CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE

ASSESSMENT PLAN

2018 – 2021
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INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a process of collecting, organizing, and interpreting information to aid in improvement methods and decision making. At Central Arizona College, assessment involves measuring student learning outcomes at the institutional, program, and course levels. The major themes of CAC’s assessment plan include process simplicity, a focus on student learning, and shared responsibility. Course/activity, program/department and institutional level assessments follow Barbara Walvoord’s *Assessment Clear and Simple*, which includes three steps: (1) set goals, (2) collect information, and (3) take action.¹

The Three Steps of Assessment

In this way, assessment drives improvements at the institutional, program, and course levels.

COMMON STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

CAC’s four Common Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs) are assessed at the institutional, program, and course levels. The College supports student success and academic achievement by providing a high quality education which integrates continuous improvement strategies in teaching and learning. CAC’s graduates possess academic knowledge, skills, and attitudes of an educated citizen, including competency in the College’s Common Student Learning Outcomes shown in Table 1. This table also includes core competencies, which are explanatory statements to assist with the understanding and assessment of the CSLOs. The list of core competencies is not exhaustive and does not require Board approval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: CAC’s FOUR CLSOs AND THEIR CORE COMPETENCIES</th>
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<td><strong>CSLO</strong></td>
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| CSLO #1: Cultural and Civic Engagement - Participate in diverse environments while demonstrating global citizenship and social consciousness | • Social Knowledge and Civic Engagement  
  • Students combine knowledge, skills, and values to actively participate in civic life  
  • Intercultural Knowledge and Competence  
  • Students demonstrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts |
| CSLO #2: Integrative Knowledge - Identify, comprehend, apply and synthesize facts, concepts, theories and practices across broad and specialized knowledge areas | • Content Knowledge  
  • Students comprehend content, ideas, and experiences within a discipline and demonstrate the ability to integrate them across multiple contexts  
  • Information Literacy  
  • Students recognize the need for information and select, evaluate, and responsibly use information  
  • Technological Application  
  • Students use appropriate technology to achieve desired end  
  • Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning  
  • Students develop the skills and attitudes necessary for the pursuit of continuous learning |
| CSLO #3: Personal and Professional Skills - Demonstrate skills which enhance personal and professional development | • Ethical Perspectives and Actions  
  • Students describe and analyze positions on ethical issues and practice ethical decision-making skills  
  • Communication  
  • Students send and receive visual, written, and spoken messages to create meaning, understanding or promote change  
  • Life Skills  
  • Students demonstrate sound physical, mental, emotional practices in real world situations |
The CSLOs and the related assessment apply to every CAC certificate and degree program. Each faculty member must align his or her courses’ learning outcomes with the appropriate CSLOs and show this alignment in the course syllabus.

CSLO Assessment is the formal, systematic and continuous process of evaluating the degree to which CAC students demonstrate proficiency of each of CAC’s Common Student Learning Outcomes. The purpose of CSLO assessment is to:

1. Demonstrate that CAC students are acquiring the comprehensive skills, abilities, attitudes and knowledge necessary for being a productive and educated citizen in the 21st century.
2. Identify gaps in the acquisition and to promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning.
3. Be accountable to our community, by showing that our students are achieving our common student learning outcomes.

To ensure that the CSLOs remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace, and societal needs, the assessment committee may review these common learning measures each fall. The committee analyzes previous assessment results and possible shortcomings through gathering information from internal constituents and reviewing relevant literature to ensure alignment with best practices. The committee determines and revises the institutional learning outcomes, and the methods for measuring them, with input from constituents through shared governance processes. It benchmarks results (when appropriate) to national findings. When alignment is not evident, the assessment committee revises the CSLOs with input from faculty and staff.

CSLO assessment occurs at the institutional, program, and course levels, as shown in the following graphic.
CAC’s assessment committee creates an annual report that includes the scope of work conducted for the annual assessment, the assessment results, and a list of recommendations for faculty and the college community. This committee shares the report with faculty and other instructional staff. Depending on the assessment results, the committee may recommend approaches to improving student learning in one or more CSLO areas.

**INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL ASSESSMENT**

CAC’s institutional-level assessments are aligned with the CSLOs and used to inform internal improvements to strengthen student achievement. The College’s main instruments for the institutional level assessment are the ETS Proficiency Profile and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE).

The ETS test identifies the college level skills of reading, critical thinking, writing, and mathematics learned through general education courses without analyzing the content gained in each course. CAC’s assessment committee has aligned the college's CSLOs with the test’s three levels of proficiency for reading and critical thinking, writing, and mathematics. ETS also reports context data in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences and scaled scores and proficiency classifications. ETS is conducted nationally, allowing benchmarking among community colleges to occur.

CSSEE provides information on student behavior, a key indicator of learning and, therefore, of the quality of community colleges. The survey, administered to community college students,
asks questions that assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are correlated highly with student learning and student retention. CCSEE is conducted nationally, allowing benchmarking among community colleges to occur. CAC alternates between using the ETS Proficiency Profile one year and CCSSE the next, as shown in Table 2.

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<th>TABLE 2: TIMELINES AND TASKS FOR INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT</th>
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The following flowchart captures the step-by-step process for institutional-level assessment.
Institutional-Level Assessment - Process Overview

College Completes Institutional-Level Assessment*

Assessment Committee Reviews Results and Completes a Report, Which is Placed on Website

Vice President of Academic Affairs Shares Results with Faculty

Vice President Identifies Area for Improvement

Repeat, Expand, or Replace the Change

Did the Change Work?

Assessment Committee Reviews Impact of Improvements

Institution Implements Improvements

No

End

Yes

Track Data to See if Improvement Holds

*See next two flowcharts
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Process for Administering ETS

- Assessment Committee Determines Dates and Student Groups to Target for ETS
- Plan and Develop Marketing Materials – “Get Your Glo On!”
- Update BlackBoard Shell and Populate with Cohort, When Available
- Order ETS, if needed, and Test Functionality of Blackboard
- Receive and Analyze ETS Results and Recommend and Implement Improvements
- Launch, Administer, and Extend (as Needed) ETS
- End
ETSA sends procedure guide link to district coordinator

District coordinator confirms participation, attends orientation webinar, reviews procedure guide, and submits custom survey questions, if applicable.

District coordinator completes and submits data verification sample

Dean's office selects campus coordinators

District coordinator completes and submits data verification sample

Dear's office selects campus coordinators

President sends memo to students

President sends memo to faculty, staff and administrators

District coordinator reviews random sample received from CCSSE Center

CCSSE Center sends institutional reports to College president and district coordinator

End

Students complete CCSSE

District Coordinator returns results to CCCSE Center

District coordinator sends thank you note to faculty

CCSSE Center sends institutional reports to College president and district coordinator
When a change is implemented in response to test (ETS) or survey (CCSSE) results, the subsequent test or survey will provide data that shows the change’s efficacy.

PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

Program level assessments are aligned with CSLOs and are used to make improvements to the curriculum. They act as foundation for program review and division planning and are a direct examination of students’ work. Most divisions at CAC contain programs with program learning outcomes. For example, here are the program learning outcomes for CAC’s certificate in accounting:

1. (Application Level) Demonstrate entry-level competencies for employment in the field of accounting. (CSLO 2, 3, & 4)
2. (Synthesis Level) Maintain a complete set of accounting records, including recording transactions, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating the financial information. (CSLOs 2, 3, & 4)
3. (Application Level) Utilize a computerized general ledger package to accurately set up a set of accounting records. (CSLO 2, 3, & 4)
4. (Application Level) Demonstrate use of effective human relations skills, communications, and computer skills necessary for successful entry level employment in an Accounting field.(CSLO 1)
5. (Synthesis Level) Communicate understanding of how the legal and regulatory environment of business affects the practice of accounting and correctly apply these principles to accounting issues. (CSLO 1)

Programs with program learning outcomes should be measuring student achievement in these outcomes. Direct measures of student achievement in program learning outcomes include: capstone courses, pre/posttests, Accuplacer, portfolios, licensure or professional exams such as HESI. (Indirect measures of assessment [such as transfer success, student satisfaction or employer surveys, retention/graduation rates, job placement, exit interviews] are more measures of program effectiveness than measures of student achievement in prescribed program learning outcomes.)

Presently (fall 2018), however, very few programs are directly measuring program level outcomes and a centralized collection of the results does not exist. It is also largely unknown whether programs are making improvements to increase student achievement in their program learning outcomes.

Goals for Program Level Assessment

The institution has established the following goals for program level assessment:

1. By 2022, each academic program with program learning outcomes will assess student achievement in at least two PLOs annually.

2. At least direct measure of assessment will be used (such as a capstone course, an exam, or a professional exam for an accrediting body)
3. Improvements made in the results will be documented.
4. The program-level results will support program review.
5. Division chairs and program faculty will be able to use EAC (fhttps://www.edassess.net/) to save and analyze results. (Nurse Education subscribes to EAC, which the entire college could use.)

A survey that the assessment committee conducted in 2016 shows that at least 14 programs at CAC have program level assessments that align with the CSLOs. However, only one of the programs, Dietetic Technician, provided data on student achievement related to the CLSOs. This finding raises several questions, including whether programs are actively conducting assessment that measures student achievement in their prescribed program learning outcomes. The findings of Academic Program Review indicate that the majority of programs are not assessing student achievement as it relates to PLOs.

Collecting assessment results using EAC Visual Data and improvements made in response to these results will be piloted/tested in a group of programs, using Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA). Once the pilot is completed and its results are analyzed, the number of programs from which data is collected will be expanded. The pilot will be conducted during spring 2019.

**Steps for Pilot**

**PLAN:** Identify three to four programs to participate in the experiment and obtain their cooperation. (These programs will be ones that are scheduled for academic program review in the next one to two years; this approach will supply the academic program review with program-level assessment data). The programs selected will have prescribed program learning outcomes. The experiment will test the process for collecting program-level assessment and the resulting improvements from programs.

**DO**
- Provide training and access to EAC Visual Data

**STUDY** the results – what did we learn?

**ACT – Abandon, adapt or adjust the change.** If the change is not abandoned, the process would be rolled out to programs beginning mid Spring 2019.
Program Level Assessment – Process Overview

1. Division Completes Program-Level Assessment
2. Faculty Reviews Results and Make Improvements
3. Division Chair Documents Assessment Results and Related Improvements (On Program-Level Assessment Report Form)
4. Division Chairs Send Completed Reports to Their Deans
5. Division Completes Program-Level Assessment
6. Deans Place Summary Reports in S-Drive Folder for Assessment reports
7. Deans Write Summary Reports
8. Assessment Committee Reviews Reports, writes summary report for the institution, and Sends Received Program Level Data to the Academic Program Review Committee
9. Academic Program Review Committee Receives Program-Level Assessment Data
10. Summary Report is placed on CAC website and shared with faculty through email from Vice President of Academic Affairs
11. End

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Program-level Assessment – Process Beta Test

1. Identify Programs for Pilot
2. Determine How Each Program Does or Could Measure PLOs
3. Devise Program-Level Assessment Report Forms (One for Program Leads, One for Deans)
4. Share Draft for with Assessment Committee and Pilot Programs for Feedback
5. Provide Pilot Program Heads with Training In EAC
6. Send Assessment Report Forms to Participating Deans and Program Leads
7. Determine Type of Storage for Assessment Reports
8. Program: Leads and Deans Complete Forms and Return Them
9. Assessment Team reviews presented data for quality and quantity and obtains feedback about EAC
10. Abandon, Adopt, Adjust the Change?
11. End
Academic Support Programs – Programs that involve learning that occurs out of the formal classroom setting will conduct co-curricular assessment (outlined below). These programs include academic preparation programs (such as Summer Bridge), tutoring services, and Library programs that teach students about the proper use of citations.

COURSE-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

Course level (MSLO) assessment is designed to measure student learning in a course and helps faculty make informed changes to courses. Course level assessments are aligned with CSLOs and used to modify the delivery of the course. Professors, chairs, and directors are the experts in their courses and it is up to them to determine how best to assess proficiency of the course outcomes and how to then use the results.

Direct Assessment Measures: Course-embedded assessments

Indirect Assessment Measures: Course Evaluation - questions to measure CSLO achievement

CAC will develop a process to collect information from the course-level assessments that are occurring throughout the institution’s divisions.

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Course-Level Assessment – Process Overview

1. Division Completes Course-Level Assessment
2. Faculty Review Results and Make Improvements
3. Division Chair Documents Assessment Results and Related Improvements (on Course-Level Assessment Form)
4. Division Chairs Send Completed Reports to Their Deans
5. Division Completes Course-Level Assessment
6. Assessment Committee Reviews Reports, writes Summary Report, and Sends Received Data to Academic Program Review Committee
7. Deans Place Summary Reports in S-Drive Folder for Assessment reports
8. Each Dean Writes a Summary Report
9. Summary Report is placed on CAC website and Shared with Faculty Via Communication from Vice President of Academic Affairs
10. End

Academic Program Review Committee Receives Course-level Assessment Data
CO-CURRICULAR ASSESSMENT

Student Services is responsible for designing and delivering co-curricular activities to support learning. CAC categorizes “co-curricular” as mix of programs and services that focus on student learning outside of the classroom (e.g., TRIO SSS programs, Summer Bridge, Resident Life).

The primary purpose of co-curricular assessment is to provide the student-learning data needed to improve co-curricular programs. The Higher Learning Commission, CAC’s accrediting body, also requires co-curricular assessment for an institution’s accreditation.

Co-Curricular assessment focuses on assessing the degree of student learning that occurs through students participating in co-curricular programs and activities. Specifically, the focus is on assessing learning that aligns with the College’s CSLOs (Cultural and Civic Engagement, Integrative Knowledge, Personal and Professional Skills, and Reasoning Skills) and thus on the “comprehensive skills, abilities, and knowledge (required) for being a productive and educated citizen in the 21st century.”

*The focus, then, is not on assessing what students learn about a co-curricular process that can help them in college.* (Assessing the latter is a function of institutional effectiveness.) Additionally, the focus is on assessing the learning outcomes of programs in which a significant amount of learning occurs.

A significant amount of learning in areas that align with the CSLOs is likely to occur in co-curricular workshops or seminars that teach or encourage interpersonal skills, civic engagement, and reasoning skills, in co-curricular experiences designed to promote civic engagement, and in academic tutoring (provided by the Learning Center). Similarly, significant learning is likely to occur in workshops that cover Title IX issues, training programs for certified tutors, and workshops on budgeting and financial management skills.

Significant learning in aspects of the CSLOs doesn’t occur through a student filling out financial aid and registration forms or a 20-minute advising session about selecting a program of study. These are valuable processes, but they aren’t designed to provide significant learning in aspects of the CSLOs.

Co-curricular programs in which a significant amount learning occurs should establish a measurable program learning outcome (PLO) and devise a method to assess the learning in the area covered by the PLO.

Only a small number of co-curricular areas, departments, and units will have programs and activities that provide significant learning in aspects of the CSLOs. In total, we should have no more than four to eight program learning outcomes for co-curricular programs. Most units and offices should be limited to one or two PLOs (preferably one).

Programs involving an insignificant learning in aspects of the CSLOs and/or a small number of students should not participate. *The best choice – the “sweet spot” is a program that involves both a significant number of students and a significant amount of learning in aspects of the CSLOs.* Trying to capture all the learning that occurs in every co-curricular program would subject students to assessment fatigue and would be too time-consuming for staff.
Also, to assess institutional-level achievement of the learning outcomes that CAC claims for its co-curricular programs, CAC utilizes data from CCSSE, which is the college administers biannually.
APPENDIX ONE

Direct Methods of Assessment

- Require students to display their knowledge and skills as they respond to the instrument itself.³
- Look at student work products or performances that demonstrate level of learning.⁴
- Are tangible, visible, self-explanatory evidence of exactly what students have and haven’t learned.⁵
- Locally developed tests/test questions
- Rubrics for evaluating: essays/papers, lab work, exam questions, capstone projects, exhibits, performances/presentations, portfolios of student work, comprehensive exams
- Standardized tests
- Certificate exams

Indirect Methods of Assessment

- Ask students to reflect on their learning rather than demonstrate it.⁶
- Capture students’ perceptions of their learning and the educational environment that supports learning⁷
- Provide signs that students are probably learning, but the evidence of exactly what they are learning is less clear.⁸
- Surveys: students, alumni, employers
- Exit interviews
- Focus groups
- Job placement rates
- Course evaluations

⁴ Kasimatis, M., Overview of Types of Measures, PowerPoint, Loyola Marymount University
⁶ Palomba, C. and Banta, T., ibid.
⁷ Kasimatis, M., ibid
⁸ Suskie, L., ibid.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Artifact - a sample of individual student work demonstrating learning (e.g. test, essay)

Assessment - systematically collecting information to make informed decisions in order to improve student learning

Assessment Analysis Form - a reporting form containing an analysis of CSLO assessment activities and recommendations for improvement

Assessment Plan - a document outlining the college’s procedures for course, program and institutional level assessment

Common Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs) - measurable outcomes that describe the comprehensive skills, abilities, attitudes and knowledge achieved by CAC graduates through cumulative quality learning experiences

Core Competency - explanatory statement to assist in the understanding of a CSLO

Course Level Assessment - a measure of student learning that takes place in a specific course and results in improvements to classroom instruction, activities or assignments

Direct Assessment - a measure of student learning requiring students to display their knowledge and skills through assignments such as exams, essays, and oral presentations

Indirect Assessment - a measure that provides secondary evidence of learning using tools such as student surveys

Institutional Level Assessment - a measure of cumulative student learning that determines whether students are being adequately prepared for citizenship of the 21st century and results in improvements to the achieve of the common student learning outcomes in addition to meeting external accreditation requirements.

Measurable Student Learning Outcome (MSLO) - a quantifiable outcome that describes what a student is expected to learn as a result of participating in a specific academic course

Portfolio - organized samples of student work that provide direct evidence of student learning
Program Level Assessment - a measure of cumulative student learning that takes place in a specific department or program and results in improvements to the curriculum and student learning

Program-level Outcome/ PLO - a prescribed student learning outcome for a program

Random Sample - a subset of the population in which every member was selected unpredictably

Reliable - to provide consistency in terms of test items, re-testing and rater results

Rubric - a scoring tool that lists the specific evaluation criteria for an assignment

Valid - to measure what is being claimed to be measured