Designation

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
VSA Analytics
Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)

October 2021

www.LearningOutcomesAssessment.org/eia/

@NILOA_web

Overview

What is the Excellence in Assessment Designation?

How do I apply?

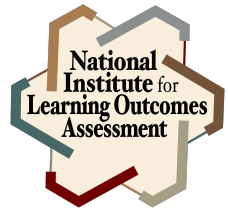What does the application entail?

What is the review process?

Designation

National recognition for institution-level assessment

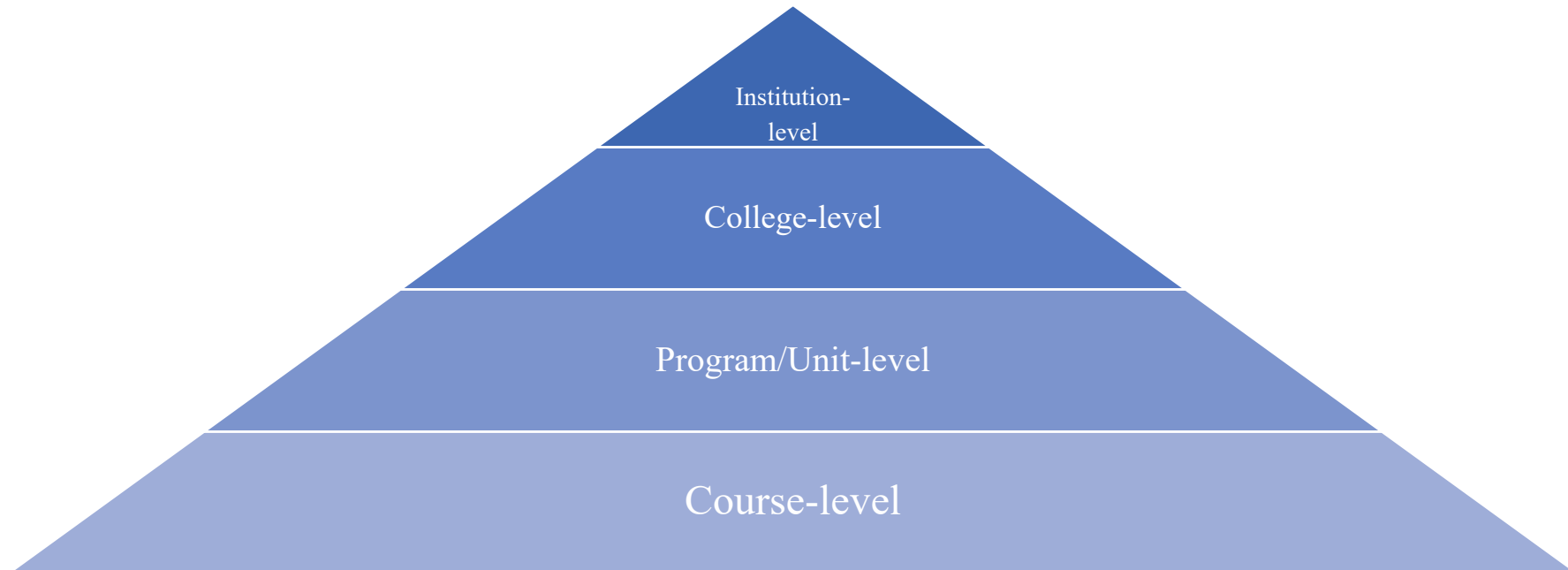Evaluation based on the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) transparency framework

Designation is for the institution as a whole – this includes -student affairs & external stakeholders

Joint designation of VSA Analytics, NILOA, and the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)

Integrated institution-wide assessment

Application components

Letter from Senior Leadership

Completed Institutional Contacts Form

Annotated list of individuals and groups engaged in assessment activities across the institution

Application narrative
- Self-study reflection process
- Draws heavily on components of the NILOA Transparency Framework
- Reflection and Growth/Improvement Plan

Evaluation by national assessment experts

Excellence in Assessment

Two award levels

1. Sustained Excellence

2. Excellence

National recognition

   Open to any accredited, degree-granting institutions

Institution-level assessment

   Vertical integration: Builds from classroom engagement

   Horizontal inclusion: Intentional inclusion of student affairs, external stakeholders

NILOA transparency framework

Student Learning Outcomes Statements
• Specific

Assessment Plans
• Descriptive
• Defines measures
• Easily downloaded

Use of Student Learning Evidence
• Targeted to audience
• Provides examples
• Describes improvement
• Defines next steps

COMMON TO ALL
• Clearly worded
• Prominently posted
• Updated regularly
• Receptive to feedback

Assessment Resources
• Easily downloaded

Evidence of Student Learning
• Interpreted results
• Contextualized to institution
• Presented graphically
• Disseminated

Current Assessment Activities
• Defines activities

T R A N S P A R E N T

EIA application review

Application completed via institution self-study
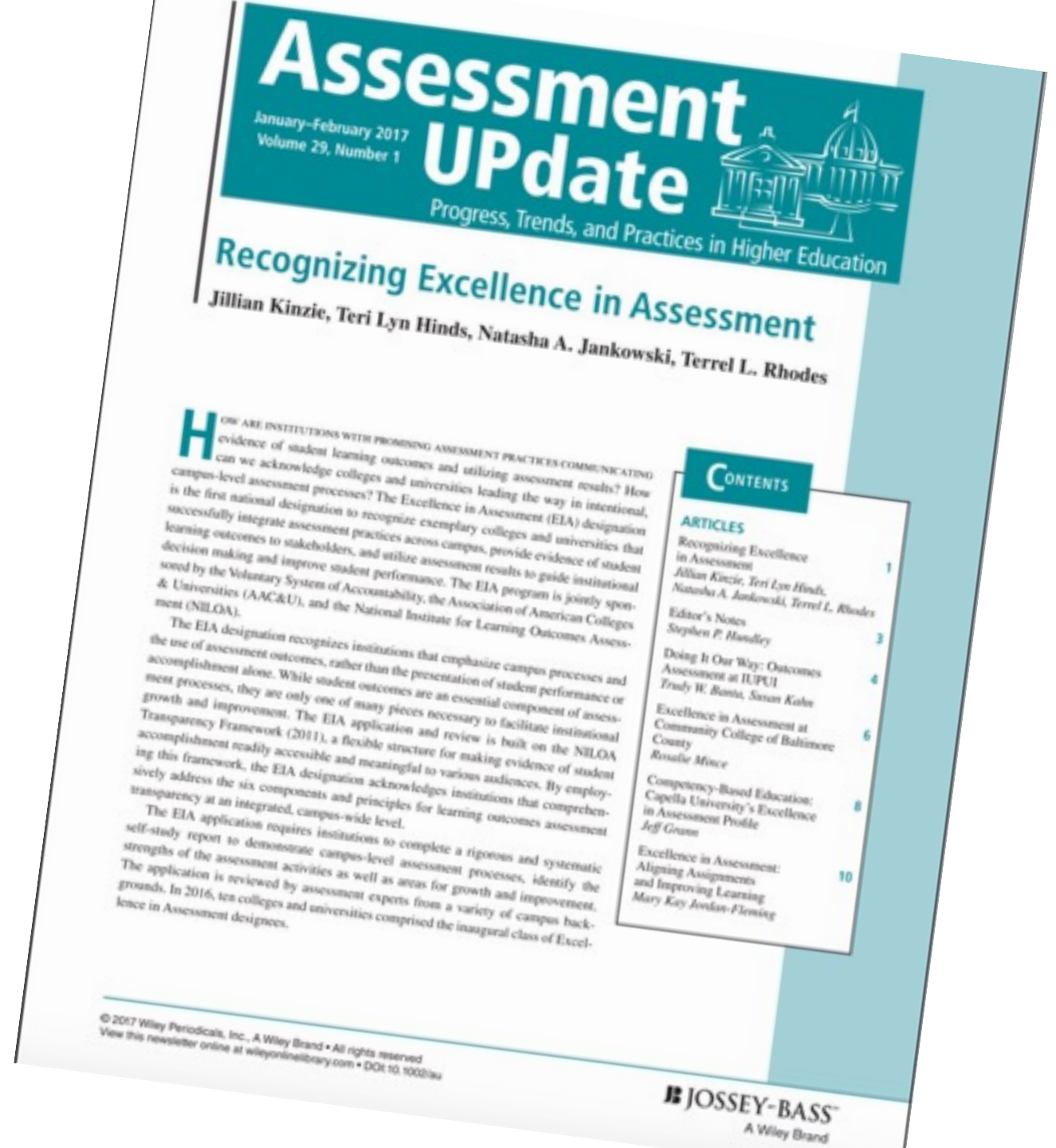- Expectation for diverse application team
- NILOA Transparency Framework is foundation

Evaluation by faculty assessment experts
- Rubric available
- Criteria are rigorous, but reasonable

Lessons from EIA institutions

Assessment UPdate

Progress, Trends, and Practices in Higher Education

Recognizing Excellence in Assessment

Jillian Kinzie, Teri Lyn Hinds, Natasha A. Jankowski, Terrel L. Rhodes

How are institutions with promising assessment practices communicating evidence of student learning outcomes and utilizing assessment results? How can we acknowledge colleges and universities leading the way in intentional, campus-level assessment processes? The Excellence in Assessment (EIA) designation is the first national designation to recognize exemplary colleges and universities that successfully integrate assessment practices across campus, provide evidence of student learning outcomes to stakeholders, and utilize assessment results to guide institutional decision making and improve student performance. The EIA program is jointly sponsored by the Voluntary System of Accountability, the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), and the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

The EIA designation recognizes institutions that emphasize campus processes and the use of assessment outcomes, rather than the presentation of student performance or accomplishment alone. While student outcomes are an essential component of assessment processes, they are only one of many pieces necessary to facilitate institutional growth and improvement. The EIA application and review is built on the NILOA Transparency Framework (2011), a flexible structure for making evidence of student accomplishment readily accessible and meaningful to various audiences. By employing this framework, the EIA designation acknowledges institutions that comprehensively address the six components and principles for learning outcomes assessment transparency at an integrated, campus-wide level.

The EIA application requires institutions to complete a rigorous and systematic self-study report to demonstrate campus-level assessment processes, identify the strengths of the assessment activities as well as areas for growth and improvement. The application is reviewed by assessment experts from a variety of campus backgrounds. In 2016, ten colleges and universities comprised the inaugural class of Excellence in Assessment designees.

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ARTICLES

EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT

2021 Designees

CAL STATE EAST BAY

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
EAST BAY
1957

Whatcom
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Assessment Institute
October 26, 2021

Introductions

Dr. Maureen Scharberg
Dean, Academic
Programs and Services

Dr. Caron Inouye
Director, GE Chair GS, GEOC
Subc.

Julie Stein, B.S. , M.S.
Project Manager,
Educational Effectiveness

Milestones

Synergy

Professional
Development

CAL STATE
EAST BAY

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES IN ASSESSMENT

Strategic Planning 2006

CSUEB establishes its strategic plan, setting the stage for the campus to be one of the first in the CSU to develop and assess Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

2009 **Community Forums**

CSUEB conducts forums with 300 University leaders, faculty, staff, and students to develop ILOs

ILO Adoption 2012

The Academic Senate unanimously adopts the campus' ILOs.

2013 **Assessment Structures**

The Educational Effectiveness Council (EEC) is formed to oversee campus assessment and accreditation, the ILO Subcommittee is approved to oversee the implementation of ILO assessment, and the Office of Educational Effectiveness is established to provide hands-on support.

WASC Re-accreditation 2015

WASC fully reaffirms CSUEB's accreditation for 10 years with commendations for being one of the first universities to address the new requirement for core competency assessment and for our collaborative transparent assessment approach.

2018 **Semester Conversion**

Transitioning to semesters in fall 2018, every academic program revises their curriculum, instruction, and assessment including course and program outcomes.

COVID Pandemic 2020

Assessment committees continue assessment with emphasis on students' learning experiences during shelter-in-place.

Drivers of Improvements in the Student Learning Experience
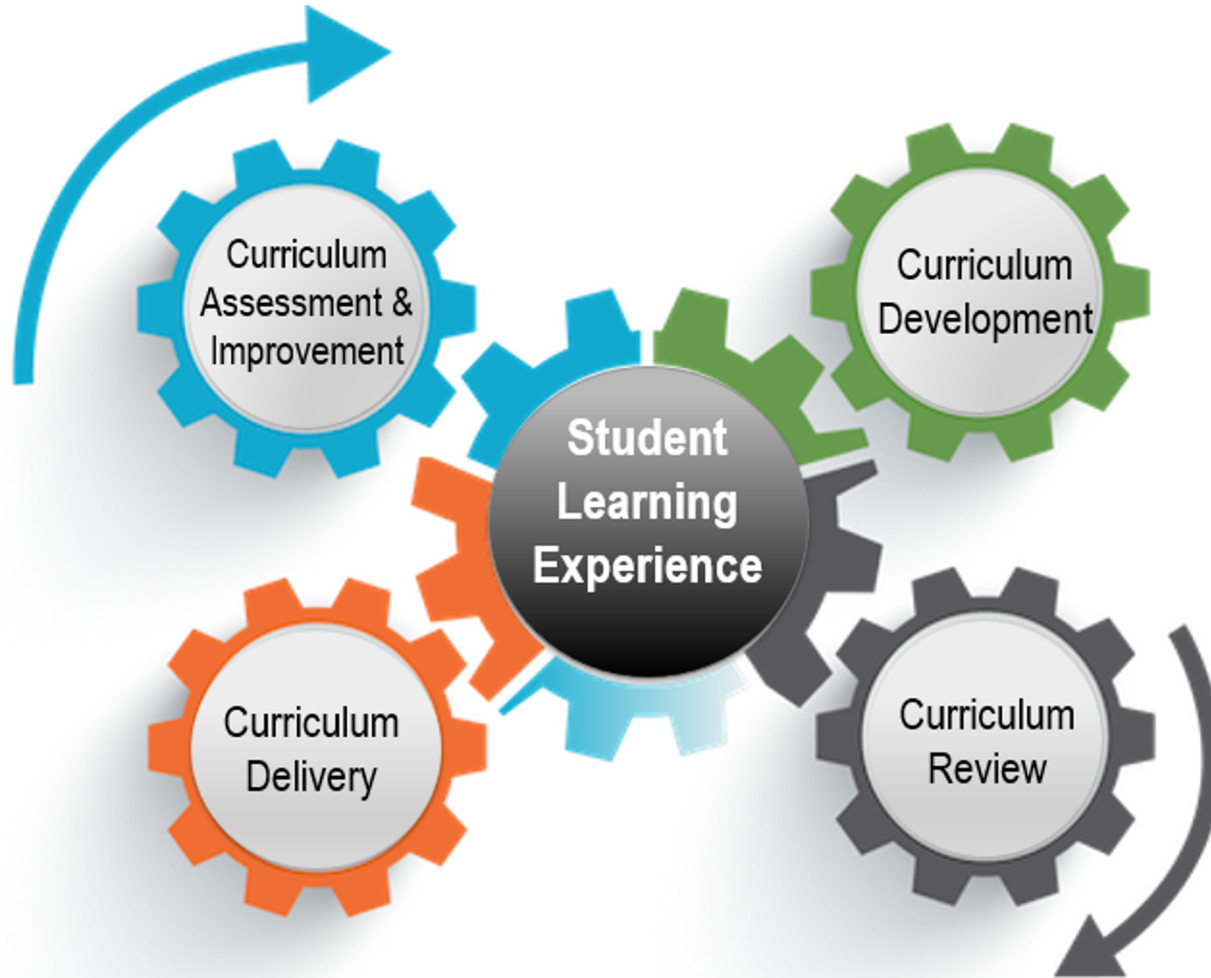
Professional Development

► Designed for Multidisciplinary Engagement
  ► Rubrics development
  ► Assignment Design
  ► Assessment
  ► Improvement

► Peer coaching

Last Word

The EIA designation brings together the current state-of-the-art of learning outcomes assessment with shifts in the field of transparency of student learning.

Its function is to provide examples to the field, but also to help institutions tell a coherent story of their assessment processes and practices.

EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT
2021 Designees

CAL STATE EAST BAY

Whatcom COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Co-sponsors: **VSA Analytics,** the National Institute for **Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA)**, and the **Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)**. VSA is a joint initiative of the **American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)** and the **Association of Public & Land-grant Universities (APLU)**.

EXCELLENCE in Assessment

SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT
2021 Designees

CCBC

IUPUI

CAPELLA
UNIVERSITY

CAMERON
UNIVERSITY

ROSE-HULMAN
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org

EXCELLENCE in Assessment
EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT
2019 Designees

FingerLakes
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

LINDENWOOD

AUBURN
UNIVERSITY

Bucknell
UNIVERSITY

SH

Sam Houston State University

University of
NorthernIowa

Missouri
State
UNIVERSITY

EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT
2018 Designees

EXCELLENCE in Assessment

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY 1865

Harper College

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

UNC CHARLOTTE

EXCELLENCE in Assessment

EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT
2017 Designees

Southern Connecticut State University

Rio Salado College

James Madison University

Middlesex Community College

BGSU Bowling Green State University

EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT
2016 Designees

EXCELLENCE in Assessment

CAMERON UNIVERSITY

CAPELLA UNIVERSITY

CCBC

MSJ 1920
MOUNT ST. JOSEPH UNIVERSITY

ZAYED UNIVERSITY

MILLS COLLEGE

ROSE-HULMAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

IUPUI
INDIANA UNIVERSITY–PURDUE UNIVERSITY INDIANAPOLIS

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

W WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Questions

For questions about the application and the review process, please contact baker44@Illinois.edu

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www.LearningOutcomesAssessment.org/eia/

Transformative principles for WCC's assessment progress

Institutional context

Whatcom Community College (WCC), in Bellingham, Washington, is a comprehensive community college serving 7,400 students in 2020-21. WCC offers transfer degrees, professional-technical degrees and certificates, a couple of bachelor of applied science degrees, basic education, and community and continuing education courses.

In February 2008, the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities expressed "grave concern that WCC has not developed and implemented meaningful assessment procedures that link data gathering and analysis with overall planning." With a new president, administrative leaders, and faculty, WCC made critical and meaningful changes to its processes, developing sustainable assessment processes to support student learning and inform college planning. In 2007, WCC created a faculty position with release time to serve as outcomes assessment coordinator and, in 2008, it hired a director for assessment and institutional research to build an assessment and institutional research office ("AIR"). These two individuals have consistently worked together for the past 13 years.

WCC's guiding principles for outcomes assessment

The following principles are indispensable in guiding the outcomes assessment work at WCC to inspire and support conversations among faculty, staff, and students and to improve student learning. WCC lives and breathes these principles that have transformed assessment.

1. Creating sustainable processes

Create simple, meaningful, and sustainable report processes for faculty and staff: WCC limits reports to the most essential elements that encourage reflection and result in action (preferably 1-2 pages).

Start with interested faculty and staff: When WCC first developed assessment processes, it started with a group of faculty volunteers who saw the long-term vision. WCC focuses on faculty who are motivated and let other faculty join when they begin to hear the passionate conversations among their peers.

Frame the outcomes assessment results as a resource for continuous improvement and support: WCC makes it clear to faculty and staff that assessment results will not be used punitively.

Start with a proposal and request feedback when creating new assessment-related processes: Starting conversations with the best available ideas, while encouraging critique and the emergence of new ideas, often results in more meaningful and substantial feedback and products. For example, when first developing rubrics, if possible, consider starting with the NILOA rubrics, rather than creating rubrics from scratch.

Develop a culture of institutional learning through action: WCC gathers enough information, rather than an exhaustive amount, at an appropriate level, to be able to take a logical next step and, then, learns from the experience. For example, WCC piloted a new core learning ability report with summer faculty to get a sense if the college was moving in the right direction in

revising the process. This information was then immediately used in the fall by the outcomes assessment committee to guide their next steps.

Create support and incentives for faculty to participate: In addition to the faculty educational workshop incentives noted in the paragraph directly below, faculty professional reports, including course outcome reports, are contractually required annually of full-time and adjunct faculty. Embedding this work in the review cycle has created a systematized and valued element of the faculty review process.

2. Engaging in collaborative learning

Engage faculty and staff in peer-driven professional development opportunities to advance assessment work: WCC is committed to instituting transformational change by encouraging faculty and staff to use innovative, equity-driven strategies for student learning and assessment. To advance this effort, WCC engages faculty and staff in peer-driven professional development. Since 2011, WCC has offered faculty education workshops (FEWs) for ongoing professional development focused on teaching, learning, and assessment practice. Through these FEWs, which are 15 hour mini-courses, WCC established and institutionalized the foundational work of outcomes assessment and data-driven reflection. Initial FEWS were designed by AIR, and focused on topics such as writing course outcomes; creating meaningful rubrics; and aligning course outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessments. Over time, an increasing number of faculty and staff developed FEWs, and WCC now offers about 13 FEWs annually, focusing on assessment, equity, student-centered pedagogy, and using student success data for improvement. As part of WCC's commitment to assessment and equity-driven pedagogy, full-time faculty completing FEWs receive permanent salary increases, and adjunct faculty are paid stipends. This investment has provided a huge incentive for participation in outcomes assessment and data-driven equity work and has reinforced the value of this work by faculty.

Routinely request feedback on processes and reports: For example, WCC includes a space on its reports for suggesting improvements to its reports and processes. The College then tries to integrate substantive suggestions from faculty, staff, and students into updated reports and processes. For example, the faculty reports Canvas page noted below resulted from a faculty suggestion on a program outcome report.

3. Providing transparent communication

Make outcomes assessment data and resources accessible on a public website: Since 2009, WCC has maintained a comprehensive public AIR website, which includes a wealth of outcomes assessment and student success data and educational materials, and serves as a resource for faculty, staff, students, and the public. Maintaining resources in an easily accessible central location broadens engagement and participation in assessment efforts. Providing access to resources and transparency is central to WCC's assessment work.

Create a central place for faculty to submit reports: WCC has a faculty reports Canvas page centralizing all faculty assessment resources, reporting, and tracking.

Provide timely feedback to each faculty and staff member who submits an assessment report: Faculty and staff receive feedback on all reports submitted, to acknowledge the value of their work and appreciation for the time dedicated to creating the reports. The "next steps" identified by faculty in their course and program outcome reports are also emailed to the faculty

during the quarter in which the information would be relevant, reminding them of the great ideas generated when the initial reports were submitted.

Communicate assessment-related information in multiple forums and encourage conversations: In addition to communicating information via the website, professional development day, and other workshops, AIR staff routinely meet one-on-one and in small groups with faculty and staff to discuss assessment information. WCC tries to create spaces – at workshops, in meetings, or one-on-one – where faculty and staff can reflect about outcomes assessment information and, together, consider possible next steps. Also, in 2018, AIR began sharing recent assessment results in short catchy monthly or quarterly emails to employees titled "what's in the AIR?" In spring 2020, AIR also began sending regular "assess-minute" emails to faculty communicating brief, relevant, and timely assessment, teaching, and learning resources.

Invest in relationships across campus to build trust, solicit input and feedback, improve relevance and responsiveness, offer support, and increase receptivity. When possible, respond to individuals requesting assistance through a phone call or in-person, rather than through email.

Next steps in WCC's assessment journey

Embracing its guiding principles of creating sustainable processes, engaging in collaborative learning, and providing transparent communication, WCC is focusing on two major initiatives this academic year:

WCC's *core learning ability process*, which has been in place for the past eight years, is being revised by its outcomes assessment committee to increase the meaningfulness of the data and simplify the process.

WCC will be more proactive in engaging students in all assessment processes by forming an *AIR student advisory group* (with paid students), which will take WCC's assessment work to the next level, providing more systematic student input and feedback.