

## 6. What are the organization's strategies to evaluate the proposed change?

RCTC will use several types of evidence and goals to assess the organizational impact and the student learning impact of offering online degrees and programs.

### ***6.a. Describe the measures the organization will use to document the achievement of its expected outcomes.***

RCTC will use the following evidence to document outcome achievement:

- Evidence of strategic planned growth
- Evidence about meeting the needs of nontraditional students
- Evidence of impact on enrollment and finances

#### **Evidence of strategic planned growth**

RCTC will be monitoring what programs and courses have been added to its overall online offerings once this process is complete. The BTEC Department has all Medical Secretary Programs - from certificate to associate of science - available for completion online, with all courses available as online courses including the general education courses. As noted earlier, the immediate intentions are to add the AA degree in the online format, as well as an Administrative Assistant. Once those are in place, the parties responsible for distance learning (Director of Educational Technology, Teaching and Learning, Distance Education and Technology Committee) will be researching the future needs and offering recommendations on how to proceed. This will be done primarily through surveys, market studies, higher education trends and direct requests by students and faculty. There has been sustained growth over a period time in online offerings as a whole, but this process is intended to move the college into more strategically-based decision making. It will be necessary to measure how expansion in this environment has helped to achieve specific goals and missions of the college, and to target future growth using the same criteria.

#### **Evidence about meeting the needs of nontraditional students**

Another measure will be how online learning is meeting the needs of non-traditional students. There is evidence that this segment of students is growing in numbers, and has different needs than the campus-based traditional student. This set of individuals includes working professionals, stay at home family



members, military personnel, and those unable to attend campus in person. Again, there will be ongoing surveys to determine their satisfaction, recommendations, concerns and experiences when taking classes at a distance from RCTC. If successful, there should be data confirming that more non-traditional students are able to take advantage of increased opportunity, and the diversity of the student body should reflect this change. A secondary effect may be how classes are delivered and configured. The online environment offers more flexibility in scheduling and styles, and may lead to experimentation from traditional delivery models.

### **Evidence of impact on enrollment and finances**

Finally, the college will continue to assess the impact on enrollment and finances. Online course delivery has been seen as a way of increasing enrollment or assisting courses or programs with declining enrollments. It will be important to monitor what percentage of overall classes is delivered in this environment, and what is considered optimal. RCTC has no intention of becoming exclusively an online institution, and will need to determine the levels that are acceptable. At the same time, there will be ongoing efforts to ensure that on campus enrollments are not negatively impacted or competing with online classes. This has not been the case in the past, and future success depends upon maintaining that relationship. Financial stability is also a critical measure, as the institution will need to verify that online courses are self-supporting and contribute to the overall financial health of RCTC. It is not known if enrollment caps will be maintained as currently configured, or if tuition differential needs to be altered, but these issues have a direct impact on the ability to provide ongoing services and support. The continuous assessment of online delivery is consistent with the stated mission and culture of RCTC, and will continue to be an important component of assessing the impact of this accreditation process.

### ***6.b. Describe how the assessment of student learning is integrated into the assessment program.***

As mentioned previously in this report, assessment of student learning is fully integrated into all academic areas of the college including online learning. While this is not considered a separate venture, as online learning is considered primarily a delivery method, the same criteria apply. Student learner assessment goals are found in college mission statements and strategic plans. In fact, Goal #1 for the college clearly calls for the creation of a “Culture of Accountability Through Assessment, Continuous Improvement and Internal and External Stakeholder Service”. The Assessment of Student Learning website (<http://www.roch.edu/dept/asl/>) offers all faculty, on campus or off, the ability to incorporate the



strategies into their courses, regardless of delivery format. The goals for the committee are stated as follows:

- Identify effective methods of assessment of student learning
- Identify whether faculty and student expectations of learning are being met.
- Maximize student success and satisfaction with the learning process through timely feedback
- Maximize faculty utilization of continuous assessment measures to enhance student/faculty communication and improve faculty-teaching strategies.

. In the committee's work plan for 2004-2005, several assessment initiatives are clearly defined:

- Facilitate department/ program discussions relating to core competencies.
- Establish ASL mentoring program.
- Facilitate completion of the ASL Matrix
- ASL committee members attend assessment conferences and workshops
- Provide opportunities for department/programs to Plan/Do/Check/Act (PDCA)
- Offer staff development opportunities on
  - assessment tools
    - utilizing results
    - eLumen
  - explore websites
- Maintain ASL website
  - Links to other sites
  - Highlight existing matrices
  - Resource List
  - Make it easy to find
- Identify a campus data steward
- Offer eLumen overview sessions
- Review general education department competencies and identify common college core competencies
- Pilot critical thinking model
- Begin discussion with VP of Student Affairs relating to ASL.
- Review RCTC student satisfaction survey results for student learning perceptions.
- Periodically review target attainment of ASL strategies.
- Include items relating to ASL initiatives on Nowell-Lovitz faculty satisfaction survey.
- Evaluate effectiveness of ASL Committee
- Evaluate effectiveness of ASL initiatives (PDCA)

All academic programs are required to have in place academic plans, and assess student learning annually. As an institution, there is no plan to separate the processes and requirements for face to face and online classes. Based on these initiatives, goals and plans, RCTC believes it is well



positioned and prepared to not only support the Request for Institutional Change, but to assess the results of implementation.



## Conclusion

RCTC looks forward to offering online degrees and programs because it will fulfill the campus mission, transform the campus culture, and improve learning for our students. RCTC has put into place effective planning, assessment, and support measures in order to ensure that online degrees and programs would be viable and effective. As we all know, higher education is changing more rapidly now than ever before. By offering online degrees and programs, RCTC will be better prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

