Mitchell Technical Institute Annual Assessment Report 2009-2010

INTRODUCTION

Mitchell Technical Institute has in place an ongoing, institution-wide process of planning and outcomes assessment for the purpose of continuous improvement and to provide evidence that the institute is effectively achieving its mission to provide our graduates with skills for success in technical careers. At the institutional, program, and course level, we have identified meaningful outcomes for student learning, and we are assessing and using the data to improve what we do and how we do it. We believe our process, which is guided by a faculty-supported assessment committee, will assist MTI to more fully achieve our mission.

STUDENT LEARNING

MTI has identified six core abilities or institutional learning outcomes that prepare students, regardless of their program of study, to become productive members of the work force and lifelong learners ready to grow within their chosen professions. Graduates of Mitchell Technical Institute will be able to:

- Communicate effectively through both oral and written means
- Demonstrate a professional attitude and work ethic
- Apply reasoning and critical thinking to solve problems and seek information
- Work cooperatively in a team environment
- Use computer technology within a field of study
- Apply technical skills required of an entry-level technician in a chosen field

These outcomes are assessed both directly and indirectly. A set of rubrics tied to our learning outcomes were developed this year to be used by instructors throughout the institution to assess student achievement and to provide feedback to the institution, as well as to the students themselves. During the Spring 2010 semester, over 1,300 rubrics were turned in to the Office of Institutional Research. The assessment committee then analyzed the rubrics data to set goals for the institution. Next year, for example, we will be focusing on oral communication in an effort to raise achievement in this important outcome.

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SURVEYS

Other, less direct, measures of institutional effectiveness are provided by surveys of our stakeholders, such as students, parents, and employers. The survey results are used for institutional and program planning and improvement efforts.

Parent Survey – Parents of the 2009-10 students were sent a survey this spring to determine their perceptions on services and educational opportunities provided by MTI for their student. We were pleased that over 95% of parents indicated satisfaction with the education their child is receiving at MTI. We did learn, however, that 55% are unfamiliar with institutional policies, such as those dealing with privacy and confidentiality, graduation requirements, and academic probation and suspension. To answer this concern, MTI will initiate a parent newsletter for the 2010-11 to communicate more effectively our policies, as well as campus activities, news, achievements, etc. When asked about areas of concern regarding their student, the parents had most concern regarding their child's ability to manage time and study effectively. These and other concerns can also be addressed through the parent newsletter, as we can do a better job of letting parents know, for example, what learning services MTI offers to students. We will also include these important topics in our newly developed Student Success course that all incoming freshman will take. Comments provided by parents regarding instructors, departments, and services were provided to the appropriate personnel and will be used to work to better our programs and services at MTI.

Community Survey – A survey sent to Mitchell area residents and business owners in February showed strong support for MTI in the community. Most respondents indicated a favorable view of MTI and technical education, although the institution needs to continue its efforts to publicize what we do to build an even greater understanding of MTI's programs and services, including community education opportunities.

Spring 2010 Advisory Board Survey – Each program at MTI has an advisory board, made up of representatives from industry, responsible for overseeing curriculum and programming and providing guidance to the program. A survey of board members was conducted in May 2010 to learn what these industry experts think about MTI, our programs, and their service as advisory board members. Results of this survey (concerns, suggestions, and other insights) will be reviewed by instructors in the fall, so that each program can better utilize its advisory board in the future.

ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REVIEW

MTI instructors are involved in assessment activities throughout the year that culminate in an assessment review completed in each department. Instructors consider such factors as program enrollment, retention, graduation and job placement, as well as feedback from alumni, advisory boards, employers, and current students. They also evaluate and review the learning outcomes for students in the program: what will students need to know and be able to do upon completion of the program to successfully enter the career field. They review how they assure that students are indeed achieving those outcomes. Through the annual review, instructors make changes to their programs that will affect not only current students, but future students in the program as well. Here are some changes made this year, as well as others being planned for next year:

- **Accounting/Business Management** will hire a fulltime instructor to reduce workload of present staff in an effort to improve retention in the program.
- **Agricultural Technology** is adjusting curriculum to incorporate more precision ag techniques based on advisory committee recommendation.
- **Architectural Design & Building Construction** is expanding its curriculum to include commercial instruction as a response to industry demand. An internship component will also be offered to students starting next year.
- **Automation Controls/SCADA** created a new program student handbook, which will assist student success in the program by outlining guidelines and expectations for the students. Advisory board recommendations are prompting changes for next year to include adding a one-credit safety class, dropping one class, and increasing hours in another class. The curriculum will also include some instruction and practice with photovoltaic solar panels.
- **Computer Systems Technology** completely revised its curriculum based on an industry summit held a year ago. The program also added a one-year exit point and additional degree options--changes which are already having positive results. Instructors hope to continue to collaborate with Enrollment and Marketing to help guide qualified students into the program.
- The **Culinary Academy of South Dakota** will discontinue its summer start to improve enrollment and retention. Classes will start in August with all the other programs.
- **Electrical Construction & Maintenance** added a new wiring lab for first year students, which instructors feel will help retain students by providing them more hands-on learning experiences. ECM will also hire another instructor for 2010-11 to accommodate an increased enrollment in the program.
- **Farm Business Management** is expanding for 2010-11. Surveys of current participants, as well as comparisons of participants to non-participants, clearly demonstrate the value of the FBM curriculum for producers. State commodity groups have agreed, and, with their financial support, a third instructor has been hired and plans made to expand the program statewide.
- **The General Education** department helped develop rubrics to be used throughout the institution to assess communication, teamwork, technology, work ethic and math. A second math instructor was hired due to increased enrollment. Also, MTI added a Student Success course for first-year students in an effort to help students succeed in school.
- **Heating & Cooling Technology** added internships to the program this year. After discussion at an advisory board meeting, the internships will be moved from the third semester to the spring which will be less interruptive to the students' coursework. A grant will allow the program to purchased needed trainers to expand training in geothermal technology for next year.

- **Medical Assistant** developed and used new forms and evaluations for assessment in the program. Following an advisory board recommendation, the department proposed will use a new entrance exam to admit new students into MTI's medical programs. Also new for 2010-11 is an electronic medical records class.
- **Medical Laboratory Technology** changed curriculum after certificate exams indicated a need for more instruction on Ab and parasite identification. A new admissions packet was developed to help guide new students into the program. New for 2010-11, Lab Fundamentals will be one 4-credit course, rather than separate lecture and lab courses.
- **Medical Office Specialist** is being revamped from the Medical Secretary/Transcription program and will accept new students this fall. An advisory board recommended requiring laptops in the program. Other curriculum additions are advanced coding, electronic health records, computers in the medical office, and medical administration. Medical Insurance will be increased to a full semester class.
- **Office Technology Specialist** is a new degree option at MTI this year. With guidance from the advisory board and internship sites, the program was revised for the 2009-10 year to give students the options of a nine-month diploma or one of two A.A.S. tracks. A course in customer service was developed based on advisory board recommendation.
- **Power Sports** will be adding a second year to the program allowing students to earn an A.A.S. degree. Also on recommendation of the advisory committee, the program will be giving more attention to fuel injection and electronic control systems. New lab practicals were added this year to give students hands-on practice tied to topics covered in lectures.
- **Power Line Construction & Maintenance** made revisions to exams and added increased instructional time to underground training and safety concerns. The program is also working on incorporating more transmission into the curriculum for next year.
- **Propane & Natural Gas Technologies** is planning to adjust time spent on lab exercises for next year based on lab assessments, as well as feedback from students. The advisory board also has recommended the program include GIS mapping in the curriculum, so this is underway for next year.
- **Radiation Therapy** updated its clinical evaluation forms to be more current with the field. The program is seeking to acquire JRCERT accreditation and is working on the needed documentation and requirements.
- **Radiologic Technology** will add a computer tomography (CT) component to RAD 121 Imaging Equipment to meet coming ASRT requirements. Included in the instruction will be a series of online CT modules developed by ASRT, and a clinical rotation will become a standard rotation for second-year students.
- **Satellite Communications** plans to increase time spent on digital modulation and compression techniques next year. The program is also seeking to upgrade the mobile uplink truck to process and develop digital signaling.
- **Telecommunications** made a complete overhaul of the program following an industry summit held a year ago. All courses were reviewed and updated, with extensive changes made to the curriculum to include cutting edge technology such as Occam networks, Extreme Network Layer 2 and 3 switching equipment, maintenance and troubleshooting DMS 10, and various activities on the Mitel from basic installation and voice mail programming to data capture and call recording.
- **Wind Turbine Technology** is developing its second year curriculum for the A.A.S. degree. The department's advisory board is guiding this process through input into skills needed for graduates. New standards being developed by the American Wind Energy Association are also guiding MTI's WTT curriculum competencies and learning objectives.