

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA

*Assessment of Mission Effectiveness:  
Development of General Education Skills for 2003 CCP Graduates*

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH  
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## **Assessment of Mission Effectiveness: Development of General Education Skills for 2003 CCP Graduates**

### Introduction

The General Education Standard in Middle State's *Characteristics of Excellence* is as follows:

*The institution's curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy.*

In addition to these established general education goals, the College's Mission commits the institution to creating an environment that encourages students to achieve interpersonal growth, an appreciation for diversity, intellectual curiosity, and community involvement.

This report considers the goal accomplishment of CCP graduates relative to the development of general education skills and affective attributes. The information that is used to evaluate the College's effectiveness with respect to these aspects of its mission was gathered through the annual survey of CCP graduates. In 2003, this survey had a response rate of approximately 24%. Measures of mission effectiveness are based on graduates' self-assessments of the progress they made on objectives while enrolled at the College. For example, at the start of the questionnaire, graduates are asked the global question, *Have you accomplished the educational objectives you set for yourself at CCP?* For the most part, graduates accomplished their objectives (Table 1). Most graduates achieved their educational objectives in full while none of the graduates in 2003 indicated they did not accomplish their objectives.

**Table 1**  
**Accomplishment of Educational Objectives**  
**2003 Graduates**

<b>Level of Accomplishment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Fully	270	79.6
Partly	69	20.4
Not accomplished	0	0.0
Total	339	100.0

Table 2 contains a list of 19 goals that were included as part of the questionnaire item that asked graduates to indicate *the level of progress made on each goal while at the College*. The following four-point response scale was provided for this item: 1) considerable progress, 2) some progress, 3) little progress, and 4) no progress.

**Table 2**  
**General Education Goals and Affective Attributes**  
**Included on Graduate Survey**

1. Improved my oral communication skills
2. Improved my written communication skills
3. Improved my quantitative reasoning skills
4. Improved my scientific reasoning skills
5. Improved my ability to critically evaluate ideas
  
6. Developed an interest or openness to new ideas
7. Enhanced my ability to work as part of a group
8. Developed interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to others
9. Enhanced my understanding of my own and different cultures
10. Improved my leadership abilities
11. Developed meaningful career goals
12. Enhanced my self-confidence
13. Improved my self-reliance
14. Improved my self-discipline
15. Improved my preparation for active participation in community activities
16. Preparation for continued personal and intellectual growth after college
17. Developed into a more informed citizen
  
18. Improved my ability to use internet and online resources effectively
  
19. Enhanced my ability to express myself creatively

A factor analysis indicated there were two clusters on which 17 of the 19 goals loaded. Items 1 through 5 (Table 2), which define one of the clusters, appear to comprise a general education factor while items 6 through 17, which define the second factor, represent affective attributes that address issues in the College’s Mission Statement. Items 18 and 19 are items that statistically did not cluster with the other goals.

General Education Goals

Table 3 contains the distribution of graduate responses to the goals that represent the General Education cluster. As a group, graduates made significant progress across the five general education goals. Between 43% and 61% of all graduates reported they made considerable progress in all five areas of general education and another 33% to 43% made some progress on these goals while enrolled at the College.

**Table 3**  
**Progress on General Education Goals Reported**  
**by 2003 Graduates**

<b>General Education Goals</b>	<b>Considerable Progress (%)</b>	<b>Some Progress (%)</b>	<b>Little Progress (%)</b>	<b>No Progress (%)</b>
Improved my oral communication skills	51.5	41.3	5.0	2.3
Improved my written communication skills	60.7	33.3	4.3	1.7
Improved my quantitative reasoning skills	54.0	37.1	7.6	1.3
Improved my scientific reasoning skills	42.7	43.0	11.0	3.3
Improved my ability to critically evaluate ideas	50.8	40.3	6.9	2.0

Responses to two of the general education goals stand out from the rest; *improving written communication skills* and *improving scientific reasoning skills*. While only 6.0% of graduates reported making little or no progress in the area of written communication, over twice as many (14.3%) reported making at little or no progress in the area of scientific reasoning.

Affective Attribute Goals

Table 4 contains the distribution of responses to the goals that represent the Affective Attributes cluster. Between 42% and 62% of all graduates reported they made considerable progress in most of the affective areas contained on the questionnaire and another 29% to 38% made some progress on these goals while enrolled at the College. Once again, the distribution of responses to several of these goals distinguish themselves from the others. Most notable are the responses associated with preparation for active participation in community activities. Seventy-six percent (76%) of graduates reported at least some progress in this area, which is considerably smaller than 95% of graduates who reported at least some progress in developing an interest or openness to new ideas; and 92% who reported at least some progress in developing interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to others.

**Table 4**  
**Progress on Affective Characteristics Goals Reported**  
**by 2003 Graduates**

<b>Affective Attribute Goals</b>	<b>Considerable Progress (%)</b>	<b>Some Progress (%)</b>	<b>Little Progress (%)</b>	<b>No Progress (%)</b>
Developed an interest or openness to new ideas	60.9	33.8	3.3	2.0
Enhanced my ability to work as part of a group	55.9	30.8	8.4	5.0
Developed interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to others	58.1	32.2	5.6	4.0
Enhanced my understanding of my own and different cultures	52.6	33.4	9.6	4.3
Improved my leadership abilities	50.7	37.7	8.3	3.3
Developed meaningful career goals	58.1	30.7	8.3	3.0
Enhanced my self-confidence	56.6	33.8	6.0	3.6
Improved my self-reliance	58.5	33.2	6.3	2.0
Improved my self-discipline	56.8	33.6	6.6	3.0
Improved my preparation for active participation in community activities	42.2	33.6	14.3	10.0
Preparation for continued personal and intellectual growth after college	62.0	29.0	5.6	3.3
Developed into a more informed citizen	57.1	34.0	6.3	2.6

### Other Goals

Responses to the two remaining goals that did not load onto the two factors represented in the preceding tables appear in Table 5. Compared with other areas of student development, both of these goals reflect areas of lesser progress for the College's graduates. Approximately 25% of graduates reported they made little or no progress in *enhancing their ability to express themselves creatively* and nearly 20% reported little or no progress in *improving their ability to use the Internet and online resources effectively*.

**Table 5**  
**Progress on Goals Reported by 2003 Graduates**

<b>Other Goals</b>	<b>Considerable progress (%)</b>	<b>Some Progress (%)</b>	<b>Little Progress (%)</b>	<b>No Progress (%)</b>
Improved my ability to use internet and online resources effectively	41.9	39.6	9.4	9.1
Enhanced my ability to express myself creatively	37.2	38.5	13.3	11.0

### Comparisons Across Degree Type

Reported progress was compared for two groups of survey respondents based on the nature of the degree they were awarded. Initially, three groups were formed: 1) Associate in Applied Sciences, 2) Associates in Arts and Associates in Science, and 3) General Studies. Since the General Studies program has been discontinued, graduates who were awarded a degree in this area were not included as part of this analysis. There were 174 graduates who were awarded an Associate in Applied Science and 145 graduates whom received either an Associate in Arts or Associate in Science.

For ease of comparison, responses to each item were coded as follows: No Progress = 0; Little Progress = 1; Some Progress = 2; and Considerable Progress = 3. Group means<sup>1</sup> were calculated for each goal that appears in Table 6. In order to more easily visualize differences across degree types, the larger<sup>2</sup> of the paired means in each row is in bold font.

**Table 6**  
**Progress on Goals Reported by Graduates by Degree Type**

	<b>Associate in Applied Science</b>	<b>Associate in Arts or Science</b>
<b>General Education Goals</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Improved my oral communication skills	2.34	<b>2.50</b>
Improved my written communication skills	2.48	<b>2.61</b>
Improved my quantitative reasoning skills	2.46	2.44
Improved my scientific reasoning skills	2.19	<b>2.31</b>
Improved my ability to critically evaluate ideas	2.35	<b>2.46</b>
<b>Affective Attribute Goals</b>		
Developed an interest or openness to new ideas	2.51	<b>2.57</b>
Enhanced my ability to work as part of a group	<b>2.41</b>	2.35
Developed interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to others	<b>2.46</b>	2.41
Enhanced my understanding of my own and different cultures	2.35	2.34
Improved my leadership abilities	2.37	2.38
Developed meaningful career goals	<b>2.55</b>	2.33
Enhanced my self-confidence	<b>2.48</b>	2.41
Improved my self-reliance	<b>2.50</b>	2.47
Improved my self-discipline	2.44	2.43
Improved my preparation for active participation in community activities	<b>2.14</b>	1.97
Preparation for continued personal and intellectual growth after college	2.43	<b>2.54</b>
Developed into a more informed citizen	<b>2.46</b>	2.42
<b>Other Goals</b>		
Improved my ability to use internet and online resources effectively	2.10	<b>2.23</b>
Enhanced my ability to express myself artistically	<b>2.05</b>	1.97

<sup>1</sup> Given the scale of measurement, the maximum mean value possible is 3.0.

<sup>2</sup> Mean differences of .02 or less were treated as equal.

While the average progress made across all 19 goals was identical for the two groups (mean = 2.39), some interesting contrasts emerge from the pattern of graduate responses. Recipients of associate degrees in art and sciences made more progress across the General Education goals than graduates who earned a degree in the applied sciences. Conversely, recipients of associate degrees in applied science generally made more progress across the Affective Attribute goals. The biggest disparities across the two groups were related to the *development of meaningful career goals, preparation for active participation in community activities, and improved oral communication skills.*

### Summary

The Middle States Evaluation Team noted that *indicators of the overall effectiveness of CCP in achieving the General Education Standard suggests that the educational delivery systems are effectively educating the community.*<sup>3</sup> The information in this report supports this observation that the College is effectively providing students with opportunities and experiences that support many aspects of its mission. Most of the graduates who responded to this survey benefited from their CCP enrollment in many ways. The general education skills and affective attributes that graduates hone while enrolled at the College have contributed to the positive employment and transfer outcomes many graduates experienced after leaving the College.<sup>4</sup>

The Team also suggested *that it may be time to shift focus from what should be included in a general education program to assessing what students are able to do, as a result of what they are now being taught and provide evidence that the assessment has resulted in curricular*

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<sup>3</sup> Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees and Students of Community College of Philadelphia (@ [http://www.ccp.edu/scurtis/Middle\\_states.pdf](http://www.ccp.edu/scurtis/Middle_states.pdf) )

<sup>4</sup> Outcome Reports for both 2003 Career Program graduates (Report #141 & 141B) and Transfer Program graduates (Report #143) can be found on the Institutional Research Reports Webpage @ [http://www.ccp.edu/VPFIN-PL/ir/reports\\_available\\_on.htm](http://www.ccp.edu/VPFIN-PL/ir/reports_available_on.htm)

*improvement.* While the information in this report, taken as a whole, indicates that the College is effectively addressing its mission, it also points out the existence of some disparities in graduate achievement across curricular clusters that should be addressed by the College.