

Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC)

Ad Hoc Report

October 15, 2015

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Introduction

This Ad Hoc Report responds to two recommendations from the Commission resulting from YVCC's Year One Peer Evaluation Report and Mid-Cycle Peer Evaluation report, as described below.

Commission Requests for Ad Hoc Reports

On February 6, 2015 the Commission wrote to Yakima Valley Community College following the College's 2014 Mid-Cycle Review. The Commission's accepted YVCC's Fall 2014 Mid-Cycle Report and requested an Ad Hoc report, due October 15, 2015, responding to Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2014 Mid-Cycle Peer Evaluation Report.

Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2014 Mid-Cycle Peer Evaluation Report:

The Commission recommends that Yakima Valley Community College incorporate objectives, indicators, and student learning outcomes into an effective system of evaluation and improvement (Standard 4.B.1, 4.B.2).

In the February 6 letter, the Commission also requested that the College again address Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2012 Year One Peer Evaluation Report.

Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2012 Year One Peer-Evaluation Report:

The evaluation panel recommends that the College continue to refine its indicators and benchmarks to ensure that all objectives have meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement in order to form the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of the core theme objectives (Standard 1.B.2.)

Additionally, this report responds to a request from the Commission for an Ad Hoc Report following approval of a Substantive Change submitted by the college in fall 2013, requesting authority to award degrees at the baccalaureate level. In April 2014, the Commission approved the Substantive Change Request. At that time, the Commission requested that the College submit an Ad Hoc Report on the Bachelor of Applied Science degree program in Business Management.

Response to Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2012 Year One Peer-Evaluation Report

The evaluation panel recommends that the College continue to refine its indicators and benchmarks to ensure that all objectives have meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement in order to form the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of the core theme objectives (Standard 1.B.2).

Annual Review of Core Themes

In response to this recommendation, the College conducted annual reviews of its core themes together with their respective objectives, indicators and benchmarks. The annual reviews assisted the College to update its core theme indicators and benchmarks to better respond to Standard 1.B.2. Each review of core theme indicators was conducted by a 45 member cross-departmental Institutional Effectiveness Team. The resulting reports and recommendations were reviewed and approved by the Administrative Council and finally by the Board of Trustees during their annual summer retreats.

Core Theme Continuity and Improvement

Each annual review resulted in adjustments in the total number and the phrasing of objectives, indicators and benchmarks, in order to craft objectives that better relate to mission fulfillment through their respective core themes, and indicators that are meaningful, assessable and verifiable. This annual review resulted in an increased emphasis on outcomes as opposed to outputs in evaluation of the core themes.

The College maintained substantial continuity in the phrasing of each core theme, and in the objectives and indicators that support each of the core themes, in order to maintain integrity in the assessment of core theme performance over time. At the same time, the College identified objectives and/or indicators that described characteristics of the college and outputs resulting from its operations, but did not contribute to the measurement of outcomes related to the attainment of the core themes and therefore the mission. In these instances, these descriptive indicators and/or objectives were determined to be responsive to Standard Two and were therefore reassigned to that area for self-study purposes.

Updated Core Themes, Objectives and Indicators

The updated core themes, objectives and indicators are listed below. These represent the most recent work of the College to refine the objectives and indicators to better form the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of core theme objectives. This report notes those instances where indicators are currently under further development or refinement.

Core Theme One: Community

YVCC embraces its roles as both a provider of higher education and an employer, and actively seeks partnerships to provide opportunities for the economic, social, and cultural development of our external and internal communities.

Objective 1.1 – Contribute to the work skills and educational levels of YVCC’s communities.

Indicator 1.1.a – Percentage of Basic Skills students demonstrating improvement.

Indicator 1.1.b – Number of certificates and degrees awarded annually.

Indicator 1.1.c – Percentage of professional/technical students employed in their field of study nine months after graduating.

Indicator 1.1.d – Dual Enrollment (Running Start and Tech Prep): Maintain dual enrollment numbers and track the number and percentage of eligible dually-enrolled students matriculating to YVCC.

Indicator 1.1.e – Percentage of area high school graduates matriculating to college.

Objective 1.2 – Increase student engagement outside the classroom.

Indicator 1.2.a – Club Involvement - The percentage of students reporting involvement in clubs.

Indicator 1.2.b – Experiential learning – indicators currently under development.

Objective 1.3 – Maintain a positive campus climate for employees.

Indicator 1.3.a - College climate rated above the NILIE national norm on the PACE campus climate survey.

Indicator 1.3.b - College climate is rated above 3.5 by employee groups on the PACE campus climate survey.

Indicator 1.3.c. – College climate is rated above 3.5 by benchmark area on the PACE campus climate survey. The PACE survey is categorized into four benchmark areas: institutional structure, supervisory relationships, teamwork, and student focus.

Core Theme Two: Access

YVCC strives to provide access to our diverse community. YVCC encourages and supports our community members' participation in services and educational programs.

Objective 2.1 – Student support services contribute to student success.

Indicator 2.1.a - Students requesting and qualifying for accommodations are served.

Indicator 2.1.b – Impact of services on retention - This indicator is being developed by OIE currently. Measurements will include the use of centers in relation to retention from one quarter to the next and continuous enrollment in math and English. Centers will include two groups: Tutoring centers, Math and Writing center on both campuses, and Counseling and Advising Centers.

Indicator 2.1.c – Percentage of students reporting on the Fall Student Survey that they agree with their initial placement.

Indicator 2.1.d - Monitor pass rates in English and math courses in relation to placement. Pass rates are calculated for first-time course takers placing into developmental courses.

Indicator 2.1.e – Impact of advising - Pathway advising teams are developing an evaluation plan for advising.

Objective 2.2 – Increase transition to college programs from Basic Skills.

Indicator 2.2.a - Percentage of students in ABE levels 4/5/6 who participate in college coursework in the same academic year or the next.

Indicator 2.2.b - Percentage of high school equivalency students who matriculate to college within one year.

Objective 2.3 – Increase completion of developmental education requirements.

Indicator 2.3.a - Percentage of degree-seeking students who start in a developmental math course and complete a college-level quantitative degree requirement within two years.

Indicator 2.5.b - Percentage of degree-seeking students who start in developmental English course and complete a college-level English course or professional-technical communication degree requirement within two years.

Core Theme Three: Success

YVCC's learning-centered environment focuses on its diverse students, providing a foundation for lifelong learning and enabling the achievement of educational goals.

Objective 3.1 - Increase course completion rates, while reducing course completion gaps between groups.

Indicator 3.1.a - Course completion with a C or better in professional/technical and transfer programs

Indicator 3.1.b - Student success by instructional modality.

Objective 3.2 – Increase student progress towards certificates and degrees, while reducing gaps between groups.

Indicator 3.2.a - Fall to winter retention rates.

Indicator 3.2.b - Fall to fall retention rates.

Indicator 3.2.c - Percentage of students making “momentum” towards certificates and degrees.

Objective 3.3: Increase program and degree completion rates, while reducing completion gaps between groups.

Indicator 3.3.a - Degree completion within 3 & 6 years

Indicator 3.3.b - Percentage of students who earn a credential, transfer out, or are still attending into the fourth year from initial enrollment.

Objective 3.4 – Students will demonstrate competence and confidence in student learning outcomes.

Indicator 3.4.a - College Learning Assessment (CLA).

Indicator 3.4.b - College outcomes for Analytical Reasoning (AR) and Communication (C). Assessment committee is in the process of developing this indicator.

Indicator 3.4.c - Students demonstrate confidence in their academic abilities (annual fall student survey).

Response to Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2014 Mid-Cycle Peer Evaluation Report

The Commission recommends that Yakima Valley Community College incorporate objectives, indicators, and student learning outcomes into an effective system of evaluation and improvement (Standard 4.B.1, 4.B.2).

In response to this recommendation, the College appointed a Committee on the Assessment of Student Learning consisting of faculty from all mission areas of the college, together with academic administrators. The system of evaluating student learning outcomes is currently under development by this committee. This report provides an update on the development and implementation of that system.

The system of evaluation will identify the outcomes to be measured, the assessment methods utilized, the use of assessment results to inform instruction at the course, degree and program levels, and the link to core theme objectives and indicators.

The system of evaluation is based on the following principles:

1. The system incorporates previous and existing practices in the evaluation of student learning based on approved learning outcomes, at the course, program and general education levels.
2. The system provides for documentation by the College of how the evaluation results are used to inform instruction at the course level and within programs and incorporated into the reporting structure.
3. The system incorporates student learning outcomes in the general education areas of *Communication* and *Computation/Analytical Reasoning*. Under consideration is the adoption of a third learning outcome, *Human Relations*, currently in use only in the Workforce Education Division.
4. The system identifies required courses in each certificate and degree program which contain learning outcomes that align with specific general education student learning outcomes.
5. The system relies upon multiple methods and data sources to evaluate student learning at the degree and general education levels. These include rubrics for the evaluation of learning outcomes; methods of assessment of student performance against these rubrics; survey results that examine student perceptions of their competence and confidence in mastery of these learning outcomes; administration of the College Learning Assessment (CLA) to gather evidence of increased competence in *Communication*, *Computation/Analytical Reasoning* and *Human Relations* of entering and exiting students.
6. The system documents how the results of these assessment activities are analyzed, interpreted, and the results used to inform instruction at the course, degree and program levels.

Previous Practice

The College's previous efforts to evaluate student learning focused at the course level and the program level, but did not assess student learning at the general education level. Additionally, the College did not account for the impact of assessment results on the decision making processes of the College. *Recommendation One of the Fall 2014 Mid-Cycle Peer Evaluation Report* helped to incite a renewed dialogue among stakeholders, for the purpose of articulating a plan that extends beyond course-based evaluation and closes the loop from evaluation to decision-making.

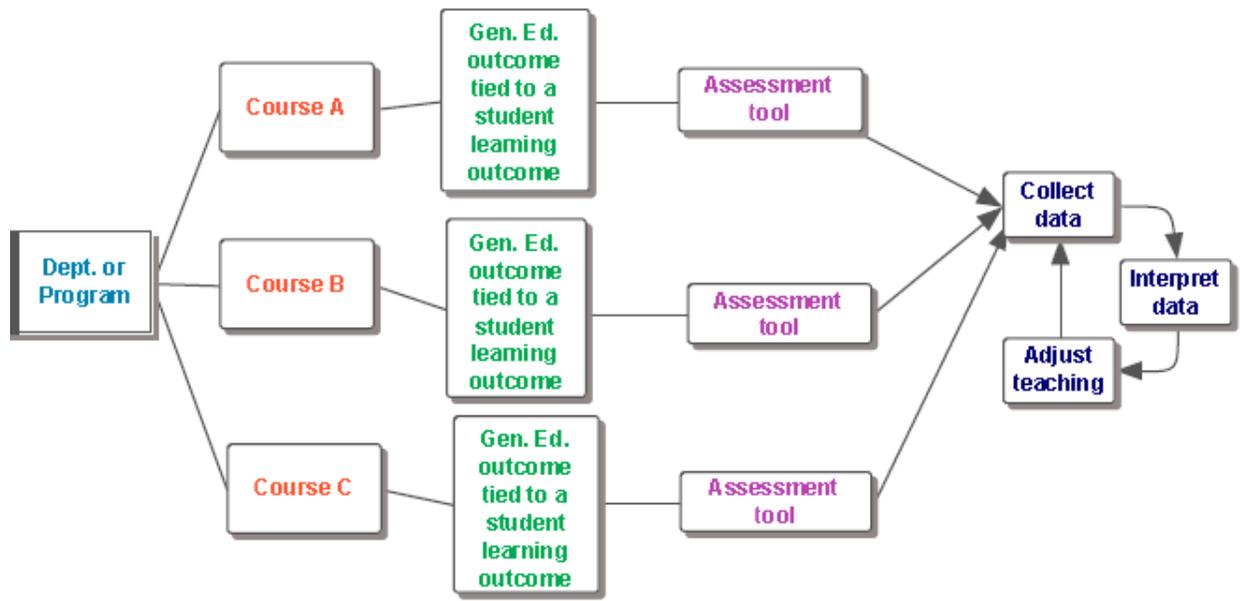
Important to the articulation of this plan is the need to better understand the framework in which evaluation occurs. Faculty members follow an established practice of evaluating student learning against the learning outcomes identified in course outlines and communicated to the students via syllabi. Lacking is a process to evaluate student learning outcomes at the general education level, and to account for how these evaluation results relate to evaluation of student learning at the course level.

Initiating Change

During spring 2015, the College established a Faculty Committee on the Assessment of Student Learning, including faculty from each of the primary mission areas of transfer, workforce, basic education for adults, and student services, as well as their respective deans. The committee is staffed by the Curriculum and Instructional Affairs Manager who reports to the Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, and the Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The vice president charged this committee with the task of articulating a plan for evaluation of student learning at the institutional level.

Framing the Task

Building from the work of previously appointed faculty committees on assessment of student learning and responding to evaluator feedback, the plan must account for and extend beyond the current practice of evaluation at the course level, identifying and providing for the evaluation of general education outcomes that provide the foundation for certificate and degree programs. In order to engage the faculty in adoption of an institutional plan for assessment of student learning, the committee worked with the deans and the vice president to develop a framework for evaluation and improvement. The following graphic depicts the framework for evaluation and improvement, reflecting a general education foundation of certificates and degrees, for which learning outcomes needed to be defined. To facilitate this process, this framework calls for the identification of required courses within each program that contain the general education outcomes that are to be measured. The resulting student learning outcome data will then be analyzed and interpreted in order to inform necessary adjustments to curriculum and instruction.



This framework was presented to the faculty during fall 2015 Convocation. Working within this framework, the faculty began the process of identifying courses in which the general education outcomes are taught, identifying the (documented in course outlines) learning outcomes and the methods used to measure student learning of these outcomes. A total of 33 courses were reviewed, identifying ten courses that focus on a *Communication* learning outcome, and twenty four courses that focus on a *Computation/Analytical Reasoning* learning outcome.

Closing the Loop - How do Results Inform Decisions?

Previously, efforts by the College to articulate a system of evaluation failed to account for how the evaluation of student learning informs instruction. The evaluation of learning at the course level occurred in isolation and did not contribute to understanding the general education associated with completion of certificate or degree requirements.

The evaluation system currently under development by the Faculty Committee on the Assessment of Student Learning accounts for each of these evaluation foci:

1. Assessment of student learning outcomes at the course and program level – this current practice will continue. Results inform course contents and methodology. The analysis of these outcomes results in periodic course changes that may require curriculum committee approval. Generally, curriculum committee approval is required for changes to course outcomes. The system accounts for the analysis of results and the impacts on decision making at the course and program levels.
2. At the degree and institutional levels, the departments identify required courses that address the general education student learning outcomes to be evaluated. Results are assessed in order to inform content and methodology at the degree level as well as academic and student support services. The analysis of these outcomes will result in

periodic adjustments to program requirements at the certificate and degree level that require approval by curriculum committee and academic administration.

Link to Core Themes, Objectives and Indicators

The system for evaluation of student learning will continue to incorporate assessment of student learning at the course and program level, as indicated above. Additionally, by identifying student learning outcomes in relation to general education, the evaluation system will account for the acquisition of knowledge and abilities across the curriculum. This will enable the College to account for the learning that occurs as student complete the requirements of their certificate and degree programs, that differs from and is in addition to the knowledge and abilities specific to their program requirements.

The system for evaluation of student learning links to and supports achievement of the following core theme objectives and indicators:

Objective 2.3 – Increase completion of developmental education requirements.

Indicator 2.3.a - Percentage of degree-seeking students who start in a developmental math course and complete a college-level quantitative degree requirement within two years.

Indicator 2.5.b - Percentage of degree-seeking students who start in developmental English course and complete a college-level English course or professional-technical communication degree requirement within two years.

Objective 3.1 - Increase course completion rates, while reducing course completion gaps between groups.

Indicator 3.1.a - Course completion with a C or better in professional/technical and transfer programs

Objective 3.4 – Students will demonstrate competence and confidence in student learning outcomes.

Indicator 3.4.a - College Learning Assessment (CLA).

Indicator 3.4.b - College outcomes for Analytical Reasoning (AR) and Communication (C). Assessment committee is in the process of developing this indicator.

Indicator 3.4.c - Students demonstrate confidence in their academic abilities (annual fall student survey).

The evaluation plan incorporates currently successful practices, acknowledges areas in need of improvement and addresses those needs in a forthright manner. The evaluation plan relies on multiple data sources and methodologies, and links assessment practices to core themes objectives and indicators.

Bachelor of Applied Science in Business Management

Enrollment

Enrollment in the BAS in Business Management program is fulfilling expectations. Cohort totals for the first and second years of the program are as follows:

BASM 1st yr. 32 students

BASM 2nd yr. 36 students – additional 8 students on wait list

These totals exceed enrollment projections for the first two years of this new applied baccalaureate degree program, indicating that demand for the program is strong.

Curriculum

The curriculum for the BAS in Business Management degree program has been approved through the established curriculum management procedures of the college. Approval has been granted to 14 core courses and three elective courses, at the upper division level. In addition, students in the program may satisfy general education requirements for the degree from the College's existing inventory of general education courses.

The following courses were developed through collaboration among faculty members in the Arts and Sciences and Workforce Education Divisions. These courses were reviewed and approved by the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee for distribution, enabling these courses to count towards general education requirements for the degree. These distribution courses include one elective course and three core courses.

POLS 310 Political Economy – Social Science Distribution - Elective

SOSCI 320 Organization Behavior and Leadership – Social Science Distribution - Core

PHIL 315 Professional Ethics – Humanities Distribution - Core

CMST 330 Organizational Communication – Communications Distribution - Core

All program courses are under review in accordance with the program plan. Initial results indicate that the courses reflect appropriate rigor for baccalaureate level instruction. The areas for improvement identified during the first year of instruction relate to instructional technology, specifically in the area of Interactive Television. Technology Services is working closely with the program faculty and administrators to account for and address these issues, and the College remains committed to the hybrid model of course delivery.

Student Performance

Overall, students performed satisfactorily during the first program year, as the aggregated quarterly earned GPA's indicate:

Fall 2014 - 3.33 Avg. GPA

Winter 2015 – 3.41 Avg. GPA

Spring 2015 – 3.18 Avg. GPA

Students were challenged by the mathematics content and, to a lesser extent, by the theoretical content in a few of the courses. As expected, those students who invested more time and who used the academic support services performed better.

The retention rate during the first year of the BAS in Business Management program was 92%, with is within the anticipated rate of retention.

Staffing

Two administrative personnel assigned to the baccalaureate degree programs and the BAS in Business Management meet each month with the vice president and the dean. Together, these four individuals comprise the administrative management team.

Director Luis Lopez provides administrative leadership for applied baccalaureate degree programs. This includes all aspects of program development, program planning and oversight during implementation, and on-going evaluation of program outcomes and performance. After serving successfully in an interim capacity, including significant contributions to program development and planning, Mr. Lopez was appointed to this position on a permanent basis.

Mr. Joseph Young was appointed as Program Coordinator for the BAS in Business Management. Mr. Young holds an M.B.A., and is responsible for coordination of the admission process, as well as the provision of academic and student support services.

Faculty

The College selected Christi Kitt, M.B.A. to the tenure track position of Business Administration Instructor. Ms. Kitt anchors the instructional effort in the BAS in Business Management program. Other instructors include tenured faculty members from the Workforce Education Division as well as the Arts and Sciences Division.

Facilities and Equipment

Generally, facilities and equipment met or exceeded expectations. The exception was the ITV technology. The classes encountered instances in which connectivity issues affected instruction. These matters are receiving priority attention from Technology Services, and as these problems are addressed we anticipate that these issues not be repeated.

Library and Information Resources

The Library and Media Services met all expectations, providing needed resources and services. These include print and digital reference resources, and reference services.

Student Services

The high retention rate in this program results in part from the selective admission process. In addition, the Program Coordinator provides focused attention to the program students, including

a detailed orientation, monitoring of attendance and academic progress, referrals to academic support services and counseling services where appropriate, and monitoring the use of academic support services by students. Program Coordinator Mr. Young participates in the administrative management team.

Management

The coordination and management of the BAS in Business Management program, is supported by monthly meetings of the management team, which includes the Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, the Dean of Workforce Education, the Director of Baccalaureate of Applied Science Programs, and the Program Coordinator. The monthly meetings provide for the review and assessment of the performance of the program and its students. The goal of these meetings is to address any issues that might impede students' successful progression through the program, or affect program viability.

The management team meetings held during the 2014-15 academic year provided opportunities to guide and monitor the implementation of the new program, according to the implementation plan. The work of both the Program Coordinator and BAS Programs Director is supported and enhanced by these monthly meetings. Each of these individuals works effectively with students, faculty members, and college academic and student services departments to address matters needing attention. The monthly administrative management meetings will continue, to ensure student and program success.

Conclusion

The College provides this Ad Hoc Report at the Commission's request, in order to address questions or concerns resulting from the Year One Report, the Mid-Cycle Report, as well as the recently approved Substantive Change. As this report illustrates, the College is successfully addressing these questions and concerns.

The core themes, objectives and indicators are refined and reflect an improved focus on the outcomes that are sought by the programs and services of the College. This improved focus supports more effective evaluation of mission attainment, while accounting for program outputs in the more appropriate are of Standard Two.

The College has made significant progress in articulating a plan for the evaluation of student learning that informs instruction and support services. This plan derives from careful and inclusive stakeholder engagement, and will contribute to evaluation of mission attainment.

The newly approved Bachelor of Applied Science in Business Management degree program is enjoying a successful initial implementation. The curriculum reflects rigor appropriate for baccalaureate level instruction. Program enrollment is exceeding initial projections, while retention is high and meets expectations. The administrative management methodology ensures that the program receives focused attention from executive leadership.