

Turtle Mountain Community College, ND

TMCC Assessment Renaissance

Participation Start: 11-19-2014

Participation End: 11-30-2019

Date Completed: 12-09-2018

Scholar(s): Gloria Rogers
Susan Murphy

Primary Mentor(s): Cia Verschelden

Team Lead: Erik Kornkven

Team Member(s): Kellie Hall
Sheila Trottier
Teresa Delorme
Les LaFountain
Marilyn Delorme
Jeff Azure
Ann Brummel
Ron Parisien
Terri Martin-Parisien
Dan Henry

This Results Report reflects the activity of Turtle Mountain Community College in the Assessment Academy Collaboration Network. It is not an official document of the Higher Learning Commission.

Context

Q: Describe your plan for creating shared responsibility for assessing and improving student learning. (100 - 200 words)

A: Members of faculty, staff and administration will meet consistently and continuously to activate and engage a friendly assessment environment to advance teaching and learning. This group will be called the Student Learning Committee (SLC) and will be composed of representatives from faculty, staff and administration. The SLC will be responsible for gathering and analyzing data as well as the dissemination of information to all staff and faculty throughout the institution. Through the collaboration of the SLC, shared responsibility for assessing and improving student learning will be implemented.

Q: What is the broader impact of your Academy work on the institution, faculty and staff, students, or other stakeholders? How will this work influence the culture of your organization, build institutional capacity, advance teaching and learning...etc.? (100 - 200 words)

A: The broader impact of this student learning project will create an environment that embraces the assessment of student learning and consequently, create a culture in which assessment is viewed favorably. The end result will situate TMCC in a position in which teaching and learning are blended with assessment. Currently, assessment at TMCC is viewed as an added-on, separated task that faculty must comply with. Through the implementation of this student learning project, assessment will become more institutionalized and viewed as a complement to teaching and learning.

Q: Optional: What else is important to know about your work on assessing and improving student learning? (100 - 200 words)

A: Historically, assessment practices at TMCC were focused primarily at the course level, with 100% of full time faculty engaged in the process. Assessment at the program and institutional level consisted of episodic practices based upon need, with no clear model outlined. Today, however, the SLC has recently identified a need to develop and enhance a systematic approach to assessment that includes the review of program and institutional outcomes.

Impact Report

Q:

What do you see as the next logical steps for continuing the work that you have begun in the Academy?

A: The next steps are to:

- 1) maintain momentum in the academic assessment areas
- 2) nurture the new programs entering into the assessment process (i.e. co-curricular programs)
- 3) continue to refine the assessment process
- 4) move towards continuous student improvement

Q:

What steps will you take to keep faculty and staff engaged in ongoing assessment of student learning?

A: One of the changes we came up with through our discussions at the results forum was to move the bulk of the preparatory work for the assessment plans to organized meetings during the school year. Right now, we have people work on their plans on their own and we feel like we could better organize and motivate people if we got everyone together during the year.

Other than that, we must continue putting energy into the system. Left alone, the movement and progress we've made will stall.

As this is the final report, thank you to both Cia and Susan for all of your feedback, encouragement, and advice over the last several years. It has meant a lot to have you with us as we've worked towards improving student learning through meaningful assessment here at TMCC. Happy Holidays!

Response to Impact Report

Q:

Please describe your general impression of the institution's progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.

A: Cia

I have been the mentor for this team since the first Roundtable and I want to affirm their report as reflective of the progress I've witnessed over their years in the Academy. We have met each year at the Annual Conference for a status check. I well remember our early conversations about revising the general education outcomes to more clearly communicate the uniqueness of Turtle Mountain as a Tribal College.

It is so heartening to read the chronology of activities and accomplishments at TMCC related to assessment, in general, but, more importantly, about institutional transformation more holistically. I agree with the report that one of the strengths of the team's approach was to move deliberately and slowly, making sure that everyone had a say in these major changes, including stakeholders both on and off campus. By this approach, they built a firm foundation of engagement and support before they got into the technical aspects of assessment. This approach has reaped benefits in broad acceptance and investment in student learning.

Susan

Your growth has been remarkable; the list of accomplishments (shared in the 8.0 posting) is impressive (I hope the whole campus knows that) and positions you for further growth and success. Though there are many notable features of your processes I want to make special note of the practice of having members of the Student Learning Committee meet with every program during the year to provide assistance with plans. This collegial, helpful approach may prove to be particularly important in sustaining effort and engagement. The praise goes on: you have accomplished bold, broad change in culture and have a practical, viable long term model.

Q:

Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?

A: Cia

I have no concerns.

Susan

No concerns.

The work completed has created a solid foundation and the processes that are poised for implementation suggest a positive trajectory.

Q:

In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?

A: Cia

Yes, in my judgment, TMCC is poised well to continue the progress they've made to date. Their distributive model, with its broad participation, is critical in a small school where faculty and staff take on a variety of responsibilities. Their current structure, involving so many people, will keep all the work and initiative from landing on one or a few people.

Susan

Turtle Mountain certainly will gain value/useful insight on student learning once their tools and measures are in action. The new attitude, capacity and changing culture toward data-informed decision making means that the institution can expect to continue to grow and mature in its efforts.

I sometimes see that the vocabulary of academic assessment can be an awkward fit for some of the areas you mention where you are expanding, e.g., business office, bookstore, etc., Consider whether the vocabulary of the quality movement, e.g., "process improvement" might resonate better. Maybe those areas would be open to surveying their primary users for adequacy or efficiency of services.

In other areas of the co-curriculum (student clubs/organizations, services in student affairs, etc.,) trying to measure institutional outcomes may be possible to determine whether they want to claim that they support these outcomes indirectly. They could also choose to set their own outcomes.

Your choice of the word "nurture" strikes me as the hallmark for the work ahead with your colleagues.

Q:

Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.

A: Cia

Congratulations to the TMCC Academy team for excellent work. I am pleased that you are communicating with other Tribal Colleges that face similar challenges.

Susan

I'll expect to see you presenting at the HLC Conference soon

Scholar(s): Susan Murphy

Primary Mentor(s): Cia Verschelden

Project: TMCC Assessment Renaissance

Version 8.0 - Project

Q:

What have been your accomplishments while in the Academy? Consider the range of these accomplishments, from the very specific (e.g., development of a rubric) to the more general (e.g. outcomes-based curriculum approval processes).

A: *There have been a number of accomplishments throughout the academy timeline including:*

- *Creation and staffing of the office of Institutional Research Assessment and Planning (later changed to the office of Institutional Research Assessment and Accreditation)*
- *Creation of an assessment committee comprised of faculty, administrators, and staff*
- *Explored, purchased and implemented data management software solution (Livetext).*
- *Professional development series focused on building capacity within the faculty*
- *Summer stipend projects for faculty to continue developing assessment skills and processes*
- *Networked with other tribal colleges to share assessment practices*
- *Ground-Up redesign of assessment process throughout the institution*
 - *Shift from course level subjective assessment to program level objective assessment*
 - *Creation of standardized assessment form that all programs use across campus*
 - *Creation of an Assessment-Based Requests form and publicized Administrative Response form*
- *Implementation of a review process for all program assessment plans*
- *Implementation of annual Assessment Kick-Off meetings (beginning of the year) and Assessment Celebration meeting (end of year) for all faculty and staff*
- *Complete re-write of the institution's Student Learning Outcomes to better reflect our institutional identity as a tribal college dedicated to the advancement of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa*
- *Addition of Co-Curricular assessment to the annual assessment process*
- *Outcomes-based curriculum approval process*
- *Creation of Program Review Process*
- *Creation of Faculty Handbook*
- *Update of Assessment Manual*

Q:

Looking back, reflect on the evolution of your Academy project. What factors does your team feel most influenced how the project developed and changed?

A:

Looking back, the journey that TMCC has taken that has brought us from a subjective narrative driven course-level assessment to the outcomes-based program-level assessment that we have today has been a series of deliberate steps one after the other. This measured and controlled pace of rolling out change is one of the reasons that we have seen such success in our transition to a culture of assessment. Rather than trying to make wholesale changes overnight, we took our time with each step, even though it may have been more challenging, to ensure that we were not only

putting the processes in place but also building the capacity in our faculty and staff. For example, rather than implementing the new assessment process and asking all programs to begin measuring for their outcomes, we began the process of giving every program that is new to the assessment process a full academic year to develop meaningful outcomes for their program. This ensured that the outcomes were measurable and realistic, while fully capturing the knowledge, characteristics, and abilities that our graduates possess.

In addition to a measured approach, our journey has involved adapting to changes along the way. For instance, we began by asking all programs to develop their own outcomes unique to their own discipline. This made sense in many situations, but when it came to the trades we found that we could create a standard set of program outcomes that programs like welding, plumbing, and building trades could all adopt. This greatly streamlined the process for those programs and allowed them to work together to create assessment tools and also helped establish a baseline of best practices that helped the assessment process thrive.

Another example of adaptation that came as a result of our work on assessment was the wholesale rewriting of our student learning outcomes. As we began to work towards a process for assessing our general education outcomes it quickly became apparent that our outcomes did not actually reflect our institutional identity as a tribal college serving the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. Our general education outcomes were generic, unwieldy, and difficult to measure. After hearing our own thoughts reflected to us throughout Academy mentor, we undertook the task of rewriting our general education outcomes. In keeping with our measured approach, we took our time. We spent two years gathering data from all our stakeholder groups including students, faculty, staff, as well as community leaders such as tribal council members, cultural leaders, and local educational leaders such as principals and superintendents of our local schools. We asked all of these stakeholder groups the same questions. What should a graduate of TMCC look like? What makes a graduate of TMCC unique? After two years of work, we have created an entirely new set of student learning outcomes that we have implemented and will begin assessing for this academic year.

What began as a committee of eager but untested faculty, administration, and staff, has evolved into a campus-wide culture that embraces assessment and sees the value in data-driven decisions. The change has spread beyond program-level assessment and has helped our institution become focused on the results of our efforts, and ultimately improving student learning.

Q:

How has institutional capacity for assessing student learning changed over your time in the Academy?

A: The institutional capacity for assessing student learning has dramatically changed throughout our time in the academy. Prior to the academy, assessment at our institution was largely coordinated by one faculty member. Each faculty was asked to pick one class and write a brief narrative report explaining what went well and what could be improved in that course. Department chairs were asked to write a narrative assessment of the general education outcomes.

Today, we have an assessment (Student Learning) committee that is comprised of every department chair, the VP, Academic Dean, Director of CTE, Dean of Student Services, IT director, and the director of our 4-year Teacher Education program. The committee represents the coordinated effort from all functioning bodies of the campus to work together for the improvement of student learning. It is led by a faculty member and holds two annual assessment meetings for the entire campus. The assessment process is active throughout the academic year with initial plans due by Oct. 1st and a coordinated review of all assessment plans and results by the end of the academic year. Members of the Student Learning committee meet with every program on campus throughout the year to help them with their assessment plans.

In addition to the capacity that was built through the Student Learning Committee, a byproduct of the process has been an evolution of the role of department chairs. With chairs so involved in the assessment process faculty leadership has grown in unexpected ways. Communication across departments has improved, and the overall

It is not simply the institutions capacity for assessing student learning that has changed during our time in the academy; It is the culture of our institution that has evolved.

Q:

What evidence do you have that your Academy work is improving student learning?

A: The evidence we have that our work is improving student learning is still largely anecdotal. Since we have so thoroughly torn down our old assessment process and built a new one in its place, the past three years have not been long enough to get concrete quantitative proof of increased student learning. What we do have, however, is a change in the way that faculty think about data, use data, and gather data to help improve their teaching at both the program and classroom level. For instance, because of the assessment changes we now have regular norming exercises within the English department where all the faculty use the same rubric to assess student writing across the curriculum. We have CTE programs that are methodically tracking student performance on equipment, knowledge, and safety practices in a way that has never been done before at this institution. We are still at the beginning of our journey to use student-generated data to inform our pedagogical choices. We are excited to know that now we have the capacity to track, measure, and analyze the evidence of improved student learning as we make data-driven changes to our curriculum.

Q:

What work still needs to be done?

A:

Even though the academy was only three years, we have always thought of this as a long-term process. We are still fine-tuning our practices to ensure that our assessment practices are reliable, meaningful, and sustainable. We have seen such a dramatic embrace of assessment at our institution that the natural concern is how to keep the enthusiasm high. We are addressing this by continuing one-on-one meetings with every program responsible for an assessment plan as well as annual recognition and celebration of our assessment practices.

After seeing the positive effects of assessment on our academic programs we have also expanded our assessment practices out to include co-curricular offices such as the library, IT department, business office, bookstore, and others. This is a new challenge that has our assessment committee wrestling with a new set of questions and hurdles, but after our work through the academy, we feel prepared to deal with those challenges.

Version 8.0 - Update

Q:

Please confirm that Part I of the Impact Report is ready for submission.

A: This project is ready for review.

Version 8.0 - Response

Q:

Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A:

Q:

What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A:

Q:

What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A:

Q:

What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A:

Q:

What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of

this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A:

Project: TMCC Assessment Renaissance

Version 7.0 - Project

Q:

Consider the current tags associated with your project, are they still accurate? If not, what five Assessment Academy tags are most helpful in describing your project as it stands today?

A: To be honest, I'm not entirely sure where the tags are located. Our project hasn't changed in scope or mission since its inception so I would assume the existing tags are adequate. I will be open to further action on this if needed.

Version 7.0 - Update

Q:

What were your goals for the past six months? Were you successful in attaining your some or all of your goals? Why? Please explain.

A: The last six months saw us begin the 17/18 academic year. Our goals were threefold:

- 1: continue making progress on the academic program assignment model
- 2: Begin development of co-curricular outcomes/goals
- 3: Acquire approval to institute new Student Learning Outcomes at an institutional level

Here is how we have progressed in each area:

1. We have a solid base of faculty buy-in for the academic outcome-based assessment process we have instituted. These past few years have seen us create a new process. We spent the first year helping program develop measurable outcomes. The next year, we began the assessment process for those outcomes along with an annual assessment review process run by our assessment committee. Now we have completed two years of assessment under the new model and we are very pleased with the progress we have made.

Only a handful of programs have yet to be assessed, mainly due to lack of full-time instructors directing those programs. As we identify these outlying programs we have reached out to them and have worked to help them develop measurable outcomes.

Also, we have instituted practices whereby new programs must produce measurable student learning outcomes before they are approved for the catalog.

The main thing we have been doing at a committee level to improve the assessment process is that we have started each monthly committee meeting with a norming session. As a committee, we look at an assessment plan from the previous year and assess the plan using the rubric we have developed. We all score the plan then go through and compare the scores and discuss any differences. This norming process has really strengthened the committee's grasp of the entire assessment procedure. It has brought us together so that when we conduct our year-end assessment review this year, our results will be more meaningful and specific. It will also help us provide more focused feedback to our faculty presenters.

2. Co-Curricular Assessment

This has been a challenge. We had an organizational meeting in the fall with the heads of the co-curricular areas we wanted to begin this process. Those present were the heads of the library, IT, Business Office, and Student Services. Our goal for this year is to develop measurable goals and outcomes for these areas. This has been challenging, both to find time with the directors of these areas and to come up with goals that make sense for them.

This is one place where we have made use of the suggestions provided in the consolidated response to our previous update. You both gave us good advice on other programs and resources we could use to help in this effort. I have passed that information along and the committee has meetings scheduled in the next few weeks to meet with each director to help them create their own goals. We are still optimistic that we will have goals developed by the end of this school year that are ready to be assessed next academic year.

3. New Student Learning Outcome Roll-Out

We are on track with our updated student learning outcomes. We were encouraged by your response to them after our previous update. We feel they are going to be powerful tools to help us stay focused on our mission and will represent the unique institutional context here at TMCC.

Currently, the outcomes are on pace to be approved at the next administrative council meeting. We have had a few questions in this area because there is not a determined process for adopting new student learning outcomes. We have held a vote at the assessment committee level to approve them and send them on to the administrative council for approval. We are thinking that once they are approved at the administrative council level that they will be ready to be included in next year's catalog. If you have any insight into the normal process for this kind of change feel free to share with us.

Q:

How have you incorporated the feedback from the Consolidated Response to your previous Project Update?

A: As always, we greatly appreciate the feedback provided by Dr. Murphy and Dr. Verschelden. The encouragement we received after our previous update was highly motivating. We printed off both the report and the response and shared them with the assessment committee and everyone was gratified to see some recognition of our hard work. We feel proud of what we've accomplished, and are beginning to feel a sense of

ownership over our own process that is strengthened as we get feedback from our HLC representatives.

This past update we received a lot of useful feedback. One area that was especially useful were some of the suggestions about how to think about developing goals/outcomes for co-curricular departments. As I mentioned in the previous section, we shared your suggestions with our department heads and are actively using those resources to help us develop our own goals. Thank you for your feedback.

Q:

How is the Academy project contributing to creating a culture of learning? How might your team need to adjust your project plans for the final year(s) in the program to further contribute to creating or sustaining a culture of learning?

A: This academy project has truly changed the culture at TMCC. Our assessment process is still in its infancy. Our efforts are still focused primarily on assessing the process more than making meaningful changes to increase student learning (though these are starting to happen more and more), but the real value of this process on the student experience at TMCC is already clear to see with even greater gains visible on the horizon.

What began as a journey to better meet HLC standards for assessment has taken on a life of its own. Now, this project has grown and the fact that we have developed it ourselves has made it about something more than simply a mandate for accreditation.

What we have noticed is a clear example of the 'observer effect'. Whereby the act of observing something inherently changes that which is observed. By focusing our collective attention on the assessment of student learning, we have already changed student learning at TMCC. Faculty who worked hard but didn't necessarily think about student learning outcomes are suddenly finding themselves fascinated by the process of identifying outcomes and tracking them. Across our institution, barriers are falling as people of all departments work together on this common task. Now as we expand this task to other non-academic areas of our institution that effect is already spreading. The act of creating this assessment process has reminded us that we are all necessary components of the same machine, constantly working for the benefit and success of our students.

Our process may not be perfect, but the act of creating it has already made us a better institution.

Q:

What assistance would you need, and from whom, in accomplishing your desired goals for the next six months?

A: The only assistance we require at this point is continued support and comments through this update process. We feel like we are moving forward positively towards our goals.

Version 7.0 - Response

Q:

Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Cia Verschelden

cverschelden@uco.edu

405-974-2359

Susan Murphy

smurphy@cnm.edu

Q:

What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Cia

Your report that your work has transformed from something done to meet accreditation requirement to something that is owned and valued for its promise to improve your institution is just what we hope will happen. That is so encouraging; you express very clearly that there is a new and evolving culture at TMCC related to student learning.

Your practice of starting each of your meetings with a session of using a common rubric to evaluate assessment plans is excellent. You are getting an important job done while getting experience in the use of a rubric to assess a piece of work. This practice will serve you well when you begin to assess student work using common rubrics.

On the issue of the process for adopting new student learning outcomes, it seems to me that you have - even without an articulated process - done exactly what you should do. You engaged the views of many people on campus and in the community in the formation of the outcome statements and now you're taking them very formally through the approval process that is used with other important decisions. At the end, you will have student learning outcomes that have been co-created by many people and that have the blessing of institutional leadership.

Susan

Cia has said it all...congrats on so many accomplishments!

I am most impressed with your characterization of faculty buy-in to the processes you have established...that is no mean feat! Most colleges struggle with this piece throughout their Academy affiliation. The participation and efforts of your faculty are a tribute both to their professionalism/commitment to student success as well as a compliment to your teams good work.

Requiring measurable learning outcomes for new program approval is a hallmark of culture shift.

Q:

What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Cia

For assessment in co-curricular areas, are you having staff use the new student learning outcomes that were recently created? Some people working in co-curricular units have not thought about what they do as being directly related to student learning of specific outcomes, but in your case, since you have created outcomes that are so uniquely suited to your context, it seems like units could choose one or two of them and ask how student learning of those outcomes is supported by their work. Maybe learning outcomes assessment could be woven into whatever other assessments (often student satisfaction) they are already doing.

Susan

Cia's point is worth underscoring. The many areas that provide support to students do not need to try to artificially fit into your new learning outcomes. Where there is a natural fit---use of history or language?---oral communication?---then that's great. And, at that, their insights are likely to be indirect, not direct measures of learning. Those areas need to consider what their very purpose is (tutoring, library/resource access, advisement, etc.,) and determine what few simple statements define their intended services and support so that they can use a tool to measure how students perceive/experience their services. The results invariably offer important insight on how to improve. Cia's thinking that you could weave some question into a student survey is worth exploring so that you are not creating an additional workload for services staff.

Re: your question on approval of the learning outcomes I am most used to such statements moving through a (faculty) Curriculum Committee or group for oversight of curricular changes and then on to the next authority for formal adoption. (I don't typically see such statements confirmed by a governing board but everybody does it differently.) I think what you have going for you here is that the categories and statements can persist and when/if you choose to measure different performance indicators you wouldn't have to start from scratch.

Q:

What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Cia

This is probably obvious but I want to mention that I think it will be important for you to be culturally consistent when you design assessments, especially for the outcomes that are unique to your context. For instance, as students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of their cultural history, you might want to give them a broad range of choices as to how to demonstrate the depth of their understanding consistent with the way

history is passed down in your culture (instead of a requirement that students write a research-type paper, for example.)

Susan

As you head to your last year take some time to consider how you might continue to strengthen this culture change. Should you reinforce the centrality of understanding student learning (assessment) and include this area in job postings? Interview questions? Orientation? Annual faculty reviews? What about its value on your campus? How about reward and recognition for these efforts?

Ask faculty what more you can do for them and how you can continue to support them in improving the teaching/learning enterprise.

As the work matures is it possible to link assessment/research findings to budget requests? That step would send a bold message about the value of the work and how it can be recognized and supported.

Q:

What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Cia

Nothing at this time.

Susan

As always, feel free to contact us if you have questions/concerns we might help with.

If you want to contact either of us at the Annual Conference you can work through Kim Davis; she could assist you in setting up a consult/discussion.

Scholar(s): Susan Murphy

Primary Mentor(s): Cia Verschelden

Project: TMCC Assessment Renaissance

Version 6.0 - Project

Q:

What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects.

A: We have continued to follow LCOOCC's assessment program.

1. Gimaamawi-nandagikenjigemin - We Are All Learning Together, maintained by Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC).

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC) is a tribal college with a mission dedicated to their community and tribal values, similar to that of TMCC. As such, TMCC stands to learn from LCOOCC about common concerns that only another tribal college can know about. For example, while it is important to blend in assessment criteria that needs to be addressed, it is also important to maintain our tribal identity through our mission statement. The LCOOCC project discussions may give us insight into what their experience has been regarding this concern.

Version 6.0 - Update

Q:

Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope or design since April 2017.

A: Our project continues to evolve from last April. Our scope and overall design have remained the same, but we are entering into new phases of our assessment journey. The main phases we are beginning are the assessment of co-curricular services on campus and the implementation of new student learning outcomes. A tangential process that is in the early stages is the advent of a dedicated program review process to go along with the program assessment process.

We have hired a new director of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Accreditation who will be of great value to our assessment and review efforts.

We have also included the most recently updated Annual Assessment Plan that we use for all programs, both academic and co-curricular.

Turtle Mountain Community College
Annual Assessment Plan

Name _____

Area of Assessment _____ Academic
Year _____

Submission Purpose: ____Initial Assessment Plan ____Revised Assessment Plan
____Year-End Submission

Please provide the number of students involved in assessment: _____

Section 1: Prior Assessment Actions:

Describe the actions taken as a result of last year's program assessment. Include a discussion of the implementation of any new resources added as a result of the assessment-based requests.

Section 2: Program Outcomes:

List each outcome separately

Section 3: Assessment Methods:

Provide assessment method/s for each program outcome. Include a description of assessment instruments

Section 4: Assessment Results

Give an overview of the results of your assessment.

Section 5: Assessment Recommendations:

Explain how you will use the assessment results to improve your program

Section 6: Assessment-Based Requests:

Describe the resources or support your program needs to act on the findings of your assessment. Requests must be specific, and clearly connected to assessment results and recommendations.

Section 7: Administrative Response:

To be completed by administrative supervisor

Instructions:

1. Complete the “Prior Assessment Actions”, “Program Outcome”, and “Assessment Methods” columns and submit to the Director of Research, Assessment, and Planning no later than October 1st. Each plan must be approved by the Student Learning Committee. If the plan is not approved, it will be returned to the issuer of the plan with recommendations for improvement. Assessment Ambassadors will be available to assist with the completion of any suggested changes to the Annual Assessment Plan.
2. Faculty members of The Arts & Humanities, Math & Science, and Social Science departments will be responsible for assessing the student learning outcomes at the institution. All other departments/programs will develop a plan according to their program outcomes. If your program does not list any program outcomes, consider developing these outcomes as your plan for the academic year.
3. At the end of spring semester, the issuer of the plan will complete sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 and bring the completed plan to a conference with the Student Learning Committee where the committee will review and rate the assessment plan.
4. Remember, your department chair or administrative supervisor is always willing to help you complete any portion of your assessment plan. Please speak with your department chair or administrative supervisor to schedule a visit.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Erik Kornkven at ekornkven@tm.edu in Office #210N, or at x. 2093 or Ace Charette at extension 2069.

Q:

Since the last update, what were your goals for the past six months? Did you achieve them? Why or why not?

A: Our goals for the previous six months were to finish out the assessment calendar in May of '17. The assessment process went much smoother the second time around. We streamlined both the assessment review process and improved the 'Assessment Celebration' at the end of the year to include prizes and made it more of a positive event for all faculty.

Our other main goal was to complete the creation of a new set of student learning outcomes to replace our existing general education outcomes. We had been working on this process for two years and had carried out stakeholder meetings that gathered feedback from local cultural, educational, and business leaders, students, faculty and staff, and the community at large. We held multiple events and collected a variety of different data to help us formulate a set of student learning outcomes that properly reflected our unique identity as a tribal college.

We are pleased to say that we have come up with a working draft of the outcomes. We plan to use this academic year to test the assessment of these outcomes before making a full transition next year. I have copied the draft of our new outcomes below.

We feel like we have been very successful in meeting our goals from last year.

TMCC Student Learning Outcome Draft 2017-18

Student Learning Goal 1: Advocacy

TMCC students will develop the skills necessary to help them become advocates for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

Student Learning Outcome #1: History/Language

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of TMBCI history and languages.

Performance Indicators

- Students will demonstrate an entry level proficiency in either Anishinabemowin or Michif
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of TMBCI history.

Student Learning Outcome #2: Critical Thinking

- Students will develop critical thinking skills and apply them to challenges facing the community.

Performance Indicators

- Students will identify ongoing challenges and issues facing the community
- Students will use data to develop solutions to challenges
- Students will acknowledge multiple perspectives surrounding societal issues

Student Learning Goal 2: Professionalism

TMCC students will develop skills and characteristics that will contribute to their success in a global environment.

Student Learning Outcome #3: Communication

- Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of situations

Performance Indicators

- Students will demonstrate effective oral communication
- Students will apply written communication strategies across a wide variety of situations and contexts.
- Students will use technology to successfully gather and communicate information.

Student Learning Outcome #4: Research Skills

- Students will develop quantitative and qualitative reasoning and research skills

Performance Indicators

- Students will be conversant in mathematical principles appropriate to their major.
- Students will apply quantitative research techniques to gather and synthesize complex information.
- Students will apply qualitative research techniques to gather and synthesize complex information.

Q:

How did you incorporate the feedback that you received on your previous posting in April 2017?

A: We very much appreciated the encouragement and advice given by both Cia and Susan. They were both encouraging about our efforts to re-write our general education outcomes (now student learning outcomes) and applauded our efforts to engage members of the community as stakeholders in the decision.

We listened to the advice to think about how we could improve the year-end assessment meeting. Our Assessment Celebration was a hit with faculty. We provided refreshments and for the first time recognized exceptional assessment contributions from members of both CTE and General Education faculty. We have been truly excited to see the culture of assessment taking hold here.

One question that was brought up in the responses was how exactly we were rating the assessment plans. I've copied the rubric we use as a committee to conduct our ratings below.

	5 Exceeds Expectations	4 Very Good	3 Meets Expectations	2 Room for Improvement	1 Insufficient
Section 1: Prior Assessment Actions	Actions involve effort and commitment above and beyond the level expected.	Actions clearly derive from past year's data and improved student learning.	Logical actions derived from past year's data. Some data suggesting improvement of student learning	Actions not clearly related to past-year's data. Little to no evidence of improvement to student learning	No actions taken based on past-year's data or justification for lack of change. Student learning fails to improve.
Section 2: Program Outcomes	Outcomes are concise and paint an excellent picture of the skills, abilities, or dispositions students will leave with upon completion of the program. Outcomes are clearly able to be assessed.	Outcomes are concise, measurable, and clear. Some small room for improvement.	Outcomes are measurable, clear, and concise. Outcomes are conceptually well suited for assessment purposes.	Certain elements such as number of outcomes, clarity, or development, may make these outcomes difficult to assess.	Due to length, scope, or clarity, the outcomes will prove to be difficult to effectively assess.
Section 3: Assessment Methods	Methods go above and beyond the requirements to provide valuable data	Methods are very clearly connected to specific learning outcomes.	Assessment methods are clearly connected to specific program	Assessment methods are not clearly connected to specific program	Assessment methods provide either insufficient or ineffective data for

	for improvement in student learning. Clearly connected to specific program outcomes. Little to no room for improvement.	They are organized to clearly produce student learning data. Some room for improvement.	outcomes and provide effective data for analysis. Room for improvement in scope or development of methods.	outcomes. Elements of the methods may make them difficult to repeat, analyze, or carry out.	analysis.
Section 4: Assessment Results	Clearly articulated and analyzed results. The level of detail and effort presented in the assessment results goes above and beyond requirements. Results point clearly to usable and insightful data related to student learning. Little to no room for improvement.	The results clearly connect to specific methods. Results are analyzed and interpreted in a way that presents effective evidence of student learning. Some room for improvement.	The assessment results clearly derive from the assessment methods, articulate student learning levels, and are prepared in a readable format for easy interpretation.	The assessment results may be detailed, but elements could be improved to make them more readable, inclusive, or better point to specific student learning evidence.	The Assessment results are either insufficient for meaningful analysis or unconnected to specific learning outcomes.
Section 5: Assessment Recommendations	The level of effort and detail in the assessment recommendations clearly exceeds the requirements. Recommendations are innovative, insightful, and clearly designed for the improvement of student learning. Little to no room for improvement.	Recommendations are meaningful and clearly connected to specific outcomes, methods, and results. Recommendations are logical and produced to directly contribute to student learning.	Meaningful and concrete suggestions are made as a result of the analysis of assessment data.	Suggestions made based on assessment data may be useful, but elements could improve the practicality, and specificity of actions to be taken.	Actions suggested as a result of assessment data are either insufficient to produce desired changes, or are not clearly defined.

Section 6: Assessment Based Requests			<p>_____Requests clearly derive from assessment findings</p> <p>_____Requests do not derive from assessment results</p>
---	--	--	---

Q:

**What are your plans and goals for the next six months — up until February 2018?
What challenges do you anticipate?**

A: - Continue to improve the existing program assessment model.

For example, we noticed that the career and technical education programs were struggling at times with assessment. Over the summer we created a standard set of program outcomes that all CTE programs could adopt. The outcomes are as follows:

Content Knowledge:

- Students will demonstrate knowledge and application of the policies, practices, and procedures that represent the knowledge base required to succeed in the discipline.

Safety:

- Students will demonstrate the knowledge and application of all required safety procedures and practices in the discipline.

Equipment:

- Students will demonstrate a proficiency in the maintenance and use of the tools and equipment used in the discipline

This should help the process because faculty from different programs can collaborate and ask each other, 'how are you assessing the safety outcome in your program' and share ideas. Even though the content may be different between say plumbing and electrical programs, with common outcomes the methods of assessing these areas may be similar.

- Develop outcomes for co-curricular assessment

This is our major goal for the 17/18 academic year when it comes to assessment. We feel we have a good start with our academic assessment. We are excited to expand this out to other programs at the institutional level including IT, Library, Financial Aid, Student Services, Business Office, and Facilities.

We are going to follow the same process we used as we began our academic assessment overhaul. Members of the Student Learning (Assessment) Committee will meet with the heads of the various co-curricular and institutional departments and work to develop outcomes/goals that they would like to use in their yearly assessment. We will focus this year on creating strong outcomes and begin the data collection on those outcomes next year.

We feel like we may be able to identify some common outcomes like we did with the CTE programs. If so, that will be useful. However, developing ways to assess these different programs will be a challenge. Getting buy-in from administrators who are not used to participating in assessment may be difficult, but the culture is such here that we feel good about our their commitment and participation.

'Test Run' assessment on the new student learning outcomes

We are continuing with our normal assessment of the old outcomes for one more year, but some of us will also be conducting some preliminary assessment using the newly created student learning outcomes and performance indicators. This will be helpful to determine any areas that are difficult to assess or need rewording to be effective.

Next year, once the new student learning outcomes have been adopted, we will conduct a large-scale curriculum map project where we work on mapping our entire catalog to the new outcomes to identify any gaps in coverage. We look forward to the implementation of these new outcomes.

Version 6.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Cia Verschelden, Primary Mentor

cverschelden@uco.edu

405-974-2359

Susan Murphy

HLC Scholar

smurphy@cnm.edu

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Cia

Wow! You've accomplished so much, demonstrating a persistence of effort and focus. I'm so happy to see your new common learning outcomes that reflect your unique mission and culture. I'll be interested to see how the pilot assessment goes and how they are received. You have done an excellent job, in my opinion, of combining the what AAC&U calls "essential learning outcomes" with those that incorporate the values of your particular cultural context.

Your assessment report template seems to contain all the important questions and I really like that there are several places within it where help and support are offered.

Your assessment/student learning celebration seems very positive and seems to have helped greatly to enhance institutional engagement in assessment activities.

Susan

Yes, to all that Cia has noted and let me recognize another important accomplishment in the hiring of an Institutional Research Director; I am thinking that this role can vault your work forward and allow for broader types of inquiry. Your Annual Assessment Plan document is terrific: short and sweet and it gets the individual focused on what, how, and then what to do about it.

It is positive to read that you are ready to tackle assessment of the co-curriculum and program review. Both of these are significant processes to take on and appropriate complements to your current work.

Thank you for answers to questions we had posed previously; the responses give us a deeper insight/understanding into your work.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Cia

Nothing.

Susan

Standing ovation for the epiphany of using common outcomes statement for the CTE programs. Are they all working on their department/discipline performance indicators to refine/customize meaning? The expected collaboration should make the task that much meaningful for all.

Are you thinking that in addition to any other goals that the co-curriculum might have independently they could also make claim to some of your current (4) learning outcomes: History/Language, Critical Thinking, Communication and Research Skills. Are there some performance indicators in these outcomes that student affairs, clubs/organizations, events, athletics, and service learning might say that they contribute to---even if indirectly? would this be a useful starting point or a complication?

As you talk about the possibilities of measures in the co-curriculum keep in mind some tools that might net more qualitative results such as focus groups and surveys. Also, think about some one minute assessments (a la Classroom assessment techniques) that might give formative---even instantaneous---results. (Think about an index card with only 2 or 3 questions given to students after use of a student affairs service that they can complete in 30 seconds and place in a box. Look at responses weekly...any trends? common issues?) Would starting very small help to get this work going?

For Student Affairs and a variety of other operational units, the word "assessment" might seem foreign. Would a different vocabulary resonate better? Would the words "continuous improvement" or "process improvement" make a difference? (Just thinking out loud here.)

Do you have some experience with curriculum maps? Think about a possible workshop approach with groups/teams assisting each other. When you get closer to this task I can offer a few suggestions.

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Cia

I know how few there are of you who are heavily engaged in this work. I commend you and hope you're not being overtaxed. What I see that is encouraging and makes me think you are managing is that you are setting into place well-articulated processes, like your assessment report template, that should result in things clipping along nicely going forward. I also see that you have been clear about the delegation of responsibility, like when you describe that the faculties of the core general education areas will have responsibility for reviewing and evaluating those assessment reports.

Susan

Streamlining the assessment process is a breakthrough. Keep an open mind and ask for regular feedback on how the process can continue to serve you---not burdcen you---and be sure to ask for others' ideas on possible improvements.

Good for you for piloting the new outcomes before committing! You already recognize that there is the possibility to refine and improve. One caution in the language of the performance indicators to consider is avoiding "will demonstrate" or "will demonstrate understanding" where possible. Try to use Bloom's language that might better represent what you want as actual performance from students. (Many of your performance indicator statements *already* use action verbs that send a clear message about what is expected; try to make it all.)

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Cia

As you consider student learning outcomes for co-curricular areas, you might consider looking on the web sites of professional group like National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and groups for specific areas like financial aid, library services, etc. More and more, these organizations have model learning outcomes lists. I've attached a few examples below from NASPA and from a couple of institutions.

Susan

Cia has cited an extremely useful site; there may be a model in this work you can adapt.

Lac Courte Oreilles now has its final report available; take a look at their narrative journey and consider whether a conversation with their team lead (Tom Antell) would be worthwhile. (I realize I am volunteering him but only because in the past he has been so willing to share their experience. As a tribal college there may be some valuable insights he can share.) They also went through the creation of a program Review process late in the project as they were approaching an accreditation cycle.)

Feel free to contact us.

Link 1: [Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs](https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Principles_of_Good_Practice_in_Student_Affairs.pdf)
https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Principles_of_Good_Practice_in_Student_Affairs.pdf
Link 2: [NASPA Learning Reconsidered Report](https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Learning_Reconsidered_Report.pdf)
https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Learning_Reconsidered_Report.pdf
Link 3: [Financial Aid Learning Outcomes from Los Medanos College](http://www.losmedanos.edu/financialaid/missionandslo.asp)
<http://www.losmedanos.edu/financialaid/missionandslo.asp>
Link 4: [Library Student Learning Outcomes from University of Washington](http://www.lib.washington.edu/teaching/learning-goals)
<http://www.lib.washington.edu/teaching/learning-goals>

Scholar(s): Susan Murphy

Primary Mentor(s): Cia Verschelden

Project: TMCC Assessment Renaissance

Version 5.0 - Project

Q:

What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects.

A: We have continued to follow LCOOCC's assessment program.

1. Gimaamawi-nandagikenjigemin - We Are All Learning Together, maintained by Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC).

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC) is a tribal college with a mission dedicated to their community and tribal values, similar to that of TMCC. As such, TMCC stands to learn from LCOOCC about common concerns that only another tribal college can know about. For example, while it is important to blend in assessment criteria that needs to be addressed, it is also important to maintain our tribal identity through our mission statement. The LCOOCC project discussions may give us insight into what their experience has been regarding this concern.

Version 5.0 - Update

Q:

Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope and design since the last Project Update.

A: The main changes we made to the assessment process were installed at the beginning of the academic year. So far, we are continuing on with the plan as outlined in the previous project update. One area we can update is our continued efforts to rewrite our student learning outcomes.

Following our plan, we have moved forward with a sequence of events designed to gather stakeholder input regarding the revision of the student learning outcomes. In December, we held a world cafe event for staff and faculty members at the college to come together and discuss the topic. The guiding questions we used were:

1. What skills, knowledge, or values does a TMCC graduate need to succeed in the

workplace?

2. What skills, knowledge, or values does a TMCC graduate need to be a successful advocate for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians?
3. How can we use the Seven Teachings to guide our student learning outcomes?

That event resulted in some interesting data that we are now using as we plan two more stakeholder events. The next event will be held on March 28th. It will be another world cafe event in which we invite local academic, political, and community leaders to our campus to get their input on the topic. We are curious to know what they see as the most important qualities they identify for TMCC graduates.

Finally, we are going to hold a community event that is open to the public. This event was contrived as a way to gather community-wide input on the student learning outcome question but has grown to resemble a showcase of the school and a way to open our doors and invite the community in to celebrate their students. We will display student work and have cultural demonstrations. At this event, we will also circulate surveys designed to elicit responses from the community on the topic of student learning outcomes they see as important for TMCC graduates.

These events will ensure that the decisions made as we revise the student learning outcomes at TMCC are informed by stakeholders at all levels of the institution.

Q:

Describe your short term plan for measuring student learning. What specific tasks do you plan to accomplish in the next six months?

A: In addition to the events described above, we will be continuing on in our assessment strategy for the 16/17 school year. Below are the steps we will take for the remainder of the school year:

1. Members of the Student Learning Committee (SLC) will meet with each faculty to discuss their program assessment plans.
2. Faculty will report on the results of the assessment plans to the committee at the conclusion of the semester.
3. The SLC will rate the program assessment plans.
4. A year-end assessment wrap-up will be held for all faculty. Initial assessment results will be shared and recognition will be given for those faculty who have made consistent strides towards improving their program's assessment practices.
5. The 16/17 assessment report will be completed by June 1st.

Q:

How well are you positioned to complete your project in the final two years of the Academy? What additional tools, resources, and engagement do you need?

- A:** We feel that we are strongly positioned to meet the goals established in the Assessment Academy. This year will mark the second year of the updated assessment schedule and has already seen changes to the forms and processes that are working to streamline the process.

Continuing instruction and guidance from our HLC sponsors and representatives will be vital as we continue our assessment journey. To that end, we will be, again, sending a team to the HLC annual conference in Chicago where we have already set up a meeting with our HLC representative. We also are open to further Academy workshops focused on assessment such as the one that we attended in October.

Q:

What changes do you anticipate as you move into the second half of the Academy term? What have you learned from the first two years of the Academy to mitigate these challenges?

- A:** We continue to learn from experience and research as we work to develop our assessment plan. One of the primary challenges as we move on into the final two years of the term is the changing of our student learning outcomes and the subsequent reworking of some elements of the assessment process. While the process will remain, we fully expect challenges as we work to identify not only new student learning outcomes but new performance indicators for those outcomes, as well as assessment strategies for those new performance indicators. We will also need to conduct a new curriculum map of our Associate degrees for the updated outcomes.

One potential change we may end up making is to the course-level assessment sheet that we implemented at the beginning of the year. After talking at the Academy workshop in October and internal discussions here, we may decide to waive the requirement that all instructors complete the course-level assessment form for every semester. Instead, we would focus our efforts on detailed curriculum matching and the program-level assessment process.

Q:

How have you used what you have learned about student learning to improve your educational strategies (curricular and co-curricular)? What evidence do you have that your work thus far has improved student learning? What more do you need to know?

- A:** We are still in the construction and information gathering phase of our assessment restructuring efforts. For the past year our gains have been in building the culture of assessment at TMCC starting with the faculty and the administration. We are looking forward to the results of our current year's program assessments to see just how the assessment process has improved student learning in those specific areas.

Anecdotally, the faculty have reported that they are finding information about their students and classes they may have suspected but never had data to support. Looking into one area, the communication general education outcome has been affected by the assessment process in the fact that a new rubric has been created that is being used to assess all writing assignments. The new rubric incorporates the performance indicators developed as a result of the thinking that has been done about the communication general education requirement.

When the programs report on their assessment strategies at the end of the year we will be

able to compile the findings and changes made to those programs based on the assessment undertaken.

Version 5.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Cia Verschelden

University of Central Oklahoma

405-974-2539

cverschelden@uco.edu

Susan Murphy

HLC Scholar

smurphy@cnm.edu

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Cia

I very much like the questions you used for the focus groups of faculty and staff. I hope you're going to use those same ones in your meetings with community leaders and stakeholders. It will be very interesting to see the similarities and differences in the responses of the two groups.

The evolution of the focus group that was to be open to the community into a celebratory open house seems very nice. You might think about putting the three focus group questions on large sheets of paper and putting them on the walls and invite attendees to write responses as they think of them during the event (in addition to your planned survey - unless you were just going to use those three open-ended questions).

It is good that you're going on with the development and maintenance of your assessment process while you're working on the general education outcomes. It sounds like you've created a consultative process that will encourage engagement by all faculty. (I also want to affirm your consideration of not necessarily requiring assessment reports every semester from every class. Sometimes we get caught up in the collecting of data and don't have time to really look at it and use it to make improvements.)

Susan

Cia has noted important developments in your work. Understanding the perspectives of different stakeholders on general education through a cultural lens is a unique positive.

I was pleased to read that members of the SLC will meet with faculty to discuss individual assessment plans; I believe that connecting to faculty individually makes a huge difference in how the work is experienced.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Cia

Everything is clear to me at this point. I look forward to hearing about what you learn from the focus groups in the next report.

Susan

I am curious about how the SLC will "rate" the assessment plans. Did you develop a rubric for this process and was the rubric shared with faculty in advance? (You may have mentioned this in a prior posting and I have just lost track.) It is imperative that faculty get some feedback on how/what they are doing. It is to your credit that you have built this feature in.

The end of year wrap-up and sharing of results is a great way to recognize work. How can you leverage this event to the greatest advantage? Open Q&A with colleagues? Assistance to programs that are still in process or struggling? Think of how this event can bring the maximum benefit and positive trajectory for the next cycle of work.

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Cia

Not knowing the structure for the "rating" of assessment reports or plans, this comment may not be relevant. I just want to affirm what you mention in the very last line of your report, and that is that the goal of the entire assessment process is to use the results to make changes in what we do with the goal of improving student learning. That is the ultimate test of the value of our efforts.

So, in judging an assessment plan or report, the most important question is, did the process result in the production of information that was useful to help us to improve student learning.

Susan

As you are working on the general education outcomes keep in mind that just having a few (4-5?) is fine. (I was surprised by the 11 at Oglala Lakota---that's a lot to manage!) The focus you need is the one you are working on, i.e., identifying and confirming outcomes with your stakeholders that are consistent with your Mission. Once you determine what they are; the next step is to confirm that they can be measured and that there is common agreement (agreed upon performance indicators that give definition for achieving the outcome) on what the outcomes statements mean. You already know, this process takes time.

You have already noted that you will need to get back to the curriculum map exercise---good for you for recognizing the importance of that step. Think about how you

might want to accomplish that task. An in-service day? Workshop? Everyone able to complete the task in just a few days?

As Cia has already noted, your decision NOT to have course documentation of assessment every semester is just fine. Determine when---during Program Review cycles?---that you might collect such information.

The most interesting discussions are ahead. Listening to colleagues report on their own findings and using/compared/sharing data is the real stuff of assessment. Seems with this most recent cycle of measures that you will have lots to share with us in the next posting. Keep up the solid work.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Cia

I copied this passage from the Oglala Lakota College catalog; I knew that they had worked on culturally-appropriate learning outcomes a few years ago.

Oglala Lakota College Catalog - http://www.olc.edu/academics/college_catalog.htm

General Education Mission

The Oglala Lakota College General Education provides opportunities for students to acquire and apply the skills and disposition necessary to become life-long learners and contributing members of their diverse local and global communities through Wolakolkiciyapi.

General Education Goal and Outcomes

OLC's unique mission is evident in the general education goal and outcomes. The general education program has a primary goal which filters through all aspects of the program.

General Education Goal: Students will exemplify Wolakolkiciyapi: Learning Lakota ways of life in community.

General Education Outcomes: OLC has eleven general education outcomes. The general education program encourages students to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be successful in their degree programs. The learning outcomes are grouped into six areas under

Wolakolkiciyapi: written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, technology, disposition, and diversity. The outcomes state that upon completion of a degree program, the student should be able to:

Disposition

1. Apply cultural values in a learning atmosphere. Written and Oral Communication
2. Communicate effectively in writing using both Lakota and English.
3. Demonstrate oral communication skills in both Lakota and English.

Quantitative Reasoning

4. Apply quantitative analytical skills. Critical Thinking
5. Examine concepts and theories across multiple contexts and disciplines.
6. Critically review resource material.
7. Develop ideas to address contemporary issues.
8. Critically examine sovereignty

Technology

9. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of standard computer technologies.

Diversity

10. Examine the importance of diversity.
11. Examine the contexts of Lakota social organizations, communities and global networks.

Susan

In addition to the helpful site that Cia has identified I encourage you to contact the Team lead for the Lac Courte Oreilles project. They are just now completing their Academy project and surely will be willing to share experience and insight.

Scholar(s): Susan Murphy

Primary Mentor(s): Cia Verschelden

Project: TMCC Assessment Renaissance

Version 4.0 - Project

Q:

What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects.

- A:**
1. Gimaamawi-nandagikenjigemin - We Are All Learning Together, maintained by Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC).
 2. UTTC's Assessment Project, maintained by United Tribes Technical College.

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC) is a tribal college with a mission dedicated to their community and tribal values, similar to that of TMCC. As such, TMCC stands to learn from LCOOCC about common concerns that only another tribal college can know about. For example, while it is important to blend in assessment criteria that needs to be addressed, it is also important to maintain our tribal identity through our mission statement. The LCOOCC project discussions may give us insight into what their experience has been regarding this concern.

United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) is similar to a tribal college in that the population served is primarily Native American. Situated in an urban area, it provides higher education to Native peoples residing off the reservation. That said, UTTC appears to be new to the academy and while there's not much noted for the progress of their project, they do speak to an institution wide assessment plan. As they experience this, TMCC will learn about their successes as well as their struggles.

Version 4.0 - Update

Q:

Your team has reached the midpoint in the Academy. Summarize your team's accomplishments thus far.

A: Academic Year 15/16

After the initial meeting, our team came back to our college and created a Student Learning Committee (SLC) to focus on assessing student learning at our institution. The committee is comprised of faculty, administration, and staff. In the academic year 2015/16, the committee established a new program assessment process that created a standardized form for each program to use as they assessed their area.

The committee gathered and evaluated these plans in October of 2015 and either approved the plan or returned it for revision.

At the end of the year, each program presented the results of their assessment plans to the committee and the committee rated each plan on criteria such as assessment instrumentation, program outcomes, etc.

The committee held an all-faculty meeting at the end of the year that served to both report out the results of the assessment rating process, as well as extend our appreciation to the faculty for their patience and engagement with the assessment process.

Academic Year 16/17

This year we have continued to refine the process that was begun the prior year. We made a number of significant changes to the process:

1. The SLC committee collaborated to revise the Assessment Manual which now contains the coordinated assessment plan at our institution. The manual was designed to walk anyone through the assessment process at TMCC at the course, program, and institutional level.
2. The Annual Assessment Form that was introduced in 15/16 was revised at both a design level, as well as a content level. It was changed from a table based form to a standard portrait orientation to better display and present the information. The following new areas were added to the form:
 - a. Prior Assessment Actions
 - b. Assessment based requests
 - c. Administrative response

3. Course level assessment was completely revised. In the past, course level assessment was carried out using a report that faculty used to assess one of their classes per semester. The previous report was heavily based on narrative.

The new course level assessment procedure asks each faculty to record their pre/post test process for every one of the classes they teach. The report focuses on the data received from pre/post tests and does not require a narrative.

4. Two institution-wide assessment days were planned for the 16/17 academic year. The first, an Assessment Kick-Off meeting was held in September, and planning is underway for an Assessment Wrap-Up meeting for the end of the year.
5. Following faculty and staff requests for more assistance, the SLC committee has canceled their September and March meetings and instead is using those months to go out and meet with each faculty and staff member who is responsible for completing a program assessment. This has been instrumental for building awareness and follow-through with the updated plans.
6. Last year we began the process of revising our general education outcomes. We held meetings with people from across the institution (committee and non-committee members alike). We are aiming towards creating a set of general education outcomes that reflect the culture and heritage of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.
7. This year we have the goal of completing the new set of general education outcomes by the end of the academic year. To do so, we will build on last year's brainstorming sessions by holding three meetings throughout the school year.
8. Finally, we have completely changed our approach to assessing the general education outcomes at our institution. In the past, department chairs would write reports that assessed each general education outcome across their department. This resulted in several reports in different styles. It would have

been very difficult to get a clear picture of the state of any one of the general education outcomes at our institution.

Now, we have asked all science, math, and liberal art faculty to split up the general education outcomes and each write one report for a particular outcome connected with their field. For instance, English faculty are responsible for assessing the communication outcome at the institution, Math faculty are responsible for reporting on math general education outcome and so on. We feel this engages more of the faculty, and will result in more transparent data that will help us track student learning in the area of general education outcomes. It will also provide an interdisciplinary perspective as it is inclusive of all faculty.

Q:

Describe the most significant challenges and opportunities encountered in the development and initial implementation of your Academy project.

A: Taking the concepts generated at the Assessment Academy and transferring them from the assessment team to the assessment committee, then from the committee to the rest of the institution has been the biggest challenge and also has represented the most significant opportunity for our institution.

It is a challenge because any time new ideas and process are implemented, it requires effort and a willingness to engage on behalf of those asked to participate. However, this challenge has served to reveal a real opportunity at our institution because it has shown that we have a faculty and staff who are not only willing to engage with meaningful assessment but in fact are eager to tackle this process together. What began as our largest challenge has ended up to be our greatest opportunity to improve student learning at our institution.

Q:

How have you incorporated the feedback to your previous postings?

A: The feedback we have received from Susan and Cia has been fantastic and very useful. Sometimes it can feel like we are creating things from scratch with only our own vision of how everything should work. When we are given encouragement and advice from those outside of our institution, it helps us see that we are on the right track and that what we are doing is not only viable but valuable at our institution.

The feedback we have received has specifically helped us to move forward on our general education outcome revision and has encouraged us to work hard to build a community around assessment at our institution which we have done through our faculty-wide assessment meetings at the beginning and end of each year.

Q:

To this point, who has been engaged in the Academy process. Are there additional stakeholders who need to be included in the Academy process? How can they be engaged?

A: Of the original team who attended the Assessment Academy some have left the institution, others remain, and still, others are here but in different roles at the college. The creation of the SLC committee was vital in maintaining continuity and focus on the assessment process began at the Academy. Every department chair, all deans at the institution, the Vice President, and the IRAP are all members of the committee. This allows us to continue our

efforts even as people may come and go.

What has found a base in the Student Learning Committee has now spread to include all of the faculty and many of the staff at our institution. The faculty are vital to our student's success and fostering assessment procedures that accurately measure student learning requires engagement from all areas of the institution: engagement that we are proud to say is very present at TMCC.

Q:

What are your goals for the next six months? How will this advance your project?

A: We have several goals for the rest of this academic year:

1. We are going out to all faculty and helping them complete their annual assessment plans. We hope to have all plans by Oct. 1st.
2. Movement continues in our effort to revise the general education outcomes. We have three meetings scheduled for this school year. A small-group planning session in October/November, a stakeholder meeting in December that will include faculty, staff, students, and members of the community, and a final consolidation meeting in March/April to finalize the changes to the general education outcomes.

The process of connecting general education outcomes to cultural teachings is a delicate and serious undertaking. It cannot be taken lightly, and must be handled with care. It has a real chance of failure, but if we can do it, it will not only strongly help our institution better serve our community, but will hopefully serve as a model for other Tribal institutions as they design and revise their own general education outcomes.

We are sending a team to the HLC workshop on assessing general education outcomes that will take place in Chicago this October to further our understanding of the general education outcome topic.

3. Finally, our goal for this year continues to be to develop our assessment procedures with the understanding that this transformation will take time. We are proud of our achievements thus far and very optimistic for the future of assessment at our institution.

Q:

What challenges do you anticipate? How will you address them?

A: The challenges we face lie in maintaining the positive momentum we've established so far. Drumming up engagement with our stakeholders is important, but keeping the energy level high is a challenge. We've taken a number of steps to deal with this starting with the practice of listening closely to the members of our institution most affected by these changes.

For instance, we have responded to calls that assessment seems at times to be 'busy work' that doesn't lead to real change at the institution by adding a section to the annual assessment plan form that lets faculty make requests based on their assessment results. We then added another section where administration will respond to those requests and both the request and responses will be reported out to the institution on a yearly basis.

Another way that we have responded to feedback has been in the way we have taken the committee out to the faculty who are working on creating these assessment plans. We recognize that it is not fair for us to ask for stakeholders to walk to us, we must walk with them towards our goal.

Version 4.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Cia Verschelden

University of Central Oklahoma

cverschelden@uco.edu

405-974-2539

Susan Murphy

HLC Scholar

smurphy@cnm.edu

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Cia's comments

Remembering our conversations at the first Roundtable, I was looking for a few specific things in this update: 1. progress on identifying general education/common learning outcomes, including input from all stakeholders; 2. broadening engagement of faculty and professional staff in assessment of student learning; and 3. revising and streamlining assessment reporting. It seems like you are progressing well in all of these areas.

I affirm your care in establishing common learning outcomes that are based on tribal principles and values. I think you are right in taking time to get input from all interested parties and to seek feedback from everyone who has a stake in the life of the college. You are a small community and a small college and it will be critical to have the majority of people invested in these new outcome statements. I'm looking forward to seeing them when you finalize that process.

Susan's comments

I can only echo Cia's comments regarding the learning outcomes; taking your time makes sense.

Let me add two thumbs up for taking the time to review other institutional content on the Portal; time well spent.

Going out to meet with individuals is fabulous! (and a bonus that you got to cancel a few meetings). I believe that the personal, collegial interaction is far more appreciated and contributes most meaningfully to growth and understanding of expectations. Good for you! I don't read often enough about the one-on-one interaction that really can make a huge difference.

Lastly, let me praise your willingness to be adaptable and evolve as needed given what you described as the change in how general education outcomes are reported.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Cia's comments

Just a question about your move from a narrative assessment report from departments to the use of pre- and post-tests in classes. In my experience, a pre-/post-test approach is very appropriate as a way to establish benchmarks about how much gain students are making in a given class. It can also be very rewarding to see how much students have gained over a semester. This data can also tell us on which particular outcomes students are doing very well and if there are any outcomes on which students' performance is below what we expect and want. As revisions are made in course material, presentation, and pedagogy, post-test scores will increase.

After those processes have been done for a few semesters, you may see that pre-test scores stay pretty consistent from semester to semester (given that your students come from similar backgrounds over time). When this happens, you could stop doing the pre-test because you will know fairly accurately what students know when they come into the class.

Having said that, a pre-test can also act as a teaser, as a way to peak student interest in the subject. If it is serving that function, it may be worth doing even though the mean score varies little across semesters.

Susan's comments

I agree with Cia's comments on pre/post. I think that both narrative and pre-post can have useful roles in assessment and provide insight. Since you haven't been getting what you need from the narrative reports then, yes, making a change was in order. I think the issue for you to explore with the pre/post is how the instrument is designed. If this is not just about value-added, i.e., students didn't have some knowledge at the start of the course but did at the end, this may not be the exact instrument for you. If the pre/post specifically incorporates the course learning outcomes then you have a great tool at your fingertips....and you can then aggregate and compare across sections; this could prove to be very useful and efficient.

Another question on the measures of gen ed is whether you are looking outside of math and English for measures of communication and quantitative literacy. Will you be looking for these competencies in courses in the major also? Beyond the competencies taught in the liberal arts courses where else are the gen ed outcomes supported and promoted? I can't recall, have you done curriculum mapping? A great way to see inside the curriculum so to speak.

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Cia's comments

The most critical thing, in my view, is to maintain your level of engagement with all parts of the TMCC community. Besides resulting in common learning outcomes and assessment

strategies in which many people are invested, this broad engagement will allow you to spread the effort out among more people so that it's not the same few people doing all the work going forward.

Susan's comments

Cia has identified what I agree is the most important short term issue---that will feed into long term capacity; that is, keeping momentum and focus through broad engagement. If not right now, perhaps as the work matures, participation can be recognized as college service and you might even be able to offer some recognition (reward?) for those who have made unique or particularly helpful contributions.

Again, applause to you for the plan to get out to the faculty. Ask what they need from you. What would help them? What can you make clearer? Ask for their ideas on how this work could be messaged...and/or made simpler.

This last item is a bit premature but I'll toss it out since part of your narrative suggests you are headed in that direction. (Or already there!) When assessment results are tied to budget requests the process seems to be more purposeful and powerful. If analysis of assessment findings culminates in identifying resources and these are funded THEN that so-called loop really can be closed!

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Cia's comments

Nothing more at this time. Please let me know if you have questions or want to discuss something I've written.

Susan's comments

Feel free to make contact.

Scholar(s): Susan Murphy

Primary Mentor(s): Cia Verschelden

Project: TMCC Assessment Renaissance

Version 3.0 - Project

Q: What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

- A:**
1. Gimaamawi-nandagikenjigemin - We Are All Learning Together, maintained by Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC).
 2. UTTC's Assessment Project, maintained by United Tribes Technical College.

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College (LCOOCC) is a tribal college with a mission dedicated to their community and tribal values, similar to that of TMCC. As such, TMCC stands to learn from LCOOCC about common concerns that only another tribal college can know about. For example, while it is important to blend in assessment criteria that needs to be addressed, it is also important to maintain our tribal identity through our mission statement. The LCOOCC project discussions may give us insight into what their experience has been regarding this concern.

United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) is similar to a tribal college in that the population served is primarily Native American. Situated in an urban area, it provides higher education to Native peoples residing off the reservation. That said, UTTC appears to be new to the academy and while there's not much noted for the progress of their project, they do speak to an institution wide assessment plan. As they experience this, TMCC will learn about their successes as well as their struggles.

Version 3.0 - Update

Q: Describe your team's initial implementation of the project you have designed.

- A:** The TMCC project is two-fold: 1.) to create an assessment environment that is friendly and receptive to inquiry and 2.) to institutionalize assessment processes.

To create an environment in which assessment is received favorably, professional development assessment activities were implemented at TMCC for the academic year 2015-2016. These activities were meant to provide a mechanism for all faculty to come to the table and openly discuss assessment at all levels. The following professional development activities were implemented for the fall semester:

- Cultural/History Course
- Assessment Training
- Outcomes based training
- Attended SBC Presentation on Assessment

The spring semester will also include further professional development activities for all TMCC staff and faculty. To date, the following activities are planned:

- SBC presentation to all TMCC faculty and staff
- HLC Conference

To engage all faculty in assessment, the SLC implemented a process for department/program outcomes assessment plans. The SLC reviewed and discussed other institutions' program assessment processes. After an array of options were presented to the group, the SLC decided to use a process that was inclusive of: 1.) Department/Program Outcomes 2.) Methods of measurement, 3.) Timelines and Responsibilities 4.) Outcomes and 5.) Follow-up on results. Through department chairs, all faculty were provided the plan outline and a deadline was set for plans to be submitted to the SLC.

Q: How has your project developed and changed since the last posting?

A: Since the last posting we have continued on the path outlined in the initial plan. We continue to meet as a Student Learning Committee (SLC), we have held professional development opportunities for our faculty and staff, and we have moved forward on the path of developing department and program level assessment plans. While the plan has been moving forward, it has also been evolving as we continue to learn about the assessment process. Some of the ways our project has developed include:

- We have nominated a faculty co-chair of the SLC to serve alongside the current administrative chair. This aligns with our goal of developing a faculty owned and led assessment process. We feel that having representatives of both administration and faculty as co-chairs of the SLC fosters institutional-wide involvement in the assessment process.
- As the department assessment plans have come into the committee, what started as an isolated experience of each program working alone, has taken on the beginnings of a community response to assessment. We found that as plans were reviewed each plan helped members of the committee gain a better vision of their own assessment methods and practices. The end result is that department chairs are working together and including each other in the planning and implementation of their assessment plans. It is encouraging to see the culture of assessment begin to take hold.
- While we are pleased with the progress we have made so far both as a committee and as an institution, we already are identifying ways that our vision of assessment can evolve to meet our institutional goals and objectives. For instance, we have begun to plan a campus wide assessment experience that will gather all faculty together to assess for general education outcomes. Our current vision of assessment at TMCC has only evolved because of the work that we started at the Assessment Academy.
- As we anticipate future participation, the SLC has also discussed the addition of another SLC member, a TMCC employee from the co-curricular sector of the institution. The result is that the new Dean of Student Services was invited to, and accepted, participation at the HLC in April. This will help transition Student Services into the SLC.

Q: How have you incorporated the feedback from the Consolidated Response to your previous Project Update?

A: The most recent feedback from our mentors has proven valuable to SLC discussion. One area to highlight continues to be the priority on tribal values for the revised general education outcomes. Initially, the SLC formed a subcommittee to address the revision of general education outcomes. However, with the completion of the implementation process to assess department/program outcomes, the SLC is now in a position to discuss the inclusion of all SLC members to oversee the revised general education outcomes. In addition to this new direction, the SLC has also begun to discuss how we can reach into the community to pull in voices that are inclusive of a community driven approach for general education outcomes.

Another noteworthy mention is the feedback received regarding whether the general education outcomes were synonymous with a liberal arts program. When the SLC began the process of implementing a process for program assessment, the faculty in general education courses were the only faculty to assess for general education outcomes. All other program faculty assessed for their program outcomes. The rationale was to implement a process with all faculty, in their chosen areas of expertise, as it may make assessment less intimidating. Since the implementation process is now complete, the SLC has begun discussion on how all faculty can assess for general education outcomes. This conversations looks promising in terms of next steps.

Q: Thus far, what have you discovered about student learning at your institution.

A: As TMCC has only started the process of department/program assessment plans during this academic year, the SLC won't have any feedback until the end of the academic year. Once this first round of assessment is complete, the SLC will start the process of accruing meaningful data concerning student learning. It will be at that point in which we will be able to speak to our discoveries of student learning.

Q: How will you continue to advance your project in the next six months?

A: The recent discussions of the SLC indicate that a new direction is going to emerge for assessment at TMCC. The two areas of discussion include 1.) the SLC to commit to the revision of the general education outcomes and 2.) the current general education outcomes to be assessed by all TMCC faculty. Both of these activities will support the institutionalization of assessment in an environment that is open and receptive.

The SLC has had the recent discussion of moving the revision of the general education outcomes from a subcommittee to the inclusion of the whole SLC. As the SLC has concluded the implementation of the program assessment plans, committee meetings can be used as working meetings to review general education outcomes for the institution.

The other topic of discussion includes the assessment of at least one general education outcomes by all TMCC faculty. This first year was about implementing a process to assess for program/department outcomes and as all faculty now have a baseline knowledge of what that process is, it is an optimal time to bring all faculty together to assess for one area. In addition to providing an atmosphere of assessment, faculty will also see how their work connects throughout the institution.

Q: What challenges do you anticipate? How will you address them?

A: Building an environment that is friendly and conducive to assessment has been difficult. One of the biggest factors seems to be time. It is difficult to coordinate schedules, including presenters, with all TMCC employees. This has resulted in less coordinated activities than what was anticipated for the current academic year. That said, most activities were completed, or will be complete.

As we begin to plan for the next academic year, the SLC will discuss whether to set aside at least one day per semester to bring all faculty together to assess. If this idea is desired, this activity will be marked on the academic calendar at the beginning of the school year with the expectation that everyone will attend.

Version 3.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A:

Cia Verschelden

University of Central Oklahoma

cverschelden@uco.edu

405-974-253

Susan Murphy

HLC Scholar

smurphy@cnm.edu

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Cia's comments

Judging from this report, the project is going along calmly and surely, dealing with time constraints but still moving forward. What I most liked to read was that there was "...the beginnings of a community response to assessment." That is the goal for most of us and many of us never achieve it, so that's excellent that you are getting some sense of that so early. When faculty begin to share ideas across departments, that's when the significant conversations happen and that practice will serve well when you start the more general discussion about general education outcomes.

You mention reaching out into the community for input. I think that's an excellent idea. For the process of creating new general education outcomes, I suggest that you not only include all the members of the SLC, but all the faculty and staff of the college. Community people could have input here as well. If you can set aside a morning or an afternoon (maybe half of the day you talk about for assessment), you can have a series of conversations to answer the question, "What should every graduate of TMCC know, what should s/he be able to do, and what values and dispositions does s/he take into her life and work?" This is a question that could be answered by many people, on and off campus. It might be interesting to have a session with high school juniors and seniors to gauge their expectations for college.

It is good that you are expanding the SLC to include a student affairs person. Especially in the case of many general education outcomes, students learn a great deal outside of the classroom, so the collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs is critical in their formulation and in the assessment of learning.

Susan's comments

Cia has commented on your many strengths to date. I especially applaud the community involvement you are seeking. Sometimes that isn't easy but I believe that in the case of tribal colleges it is particularly important and warranted given the strong community investment in the college's success.

It was good to read that you have read through other Academy projects. Lac Courte Oreilles is closer to the end of its project and has done a fine job in pulling together many assessment plan features. As you noted with UTTC, they are at the beginning of their work and still there may be some valuable insights to share as the work progresses.

The features you share for the Program level assessment appears comprehensive. You did some good work looking at other models and understanding how varied plans can be.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Cia's comments

With regard to this statement: "The two areas of discussion include 1.) the SLC to commit to the revision of the general education outcomes and 2.) the current general education outcomes to be assessed by all TMCC faculty," I wonder if you want to keep the assessment focus on degree programs now and focus the energy related to general education on the outcomes and their revision or creation. It might not be helpful to design ways to assess the current general education outcomes that might not exist a year from now?

I don't know what SBC is, although maybe I should know.

Susan's comments

As Cia's questions suggest you do have a lot of areas in assessment that you could pursue but as a practical approach don't try to do too much simultaneously. Are the plans that departments are working on going to identify certain cycles? Are there going to be some common areas where work can be combined/shared? If departments are focused on their program level learning outcomes through this year as the gen ed outcomes are revised that will be a fine effort.

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Cia's comments

It seems to me like you're on the right path at this, the beginnings, of a robust program of assessment of student learning. I think it will be critical to continue to engage people across your school and community and encourage everyone to get involved at least to the extent of having a say in the general education outcomes. You might want to have two or three focus group sessions so that all stakeholders have a chance to participate and feel like they have an investment in the outcomes. (Of course, you don't need to use a focus group strategy at all; what will be important is that the process is transparent and anyone who wants to give input has the opportunity to do so.)

Susan's comments

As programs start defining their plans I want to suggest that you encourage them to be brief and specific. You want a great initial experience of the work so faculty should be working with just a few outcomes that they can commit to and manage. Nothing will derail a project faster than trying to move on too many fronts simultaneously. Everyone will become exhausted and lose interest or focus.

I encourage you to continue the conversations and preferred measures of the gen ed in different curricula. Perhaps a rubric intended for one discipline could be used in another and faculty working together would be learning about context and outcomes results. This idea might be premature but your mention of all faculty measuring the gen ed suggests that some

type of colleague/team approach might serve you well.

One other thought on the environment of assessment being friendly, think about any opportunity for communicating the core purpose assessment---improving the teaching-learning dynamic---and think about where else beyond your committee work that you can promote the value of this work. Do some faculty already have some measures, results, and successes that you can share/showcase?

Consider now what other communication opportunities you have to promote and value the professional work of assessment---meetings hosted by the president or VP? Deans and program leads? Would regular public mention and recognition of the gen ed work, department assessment planning, etc., contribute to that environment you want to create.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Cia's comments

In thinking about the deliberations related to adopting revised or new general education outcomes, give careful thought to the resources you provide for participants in the discussion. The balance will be to mark some parameters so that discussion stays focused without pre-defining what the outcomes will look like before the discussion starts. It's helpful to give some examples without inhibiting open-minded exchange of ideas. You might want to post on the wall the values and principles of your tribe, the current general education outcomes, and maybe the outcomes of two or three colleges like yours, just to give participants a place to start. You'll want to think carefully about who will facilitate the discussion; you want someone who can encourage and keep people on task without exerting excessive control over the conversation.

Susan's comments

All of Cia's points are important to consider. Is there any resistance or negative thinking you need to be prepared for? Assuming most everyone is on board for the updating/revising, just as Cia advised, be sure you have a good facilitator for the conversation in order to avoid any sense of bias.

If you are attending the Annual Conference consider connecting with Cia (though I do not know for certain that she is attending). I will be hosting a Roundtable discussion on Assessment for Tribal colleges; we may have the chance to meet there.

Scholar(s): Susan Murphy

Primary Mentor(s): Cia Verschelden

Project: TMCC Assessment Renaissance

Version 2.0 - Project

Q: Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope or design since February 2015.

A: The TMCC student learning project is to institutionalize the assessment process in an environment that is friendly and receptive to inquiry. This includes the development of an assessment process that is conducive to both TMCC, as a tribal college, and to general education. To that end, there has been no change.

Q: What were your goals for the past six months—since February 2015? Did you achieve them? Why or why not?

A: The goal for the past six months was the assessment of the General Education outcomes. This goal was achieved through the following steps:

1. Establish Student Learning Committee (SLC)
2. Education/Training of SLC on assessment and paradigm shift
3. Research models for program assessment that fit best with TMCC; select and/or develop a model.
4. Provide training to others

Formally established in January 2015, the SLC began the task of assessing the general education outcomes. To begin the process, the Chair of the SLC provided training on general education assessment. This training or education period occurred during SLC meetings throughout the semester and was held concurrently with the assessment of the general education outcomes. The information provided during the training or education sessions included:

1. What is assessment?
2. Why do assessment?
3. What does assessment look like in a tribal college?
4. TMCC assessment processes
5. General Education models
6. Process for assessing general education outcomes
7. Tools to use (Rubrics, course-embedded outcomes, standardized tests)

Toward the end of the semester, the SLC membership researched models of assessment used at other institutions, tribal and non-tribal, and presented the information they learned to all SLC members. This activity helped break down the barrier to assessment for the SLC members as they gained further knowledge on assessment, opening the door for more engaging conversations and the options available regarding assessment. This was further enhanced by the participation of many SLC members at the HLC annual conference. Upon return from the conference, all HLC attendees presented assessment information, gained during HLC sessions, at an all TMCC staff and faculty meeting. While this provided an opportunity for the HLC attendees to share information surrounding assessment, it also started the process of engaging all TMCC staff and faculty.

Simultaneously occurring with the training period was the assessment of the general education outcomes. This provided faculty with an opportunity to put theory into practice. While this endeavor was difficult to negotiate, it was more beneficial in that it provided a

means of breaking down the barriers that are placed around assessment. As a result, assessment became a more doable task. Moreover, the end result of the general education assessment provided a baseline of evidence showing that a lack of unity exists for faculty when it comes to the assessment of the general education outcomes, even at the most basic level of what is the definition of each outcome.

Q: How did you incorporate the feedback that you received on your previous posting in February 2015?

A: Feedback was provided on incorporating tribal values into the general education outcomes. This feedback became the subject of several conversations and will continue to be. As the SLC begins the process of re-defining the general education outcomes, it will be driven by tribal values.

Feedback was also provided on using the backward design as well as a project management approach. This was helpful in terms of providing more technical assistance. The response on using the backward design reinforced the idea that the SLC is steering in the right direction in terms of the assessment process. Further, the suggestion to identify tasks, responsibilities and timelines validated step 5 in our original plan, again reinforcing the idea of heading in a good direction, and it will be used to guide the upcoming process of the revision of the general education outcomes.

Q: What are your plans and goals for the next six months—up until January 2016? What challenges do you anticipate

A: The goals for the next six months will be to continue working on the general education outcomes. The assessment done in the last semester provided a baseline of information about the general education outcomes. Using this baseline of information, the general education outcomes will be re-defined to reflect the values of TMCC. A sub-committee will be developed in September to address this issue.

As a result of the general education assessment, the current assessment process used at TMCC was also reviewed. Several issues were revealed regarding the current assessment process, leading to the development of a second sub-committee to review and revise the process as needed.

Another goal will be to continue providing professional development training on assessment to all TMCC faculty and staff. While several assessment education/training sessions were held with the SLC during the last academic year, there was only one session held with all TMCC faculty and staff. One goal for the next academic year will be to offer more assessment trainings to all TMCC employees. Some trainings that have been identified include:

1. Faculty Assessment Presentation (August)
2. Development and Implementation of Cultural/Historical Course (August to December)
3. Sitting Bull Community College (tribal)- (October, November and December)
4. Southwestern Community College (non-tribal)- To Be Determined

Lastly, the current general education outcomes will be continue to be assessed during the school year. The rationale behind this is to continue building an environment that is friendly and conducive to assessment. Despite the development of a sub-committee to address the general education outcomes and the possible revision of each, it is worthwhile to continue building a systematic process for the assessment of general education as it will provide additional experience to all TMCC faculty.

One challenge will be to continue to gain support from faculty surrounding assessment. This will be addressed through multiple educational sessions in which all faculty have an opportunity to present their ideas and concerns on assessment. Another challenge, which will remain throughout this process, is to continue building an assessment friendly climate, one that does not need to be enforced, but rather supported and engaged by all faculty, staff, and administration.

Version 2.0 - Update

Q: Please confirm that this Activity is ready for review.

A: This project is ready for review.

Version 2.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Cia Verschelden

University of Central Oklahoma

cverschelden@uco.edu

405-974-2359

Susan Murphy

HLC Scholar

smurphy@cnm.edu

505-239-0343

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Cia Verschelden's Review

The strength of your project is that you are going back to the basics while carrying on with assessment of student learning. It seems that you have had some very useful interactions to date in various forums. It was good that you sent several people to the HLC Annual Conference and that information learned was shared with all the faculty/staff. You are,

through these various sharing sessions, keeping the conversation alive about general education outcomes and their assessment. If faculty and staff remain engaged in the process, they will be more likely to be invested in the revised outcomes and their assessment.

Susan Murphy's Review

I agree with Cia's comments. Your project is rooted in broad campus response to measuring student learning and using information to contribute to improving the teaching/learning dynamic. Having the same General Education outcomes across all programs at the college means a shared vision of the qualities you want all graduates to have. Your project strength lays in the common purpose all programs have relative to Gen Ed.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Cia Verschelden's Review

In your next update, I would like to hear more about how you are assessing general education outcomes so I can follow along with any revisions you make in the process now that you have a sub-committee looking at that.

Susan Murphy's Review

Since I am just now joining as your newly assigned Scholar I have a number of questions.

After visiting your website I believe I understood that you have 7 categories of performance outcomes that you desire for all students completing degree programs. (Communication, Math, Science, Humanities/SS, Culture/Diversity, Critical Thinking, and Technology) The statements associated with these categories may not be serving you as sufficiently explicit for faculty agreement on the intended skill, knowledge or behavioral outcome. Since your SLC Minutes indicate an interest in going back to some basics I'd ask if you are considering revising/re-stating the Gen Ed's or seeking to more explicitly state the intended learning outcome in these categories? With statements that are shorter and more specific as to the performance outcomes there may be an economy of scale you can achieve in measuring any one of the Gen Ed's with the same tool across multiple programs. This approach could net you richer data for analysis and interpretation.

Working together on revising student learning outcomes for the Gen Ed could prove extremely valuable to the project and the campus community. (I think this is where some committee work is headed from some entries in the SLC Minutes.)

Is Gen Ed thought of as synonymous with Liberal Arts coursework? Or is there agreement or discussion that the program major courses also contribute to all of the outcomes categories? Typically, Gen Ed outcomes are shared by all of the college curriculum.

Are you thinking that programs should create Curriculum Maps to look at where intended outcomes might be happening and where they might best be measured? The Curriculum Map can be a powerful tool to diagnose learning points.

Are the Gen Ed outcomes different for baccalaureate vs. associate degree bound students?

Given the reported results for this first cycle of Gen Ed measures conducted by the programs what are the best next steps to get a handle of measuring and understanding

student achievement of the outcomes?

How can departments compare data on student learning if they approach the task with different understandings of what the outcome statements mean?

Is the 5 year cycle referenced in the SLC Minutes both Program Review and Assessment? Would that mean that in the intervening years that areas not "in the cycle" would not be required to conduct any measures? Could an area not measure outcomes/[performance for 4 years and then conduct measures in the one reporting year? (Clearly, I am unsure of what the cycles include.)

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Cia Verschelden's Review

It sounds like you're having important conversations about tribal values and how to let them guide your development of institutional/general education student learning outcomes. I wonder about including people outside of TMCC in those conversations, for instance, tribal council members, elders, teachers and parents from the K-12 system, business people in the community. Your school is a vital resource in your community and area and it is good, I think, to have the broadest possible engagement of your key stakeholders.

Susan Murphy's Review

Cia makes good points and your SLC Minutes reflect that you are headed in that direction.

Learning outcomes statements have to be meaningful (and that meaning agreed on by faculty), measurable, and manageable. SLC should resolve for itself that the Gen Ed statements fulfill these characteristics.

Consider that you may be trying to tackle too much by measuring ALMOST ALL outcomes in ALL programs. I assume that programs are busy measuring their own program learning outcomes in certain cycles, so, ask yourselves if it would serve the college to tackle just a few of the (revised) Gen Ed outcomes to gain both broader and deeper insight on student learning.

With a clear set of outcomes statements the SLC might find the work of measuring is made a bit easier.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Cia Verschelden

I have no other comments at this point.

Susan Murphy

If any of the comments above are unclear feel free to contact me or your Primary Mentor.

Scholar(s): Susan Murphy

Primary Mentor(s): Cia Verschelden

Project: TMCC Assessment Renaissance

Version 1.0 - Project

Q: Describe the project you developed at the Roundtable. Focus particularly on the general strategies you developed. (500 words)

A: The TMCC student learning project will be to institutionalize the assessment process in an environment that is friendly and receptive to inquiry. The first stage of implementation will be the analysis of the general education program at TMCC. In doing so, a process will be identified for subsequent assessments. The following strategies will be employed to accomplish this goal:

Strategies:

- A. Create a friendly environment that is conducive to blending assessment with teaching and learning.
- B. Engage all faculty, staff and administration in the assessment process.
- C. Enforce the institutionalization of the assessment process.

Q: How will your project contribute to making assessment an activity that leads to the improvement of student learning?"

A: The contributions of this project will provide a nurturing culture of assessment for faculty, staff and administration, enabling assessment to become an institutionalized process that is used to improved and advance teaching and learning. As more faculty, staff and administration engage in assessment activities, barriers toward assessment will begin to dissolve. The result will be an environment where the focus will be “learning about learning”.

Q: What are the desired outcomes of this project? How will you know that you have achieved each of these outcomes?

A: The desired outcomes of this project are two-fold; 1.) To develop a favorable systematic process in which all faculty, staff and administration contribute on a consistent and continuous basis and 2.) To use the results of the assessment process to advance teaching and learning.

These results will be achieved when 1.) The barriers to assessment are dissolved and 2.) Assessment practices are a common feature throughout the institution.

Q: What serious challenges do you expect to encounter? How will you deal with them?

A: Challenge One: Negative perception

One challenge will be to address the negative perception that exists toward assessment practices. As noted earlier, assessment is often viewed by faculty as an added-on task that must be completed for compliance reasons only. To meet this challenge, a paradigm shift will need to be implemented.

This challenge will be addressed through training. At this time, there are at least two identified training opportunities that will need to be provided. The first will address the paradigm shift. The SLC is currently in discussion on the topic of various models that will help with a paradigm shift. The first noted model is the student-centered learning approach as opposed to the teacher-centered approach. This discourse will lead to the implementation

of a model to guide TMCC. The second training will be on assessment practices and will be done in groups and on an individual basis. The trainers will be the SLC.

Challenge Two: Enforcement of assessment

Another challenge will be the enforcement of assessment. It will be critical to engage the support of as many faculty, staff and administrators as possible. This will assist in breaking down barriers from those members of the institution that are more hesitant to adopt the assessment process.

The SLC will play a key role in addressing this challenge. As this group is comprised of various members of the institution, they are set to share assessment information with others within their own departments. As such, they are positioned to be a resource for others. Training will also help address this challenge (see Challenge One).

Q: Describe the specific steps you will be taking in Year 1 to develop and implement the early stages of your project.

A: During Year 1, the focus of the student learning project will be to assess the general education program at TMCC. This assessment process will be used as a model to guide other future assessment practices, thus initiating a process for the assessment of all programs. The following is a tentative schedule of events:

Step 1: Establish Student Learning Committee (SLC).

Step 2: Education/Training of SLC on assessment and paradigm shift.

Step 3: Research models for program assessment that fit best with TMCC; select and/or develop a model.

Step 4: Provide training to others.

Step 5: Begin tasks as guided by assessment model.

-Subcommittees will be developed.

-Objectives and timelines will be identified per each subcommittee.

Step 6: Write reports.

Step 7: Disseminate results.

Step 8: Review process, make necessary changes to best fit with TMCC.

Step 9: Begin process again.

Version 1.0 - Update

Q: Please confirm that this Activity is ready for review.

A: This project is ready for review.

Version 1.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Primary mentor:

Cia Verschelden

University of Central Oklahoma

cverschelden@uco.edu

405-974-2539

HLC Senior Scholar:

Gloria Rogers

grogers@hlcommission.org

812-240-9770

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Reviewed by Cia Verschelden (Primary Mentor):

The strength of your project is the plan to analyze your current general education program. You talked at the Roundtable about the possibility of incorporating Native cultural values into the general education outcomes. If this review and reconsideration could be done in an inclusive process that engaged the voices of all the stakeholders - students, community, faculty, staff, tribal elders - a comprehensive system of assessment and continuous improvement could grow out of it organically.

Reviewed by Gloria Rogers (HLC Senior Scholar):

In addition to Cia's comments, I also think that one of your strengths lies in the fact that you have clearly identified some of the barriers that can impede the project and have identified strategies to deal with them. Doing this at the beginning of the project will enable you to make progress rapidly.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Reviewed by Cia Verschelden (Primary Mentor):

This may just be semantics, but it doesn't seem to me that it necessarily follows that the more people are engaged in assessment, the greater the likelihood that resistance will fall away, especially if assessment is "enforced." As stated above, if the general education program review is done comprehensively and new or revised student learning outcomes emerge, the plan for assessing the learning of those outcomes might happen along with their adoption.

Reviewed by Gloria Rogers (HLC Senior Scholar):

In addition to Cia's comments, it isn't clear to me if you currently have institutional outcomes or if the general education review is designed to help you define your outcomes. Please clarify. Because there were no team members listed in the Collaboration Portal, I

am not sure who is on your Academy Project Team by title. It will be important to have strong leadership from the upper levels of administration.

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Reviewed by Cia Verschelden (Primary Mentor):

This is just an observation on my part, and not a prescription, but it might be good to take a step back and think about what change looks like if done through a culturally appropriate process. How are decisions made in traditional tribal communities? What are ways of communicating and sharing ideas that are respected and valued by the stakeholders. For instance, is the concept of "enforcement" (something imposed on a group of people by another group) one that would be comfortable or even acceptable according to Native cultural values? I may be way off base here, so please ignore if so.

Reviewed by Gloria Rogers (HLC Senior Scholar):

As you are beginning this process, you will need to be aware of where you want to be at the end of the project and plan with that in mind. It is a "backwards design" process but one that will serve you well. Identifying all the tasks, responsibilities and timelines (a project management approach) will help you to stay on track and ultimately achieve you goals.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Reviewed by Cia Verschelden (Primary Mentor):

I wonder about beginning the process with the re-examination of the current general education student learning outcomes in which you involve all relevant stakeholders in open conversations. There would be some structure, for instance, it should be understood that learning outcomes statements must be clearly and publicly stated and there must be, for each, some reasonable way(s) to measure student achievement of each outcome, and that there must be a systematic plan for using the data from those measures to work to improve student learning of the outcomes. Within these parameters, let the stakeholder generate outcomes in which they can be genuinely invested.

Reviewed by Gloria Rogers (HLC Senior Scholar):

I concur with Cia. It would also be helpful to inventory what you are already doing in the way of assessment. Faculty concerns about assessment as an "add on" activity can be allayed if they are convinced that this process will build on what they are already doing, not creating new work.

-

Scholar(s): Gloria Rogers

Primary Mentor(s): Cia Verschelden

