



## **Frequently Asked Questions About HACC's Middle States Commission on Higher Education Accreditation**

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In November 2013, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) continued HACC's warning and requested additional evidence of compliance with Standard 12 (General Education). On April 29, 30 and May 1, 2014, a review team from MSCHE will visit the College.

The following questions and answers will help you understand the process and its high level of importance.

### **1. What were the results of the September 23-25, 2013 MSCHE evaluation team visit?**

After their review of evidence, the MSCHE visiting team established that HACC was in compliance with Standard 7 (Institutional Assessment) and Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning). However, their review did not find sufficient evidence to show compliance with Standard 12 (General Education).

### **2. Why didn't we comply with Standard 12 (General Education)?**

As indicated by the MSCHE reviewers' report: "While Harrisburg Area Community College has established a process for the assessment of general education student learning outcomes that sets forth the necessary guidelines, schedules and resources, the process has not been in place long enough to provide evidence that it has been systematically implemented, is sustainable, and has been used to improve teaching and learning across all of the general education competencies."

### **3. Why did we change our General Education Assessment Process?**

Guided by the results of the 2012 General Education Core Assessment Report, the College has moved towards a competency-based assessment process. In light of the report findings,

six overarching outcomes – Information Literacy, Critical Thinking, Technology Literacy, Oral Communication, Written Communication, and Quantitative Literacy – were developed to encompass General Education at HACC rather than class-defined processes that related to specific Core courses.

**4. Where do we currently stand? What is our MSCHE status?**

HACC remains accredited. However, the college is still on warning for non-compliance with Standard 12 (General Education). HACC submitted a second monitoring report on March 1, 2014, to be substantiated by the MSCHE visiting team during their April 29 – May 1, 2014 visit.

**5. What is a monitoring report?**

A MSCHE Monitoring Report is a follow-up report required by Middle States that provides evidence to address the Commission's specific questions and concerns about HACC's compliance with one or more MSCHE standards.

**6. Where can I locate a copy of the March 1, 2014 MSCHE Monitoring Report?**

A copy of the Monitoring Report can be located at MyHACC campus announcements, or on the HACC.edu web site at:

<http://www.hacc.edu/AboutUs/InstitutionalEffectiveness/MiddleStates/upload/Monitoring-Report-to-the-MSCHE-due-March-1-2014.pdf>

**7. What has occurred since the September 2013 MSCHE team visit?**

HACC has continued its efforts to successfully implement, conduct, and sustain assessment of its General Education Outcomes (as described in the March 2014 Monitoring Report). Below are selected significant accomplishments to date:

- A full cycle of all six General Education outcomes assessment was conducted in Fall 2013 using a limited pool of courses.
- HACC has revised its General Education Assessment Plan (see Appendix 2 of the March 2014 Monitoring Report) to assess two outcomes each semester, resulting in a full cycle within 1.5 academic years.
- General Education assessment results from the Fall 2013 term have been compiled, organized, analyzed, disseminated, discussed, and utilized.
- The College-Wide Assessment Committee (CWAC) is structured to have the necessary institutional influence, organizational authority, and expertise to oversee and/or conduct assessment of General Education Outcomes.
- CWAC and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment have partnered to facilitate the process of assessing the General Education Outcomes.

- Faculty have identified and mapped courses where student learning outcomes are aligned with respective General Education Outcomes.
- The institution has conducted high-impact events, including large-scale professional development sessions which bring faculty and staff members together - both across and within disciplines and departments - to analyze assessment findings and respond with strategies designed to improve and support student learning.
- The College is using the assessment management system, Tk20, to not only house and report on assessment plans and records, but also to facilitate the assessment process itself, including juried assessments, scheduling, rubric development, and curriculum and outcome mapping.
- Faculty and staff members have defined and delivered on General Education and institution-wide assessment plan goals.
- In large measure, direct and indirect assessments show that HACC students are successfully meeting the College's stated General Education Outcomes.

**8. What will happen at the April 29-May 1, 2014 visit?**

During this visit the MSCHE team will review HACC's progress towards fully complying with MSCHE Standards, especially Standard 12 (General Education), and inform the College of their resulting recommendations that will go back to the Commission regarding HACC's compliance with Standard 12.

**9. What has HACC prepared for the April 29 –May 1, 2014 MSCHE team visit?**

The College has:

- Conducted a full cycle of General Education Assessments
- Prepared and submitted a second Monitoring Report
- Activated both academic and operational College-Wide Assessment Committees
- Prepared a communications plan to keep the college community informed of ongoing efforts to improve and comply with MSCHE Standards
- Continued Tk20 training and implementation

**10. Once MSCHE has affirmed HACC's compliance with MSCHE standards and removed the warning, what happens next?**

HACC will continue to carry out the sustainable institutional effectiveness practices implemented to ensure ongoing assessment and improvement of student learning and operational processes.

**11. What does MSCHE accreditation mean to HACC students?**

The purpose of MSCHE standards and practices are to ensure that students' educational experiences are aligned with the college's higher education mission. Through assessment of

student learning outcomes, educators are able to measure whether students are achieving targeted learning, and to continually improve teaching and learning.

**12. When will I receive training and access to Tk20?**

Training has been ongoing with selected members of the College community including assessment leads from academic department and from functional areas of the College. We are now moving to enable “single sign-on” access in Tk20, which will allow its use by all members of the College. Tutorials and free webinars will also be shared through MyHACC, and more training will be scheduled in the near future.