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# READER SUBMITTED: MCC Chosen To Join The Multistate Collaborative To Measure College Student Learning

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**Bonnie Willgoos, Manchester Community College Manchester**

7:10 p.m. EST, January 30, 2014

**Manchester Community College** is one of six colleges and universities in Connecticut, and nearly 50 nationwide, to join the Multistate Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment. Higher education leaders and faculty from nine states are working together to evaluate authentic student work in ways that allow measurement of student achievement. This work will also allow colleges to assess their own effectiveness in promoting student success.

Dr. Sandra Palmer, interim dean of Academic Affairs, stated, "This is a wonderful opportunity for MCC to be part of the nationwide Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment. We, like all colleges, want to ensure our students are successful. By participating in this assessment initiative, we will be able to measure student achievement at the college with other colleges across the county. Through these efforts, MCC will be able to focus on the quality of student learning, hence student success."

The purpose of the Multistate Collaborative is to improve the quality of student learning by developing a different approach to measure learning among public colleges and universities. Existing assessment methods often rely upon grades, standardized testing and student surveys, which are inadequate to accurately gauge and compare important information about what students know, understand and how they apply knowledge. The nine states that have formed the Multistate Collaborative will design and pilot test an assessment program that builds on assessment linked to instruction, actual curricula and real student work. By doing so, the Multistate Collaborative will be able to effectively balance the improvement of the teaching and learning process in the classroom and demonstrate public accountability for higher

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The work of the Multistate Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment supports formative, improvement-oriented assessment at the campus level while also allowing state systems to gain valuable feedback about their students. Results can be compared to the results for similar institutions across the country in effect establishing nationwide benchmarks for student learning at the community college and university levels. The work of the Multistate Collaborative is based on the conviction that by working together and by focusing attention on the quality of student learning, campuses and states can bring about much needed change in higher education.

This work is supported, in part, with funding from a grant to the Association of American Colleges and Universities from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. With a subgrant to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, faculty at colleges in the Multistate Collaborative will gather student work for assessment drawing on resources from the AAC&U's Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative.

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