

FDLTCC Assessment Plan 2014-2019

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DEFINITIONS

CAC: Competencies across the curriculum. These are the institutional level assessments that encompass information literacy, the ability to communicate, problem solving, and culture.

Course outline: The official documentation of the course that is the property of the college. This outline contains the course learning outcomes as well as other important information about the course.

Course learning outcomes: Specific statements describing what students will be able to do upon completion of the course. Course learning outcomes, being an integral part of the course outline, must be officially approved through the AASC.

Course goals: These are what the faculty member intends to teach and reflects the content of the course. These are usually included in the course syllabus.

Program learning outcomes: Specific statements describing what students will be able to do upon completion of the program of study. These are an important part of the program review process at FDLTCC.

Assessment method: Faculty members are encouraged to use a variety of assessment methods in their classes. Assessment methods may include tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, short or long essays, field work, or demonstrations. Assessment methods relate to course learning outcomes.

TracDat: Assessment activities are tracked through an assessment management system called TracDat. Each faculty member will need to become familiar with this assessment management system in order to enter and retrieve their assessment data.

HISTORY

2009 ASSURANCE REPORT

The college underwent its last accreditation process in 2009. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) evaluators recommended placing FDLTCC on notice with regard to criterion 3, Core Component 3A: The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible, and Criterion 4, Core Component 4C: The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society. To quote:

To adequately resolve this area of concern, FDLTCC must take the following necessary actions: The development of an Assessment of Student Learning Plan and demonstrated progress on full implementation, data collection, and appropriate attention to instructional and college decision making based on assessed outcomes. In addition, the college needs to provide evidence that it has embraced the value of the assessment of student learning and has integrated it into their overall curriculum and instructional processes (p. 27, Assurance Section,

Final Report). The college also needs demonstrated evidence that general education and program outcomes have been fully integrated into program development and the evaluation of programs is driven by data informed decisions (p. 27, Assurance Section, Final Report).

COLLEGE RESPONSE

As a result of these findings, a high level process was initiated to plot corrective action and remove the college from sanction. A significant amount of good work was done by the Assessment Committee to refine the Competencies Across the Curriculum (CAC) including common rubrics for assessment. These efforts focused on these institutional level general education assessment and faculty actively participated in these efforts. During this work, the college invested in an assessment management platform (TracDat) to facilitate the implementation of its assessment plan and the warehousing of its data. However, there was a misunderstanding of the purpose of the software and the database was populated incorrectly. This led to a delay in its implementation. The committee then found itself in the position of having to use alternative means to capture data such as paper forms and google docs, which turned out to present its own challenges.

Discussions during the 2013-2014 school year led the Assessment Committee to believe that more could be done to utilize the TracDat system in collecting assessment data. The result of these discussions led the Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs to contact Dr. L. Hazareesingh of Mesabi Range Community College who was instrumental in the acquisition of TracDat for several colleges in Minnesota, including four colleges in the Northeast Higher Education District, Pine Technological College, and Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. Mesabi Range College has a very high degree of compliance with assessment reporting as a result of his design and efforts and its work with TracDat has been showcased at the TracDat user's conference twice in four years.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

During the Assessment Committee's interaction with Dr. Hazareesingh, a refocus in assessment strategy was discussed. Since the 2011 visit, the concentration had been on measuring institutional outcomes and our assessment methods had focused solely on the CAC's. Due to this, course specific learning outcomes had not be properly assessed. It was

determined that in order to have a robust measure of the effectiveness of teaching and learning, both course learning outcomes and institutional learning outcomes (CAC's) must be measured. The assessment committee decided that in order to facilitate this transition, course outlines must be updated to reflect course learning outcomes driven by the content of the course. At an Academic Affairs and Standards Council meeting on the 15 July 2014, a change to the format of course outlines, the official college document of the course, was approved. This format includes the recommendation of 4-7 course learning outcomes related to the CAC areas as the faculty deem appropriate. This will give us the basis for the course level reporting of student learning that is required as the basis for institutional and program level assessment.

Since the start of the summer session 2014, the college has embarked on an aggressive strategy to update the course outlines to reflect new content related course learning outcomes. Instructors were sent an e-mail and a letter asking them to consider their courses and provide 4-7 new content driven course learning outcomes for their courses. Course outline updates to 10 courses have been forwarded to the AASC (Academic Affairs and Standards Council) and were approved in draft form on the 15 July 2014 meeting. In addition, we have updated an additional 22 course outlines to reflect content driven course learning outcomes through mid-July, 2014. This brings the total number of course outline revisions to 32 at this point. This number does not include 37 course outlines that have been updated to the new format but await instructor review and approval. During the fall of 2014, the assessment team will work aggressively with the AASC to get the course outlines updated with new course learning outcomes that will be assessable in TracDat.

During the fall 2014 duty days to start the school year, the assessment team will present the assessment plan, train faculty on TracDat and present the FDLTCC Assessment Handbook which will include step-by-step instructions for the assessment of course learning outcomes for their courses. In addition, the faculty will work within disciplines/programs to come to agreement on the assessment of the institutional goals (CAC) for general education. Faculty members will also be asked to update the course learning outcomes for their fall semester courses and enter the updated outcomes directly into TracDat. Assessment committee members will be available to help with the entry of updated outcomes into TracDat. Updates to course learning outcomes will also be documented and brought forward to the AASC for formal approval of the updated course outlines.

COMPREHENSIVE COURSE OUTLINE REVIEW

A comprehensive review of the existing course outlines is the first step to setting up the database management system designed to collect assessment data. Updates to course outlines including the revision to course learning outcomes to reflect content of the courses has begun with summer 2014 courses and selected other courses and will continue during the fall of 2014. Once course outlines are updated, outcomes will be entered into TracDat and linked to the appropriate CAC goals. The set up of TracDat is essential to the assessment program of the college so that institutional outcomes can be tracked and teaching and learning may be improved on a continuous basis.

TIMELINE FOR COURSE OUTLINE REVIEW

Learning outcomes are to be assessed by course in an ongoing basis. The pilot for this will be during the summer session of 2014. No fewer than ten course outlines will be updated and entered into TracDat during the summer of 2014. Additional courses offered during fall 2014 will be added to TracDat in order to represent nearly all full-time faculty and the courses they teach. The goal during fall 2014 is to enter a minimum of 100 courses into TracDat, representing nearly 25% of the courses in the college catalog and a significant number of the courses that are regularly offered at FDLTCC. Also during the fall of 2014, spring courses will be updated and entered into TracDat. All revisions to course outlines that have been entered into TracDat will also be moved through the AASC approval process in a timely manner. After all regularly scheduled courses have been reviewed and approved, work will begin on additional courses in the catalog but only offered via special arrangement or infrequently.

Course outline review on an annual basis will be directed by the VP of Academic Affairs.

GENERAL EDUCATION REVIEW (INSTITUTIONAL GOAL REVIEW)

The Competencies Across the Curriculum (CAC) or general education curriculum will be evaluated on a rotating basis. During the fall duty days, faculty will break into discipline/program groups and discuss the best approach to evaluate the assigned CAC for that year. A common assignment/instrument for the evaluation of the appointed CAC will be developed by the discipline/program faculty as well as the courses which will use the assignment and a schedule for administering the assignment during that year. During fall 2013 and spring 2014, faculty

evaluated the Ability to Communicate CAC and the Information Literacy CAC, but we proposed to reevaluate the Ability to Communicate during the fall of 2014 using a common rubric and evaluating common assignments coordinated within programs/disciplines. The evaluation of the CAC areas will happen in the following rotational order:

<i>School Year</i>	CAC
2014-2015	Ability to Communicate
2015-2016	Information Literacy
2016-2017	Problem Solving
2017-2018	Culture
2018-2019	Ability to Communicate

Reporting on the assessment of student learning in the CAC areas on an annual basis ensures that the discipline/program areas use the most effective schedule for the evaluation of students in the CAC areas. Results will be provided to faculty each year in an annual Assessment Report produced in April of each year.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Every faculty member, whether full or part time, is expected to assess a minimum of one course each semester.
2. Assessment plan for class: Faculty members should plan their course outcome assessment early in the semester. This allows faculty members to map out their assessment strategies, carry out their assessment plan, and provide themselves with the time necessary to determine whether the outcomes have been met.
3. Assessment plans for the selected course must be set up in TracDat by the end of the 3rd week of each semester. This includes selecting the course outcomes to be evaluated and identifying an assessment method for each outcome.
4. Once data have been collected, assessment findings must be entered into TracDat and the assessment exercise marked as “completed”. Assessment reports are due 72 hours after grades are posted.

5. Assessment reports consist of 4 parts:
- A. Criterion met or not met: This is a drop-down selection menu.
 - B. Findings: This is where faculty members provide a detailed explanation of their assessment results and reflect on what these mean for their classes in the future.
 - C. Documentation: Once the above two items have been entered and saved, users will have the option of uploading artifacts. These may include rubrics, sample tests, scoresheets, photographs, PowerPoints, etc.
 - D. Assessment Actions: The purpose of assessing course outcomes is not simply to collect data, but to use the data to inform future class or program improvements. Once an assessment report is entered, users will have the option of entering actions that flow from the concluded assessment.

METHODOLOGY

Each evaluation of the CAC will consist of the use of a common assessment activity by program/discipline as well as a common evaluation method (rubric) agreed to by the faculty in that program/discipline. In this way data for the evaluation can be logically compared and thresholds will be established by faculty to determine student's mastery of the content in CAC. Program/discipline areas will include:

- Science and Mathematics (Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Geology, and Mathematics)
- Social Science (Psychology, Sociology, Geography, American Indian Studies, etc.)
- Humanities and Fine Arts (Philosophy, Art, Music, etc.)
- Language Arts (English, Anishinaabe, Speech, etc.)

All faculty will evaluate at least one course per semester for each of the course learning outcomes listed in the course outline. Faculty will also evaluate a minimum of the prescribed CAC area as outlined in the schedule above for the course(s) identified by each program/discipline working group.

Duty days at the beginning of each semester will be devoted to defining/refining the common assessment to be used in program/discipline areas. We currently have an approved

common rubric for the Ability to Communicate CAC, but the assessment committee will be tasked with developing a rubric for the other CAC areas following this schedule:

Spring 2015-Information Literacy

Spring 2016-Problem Solving

Spring 2017-Culture

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

It is imperative that we explain current program review on the campus with a renewed emphasis on program level assessment. A program at FDLTCC is defined as an Associate of Science (AS), Associate of Applied Science (AAS) or Associate of Fine Arts (AFA) degree that has been approved by MnSCU (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities) and is currently an active academic program listed on the official program inventory of the college according to MnSCU.

Program Review Schedule:

2015

EUT
GIS
BUS

2016

Env. Science
AFA
AA-AMIN

2017

LAWE
AA- Liberal Arts
Nursing

2018

Corrections
Human Services/Chemical Dependency
Early Childhood Human Services (AAS)

During the 2013-2014 academic year, significant progress was made by program coordinators to redefine program outcomes. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the three programs with high student enrollment will have program level outcomes entered into TracDat

so that this phase of assessment can be implemented for these programs. During the 2015-2016 academic year the next three most popular programs by student enrollment will have program level outcomes entered and implementation of assessment of these programs will enter the TracDat phase. The remaining programs will have program level outcomes entered during the 2016-2017 academic year. Once all program outcomes have been entered, assessment will continue on an annual basis for all programs of the college.

Program assessment takes into account not only the academic components of the department/program but also support services such as advising. Ideally, it's an opportunity for faculty to engage in an ongoing conversation about how their courses relate holistically to the goals of the department/program. Ultimately, both students and faculty can benefit from the process.

Like course-level assessment, program-level assessment is an iterative process that provides faculty with a framework to examine present and future educational offerings. The process itself is analogous to that of course-level assessment—identifying program learning goals, aligning goals with the curriculum, gathering evidence of student learning, interpreting the evidence, and using the evidence for improvement. A key distinction between the two processes is that program-level assessment requires the collective engagement of faculty during all steps in the process.

The FDLTCC Assessment Coordinator will be involved in helping programs develop 4-7 Program Learning Outcomes prior to duty day in Spring 2015. Program learning outcomes will be an important part of the new program review process.