

Estrella Mountain Community College

Executive Summary

The Student Academic Achievement Committee (SAAC) instituted a “SAAC EZ Form” to facilitate the documentation and sharing of assessment information. A “Statement of Administrative Support in the Assessment Process” has been drafted to recognize the value of assessment and the essential role that faculty have in owning this process. Support for assessment will continue to be expanded in the coming year.

Highlights

In Spring 2005, fulltime faculty received a “SAAC EZ Form” and instructions in a “SAAC Made Easy” packet that was created by faculty leadership the previous semester. The goal was to enable more of the faculty to document and share improvements resulting from the assessment process. New faculty received the “SAAC Made Easy” packet as part of the New Faculty Orientation. Adjuncts are invited to participate in an “Assessment Discussion Group” as part of EMCC’s Adjunct Faculty Institute workshop on assessment. To date, 15 fulltime faculty and 12 adjuncts started a SAAC EZ Form in nearly all divisions of the college.

Sample improvements have included:

- Using actual samples of previous students’ sentences to help future students understand what is considered “perfect” versus “passing/average” (ESL043 Vocabulary for ESL IV)
- Having the students draw their molecular models in lab on white boards – the instructor will circulate and keep indicating areas that needed to be reconsidered, providing hints and asking them to think about (evaluate) their own drawings (BIO181 General Biology for Majors I)
- Instituting a reflective journal entry that contains (1) a description of a situation where the student observed the communication model in a conversation, (2) the proper terms and concepts, and (3) an assessment of whether or not the communication situation was effective or ineffective (COM110 Interpersonal Communication)
- Encouraging lively class discussions that will stimulate topics (i.e. small group or whole class brainstorming) and providing opportunities to demonstrate relevance of literary selections pertinent to narrowed and specific topic selection for written rhetoric (ENG101 First-Year Composition)
- Allowing mock debates that assist students in figuring out what they *think* about a given topic or issue and to help motivate them to identify support of that thesis or position (ENG102 First-Year Composition)

A description of “SAAC Made Easy” and examples of the SAAC EZ form are available online at <http://www.estrellamountain.edu/academics/saac/course.html>

At the beginning of the Fall 2005 semester, the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, Occupational Education, and Student Affairs presented a “Statement of Administrative Support in the Assessment Process” to the SAAC Steering Team. The purpose of the statement was to recognize the value of assessment and the essential role that faculty have in owning this process. The statement listed several concrete ways that administration would support faculty:

- Encouraging faculty to include assessment in the FEP
- Encouraging divisions to have current assessment activity matrices and including them in division plans
- Encouraging faculty to complete the assessment portfolio
- Encouraging faculty to complete the SAAC EZ Form
- Raising visibility of faculty involvement in assessment activities
- Use of data to support institutional planning and decision making
- Supporting assessment through appropriate use of resources to improve student learning and success

By providing concrete support, the administration intends to show the faculty that their contribution to assessment plays an important role in the planning and decision making of the college. The methods listed above support initiatives currently underway at the college.

Future Recommendations

A web-based version of the SAAC EZ Form is currently under development – a pilot will be conducted later in Fall 2005 or Spring 2006. The college is interested in sharing the web-based version with other Maricopa Colleges that would like to share methods for improving teaching and learning. The Spring 2006 Assessment Forum is tentatively on “Best Practices for Using Technology in Assessment” and we will present the web-based version of the SAAC EZ Form if it is ready. The “SAAC Made Easy” packet will continue to be included in the New Faculty Orientation and the Adjunct Faculty Institute workshop on assessment.

A statement that lists concrete ways that the faculty support assessment continues to be explored. Such a statement would be a positive addition to the statement of support by administration and would provide tangible ways for individual faculty members to participate in the assessment process.

Program level assessment is included in the program review template that was developed by the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OPIE) with input from SAAC. Program reviews is another area where assessment will be expanded in the coming year.