For Consideration of the Faculty Senate:

The CAPE Committee proposes the following be adopted as part of the Faculty Senate Resolutions, Section XX.XX, related to assessment of programs:

Recognizing that accredited degree programs at the College undertake significant reflection of the effectiveness of their programs, be it resolved that:

Accredited programs shall be eligible to conduct alternative program evaluations with streamlined processes and reduced requirements. The specific process recommended is attached as Exhibit ZZ.

a. Accredited programs in professions with required licensure/certification examinations may be exempted from all program evaluation processes at MCC, with the following conditions:
   i. Licensure/Certification exam results measuring aggregate student success at MCC’s programs are reported on an annual basis, or consistent with specialized accreditor requirements;
   ii. Programs exempted from MCC’s program evaluation processes submit complete and current curriculum maps to the Curriculum and Assessment offices at least once every six years (consistent with the timing of program evaluation cycles). This includes a comprehensive review of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) for all program-specific courses required for the program.

b. All other accredited programs should follow the attached process.
Recognizing that accredited degree programs confront unique challenges in program evaluation, particularly the duplication of efforts associated with assessment, the CAPE Committee proposed in March 2013 to create an alternate protocol for the evaluation of accredited programs. In the area of assessment and evaluation, specialized accreditation often requires that program faculties pursue a process that deviates from that which has been established at MCC. A specialized accrediting body may overly emphasize one area of assessment or evaluation relative to typical MCC standards, while de-emphasizing or omitting entirely other areas of significant importance to the College.

The following process is therefore recommended:

Process in Context

As outlined in *Foundations of Student Success IV: Closing the Loop*, Monroe Community College’s faculty is moving toward a model of full-circle assessment:

“The four phases of the assessment/evaluation cycle can be summarized using four corresponding verbs:

```
REVIEW => ASSESS => EVALUATE => ACT
```

Typically, this four-phase process is demonstrated visually in a circle, each verb occupying a different quadrant of that circle, but with the process clearly indicated as iterative and never-ending. The term “close the loop” refers to the final “ACT” phase, and has received attention because that step is so often overlooked, thus leaving the circle incomplete (*Foundations IV, pg. 25*).”

This process, when applied to an accredited program evaluation project, results in a set of findings and recommendations which require follow-up action beyond that point when the project is completed and the report is filed.

Monroe Community College operates on a 6-year cycle, with all degree and certificate programs scheduled for a complete evaluation once within that time frame.

REVIEW:

1. *Review, and revise as necessary, the program’s purpose statement and describe its relationship to the College’s mission;* if the program has no formal or published purpose statement, one should be written, with linkages shown to support the College’s mission;
2. **Review, and revise as necessary, established program-level goals/objectives.** If the program has no formal or published goals/objectives, then they should be written. Do these stated goals/objectives accurately reflect the program faculty’s priorities for what the program should offer its students (examples could include completion of the degree, acquiring a specific skills set, transfer, and/or employment)? Is the list of goals/objectives complete and up-to-date?

3. **Describe how the program’s goals/objectives support the program’s purpose statement.**

4. **Review, and revise as necessary, existing program-level outcomes.** If the program has no formal or published outcomes, then they should be written. Outcomes should take two forms:
   a. **Program Learning Outcomes.** These are concisely-worded, measurable statements of the broad, cumulative learning that graduates of the program should have acquired as a result of successfully passing the program’s designed set of courses. Measurement of these outcomes is usually associated with the structured learning that goes on in the classroom (known as direct measures of program success).
   b. **Program Operational Outcomes.** These concisely-worded statements include all other aspects of the successful operation of a high-quality program outside of the classroom, such as ongoing faculty professional development; conditions of the learning environment; success in student recruitment, enrollment, retention, and completion; and/or applications of technology. The measurement and reporting of these outcomes is not associated with the structured learning in the classroom, but these measures do help provide a broader understanding of the success of a program (known as indirect measures of program success).

5. **Describe/discuss how all program outcomes support the program’s goals/objectives.** Construct a curriculum map (or grid) that shows how each of the stated goals/objectives relates specifically to the outcomes of the program.

6. **Review existing course learning outcomes (CLOs) for all core required courses in the program, and for all electives supporting the program.**
   a. Ensure that the design of each CLO meets current College standards
   b. Verify that the set of CLOs for each course accurately portrays the “minimum common core content” that students should expect to learn by taking the course

7. **Review the whole of the program curriculum.** Map program core and elective courses to program-level outcomes. Analyze and assess as part of this process how current courses do and do not satisfy program-level outcomes as a whole. What program-level learning outcomes are not adequately supported by courses (gaps)? Which program learning outcomes are covered in too many classes (redundancies)? Which courses seem to deliver little value in supporting program learning outcomes, and which ones seem to be overly-packed with content?

**ASSESS:**

1. **Plan for course-based assessment.** Based on the work included in the curriculum map, identify strategic opportunities for assessing individual course learning outcomes that can be shown to directly support program-level outcomes. These courses will be the “target courses” for assessment of the program’s learning outcomes. Course-based assessment needs a lot of planning for it to be done well, and faculty should work collaboratively to ensure
program and course outcomes are assessed properly. This course-based assessment may occur over two semesters in order to include fall-only and spring-only courses. The PEL should consult with the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Assessment for training, and where appropriate, should invite the Assistant Director to meet with program and/or department faculty for advice and training in assessment processes.

2. **Plan and administer course-based assessment of student learning in selected courses.** The information collected from course-based assessment is particularly important, because it is generally the only source of direct measurement of student learning available to program faculty. Conducting course-level assessment requires management and coordination because the timing for opportunities for collecting this information is often short and very specific. Referring to the identified target list for course-based assessment, the PEL should work with the teaching faculty members to assist them in the planning and administration of the assessment.

**EVALUATE:**

1. **Discuss and analyze data and information.** After the majority of course-based assessment data has been collected, the PEL should begin to assemble the information and compile the project report. The discussion of the results of this research and inquiry should include colleagues, and may include adjuncts and staff. Collaboration outside of the program, and even outside of the department, is encouraged. From these discussions, and from the input from the external review team visit, the PEL should be able to identify a set of findings, and begin developing a set of recommended actions based on those findings. In addition, given the results of the assessment of student learning outcomes, identify specific changes program-faculty members propose making to their teaching for the improvement of student learning.

2. **Compile, complete, and submit project report summarizing information, data, findings and recommendations for action.** It is recommended that a reasonable system is developed to summarize the strengths and weaknesses identified in both the work of this project and the external accreditation report which will be acted upon later. Then, the PEL should collaborate with his/her program colleagues, the department chair, and the division dean to ensure that a complete assessment and analysis of program strengths and weaknesses has been conducted, and that the purpose(s) of conducting the program evaluation project has/have been addressed.

**ACT:**

The period following the completion of a program evaluation project (until the next cycle of evaluation) is known as the “action phase.” Often identified in educational literature as the “closing-the-loop” step of assessment and evaluation, this phase of program evaluation should focus the attention of department and program faculty members on “findings and fixes.”

Monroe Community College’s “full-circle assessment model” ensures program evaluation projects establish opportunities for programs and departments to organize their work with students in a strategic manner.
A. *Moving Forward Forum.* Within the same semester in which a program evaluation project report has been submitted, the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Assessment convenes a meeting that initiates the action phase, the “closing of the loop.” Those attending this meeting should include:

a. Program Evaluation Leader  
b. Department Chair and/or Program Coordinator  
c. Division dean  
d. Assistant Director of Curriculum and Assessment  
e. Other program/department faculty members (optional)

B. *Closing the Loop.* Following the completion of the moving forward forum, the PEL’s official service ends, and the department chair and/or program coordinator become the effective leaders to ensure that follow-up steps are taken to ensure that the project’s findings and recommendations are acted upon. It is recommended that a reasonable system is developed to collect and document the evidence the recommendations and changes were acted upon. Each department/program will define its own way to collect and document such evidence. The evidence will need to be submitted with the next program evaluation.