry into practice. This document will be used in the Department's evaluation of curriculum completeness, soundness and relevance.

### **Staff Summary**

The *Nursing* Department is to be commended for its efforts in applying student learning outcomes to Departmental decision-making. For example, the impact of enhanced recruiting has led to a review of admissions policies and improvements in academic support and financial aid services. An Academic Review Committee has also been established to review reinstatement requests and to recommend academic support services needed by reinstated students. Recruitment and retention efforts in the *Medical and Research Technology* program have been enhanced by a federal grant. The *Dental Hygiene* program has taken several actions to improve performance on board exams.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** Not applicable. UMAB undergraduate programs are upper division only; there is no general education core.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** *Nursing:* The three year graduation rate for the traditional program has increased from 91 percent (1990 class) to 94 percent (1992 class). Other nursing tracts report similar data. *Medical and Research Technology:* The program's two-year graduation rate was 88 percent (1993 class) an increase of 6 percent from the 1992 class. *Dental Hygiene:* Nearly 100% of the students enrolled in AY 1992-94 graduated from the program within two years.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** *Nursing:* Fall 1993 undergraduates completing the Course Evaluation Questionnaire rated "Faculty are knowledgeable about course content" highest and "The physical facilities were conducive to learning" the lowest. *Medical and Research Technology:* Overall, the ratings for the courses offered during the 1994-95 academic year were very high with the exception of 2 clinical chemistry courses. The Department as a result is hiring faculty to enhance this portion of the program. *Dental Hygiene:* Student program evaluations indicate high levels of overall satisfaction.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** *Nursing:* Nearly 40 percent of new students who entered the masters in nursing program at UMAB were graduates of either UMAB's or UMBC's undergraduate nursing programs. *Medical and Research Technology:* Three percent of the 1995 class reported acceptance into an advanced degree program. *Dental Hygiene:* A high percentage of UMAB graduates enrolled in the university's Dental Hygiene MS program.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** *Nursing:* The 1995 NCLEX-RN results fell below that of prior years. The Department did an analysis of those who did not pass and as a result the Department has reexamined its admissions and student support services. *Medical and Research Technology:* The 1994 ASCP Registry Exam passage rate met the national average. *Dental Hygiene:* Passage rates of UMAB graduates are consistently high on several Board exams.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** *Nursing:* Eighty-five percent of the respondents to a 1995 Alumni survey indicated either full- or part-time employment (70% full-time, 15% part-time). *Medical and Research Technology:* Over the past three years employment rates for graduates of this program have averaged 89%. *Dental Hygiene:* Data from alumni surveys and anecdotal reports indicate that 100% of the program's 1991-1995 graduates found employment. Graduates from each of these Departments have indicated general satisfaction with their educational experience.

**Institutional Indicators:** *Nursing:* Other indicators include GPA of entering students and honors and other competitive awards. *Medical and Research Technology:* Honors and competitive awards to students were listed as an additional indicator. *Dental Hygiene:* listed cumulative GPA of enrolled classes, honors and awards to students, student and graduate involvement in professional associations and accreditation and certification visit reports.



## University of Maryland Baltimore County

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The University and its departments take seriously their assessment activities and use them for programmatic decision-making. Recent results of assessment activities include: reform of the general education requirements; modification of the assessment process for upper level English composition courses; curriculum changes in a number of departments; improved support services for students in several departments; and creation of processes to apprise students of opportunities for scholarships, foreign travel and research, and field/lab experiences.

### **Staff Summary**

The University has institutionalized student learning outcome assessment. Examples of the impact of these activities include: national recognition for the campus' work with minorities in the sciences and engineering; recognition of the Interdisciplinary Studies Programs as a national model for research universities; national recognition of UMBC at the PEW Roundtable; scores on licensing and certification exams well above the national average; and acceptance rates into UMAB's medical school above the overall acceptance rate.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** Responses from 4 recent alumni surveys indicate increasing satisfaction with the University's contribution to the alumni's ability to gain a broad general education about different fields of knowledge. The general education program has also contributed to their ability to write clearly and effectively and to think analytically and logically. Between 70 and 75 percent of alumni agreed that they would attend UMBC again and an overwhelming majority agreed that their UMBC undergraduate experience improved their quality of life, outside of financial benefits.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** Since the 1990 cohort, at least 81% of first-time full-time freshmen have been retained into their second year. Six-year graduation rates have been consistently above 50 percent and are showing continued improvement.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Course evaluations consistently rate the overall teaching effectiveness of the instructor highly. Alumni surveys also reveal a high level of satisfaction with teaching. For the past 4 surveys, 85 percent to 88 percent of respondents reported they believe the "overall quality of teaching at the undergraduate level in their major program" was good or excellent.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** For the past 4 alumni surveys, at least 30 percent of alumni indicated enrollment in a post-baccalaureate program within one year of graduation. The percentage of UMBC applicants accepted into UMAB's medical school has ranged between 15 and 20 percent. The Medical School's overall acceptance rate is 4 percent. Cooperative five-year programs with UMAB's professional schools have also helped facilitate and accelerate post-baccalaureate study.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** UMBC students taking the NTE's and the Social Work Associate exams have consistently passed at a higher rate than the national norm. MCAT scores were at or near the national average.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** For the 1993 class, 76 percent of the graduates were employed full-time and 14 percent were employed part-time. The cooperative education program has also successfully helped students gain employment. The majority of co-op students are offered a permanent position after graduation and the average time between graduation and permanent employment is less than a month. Alumni rate UMBC very favorably with regard to "gaining a range of information that may be relevant to a career".

## University of Maryland College Park

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

This year, a comprehensive effort to create a plan for student learning outcomes has been launched. Even though assessment has been occurring for some time, the institution is initiating a philosophy-based plan and process to establish an infrastructure that will facilitate, support, coordinate and monitor assessment activities. The plan is to include guidelines on the role of faculty and strategies to help faculty develop assessment skills. UMCP hopes that its plan for implementing a comprehensive approach to assessment will serve as a model for similar large and complex research universities. Also, in response to student and faculty concerns, the campus has also added a new math course that meets the needs of students who need to prepare for Calculus, but have math skills above that of remedial work.

### **Staff Summary**

UMCP has made great strides in its assessment of student learning outcomes. The campus' examination of student needs in the area of general education mathematics requirements is impressive. Not only is UMCP adding appropriate level courses to meet student needs (and not just adding course sections) but it is experimenting with different teaching approaches designed to improve student success. The University has been successful in attracting high ability students. Over the past three years, the average SAT score of entering freshmen has increased 14 points to 1100. The high school GPA has increased from a 3.0 to a 3.2 and the first semester GPA has increased from a 2.58 to 2.68. More importantly, the percentage of students with a GPA of less than 2.0 has decreased to 17 percent.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** During the 1994-95 academic year, 49 CORE courses were reviewed. Part of the review process includes student responses to a questionnaire. Over one-half of the respondents felt that their course had provided them with "quite a lot" or "a great deal" of opportunities to think carefully and critically. Sixty-five percent of the respondents indicated that their courses had increased their awareness of the ideas, theories, and concepts central to their field by "quite a lot" or "a great deal". A survey of current juniors indicated that 76 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their overall educational experience at UMCP has been a rewarding one and that two-thirds agreed or strongly agreed that the overall quality of academic programs is excellent.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** Second year retention rates for all students have ranged between 82 percent and 88 percent since 1986. Retention rates of transfer students have increased to 82 percent for the class of 1994. Six year graduation rates have increased from 57 percent to 66 percent for the classes of 1983 and 1989 respectively.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** A common teaching evaluation form is not used by the institution. There is general agreement that the way current teaching evaluations forms are designed, information provided is not useful for the improvement or assessment of learning outcomes. The issue is being addressed by several campus committees.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** Data on UMCP graduates who entered law, medicine and dentistry was provided. In 1993-94, 324 graduates enrolled in law school. UMCP has not done as well as the national trends in medical school acceptances. While the number of dental school applicants from UMCP has dropped, the percentage accepted has remained stable.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Overall, UMCP students perform well on the GREs, LSATs, MCATs, GMATs, NTEs and the registration examination for dietician's exams.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Employment rates of engineering graduates were provided. Data for the campus overall was not provided.

## **University of Maryland Eastern Shore**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

UMES's student learning outcome assessment program is linked to program review. Over the past three years, faculty involvement with assessment has evolved for the most part through program review activities. Within this time period, 22 programs have undergone comprehensive review. Most of the departments now have capstone courses. Portfolio's are used in some areas and two departments use national boards or standardized exams to directly assess student learning. Results from program reviews include program discontinuation, unification and curriculum modifications/innovations.

### **Staff Summary**

The University has made positive progress in assessing student learning outcomes. One of the outcomes of the assessment process has been the identification of a need for formal enrollment management strategies. As a result, UMES instituted enrollment management strategies beginning in the 1994-95 academic year.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** In June, 1994, the General Education Assessment Project was initiated. The purpose of the project was to assess the quality and character of the general education core offerings for the purpose of identifying ways to increase the rigor of the courses. To this end, much has been accomplished with regard to the review of the curriculum. Final assessment of the effectiveness of the general education curriculum would however be premature. Alumni surveys indicate that students feel that the University has prepared them at least adequately for graduate level work. The percent of respondents indicating that they would choose UMES again has increased from 58 percent for the class of 1985 to 80 percent for the class of 1989.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** The second year retention rates have fluctuated between 61 percent and 72 percent for the classes of 1985 through 1994. Six year graduation rates have increased from 22 percent to 27 percent for the classes of 1985 and 1989 respectively. These increases are due in part to the Faculty Advisement Program, the Pre-College Program, departmental advising programs, support services for the Academic Development and Counseling centers and the Honors Program.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** A survey of faculty suggests that student evaluations have resulted in a range of modifications or innovations in the classroom. These include modification of teaching, grading methods, enhanced use of field trips on and off campus, course content and major revisions of several core courses.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** Between 1990 and 1994, an average of 16 percent of UMES graduates enrolled in graduate or professional studies within one year of graduation. Within three years of graduation, the percentage increases to 20 percent.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** The passage rate on the physical therapy exam over the past 5 years has been 100%. The percentage of students passing the NTE Core Battery subjects was at least 81% for students taking the exam in 1994. The percentage passing the NTE Core has increased significantly since 1991.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Fifty four percent of 1993 graduates indicated that their employment was directly related to their major. For those graduates not enrolled in post baccalaureate work, the unemployment rates ranged between 0 percent and 4 percent for the classes of 1987 and 1993 respectively.

## University of Maryland University College

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The University has undertaken a comprehensive reengineering of undergraduate student services. This process will be completed in the Spring 1996. The objective of reengineering is to improve the quality and convenience of student services. A closer relationship between new student services teams and the academic units is planned in order to improve academic advising regarding degree completion.

### **Staff Summary**

Assessment of student learning outcomes becomes a challenging task for UMUC given its mission to serve the part-time adult learner. This process is made more difficult given the number of part-time faculty members. UMUC however is beginning to assist faculty in the development or enhancement of assessment skills through various faculty workshops and seminars.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** Alumni have consistently reported that they have received a general education from UMUC. At least 87 percent of the respondents from the three most recent alumni surveys have indicated that they would attend UMUC again. In addition, at least 88 percent stated that their undergraduate education at UMUC had improved their quality of life.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** Because UMUC primarily enrolls part-time students, retention and graduation rates may not be indicators of success. The institution provided data on the number of bachelor's degrees awarded per FTE. The percentage of bachelor degrees awarded per undergraduate FTE was 46 percent for the class of 1995.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Student responses to the item "This course was valuable and worthwhile." have been at least a 4.2 on a 5.0 scale for the past three academic semesters. Responses in the Current Student Surveys revealed that students continue to feel positive about various aspects of instruction.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** Over 32 percent of 1994 alumni indicated enrollment in additional post-secondary studies within one year of graduations. This is up from 30 percent for the 1991 class. Twenty nine percent of 1994 graduates reported that preparation for graduate school was a very important goal when the decision to attend UMUC was made.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Not applicable. No baccalaureate degree concentration leads specifically to licensure or certification.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** At least 87 percent of UMUC graduates from 1991, 1993 and 1994 indicated full-time employment. Most UMUC students, however, are employed while enrolled in their undergraduate program, and therefore the high and stable employment rate one year after graduation is reasonable.

**Institutional Indicators:** An employer survey was recently conducted where employers were asked to rate performance of UMUC graduates in certain areas including oral communication skills and analytical and problem solving skills. Most of the skill areas received a better than average rating. Student success in mathematics and English courses after taking placement exams was also provided.



**MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**



## **Morgan State University**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The University feels that its educational experience is comparable to that offered at predominately white institutions. The success of its student body is due in part to the efforts to create a personal and supportive environment while at the same time holding students to high standards. The University attributes increases in retention rates to its development of a comprehensive retention program implemented three years ago. This program incorporates several features: high level of supervision, coordinated activities, staff training in student relations, faculty development activities emphasizing retention strategies, extra attention to student needs out-side the classroom, increasing on-campus housing and use of residential facilities for academic and support programs.

### **Staff Summary**

The University continues to be rated highly for its teaching by current students. Morgan points out that a greater percentage of its graduates owe more than \$9,000 in loans than the percentage of African-American graduates and all graduates at all campuses.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The University provided information from a national study in which it is participating to describe the effectiveness of the general education program. This study monitors the academic progress of a sample of first-time full-time undergraduate students from 18 institutions throughout their college experience. One of the findings to date is that students attending Morgan and other HBCU's in the study have demonstrated levels of achievement comparable to African-Americans attending predominantly white campuses in the study. Morgan did not provide specific information on its internal general education evaluation process.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** Retention rates for Morgan students have been steadily increasing over the past six years. The second year retention rate for the class of 1994 was 77 percent, the highest percentage during this period. Students retained after four years has increased from 48 percent to 53 percent for the classes of 1989 and 1992 respectively.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** For each of the past four years, at least 78 percent of graduating seniors have indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of instruction. Over 70 percent of the respondents to the Commission's 1993 Bachelor's Follow-up Survey indicated that preparation for advanced study was good or excellent.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** Thirty-six percent of those responding to a survey indicated that they were enrolled in an advanced degree program compared to 24 percentage average statewide. Most of these students were enrolled in master's programs (25%).

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Since 1990, the passage rates of Morgan students taking the National Teacher Exams has risen from 56 percent to 100 percent.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Three-fourths of Morgan's 1993 bachelor's degree recipients reported holding full-time employment one year after graduation.

**Institutional Indicators: Accreditation Results:** During the past year, Morgan had two major accreditation visits by ABET and AACSB. For the School of Engineering, the team recommended reaccreditation and for the School of Business and Management, the team recommended full accreditation.

**ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND**



## **St. Mary's College of Maryland**

### **Institutional Impact of Student Learning Outcomes**

The Assessment Program at St. Mary's continues to evolve. Some aspects of the original program have been modified to provide better student learning outcome data. For example, a general education assessment exam was given on a trial basis. Later that exam was suspended for a variety of reasons and new emphasis was given to the portfolio as the principle measurement of outcomes for the General Education Curriculum. St. Mary's is the only public institution using a portfolio approach for general education assessment.

### **Staff Summary**

St. Mary's continues to be an innovative institution with regard to student learning outcomes assessment. The variety of tools that the campus uses to evaluate student learning is commendable.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Effectiveness of General Education Program:** The College's Assessment Plan includes the use of portfolios of student work as indicators of the effectiveness of the General Education Program. Student papers are evaluated in the freshmen year and compared with those in the senior year. Overall, significant improvement was made between the freshmen and senior year especially in the areas of critical thinking and organization. Among those elements consistently rated highly by 1994 alumni was the improvement in the breadth of general education requirements and the consistently high ratings of faculty instruction and accessibility.

**Retention/Graduation Rates:** Second year retention rates have remained above 87 percent since the class of 1989. Six year graduation rates have jumped from 56 percent for the class of 1984 to 78 percent for the 1988 class.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction:** Over the past four years graduates rated "faculty instruction within major field" as good or excellent on the Senior Exit Survey. Nearly 90 percent of the respondents rated instruction in courses outside their major as good or excellent. Over the past four years, seniors and alumni both rated the accessibility of faculty and professional staff at least a 3.4 on a 4.0 scale.

**Admission to Post-Baccalaureate Study:** Approximately one-third of the 1990, 1991, and 1992 graduates reported they had engaged in post-baccalaureate study. Thirty seven percent of the 1994 graduates reported that they are seeking a graduate/professional degree.

**Licensing and Certification Exams:** Test scores on the MCAT, GMAT and LSAT scores were provided. Since a small number of students from St. Mary's take these exams, generalizations are not possible. However, more than 90 students have taken the GREs during each of the past three years. Mean scores in Verbal, Quantitative and Analytical areas are above national means and improving.

**Graduate Employment Rates:** Consistent results of alumni surveys indicate that at least 90 percent of St. Mary's graduates are employed within one year of graduation.

**Institutional Indicators:** Majors that have engaged in assessment activities include Biology, Music, Political Science, Psychology, English, History, Mathematics, Dramatic Arts and Economics. These majors have used a variety of assessment tools. These range from the administration of a national normed test to locally developed assessment instruments including comprehensive exams, senior capstone courses, and questionnaires. Employer recruiters were also surveyed as to their perceptions of the preparation of students. The recruiters were asked to evaluate the students and compare them with students they had interviewed at other colleges. In all three years of the survey, interviewers strongly agreed that St. Mary's students expressed themselves clearly and effectively, were academically prepared for work in their organization, and had appropriate job-related skills for work in their organizations.