

Most Notable Contribution to an Assessment Project by a Program or Department Faculty

Collaboration in academia can be challenging. Even though we work as part of team during department meetings and in department committees, the majority of faculty work is carried out independently – planning and researching, preparing lessons, and everyone's *favorite* activity – grading. For assessment projects to be successful, however, it is vital that faculty work as a team to focus their common attention on the purpose and design of the project. This award is designed to recognize programs and departments for their support and collaboration in this demanding work.

In Fall 2014, MCC was beginning the second round of "department-based assessments." Assessing for SUNY was safely in our "rear view mirror" and program and department faculties took on the challenge of conducting projects designed to answer questions meaningful to those faculty. Given that task, this program's faculty was particularly challenged, because recent turnover of personnel in the program, and reorganization of the program to a new faculty department, meant that the range and depth of inquiry for consideration seemed overwhelming.

The faculty of this program never hesitated. Armed with new program evaluation standards that had been recently approved by the Faculty Senate, they began their process by asking the most fundamental questions, such as:

"What is the scope of what we do?"

"Why do we do things this way, instead of another?"

"How do we know that what we are doing for students is 'good enough?'," and

"How can we use this project to address what seem to be obvious and important insufficiencies with the program?"

Program evaluations should not consist merely of a list of tasks to be completed, but rather, serve as an instrument for faculty to accomplish personal and professional goals for the benefit of their students and departments. This team of faculty is recognized for their success in doing just that. Reviewers of this program evaluation report observed that the faculty didn't just follow the College's program evaluation guidelines – they conducted inquiry and collected information and data that went far beyond what was required. They did so not because of an abundance of affection for assessment -- but because the profits from doing this deep of an inquiry far outstripped the effort of the project.

Assessment projects, by their nature, are challenging and time-consuming. How exciting it is, then, when the results enable program faculty to accomplish bigger goals than those envisioned at the beginning of the project! This team is being honored not because of the obvious quantity of work that they did, but because of the quality of that work, and its positive impact on their program.

Please join me in honoring *the ESOL program faculty* as this year's recipients of the Award for the Most Notable Contribution to an Assessment Project by a Program or Department Faculty.