

Santa Fe Community College

A Case Study on the Institutional Dynamics and Climate for Student Assessment and Academic Innovation



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I. Institutional Context

A. *Brief institutional description*

Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) is a state-supported community college (associate of arts institution) in the north-central region of Florida. Its mission statement / vision is as follows:

“Adding value to the lives of our students and enriching our community.”

Although not formally part of its mission, SFCC tries to prepare its Associate of Arts degree (AA) students to successfully transfer and succeed in any of Florida’s major universities. (See page the SFCC web page < <http://www.santafe.cc.fl.us/> > for a more detailed philosophy, vision, and statement of values.)

SFCC plays an important role in the region of north central Florida. The community college system in Florida is quite extensive and serves to prepare residents to become responsible and contributing citizens throughout the state. Located in Gainesville, home of the University of Florida (the state’s flagship institution) SFCC serves many students whose goal it is to transfer to UF or one of the other nine state universities.

Of the 28 public community colleges in Florida, SFCC is ranked among the top in its successful retention, preparation, and graduation of students.

SFCC does not have formal divisions based on academic area, but rather program areas. The institution offers three degree programs, Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science and two certificate programs, the Occupational Certificate and an Advanced Technical Certificate. The program with the greatest enrollment is the Associate of Arts degree program. This is also referred to as the transfer program because students in this program generally have the goal of transferring to a four-year institution. The Associate of Science degree program is considered a post-secondary vocational degree for students interested in specific areas of vocational training. The Associate of Applied Science degree program was just implemented this year and as of our visit had not been finalized. The two certificate programs are very small and cater to individuals in very specific areas that require certification and /or licensing such as paramedics and firefighters. The college has a wide variety of program offerings in all five of these areas. (See the list on page 11 of the SFCC 1999-2000 fact book)

The total undergraduate population at SFCC for the fall 1999 term was 12,795. Of this number 6000 were part-time students and 6795 were full-time students. Further breakdowns by gender, race, geographic region from which the students come, and the programs in which the students are participating are as follows:

Gender: 6643 – female,

6152 – male;

Race: American Indian – 83,

Asian – 322,

Hispanic – 845,

African American – 1343,

White – 9859;

Geographic region: In district – 7088,
Other Florida – 4920,
Other U.S. – 364,
Foreign – 423;

Program: Associate of Arts – 8288,
Associate of Science – 3294,
Other – 1213;

SFCC has no bachelor or graduate programs.

SFCC has a Board of Trustees with eight members, a president, and four vice-presidents. (See appendix A for a list of the college officers.) Additionally, SFCC has a college senate, which includes administrators, professional staff representatives, and faculty representatives.

B. Division of Arts and Sciences

The main mission of the A&S division of SFCC is to prepare students to transfer to one the ten state universities in Florida. The students who enroll in this division are enrolled in the AA program, which is also termed the transfer program.

The regional role of the division, though not a formally specified role, is to prepare students to transfer to the University of Florida. Many of the Florida residents from other counties that attend SFCC do so with the hope of transferring to U of F.

The A&S division offers AA degrees in 43 different programs. Most are in very traditional programs such as English, Botany, or Sociology, but some are in less traditional areas such as building construction, nursing, or fashion merchandising.

The division is headed by an Associate V P and consists of five departments: Creative Arts / Humanities, English, Math, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences /History each with a department chair.

Of the total 12,795 students enrolled at SFCC, 8288 (64.8%) are enrolled in the A&S division. Other breakdowns by division were unavailable at the time of this report.

II. Institutional Approach to Undergraduate Student Assessment

A. Overview of History or Development of Institution's Approach

SFCC has a very strong academic assessment program. The major focus of the program, however, is to test the readiness of students to enroll in college level courses. This is not atypical for a community college that enrolls large numbers of high school graduates who may not be prepared to enroll in a four-year institution. The institution does perform limited outcomes based assessment through the administration of the CLAST (described below). This specific testing is mandated for all public institutions in the state of Florida.

An Associate Vice President of Academic Resources under the Vice President of Educational Services is charged with running the academic preparedness assessment programs of the institution. This office oversees the Assessment Center at SFCC, which administers all of the

required testing for the institution. The Coordinator of the Assessment Center directs these testing efforts. There are a number of tests that are administered through the Assessment Center including the Florida Computerized Placement Test (CPT) the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST), and various College Level Examination Program tests (CLEP).

B. Student Performance Data

Entry Level Data

Most all of SFCC's assessment data is collected at entry. The type of data includes students' preparedness in math, reading comprehension, and sentence skills (writing). These tests are used to place students in remediation if necessary. Test cutoff scores are used to determine if a student may enter college-level courses.

First-time students and transfer students have different testing requirements for enrollment. First-time degree seeking students who apply for admission to SFCC and who have no entry test scores must take the Computerized Placement Test (CPT). The CPT basically tests students' readiness to enroll into college level courses. The entire CPT test battery is administered and scores are entered on the student's record. Initial course placement is based on these test scores. Degree seeking students may submit test scores from one of the state-approved assessment tests (SAT, ACT-E, or CPT) for placement and will fall into one of two categories:

- 1) If these scores are no more than two (2) years old and if all the scores are above the State cut score, no additional testing is required.
- 2) Students who submit SAT or E-ACT test scores that do not meet or exceed college-level placement scores in reading, writing, and/or mathematics will take the entire College Entry Level Placement Test (i.e. Computerized Placement Tests-CPT). These scores will be entered on the student's record. Course placement will be based on the CPT scores. Placement test scores may not be older than two years.

Transfer students (from other institutions) who do not have current placement test scores or official transcripts on file showing appropriate course work are handled according to the following guidelines:

- 1) they are flagged with a "Y" flag and will take the entire CPT. (Flag maintenance to accommodate students who have passed the required courses prior to transferring, but had prep flags generated on the basis of CPT testing, will be done by the College Prep Advisor prior to registration.)
- 2) flags generated by the CPT will be retained for students failing any part (reading, English, or mathematics) of the CPT and not having official transcripts which show a grade of C or better in the required courses. The required courses are: ENC1101 (or its equivalent), a college-level reading course, and/or a college algebra course (or a higher level mathematics course) or the highest level math course required for the students' selected program code, i.e. MTB1371 in specific health related programs and MTB1103 in specific business programs.

Transfer students with CPT scores that are less than two (2) years old will not be re-tested.

The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) is a national program of credit by examination that allows students to obtain recognition for college-level achievement. A student's personal reading, professional training, adult school, or distance learning courses may have prepared them

to earn college credit. Many colleges and universities award college credit based on specific pre-determined test scores. The CLEP however, tests previous achievement and is not considered a test of student outcomes due to enrollment in the specific institution. As such, SFCC uses this test for placement and credit earned purposes.

Affective Assessment Data

SFCC does collect some affective data in the area of student attitudes. This data is collected at the students' exit. The Graduate Assessment Survey is one such assessment which collects information on student satisfaction with the various student services and activities. This survey is administered to student when they apply for graduation. Most students assume it is required for graduation and therefore the response rate is very high (greater than 90%).

Santa Fe's assessment of student experiences and perceptions measures students' satisfaction with their educational experience, the services offered to support the academic function and the student's satisfaction with the preparation received at SFCC. (See SFCC 1998-1999 Graduate Assessment Survey Report for details.) This assessment is performed periodically with all students.

Student Performance Data

The College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) is a part of the Florida system of educational accountability. The CLAST measures students' achievement of college-level communication and mathematics skills. It consists of four sub-tests: Essay, English language skills, reading, and mathematics. SFCC students need to take the CLAST when they earn 18 AA degree hours, including grades of C or better in ENC1101 (first course in English composition), ENC1102 (second course in English composition), and a college-level mathematics course at MAC1102 or higher. Students are required to pass all four sub-tests or qualify for an alternative in order to earn an Associate of Arts degree and to be admitted to most upper division programs in the Florida State University System. Students who fail any sub-test are required to remediate their skills in the CLAST Lab prior to retaking the CLAST.

SFCC also performs an annual employer survey that seeks to measure employer's satisfaction with the training that their SFCC graduates received as determined by their job performance. Additionally, SFCC tracks its graduates, and regularly surveys its alumni as well as "leavers" who withdraw before graduating.

C. Nature and Source of Instruments and Reports

All students are required to take entrance placement tests in order to test their academic preparation and to satisfy state reporting requirements. These tests include the CPT and CLEP tests. The CPT is a computerized battery of tests that is developed and standardized at the state level. This battery of tests, which test reading English and mathematics abilities, is used for placement purposes. Students must achieve a certain cut-score (determined by the state) in order to enroll in college level courses. Those below the cut-score must take remedial courses prior to enrolling in college level courses.

The CLEP tests determine whether students may receive academic credit for knowledge, experience, or coursework they have prior to enrolling at Santa Fe. CLEP tests are nationally developed and offer two types of tests: General Examinations and Subject Examinations. The

General Examinations measure familiarity with material covered in courses taken during the first two years of college to meet general education or liberal arts requirements. The subject examinations measure knowledge usually acquired in specific college courses and are used to grant credit for or exemption from these courses.

The CLAST test measures students' achievement of college-level communication and mathematics skills and consists of four sub-tests: essay, English language, reading, and mathematics. This test is also a standardized test developed at the state level. It is used as part of the Florida State Accountability System, which uses the test data to hold Florida public institutions accountable for the quality of the education provided to students at each campus.

The Florida State system requires reporting of test information. The CPT and CLAST results are reported to the state and are used to produce reports mainly used as feedback to high schools. The reports do contain useful information, however, on transfer students to four-year state institutions. The Florida Department of Education produces the reports. The first comprehensive report in February of 2000 provided state summaries for community colleges and state universities by district from which students graduated.

The Graduate Assessment Survey, given to graduates during graduation registration, is intended to assess student satisfaction with the institutions educational programs and services. The employer survey is used to assess the satisfaction of employers with the education and skills received by their SFCC graduates. The assessment of student satisfaction and perceptions is given to all students periodically. The institution uses the results of this survey to improve programs and services based of student feedback. All three of these surveys are developed internally by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning.

III. Institution-wide Support Patterns Guiding and Promoting Student Assessment

A. Mission and Purpose

Though quality education in preparing students for work in the community is a key aspect of the mission, there is no mention of student assessment in the brief mission statement. However, assessment is mentioned in the institution's statement of values to which the institution is committed. SFCC also has a set of seven defined goals. Within two of these goal statements, Delivery of Alternatives and Educational Programs, student assessment is noted as a key component.

In the recent past, the primary purpose for assessment at SFCC was to meet state reporting requirements and to test students' preparation for college level course work. During the spring and summer of 2000, the institution has been working on a self-study in preparation for an upcoming SACS accreditation visit. Out of this self-study have come several initiatives, which focus on the need to increase the emphasis student outcomes assessment. The colleges new "Strategic Plan 2000" (See attachment) incorporates student assessment as a key element in its plan for the future. Since this plan has just been developed and is in the process of being implemented, the effect may not be immediately apparent. The remaining sections of this report address the institution's practices prior to and during our visit in the spring of 2000, and therefore do not include any changes to or emphasis on student assessment that has occurred since the implementation of the "Strategic Plan 2000".

B. Regular Institution-wide Events Related to Student Assessment

While there are no regular institution-wide events related to student assessment, there have been several on-campus-training sessions open to faculty, staff, and administrators conducted by outside consultants. Several examples of workshops include “Getting Started in Departmental Assessment”, “Evaluating Good Teaching”, and “Service Learning”.

C. Planning and Coordination for Student Assessment

SFCC did not have a specific assessment plan that addresses student assessment. However, the institution was in the process of creating a draft institutional effectiveness handbook, which is scheduled to be published in November. This handbook will describe the planning and assessment systems and processes along with step-by-step instructions for doing planning and assessment at the college and unit level.

As of spring 2000 there was no group designated to specifically address student assessment issues, however, SFCC has an Office of Academic Resources that oversees all academic assessment and testing. The Vice-President of Educational Services, Patricia Grunder, reports directly to the President and oversees the Associate Vice-President of Academic Resources, Patsy Smittle, who is charged with responsibility for all testing and assessment of student learning. The Office of Academic Resources directs the Assessment Center, Coordinated by Dot McGuinness. Both the Office of Academic resources and the Assessment Center are responsible for the design, training, testing, and collection of assessment data.

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning, which also reports to the VP of Educational Services is responsible for the analysis and reporting of assessment information. An Interim Director, William Vivian, heads this office. William Vivian is also the person charged with the responsibility of directing the self-study committee in preparation for the upcoming SACS accreditation visit and is a co-chair on the accreditation steering committee. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning does perform assessment in the areas of graduate surveys, student satisfaction surveys, and employer satisfaction surveys, but most of the effort and resources at SFCC are used to meet the state reporting requirements in areas of academic preparedness, and retention and completion rates. The new strategic plan charges the Office of Institutional Research and Planning with collecting and analyzing student assessment information from the units and compiling this information in an annual assessment report.

The assessment that SFCC has performed in the past has been almost completely geared toward the placement of students as they enter the institution and the meeting of state requirements with the administration of the CLAST. SFCC is currently undergoing a self-study in preparation for an upcoming accreditation visit and the self-study committee is looking at certain assessment issues as part of the self-study. One interviewee mentioned that SFCC is planning to create a “General Education Committee” where people from all disciplines will develop and review a plan for on-going assessment.

D. Support for Student Assessment

Based on our visit, the primary campus leaders who support assessment at SFCC are the President, Vice-President of Educational Services, Associate Vice-President of Academic Resources, the Coordinator of the Assessment Center, and the Director of Institutional Research and Planning. There was no specific support or lack of support from the faculty for student

assessment beyond the assessment for placement purposes, which most supported and viewed as very necessary.

Aside from traditional classroom assessment and the state required placement assessment, there currently appears to be little focus on student assessment of teaching and learning outcomes beyond traditional classroom testing. Therefore it is difficult to identify any group or individuals that support this process. Several faculty in a focus group mentioned that there was no real push at the institutional level for assessment, there was some in certain departments but that most of the assessment was still determined by the course instructor. The administrators mentioned above—with the exception of the president with whom we did not speak—all spoke of the need to do greater assessment of student outcomes. They recognize the value of such assessment and are in the planning stages for improving their efforts in lieu of the upcoming SACS visit.

E. Evaluation of Institutions Student Assessment Process

The Office of Academic Resources and the Assessment Center do evaluate their processes. However, these evaluations are generally focused on testing for placement purposes and limited to surveys of students who use the testing center.

IV. External Influences

A. State Level

Historically, Florida has been one of the most active states that have implemented a statewide system of testing to track the academic preparedness and success of its students at all levels of education (K-12 through four-year college). In 1983 Florida established common college-entry-placement tests to be used statewide. Previously, placement tests were used but different institutions used different tests and comparisons were difficult if not impossible. In 1990 feedback reports were given to high schools. In 1995 the Computerized Placement Test (CPT) was introduced at some colleges. In 1996 the CPT was required at all colleges and the corresponding CPT cutoff scores were raised at many colleges. In 1997 the cutoff scores were raised at the remaining colleges, becoming uniform across the state. In 2000, the first feedback was sent to districts and high schools based on the uniform statewide CPT cutoff scores.

The Florida system standards and reporting requirements have driven most of the assessment activity that has occurred at the state institutions. SFCC spends most of its time and resources testing incoming students and compiling data in order to meet state reporting requirements. There is little assessment of the teaching and learning that occurs while a student is enrolled at SFCC other than the traditional classroom assessment. Because many SFCC students transfer to Florida four-year institutions, such as the University of Florida, SFCC is able to gather some information about how well they prepare their AA students for transfer in comparison to other Florida Community Colleges.

The greatest influence for the assessment that SFCC undertakes is from the state. The state of Florida has specific requirements for institutions to report CPT and CLAST test results. The CPT results are used to track how well the high school system is doing in preparing students for college level coursework, while the CLAST is used to assess academic preparedness for upper division coursework at the post-secondary level. The state also requires reporting of certain

accountability measures such as retention and success rates of students. Beyond these reporting requirements, the state has not mandated any student outcome assessment.

The state has standardized the tests used for assessing academic preparedness such as the CPT and CLAST tests. Beyond the state-standardized tests, SFCC has no standardized student outcome assessment measures.

State reporting requirements for SFCC and other public institutions exist in the areas of performance indicators, CPT scores of entering students, CLAST scores of graduating students, and in the area of retention and completion rates. No other reporting requirements were discussed during the case study.

State uses the CPT scores to provide feedback to high schools on how well they are preparing students for college level work. (See the Readiness for College Report) It was mentioned several times during our visit that the state is more concerned about providing feedback to public high schools on their preparation of students for college level work and less concerned about assessing the academic preparation that colleges and universities are providing to students.

Florida currently has a very coordinated higher education system. There are 10 state universities and 28 state community colleges. There is currently a move to eliminate the state board of regents and have separate boards for each institution. Many felt that this would undermine the standardization across the state for community colleges trying to prepare students for university work. At the time of this report the final decision regarding the elimination of the state board of regents was unknown.

In the area of assessment the influence of the state is great in Florida. Although there are currently no mandates for student outcome assessment, the state requirements for reporting entry preparedness are very influential. Most of the assessment resources of SFCC are devoted to meeting these state reporting requirements. Many at the institution mentioned that lack of time to devote to institutional initiatives due to the burden of meeting state reporting requirements.

B. Regional Accreditation

The most recent accreditation report was from the 1992 SACS visit. Since Santa Fe Community College is currently preparing for an upcoming visit in 2002. SACS (southern region accreditation association) plays a major role in the assessment efforts of SFCC. The SACS *Criteria for Accreditation* specifies that institutions are encouraged to use a variety of assessment methods and use the results in the planning and evaluation process for improving educational programs and support activities. The criteria do not give specific guidelines, however, for the types of assessment that should occur.

C. Other External Influences

No other external entities were mentioned during our visit as having influence on the assessment efforts at SFCC.

V. Academic Management Policies and Practices

A. Resource Allocation

State Level

At the state level, there is resource allocation in the form of performance incentives that are based upon the information reported by institutions on certain accountability measures such as degrees awarded, AA transfers to the state universities, etc. These are based on the measures such as retention and graduation previously mentioned and not on any other student outcome assessment measures.

The state does not, however, allocate any money or resources to institutions to help fund the assessment that is required. One of the administrators interviewed, used the term “unfunded mandate” to describe the requirement of collecting and reporting student test data to the state.

Institutional Level

Santa Fe does not provide funding or other resources based upon the results of any of the assessment performed at the institutional level or at the department level. The results of institutional assessment because they are primarily directed at entry-level placement would not provide any useful information in this regard. The CLAST, which does assess academic preparedness for upper level courses, could be used for rewarding or allocating resources based upon positive results. However, there was no mention of this test being used in this way.

There was no mention of resource allocation at the institutional level that was dependent upon the use and/or involvement in assessment activity by faculty or administrators. Furthermore, there was no mention of any resource allocation specifically intended for the use of faculty or administrators in performing assessment. (This excludes resources that the institution budgets for the Assessment Center, which is charged with performing all institution-wide assessment.)

B. Student Assessment Information Systems

The state of Florida has a statewide information system that is used to report and store data from its public institutions. The information system is used to track students, report test scores (e.g. CPT and CLAST) and other accountability measures (i.e. retention and graduation). This information is aggregated and sent back to institutions in a comparative format allowing institutions to compare themselves with other like institutions.

SFCC has a good information support system that is available to departments. If departments want to gather certain kinds of information (e.g. test scores, retention, etc.), the division of Information Technology Services is available to assist in writing code and designing data collection systems for the department. The institution-wide data, which is collected by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and the Assessment Center, is available to departments but must be requested. There is not currently a connected system that makes access to department heads easy. One source commented that much of the raw data on assessment has been collected, but the institution has fallen short on analyzing it.

C. Accessibility of Individual Student Data to Various groups

Various groups such as department heads and deans have access to information, but it is not necessarily at their fingertips; the data must be requested. If various groups want specific

information that has not been previously reported or summarized, the ITS division is willing to help with writing programs to meet the specific needs.

D. Distribution of Studies and Reports to various groups

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning generates most of the institutional reports. Furthermore, this office has copies of state reports and it shares this information with various groups that request such information. While there is no formal system or policy document that addresses the distribution of assessment information, this office does send compiled state reports (based on CPT and CLAST) and other survey reports (graduate survey, student satisfaction survey, employer survey) to program directors and college leaders when the reports are published. These reports are also housed in a library where people can (and do) come to check them out. Much of the data is sent to the state, which then compiles and distributes reports to institutions. These reports are available at the institutional level, but are not widely distributed.

E. Student Related Policies

Santa Fe has a number of policies in place to assure that students are tested prior to enrolling in classes. These policies apply to new first-time students and transfer students. New students are required to submit ACT or SAT scores or take the CPT at the institution. Transfer students must submit transcripts or current placement test scores.

SFCC students need to take the CLAST when they earn 18 A.A. degree hours, including grades of C or better in ENC1101, ENC1102, and a college-level mathematics course at MAC1102 or higher. Students are required to pass all four sub-tests or qualify for an alternative in order to earn an Associate of Arts degree and to be admitted to most upper division programs in the Florida State University System. Students who fail any sub-test are required to remediate skills in the CLAST Lab prior to retaking the CLAST. A fee is charged for CLAST retakes. State financial aid students who fail to take the CLAST by the time they have earned 60 hours jeopardize their financial aid status.

Other policies and procedures for student testing are determined by the individual departments and programs.

Student feedback, in general, is only gathered through the student support offices and does not necessarily relate to assessment issues. The assessment center does ask for feedback from students who visit the center for testing and placement and the information is used to improve the services of the testing center.

F. Professional Development Opportunities for Faculty, Academic or Student Affairs Staff

The institution has been increasingly providing opportunities for faculty and administrators to attend workshops or meetings related to improving student assessment efforts. Additionally, there have been several outside consultants brought to campus for workshops on departmental assessment and evaluating good teaching. A central administrator mentioned these. (See section III B.) None of the faculty, however, discussed having known about or attended any workshop related to assessment, nor was there any mention of support for faculty to attend conferences or workshops (outside the institutionally sponsored events) related to student assessment.

G. Faculty Evaluation or Rewards

In the interviews with faculty and administrators, there was no mention of rewards for faculty that participate in, or assist with student assessment. Neither was there any discussion of student assessment being a part of the faculty evaluation system.

SFCC does have certain rewards for innovative teaching. There are quarterly awards and the Allen J. Robinson (AJR Medallion) end-of-the-year award for quality instruction. The tenure system is a time-based system. There are no specific requirements for research, publishing, and service that are incorporated into the tenure system. The ranks are Asst. Prof., Assoc. Prof., with tenure, and after 10 years, Full Professor.

Other rewards recognizing quality teaching were mentioned by a central administrator and include newsletter acknowledgements for A&S faculty, and professional development opportunities awarded at the departmental and institutional level.

H. Academic Planning or Review

Assessment data (CLAST), retention, GPA, and graduation rates are used for programmatic planning and review. The data from these measures is reported to departments and is used to inform the planning process. Departments use the data to add or drop courses, restructure requirements to meet the needs of students, and to evaluate the current curricula. Other types of student outcome assessment were not mentioned as playing a role in planning and review.

From an institution-wide perspective, little was discussed concerning the use of student assessment data in the planning and review process. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning, however, is currently in the midst of a self-study in preparation for an upcoming SACS accreditation visit. This office is very interested in improving the institution's overall assessment efforts and putting a system in place to use assessment data in the planning and review process.

VI. Innovative Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Practice

A. Teaching Learning and Assessment Activity

Within the academic structure of Santa Fe Community College, there are five departments: English, Math, Social Sciences and History, Natural Sciences, and Creative Arts and Humanities. We spoke with representatives from four of the departments, but were unable to interview anyone from Social Science and History. Throughout the institution and specifically within the departments and among faculty, Santa Fe Community College is very student centered. The faculty and staff at Santa Fe are committed to continuous evaluation and innovative revision of the educational environment in their efforts to help foster student goals. Sixty percent of the faculty at Santa Fe Community College has been there for 20 years or more. This has been interpreted as a testament to their satisfaction level and commitment to student learning and teaching. Several of the faculty, however, have mentioned that there is little institutional interest in teaching, but that the administration is most interested in retention and graduation—getting the most students through as quickly as possible. This was attributed to state mandates.

Santa Fe is currently planning to create a General Education Committee where people from all disciplines would review the general education model and develop a plan for on-going

assessment. The administration believes it is not the place of administrators to develop the vision and goals but rather to have faculty buy into the plan by allowing them to create the vision and goals for the committee.

In an ongoing effort to support innovative evaluation, the administration provides support for faculty to improve teaching and learning. Faculty may attend workshops and conferences and then are expected to return to campus and share what they learned with other faculty. While this support exists from the administration for faculty to use innovative methods in teaching, based on our interviews, few faculty have actually tried new methods of teaching and assessment. Naturally, however, the type and amount of innovative teaching, learning, and assessment varies greatly by department.

B. Assessment Practice

Below is an indication of the extent to which each department uses new and innovative methods of teaching, learning, and assessment.

English

The English department was the leader in areas of innovative teaching and learning. It was mentioned that Florida has a writing requirement that called the Gorden Rule. (Named for the congressman who introduced it to legislation.) This rule requires that students write 24,000 words as part of their graduation requirement. This translates into writing across the curriculum. One of the goals of the department is to have the required courses reflect what students can be expected to do in upper level courses. As such the objectives reflect what students need.

The English courses have finals that are partly developed by the instructor and partly developed by the department. This insures that faculty teach certain common principles and that all students have a common experience in their English courses. There is also a common final exit exam that helps to set a standard for instruction in the English department.

Other innovative practices:

- About half of the instructors are using reflective writing in their courses.
- Some instructors are having students do peer grading and review.
- There are some faculty who have developed their own textbook.
- In the area of assessment, the department looks at student evaluations, faculty self-evaluations (narrative), grade distribution patterns, elements included in the course syllabi, and in class evaluations followed by discussion.

Math

The math department has pushed for some reform at that level, but it has not been pushed at the institutional level. There is a state-mandated final for beginning algebra that standardizes the course requirements across the state. In this course many instructors teach to the test. There is also a common final intermediate algebra but the department and instructor and not the state develop this. For other courses in the department each faculty determines their own teaching and assessment.

The instructor's teaching methods are evaluating based annual self-evaluation as well as department chair and peer observation.

Other innovative practices:

- Use reform texts, which dictate teaching using non-traditional methods (graphic, numerical, symbolic, etc.)
- Department tries to find ways to assess learning in other ways beyond testing (i.e. how students work together, participation, explaining work, using tables or graphs, etc.)
- Use gateway quizzes and projects with real life scenarios.

Humanities

The humanities department is similar to the English department. There is a heavy composition requirement and emphasis on writing skills, critical thinking, and argument. The department still uses many traditional forms of assessment such as papers, essay exams, multiple choice exams, and oral performance in the languages. The performing and fine arts classes have achievement based assessment, which uses judging on final artistic work or performance.

The humanities felt that there was no real institutional push or support to encourage developing new assessment methods. The course loads for instructors is heavy (often having five courses). This makes it difficult to do one-on-one tutorials or evaluation. There does not seem to be any push to move away from traditional assessment methods. Individual efforts and direct feedback from students help to drive innovative assessment and teaching. Teaching is assessed through student evaluations, and non-tenured faculty are observed.

C. Evaluation of Teaching

Santa Fe Community College assesses quality teaching in a number of ways. Faculty, as a part of their annual evaluation do a self-evaluation of their own teaching. There are also student evaluations, which are part of the overall evaluation. Some departments also have mid-term evaluations. These are optional and departmentally based. Finally, classroom observation and informal mentoring where full-time faculty are paired with part-time faculty, are included as part of the assessment of quality teaching.

D. Rewards and Recognition for Teaching

There are several awards given to recognize faculty teaching efforts at Santa Fe Community College. Quarterly recognition awards are given to part-time and full-time faculty who demonstrate service to the institution. The Allen J. Robinson End-of-the-year award is given to faculty for quality instruction, and periodic newsletters recognize and acknowledge the efforts of Arts and Science faculty who excel in teaching.

VII. Uses and Impacts of Student Assessment

A. Uses in Academic Decisions

The current uses of assessment information at SFCC are related to state accountability. The major type of assessment is to test the academic preparation of incoming students and preparation for upper level coursework by graduates. The main purpose of this assessment is to

meet state reporting requirements and for use in curriculum development. The state mandates several tests and the scores to be reported by all state institutions. The state uses this information primarily to evaluate how well the K-12 system is preparing students for college level work. Beyond this, SFCC does not have the time or resources to pursue other uses of the information they collect, nor have they broadened the type of student assessment data collected. Some programs use the CPT and CLAST results to evaluate and change curriculum to better serve the needs of the students. However, this only occurs in a few cases.

There is some assessment of quality teaching that is occurring throughout the institution. This usually takes the form of classroom observations, self-evaluations, narrative evaluations and student evaluations. This quality of teaching assessment information is used to make faculty appointments and tenure decisions.

B. Internal Institutional Impacts

The current discussion in the area of educational and instructional changes lies with the creation of a General Education Committee, which will oversee plans and changes to the general education requirements. This was an area of some discussion. The concern of several administrators centered on how effective the general education model was, what criteria should be used to evaluate the model, and what evidence can be used to show it is working. There appears to be a strong consensus for the need for assessment data within general education. However, SFCC has yet to begin using different assessment strategies to collect this data.

The areas of student satisfaction, retention, and postgraduate performance are the main areas in which most information is collected at SFCC. There are student and graduate surveys for satisfaction, employer surveys to inform graduate performance, and the registrar regular tracks retention of students. The retention is reported to the state as an accountability measure. The information from the other two areas is reported to divisions and departments regarding their respective students. The information is reportedly used to improve programs and services where satisfaction is low. Other uses of this information were not discussed.

C. External Impacts

While state mandates have generally driven the type of assessment performed at SFCC and other Florida institutions, there was no mention of state dollars being tied to student assessment initiatives or results. The issue of accountability was widely discussed and there is a perception of pressure from the state to retain and graduate students, but as far as tying funding to student assessment, there was no mention of this.

The current driving force behind SFCC's effort to establish an institutional effectiveness system, which includes assessment of student outcomes, comes from SACS accreditation association. The institution is now involved in a self-study in preparation for a SACS accreditation visit next year. While there was no mention of the impact of student assessment efforts on the accreditation evaluations, the criteria manual requires a strong system of institutional effectiveness including planning, assessing student outcomes (student performance), and demonstrating the use of assessment results. Those involved in the self-study recognize the importance of the accreditation evaluation and the likely role of their assessment efforts in that evaluation.

VIII. Assessment Culture and Climate

A. Nature and Role of Assessment in Institution

The nature of assessment at SFCC is focused in the area of testing incoming students for preparedness. While there is some acknowledgement of the need to assess student learning, the resources at SFCC have been utilized to meet state reporting requirements. Therefore, little attention has been given to assessing the teaching and learning of students who go through the SFCC program.

B. Meaning to Faculty and Student Role

Most of the faculty is not involved in the assessment that occurs at SFCC. There is an assessment center, which performs all the required assessment to meet state requirements. The faculty who were interviewed knew nothing about any efforts to do assessment at an institutional, divisional, or departmental level. For the faculty, assessment was confined to classroom assessment of learning. The methods were tradition, in most cases, with faculty citing testing and writing as means to assess student learning.

It is evident that the upper administration is aware of the need for greater assessment efforts. Meeting state-reporting requirements, however, have been the focus in recent years. There appears to be no pressure from the state to increase or expand the assessment efforts, aside from reporting retention and graduation rates and therefore will not likely provide any impetus for SFCC to increase its student assessment efforts. The upcoming SACS visit however, has had a great impact on the efforts of the institution to create an institutional effectiveness system and to incorporate student assessment into its strategic plan. There are currently discussions taking place and some initial planning of ways to improve the institution's assessment efforts. The creation of a General Education Committee is one such effort. This committee will likely be responsible for laying out an agenda and plan evaluation the general education requirements of SFCC.

Appendix A

OFFICERS OF THE COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

President - Lawrence W. Tyree
Vice President for Administration and Finance -
Janice R. Bullard
Vice President for Educational Services
Patricia J. Grunder
Vice President for College and Community Services,
Blount Center - Portia L. Taylor
Vice President for Development - W. Harvey Sharron, Jr.
Director, Government Relations and Legal Counsel -
Brian T. Babb

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Vice President for Administration and Finance -
Janice R. Bullard
Associate Vice President for Administration - Guy L. York
Associate Vice President for Finance - Rochelle D. Prince
Associate Vice President for Information Technology
–Timothy C. Nesler
Director, Facilities Services - William S. Reese
Director, Human Resources - Bennye Alligood
Director, Information Technology Services -
Margaret V. Rogers
Director, Accounting - Lynn Powers
Director, Purchasing - Philip N. Chaney

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Vice President for Educational Services
Patricia J. Grunder
Assistant to Vice President for Educational Services -
John S. Cowart, Jr.
Director, Center for Academic Technologies
Kimball B. Kendall
Director, Interim, Institutional Research
William C. Vivian
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
Patsy Frenchman
Associate Vice President for Applied Technology
Education -C.Fran Holm
Associate Vice President for Academic Resources -
Patsy B. Smittle
Associate Vice President for Arts and Sciences -
Karen Cole-Smith
College Registrar - Mary Etta Fisher
Director, Academic Advisement - Lynn Sullivan
Director, Enrollment Services - Margaret Karrh
Lead Director, Student Services/Financial Aid -
Steven H. Fisher
Lead Director, Counseling and Instructional Services -
Linda Lanza-Kaduce
Director, Student Leadership and Activities
Judith McBride

Director, Ethnic Diversity - Geraldine H. Singleton
Director, Industrial Technology - Tom O’Neal
Director, Business Technology - Deborah Clark
Director, Institute of Public Safety - Harvey A. Blalock
Director, Information Technology Education
Eugene Jones
Chairperson, Creative Arts and Humanities
Leslie Lambert
Chairperson, English - Anne Kress
Chairperson, Natural Sciences - Sture Edvardsson
Chairperson, Mathematics - Glenn Smith
Chairperson, Social Sciences and History - Michael Reiner
Director, Educational Media - P. Harley Smith
Director, Library - Joanne M. Laipply

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Vice President for College and Community Services -
Portia L. Taylor
Associate Vice President for News and Public Information
Lawrence D. Keen
Director, Andrews Center - Paul C. Hutchins, Jr.
Director, Charles L. Blount Downtown Center -
Portia L. Taylor
Director, Continuing and Community Education -
Kristin T. Williams

OFFICE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Vice President for Development - W. Harvey Sharron, Jr.
Assistant Vice President for Development, Grants and
Projects –Joan M. Suchorski