

# **Bridging Research, Information, and Cultures Initiative (BRIC) Technical Assistance Program Application**

## **Monterey Peninsula College**

1. The overarching purpose of the BRIC initiative is to strengthen inquiry-based practice at institutions. Describe your institution's historical and current use of information and evidence to inform planning and make decisions. Identify projects or initiatives that have been successful in using information. Additionally, identify areas where gaps exist in either the use or availability of information or evidence. In this latter domain, where would you like to see the college evolve? (300 words maximum)

In the last ten years, Monterey Peninsula College (MPC) has collected data in two areas: (1) demographics and enrollment trends of its students and community and (2) retention and successful completion rates for courses, programs, and specific groups of students. This information has been used to address two broad areas—access and success—as well as program review. There have been several projects where MPC has used this information; these include the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI), the Student Equity Plan, and development of a pilot learning community (Lobo-TLC/PASS). The data for the BSI project demonstrated that a small percentage (less than 25%) of students in basic skills courses persist to the transfer level course within the same discipline. Data for the Student Equity Plan and the Lobo-TLC projects indicated that certain populations within our district are underrepresented at the college and less likely to succeed.

There are areas where gaps exist in our knowledge and where we would like to evolve. As indicated above, our assessment of “outcomes” has been limited to retention and successful completion rates at the course level or for particular groups of students. We would like to expand our assessment into the classroom, to include both student attainment of the course learning outcomes, as well as analysis of teaching methods used in the-classrooms. Of particular interest are basic skills courses since our research indicates that retention and success rates are lower for these courses. Second, we would like to deepen our understanding of student progress through basic skills sequences and from basic skills courses to transfer level courses. Although we have begun to track students through a sequence of courses, we know little about the specific pathways of these students or what intervention points we could implement measures to better help students succeed.

2. The TAP is designed to collaborate with existing campus infrastructures to strengthen the capacity of the practitioners at the institution. Examples of such infrastructures include Student Success Committees, Basic Skills Committees, Student Learning Outcomes Committees, Faculty Inquiry Groups, Flex Days, and department meetings. Describe the existing internal and external institutional structures that could be involved in the implementation of this project. Include the functions served by these groups and how they could expand your institution's ability to improve programs and services through the use of timely and relevant information and evidence. Describe how these institutions fit into your governance structure. (300 words maximum)

**The Basic Skills Initiative committee** has just finished with the 2010-2011 Action Plans for MPC. Five of our action items are either directly or indirectly connected to assessment (see Appendix A). This committee works with the Faculty Senate; the Senate President is an active participant on the BSI

committee and is also the SLO Coordinator for the campus. This committee also presents at flex days and is planning for 2010-2011 to be our year to really impact all areas of the campus. Communication and teamwork have been a hallmark of the BSI committee, and we are working to expand this approach campus wide specifically related, but not limited to, Basic Skills issues. There are several programs sponsored by BSI, and their success and impact have not been formally assessed, nor were there any formal plan set up to do so at their inceptions. This, of course, must be rectified. The BSI committee makes recommendations to the campus via Faculty Senate, **Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Advisory Groups**. These are modified or accepted and moved forward to **College Council** which evaluates and approves or requests modifications, taking into account fiscal issues.

**Faculty Senate:** The Senate has responsibility for Student Learning Outcomes and Flex Day presentations. Additionally, they have offered “teaching and learning” discussion groups regularly each semester for the past two years. These have various instructional foci. We plan to expand these discussions to include how to use assessment to improve student learning. Although all courses on campus do have at least two student learning outcomes, the methods of formally assessing and communicating the success of these outcomes is still in its beginning stages. The Faculty Senate has supported one method of reporting effectiveness and how instructors have improved their teaching as a result of this assessment. However, this has not been widely accepted or instituted by faculty. It is not clear that all the general faculty understand how to turn data and research information into action in the classroom.

3. What actions do you expect the college to take as a result of participating in TAP? Are there particular changes you hope to implement as a result? (300 words maximum)

There are several changes we hope to implement as a result of participation in this Technical Assistance Program:

1. Inclusion of research and assessment plans in all program proposals
2. Changes in the “Early Alert” system which supports faculty to refer students who need help to counseling
3. Improvement in instruction and course sequencing, specifically for BSI courses
4. Improved communication about SLO outcomes

4. The BRIC Initiative is preparing resources on the following topics. Select between one and three topics on which your institution would like to collaborate with the BRIC team in the 2010-11 academic year. Please ensure that at least one of your selections is from the CORE MODULES list.

#### CORE MODULES

- A. **Assessing Student Learning Outcomes**
- B. Using an Equity Lens to Assess Student Learning
- C. Assessing Student Services Outcomes

#### SUPPORT MODULES

1. Building Information Capacity and Promoting a Culture of Inquiry
2. Assessing Institutional Effectiveness

**3. Assessing Basic Skills Outcomes**

4. Maximizing the Program Review Process

**5. Turning Data into Meaningful Action**

5. If your institution is selected as a participant, identify the individuals who would collaborate with the individuals in the BRIC teams. Please list their names and titles.

Rosaleen Ryan, Director of Institutional Research

Caroline Carney, Child Development instructor and Faculty Co-Chair Basic Skills Initiative Committee

Laura Franklin, Dean of Instruction

Alfred Hochstaedter, President, Faculty Senate

**Appendix A**  
**Basic Skills Initiative – Action Plans for 2010-11**

There are five action plans in the Basic Skills Initiative plan that either directly or indirectly are specifically connected to assessment needs:

- B.2.a: Investigate and develop an effective process that enhances or replaces the current early alert system.
- C.1.a: Investigate and promote professional development resources, training, and opportunities for faculty teaching developmental level skills; provide professional development in basic skills instruction to faculty who teach courses outside of the developmental level classes.
- C.2.b: Increase use of assessment techniques and strategies in BSI projects, courses, programs, and student services.
- D.1.a: Pursue ongoing and regular campus-wide outreach to students in order to enhance student awareness of on-campus support services and resources. Pursue various means including collaboration with Public Information Office.
- D.3.a: Analyze student success and drop-out rates in Basic Skills classes versus General Education classes; study student patterns of progression from Basic Skills classes into General Education classes.