



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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November 7, 2019

President Todd Holcomb
Hawkeye Community College
1501 E. Orange Rd.
Waterloo, IA 50704-8015

Dear President Holcomb:

The interim report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. The staff analysis of the report is attached.

On behalf of the Higher Learning Commission staff received the report on effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of institutional learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. No further reports are required.

The Open Pathway Assurance Review is scheduled for 2021. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2026– 2027.

For more information on the interim report process contact Lil Nakutis, Accreditation Processes Manager, at lnakutis@hlcommission.org. Your HLC staff liaison is Linnea Stenson (lstenson@hlcommission.org); (800) 621-7440 x 107.

Thank you.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION



STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: November 7, 2019

STAFF LIAISON: Linnea Stenson

REVIEWED BY: Steven Kapelke

INSTITUTION: Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo, IA

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Dr. Todd Holcomb, President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION AND SOURCES: An interim report is required by 9/1/2019 on effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of institutional learning outcomes and program learning outcomes.

Further, the report should include how HCC has used the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

This interim report derives from the Team Report of the institution's 2017 Comprehensive Evaluation.

REPORT PRESENTATION AND QUALITY: The Hawkeye Community College interim report is presented in a clearly written, well-organized narrative supported with a range of supplementary items contained in the appendices (Appendices A through J). Included among these supporting documents is the "Assessment Faculty Fellow Job Description," an "Excerpt from Executive Assessment Report," the "Syllabus Template," and the "Curriculum Committee Faculty Information Packet." Indications are that the report is thorough and candid.

REPORT SUMMARY: Following a brief introductory section that provides context for the body of the report, the document's primary content is presented in two parts, titled "Areas of Focus." In the introduction, the report notes that the College used the process of drafting the report as a means by which to review and improve its assessment procedures, stating "*The team was determined that there be a shift from the lackluster participation in 'collecting data' to broad participation with a true appreciation for quality improvement in student learning...*" Here the report offers an overview of the five steps taken by the College to carry out this process, beginning with review of existing student learning outcomes (SLOs).

The first area of focus is titled, "**Effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of Institutional Learning Outcomes and**

program learning outcomes.” This part of the report is presented in five subsections, each addressing one step in the College’s efforts to improve assessment of student learning. The first of these was to review existing outcomes at both the course (SLO) and program (PLO) levels to assure appropriate alignment with Bloom’s taxonomy. Subsequently, the institution determined to conduct syllabus review sessions for every section of every course on a semester-by-semester basis. The following tables show the review schedule for course and program outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Created by Relevant Faculty Maintained in Course Syllabus Templates Review Plan		
Step	When	Who
Syllabus Review Work	Each Semester	Deans
New Course Approval	As Needed	Curriculum Committee
Major Course Modification	As Needed	Curriculum Committee
Five Year APR Evaluation	Third Year of Cycle	Curriculum Committee

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) Created by Relevant Faculty Maintained in APR Document/Curriculum Database Review Plan		
Step	When	Who
New Program Approval	As Needed	Advisory Committee Curriculum Committee Deans VPAA
Program Modification Approval	As Needed	Advisory Committee Curriculum Committee Deans VPAA
Five Year APR	Fifth Year of Cycle	Assessment Committee Deans VPAA
Advisory Meetings	Every Fall	Advisory Committee Dean Program Faculty

The second subsection addresses procedures for new and/or revised instructional programs with regard to the development and course mapping of PLOs and ILOs as well as determining that all learning outcomes are being

assessed. This process is repeated regularly during the academic program review cycle.

In the third subsection of Focus Area 1, the report describes in some detail the College's efforts at establishing "*a clearer and more user-friendly assessment process to reduce confusion among the faculty.*" To that end, the institution now houses required assessment elements, resources, and instructions in Canvas, the College's Learning Resource Management system, which is readily accessible to the faculty.

According to the report, the institution updated its Plan to Assess Student Success (PASS) Guide, and has made available help sessions throughout the academic term to assist the faculty in its assessment efforts. Here the report also enumerates the four general steps in the assessment process: *(1) completion and submission of a planning form, (2) faculty assessment of student outcomes, (3) data submission; and (4) completion of a Closing the Loop survey.*

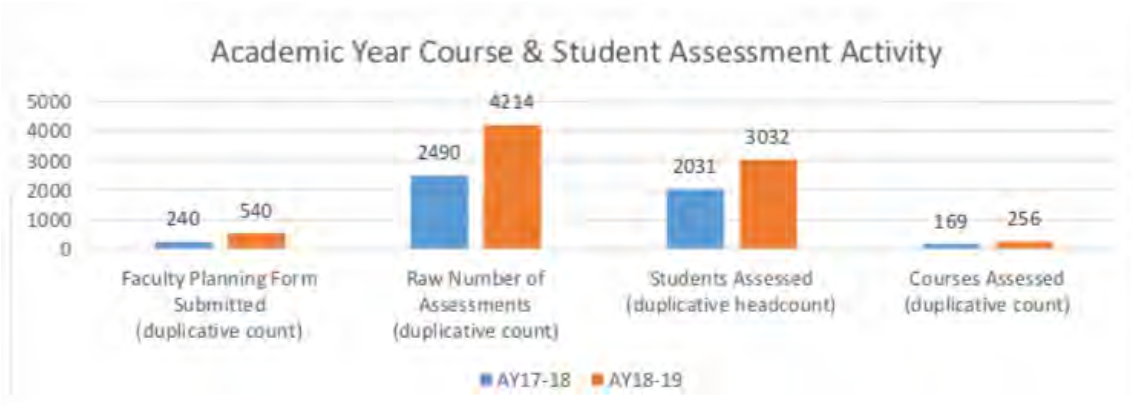
The fourth and fifth subsections of Focus Area 1 center on the final two steps in the assessment process, the use of assessment data for the purposes of educational improvement, and the dissemination of "*assessment data, results, and plans for action,*" which are being shared with the faculty during two annual in-service days. The report notes that the College is developing a plan to distribute this information more broadly.

In a separate section of Focus Area 1, the report provides a list of the committees and other resources placed at the support of the College's assessment efforts. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The Assessment Committee
- The Curriculum Committee
- New Faculty Orientation
- Faculty Induction and Mentoring
- Assessment Faculty Fellows

The report offers additional details for each of these support features, noting for example the four primary responsibilities of the Assessment Committee, which includes providing "*faculty leadership, perspective consultation and feedback pertaining to assessment procedures and instruments.*"

Focus Area Two: How HCC has used the information gained from assessment to improve student learning, describes how the College set assessment goals, the steps it took to meet the goals, and the results of those efforts. The goal for AY2018-2019, for example, "*was to extend [faculty] training and assessment expectations to adjunct and concurrent enrollment faculty.*" The report notes substantial increases in the number of planning forms and assessments, as reflected in the graph below.



The report goes on to summarize some results of the AY2017-2018 and AY2018-2019 assessment data, noting that the assessment focus for AY2019-2020 will be on Critical Thinking/Problem Solving. Here the report provides tables showing assessment results from Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 in the eight ILO areas.

Fall 2017	Number assessed	Percent of total	Number passed	Percent passed
ILO Artistic Expression	43	3%	43	96%
ILO Communication	84	5%	68	81%
ILO Community/Global Awareness	264	17%	203	77%
ILO Critical Thinking Problem Solving	502	32%	365	73%
ILO Individual Development	156	10%	139	89%
ILO Information Management	46	3%	36	78%
ILO Quantitative Reasoning	180	11%	120	67%
ILO Workplace Application of Skills	312	20%	260	83%

Spring 2018	Number assessed	Percent of total	Number passed	Percent passed
ILO Artistic Expression	19	2%	18	95%
ILO Communication	88	10%	77	88%
ILO Community/Global Awareness	95	10%	73	77%
ILO Critical Thinking Problem Solving	344	37%	260	76%
ILO Individual Development	167	18%	144	86%
ILO Information Management	7	1%	6	86%
ILO Quantitative Reasoning	144	16%	107	74%
ILO Workplace Application of Skills	62	7%	50	81%

The last parts of Focus Area 2 describe the institution’s efforts in “*the final step in the assessment process, Closing the Loop...*” Here the report notes that 84% of the full-time faculty submitted closing the loop reports for AY2017-2018, with AY2018-2019 data to be collected in Fall 2019; this will include reports from all faculty contingents, among them the adjunct and concurrent enrollment faculty.

The institution administered the closing the loop survey to the faculty, the results of which indicated that 11 themes were identified; these “*will be used to create a drop-down menu for the next reporting cycle to help streamline the process and make data analysis easier.*” These themes are reflected in the table below.

Modification Tested Through Assessment	Number of Faculty Reporting
Modified Exam or Assignment	18
Added hands-on and/or other activities	2
Spent more time on topic	17
Changed teaching methodology	18
Provided additional instruction	12
Modified the learning environment	1
Clarified expectations	10
Added and/or modified resources	6
Made a curriculum modification	1
No change was needed	7
Repeated assessment with no change	21

The report’s narrative closes with a summary analysis of the 11 themes, noting the degree of faculty response and providing brief recaps of the results in certain areas—citing, for example, the fact that the largest response category was that of “Repeated assessment with no change,” as reflected in the table above. At this point in the report, the College restates its commitment to the assessment of student learning and acknowledges the need “*to sustain and grow from where we are today.*”

REPORT ANALYSIS: Materials presented in the Hawkeye Community College interim report provide evidence showing that the institution has made significant progress in its efforts to create an effective and sustainable set of procedures for learning outcomes assessment.

More specifically, the College undertook a comprehensive review of its course and program level student learning outcomes, at the same time establishing a system of syllabus review to ascertain that these outcomes are appropriately reflected in course syllabi. According to the report, the institution will continue to review these on a semester-by-semester basis; this should ensure a high degree of sustained compliance within the College.

The report is also clear with regard to the revision of the College's assessment system, noting the four steps in the process and including in the report a "fifth step" which is the increasingly broad dissemination of assessment data within academic affairs and across the institution. This effort to communicate assessment results more broadly reflects well on the institution.

Information included in the report indicates that the College's support for learning outcomes assessment is strong, including what appears to be an effective committee structure pertaining directly to assessment, beginning with the Assessment and Curriculum Committees. The report describes other features of this support as well, including the appointment of Assessment Fellows, who *"are given release time and/or a stipend to provide targeted professional development opportunities, resources, and individual consulting to support assessment efforts at the College."*

Although the work of the institution pertaining to the use of assessment data for the purposes of improvement is still a work in progress, it is evident that the College has made a solid beginning in this area and has started to track the results of its assessment efforts. The number of assessments has grown substantially between AY17-18 and AY18-19, as noted in the Report Summary section above, and the faculty "closing the loop survey" has supplied the institution with useful information that will affect future reporting cycles.

Analysis Concluding Statement: Hawkeye Community College has complied in all respects with recommendations articulated in the 2017 HLC Team Report. The Higher Learning Commission acknowledges the institution's efforts to date and will not require additional reporting on these matters.

The College will need to give continued attention to these matters, as noted in the Staff Finding section below. This is not intended as criticism; the institution has made marked progress in establishing and implementing what appears to be an effective set of procedures for learning outcomes assessment and is to be commended for the work completed to this point. Nonetheless, much of this work is in early stages and will need ongoing oversight by the College. The institution should assume that the HLC Peer Review Team conducting the 2021 Open Pathways Assurance Review will examine carefully the institution's continued progress in assessment.

STAFF FINDING:

Note the relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s): Core Component 4.B

Statements of Analysis (check one below)

Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.

Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.

Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.

Evidence is insufficient and a HLC focused visit is warranted.

STAFF ACTION: Receive the report on effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of institutional learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. No further reports are required.

The Open Pathway Assurance Review is scheduled for 2021. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2026– 2027.