Montgomery College

MAY 2016

INTERSECTIONS

THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS CHRONICLES

A message from Dr. Rai

As we close out the academic year, I want to reiterate how proud I am to work with such an engaged and passionate faculty and staff. We celebrated our first ever: **Full-time Faculty of the Year, Dr. Nathan Zook; Part-time Faculty of the Year, Dr. Jeanita Pritchett; and Staff of the Year, Mrs. Karla Nabors**, as well as 19 additional awards for excellence. The recipients (see side bar) exemplify the remarkable work being done in the classroom and beyond, and the impact all of you have on our students. Congratulations to all of the awardees!

Your hard work has been reflected in a variety of student success strategies with the Collegewide goals of increasing enrollment, improving our graduation and transfer rates, reducing cost and time to degree, and improving alignment with transfer institutions and the needs of industry. You've risen to meet these challenges in the face of dynamic forces that are having an impact here and throughout higher education. Our students continue to benefit from your outstanding efforts and your continued engagement to help them navigate their programs of study.

As you read about the strategies in this issue of Intersections that have been employed by faculty, what shines through is the impact of outreach. Connecting students with alumni--recent graduates in the same field, offering an online orientation, and changing department policies to ensure students are prepared to succeed are just a sample of the ways faculty have changed the rules of engagement.

Over the summer, department chairs will continue to develop strategies to decrease DFW rates in our highly enrolled courses, as well as engage with the VPPs and deans on additional issues. I am excited to share that the Academic Affairs leadership team will have its first retreat in August to continue discussions on student success strategies.

The conversations at Montgomery College are changing. They are data Informed and focused on student success. I am deeply grateful for your engagement in these conversations.

Congratulations!

Excellence in Teaching or Counseling/Academic Advising

Full-time

Dr. Joanne Bagshaw
Professor Michael Berman
Dr. Zineddine Boudhraa
Dr. Ada Garcia-Casellas
Dr. Nader Chaaban
Dr. Cory Newman
Professor Bill Talbot
Dr. Bess Vincent
Dr. Carole Wolin

Part-time

Professor Karen Malaska
Professor Patricia Rupert
Dr. Peter Vos
Professor Dorothy Wiseman

Excellence in Service to the College or Community

Dr. Alex Hou
Professor Debra Poese

Excellence in Scholarly or Professional Accomplishments

Full-time

Dr. Kristine Lui
Dr. Shah Mehrabi

Part-time

Professor Lisa Locke
Dr. Monica Zhang

INSIDE

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THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS CHRONICLES

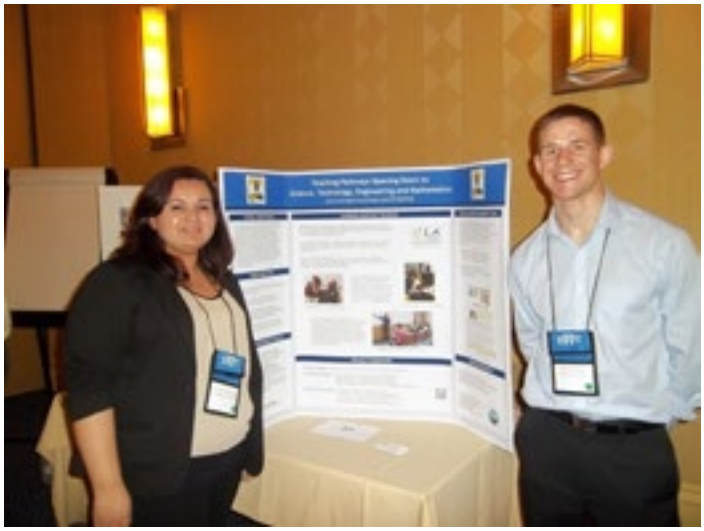
Montgomery College Receives $1.2M NSF Grant

Montgomery College has received a nearly $1.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to fund a five-year teaching initiative for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

The program, titled MC NEXT STEM, will introduce undergraduate STEM majors to career opportunities in education and aid in their transfer to STEM teacher preparation programs at regional four-year institutions. It will also support STEM professionals as they transition into STEM teaching positions. The award is part of the National Science Foundation's Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program that was designed to respond to the critical need for K-12 STEM teachers. MC NEXT STEM is the only community college-led Noyce project in the state of Maryland.

"Whether as a new college student or a career-changer, we look forward to preparing even more STEM teachers, from a variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, to enhance student achievement in Montgomery County," said Debra Poese, director of Montgomery College's School of Education and Principal Investigator for MC NEXT STEM. Faculty from Montgomery College's School of Education and STEM disciplines will lead the program which builds on an earlier project, Teaching Pathways Opening Doors to STEM (TPOD STEM), also funded through the NSF Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program.

As part of the MC NEXT STEM program directed at Montgomery College undergraduates, the highly successful Learning Assistant program initiated during the TPOD STEM grant is planned to continue. In addition, project leaders will design, propose and implement a one credit pedagogy course for the Learning Assistants, modeled on course materials from the Learning Assistant Alliance. In another extension of work from the TPOD STEM activities, faculty mentors who support the LA program will be provided formal resources to use in recruiting and supporting their LAs, other students in their classes and students that they advise during enrollment and throughout the academic year in the STEM teaching field. Several meetings have taken place with representatives from the University of Maryland College Park to discuss the impact of their newly approved UTeach model program, Terrapin Teachers, on the methods of receiving transfer students. Work will continue over the MC NEXT STEM grant period to match curricula for transfer under the new models.



Left: Learning Assistants Jasmine Aviles Vega and AndrewPotocko presenting a poster session at the Noyce Regional Conference in Boston.

Bottom: A group of ACET graduates who are current MCPS teachers gather for the annual open house and program kick-off event.

The second component of MC NEXT STEM will feature stipends for selected STEM professionals who are choosing to become middle school or high school STEM teachers in MCPS through the ACET program (Alternative Certification for Effective Teachers), a collaborative effort including the Montgomery College School of Education, Workforce Development and Continuing Education, and MCPS. Now in its tenth year, this Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program for career changers provides intensive pre-service training and a teaching internship followed by a supported year-long residency at a Montgomery County Public School. Applications for the MC NEXT STEM Scholars will be available in Summer 2016.

Left: Learning Assistant Rachel Cali in CHEM131 General Chemistry.

For further information, contact Professor Debra Poese at debra.poese@montgomerycollege.edu.

Funding for this project is made possible through the National Science Foundation Award Number 1555634.

INTERSECTIONS
THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS CHRONICLES

Strategies to Reduce DFW Rates Collegewide

With student success as our goal, faculty have continued to engage efforts to increase retention and decrease DFW rates for highly enrolled courses using microintervention strategies. ELITE offered several workshops on microintervention strategies throughout the year, and faculty participation was invaluable. Areas of particular focus included attendance patterns, performance issues on course assignments, and effective referrals to academic support centers. As the academic year progressed, data was collected, and it will be shared with department chairs, deans and the VPPs as we prepare for the next academic year.

Communications, Health Sciences, Health and Physical Education, and Humanities (CHSHPEH) Unit

Faculty in Communication Studies, Health Sciences, Health and Physical Education and Humanities launched a unit-wide effort to enhance student success and completion via the use of microintervention strategies. Specifically, faculty focused on course attendance patterns, performance issues on course assignments, and effective referrals to academic support centers. Faculty members shared examples of their efforts in each of these areas with department chairs, deans, and the VPP. Three ELITE Workshops on microinterventions were held during the academic year.

Two courses in the Communication Studies, Health Sciences, Health and Physical Education and Humanities were identified as having high DFW rates: COMM 108 and SPAN 101. The area Deans worked with faculty to identify possible reasons for the DFW rates in these courses and develop success strategies.

COMM 108 - Introduction to Human Communication

Faculty in Communication Studies addressed academic performance rates in COMM 108 with a focus on attendance. Communications Studies faculty made outreach to students before the W date and engaged in conversations with the students. These faculty also reached out to students who were performing below passing level at the midpoint of the semester offering additional support and encouragement to persist. DFW rates were reduced from 17percent in F14 to 14.8 percent in F15, a reduction of 2.2 percent.

SPAN 101 - Elementary Spanish I

Faculty identified several strategies to improve student success rates in SPAN 101. Faculty worked with ELITE to develop training sessions to sharpen their teaching skills. Faculty also instituted more aggressive remedial action by establishing a series of Spanish make-up and review sessions (Supersessions) throughout the semester (before each exam in all sections of the course). The Academic Success Center implemented a program in which four classes were provided with supplemental instruction supports.

Faculty identified students whose midterm grades were below average and required these students to attend tutoring sessions from the Academic Success Center. At the end of the semester, faculty received progress reports for each of the students in the program. Faculty also reached out to students who received low grades on the first course assessment. These students were referred for tutoring and faculty developed more relevant resources to share during tutoring sessions. The DFW rate fell from 30.2 percent in F14 to 24.3 percent in F15, a reduction of 5.9 percent.

Arts, Business, Education, English and Social Science (ABEESS) Unit

Strategies were identified for two courses in the ABEESS Unit (Arts, Business, Education, English and Social Science): ACCT 221 and ENGL 002.

ACCT 221 - Accounting I

Retest Option for Exam #1

Students who score poorly in ACCT221 (generally a score below 65-70% are eligible, in certain classes, to take a makeup exam). Since the material in ACCT221 is cumulative in nature, the makeup enables students to have another chance to revise their study approach, and attempt to master the material the second time around.

Students need to do all of the following to retest:

1. Prepare an additional comprehensive problem set packet.
2. Attend a two hour review session on a Friday night
3. Take a retest of Exam #1 the following Monday or Tuesday in the Assessment Center. The retest is similar in nature to the first exam.

While not all instructors took part in the Fall 2015 pilot, the results indicated the following for all three campuses in the Fall 2015 semester:

- 68 students qual-

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ified to retest
- Of those 68, 53 took advantage of the retest
- Of those 53, 34 scored a 70 or higher on the second go around
- Of those 34, 20 ended up earning a C or better as a final grade in the course.

The pilot was expanded for Spring 2016 and results will be available after grades are submitted.

ENGL 002 - Basic English II

An early alert strategy was implemented in fall 2015 to address the needs of students who were in danger of not passing the course. Before the midterm, faculty members encouraged struggling students to meet with the department chair or another faculty member trained in advising. Chairs and advisors met and reviewed midterm and final grades, allowing the collection of informal, qualitative data to understand student motivation and other predictors of success. As an added measure, faculty conducted midterm and final week conferences, whereby students were informed of revision strategies and next course placement. Anecdotal data shows that the chairs (or designated faculty) met with nearly 50 students who were referred to them. In many instances not only did the students improve their performance in the second half of the course, but many of them returned to the chair (or designated faculty) to get guidance on their next course placement and advice on which section to register for in the next semester.

In addition, a faculty member conducted a feedback project in order to inform faculty of grading practices that support the revision process for student writing in Fall 2015. Data reflect that faculty respond to student writing in a variety of ways. Some of the ways that faculty respond are centered on the professor giving instruction to students, but not always in the ways that students receive and process feedback. The faculty member who conducted the study led several conversations across the discipline in the spring semester to provide members with student-centered strategies to giving feedback. The faculty will continue this conversation in the fall.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Unit

Throughout Fall 2015, all disciplines selected a variety of strategies to implement followed up by a breakdown of the activities and results during the Spring Opening Meeting. One successful strategy from **BIOL 150 (Principles of Biology I),** which enrolls over 2,500 students (FY15), encourages student participation in weekly targeted review session held outside of class to help students make connections and reinforce skills they learn about in class. This work has been supported by the GT STEP grant and faculty hope to scale up this effort to include more students.

Another successful strategy, this time from the **Mathematics and Statistics** area focused on students who withdrew from classes. Using data and working with the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, individual courses were reviewed to look at academic preparation, contact with college personnel, and what actions students took before withdrawing. One of the recommended strategies was that faculty should meet with all students individually within the first few weeks of class to understand their academic goals and how the class fits with what they need. At the August deans meeting, strategies and results will be discussed and refined for future implementation.

Love of Teaching Faculty Retreat

Part-time and full-time faulty from across the College gathered at Germantown on a recent April rainy Saturday morning to "refresh, revitalize, renew and re-engage." Through activities, group discussions and a captivating presentation by Professor Deb Poese, director of the School of Education, participants reconnected with what first inspired them to become educators and reflected on current sources of support and inspiration. Many faculty present expressed how valuable it is to connect with one another and to engage in honest conversations about the struggles and joys of the teaching vocation.

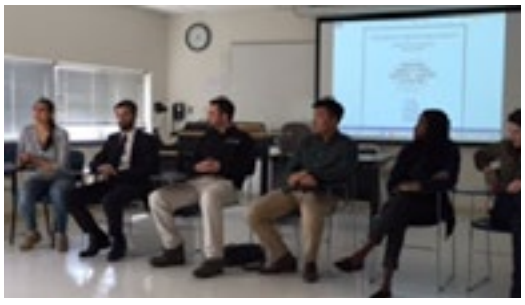
Speakers at the event included representatives from the two co-sponsoring groups: Dr. Michael Mills, Vice President of E-Learning, Innovation and Teaching Excellence (ELITE) and Dr. Antonio (Tango) Thomas, Director of the Institute for Part Time Faculty Engagement and Support. Special thanks to the Planning Team: ELITE instructor designer Dr. Carol Moore, Professors Edward McReady, Jesse Parker and Jane Smith.

Student Success Strategies and Events

Student success for **all** of our students continues to drive our efforts to increase enrollment, improve graduation and transfer rates, decrease costs and time to degree, and more closely align programs with the needs of business and industry. Faculty across the College share the student success strategies implemented this year, and what they have learned in the process.

Computer Science and Engineering Host Alumni Panel

A highly effective student success strategy is learning directly from former students what they did to be successful in their academic careers. With this in mind, the engineering program hosted a panel of Montgomery College (MC) engineering alumni in April. These alumni had received scholarships from the program's first National Science Foundation (NSF) S-STEM grant, Achieving Community College Excellence, Success and Scholarship (ACCESS) in engineering. The $600,000 grant also provided tutoring, mentoring, and supplemental instruction for low-income students, preparing them to attend engineering programs at such institutions as the George Washington University, Georgia Tech, and the University of Maryland, College Park.



Right: Panel of Engineering Alumni, former recipients of the ACCESS I scholarship.

Bottom: ACCESS scholars dinner reception with alumn.

Now employed in fulfilling engineering careers or studying for advanced degrees, the alumni offered advice on how to succeed. Dean Kehnemouyi also answered questions from students and offered advice on success strategies. Students were encouraged to take advantage of MC's small classes and the extra time professors give them, two bonuses not found at large universities. While students are still at MC, they should also explore as many engineering topics as possible so that they can be sure of their intended concentrations when they transfer. In addition, they will benefit from being involved in student internships and engineering clubs, where they can make friends, develop team building skills, and create a support system that will carry through to their transfer schools.

The engineering program is now in its second $600,000 grant of NSF S-STEM scholarships with ACCESS II. Current scholarship recipients were present during the panel discussion and had the opportunity to have dinner with the alumni that evening.

The ACCESS scholarships enable student recipients to dedicate more time to their studies by alleviating the need to work extra hours to pay tuition. In addition to receiving scholarships, students serve as K-12 outreach ambassadors and teachers for engineering hands-on workshops that elementary and middle school children enjoy on Saturday mornings during the spring semester.

The first ACCESS grant awarded scholarships to 125 engineering students from spring 2009 through spring 2013. Of those students, 86.4 percent are known to have successfully graduated or transferred to a four-year engineering bachelor's degree program. This compares with an average graduation / transfer rate of 48 percent for all engineering majors at MC. In addition, 62 percent of these successful transfers have completed at least a bachelor's degree in engineering.

The opportunities created by the ACCESS grant benefit not only the student recipients, but all engineering and computer science students. Efforts to scale up lessons learned from ACCESS include adding nine new faculty advisors, and planning to bring in Achieving the Promise coaches designated specifically to engineering.

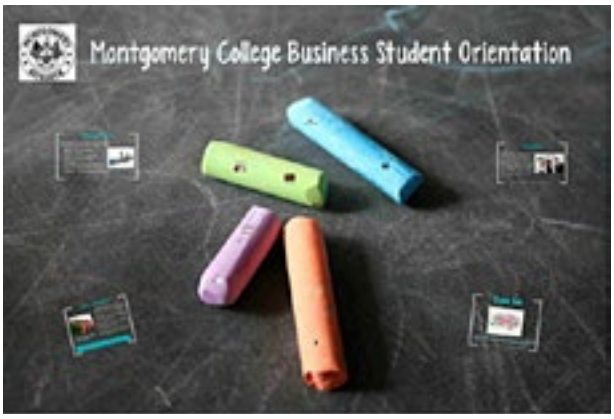
New Offerings in Communication Studies

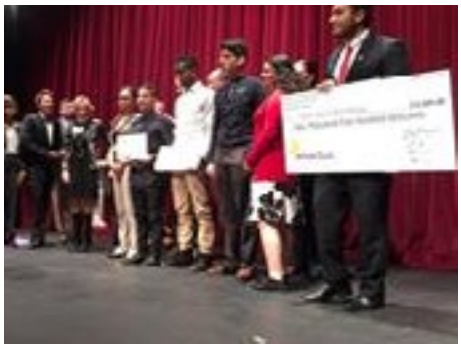
The Communication Studies discipline has engaged in a number of initiatives this academic year to promote student success. They are as follows:

- Adopted an affordable COMM 108 common textbook, with the EBook costing under $20.00
- Added two, 200-level journalism electives to the major
- Increased 200-level course offerings on each campus to ensure that students can complete their degree in a timely manner
- Created a Communication Studies Blackboard site as a resource for all faculty. The site includes instructor support, student resources, and innovative teaching techniques focused on diverse learners.

Exposure to the Real World of Business

The Business Program is actively engaging in strategies to ensure student success. Beginning with a vivid online Business Student Orientation on the business program website, new and returning students receive a comprehensive introduction to the program with details about requirements and links to information about transfer schools' pre-requisites and websites.





Above: Online Business Student Orientation.

Right: Raptor Tank Winners.

The Business Buddies Program works to pair every new business student with an MC Business "Buddy." These pairings allow students to talk with a peer for guidance and advice as an informal "buddy" throughout the business program. An email distribution list is used at least weekly to inform majors of all activities and opportunities of interest to business students.

MC faculty have created several rich opportunities through which students can gain valuable experience and exposure to the real world of business, one of the keys to persistence.

Expanded to all three campuses this year, Enactus, an international student run organization open to all Montgomery College students, challenges students to improve people's livelihoods locally and globally through seven student-developed and student-led businesses and entrepreneurial activities.

Held for the second time this April, the Raptor Tank Business Competition supports student start-up ideas and economic development by bringing together students with mentors and judges from the entrepreneurial community in a real-life challenge. A total of $5,000 in seed money was awarded to the winners.

Raptors for Change, a social entrepreneurship competition focused on empowering people both locally and globally, provided student teams (of up to four people) $18 in "seed" money (a microloan) and other "scarce" resources with the goal to raise as much money as possible in five days. Students raised over $6,500 this year to benefit several organizations to help improve livelihoods and standard of living.

Departmental Policy Change in Life Sciences

Biology 150 is a gateway course to the Life Science degree as it is required for many 200-level courses. DFW rates for BIOL 150 hover around 37%. The prevalence of prerequisite and repeat overrides was examined for biology courses at the level of BIOL 150 and above. For the Fall 2015 semester, students that withdrew from courses numbered BIOL 150 or higher following one or more prerequisite or repeat overrides exceeded 26% of the number of total withdraws. This finding was used to change departmental policy regarding who may process prerequisite and repeat overrides in the future.

College Chorus Performs with Professionals

Sixty students who participate in Dr. Donnelly's College Chorus were given the once-in-a-lifetime thrill in April of singing on the stage of the Music Center at Strathmore accompanied by the fully professional National Philharmonic Orchestra (NPO) and Chorale. The students joined the 100-member National Philharmonic Chorale (NPC) for several weeks of rehearsals which culminated in their performance in front of the near-capacity (1,976 seats), wildly appreciative audience.

Bottom: College chorus performs with National Philharmonic Orchestra (NPO) and Chorale at Strathmore.

Their performance was of Missa in Angustiis (Mass for Troubled Times), also known as the Lord Nelson Mass by Joseph Haydn, and the Requiem, Op. 9, by Maurice Duruflé. The concert was favorably reviewed by The Washington Post which included mention of Montgomery College's participation.

This rare opportunity came about for MC students because Professor of Music, Dr. Molly Donnelly, has a long-standing relationship with the NPC and its conductors; she has sung as a soloist with them and is their ongoing vocal coach. She is also the co-director of the Montgomery College/National Philharmonic Summer Choral Institute. It is because of her respected standing in professional music circles and the fine reputation of her MC Chorus that MC students were invited to participate in the Strathmore concert. More than one student said that this experience was the highlight of their college and musical experiences. Because of their exemplary job in this concert the MC Chorus has been invited to participate in next season's performance of Orff's Carmina Burana with the National Philharmonic Chorale and Orchestra.

Another unique aspect to this concert is that 8 Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) music teachers also sang as part of the Maryland Choral Directors Chorus (MCDC). MCDC is a cooperative program, started by the MC Arts Institute with MCPS, whereby professional music teachers, who become an integral part of the MC Chorus, earn continuing education credits applicable to the renewal of their state teaching certifications.

Career Talk Gets Real in Criminal Justice

The Law, Government and Public Safety Program Advisory Committee held a Careers in Criminal Justice event at the Montgomery County Public Safety Headquarters in March. The program hosted approximately 100 students from the Montgomery College Criminal Justice Program and the MCPS Justice, Law and Society Program. The event emphasized the increasing need for higher education for students considering careers in the criminal justice system. Dean Darrin Campen from Montgomery College and Benjamin OuYang from MCPS provided opening remarks to the students and discussed the educational programs and transfer pathways offered at Montgomery College.

Chief Thomas Manger (MCPD) started the discussion by sharing some of the career wisdom he had obtained during his nearly 40 years in law enforcement. He discussed the importance of public safety and the community's need

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for young men and women of integrity to serve as the next generation of public servants. This inspiring speech was followed by a discussion panel of criminal justice professionals from Montgomery County. The panel included representatives from the Montgomery County Police Department, Rockville City Police Department, Gaithersburg Police Department, Maryland Division of Parole & Probation, Montgomery County Sheriff's Department, Montgomery County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office. The panel members shared their vast career knowledge and experiences with the students and were very responsive to student questions related to career and community concerns.

The MCPS students and Montgomery College students each received an interactive tour of the MCPD Headquarters and crime laboratory and an opportunity to meet one-on-one with the representatives from the criminal justice agencies to learn more about career and internship opportunities.

The event was so successful that the Program Advisory Committee is already working to make this an annual event.

Assessment Corner: Wrapping Up the Academic Year In Assessment 2015-2016

Assessment at the College is ongoing, systematic, and inclusive. During this past academic year, faculty and staff in various academic programs and disciplines examined student learning in General Education or programs or evaluated their programs and certificates through the program review process. Here's summary information from their efforts:

Program Assessment **9 programs assessed their program learning outcomes.**	**Top Themes from Action Plans:** • Provide more opportunities for students to practice skills in the classroom • Revise assessment tools to better measure outcomes • Encourage students to use College resources such as the Writing, Reading, and Language Centers
General Education Assessment **11 disciplines assessed student learning outcomes in over 40 courses.**	
Academic Program Review **34 programs and certificates and one WDCE non-credit program participated in the review process.**	**Major Themes from Recommendations:** • Implement curricular changes by modifying or adding courses • Improve student advising and academic support • Increase online course offerings • Increase usage of online educational resources

In addition to being used by the individual disciplines or programs for improvements, data from the assessment processes were shared to support college initiatives. Program review recommendations were used to inform the Perkins Grant Improvement Plan for career and technical education programs. General Education assessment results were shared with CAPDI to examine the differences in student performance based on initial college placement results. Also, the library explored General Education assessment results from the information literacy competency to inform their efforts with information literacy instruction.

Both assessment processes and the program review process were supported by their respective committees, which were comprised of representatives from across the College. The Collegewide Assessment Team met monthly to review and provide written feedback on General Education and Program Assessment reflection forms and assessment plans. The College Area Review Committee (program review) reviewed reports and recommendations for those areas participating in program review and submitted their comments to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for further consideration. In addition, external peer reviewers submitted reports and recommendations for various programs participating in academic program review.

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