1: Project Goal

A: Our goal is to create and implement a complete, systematic process to assess student learning at the institutional level. We will also gain an understanding of how institutional level assessment connects with our existing program review process and ongoing course level assessment.

2: Reasons For Project

A: In June, 2009, SCC submitted its first Systems Portfolio to the HLC. The feedback clearly substantiated our need for a systematic process to assess student learning. Reviewers noted our lack of such a process in 1P1, 1P2, 1P17, and 1P18. In October, 2009, all employees reviewed our O and OO ratings and overwhelmingly selected SCC's lack of an assessment process as our greatest challenge. Assessment of student learning became the focus of our participation in the November Strategy Forum.

After participating in the Strategy Forum, SCC created an Institutional Assessment Committee comprised of the President, CAO, Dean of Humanities, Director of Institutional Research, Director of Grants & Accreditation, and six faculty members from various programs. In September, 2011, the Committee created bylaws which implemented term limits for faculty members and the academic dean so that more would have a chance to participate.

Southeastern wrote a new Strategic Plan in 2011, and “Systematically assess student learning college-wide” is included as a strategy. The President also included specific assessment-related activities in her 2012 Goals.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: The Teaching & Learning Division will be most affected by this Action Project.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Classroom instruction and faculty professional development.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: The length of time is determined by SCC's participation in the HLC Assessment Academy, which is a four-year commitment.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: Since the 2009 Strategy Forum, SCC's Assessment Committee has worked with all faculty to create five new core competencies. Having learned from past unsuccessful attempts to implement assessment, the Committee decided to start slow and chose to pilot just one of the new competencies: Communication. The Committee created indicators for this competency, using input from all faculty and staff gathered at an in-service.

The President included the following in her goals for 2012: “Work with faculty to identify and/or create appropriate assessments for the Communications Core Competency in all key courses by May 11, 2012.” She provides semi-annual updates to the Board of Trustees on her progress toward the goals.

SCC's 2011 5-year Strategic Plan includes the following initiatives:
- Develop Competencies for each of the five core competencies.
- Implement and administer an assessment of student learning based on our Core Competencies utilizing our competency indicators. Progress toward all initiatives is monitored by the President's Executive Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. SCC will also establish a timeline and milestones through its participation in the Academy and will provide updates/reports as required.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: As well as the outcomes listed in question 6 above, SCC's participation in the Academy will provide us with feedback regarding our successful implementation of an assessment plan. Similarly, we will detail our efforts in our next Systems Portfolio, due in June, 2013. The feedback report will be closely reviewed by the assessment committee.

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: As described in last year's Action Project update, the Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) has focused its efforts on institutional-level assessment. The committee worked with all faculty and staff to revise the College's original core competencies. The committee initially developed five competencies based on input from all employees. In response to input from area businesses and industry as well as career, technical and health advisory boards, we added a 6th competency: Workplace Readiness. The six competencies are:

- Communications
- Critical Thinking
- Scientific, Quantitative, and Qualitative Reasoning
- Responsible Citizenship
- Cultural Appreciation
- Workplace Readiness

To date, the Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) has completed and piloted rubrics for two of the core competencies (Communication and Critical Thinking).

April In-Service:
The Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) presented the assessment process and the two completed rubrics to all faculty at the April 5, 2013 in-service. The AAC faculty co-chair presented the following information to all faculty:

- Timeline for the process
- Core competencies
- History of the process
- Details and information on the two completed competencies, communication and critical thinking (including the rubrics).

During the In-Service, all faculty were asked to complete a brief form on which they were asked to 1) choose which competency (communication or critical thinking) they would assess during the fall 2013 semester, and 2) specify in which class they would do this assessment.

August In-Service:
At the August 15, 2013 In-Service, the AAC reviewed the process with all faculty and demonstrated the use of the rubrics through an exercise in which all faculty participated. The committee provided additional information on the assignment for the fall semester:

- Each faculty member was tasked with sharing his/her selected assessment assignment with a department colleague by September 20, 2013. This conversation was to include a discussion of the scoring criteria and how the scores integrated with the rubric. After this meeting, each colleague was to sign a form (provided by the AAC) stating that the conversation had taken place. These forms were to be submitted to the appropriate department chair.
- The AAC faculty co-chair stressed that all faculty must send their rubric scoring sheet to Institutional Research by December 17, 2013.
- The faculty co-chair re-introduced the members of the AAC and said that all members were available and willing to help anyone with this process. The AAC members scheduled two meetings (one on each campus) when they were available to answer questions and provide support to anyone who stopped by. Approximately twenty-five faculty dropped in seeking assistance during these meetings. AAC members also answered many questions one-on-one.
As well as helping faculty prepare for their assessment deadlines, AAC subcommittees are currently working on rubrics for the remaining four competencies with a deadline of October 1, 2013. All forms and rubrics have been posted on the employee intranet for easy access.

**HLC Academy Reviews:**
Our Academy reviewers noted a significant concern in our last review, stating that we had not identified how we would actually use data gathered from student assessments to make instructional improvements. After receiving this feedback, the AAC agreed that our data collection must lead to meaningful actions. The AAC has adopted a process described by Barbara Walvoord at the UIPI Assessment Conference:

1. During the fall 2013 semester, each faculty member will choose one of their existing assignments or will create an assignment that they can use to assess their students using either the critical thinking or communication rubric. Using the rubrics, they will “score” each assignment and submit the data to Institutional Research (in process).
2. Institutional Research will compile and analyze the data from the rubrics. The IR director will also create a summary that includes several “highlights” – trends, challenges, or strengths that were revealed by the data.
3. The AAC will review the report and will collaboratively select the “top 10” (or fewer) issues that will be sent to the department chairs along with the entire report.
4. Each department will review the report and the “top 10,” and it will choose two things that the department will work on throughout the next semester. The department representative on the AAC will provide the Committee with updates on this process at each meeting (see next question for additional information about departments).

### Institution Involvement

**A:** HLC Academy reviewers noted in our last report that assessment had not gained much traction among the faculty.

To address this concern, SCC recently implemented academic departments. The College now has six departments (three in the career, technical and health division and three in arts & sciences). Each department has a chair, and these individuals have designated one person from their department to serve on the AAC. This will increase faculty representation on the team as well as provide an even distribution of department representatives on the committee. Most importantly, it will increase communication between faculty and the AAC, which has been a significant challenge. SCC has in-service with all faculty only a few times each year, and these events provided the AAC with its best opportunity to disseminate information. Not all faculty regularly check email, so sharing information was extremely difficult. The department chairs will hold regular meetings with their departments (either monthly or semi-monthly). AAC members will be responsible for providing their departments with updates and information as we continue to implement the process.

### Next Steps

**A:** The co-chairs of the committee recently revised the schedule for the assessment process as shown below. Highlights of this schedule include the following:

- Instructors must share their fall 2013 assessment assignment with a department colleague (September 20).
- All faculty must submit their completed scoring sheet to Institutional Research by December 17. The AAC will have a meeting on January 9th during which they will review the institutional research report and create the “top 10” list.
- Currently two rubrics out of six have been completed. All rubrics will be finalized by October 1st. Four faculty AAC members volunteered to serve as leads for rubric sub-committees. Each team lead solicited team members from other faculty who are interested but do not currently serve on the assessment committee.
- During the next six months, there will be ongoing communication between the AAC Co-chairs and the department chairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>TEAM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 13</td>
<td>Meeting (at CBIZ)</td>
<td>AAC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop 8/15 presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identify Rubric Team leaders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• 2013-14 committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 15</td>
<td>Presentation (by AAC) for all faculty at the pre-semester in-service</td>
<td>All faculty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Common language discussion</td>
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<td>• Artifact examples</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Faculty due dates schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Responsible Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 30</td>
<td>Team leaders finalize teams to develop rubrics for remaining Core Competency areas. AAC member with faculty volunteers.</td>
<td>AAC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| September 9| Meeting  
  - Discuss artifact collection and repository                                                                                             | AAC                 |
| September 20| Deadline for instructors to share their Fall 13 assessment task/assignment plan with department colleagues, including scoring criteria and integration of scores with appropriate rubric (either Critical Thinking or Communication). | All faculty         |
| September 23| Meet/Plan  
  - Team/subcommittee work  
  - Address faculty concerns                                                                                                           | AAC teams           |
| September 27| Instructor submission of Fall 2013 assessment plan to their department chair along with a colleague(s) signature sheet.                         | All faculty         |
| October 1  | Rubric teams submit rubric to AAC.                                                                                                             | AAC and Rubric Teams|
| October 7  | Meeting  
  - Discuss new rubrics                                                                                                                  | AAC                 |
| October 21 | Meet/Plan  
  - Team/subcommittee work  
  - Address faculty concerns                                                                                                           | AAC teams           |
| October 27-29| IUPUI Assessment Institute                                                                                                                    | AAC                 |
| November 1 | Rubric teams submit final rubrics to committee                                                                                               | AAC and Rubric Teams|
| November 4 | Meeting  
  - Finalize new rubrics  
  - Discuss pilots for new rubrics                                                                                                             | AAC                 |
| November 18| Meet/Plan  
  - Team/subcommittee work  
  - Address faculty concerns                                                                                                           | AAC teams           |
| December 9 | Meeting  
  - Review Fall 2013 progress  
  - Update Spring 2014 timeline                                                                                                               | AAC                 |
| December 13| Fall 2013 assessment task completed.                                                                                                          | All faculty         |
| December 17| Fall 2013 assessment data entered into digital matrix set up by IR.                                                                             | All faculty         |
| December 17| Meet/Plan  
  - Team/subcommittee work  
  - Address faculty concerns                                                                                                           | AAC teams           |
| January 3  | IR to send final assessment report sent to ACC.                                                                                               | AAC                 |
| January 7  | Meeting (at CBIZ)  
  - Review Fall 2013 Academic Assessment Report  
  - List 5-10 items that provide an opportunity for improvement  
  - Plan 1/9/14 presentation                                                                                                              | AAC                 |
| January 9  | Presentation (by AAC) for all faculty at the pre-semester in-service                                                                           | All faculty         |
| January 20 | Meet/Plan  
  - Team/subcommittee work  
  - Address faculty concerns                                                                                                           | AAC teams           |
| January 31 | Deadline for instructors to submit to department chair two goals and an additional rubric for Fall 13.                                           | All faculty         |
Implementation plan address these goals. (issues identified by the Fall 2013 Assessment Report)

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The AAC believes that including representatives from each of the newly-formed departments will make a significant difference in the roll-out of the assessment process by improving communication between the AAC and all faculty members.

5: Project Challenges

A: 
- The AAC needs to continue to involve more people in the process. This will be resolved through the College’s new academic department structure as well as the committee’s efforts to reach outside of its own members. However, if the department structure is to succeed, it will require a significant administrative commitment to help arrange schedules so that instructors in each department have a common time when they can to meet.
- We have discovered that we need to provide training to some instructors (particularly in our Career and Technical area) who are unfamiliar with rubrics.
- Some individuals have questioned the validity of the data from our assessment process, and our IR director agrees that we need to have more than one person scoring each assignment against the rubric. However, this suggestion may meet with some resistance. As a result, the committee decided that we will not incorporate multiple scorers during this initial roll-out. That is something that we need to work on in the future.
- The AAC continues to find that scheduling time to meet and maintaining a significant level of progress is very difficult.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Southeastern Community College (SCC) has accomplished a great deal on this action project in the first two years. The establishment of six competencies, multiple in-service trainings, the availability of AAC committee members for individual consultation with faculty, and completion of rubrics for two competencies are significant steps toward SCC meeting its goals. Given the importance of this project to satisfying HLC Criteria (3) Student Learning and Effective Teaching and (4) Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge and AQP categories (1) Helping Students Learn and (7) Measuring Effectiveness, the continuing success of SCC will be very beneficial to the students and the college’s reaffirmation of accreditation.

2: Institution Involvement

A: The challenge of gaining full acceptance of a comprehensive student learning assessment by faculty can be very difficult. SCC has taken very specific steps to address the challenge in ways that should prove effective. Having more faculty representation on the AAC should make the process seem more “faculty driven” and thus acceptable.

3: Next Steps

A: SCC has laid out a well-developed plan of action for the coming year. The plan will result in rubrics for the remaining 4 competencies. The AAC has an ambitious but doable plan that can obviously move this action plan forward substantially.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: SCC acknowledges that they expect improved communication and faculty “but-in” to the new assessment focus. Testing this expectation during the coming year will provide some valuable insights and serve as an assessment of the communication improvements. Higher rates of full participation may be one way to assessment the expectation. The college has also developed an effective practice of continuous improvement and focus on assessment of student learning. This effective practice should be recognized and, again, assessed for its success.
5: Project Challenges

A: Finding time for meetings is a challenge all college face. Some ways that have been used to address that challenge are to have a block (ex. Tuesday and Thursday 1-2:30) of time with no scheduled classes and changing the typical MWF class schedule to a MW and then have Friday as the designated meeting day. SCC is definitely on the right track trying identifying the need for scheduling considerations.

Involving as much of the faculty as possible in the assessment process is, of course, critical to its success and SCC is wise to continue exploring ways to accomplish that end. One scoring consideration may be to explore using the faculty requirement of “sharing his/her selected assessment assignment with a department colleague” by having those colleagues do the initial scoring as an “independent scorer.”