

Key Success Factors in Strengthening and Supporting Institution-Wide Goals for Learning

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Introduction

Complementing the learning outcomes at course- and program-levels and in other settings, institution-wide goals for learning describe what students should know and be able to do as graduates of *any* program across the college or university. These goals reinforce the aims and values an institution places on a collegiate education, and they signal to students, parents, employers, and other influencers the broad outcomes graduates should be able to demonstrate by attaining a degree from the institution.

Many campuses have adapted a framework developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) known as Essential Learning Outcomes to guide their thinking about specific institution-wide learning goals. As described extensively on AAC&U's website (aacu.org/essential-learning-outcomes), Essential Learning Outcomes—and the related VALUE rubrics designed to articulate characteristics and criteria of these outcomes—prepare students for twenty-first century challenges in several domains. These include:

- *Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World*, through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts;
- *Intellectual and Practical Skills*, including inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, and teamwork and problem solving;
- *Personal and Social Responsibility*, including civic knowledge and engagement—local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundations and skills for lifelong learning; and
- *Integrative and Applied Learning*, including synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies.

Institution-wide goals for learning have the potential to provide meaningful, coherent, and interconnected learning experiences for students. By serving as an overarching framework for student learning, they provide an opportunity for individual programs, courses, and learning experiences in co-curricular, experiential, community, and international settings to align their specific learning goals to broader institutional learning goals. Doing so presents several venues and possibilities to introduce, reinforce, and assess both types of learning goals.

There are several challenges faced by faculty, staff, and administrators in advancing institution-wide goals for learning. First, some colleagues may not fully appreciate the significance of having institution-wide goals for learning and their intended purpose in developing holistic graduates. Second, because such institution-wide learning goals are broad in nature, it may be

difficult for individual faculty or staff members to see how these goals connect to specific goals for learning in individual programs, courses, or learning experiences. Third, implementation and assessment of institution-wide goals for learning is typically distributed throughout the campus; thus, there may be a sense of diffusion of responsibility for accomplishing the outcomes of these goals. Finally, colleagues may lack an understanding of how to use credible evidence from various sources to determine the extent to which institution-wide goals for learning are being achieved.

To address these challenges, several *key success factors* are necessary to strengthen and support institution-wide goals for learning:

1. Communication
2. Professional Development
3. Implementation
4. Assessment and Improvement
5. Documentation

Key Success Factor #1, Communication

Educators need to develop effective *communication* plans and approaches to (re)introduce, promote, and ensure widespread understanding of institution-wide goals for learning to various stakeholders, including students and prospective students, parents/influencers, faculty, staff, employers, community partners, and institutional governance leaders/policymakers. This requires a focus on context, audience and message, media, and timing.

Context

The context in which institution-wide goals for learning are advanced plays a role in the communication strategies employed to promote them broadly. The institution's history and maturation with institution-wide learning goals provides a starting point. Are these goals under consideration for adoption? In initial development? Newly launched? Represent a sustained endeavor? Or are they in the process of being revised after several years of experience with their use? Where the institution finds itself in the implementation cycle will inform how communication unfolds.

An example from my home institution, IUPUI, illustrates the importance of understanding context as part of communicating institution-wide goals for learning. Our campus was an early adopter of these types of learning goals, and we initially launched our then-titled *Principles of Undergraduate Learning* in 1998. Recently, we undertook a faculty-led process to revise them. What emerged was our *Profiles of Learning for Undergraduate Success*, a set of learning outcomes we hope every undergraduate student at IUPUI demonstrates by the time they graduate; learn more at profiles.iupui.edu/. Despite of our long history of integrating institution-wide learning goals across campus, we are embarking on a communication plan about our new *Profiles* to various audiences.

Audience and Message

Communicating salient messages about institution-wide goals for learning to various audiences is critical in order to ensure widespread understanding of their importance and use. *Students* need to be informed about the broad aims and purposes of these learning goals; how they augment and reinforce discipline-specific knowledge; and how they will benefit from acquiring and applying them throughout their pathway to graduation, including specific learning experiences where they will engage with these learning goals. Moreover, they should be made aware as to how institution-wide goals for learning will enhance their post-graduation success. *Faculty and staff* are colleagues charged with advancing these learning goals in programs, courses, and co-curricular learning experiences. They need to know their roles and responsibilities in implementing learning goals in their specific context. Additionally, they need to be made aware of the resources, such as professional development, available to them as they design learning experiences to foster student achievement of these learning goals.

Several external audiences are also interested in institution-wide learning goals. *Prospective students and parents/influencers* want to know how the institution prepares graduates to be productive citizens, to serve as participants in the workforce, and to further their studies through graduate and professional education. Thoughtfully designed and implemented, institution-wide goals for learning equip students for these post-degree roles; they also signal how distinctive or differentiated the college or university is in a crowded higher education marketplace. *Employers and community members* want to know that graduates of the institution are prepared to make a difference by contributing to the intellectual, economic, and cultural advancement of the broader community; achievement of institution-wide learning goals signals to these external stakeholders how seriously the campus takes this responsibility. *Alumni* want to know how the institution continues to adapt its programs to ensure ongoing quality and responsiveness to drivers of change; these individuals can also be sources of information about how well institution-wide goals for learning have prepared them for post-degree success. Finally, *institutional governance leaders/policymakers and accreditors* want to know that when an institution makes a claim about learning—including institution-wide goals for learning—there are plans and processes in place to document the achievement of that learning and make ongoing improvements to courses, programs, support services, and other learning experiences. Matching specific messages to audiences are key to informing them about institution-wide goals for learning; relying on various media helps accomplish this purpose.

Media

To communicate institution-wide goals for learning, using several media sources is encouraged. *Print* media involves creating documents, brochures, syllabi, and other physical materials to convey important aspects of what an institution would like to share about its overarching goals for student learning. This information can be shared with many audiences to raise awareness, identify learning outcomes, and answer key questions about institution-wide learning goals. *Digital* media involves using tools such as websites, learning management systems, and social media to share information, encourage interaction, and promote community building related to these learning goals. *Video* offers a profound opportunity to construct narrative storytelling

about how institution-wide learning goals are implemented in a given context or how the achievement of such goals have made a difference in the lives of students, alumni, community partners, and others. *Graphic representation* can help with branding institution-wide learning goals and succinctly conveying the often-complex, interdependent relationships of these goals. *Promotional items* can be used to augment other forms of communication to generate excitement and offer reminders about unifying learning experiences across campus. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, *individual and group outreach* to key stakeholders is critical to both sharing important information about institution-wide learning goals and in seeking feedback about the experiences with and impressions held about these goals. A mix of media can reinforce key messages, as can the timing of when such messages are conveyed.

Timing

Ideally, messages about institution-wide goals for learning would be shared with stakeholders on an ongoing basis. Practically, there are certain times when we might emphasize and sequence certain communication about these goals, including the following conditions:

- *When we develop or revise learning goals*—this requires significant communication to let campus constituencies know about learning goals, including their importance and how students will have multiple opportunities to acquire and demonstrate competence related to these goals;
- *When we have new members join our community*—as faculty and staff colleagues are hired and as students (beginners, transfers, or returners) are admitted, this represents an important time to educate these individuals about the shared learning goals of the institution through various onboarding and orientation processes;
- *When we have important information to share about the achievement of learning goals*—making use of assessment findings is key to ensuring we continually improve, and we need to regularly share how and where student achievement is occurring, the lessons we are learning about institution-wide learning goals, and the input or feedback needed to inform ongoing actions;
- *When we want to remind individuals and groups about a unified learning experience*—because institution-wide learning goals are about more than what takes place in an individual course, program, experience, or setting, we should use frequent opportunities such as meetings, retreats, convocations, workshops, and related gatherings to foster the shared purpose these goals offer the campus community; and
- *When we desire for certain actions to be undertaken to support or strengthen institution-wide goals for learning*—such actions include cascading broad learning goals to a specific program, course, or setting; designing assignments or learning experiences to reinforce broad goals; assessing institution-wide learning outcomes and making necessary improvements to instructional practices; documenting the results of student achievement; and participating in ongoing professional development to support capacity building for institution-wide goals for learning.

Key Success Factor #2, Professional Development

Professional development for institution-wide learning goals may be vested in such venues as centers for teaching and learning, may be assigned to campus-wide committees charged with curriculum and assessment matters, or may be organized by leaders helming certain campus-level offices. Perhaps less ideally, given its isolated nature, it may be distributed through individual units or programs whose members assume responsibility for addressing their own needs. Regardless of where or how professional development is organized in a given context, a well-designed approach requires the following components.

Identify participants for professional development

The pervasive nature of institution-wide goals for learning relies on numerous individuals involved in educating students through curricular and co-curricular programs and experiences at multiple touchpoints. *Faculty members* are a principal audience for professional development related to institution-wide learning goals. These include colleagues teaching in first-year experience and general education courses, who have the responsibility to introduce these broad learning goals to students through assignments that meet the course learning objectives and foster a connection to the campus as a whole. Similarly, faculty teaching capstone experiences have the responsibility of pulling together learning from the major and reinforcing what it means to be a well-rounded college graduate, including attention to institution-wide learning goals. Faculty teaching discipline-specific courses provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and scaffold the learning goals through disciplinary ways of knowing.

Others for whom professional development is needed include staff members, teaching assistants, and instructional partners. *Staff members* often include colleagues from the student affairs portfolio, as thoughtfully designed and implemented co-curricular learning experiences help to advance institution-wide learning goals. Colleagues involved in crafting learning experiences in experiential settings such as in the community or in international contexts represent additional staff audiences for professional development. *Teaching assistants*, often comprised of graduate students or advanced undergraduates, need training in how institution-wide learning goals are evidenced in the specific courses in which they provide support. Finally, *instructional partners*, including clinicians, preceptors, and internship supervisors, among others, need to be made aware of how their roles support broader learning goals that institutions have for students.

Prioritize professional development needs and topics

Several sources can help designers of professional development determine where to focus their efforts to meet particular participant needs. *Campus strategic and academic plans* provide an overarching framework in which several intersecting and mutually dependent initiatives are articulated with the aim of advancing the campus commitment to student learning and success. Institution-wide learning goals should be represented in these plans and can signal how such goals are integrated with and supportive of other actions the institution is taking to meet its educational mission. *Direction and input from individuals leading initiatives around institution-wide goals for learning* also represent a source for professional development needs. These often include leaders of learning experiences that serve all students, including courses in the first-year

experience or general education, as noted above. *Formal feedback or requests* from individuals in units, programs, courses, or other learning settings can identify unique professional development needs. Finally, *information in annual assessment reports* may discuss institution-wide learning goals and the evidence used in determining how well such goals are being achieved by students. A periodic review of these reports with an eye toward identifying future professional development opportunities is recommended.

There are plentiful topics to address through professional development in support of institution-wide learning goals. Some of these include:

- Raising awareness of the purposes and aims of such goals for various stakeholders;
- Aligning program-level learning outcomes to broader learning goals;
- Scaffolding program curricula to introduce and reinforce institution-wide learning goals at multiple touchpoints of the student learning experience;
- Designing assignments and other learning experiences to support these learning goals;
- Fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion, including promoting student agency, in this work;
- Developing or adapting rubrics to assess student achievement of learning (such as the VALUE rubrics from the Association of American Colleges & Universities; access them at aacu.org/value); and
- Making instructional improvements as a result of assessment findings.

Provide and evaluate professional development offerings

To address specific topics and needs of participants, there are various approaches for providing professional development offerings. *Workshops* are a common way to reach wide audiences interested in a similar topic related to institution-wide learning goals. Workshops are often helpful during times when such learning goals are initially introduced or revised, as they can provide a way of conveying important information in a reasonably consistent manner. They can also address specific topics of interest to stakeholders. *Consultations* with individual faculty and staff members, or with groups, including programs and campus- or unit-level curriculum and assessment committees, offer the ability to tailor professional development to the needs of a particular constituency or context. *Communities of Practice* offer participants the ability to connect with colleagues, often through prolonged engagement in a peer-learning format, in order to provide mutual support, share resources, and provide professional development on an ongoing basis.

Other professional development interventions include electronic resources, grants for pilot projects, and reflective practice. *Electronic resources* can permit individuals to access information to inform their own professional development on an as-needed or just-in-time basis. Such resources often include inventories of sample or exemplary assignments, rubrics that can be adapted for assessing student achievement of institution-wide learning goals, or job aids to address specific requirements (e.g., using the learning or assessment management system). *Grants for pilot projects* are a form of professional development that uses an infusion of resources to permit individuals or groups to propose how they will advance institution-wide learning goals in a given context. Such grants often carry with them a requirement to scale and sustain the positive outcomes of the work and to disseminate lessons learned from the project to

stakeholders on campus and elsewhere. *Reflective practice* encourages individuals to think about their approaches to and experiences with implementing institution-wide learning goals in their course, program, or learning experience. This can help improve one's own learning and help sustain ongoing understanding of, investment in, and commitment to institution-wide learning goals. It may also have the potential to inform conversations with colleagues, curriculum planning, annual performance evaluations, teaching philosophies, and course portfolios.

Finally, attention is needed to evaluating the results of professional development programs. This requires feedback from participants as to how satisfied they were with the interventions, along with how well these colleagues were able to transfer their learning into the contexts in which they will advance institution-wide goals for learning. Planners of professional development should determine how well each offering achieved its intended purpose, using this information to inform future endeavors. Ultimately, professional development should be evaluated based on how well it enhanced participant capabilities in contributing to student achievement of institution-wide learning goals. A broader outcome is continued integration of these learning goals through effective implementation in various campus settings, structures, and processes.

Key Success Factor #3, Implementation

Students need many opportunities to acquire and apply competence and to develop themselves personally, academically, and professionally. Thus, these learning goals need to be introduced, reinforced, and assessed at multiple touchpoints throughout the student's pathway to graduation. Implementation begins upon initial entry into the institution, continues through progression in major field(s) of study, often culminates in a capstone learning experience, and is complemented by co-curricular and other experiential learning opportunities. This requires a sense of shared responsibility by faculty and staff across the campus, each of whom plays a crucial role in developing holistic graduates from the institution.

First-Year Experience and General Education Courses

First-Year Experience (FYE) courses provide a connection to the institution, teach students the skills needed in college, outline resources and opportunities available to enable their success, and, when designed effectively, reflect a seamless transition into the institution. This is a principal venue in which the aims and purposes of a collegiate education can begin to be fostered, including outlining for students the broad learning outcomes the institution seeks to have each individual achieve by the time of graduation. Assignments and class time can be spent reviewing, discussing, and identifying the myriad ways students will be exposed to and acquire institution-wide goals for learning throughout their educational experiences. As such, FYE courses help students establish a strong and necessary foundation for their future learning.

Likewise, *general education courses* represent a powerful opportunity to provide foundational learning to students. These courses introduce students to the principles and theoretical underpinnings of many disciplines, often transmitting the values and competence necessary for further inquiry within a particular discipline and for knowledge to be subsequently adapted in other disciplines. General education courses lay this groundwork through such concepts as critical thinking, communication skills, scientific and information literacy, quantitative

reasoning, ethical decision-making, valuing and appreciating diverse perspectives, and understanding historical traditions and contemporary issues in a global, pluralistic society. Because these courses often embody concepts at the heart of institution-wide goals for learning, they serve as an important catalyst to expose students to new ideas, excite them about disciplines unfamiliar to them, and equip them with knowledge and skills for their ongoing collegiate success.

Discipline-Specific and Interdisciplinary Courses

As they progress toward degree completion, students take many *discipline-specific courses* in their major field(s) of study. Such courses provide intellectual depth through a focus on specialized knowledge. They also build upon FYE and general education courses by adapting concepts from foundation courses to incorporate disciplinary traditions. Faculty in discipline-specific courses can foster institution-wide goals for learning through intentionality and alignment of instructional approaches. This occurs by helping students see and build connections between courses, reinforcing prior knowledge through disciplinary examples, and developing assignments integrating institution-wide learning goals, whenever appropriate, with disciplinary ways of knowing.

These approaches can also be employed in *interdisciplinary courses*, where students from different fields convene in the same instructional setting to advance interdependent learning opportunities. Such courses are a natural place to use institution-wide learning goals as a crosswalk to connect various disciplinary concepts, and to demonstrate the universality and intersections of disparate and adjacent fields.

Capstone Experiences

Increasingly a requirement undertaken by students toward the end of an academic program, *capstone experiences* seek to accomplish many objectives. This includes encapsulating and demonstrating significant program-level student learning outcomes through pedagogies and assignments promoting higher-order thinking and integrative learning. Capstones also typically engage students in intentional reflection on and use of their prior learning. These culminating learning experiences are where students—often through self-directed and collaborative inquiry with peers—pull together learning from their major field(s) of study, from their general education courses, and from co-curricular and other experiential learning opportunities in which they participated (described below). In doing so, capstone experiences represent a final opportunity in which faculty can reinforce institution-wide goals for learning. Authentic assessment approaches in capstones can help students make sense of the often-discrete nature of their collegiate learning through expectations for reflection, integration, and demonstration of competence.

Co-curricular and Other Experiential Learning Opportunities

To promote holistic student development, *co-curricular opportunities* are important settings in which institution-wide goals for learning also get reinforced for students. Student affairs professionals are often willing partners with faculty in helping align co-curricular programs,

services, resources, and student leadership and engagement opportunities to support and extend learning from academic courses and programs. This can be accomplished by using institution-wide goals for learning as a means of articulating the learning expected of a given co-curricular offering and using those goals to inform the actions needed in programmatic development and implementation. Thus, institution-wide goals for learning provide both sides of the house—academic affairs and student affairs—a common framework from which to offer context-specific interventions aimed at promoting student learning and success.

Finally, *other experiential learning opportunities* provide students additional ways to acquire and apply institution-wide goals for learning. High Impact Practices—evidence-based, educationally purposeful learning experiences in which student engagement is a central component—exemplify this approach. Activities such as undergraduate research, service learning, internships, clinical and field-based experiences, project-based learning, and study abroad opportunities represent plentiful ways through which institution-wide goals for learning can be aligned with, and mutually supportive of, broader engaged learning strategies. Colleagues charged with championing these types of experiences should design them with an intentional focus toward incorporating these goals, whenever possible. Regardless of where institution-wide goals for learning are implemented, assessing student achievement of these goals is necessary.

Key Success Factor #4, Assessment and Improvement

The pervasive nature of institution-wide goals for learning provides faculty and staff members multiple opportunities to assess student achievement of these learning goals throughout a student's pathway to graduation. Doing so effectively requires planning for assessment, assessing learning, and using results for improvement.

Planning for Assessment

One of the first steps in planning for assessment involves *determining institution-wide goals for learning*. While many sources exist to aid in this process, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) provides information for considering how Essential Learning Outcomes can be developed and implemented to prepare students for twenty-first century challenges (see aacu.org/essential-learning-outcomes for more details). Stakeholder engagement, often through a faculty-led process sponsored by the Chief Academic Officer, in initially developing and periodically updating institution-wide goals for learning can promote widespread buy-in and commitment.

Aligning and adapting institution-wide goals to the local context is also necessary. Often, this involves showing the explicit relationship between program-level learning outcomes to the broader aims and purposes of a collegiate education. In addition to discipline-specific resources, one tool to aid faculty in considering program-level learning goals is the Degree Qualifications Profile (see degreeprofile.org for more details), a learning-centered framework of what college graduates should know and be able to do upon graduation at various degree levels. *Creating a curriculum map* often follows, in which specific learning opportunities are identified to give students ample places to acquire and apply competence related to these goals.

Alignment and adaptation extends to course- and assignment-level learning, along with learning taking place in co-curricular, community, and experiential contexts. This requires *designing instructional strategies to promote institution-wide goals for learning*. Assignments and learning activities already developed to advance program-/discipline-specific knowledge can often be used to achieve this purpose, although it may require designers of learning to make slight instructional modifications for such alignment to occur. Finally, *developing an assessment plan* provides an understanding of, and signals responsibility for, the expectation of the various places in which student achievement of institution-wide goals for learning will be assessed, including the frequency with which such assessment of learning is needed.

Assessing Learning

Implementing instructional strategies is key to advancing institution-wide goals for learning. This requires educators to draw explicit linkages between both the context-specific and broader learning goals they have for students. Being explicit about how assignments and learning activities are related to institution-wide goals for learning can help foster within students a sense of connectedness between their courses and learning experiences, providing for them an opportunity to see how their discrete courses and experiences come together in a coherent manner.

Identifying artifacts for assessment of institution-wide goals for learning is also necessary, including the use of both direct and indirect evidence of learning. Examples of direct assessment include assignments, exams, projects, papers, standardized or locally-developed tests, and oral presentations—these help demonstrate what students should know and be able to do from a given learning context. Indirect assessment involves the use of surveys, interviews, reflections, and focus groups—these are approaches designed to capture perspectives held by students concerning their experiences with, or impressions about, their own learning or the learning environment.

Increasingly, educators are *using signature assignments and VALUE rubrics* to aid in developing and assessing authentic measures of student learning, including institution-wide goals for learning. Signature assignments require students to demonstrate competence in learning outcomes, often through real-world, simulated, or problem-based assignments. Key to signature assignments is a focus on integration and application of knowledge, along with student reflection on their learning. The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) offers a robust Assignment Library, providing plentiful examples of signature assignments used in a variety of disciplines (see assignmentlibrary.org/ for more details). AAC&Us VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) rubrics are tools designed to help faculty and students assess achievement of learning outcomes in such domains as critical thinking, written communication, quantitative literacy, problem-solving, and ethical reasoning, and action, among other areas—many of which align to institution-wide goals for learning. VALUE rubrics can be adapted to the local context and provide a means of both articulating expectations about learning and assessing achievement of learning (see aacu.org/value for more details).

Assessment also benefits from *using program review and related processes to enhance understanding of student achievement of institution-wide goals for learning*. In addition to

assessment taking place in courses and learning experiences, program review is one venue in which programs should demonstrate student achievement of both program-specific learning and broader goals for learning. Requiring program review self-studies to make this connection can ensure periodic attention is given to institution-wide goals for learning at the program level. Finally, using other related processes—such as review of General Education courses for potential continued inclusion in that program—can also serve as important catalysts for ensuring ongoing attention to assessing institution-wide goals for learning.

Using Results for Improvement

Ultimately, results from assessment of student achievement of institution-wide goals for learning should be used for *improvement*. Those involved in both planning for assessment and assessing learning should proactively think about how results of assessment will be used. This often means using existing *structures* (using regular meetings of faculty, engaging curriculum or assessment committees, holding special focused retreats, etc.) and *processes* (submitting annual assessment reports, proposing new courses and programs, allocating resources, etc.) to promote the use of assessment findings for improvement purposes.

Such improvement can take on many forms, including the following:

- to improve instructional practices in courses, programs, and student experiences;
- to improve curricular coherence between the general education program and major field(s) of study;
- to help students reflect on, integrate, and make meaning of their learning;
- to identify gaps or overlaps in instruction; and
- to determine how well learning goals are being met.

Using results for improvement also requires *documentation of learning*—and the subsequent improvements resulting from the assessment of learning—for a variety of purposes and audiences. Such documentation of improvements to institution-wide goals for learning occurs at course-, program-, and institutional-levels, relies on a variety of tools and approaches, and involves faculty and staff, administrators, external stakeholders, and students themselves.

Key Success Factor #5, Documentation

Documenting student achievement of institution-wide learning goals provides an opportunity to reflect on, better understand, and make ongoing improvements supportive of these learning goals. Students, institutional colleagues, and external constituents are all audiences for which documentation is necessary.

Student-Centric Documentation

Students are the beneficiaries of approaches to introducing and reinforcing institution-wide goals for learning at multiple junctures in their pathway to graduation. Effectively articulated and designed learning opportunities can also foster in students a sense of how often-discrete components of their educational experiences add up to a coherent whole. *Student electronic*

portfolios (eportfolios) and *Comprehensive Learner Records (CLRs)* are examples of two documentation tools that can transcend single instances of student learning.

ePortfolios—when done well—provide opportunities for students to capture, reflect on, integrate, and represent their learning through artifacts from various courses or learning contexts. As a tool to promote documentation of institution-wide goals for learning, ePortfolios offer students a venue to highlight their achievement of these learning goals over time. Organizing an ePortfolio around institution-wide learning goals—and providing several meaningful opportunities for student engagement with their ePortfolio—can help students build connections between their various courses and learning experiences, while also contributing to individual, academic, and professional identity development. To learn more about leveraging ePortfolios for these purposes, readers are encouraged to consult the Association for Authentic, Experiential, and Evidence-Based Learning, which provides several resources to advance ePortfolio scholarship and practice; learn more at aaebl.org.

Like ePortfolios, CLRs document and reflect student learning occurring in a variety of places, including academic courses and programs, co-curricular contexts, and community or experiential settings, or through other forms of competency-based or prior learning assessment. These digital records capture verified learning experiences in which students have participated and can be organized to provide documentation in support of institution-wide goals for learning. A relatively new tool, CLR projects are evolving on campuses across the U.S., in large part as a result of a Lumina-funded grant to two leading higher education associations: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. Readers are encouraged to learn more about CLRs, including their potential to support student-centric documentation related to institution-wide learning goals, by visiting aacrao.org and naspa.org.

Institution-Centric Documentation

Several colleagues within the institution are routinely engaged in documenting the outcomes and improvements related to institution-wide goals for learning. Among others, these include faculty in academic courses and programs, student affairs professionals, assessment and institutional research professionals, educational developers, and administrators. All use various approaches to support documentation efforts.

Faculty in academic courses and programs often use *findings from authentic measures of student learning*, including signature assignments, to determine how progress is being made in support of institution-wide goals for learning in their local contexts. Similarly, student affairs professionals routinely align their co-curricular programs and student engagement experiences to reinforce and support these broad learning goals, often using *feedback from program participants* to assess progress. Assessment and institutional research professionals, working collaboratively with colleagues in both academic and co-curricular programs, use *direct and indirect assessment evidence* to document achievement of institution-wide learning goals, typically at program-specific and institutional levels. Educational developers use *results of needs analyses* and *feedback from instructional consultations or workshops* to guide ongoing professional development interventions in support of institution-wide goals for learning. Finally,

administrators at all levels rely on *information found in periodic assessment reports, program reviews, and related processes* (e.g., review of general education courses; course or degree program proposals; curriculum maps) to inform their strategic understanding of how institution-wide goals for learning are developed, implemented, and assessed across campus.

External-Centric Documentation

In addition to students and institutional colleagues, external constituents rely on documentation of outcomes and improvements associated with institution-wide goals for learning for various purposes. Accreditors seek assurances that when an institution makes a claim about learning, there are appropriate systems and processes in place to assess that learning and make ongoing improvements as a result of assessment findings. *Documentation in support of accreditation processes* is especially important for institution-wide learning goals, given both their pervasiveness across campus and connection to general education.

External-centric documentation extends to advisory boards, alumni, employers, community partners, and prospective students and their parents/influencers. These groups want to know how the institution prepares graduates for post-degree roles and contexts, including evidence supporting graduate outcomes. Therefore, *summarizing and displaying through various communication channels how graduates are equipped to demonstrate and apply institution-wide learning goals* is a way to garner ongoing interest in and support for the institution by these stakeholders. When properly documented and communicated, student outcomes of institution-wide goals for learning may provide a means to promote the distinctiveness or differentiation of a particular campus experience, something especially salient in an increasingly crowded higher education marketplace. Refer to key success factor #1, *communication*, for additional communication-related strategies.

Conclusion

Key success factors in strengthening and supporting institution-wide goals for learning include *communication, professional development, implementation, assessment and improvement, and documentation*. The broad nature of institution-wide learning goals—critical thinking, oral and written communication, ethical reasoning, and quantitative literacy, among others—help students develop themselves holistically. It requires all of us engaged in teaching and learning, student success, and assessment and improvement activities on our campuses to maintain an ongoing, collective focus on these learning goals.