# Assessment Newsletter

Assessment in the Time of COVID

We've had an interesting couple of years dealing with the many, many ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. As with almost everything in our lives, assessment was affected. Our pre-planned assessment activities went out the window, our standard methods of teaching were crushed by hybrid-flexible learning and 50% classroom capacities. Even our assurances that *most* of our students would be in class reliably fell away as we modified to accommodate frequent and unpredictable student quarantines. But still we continue.

The Student Learning Assessment Team (SLAT) noticed a decline in assessment partici-pation during the 2020-21 academic year. As many faculty were teaching in new and even combined modalities to split classes, their time was often consumed by class preparations and working with students who moved in-and-out-of-quarantine. They were also affected by the pandemic personally, emotionally, mentally, and physically, making assessment less of a priority during that time of stress and continuous change.

Given the global circumstances, SLAT finds this dip in assessment participation to be not only acceptable but also inevitable. However, SLAT also realistically believes that the progress previously made in assessment will return as we adjust to the "new normal" of education.
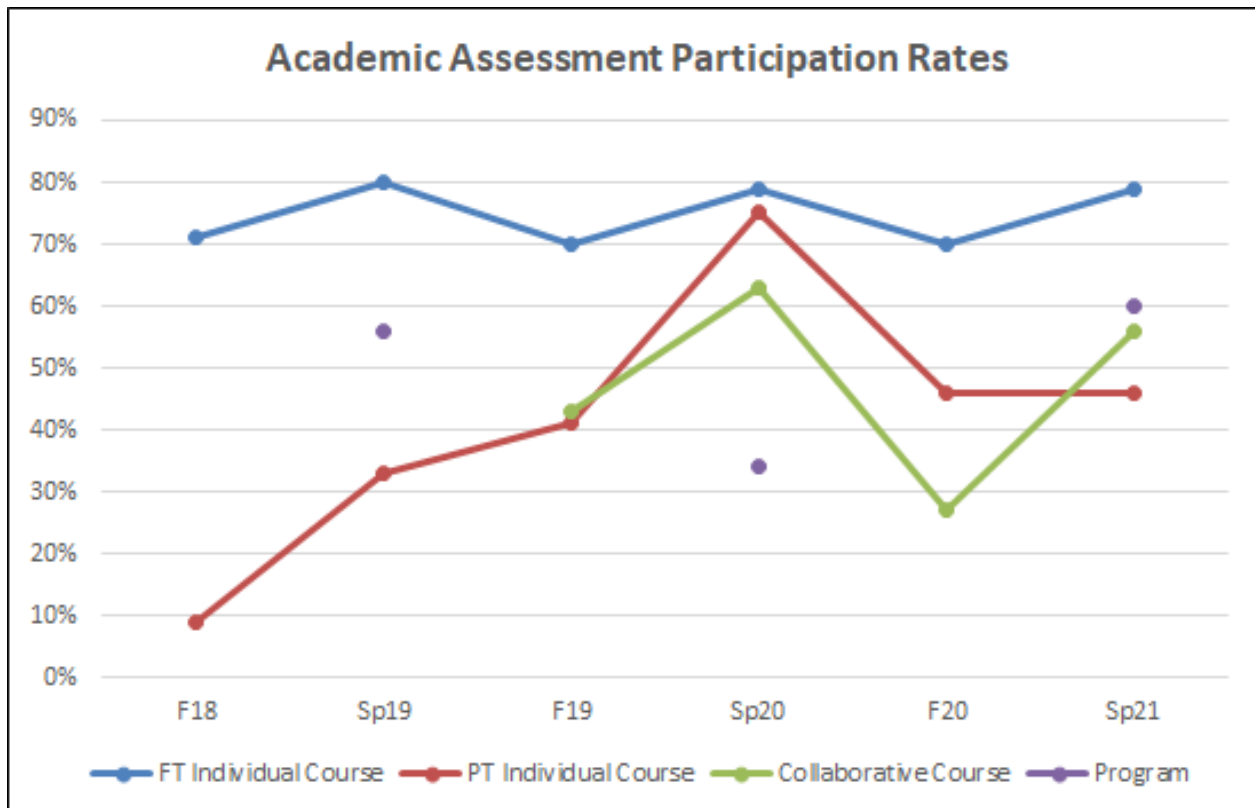
GCCC's HLC site visit is scheduled for November 7-8, 2022. During that visit, the site team will meet with various groups on campus including faculty.

One significant area of HLC oversight is Criterion 4 which addresses Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement. For this area, HLC wants to know *what our assessment processes are* and *how we use the information* for continuous improvement.

Therefore, it's important that we have a shared understanding of our assessment processes. We have two broad categories of assessment: Academic and Non-Academic.

Academic Assessment

Academic Assessment takes place on three levels: institutional, program, and course. Each of these assessments collects actionable data about student learning.

Institution-level assessment is **General Education** assessment which occurs through the Essential Skills for transfer programs and Employability Skills for technical programs.

> **ESSENTIAL SKILLS**
> Critical Thinking
> Diversity Awareness
> Social Responsibility
> Oral Communication
> Written Communication

The Essential Skills and Employability Skills represent general outcomes that all students should meet regardless of major or program. General Education data is collected through the programs (any sequence of courses resulting in a credential) so that students are evaluated for their ability to use the skills within their fields. For example, nursing students can problem-solve *as nurses* and psychology majors can write like *psychologists*.

Every program also participates in **Annual Program Assessment**. Program majors are assessed on the content knowledge and skills stated in the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) which students achieve by moving through the program's course sequence.

PLOs as well as Essential and Employability Skills are included in the program's curriculum map which shows the

> **EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**
> Communication
> Problem Solving
> Work Ethic

alignment among those outcomes and skills and courses within the program sequence.

In addition, every instructor assesses selected Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), which identify the skills and knowledge students should obtain within a given course. This assessment occurs in each course each semester as the **Semester Course Assessments**. These are combined into Collaborative Course Assessments by instructors of the same course.

Academic Assessment:
Marc Malone, VP of Instructional Services
SLAT
Brian McCallum, Chair
Samantha Sanger, Assessment Coordinator
Seth Kristalyn
Chip Marcy
Perla Salazar
Chris Turpin
Brandy Unruh
Gabe Winger

More HLC and Assessment

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Non-Academic Assessment

Non-Academic departments also participate in annual assessment. Departments that have direct interaction with students complete Co-Curricular Assessment while departments that serve campus infrastructure complete Departmental Assessment. Both assessments ask departments to consider Performance Objectives for effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction, and co-curricular departments also consider Student Learning Outcomes.

Program Review

Every Academic Program and Non-Academic Department participates in the five-year comprehensive Program Review. The Review provides the opportunity to analyze functions and performance including analysis of financial and personnel resources in addition to learning and performance outcomes. Within the Review, participants highlight successes, address

Assessment	What is Assessed?	Who is Assessed & When?	Who uses the data?
Annual General Education Assessment (institution-level)	Essential Skills (transfer programs) Employability Skills (technical program)	All GCCC students through their programs where ever they can best demonstrate the outcome in the program sequence	Programs and GCCC
Annual Program Assessment	Program Learning Outcomes (skills and content knowledge majors gain through the program)	All program majors in the courses they demonstrate mastery based on the program's curriculum map.	Programs
Semester Course Assessment	Student Learning Outcomes (skills and content knowledge students gain through the course)	All students enrolled toward the end of course after they've had time to practice and develop the skill.	Instructors, Departments, and Programs
Non-Academic Assessment	Department performance objectives for efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction (and student learning outcomes for co-curricular departments)	Inter— and intra-departmental activities, processes and procedures Annually	Departments and Non-Academic Divisions
Program Review	Program and departmental function including budget, resources, outcomes, and personnel	Each program and non-academic department on campus on a 5-year cycle.	Programs, Departments, Divisions, and GCCC

(Continued from page 3) challenges, and identify needed resources to request through the budge planning process.

How Assessment is Used

Analysis of assessment data is used to improve courses, programs, and departments. Academic improvements can include changes to course curriculum, prerequisites, or offerings or revision of learning outcomes or course sequences, among others. For example, the Allied Health program determined that their students needed additional practice taking blood pressure and requested additional funding to provide each student with his or her own blood pressure cuff allowing for additional practice outside of class.

Non-academic improvements can focus on process or procedure changes, inter-departmental projects, or resource needs. Assessment and program review also feed into other campus processes including budget planning and the strategic plan.

How to Prepare for the HLC Visit

So what should *you* do to prepare for HLC's visit? It's simple: know our assessment processes and how we use them to continuously improve. Assessment touches every area of campus and every employee. Talk with your department about how your area uses assessment. What is assessed? What changes have been implemented because of assessment? What is your current assessment plan?

You should also

- Attend assessment meetings.
- Ask questions.

- Think about assessment and your department.
- Contribute your assessment experiences to the Assurance Argument.

Interested in Assessment?

SLAT is looking for new members beginning Fall 2021. Please contact Brian McCallum or Samantha Sanger if you are interested in joining.

General Education Outcomes

GCCC has two sets of General Education Outcomes: Essential Skills for transfer programs and Employability Skills for technical programs. Each outcome is presented below.

Essential Skills

1) Students will develop **critical thinking** skills.
2) Students will develop **awareness of diversity**.
3) Students will demonstrate **oral communication** skills.
4) Students will develop an awareness of **social responsibility**.
5) Students will illustrate **writing skills**.

Employability Skills

1) Students will be able to **communicate** effectively.
2) Students will apply **problem solving** skills in industry-specific situations.
3) Students will model **work ethic**.

Test Your Assessment Knowledge & Win a Prize!

Bring your completed crossword to Samantha Sanger in the JOYC building. All correct submissions will be entered in a drawing for $10 gift cards.

Submissions must be received by 4 p.m. on Nov. 16. Five winners will be drawn on Nov. 17.
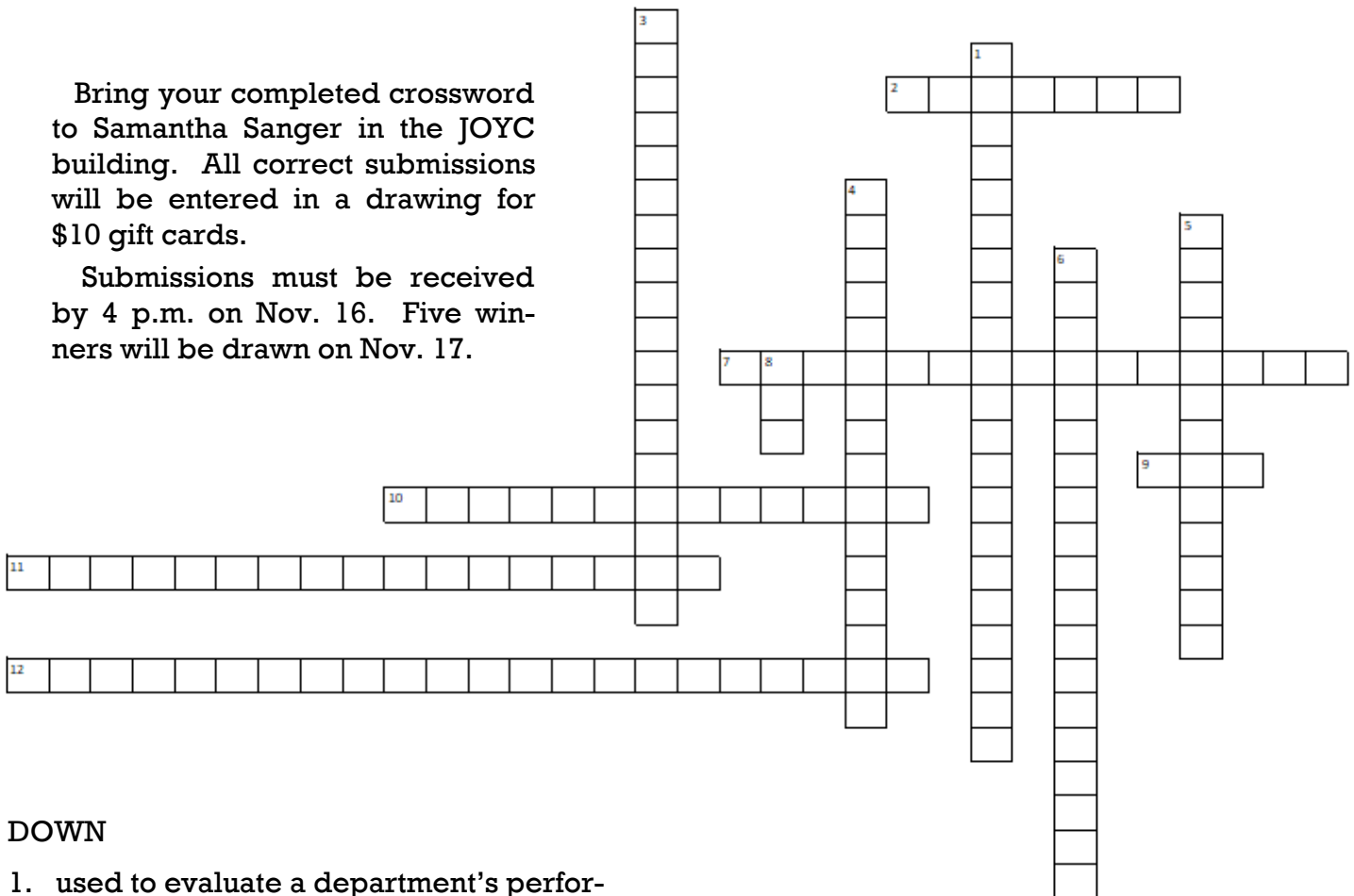
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1. used to evaluate a department's performance objectives for effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction

3. overarching term for all course-related student learning evaluation processes

4. completed each semester by each instructor

5. shows the alignment between program and course outcomes as well as Essential and/or Employability Skills

6. universal skills that all technical program students should possess

8. measurable statement of content knowledge and skills possessed by students at the end of a course

ACROSS

2. a sequence of courses ending in a credential

7. universal skills that all transfer program students should possess

9. measurable statement identifying content knowledge and skills possessed by program majors

10. five-year comprehensive evaluation of a department

11. annual assessment of a sequence of courses

12. completed by non-academic departments

What's New in Academic Assessment?

GCCC has adopted three Employability Skills as General Education outcomes for technical programs. They are Communication, Critical Thinking, and Work Ethic. Their definitions and applications encompass the intent and rigor of the five Essential Skills (Critical Thinking, Diversity Awareness, Oral Communication, Social Responsibility and Written Communication) but reframe them within the context of workforce expectations.

The Employability Skills were piloted in Spring 2021. They are being fully implemented for the 2021-22 academic year.

Gabe Winger, Agriculture Equipment instructor, participated in the pilot: "Using the employability skills rubric this semester gave me a different insight to my sophomore class and showed me how prepared they really are to enter the workforce. This type of data can be used in multiple ways to help me understand and formulate a plan to make sure that these students have a successful transition into the work force as a competent, well spoken, and well mannered active member of society."

Brandy Unruh, Kurt Wenzel, and Patsy Zeller were instrumental in the creation and pilot of the rubrics.

Course & Program Assessment Details

Annual Program Assessment

	Completed Assessments	Total Programs	Percentage
2018-19	22	39	56%
2019-20	20	58	34%
2020-21	35	58	60%

About the Data: Program assessment in 2018-19 was completed by department not credential; hence, the smaller total number of programs. The 2019-2020 data reflects the total number of credentials offered by GCCC. HLC defines programs as any area granting an award (credential).

Collaborative Course Assessment

	Completed Assessments	Total Courses	Percentage
Fall 19	23	53	43%
Spring 20	33	52	63%
Fall 20	17	61	27%
Spring 21	33	58	56%

About the Data: total courses represent all courses that should have a collaborative assessment filed.

Full-Time Individual Course Assessment

	Completed Assessments	Total Courses	Percentage
Fall 18	202	284	71%
Spring 19	208	257	80%
Fall 19	230	328	70%
Spring 20	227	282	79%
Fall 20	184	262	70%
Spring 21	208	262	79%

Part-Time Individual Course Assessment

	Completed Assessments	Total Courses	Percentage
Fall 18	24	260	9%
Spring 19	55	164	33%
Fall 19	60	146	41%
Spring 20	70	93	75%
Fall 20	56	121	46%
Spring 21	47	102	46%

General Education Assessment Details (majors only)

Critical Thinking *21.25 pt. scale*	Explanation of Issues	Evidence	Influence of Context & Assumptions	Student's Position	Conclusions & Related Outcomes		Total
2018-2019 (5 programs)	3.09	3.10	2.75	2.69	3.12		**14.75**
2019-2020 (4 programs)	2.94	2.99	2.85	2.93	2.91		**14.62**
2020-2021 (3 programs)	3.88	3.89	3.75	3.5	3.83		**18.85**

Diversity Awareness *25.5 pt. scale*	Knowledge Cultural Self-Awareness	Knowledge: Cultural Worldview Frameworks	Knowledge: Cultural Empathy	Skills: Empathy	Skills: Verbal & Non Verbal Communication	Attitudes: Curiosity	Attitudes: Openness	Total
2018-2019 (5 programs)	2.34	2.43	2.30	2.51	2.24	2.62	**14.44**
2019-2020 (4 programs)	2.38	2.26	2.47	2.3	2.28	2.46	**14.14**
2020-2021 (2 programs)	3.41	3.42	2.82	3	2.88	2.92	**18.43**

Oral Communication *21.25 pt. scale*	Organization	Language	Delivery	Supporting Material	Central Message		Total
2018-2019 (4 programs)	3.38	3.07	3.22	3.35	3.16		**16.18**
2019-2020 (5 programs)	3.57	3.53	3.43	3.39	3.39		**17.31**
2020-2021 (5 programs)	3.25	3.07	2.97	2.79	3.06		**15.15**

Social Responsibility *25.5 pt. scale*	Diversity of Communities & Cultures	Analysis of Knowledge	Civic Identity & Commitment	Civic Communication	Civic Action & Reflection	Civic Contexts/ Structure	Total
2018-2019 (3 programs)	2.79	2.59	2.46	2.72	3.16	3.21	**16.94**
2019-2020 (2 programs)	3.08	2.79	3.18	3.04	2.78	2.74	**17.6**
2020-2021 (1 program)	2	2	2	1.8	1.8	1.6	**11.2**

Written Communication *21.25 pt. scale*	Context & Purpose	Content Development	Genre & Disciplinary Conventions	Sources & Evidence	Syntax & Mechanics		Total
2018-2019 (7 programs)	3.11	3.01	3.05	2.78	2.90		**14.69**
2019-2020 (6 programs)	3.43	3.51	3.18	3.52	3.2		**16.83**
2020-2021 (4 programs)	3.68	3.57	3.1	3.54	2.94		**16.84**

Non-Academic Assessment Spotlight: Instructional Services

Non-Academic Assessment is completed by all departments on campus, including Administrative departments. One of the Performance Objectives of the Instructional Services department is to "work to ensure its policies are up-to-date, accurate, and work to support teaching and learning…." In evaluating this objective, Marc Malone and the Instructional Services division set the goal of reviewing 20 instructional policies for the 2020-2021 assessment cycle.

Their report indicates that only four policies were reviewed during the assessment year. More importantly, their analysis revealed that the review process is quite complex: "We determined the process—starting policy discussions with Faculty Senate, then sending to Instructional Services, then sending to College Council, then to Cabinet—is indeed quite lengthy, potentially taking five months for a single policy to move through."

Their analysis has identified a significant challenge to the policy review process. Rather than change the target number of policies, making an easily achievable goal, they instead worked to address the challenge: "Malone proposed to C&I [Curriculum & Instruction Committee] a new structure which would eliminate Instructional Council as a decision-making body for Instructional policies. This would shorten the timeline by one stop without diminishing the role of faculty in providing feedback to Instructional policies."

Tips for Non-Academic Assessment

- Create & discuss your assessment plan with input from your department

- Post your assessment plan in your area, so you are reminded to collect data

- Make assessment check-ins part of your regularly scheduled meetings

- Create your assessment tools (including attendance tracking tools, surveys, exit interviews, etc.) early and share with everyone collecting data

    - What do you need to collect?

    - Who is responsible for collecting it?

    - When is it collected?

    - How is it collected and stored?

- Set reminders on your calendar for data collecting, updating, checking in with the department on assessment, etc.

- Use the Ready Ed App to track attendance at events and to collect feedback

Non-Academic Assessment
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