

**The College of New Jersey
Academic Leaders Meeting
Wednesday, February 16, 2005**

Sustaining and Using the Student Learning Assessment Plan

During the last two years, we worked hard to identify learning goals for each program (majors as well as liberal learning). We linked those goals to specific courses and experiences in meaningful ways using a matrix format. We also specified how these learning goals have been or could be studied (i.e., assessed) in order to improve our educational experience.

In its approach to the accreditation review, TCNJ embraced the idea of ongoing self-reflection. In that spirit, it is important that we continue next year the process of self-study in deliberate ways.

Next Year's Work:

Each program needs to select (usually) ONE of the learning goals for an in-depth study. Ideally, the program will select a goal that is particularly important to the success of the program, will develop thoughtful and imaginative ways to study student learning in this area, will identify strengths and weaknesses with regard to this goal, and will specify changes that will improve the program's educational offerings. This self-study may also lead to clarification of the learning goal itself, which is itself an important kind of improvement.

Context

You will recall that the learning outcomes were developed following and in light of an extended conversation regarding the College's:

- mission, values, goals, and commitments;
- principles of student learning; and
- transformed educational experience.

Our collective aspiration is to provide distinctive educational programs and powerful learning experiences so that students become accomplished and engaged learners. Each program has worked to specify how this aspiration can be accomplished in a given discipline or area.

This process of ongoing self-study responds to the recommendations made by our own self-study report and affirmed by the Middle States Visiting Team. Both called for clear priorities regarding and direct support for student learning assessment as the College pursues its aspirations and ensures the quality of its educational programs.

Support

The Office of Institutional Research will play a more direct role in supporting programmatic self-study efforts. Director, Raymond Barclay, and Research Associate, Jason Schweitzer, will be joined by Dr. Paula Maas, Assistant Director, who will have responsibilities particularly in the area of program assessment.

Institutional Research will maintain a database of learning goal matrices as well as current assessment projects and experiments throughout the College. The Office is developing a student team to support ongoing applied research and assessment work among departments and faculty.