



230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
Chicago, IL 60604  
312.263.0456 | 800.621.7440  
Fax: 312.263.7462 | [hlcommission.org](http://hlcommission.org)

November 3, 2025

Dr. Bradley Barrick  
President  
Montcalm Community College  
2800 College Dr.  
Sidney, MI 48885-9723

Dear President Barrick:

On behalf of the Higher Learning Commission, staff received and reviewed Montcalm Community College's interim report on Assessment. The staff analysis of the report is attached.

No further reports are required.

**Upcoming Reviews**

The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2027-28.

For more information on the interim report process, contact HLC at [interimreports@hlcommission.org](mailto:interimreports@hlcommission.org).  
Your HLC staff liaison is Tom Bordenkircher.

Thank you,  
Higher Learning Commission

cc: Kevin Wagenmaker, Accreditation Liaison Officer  
Tom Bordenkircher, HLC Staff Liaison

**STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT****DATE:** October 31, 2025**STAFF LIAISON:** Tom Bordenkircher**REVIEWED BY:** Sherilyn W. Poole**INSTITUTION:** Montcalm Community College, Sidney, MI**EXECUTIVE OFFICER:** Bradley Barrick, President**PREVIOUS HLC ACTION AND SOURCES:**

A report on assessment of general education that includes a description of integrated assessments within general education, the methods used to assess outcomes, and how the data is being used to inform student learning in all programs.

**REPORT PRESENTATION AND QUALITY:** The interim report submitted by Montcalm Community College (MCC) was organized into sections to describe the activities and initiatives the College implemented to assess the general education offerings. Sections of the interim report described *“integrated assignments within general education, the methods used to assess outcomes, and how data is being used to inform student learning in all programs.”* MCC participated in the HLC Assessment Academy which helped guide the activities and initiatives implemented to respond to the area of focus. Each section of the interim report identified the groups and individuals who participated in the assessment of the general education offerings.

**REPORT SUMMARY:** The area of focus required Montcalm Community College to describe its assessment of general education including the methods utilized and the ways collected data are *“...used to inform student learning in all programs.”* One of MCC’s core goals in the strategic planning regarding assessment is supported by the team of academic leadership, Institutional Research (IR), and Information Technology (IT). MCC’s General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) *“...describe the knowledge and skills expected of all associate degree graduates...”* A change in the GELOs was the merging of domains with major overlap. Faculty governs general education. The GELO committee includes faculty stewards who *“maintain the outcome, set benchmarks, develop and refine common rubrics and oversee artifact collection and review.”* GELOs are integrated into the curriculum following the Introduce-Reinforce-Assess (IRA) model. The five-year review shows where and how each course supports GELO development. Common rubrics are applied to shared or discipline-adapted artifacts to assess GELOs. Canvas Outcomes is the institutional platform for GELOs, programs, and course outcomes. Section-Level tracking occurs at the end of each term and includes *“faculty summarizing course goal attainment, completion/withdrawal patterns, modality, and brief reflections.”* These summaries are not an assessment measure, but they do *“...provide context that informs GELO analysis and faculty action planning.”* The interim report described the assessment data which are collected and how they are used in the assessment process.

**REPORT ANALYSIS:** MCC uses the results of assessment activities to close the loop of assessment outcomes. This includes “*reviewing GELO evidence, identify patterns, select targeted strategies and check for impact in subsequent cycles.*” Examples of the outcomes and follow-up of several assessments are below:

- Written Communication/Life Skills – findings of writing artifacts showed variation in grammar and mechanics that obscured higher-order writing traits for a subset of students. Faculty used this data to begin requiring or encouraging use of Microsoft Editor (or a comparable editing tool) before submission, especially where the writing task aligns with the shared GELO artifact.
- Oral Communication – GELO scorers observed that students often struggled with extemporaneous delivery, especially when adapting content to audience cues. Faculty embedded structured practice sessions early in the term and used the live rubric during practice to provide immediate, criterion-based feedback.
- Cultural & Global Awareness were consolidated into a single GELO and “...faculty recognized that some assignments elicited summary rather than true application of cultural frameworks to contemporary issues.” The GELO committee collaborated and redesigned prompts and rubrics to ensure artifacts “*explicitly require students to interpret a situation from multiple cultural perspectives and to justify proposed actions.*”

Changes implemented based on assessment results may impact more than one course. For example, revisions in written communication, e.g. editing tools, are also adopted in social sciences and business courses as these courses include the Written Communication GELO. Faculty participate in the assessment program in a variety of ways. During Faculty Days teams “*engage in guided reflection, examine GELO evidence, and design small, testable changes for the coming term.*” The Adjunct Advocacy allows part-time colleagues to support the assessment activities and initiatives which allow faculty to not become overwhelmed. The Faculty Home site centralizes documents, rubrics, timelines, and submission links. MCC has invested in Canvas Outcomes as its system of record “*...for outcome alignment and scoring...*” Monitoring assessment activities include Section-Level Tracking every term, GELO committees post status updates annually and conduct self-studies on a rotating, multi-year cadence. The VPAA ensures compliance with assessment activities without interfering with faculty-led work. MCC’s participation in the HLC Assessment Academy resulted in the “*transition from a tool-driven, compliance-focused approach to a learning-driven model built for the long term.*” Three gains from the Academy participation were:

- Simplification and Focus – prompted MCC to reduce the number of outcomes, consolidate overlapping domains, and standardize expectations and tools...
- Technology Fit and Adoption – early trials revealed that Portfolium did not match MCC’s needs; faculty pivoted to Canvas Outcomes, with Faculty Home as the collaboration hub and Forms/SharePoint as interim scaffolding.
- Culture, Capacity, and Sustainability – the Academy reinforced the importance of recognizing improvements, embedding assessment in Faculty Days and onboarding adjuncts to clarify expectations.

A result of the full implementation of Canvas Outcomes “*...MCC is building visualizations that will help faculty and leaders examine GELO performance by student group and course context.*” Two ongoing risks to assessment continuation include faculty or leadership turnover and process drift (uneven adherence over time). To minimize these risks, MCC documents processes in the ACT Handbook, centralizes materials in Faculty Home, and embeds assessment responsibilities into standard faculty roles. The interim report ends by identifying MCC’s next steps in the assessment activities.

- Complete the Canvas Outcomes rollout, including faculty supports and quick-reference guides;
- Calibrate GELO benchmarks using the Math/Science baseline and the growing body of Written, Oral and Cultural/Global artifacts.; and
- Publish an updated ACT Handbook with streamlined flowcharts and exemplars;
- Faculty Days will continue to feature GELO showcases, recognition of improvements, and storytelling that connects assessment to teaching practice
- Expand adjunct onboarding and mentoring to ensure that every section mapped to a GELO is prepared to collect high-quality artifacts and apply rubrics consistently

**ANALYSIS CONCLUDING STATEMENT:** Montcalm Community College is commended for its response to the area of focus. The interim report included descriptions of the activities and initiatives MCC implemented to assess the General Education Learning Outcomes (GELO). Faculty provided leadership and conducted most of the work of the GELO assessment with support from the VPAA, Institutional Research, and Information Technology. The GELO assessment design is robust as shown by *“benchmarks for student performance set collaboratively, with an initial 80% proficiency target to guide expectations and calibrate instructional supports.”* Additionally, to ensure data quality and inter-rater reliability artifacts are typically dual-scored with a third review if discrepancies are large. PII is removed prior to upload to protect privacy while preserving evaluative value. The interim report provided comprehensive evidence of MCC’s GELO assessment program. MCC has positioned itself to assess the outcomes of GELO assessment and to use the assessment outcomes to strengthen its General Education program.

**STAFF FINDING:**

Note the relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s) 4.B

Statements of Analysis (check one below)

- Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.
- Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.
- Evidence is insufficient and a HLC focused visit is warranted.

**STAFF ACTION:** Receive the report on Assessment.

No further reports are required.

The institution’s next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2027-28.