



Institution: Coconino County Community College (HLC ID 2087)

Chief Executive Officer: Colleen A. Smith PhD, President

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Action: Interim Report on Assessment in response to the Open Pathway: Assurance Review Report for Coconino County Community College and letter sent by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) June 27, 2016. We appreciated the constructive feedback the Review Team provided in the area of Assessment of Student Learning. In our response to the Assurance Review Report, the College agreed that the following "Interim Report on Assessment of Student Learning" would be submitted prior to June 29, 2018.

Core Components 4.B: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

Areas of Focus: In the Open Pathway: Assurance Review Report and subsequent letter the College was asked to demonstrate progress in the areas of collecting and analyzing assessment data. We were specifically requested to provide evidence of progress including preliminary reports of assessment activity that would address:

- Performance on general education outcomes,
- Assessment of learning outcomes across different modes of instruction,
- Revisions/modifications to the assessment plan as a result of the initial implementation and, if possible,
- Demonstrate that the assessment results have been used to improve teaching and learning at the institution.

We were also encouraged to map co-curricular activities and organizations to institutional learning outcomes as an exercise to demonstrate how these activities and organizations support student learning.

INTRODUCTION

Coconino Community College (CCC), in Northern Arizona, serves the second largest county in the continental United States. As a comprehensive community college, we pride ourselves on being a college that serves at-risk students. Depending on the semester, approximately 60% to 80% of our IPEDS First Time, Full Time, Degree Seeking cohort place into either Developmental English, Math, Reading or all of the above. In addition, we are a minority-serving institution and federally recognized as a Title IV college. This is reflected in our Fall 2016 IPEDS report, where our student population consisted of 19% Native Americans, 18% Hispanics, and 7% Two or More – Unknown Race/Ethnicity. Our goal is to be a self-evaluative educational institution that critically looks at how we improve student learning so that our students can improve their lives (Appendix A). We look at this Interim Report on assessment as an opportunity to provide evidence of ongoing efforts in assessment of student learning, and as a self-analysis of the College as a learning institution that values the education of all who enroll.

ASSESSMENT EFFORTS SINCE THE 2016 ASSURANCE ARGUMENT

Coconino Community College has conducted various types of learning assessment on an intermittent basis since the college was formed. After receiving the HLC response to our 2016 Assurance Argument we began an in-depth analysis of our assessment practices. We found that, although on the surface it appeared that CCC was assessing learning, we did not have a consistent culture of assessment throughout the institution (Appendices B, C, D).

In February 2016, a new president started at the College and focused on assessment of student learning and collaboration to ensure institutional effectiveness. The priority for decision making at CCC is now student success through effective learning assessment and overall institutional effectiveness. The college is approaching our future with the understanding that the structure of the college should inspire collaboration and encourage the philosophy of putting students first. As part of this initiative, Student Development was moved into Academic Affairs. With representatives from Student Development now serving on the newly formed Academic and Student Development Council and on the Assessment Committee, communication concerning overall learning outcomes and the assessment of co-curricular activities is greatly improving.

In addition to discouraging the silos that often develop in higher education, this process helped us recognize that consistent and systematic assessment of student learning and evaluation of institutional effectiveness was not occurring throughout the entire college. This led to developing processes to synchronize efforts and develop new strategies to analyze what we are doing and then make consistent efforts to close the loop and use the information collected for improvement (Appendices E and F).

Finally, as part of these synchronization efforts, we realized CCC did not have a thorough and effective process for conducting program-level review to analyze learning assessment data and data collected to review and make improvements in all non-instructional programs across the college. Previously, our assessment practices were dependent on a handful of people within Institutional Research or at the department chair level. Because of this dependency, assessment had not been consistently valued and meaningfully used; therefore, those processes started to collapse when positions became vacant or when the organizational structure of the College changed.

For assessment to have meaning, it must be relevant and improve student learning and services, and it must be a sustainable process. To this end, the Assessment Committee, in collaboration with the Provost,

developed policies and procedures (Appendices E and F) vetted throughout the college using our shared governance model and approved by the District Government Board.

Coconino Community College has now embedded assessment within our culture by creating a sustainable assessment process (Appendices E, I, H, I, J, and K).

During our participation in the HLC Assessment Academy, we realized that each area of General Education needs to define similar performance measures using the language of their discipline. Now each General Education area has developed performance measures within their discipline while still measuring the overall program level outcome (Appendix L).

Ultimately, through the analysis of our assessment process, we have established sound and sustainable processes involving different committees, councils, and departments across the college (Appendices E, K, M, N, and O). We believe these efforts will impact student learning and overall College effectiveness, which will, in turn, lead to increased student success.

ASSESSMENT PLAN AND PROCESSES

History

Prior to 2016, CCC embarked on a journey to redesign assessment across the College. We enrolled in the HLC Assessment Academy in 2014 with the goal of creating sustainable processes through an initial focus on assessing critical thinking in General Education courses. Discussions with faculty began in Spring 2015, and we formed our Assessment Committee in Fall 2015. Initial efforts for collecting critical thinking assessment data began through our General Education committee in Spring 2016. Additionally, we began a new format for conducting Program Reviews in Spring 2016. While assessment efforts had begun, the assessment process was still scattered and not cohesive.

Unification Efforts

Currently, assessment at CCC is an active process that takes into consideration building on past successes and learning from our past missteps, with a constant focus on improvement of student learning. Beginning in 2016, CCC made coordinated efforts to improve the structure and processes that lead to a healthy assessment culture.

An assessment budget was developed, and new positions were created to sustain the assessment process. With the new organizational structure for assessment, the budget for assessment increased from \$5,729 in Fiscal Year 2015 to \$119,970 for Fiscal Year 2019. In the summer of 2016 we hired an Assessment Coordinator and in Summer 2017, we hired an Associate Dean of Curriculum and Assessment. This structure was designed to support students, faculty, and staff in a unified collaborative assessment program focused on the improvement of learning.

The work done in the Assessment Academy aligned with our ultimate goal to unify academics and College services around a common goal of enhancing student success via improvement of student learning. The Assessment Academy provided a structured, four-year program to assist us in developing our efforts as we were assigned a primary mentor and an HLC Scholar who provided feedback and acted as a primary contact for questions (Appendix L).

In February 2016, a faculty workgroup developed a faculty evaluation plan that required each professor to include learning assessment as part of their annual goal setting and performance review. (Appendix F).

Our Academic Standards Committee created a model syllabus for all classes that all faculty are required to use when developing their courses. This model syllabus includes assessment of student learning as a core component (Appendix I). Using the model syllabus reinforces the alignment between outcomes, content, and assessment tools (Appendix I). All new and modified course outlines brought to the Curriculum Committee must include these requirements. This process was improved in 2017-18 with the addition of an assessment check by the Associate Dean of Curriculum and Assessment as part of the curriculum approval process.

We've also improved the program review process. The Assessment Committee created a timeline, checklist/rubric, and process for Academic and Non-Instructional Program Reviews that were used in Spring 2017. Based on feedback from program areas and committee analysis, we revised requirements to improve clarity in the Spring 2018 program reviews. (Appendix D). In Spring 2018, the Assessment Committee made further improvements by drafting a bi-annual review document for use beginning Fall 2018.

A clear data collection process for assessment of student learning outcomes is now a part of the integrated assessment system. We first began collecting data using Course Assessment Reports in Fall 2016 and Program Assessment Reports in Spring of 2018. (Appendix C). These processes are detailed in the Consistency of Student Learning Assessment section below.

With college-wide input at all levels, we created and/or revised assessment and academic policies that were approved by the District Governing Board in December 2017. Procedures to support policies were then vetted and approved throughout the College (Appendix D). Our commitment to long-term improvement in student learning outcomes was designed to be sustainable.

CONSISTENCY OF STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Consistent engagement in learning assessment and evaluation of institutional effectiveness is critical to the health of teaching, learning, and all College services at CCC. The creation of an integrated assessment process through dialogue and training had to take place simultaneously, engaging a college-wide audience.

General Education Assessment

Development of an assessment culture

General Education at CCC has multiple measurable learning outcomes that are based on program goals: communicate effectively, demonstrate an appreciation of cultural diversity, and apply critical thinking skills. The General Education Committee developed a critical thinking project to engage all instructors in a dialogue to define and use critical thinking in the classroom. It was this project that led to the Fall 2016 assessment activities in which all courses taught by full-time faculty collected critical thinking assessment data.

Fall 2016-Spring 2017

The purpose of the Fall 2016 assessment project was to engage all full-time faculty in a well-defined project to assess critical thinking. The advantages of this approach were that we could switch focus to a singular directive and work together to understand how to measure critical thinking and use it to improve learning. Although the performance measures for critical thinking were shared with all faculty, many of the faculty decided that the measures did not apply to their courses, and this was reflected in the data

collected (Appendix C). As a result, we made improvements and continued our assessment work in the area of critical thinking.

During Spring 2017, all General Education courses that had critical thinking course-level outcomes assessed one critical thinking assignment. This collection happened across all modalities for both full-time and part-time faculty. In addition to this collection, we asked each instructor to provide the assignment used to collect the data and the definition of critical thinking used in their courses. This project provided a way to review the assignments being assessed. In addition, the result was the generation of raw data on course-level assessment of critical thinking; at this point, we saw the need to focus our efforts on the collection of program-level data. As a result, we found it necessary to use performance measures of critical thinking that should be developed by faculty for assessment in specific disciplines (Appendix C).

Revisions and modifications 2017-2018

In Fall 2017, the General Education Committee helped to revise performance measures defining the program-level outcome of critical thinking in each General Education area. The General Education areas were asked to define shared performance measures, identify key courses in which to collect assessment data and use a shared program assessment tool (Appendix D).

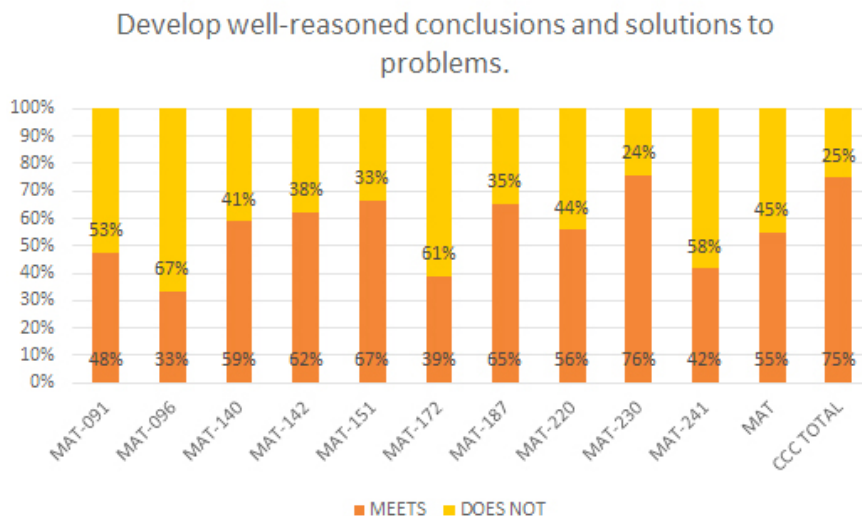
In Spring 2018, the General Education areas have been using this shared assessment tool for collecting critical thinking data that will then be reported at the end of the semester. Examples of shared assessment tools are attached (Appendices C and D).

Incorporation of assessment in the Program Review Process

We found that the learning assessment data we generate can and should be used to make our programs and College relevant. During 2016-2017, the English and Math programs, as well as others, participated in Program Review Data meetings and wrote program-review documents which incorporated the critical thinking learning assessment data. The attached program reviews for Math and English have sections in them that demonstrate how the assessment data is used to improve student learning (Appendices G and H). Figure 1 and the corresponding explanation from the Math Program Review provide an example of this.

From the Math Program Review document: Developing well-reasoned conclusions and solutions to problems is a critical thinking outcome that is measured in mathematics as shown in Figure 1. "The courses that show the lowest levels of proficiency or mastery on this critical thinking outcome are MAT 096 and MAT 241." Changes were made to MAT 096, Intermediate Algebra in order to approve learning. "MAT 172, Finite Mathematics, and MAT 241, Differential Equations, are both difficult courses with limited enrollment which are not taught in great abundance at CCC. Thus, the sample sizes for these results are quite a bit smaller than for many other courses. MyMathLab online homework is being used in MAT 172 to try to improve these outcomes. The courses that show the highest levels of proficiency and mastery on this outcome are MAT 230, MAT 187, and MAT 151."

Figure 1 From the Math Program Review showing data results and offering suggestions on how to improve student learning from data gathered in Fall 2016.



Career and Technical Assessment

Previous Program Reviews

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division assisted in re-establishing the program review process by completing program review documents during Spring 2016. The Assessment Committee reviewed these documents in Fall 2016, and they were used to create the 2016-2017 program-review document template (Appendix C).

Program Outcome Review and Curriculum

During Summer 2017, the CTE programs met with the Assessment Coordinator and reviewed information on assessment gathered by the Assessment Coordinator at the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) conferences; reviewed and evaluated current program-level outcomes; reviewed and established performance measures; and created two types of curriculum maps: knowledge-application-synthesis maps and assessment maps (Appendix C).

From these discussions and curriculum maps, programs identified many curriculum changes that needed to occur to streamline and improve learning for their students. The programs also identified courses in which assessment data would be collected and the specific assessment tool that would be used. Since these meetings, the CTE programs have been submitting their students' results to the Assessment Coordinator for compilation of learning assessment data.

Inclusion of Different Modes of Learning

Assessment across different learning modalities is critical to ensure students demonstrate the same level of rigor and learning outcomes regardless of the method of delivery.

Course Assessment Reporting

Beginning Spring 2017, all General Education faculty submitted critical thinking data across all modes of instruction (Appendix C). In 2017-2018, we continued the data collection on course-level outcomes mapped to critical thinking. This collection established a process that we are currently using to gather

consistent course-level assessment data where each instructor is required to report on assessment of one course-level outcome in one of their courses each semester (Appendix D).

Distance Learning Evaluation

In 2017, we contracted with Instructure's Canvas, our learning management system, to evaluate 66 of our online courses (the majority of our online courses at that time). This comprehensive evaluation helped to determine where we could improve student learning in our online courses. To illustrate this comprehensive evaluation, the contractor's assessment for BIO 100-01 Biological Concepts is attached (Appendix J). The evaluators considered the quality of assessment and made recommendations on how to improve assessment in each course. This procedure was repeated for all courses evaluated.

The assessment findings were reviewed by each instructor. Faculty, staff, and administrators worked together applying the information collected to improve student learning and engagement. As a result of this process, when requested by faculty members, administrators provided guidance on how to improve learning outcomes in online courses.

To close the loop, distance education instructors took part in a quality review to improve their courses and most have now analyzed how assessment of their online course helps them improve student learning. While more analysis needs to be done, we are working to stop failed practices and strengthen interaction among faculty in terms of improving student learning online. By sharing these results during the Online Learning Committee meetings (Appendix O), we will continue to improve student learning. The collection of data for online learning assessment will be a collaborative effort between the Assessment and Online Committees.

Dual Enrollment

At the beginning of Fall 2017, the Dual Enrollment Coordinator, the Associate Vice President of Innovative Learning Solutions, and the Assessment Coordinator met to create a plan to gather assessment information from courses taught by dual enrollment instructors.

CCC ensures that the same College-level outcomes are taught in dual enrollment courses as all other courses. We are now assisting dual enrollment faculty with the assessment process. The Dual Enrollment Coordinator reaches out to the dual enrollment instructors to gather a summative assessment of student results by the end of the academic year. This information will then be shared with the appropriate assessment area for evaluation and recommendations for improving learning. This process will also establish a baseline of assessment for the dual instructors' courses.

Co-Curricular Assessment

CCC is a commuter college and does not have a residential student population or athletic programs. Co-curricular activities are planned by the student activities coordinator, in alignment with College learning outcomes and priorities. The assessment process for co-curricular activities began with developing a definition of what co-curricular means at the College. After discussing in several areas and committee meetings, we agreed on the definition supplied in our Assessment Handbook. (Appendix B). Our efforts to identify co-curricular activities, devise assessment tools, and collect, analyze, and use data for improvement are all in their formative stages.

Several organizational changes are aiding our co-curricular assessment efforts. Because our Dean of Student Development now reports to the Provost, we've developed a heightened understanding of the connections across the College and the possibilities for new collaborations. Adding a member from

Student Development to our Assessment Committee provided a needed voice for co-curricular assessment and non-instructional program review. This addition also helped Student Development realize a stronger understanding of learning assessment and how to incorporate our General Education learning outcomes to plan and assess co-curricular activities. This structure has resulted in the College participating in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) for the first time in Spring 2018. Once the results of that survey have been received, it will be shared across the College to encourage continued improvement. The assessment of co-curricular activities during the past academic year has been focused on the appreciation of cultural diversity and is largely qualitative (Appendix N). In 2017-2018, we held five co-curricular events at which we gathered assessment data.

SUMMARY

This report, along with the corresponding documentation in the appendices, demonstrates the commitment Coconino Community College has to assessment. This is a commitment to change and to improving student learning and the overall effectiveness of our College. In summation, we hired an Assessment Coordinator and Associate Dean of Curriculum & Assessment to create a stable, energized, and sustainable assessment program. We created policies and procedures to help ensure sustainability at all levels of the college. We reinstated the program-review process with a new focus on student learning. We evaluated and assessed the majority of our online courses. After analysis of our current state of assessment at CCC, we developed our Quality Initiative project to improve program-level assessment and focus on a culture of assessment through collaboration among faculty and staff (Appendix A). We see the need and have created professional development opportunities that are critical to improvement. During this time, we created an Assessment Manual to aid in defining core elements of assessment. This was a substantial undertaking by a college that values assessment and has been a key focus for those individuals in leadership roles for assessment. We continue to improve assessment in all modalities of instruction.

The sustainable system we are developing is supported by policies, procedures, and shared governance. The culture of assessment that we are developing is not dependent upon a singular position or entity within the college. We are proud of our progress and will continue to refine and use the assessment processes to improve learning and overall Student Success.