

FDLTCC Assessment Plan 2020 – 2025

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HISTORY

On September 30/October 1, 2019, FDLTCC underwent its mid-cycle review for the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Standard Pathway, a timeline that coincided with the next round of assessment planning for the college. The HLC's Criteria 3 and 4, both encompassing aspects of teaching and learning, were met without concerns; however, FDLTCC's assessment committee has based Assessment Plan 2020 – 2025 on the evaluating team's guidance and suggestions. Consistent with the college's history of assessment of student learning, the Assessment Plan 2020 – 2025 carries forward a focus on existing practices related to course-, program-, and institutional-based assessment practices while also introducing the team's guidance to incorporate the college's more recent efforts to use "data to determine factors that might be predictive in terms of student success and instrumental in tailoring student success. . . ."

Because student learning and success is central to FDLTCC, the Assessment Plan 2020 – 2025 intentionally overlaps with aspects of FDLTCC's 2025 Strategic Plan, particularly Strategic Direction 4 to "Advance a Quality Education," as well aspects of FDLTCC's *Annual Report of Student Learning*, FDLTCC's *Data Factbook*, and timelines associated with the college's involvement with Achieving the Dream.

Strategic Areas of Attention 2020 – 2025

General Review and Evaluation of Processes

1. Engage in an annual review, evaluation, and report-out of primary student learning data via the production of the *Annual Report of Student Learning*. Assessment committee will review and evaluate data during the fall of each year and present the *Annual Report of Student Learning* to faculty and staff at duty days prior to the start of spring semester each year.
2. In 2024, engage in a broad review and evaluation of Assessment Plan results from 2020 – 2024 and determine paths forward.

I. Co-curricular Assessment (Criterion 2)

1. By 2023, review FDLTCC's definition of "co-curricular" and identify and develop the tracking process for other possible co-curricular student experiences (e.g., student ambassadors, PTK, athletics, conference participation in poster/research presentations)
2. Continue to assess optional credit-based internships, the Nandagikendan (Seek to Learn) Academies, and volunteer experiences (nursing and law enforcement).

II. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement (Criterion 4)

Core component 4A

1. Continue and build on established data reporting and review practices, such as Nuventive related to student learning, academic achievement, and related processes.
2. Establish a practice of including a brief and relevant data item in each standing committee meeting to increase campus awareness and discussion of data. An example would be a discussion of a KPI at the start of each AASC meeting.
3. Continue to practice and improve program review consistent with Minnesota State policy and procedure and on a 3-year cycle coupled with annual program data updates reported in the *Annual Report of Student Learning*.
4. Increase reporting of program learning outcomes in Nuventive.
5. Continue to develop, implement, and document Credit for Prior Learning opportunities in FDLTCC's academic programs in a manner consistent with Minnesota State policy and procedure
6. Continue to monitor and keep aligned Minnesota State transfer policies and FDLTCC procedures, including transparent posting of transfer policies and procedures on FDLTCC's website and in major printed materials, such as the college catalog.
7. Continue reporting dual enrollment (CITS) assessment of student learning in Nuventive and include such in the review and evaluation of assessment data.
8. Maintain documentation related to specialized accreditation and State approval boards, including ACEN, WINHEC, PELSB, BON, and POST.
9. Continue to run and review results from annual Minnesota State Graduate Follow-up Survey and annually disseminate general results broadly, such as at campus-wide meetings, the *Annual Report of Student Learning*, and FDLTCC Data Factbook.
10. Report in the *Annual Report of Student Learning* longitudinal views of student success
11. Continue to annually report key performance indicators (KPIs) related to Guided Learning Pathways, such as retention/persistence and completion.
12. Continue to refine and provide to internal and external audiences FDLTCC's Data Factbook and the *Annual Report of Student Learning*.

Core component 4B

1. Continue to monitor and improve licensure pass rates in each relevant program.
2. Maintain documentation related to specialized accreditation and State approval boards, including ACEN, WINHEC, PELSB, BON, and POST.
3. Develop the longitudinal view of ETS Proficiency Profile (FDLTCC Grad Exit Exam) results and establish an annual reporting practice through the *Annual Report of Student Learning* (report data in a disaggregated manner as able).
4. Develop the longitudinal view of assessment of student learning related to the Competencies Across the Curriculum (CAC) results and establish an annual reporting practice through the *Annual Report of Student Learning* (report data in a disaggregated manner as able).
5. Present and discuss longitudinal data related to student learning at campus-wide meeting days to broaden awareness and discussion of FDLTCC's student academic achievements.
6. Continue reporting dual enrollment (CITS) assessment of student learning in Nuventive and include such in the review and evaluation of assessment data.
7. Report in the *Annual Report of Student Learning* longitudinal views of student success
8. Continue to annually report key performance indicators (KPIs) related to Guided Learning Pathways, such as retention/persistence and completion.

Core component 4C

1. Continue to run and review results from annual Minnesota State Graduate Follow-up Survey and annually disseminate general results broadly, such as at campus-wide meetings, the Annual Report of Student Learning, and FDLTCC Data Factbook.
2. Report in the *Annual Report of Student Learning* longitudinal views of student success
3. Continue to annually report key performance indicators (KPIs) related to Guided Learning Pathways, such as retention/persistence and completion.
4. Continue to practice an annual review and reporting cycle of data related to student success initiatives reported via North Star, specifically academic alerts, academic progress reports, and mid-term grades, and generally, flags and kudos (disaggregate results as able).

Key Passages from HLC Site Visit Report 2019

I. Co-curricular Assessment (formerly Core Component 3E). Criterion 2: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Core Component 2.B (formerly known as Core Component 3.E)

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure, and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

HLC Site Visit Report, 2019: FDLTCC defines co-curricular offerings ‘as those primarily tied to credit and non-credit based experiences that are not required parts of degree programs’. . . .FDLTCC has created institutional goals for student persistence and completion rates. In addition, FDLTCC tracks persistence and completion rates for various student cohorts groups (such as student athletes). However, FDLTCC acknowledged a need to develop learning outcomes for co-curricular activities and to track data outcomes related to efficacy of such offerings.

II. 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

1. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.
2. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
3. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
4. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
5. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
6. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
7. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

HLC Site Visit Report, 2019: During the site visit, FDLTCC identified strengths and areas for improvement related to the academic program review process. Conversations with faculty coupled with an examination of program reviews provide evidence of an evolving, strengthened program review process. Similarly, FDLTCC’s World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) specialized accreditation requires the creation and articulation of Indigenous cultural standards across tribal-related programs and courses. Implementation of these cultural standards was so successful that faculty and staff are now in the process of adopting the

indigenous cultural standards in all academic programs at FDLTCC. In addition, FDLTCC's specialized accreditation with the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), POST (law enforcement accreditation), specialized accreditation for nursing further evidence ongoing commitment to the continuous improvement process.

FDLTCC recently moved from a five-year academic **program review cycle** to a more holistic review of all programs on a three-year cycle. During the third year, FDLTCC reviews program elements such as alignment of program and course learning outcomes with institutional learning outcomes, student persistence and completion rates, student transfer rates, budget allocation, financial position, labor markets, strategic planning, and retention and graduation rates.

As noted, an examination of completed program reviews and the program review template provide evidence of institutional commitment to the program review process. Furthermore, these program processes align with the program review policies and procedures set forth by the Minnesota State system.

FDLTCC uses Advisory Boards to gain insight related to the community and business needs, to track FDLTCC's degree of success in meeting those needs, and to track student progress after graduation. The FDLTCC Human Services program has written transfer agreements with the College of St. Scholastica (CSS) and the University of Wisconsin (Superior), and CSS has been offering the Social Work degree on the FDLTCC campus for the past nine (9) years.

While onsite, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Director of Institutional Research, and the Assessment Committee provided evidence of data gathering, assessment, and use of data outcomes related to demographics and student persistence, completion, and retention rates. Equally important, academic calendars provide evidence of commitment to data analysis conducted during "Duty Days," the next of which is scheduled for November of 2019. Equally important, the Director of Institutional Research and Vice President for Academic Affairs noted a need to "drill down" deeper into the data to determine factors that might be predictive in terms of student success and instrumental in tailoring student success platforms for specific student cohort groups. This evidences the fact FDLTCC is emerging a data-driven system based on the unique institutional and student needs assessment.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

HLC Site Visit Report, 2019: FDLTCC's commitment to educational achievement and improvement is demonstrated in its assessment model that adopted implementation of the Four Core Competencies Across the Curriculum (CAC). The Four Competencies are institutional learning outcomes that provide the foundation for college, program, and course learning outcomes. The competencies are:

- Information Literacy,
- Ability to Communicate,
- Problem Solving, and
- Culture.

These competencies are embedded in course outlines and form the focus for assessment of student learning. They are also integrated with college and program learning outcomes, thereby serving to ensure alignment of institutional, college, program, and course learning objectives. Understandably, this level of sophistication is due, in part, to participation in the Achieving the Dream initiative.

Faculty and deans review the course outlines and alignment of the Four Competencies with program learning outcomes on a three-year basis. This review is designed to ensure currency and assessment of student attainment of learning outcomes and to improve alignment of institutional learning outcomes in college, program, and classes offerings. Specialized accreditation, certification, and licensure exam rates further provide evidence of institutional commitment to educational achievement and improvement and ongoing improvement of student learning.

FDLTCC administers the ETS Proficiency Profile as a Graduate Exit Exam. The Graduate Exit Exam affords the comparison of competencies on a national scale and allows latitude for tailoring of eight institutional questions. However, FDLTCC first reviewed this data in 2018 and admits that issues "have not been resolved" with the data. As such, FDLTCC has not performed longitudinal (year-after-year) data analysis of the Graduate Exit Exam. Similarly, FDLTCC is beginning to disaggregate data for Activity Planning Forms, co-curricular activities, student services, and academic support programs. Similar to the Graduate Exit Exam, FDLTCC not yet performed longitudinal data analysis for these initiatives.

The Interim President and Vice President of Academic Affairs acknowledged that FDLTCC is in the initial phases of data analysis and confirmed the need to perform more longitudinal data analysis. They acknowledged that year-after-year analysis of data outcomes is essential in terms of identifying different at-risk student cohort groups. They agreed that without longitudinal data analysis, it is difficult to determine the efficacy of student success platforms designed to improve student persistence, completion, and retention rates. The good news is that longitudinal data analysis is on the horizon as part of FDLTCC's participation in the Achieving the Dream tribal initiative.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

HLC Site Visit Report, 2019: The Assurance Argument and committee meeting minutes provided evidence of commitment to improving student persistence, completion and retention rates. As evidence, FDLTCC provided data outcomes from participation in the Achieving the Dream program, data contained on the Minnesota State system Accountability Dashboard, and data contained in the Data Factbook that is published on the college website. Each contains data outcomes related to persistence, completion, retention, and graduation rates. The Data Factbook and Minnesota State system drill down into persistence and completion rates by ethnicity,

income, (as determined by Pell eligibility) and enrollment status (fulltime/part-time). Equally important, the Minnesota system requires publication of this data statewide and uses data outcomes to annually evaluate FDLTCC's president.

FDLTCC did acknowledge its institutional research processes are in the midst of change. FDLTCC recently hired an Institutional Research Director and is working with the Ascendium funded "Project Success" program and Achieving the Dream to embrace a more intensive data-driven approach to student persistence, completion, and retention analysis. This should provide more consistency in review of year-after-year data outcomes in order to identify factors that might be predictive in terms of at-risk student cohorts.

As noted, FDLTCC is participating in Achieving the Dream, a network of college and universities that provide on-site mentorship with a goal of creating a data-driven educational system to generate "student and community growth." In fact, FDLTCC has obtained a second three-year cycle with Achieving the Dream initiative, thereby providing future direction for data collection and analysis.

Similarly, the Strategic Plan 2025 and various initiatives, such as the advisor call lists, evidence commitment to improving student retention, persistence, and completion rates. FDLTCC also uses an "early alert system" to assist struggling students. In particular, FDLTCC has implemented a system that identifies students who are struggling during the first week of class and attempts to provide tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and emotional support. FDLTCC also provides the services of a Social Worker for students who might benefit from such services.

Conversations with students and FDLTCC employees describe the student support services as successful; however, FDLTCC is in the initial stages of accumulating and analyzing data to determine efficacy of student support platforms. Now that an Institutional Research Director has been hired, more data analysis and use of data outcomes is expected. Similarly, conversations with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, faculty, and the student support staff evidence an understanding of the need to improve student retention and completion rates. In fact, the student support staff and the registrar agreed that student success should be examined not only in terms of academic success, but also in terms of employment success after graduation or completion of a certificate. Overall, FDLTCC employees evidenced real dedication to celebrating student success and should be commended for that commitment.

III. Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

FDLTCC demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs and support services. Similarly, FDLTCC evaluates effectiveness of student learning processes through data collection and analysis as evidenced by its assessment reporting infrastructure.

The faculty are committed to assessment as is evidenced by FDLTCC's membership in the Achieving the Dream initiative. The next step is for FDLTCC to utilize year-after-year data outcomes to identify predictive factors for various at-risk student cohort groups. Such longitudinal data is critical when establishing student success platforms designed to improve student persistence, completion, and retention rates.

DEFINITIONS

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.

CAC: Competencies Across the Curriculum. These are the FDLTCC's institutional level assessments that encompass information literacy, the ability to communicate, problem solving, and culture.

Course outline: By MSCF contract, a course outline is the official public documentation of the course and is the property of the college (as opposed to a syllabus, which is the intellectual property of a faculty member). The course 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 on completion of the course. Course learning outcomes, being an integral part of the course outline, must be officially approved through the AASC.

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

Co-curricular: Offerings tied to credit- and non-credit-based experiences that are not required parts of degree programs, in most instances, but that add value and skills to the learning experience. At FDLTCC, these include credit-based internship and research experiences, non-credit but required community service hours in the nursing and law enforcement programs, and non-credit participation in the Nandagikendan academies for entering college students and returning college students.

Key performance indicators (KPIs): Key measures that indicate progress toward an intended result, such as credit completion, course completion, and degree completion.

Lagging indicators: Metrics that are output-oriented (summative), such as graduation, employment, and retention rates. Lagging indicators provide information "after the fact" and can't be impacted in "real-time."

Leading indicators: Metrics that are input-oriented (formative), such as mid-term grades, early alerts, and attendance reporting. Leading indicators provide information that can be acted on in order to change a circumstance.

Program learning outcomes: Specific statements describing what students will be able to do on completion of the program of study.

TracDat/Nuventive: Assessment activities are tracked through an assessment management system called TracDat/Nuventive. FDLTCC faculty, including faculty teaching in the college's dual enrollment (CITS) program, log their assessment data on a semesterly basis during the final grading period, and these data form the foundation of FDLTCC's view of course-level student learning.