# Frederick Community College
# 2011 Faculty Self-Assessment Report
## *Using Assessment to Help Students Learn*

## SUMMARY

Faculty members were asked to submit a brief Faculty Self Assessment that reflected on their internal class assessments and analyzed student course performance. Responses submitted include classes taught in AY2010 from five departments. This assessment documents FCC faculty success at using assessment to improve student learning. Information collected is shared at the Learning Leadership Council by the director of A&R and the FCC Assessment Coordinator and then passed on through department chairs.

## BACKGROUND

The Faculty Self-Assessment process began at FCC in 2007. The project was recommended by the Accreditation Self-Study Committee and adopted by the Faculty Association. Initially responses were collected using a Survey Solutions Voluntary Questionnaire, but this method was dropped due to low faculty participation. Department Chairs now collect self-assessments from full-time faculty using the annual evaluation form. FSA responses are submitted to the Assessment and Research Department from academic departments at the end of the Spring semester in response to the following evaluation question.

*The College greatly values assessment projects. Using a core learning outcome (CLO) from a course that you teach, discuss how you assessed student achievement of that CLO. What do you plan to do as a result of this assessment? Do you give your Department Chair the permission to cut & paste this section to be used anonymously as part of the Student Learning Assessment reporting?* ☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*

## SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

This year's submissions were analyzed by the Assessment and Research Department in summer 2011 using Textual Analysis software. Responses were compiled into abbreviated formats that dealt specifically with using assessment to improve student learning. Data was compiled into response categories and summarized in a one-page results page titled "**What We Learned**." This process is designed to encourage faculty to read each other's assessment ideas, promoting inter-departmental growth and personal development by discussing a variety of assessment methods. *Submissions were edited to highlight specific strategies & themes within faculty responses.* This format helps minimize the length of the report and to help faculty "zero-in" on material that can help students. A full unedited list of FSA submissions is provided in the appendixes of this report, sorted by department.

## 2010 RESULTS

Similar to 2007, 2008, and 2009 full-time faculty participation in this assessment was low. Forty-seven full time faculty, out of ninety-eight, submitted information. This is the same (n) and approximately the same percentage (48%) of responses as last year. Five departments turned in information, with varying degrees of participation.

For complete results, see page two of the report titled "**What We Learned**." This simple one page format summarizes the essential best practices that faculty used when developing assessment projects to help students learn.

Faculty responses contain a wealth of information that FCC educators can use to help create assessment projects. The remainder of this report categorizes responses based on an assessment theme. Full responses are listed at the end in the appendices. One noticeable, first highlighted last year, is the increasing use of embedded assessment to help students. Embedded assessments are activities that are independently from FCC's Course Level Assessment Cycle or Program Assessment Initiative. Faculty are increasingly using embedded assessments to help students learn specific skills within their classroom, and many responses detailed new cross-disciplinary techniques that faculty are using to improve learning in the classroom. Faculty responses also indicate an increased use of assessment data collection tools such as rubrics, critical thinking exams, and learning portfolios.

Faculty Self Assessment will continue on a voluntary basis. It is important that the College maintain its culture of evidence, encouraging faculty to routinely assess students using creative assessments and sharing results with one another to help students learn.

# Frederick Community College
# What We Learned
## *FCC Faculty Assessment Themes and Best Practices*

1. The most common Assessment Tools used by FCC faculty are **embedded assessments** which are almost always paired with some form of **rubric**. Instructors also are using outcomes-linked exams and self assessments more often.

2. **Students perform better on final exams and standardized assessments when faculty use embedded assessments** to capture student learning, give open feedback and allow for self/peer critique, and directly link to CLOs.

3. FCC instructors noted that **assessments must have <u>clear expectations</u>**, be **<u>qualitative</u>** in nature (not just raw testing), and **<u>meaningful</u>** for students in order to be successful and improve learning.

4. Many FCC instructors felt that they had become **better teachers** by incorporating interactive technology, creative assessments, and measurable CLO-linked assignments into their classroom.

5. **Students respond more positively** on course evaluations and work better as a "team" when they are asked to collaborate on outcomes assessment projects and review each other's work, compared to traditional methods.

6. FCC Faculty **increasingly volunteer** to start their own course-level assessment projects with A&R's help, in addition to existing OAC projects and program level assessment.

7. Students struggle with **critical thinking** skills, although this was not mentioned nearly as often as in previous semesters, which is interesting.

8. Faculty reported that **outcomes assessment is more effective than traditional grading** when trying to teach students complex skills. (such as cultural competence, critical thinking, and discipline specific outcomes.)

9. **81%** of all FCC faculty who shared responses discussed the **positive benefits of using assessment** tools in the classroom, up from approximately 50% last year.

10. Even when data is not officially captured, several faculty shared their "gut feeling" that **critical-thinking** linked assignments improve participation, out-of-class preparation, and long-term learning.