SPARQ • HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Northland Community and Technical College, MN
Northland Community and Technical College-ASL Project

Participation Start:	6/6/2018	**Participation End:**	6/30/2022
Date Completed:	6/30/2022		
Team Lead:	Jodi Stauss Stassen		
Team Member(s):	Brian Suckow		
	Brian Huschle		
	Justin Berry		
	Stephen Nelson		
	Mary Fontes		
	Zackary Nicklin		
	Curtis Zoller		
Primary Mentor(s):	Julie Furst-Bowe		
Scholar(s):	Susan Murphy		

> This report reflects the activity of Northland Community and Technical College in Assessment Academy. It is not an official document of the Higher Learning Commission.

Results Forum

Prepare for the Results Forum

Assessment Academy Results Forum

June 22-23, 2022

OLC Education and Conference Center

Rosemont, IL (minutes from Chicago O'Hare Airport)

What to Expect:

The Results Forum is the Academy's culminating event where teams share findings, effective practices and successes. The event serves as a catalyst for project sustainability to ensure a long-term impact on institutional processes, people and culture. During the Results Forum, teams should expect to:

- Showcase their Academy Project and share promising practices with Academy teams in the earlier stages of developing their own projects.
- Dedicated time with Academy teammates to development of a plan to continue the work beyond the Academy.
- Engage with fellow cohort members about progress, challenges and successes in assessing and improving student learning.
- Work with a trained Academy facilitator on the development of a plan to continue their work beyond the Academy.

A draft agenda
(https://sparq.hlcommission.org/assets/1/6/Spring_2022_Results_Forum_Agenda.pdf)
provides additional schedule information.

Who Should Attend:

Each participating institution is expected to register a cross-functional team. The recommended team size is five to eight with a minimum team size of three. The team at the institution that has been responsible for Academy work to date and those responsible for post-Academy assessment and student learning efforts should plan to attend.

How to Participate:

The Results Forum is designed an in-person, team event. HLC is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all HLC in-person events. All individuals participating in any in-person event are required to provide proof that they are up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccinations, in accordance with CDC guidelines. We are working closely with our hotel and venue partners to ensure proper health and safety measures.

To read full information on HLC's health and safety plan, please
visit https://www.hlcommission.org/COVID-19/health-and-safety-at-hlc-events.html
(https://www.hlcommission.org/COVID-19/health-and-safety-at-hlc-events.html)

How to Prepare:

---

1. Complete Pre-Work

To mark the end of the Academy, teams complete a two-part Impact Report in SparQ. In Part I, Academy teams look back on their time in the four-year program. The team identifies accomplishments, evidence of improvement to student learning, and remaining tasks.

Your team will have from **Monday, May 16** to **Sunday, May 29th** to submit the information in SparQ. Your assigned Mentor and Scholar will not provide feedback to this report but will provide a consolidated response to the complete Impact Report that is submitted after the Results Forum.

2. Prepare to Showcase Academy Efforts

During the Results Forum, teams completing the Academy have the opportunity to showcase their Academy project and share promising practices with Academy teams in the earlier stages of developing their own projects. The showcase sessions include:

a. Moderated Discussions: Sharing Promising Practices

b. Graduate Poster Gallery

Instructions for preparing for these sessions are available here (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/assets/1/6/Preparing_for_the_Results_Forum.pdf).

3. Complete Team Registration

The designated Team Lead should complete registration on behalf of the full team. The deadline to register is May 20, 2022.

Register Now (https://na.eventscloud.com/aarf0622)

The registration website includes additional information about the event, venue, transportation, and hotel.

Agenda and Event Materials

Agenda and Event Materials

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

All times are Central

1:00 - 2:05 p.m.	**Welcome Plenary: Thinking about Sustainability** *Janice Denton, Academy Senior Scholar* As institutions conclude their Academy experience, the concept of sustainability is explored, highlighting four key steps to carrying on initiatives post-Academy. Download Presentation Slides (/assets/1/6/Sustaining_Your_Initiative_Plenary.pdf)
2:05 - 2:15 p.m.	**Break**

Team Time

Conversation 1: Looking Backward to Learn

Teams reflect on the full life cycle of their Academy project, evaluating successes and challenges of their work as they begin to think about strategies for sustaining and scaling their work. Assigned facilitators will be available for assistance.

Download Conversation 1 Prompts (/assets/1/6/Assessment_Academy_Results_Forum_Conversation_1_Prompts.docx)

Download *Meet the Academy Graduates* Handout (/assets/1/6/Assessment_Academy_Results_Forum_Meet_the_Graduates.pdf)

Facilitator Assignments

Each team is assigned an event facilitator to help support the conversations and planning taking place during scheduled team times.

 Janice Denton, Academy Senior Scholar

Supporting the following teams:

Eastern New Mexico University - Roswell (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=801)

Institute for Clinical Social Work (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=804)

Northland Community and Technical College (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=805)

 Jan Smith, Academy Scholar

Supporting the following teams:

Belmont College (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=802)

Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=760)

Hastings College (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=803)

2:15 - 3:15 p.m.

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">3:30
-
4:15
p.m.</td>
<td>

Moderated Discussions: Sharing Promising Practices

Academy Graduate Spokespeople

Representatives from graduating institutions will share successes, effective strategies, and lessons learned from their time in the Academy with institutions entering the program. Team members who are not serving on the panels are encouraged to attend the other panels to learn about the efforts of fellow cohort members.

Panel 1: Developing, Refining, and Aligning Learning Outcomes

Moderator: Jan Smith

Teams: Belmont College (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=802)

Hastings College (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=803)

Northland Community and Technical College (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=805)

Panel 2: Making Systematic Changes to Improve Learning

Moderator: Janice Denton

Teams: Eastern New Mexico University - Roswell (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=801)

Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=760)

Institute for Clinical Social Work (https://sparq.hlcommission.org/members/project-details/?projectId=804)

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
</tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr>
<td>4:15
-
5:00
p.m.</td>
<td>

Graduate Poster Galley

Join fellow Academy graduates and Academy Roundtable participants for a networking reception. Graduate posters will be displayed for attendees to learn more about each completed project.

</td>
</tr>
</table>

Thursday, June 23, 2022

All times are Central

8:30 - 9:15 a.m.	**Plenary: Creating Impact on Student Learning** *Jan Smith, Academy Scholar* This session will focus on using assessment data to promote learning by emphasizing the many factors that contribute to productive learning environments. Download Presentation Slides (/assets/1/6/Creating_Impact_on_Student_Learning_Plenary.pdf)
9:30 - 11:00 a.m.	**Team Time** *Conversation 2: Considering Next Steps* Teams consider steps that can be taken to build on the momentum gained during the Academy with consideration for the resources needed to sustain their efforts. Assigned facilitators will be available for assistance. Download Conversation 2 Prompts (/assets/1/6/Assessment_Academy_Results_Forum_Conversation_2_Prompts.docx)
11:00 - 11:15 a.m.	**Break**
11:15 - noon	**Stewardship Pair and Share** *Cross-Team Conversations between Results Forum Teams* Hear proposed strategies from other Results Forum representatives and with a fresh set of eyes, offer feedback on how they may go forward with their assessment initiatives in the ensuing years.
Noon - 1:30 p.m.	**Lunch**

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	**Team Time**	
	Conversation 3: Charting the Path Forward	
	Teams begin drafting a sustainability plan that includes assessment goals for the next three years. Assigned facilitators will be available for assistance.	
	Download Conversation 3 Prompts (/assets/1/6/Assessment_Academy_Results_Forum_Conversation_3_Prompts.docx)	
	Download Charting the Path Template (/assets/1/6/Assessment_Academy_Results_Forum_Charting_the_Path_Template.docx)	
2:30 - 3:00 p.m.	**Closing and Graduation**	
	Teams share their plans for sustaining their Academy work with other institutions completing the Academy. Teams will also receive certificates of completion for Academy participation.	

Impact Report

Impact Report Part I: Reflection

Q: What have been the Academy Team's accomplishments while in participating in the program? Consider the range of successes, from the very specific (e.g., development of a rubric) to the more general (e.g., outcomes-based curriculum approval processes or faculty training program).

A: Revised Institutional Learning Outcomes.

Revised Rubrics used for ILO Assessment.

Redeveloped process for ILO Assessment, incorporating use of LMS rubric tool.

Revised Annual Assessment Report for Career and Technical Programs.

Revised Annual Assessment Report for General Education/Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Revised Program Learning Outcomes for Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Revised Annual Assessment Process for all areas.

Piloted new forms and processes in AY 21-22.

Held first dedicated Assessment Day for faculty in April, 2022.

Positioned college for full implementation of new processes in AY 22-23.

Q: Looking back, reflect on the evolution of the Academy Project. What factors does the team feel most influenced how the project developed and changed?

A: Limitations of LMS rubric tool for site wide data analysis.

Impact on focus and time of pandemic based responses by the institution.

Faculty involvement and input through college wide feedback sessions.

Q: How did you incorporate the feedback from the Third Year Mentor Consultation and previous postings?

A: Served as check-points through process, helping confirm direction and project modifications.

Q: What Academy Project tasks remain unfinished? Bring this list of outstanding tasks to the Academy Results for further team discussion.

A: Did not get to full implementation during project. Really, project is behind a full year in this sense.

Did not get to work around co-curricular assessment as tied to project.

There is, with implementation, ongoing work to do to assure faculty incorporate a more reflective and meaningful approach to annual assessment processes. While forms and structure better support this, and early feedback from faculty is favorable and reflects assessment will be more meaningful to them as tools for ongoing improvement of students meeting learning outcomes, the broader shift in culture will require steady and constant fostering.

Q: How has institutional capacity for assessing student learning changed over time in the Academy?

A: Institutional capacity has largely remained the same throughout the process - meaning that additional resources and positions were not contributed. That said, building in a dedicated Assessment work day for faculty in late Spring semester builds capacity be dedicating the time and investment. The institution recently added an Director of Institutional Research line, which, as that office builds itself, will bring additional capacity.

Q: What evidence do you have that the Academy work is improving student learning? If needed, how might you go about collecting this evidence?

A: Unfortunately, delays in the project have prevented data collection on ILOs using new processes beyond some pilots in the Spring term, 2022.

With respect to annual assessment, we have had faculty identify and apply assessment tools with the results of focused changes to instruction in the coming year.

The collecting of evidence is built into the changes of our assessment processes. As we gather data and analyze it over the coming year(s) we will be able to see impacts on student learning. We will, moreover, be able to assess faculty support and involvement in assessment processes.

> Reviewed by **Brian Huschle** on 05/27/2022 12:47 PM.

Impact Report Part II: Sustainability Plan

Q: Summarize the Academy Team's sustainability plan developed during the Results Forum.

A:
1. Administration needs to assure processes built in are used and documented and reported. This may be accomplished by building the conversation about specific program assessment items from the annual assessment reports into the annual program sustainability conversations (tied to that metric in that process).

2. April In-Service day needs to include and have active time for conversations around assessment outcomes by faculty. Support APR with preparation for in-service. Develop a rotation for APR membership. Be sure that assessment is still a conversation in August and January as well.

3. Data reporting for institution needs to be sorted and done. We don't have a clear means with the new process of aggregating all ILO Data, and once aggregated, disaggregating it across institution to identify patterns and underlying causes impacting student learning.

4. At the faculty program level the new annual forms for reporting need to be used to reflect qualitative use of course and department level data to improve student learning.
4.
5. Co-curricular needs to be reset and conducted. See separate notes.

Q: How will these actions contribute to a greater understanding and improvement of student learning?

A: 1. Building this into conversations around sustainability will help assure that academic deans maintain conversations with faculty around the value of assessing student learning.

2. Assuring peer-to-peer interactions about student learning, assessment of learning tools, teaching methods, etc., will assure a positive tone around the April in-service day and have long-term impact. Keeping the Assessment and Program Review committee at center of planning will help keep faculty perspective and engagement at center of processes. We heard from faculty following the April 2022 assessment day that ongoing attention during August, January, and April will be needed to keep the value at the forefront.

3. Getting a handle on data beyond a level that allows qualitative analysis at the course level will allow the institution to identify challenges for differing groups (e.g., Pell eligible, Liberal Arts majors, first-gen, those in Dev Ed, etc). This will be key to closing equity gaps and will allow Northland long-term gains in student learning, retention, and completion.

4. Qualitative/course level is most directly relevant for faculty, especially CTE faculty. Have this level for Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty is also most directly relevant, but aggregate data than can be disaggregated will be important for this area as well.

Q: What are the next immediate action steps for continuing the work that the Academy Team launched in the Academy?

A: 1. Co-curricular assessment needs to be reset following the suspension of the service learning project. Based on mentor input and discussion at the Results Forum, these are recommendations and/or considerations.

- Establish a small number of co-curricular programs (less than five) where learning aligns closely with one or more ILOs.
- Rule out/do not use one-off activities.
- Rule out /do not use services where a satisfaction survey is more appropriate (e.g., Financial Aid sessions with students and parents; advisor/advisee interactions; tutoring and disability services; etc.
- Some examples of programs discussed/recommended included those where students, especially student workers, receive specific training related to their role. Examples might include:
    - Peer tutors, based on tutor training by ASC and subsequent work.
    - Library Work Study Students, based on training provided by library techs and librarian, and subsequent work.
    - Student Ambassadors (should this program be used/in place.)
    - More generally, look at work study roles where the students receive specific training for the position. Tie this to ILO 5 and potentially other ILOs, such as ILO 1, based on specific job/role.
- Tool/rubric used for assessing co-curricular can be the same as the standard ILO rubric, but graded on a meet/does not meet standard rather than the point standard.

2. Assure 22-23 academic year with full-implementation runs smoothly, including providing administrative feedbakc and engagement on annual reports; providing ample department and program time for peer-to-peer engagement.

3. Continuing to listen and update forms and processes based on assessment results and faculty guidance.

4. Provide institution wide communication around success and challenge stories.

Q: How will the Academy Team ensure the administration's support for these future plans?

A: A key obstacle identified by the Results Forum team is current and anticipated administrative turn-over and administrative capacity. In addition, recent faculty leadership retirement and turn-over is a challenge.

The key strategy identified to address this is:

- New administrators need training/focus on institutional processes.
- Building parts of processes into new IR department (annual report development/data).
- Other offices held by professional employees (OAS, Sr) built into process to keep timeline and tasks on track.

Q: What steps need to be taken to keep faculty and staff engaged in ongoing assessment of student learning?

A: In many respects, the steps needed to keep faculty and staff engaged in ongoing assessment of student learning are outlined in the above answers.

From the Results Forum, charting the path, three items were identified as key, however. These are:

1. Faculty applying assessment to student learning.

- Peer to peer mentoring will be enhanced / prioritized to support effective selection of ILO's and rubric application.
- Leverage faculty leadership positions to keep the assessment conversation out front.

2. Training process to assure faculty, staff, and administration are kept current.

- Add assessment to strategic planning, AMP, and InService schedules moving forward.
- Leverage PD team to keep develop and implement a stepped training program specific to faculty…IE new faculty, experienced faculty.

3. Data collection and analysis process to be better developed and streamlined to be able to be aggregated and disaggregated.

- Keep assessment process in the forefront of conversations regarding PD's and daily workloads of IR resources available.
- Leverage HLC assessment academy partners and MinnState sister institutions to share in best practices during implementation. Attend 18 month graduate academy to support sustainability and ongoing support by expanding the network available through the assessment academy.
- Coordinate conversations between Assessment Team and IR resources to synchronize needed data collection with assessment analytics.

The above specific items are intended to meet the anticipated challenges of assuring faculty understanding and extended support of assessment, assuring sufficient resources of thought and energy (as well as financial) are dedicated to assessment, assuring assessment processes are properly built into IR/IE department, and assessment data is properly used for timely and relevant program leadership and institutional decision making.

Reviewed by **Brian Huschle** on 06/27/2022 02:15 PM.

Consolidated Response

Q: Please describe your general impression of the institution's progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The institution has made slow and steady progress over the past four years. Like the other institutions in this cohort, their progress was delayed by the pandemic which has been creating disruptions of educational processes for the past two and a half years.

Reviewing the list of completed activities was a good reminder that the institution did accomplish a number of important tasks, including revised ILOs, revised processes and rubrics for assessing ILOs, and revised assessment processes and reports for Career and Technical Programs and General Education/Liberal Arts and Sciences. The new processes and forms were piloted during 2021-2022, and the institution held its first dedicated Assessment Day for faculty in the spring of 2022! All of this groundwork helped to build a foundation for full implementation of the new process in 2022-2023. The team should

feel good about the work they accomplished through the Academy and their overall contributions to improving assessment of student learning outcomes throughout the institution.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Your Mentor has captured it.

Your listed activities, planned actions steps, and the specifics on your sustainability approach declare that you are ready to move this work to the next level of implementation. With training, tools and new understanding shared with faculty colleagues, you should have a particularly rewarding 2022-23 year. This coming year is when all of the in-the-trenches work will have practical application and I think a real pay off. Still, be prepared for pilots that might not go as planned and remain flexible with participating colleagues. Do all that you can as data comes in to showcase good practice and the utility of the work which you already know is bring done got its potential to inform improvement---not just for doing and reporting!

Q: Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

All of the work that was done by the team was in consultation with administration and included involvement from the faculty. The new processes and tools developed appear to be appropriate for the institution given its size, mission and programs. As noted in your posting, you did not make as much progress as originally intended and the institution still needs to develop and implement a plan for the assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

There are no specific concerns though your Mentor and I recognize the challenges ahead. With changing leaders and/or roles, some of this work could lose the central role it has enjoyed with the Academy project profile. Do all that you can to follow your own stated action steps (above) and insights on keeping faculty and staff engaged (above). They offer a practical approach and sequence of events that will keep assessment work in front of colleagues regularly. Your next steps are building on solid preparation.

Q: **In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

In my opinion, the institution is prepared to sustain its assessment efforts. Several action steps were outlined in the sustainability section of the Impact Report that will keep assessment efforts moving forward. The team leader, who was also the chief academic officer, has recently left the institution so a new leader will have to be selected and brought up to date on past and future assessment initiatives. It was also mentioned that the institution will be hiring a Director of Institutional Research; this individual will need to be involved in assessment initiatives as well. Specifically, this individual should be particularly helpful in addressing the challenges this institution is experiencing relative to implementing a system for collecting, analyzing and utilizing assessment data.

It will be important to keep assessment at the forefront of the institution as the HLC has required the institution to submit an Interim Monitoring Report on assessment in 2024 as this area was "met with concerns" during the institution's last comprehensive evaluation. Although I recognize that the goals of the Assessment Academy are separate from accreditation processes, the work of the Academy team needs to continue as the important steps they are in fulfilling expectations in assessment.

Continued communication, faculty development and designated time for faculty to work on assessment will be extremely important to ensure that the processes and tools developed over the past four years can be implemented and faculty members can use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Ditto to all that your Mentor has shared.

I want to endorse the comments/plans suggested for moving forward on co-curricular assessment. Relating the co-curriculum to the ILOs makes great sense and starting with a Pilot on how those areas contribute to learning---not that they are providing satisfactory services---is sensible. Great idea to use the same ILO tool/rubric but change the rating approach.

Q: **Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I have enjoyed working with this team over the past four years. They have persisted despite challenges related to the pandemic as well as challenges caused by technology, faculty turnover and the recent change of senior leaders. I encourage them to keep moving forward and to keep connected with other Academy participants as well as similar institutions in the Minnesota State System to share ideas and practices. And I am certainly available if additional assistance is needed at any time.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Though you state that you did not accomplish all that you intended, please recognize that a great deal of important foundational work has been accomplished. The stage is well set for continued engagement and maturity in assessment work. Be sure to recognize (reward?) contributions that can be models for others.

You are well positioned to reach stated goals in the upcoming academic year(s).

Bravo on accomplishments.

Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Project Update 6

Answer Update Questions

Q: Document any key updates and/or changes in the Academy Project scope and timeline as a result of the Third Year Mentor Consultation.

A: Key Updates:

- Plan to shift to use of a competency model for ILO assessment rather than a numeric score.

- Plan to shift a model of faculty driven choice of ILO assessment, while assuring institutional coverage/assessment across all five ILOs.

- Discussed challenges of use of rubrics within D2L Brightspace, and integration of this within the MinnState system and access to institutional data from Brightspace using an analysis tool like PowerBI.

Q: Looking back at the tasks outlined for the Academy Project following the Midpoint Roundtable, what progress has been made and what tasks remain? What is the plan to address the remaining tasks in the next six months?

A:

Goals over next two years:

Revamp Technical Program Assessment Form/Reporting structure to better capture improving.

- E.g.: Include program changes due to assessment. Program assessment form revised to better reflect this.
- E.g.: Follow up from prior years more explicitly to see if effective -at program level. Program assessment tool better revised to reflect this.
- Align Sections II and III on current form better with our annual program sustainability data. Program assessment tool revised; but this is still in process. During our September Assessment and Program Review Committee meeting we discussed splitting apart the program assessment of learning and program graduate and employer surveying as the time of collection does not fit neatly on a single form for student cohorts. We are currently in process of reviewing how splitting the report would look through revision of the tool itself, but also through looking at better organizing our collection tool to organize reporting by program "binders" rather than by academic year as currently practiced.

Lib Arts Program review and assessment.

- Revise program outcomes to map courses directly to ILOs. (Gen Ed): This task is completed. However, through this process the curriculum map for the Liberal Arts program revealed partial gaps in that three of the five ILOs were heavily assessed by several courses throughout different disciplines, while the remaining two ILOs were lightly assessed by very limited disciplines. During our August administrative inservice days, this faculty group identified courses and course learning outcomes that could be remapped to balance course and discipline assessment across all five ILOs. Natural Sciences and Communications have already made these course adjustments through our Academic Affairs and Standards Council. Several other disciplines are in process for our October AASC meeting, with the goal of completing this re-alignment process in October.
- Update process for annual assessment: We are in process updating the form for reporting this to align to the new Program Learner Outcomes (i.e., the ILOs).
- Institute a five year review for AA degree programs. We are in process of identifying five year program metrics for our transfer AA degree, and will develop the reporting mechanisms for this.

Implement process with revised ILOs. See above.

Q: **Goal for Next 6 Months**

What additional goals has the Academy Team set for the next six months? How does the team plan to achieve these goals?

A:

Focus is on completing the items outlined above.

Q: **What evidence does the Academy Team have that the Academy Project contributing a culture of learning at your institution? If needed, how would your team go about collecting additional evidence?**

A: Increased reporting within Liberal Arts disciplines this past year despite challenges of instruction within the pandemic.

Steady involvement of reporting within CTE areas this past year, with involvement and commitment in processes of updating reporting structures.

Increased membership across college (faculty from both campuses) being involved on the Assessment and Program Review Committee. In past, involvement here was heavily concentrated to one of two primary campus sites.

Could conduct a survey at end of project to gather more information, beyond participation and reporting rates.

> Reviewed by **Brian Huschle** on 09/24/2021 03:38 PM.

Consolidated Response

Q: **ASL IR Part II Consolidated Response**

Q: **Please describe your general impression of the institution's progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The institution has made slow and steady progress over the past four years. Like the other institutions in this cohort, their progress was delayed by the pandemic which has been creating disruptions of educational processes for the past two and a half years.

Reviewing the list of completed activities was a good reminder that the institution did accomplish a number of important tasks, including revised ILOs, revised processes and rubrics for assessing ILOs, and revised assessment processes and reports for Career and Technical Programs and General Education/Liberal Arts and Sciences. The new processes and forms were piloted during 2021-2022, and the institution held its first dedicated Assessment Day for faculty in the spring of 2022! All of this groundwork helped to build a foundation for full implementation of the new process in 2022-2023. The team should feel good about the work they accomplished through the Academy and their overall contributions to improving assessment of student learning outcomes throughout the institution.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Your Mentor has captured it.

Your listed activities, planned actions steps, and the specifics on your sustainability approach declare that you are ready to move this work to the next level of implementation. With training, tools and new understanding shared with faculty colleagues, you should have a particularly rewarding 2022-23 year. This coming year is when all of the in-the-trenches work will have practical application and I think a real pay off. Still, be prepared for pilots that might not go as planned and remain flexible with participating colleagues. Do all that you can as data comes in to showcase good practice and the utility of the work which you already know is bring done got its potential to inform improvement---not just for doing and reporting!

A:

Q: Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

All of the work that was done by the team was in consultation with administration and included involvement from the faculty. The new processes and tools developed appear to be appropriate for the institution given its size, mission and programs. As noted in your posting, you did not make as much progress as originally intended and the institution still needs to develop and implement a plan for the assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

There are no specific concerns though your Mentor and I recognize the challenges ahead. With changing leaders and/or roles, some of this work could lose the central role it has enjoyed with the Academy project profile. Do all that you can to follow your own stated action steps (above) and insights on keeping faculty and staff engaged (above). They offer a practical approach and sequence of events that will keep assessment work in front of colleagues regularly. Your next steps are building on solid preparation.

Q: In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

In my opinion, the institution is prepared to sustain its assessment efforts. Several action steps were outlined in the sustainability section of the Impact Report that will keep assessment efforts moving forward. The team leader, who was also the chief academic officer, has recently left the institution so a new leader will have to be selected and brought up to date on past and future assessment initiatives. It was also mentioned that the institution will be hiring a Director of Institutional Research; this individual will need to be involved in assessment initiatives as well. Specifically, this individual should be particularly helpful in addressing the challenges this institution is experiencing relative to implementing a system for collecting, analyzing and utilizing assessment data.

It will be important to keep assessment at the forefront of the institution as the HLC has required the institution to submit an Interim Monitoring Report on assessment in 2024 as this area was "met with concerns" during the institution's last comprehensive evaluation. Although I recognize that the goals of the Assessment Academy are separate from accreditation processes, the work of the Academy team needs to continue as the important steps they are in fulfilling expectations in assessment.

Continued communication, faculty development and designated time for faculty to work on assessment will be extremely important to ensure that the processes and tools developed over the past four years can be implemented and faculty members can use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Ditto to all that your Mentor has shared.

I want to endorse the comments/plans suggested for moving forward on co-curricular assessment. Relating the co-curriculum to the ILOs makes great sense and starting with a Pilot on how those areas contribute to learning---not that they are providing satisfactory services---is sensible. Great idea to use the same ILO tool/rubric but change the rating approach.

A:

Q: Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I have enjoyed working with this team over the past four years. They have persisted despite challenges related to the pandemic as well as challenges caused by technology, faculty turnover and the recent change of senior leaders. I encourage them to keep moving forward and to keep connected with other Academy participants as well as similar institutions in the Minnesota State System to share ideas and practices. And I am certainly available if additional assistance is needed at any time.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Though you state that you did not accomplish all that you intended, please recognize that a great deal of important foundational work has been accomplished. The stage is well set for continued engagement and maturity in assessment work. Be sure to recognize (reward?) contributions that can be models for others.

You are well positioned to reach stated goals in the upcoming academic year(s).

Bravo on accomplishments.

A:
Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: ASL Consolidated Response Questions

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

There is continuity from the last update (the third year mentor consultation) to the current update with continued emphasis on the adoption of a competency model, rather than a numeric score, for ILO assessment as well as continued efforts to involve more faculty members in assessment processes. The group has outlined detailed plans for the next two years relative to assessment in both the liberal arts and technical programs. The proposed changes should improve reporting and allow the institution to collect the desired information more efficiently. Finally, the group appears to be making continued progress, over the past year and a half, despite the pandemic and associated schedule interruptions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

You are making slow but sure progress on assessment activities.

It is always a good idea to update/improve forms as time allows, especially, if changes are in response to faculty users who are suggesting same.

I also want to recognize the importance of the follow-up on reports that you conduct. Explicit follow-up reinforces the idea that reports aren't something *to do* but rather are pieces of a process that contribute to positive change in student achievement.

Lastly, The revision of program outcomes and mapping courses supporting the outcomes to the ILOs is a huge alignment that hopefully send the message to faculty that the work is purposeful.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

It looks like many of the tasks in your two-year plan are already completed or close to completion. Once all of the adjustments have been made to reporting forms and processes, will the remainder of the project period be focused on collecting data, analyzing data and using data for improvement? Who will manage this process and be responsible for documenting and sharing the results.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

In addition to Julie's important question I am adding: Do you have curriculum maps in broad use so you can be sure where best to measure achievement in courses already identified as ILO contributors? Is this an effort still ahead of you? If yes, consider how quickly you might be able to complete maps and direct work to next steps of measuring and gaining insight.

Recognizing that many processes/forms are being re-worked---and this certainly is important work---I still need to ask if results are already available?   Action items established? I am not clear that this part of your assessment work is ongoing? Otherwise, how close are you to regular use of data from program and ILO measures? Are faculty engaged in analysis and decisions on next steps for potential curricular change---definitely the more rewarding part of assessment work or is that still ahead?

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I think you have outlined a clear plan of activities for the next six months. Beyond that, I would recommend the institution focus on the continued collection and analysis of assessment data on student learning across all programs. By doing so, you will have adequate information, i.e., multiple cycles of assessment results and related improvement actions, to demonstrate fulfillment of expectations for Core Component 4B in your interim monitoring report that is due in advance of the Year 4 review in 2024.

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, there is no one correct or perfect method for conducting assessment of student learning. At some point, you need to decide that your forms, software, processes, etc., are adequately designed and you'll need to begin to implement and then expand your assessment processes. You can always make refinements along the way but you will lose momentum---and be unable to demonstrate meaningful progress---if your work continues disproportionately to focus on modifying forms, tools and processes.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Julie's point is well taken and I agree with the importance of having cycles of assessment accomplished in order to provide evidence of assessment activity at the college. I also recognize that you will need to provide support and guidance to faculty....and colleagues to each other...as quickly as is reasonable and practical. If there is currently no ongoing practice of gathering and analyzing data and responding to results with action, consider how quickly this can be undertaken in cooperative programs and volunteer faculty willing to experiment and share their experience. Maybe first steps will be a matter of securing baseline data.

Much work accomplished; still work ahead.

Q: **What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, you may want to check in with other Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to see how they are using their Learning Management Systems to collect and analyze information on student learning outcomes if you haven't done this already.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Good idea. Your state colleagues may have tips and techniques that you hadn't thought of yet.

> Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Project Update 5

Update Questions

Q: **Identify and explain any specific changes to the Academy Project scope and design at the Midpoint Roundtable.**

A: The scope of the project is still within the original project. The exception is that we will not focus on co-curricular within the project at this time (or in the near term).

Our scope is still focused on ILO assessment - moving now to process for ILO assessment. We are also, per the original plan, going to review our annual program assessment process. The review of annual assessment process will focus on a revamp of long-standing form. Secondly, it will focus on the AA degree as a program; this focus is tied to retooling our process for ILO assessment.

Finally, we are retaining the goal of moving from assessment for reporting to assessment to improve student learning.

Q: Describe any short-term plan action plans developed during the Midpoint Roundtable. What specific tasks do the team plan to accomplish in the next six months?

A: **Goals over next two years**:

Revamp Technical Program Assessment Form/Reporting structure to better capture improving.

- E.g.: Include program changes due to assessment.
- E.g.: Follow up from prior years more explicitly to see if effective -at program level.
- Align Sections II and III on current form better with our annual program sustainability data.

Lib Arts Program review and assessment.

- Revise program outcomes to map courses directly to ILOs. (Gen Ed)
- Update process for annual assessment
- Institute a five year review for AA degree programs.

Implement process with revised ILOs.

In next six months

Revamp Technical Program Assessment form.

Adjust Technical program assessment form to fit AA degree and review AA program learner outcomes to align with revised ILOs.

Research and review ILO assessment process to improve it.

Q: How well is the Academy Team positioned to complete the project in the final two years of the Academy? What additional tools, resources, and engagement do you need?

A: We will need to engage with a broader scope of the faculty as we re-adapt our process and work to implement it.

This may be especially challenging within our current circumstances of working within the pandemic.

Q: 4. Anticipated Challenges

What challenges do you anticipate moving into the second half of the Academy? What have you learned from the first two years of the Academy to mitigate these challenges?

A: Our biggest challenge will be retaining focus as we continue to address issues related directed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are adjusting how our team works -- we did have the HLC team combined with the college Assessment and Program Review team for the first two years. This had benefits, but also extended the APR committee. This approach will hopefully allowed for some more focus work and then consulting with the APR committee.

We are looking at adding one additional faculty from the AA degree/program area.

Q: To this point, who has been engaged in the Academy process? Are there additional stakeholders who need to be included in the Academy process? How can they be engaged?

A: In addition to the HLC team, our Assessment and Program Review committee, we have engaged all faculty through sessions at in-services. We will continue to engage faculty in this manner, but see a need to have additional sessions with faculty at program levels as we work on the process and implementation.

> Reviewed by **Brian Huschle** on 11/13/2020 03:06 PM.

Consolidated Response

Q: ASL IR Part II Consolidated Response

Q: Please describe your general impression of the institution's progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The institution has made slow and steady progress over the past four years. Like the other institutions in this cohort, their progress was delayed by the pandemic which has been creating disruptions of educational processes for the past two and a half years.

Reviewing the list of completed activities was a good reminder that the institution did accomplish a number of important tasks, including revised ILOs, revised processes and rubrics for assessing ILOs, and revised assessment processes and reports for Career and Technical Programs and General Education/Liberal Arts and Sciences. The new processes and forms were piloted during 2021-2022, and the institution held its first dedicated Assessment Day for faculty in the spring of 2022! All of this groundwork helped to build a foundation for full implementation of the new process in 2022-2023. The team should feel good about the work they accomplished through the Academy and their overall contributions to improving assessment of student learning outcomes throughout the institution.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Your Mentor has captured it.

Your listed activities, planned actions steps, and the specifics on your sustainability approach declare that you are ready to move this work to the next level of implementation. With training, tools and new understanding shared with faculty colleagues, you should have a particularly rewarding 2022-23 year. This coming year is when all of the in-the-trenches work will have practical application and I think a real pay off. Still, be prepared for pilots that might not go as planned and remain flexible with participating colleagues. Do all that you can as data comes in to showcase good practice and the utility of the work which you already know is bring done got its potential to inform improvement---not just for doing and reporting!

Q: Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

All of the work that was done by the team was in consultation with administration and included involvement from the faculty. The new processes and tools developed appear to be appropriate for the institution given its size, mission and programs. As noted in your posting, you did not make as much progress as originally intended and the institution still needs to develop and implement a plan for the assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

There are no specific concerns though your Mentor and I recognize the challenges ahead. With changing leaders and/or roles, some of this work could lose the central role it has enjoyed with the Academy project profile. Do all that you can to follow your own stated action steps (above) and insights on keeping faculty and staff engaged (above). They offer a practical approach and sequence of events that will keep assessment work in front of colleagues regularly. Your next steps are building on solid preparation.

A:

Q: **In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

In my opinion, the institution is prepared to sustain its assessment efforts. Several action steps were outlined in the sustainability section of the Impact Report that will keep assessment efforts moving forward. The team leader, who was also the chief academic officer, has recently left the institution so a new leader will have to be selected and brought up to date on past and future assessment initiatives. It was also mentioned that the institution will be hiring a Director of Institutional Research; this individual will need to be involved in assessment initiatives as well. Specifically, this individual should be particularly helpful in addressing the challenges this institution is experiencing relative to implementing a system for collecting, analyzing and utilizing assessment data.

It will be important to keep assessment at the forefront of the institution as the HLC has required the institution to submit an Interim Monitoring Report on assessment in 2024 as this area was "met with concerns" during the institution's last comprehensive evaluation. Although I recognize that the goals of the Assessment Academy are separate from accreditation processes, the work of the Academy team needs to continue as the important steps they are in fulfilling expectations in assessment.

Continued communication, faculty development and designated time for faculty to work on assessment will be extremely important to ensure that the processes and tools developed over the past four years can be implemented and faculty members can use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Ditto to all that your Mentor has shared.

I want to endorse the comments/plans suggested for moving forward on co-curricular assessment. Relating the co-curriculum to the ILOs makes great sense and starting with a Pilot on how those areas contribute to learning---not that they are providing satisfactory services---is sensible. Great idea to use the same ILO tool/rubric but change the rating approach.

Q: **Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I have enjoyed working with this team over the past four years. They have persisted despite challenges related to the pandemic as well as challenges caused by technology, faculty turnover and the recent change of senior leaders. I encourage them to keep moving forward and to keep connected with other Academy participants as well as similar institutions in the Minnesota State System to share ideas and practices. And I am certainly available if additional assistance is needed at any time.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Though you state that you did not accomplish all that you intended, please recognize that a great deal of important foundational work has been accomplished. The stage is well set for continued engagement and maturity in assessment work. Be sure to recognize (reward?) contributions that can be models for others.

You are well positioned to reach stated goals in the upcoming academic year(s).

Bravo on accomplishments.

A:
Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: **ASL Consolidated Response Questions**

Q: **What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

There is continuity from the last update (the third year mentor consultation) to the current update with continued emphasis on the adoption of a competency model, rather than a numeric score, for ILO assessment as well as continued efforts to involve more faculty members in assessment processes. The group has outlined detailed plans for the next two years relative to assessment in both the liberal arts and technical programs. The proposed changes should improve reporting and allow the institution to collect the desired information more efficiently. Finally, the group appears to be making continued progress, over the past year and a half, despite the pandemic and associated schedule interruptions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

You are making slow but sure progress on assessment activities.

It is always a good idea to update/improve forms as time allows, especially, if changes are in response to faculty users who are suggesting same.

I also want to recognize the importance of the follow-up on reports that you conduct. Explicit follow-up reinforces the idea that reports aren't something *to do* but rather are pieces of a process that contribute to positive change in student achievement.

Lastly, The revision of program outcomes and mapping courses supporting the outcomes to the ILOs is a huge alignment that hopefully send the message to faculty that the work is purposeful.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The team continues to affirm its focus on assessing Institutional Learning Objectives although it appears that the specific activities have changed relative to ILO assessment since the spring report. Perhaps those changes were made as you evaluated your progress at the Mid-Point Roundtable and established your goals for the next two years of the Academy. A review of the team's goals for the next two years reflects a focus on program assessment, in both the liberal arts program and the technical programs. There also appears to be a new focus on the content/format of program assessment reports. You have outlined three tasks for the next six months, two dealing with changes to reporting forms.

By this point, many college faculty have been engaged with the project through their participation on the Academy team, college committees and faculty in-services. The team has recognized that faculty will need to be further involved in the modifications to the program assessment processes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

It seems that the Midpoint Roundtable gave you some new insights and energy for the remaining work.

Your work remains focused on the ILOs and the processes intended to secure useful assessment data to inform improved student learning.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

It looks like many of the tasks in your two-year plan are already completed or close to completion. Once all of the adjustments have been made to reporting forms and processes, will the remainder of the project period be focused on collecting data, analyzing data and using data for improvement? Who will manage this process and be responsible for documenting and sharing the results.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

In addition to Julie's important question I am adding: Do you have curriculum maps in broad use so you can be sure where best to measure achievement in courses already identified as ILO contributors? Is this an effort still ahead of you? If yes, consider how quickly you might be able to complete maps and direct work to next steps of measuring and gaining insight.

Recognizing that many processes/forms are being re-worked---and this certainly is important work---I still need to ask if results are already available? Action items established? I am not clear that this part of your assessment work is ongoing? Otherwise, how close are you to regular use of data from program and ILO measures? Are faculty engaged in analysis and decisions on next steps for potential curricular change---definitely the more rewarding part of assessment work or is that still ahead?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Several changes appear to have been made since the report from earlier this year, including a change in the Academy team leader as well as specific project activities. Here are my questions:

1.) Project Update 4 indicates that the team will focus on finalizing assessment rubrics and assessing ILO #1, 4 and 5 during the 20-21 academic year; yet there is no mention of this activity in the current Project Update. Will this activity still occur?

2) One of the tasks for the next six months is to "research and review ILO assessment process to improve it." What is involved in that process? I was under the impression that is the work your team had been doing for the past two years. Help clarify.

3) Although you joined the Assessment Academy and established your goals prior to your recent HLC Comprehensive Visit, I understand that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? Is this the reason you changed your planned activities from what was posted in the spring to what is reported above? Help us understand how best to offer guidance.

Given the changes, I recommend a conference call or virtual meeting between your team, Susan and myself so we can better understand the plan for the next two years. I would like to be able to help your team rather than continue to question you or guess what additional information is behind some of the responses above.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I also have questions about the substance of the plan, appreciating that the forms may need updating. Will the Academy Team tackle this or the APR Committee or some subset? Be sure to ask faculty about their ideas to improve the form; they'll be living with it for a while!

I am curious as well to understand the Monitoring Report expectations. (Accreditation and Academy work are absolutely distinct but if there is some way for us to provide insight on your current project that would have a positive corollary effect for the Report, we are poised to assist.)

Is there hard data on the previous cycles of ILO measurement that suggested areas for action/improvement?

Even with a Zoom-type world, are you able to work with faculty who need guidance on assessment activity or tools?

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I think you have outlined a clear plan of activities for the next six months. Beyond that, I would recommend the institution focus on the continued collection and analysis of assessment data on student learning across all programs. By doing so, you will have adequate information, i.e., multiple cycles of assessment results and related improvement actions, to demonstrate fulfillment of expectations for Core Component 4B in your interim monitoring report that is due in advance of the Year 4 review in 2024.

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, there is no one correct or perfect method for conducting assessment of student learning. At some point, you need to decide that your forms, software, processes, etc., are adequately designed and you'll need to begin to implement and then expand your assessment processes. You can always make refinements along the way but you will lose momentum---and be unable to demonstrate meaningful progress---if your work continues disproportionately to focus on modifying forms, tools and processes.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Julie's point is well taken and I agree with the importance of having cycles of assessment accomplished in order to provide evidence of assessment activity at the college. I also recognize that you will need to provide support and guidance to faculty....and colleagues to each other...as quickly as is reasonable and practical. If there is currently no ongoing practice of gathering and analyzing data and responding to results with action, consider how quickly this can be undertaken in cooperative programs and volunteer faculty willing to experiment and share their experience. Maybe first steps will be a matter of securing baseline data.

Much work accomplished; still work ahead.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

You indicate that for the first two year of the project the HLC Team and the college's Assessment and Program Review Committee were combined but now it appears as though you are going to go back to meeting separately.Given recent HLC concerns relative to assessment, it seems particularly important that these two groups continue to work collaboratively and that they are "on the same page" relative to panned activities.

You also realize that the pandemic complicates communication with faculty and makes it more difficult to engage faculty in discussions, work sessions and other faculty development activities. Perhaps by now, we are all becoming more accustomed to working in a virtual world compared to last spring and you will be able to reconnect with colleagues.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

The work on forms could go swiftly if you are updating or simplifying. If that is the case, I thought that the work mentioned in Version 4, i.e., review of all PLOs (to confirm that they are measurable & manageable?), identification of assessment tools, creation of an Assessment Handbook (if that is still desirable) and, determination on professional development needs would also be time well spent in the next cycle. Yes, there are huge challenges with the remote world we are in so maybe not all of these can be accomplished.

Keeping with your project interests, is there ongoing assessment activity that has produced results for analysis?

Have the ILOs and Gen Ed outcomes been reviewed for overlap? Are they synonymous? Would this be useful in streamlining assessment demands?

Will Liberal Arts and Technical programs have results of PLO or ILO measures in this academic year?

Q: **What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, you may want to check in with other Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to see how they are using their Learning Management Systems to collect and analyze information on student learning outcomes if you haven't done this already.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Good idea. Your state colleagues may have tips and techniques that you hadn't thought of yet.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Typically, you would have received a great deal of information and opportunity to network and benchmark with other institutions at the Mid-Point Roundtable. I hope this was the case although I realize the Roundtable was a virtual experience for your team.

Assuming we have a phone conversation or virtual meeting, I will be able to suggest some focused resources as well as resources related to working remotely with teams.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I want to strongly encourage taking Julie---or both of us---up on the idea of a call or Zoom. We welcome time with you and the Academy team or some subset. We are eager to help you determine how to get the best and the most out of the project work you are taking on over the next 2 years.

> Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Project Update 4

Project Update

Q: **What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?**

To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects

A: This is an area that we as a college have been negligent on. While it is no excuse, much of our team has been immersed in our recent HLC site visit, as well as an upcoming Office of Civil Rights Review. At our next meeting of the Assessment and Program Review Committee, this will be an item we spend time upon.

Q: Your team has reached the midpoint in the Academy. Summarize your project thus far in no more than two paragraphs.

A: We have completely revised ILO #2 and #3 (along with the associated rubrics) and are in the process of assessing those ILO's during the current academic year. To date, this year we have made initial revisions to ILO #1, 4, & 5 (see below). As with the previous revisions, we were deliberate about the process to insure feedback from all faculty. The revisions to the three ILO's were shared at our recent In-Service and we are in the process of incorporating the feedback we received. The plan is to have the final versions of these three ILO's presented to our Academic Affairs and Standards council this spring. We will then finalize the associated rubrics and assess ILO # 1, 4, & 5 during the 20-21 academic year.

	Current	New
ILO #1 Communication Skills	Students will be able to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences using verbal, non-verbal, listening, writing, interpersonal and team skills.	Students will demonstrate appropriate use of communication
ILO #4 Application of Resources	Students will be able to access and analyze appropriate information and/or resources using technology to solve problems.	Students will utilize appropriate informational or technological resources
ILO #5 Personal Development	Students will develop professional attitudes and habits of punctuality, honesty, respect, accountability, leadership, professional and personal integrity, and self-directedness while contributing to personal and group goals	Students will demonstrate professional and personal growth behaviors

Q: Describe the most significant challenges and opportunities encountered in the development and initial implementation of your Academy project.

A: For our project, one of the biggest challenges was the scope of our plan. We quickly realized that it was not feasible to revise all five ILO's within one year. This resulted in the change of our plan to spread them out over two years. As we worked through this process, we took advantage of the opportunity to incorporate all faculty into the revisions and allow them the opportunity to provide input. While this has certainly lengthened the time it has taken to accomplish the revisions, it has allowed for valuable feedback and feelings of inclusiveness.   Another challenge of the process is the rotation cycle for ILO assessment, since we spend an entire year collecting the data, it can take time to see results and therefore implement any needed changes.

Q: What evidence do you have that your work has or is beginning to improve student learning? What more do you need to know?

A: As mentioned previously, the ILO assessment cycle is such that we spend an academic year collecting the data and then review. Therefore, we will not have results available for review until June 2020

Q: **The Midpoint Roundtable will offer an opportunity to review, refocus, and recharge the Academy team's efforts. What particular goals does your team have for the Midpoint Roundtable?**

A: Our main goal of the midpoint roundtable will be to identify what direction we would like to move forward with the remainder of the project. In addition to our initial plan of ILO revision, we also wanted to accomplish the following:

- Develop a handbook as well as a simple one page plan
- Consistent language used relating to assessment
- Review of all program learner outcomes
- Any additions or revisions to assessment tools
- Professional development – different activities depending on the level programs are at with their outcomes and assessment

With only two years left in our academy participation, it will be crucial to prioritize what areas we want to focus or efforts on.

Q: **What topics would do you like to discuss with other teams at the Midpoint Roundtable? What questions could you ask other schools that might help advance your project? What insights would you like to share about your project with other schools?**

A: It would be beneficial to hear how other schools are addressing the assessment of ILO's (specifically how often they are assessed, how they collect the data, and best practices for implementing changes). The biggest insights we may have to share would be surrounding the need to be deliberate about large scale changes and inclusive of all impacted parties.

Reviewed by **Jodi Stauss Stassen** on 02/17/2020 02:46 AM.

Consolidated Response

Q: **ASL IR Part II Consolidated Response**

Q: **Please describe your general impression of the institution's progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The institution has made slow and steady progress over the past four years. Like the other institutions in this cohort, their progress was delayed by the pandemic which has been creating disruptions of educational processes for the past two and a half years.

Reviewing the list of completed activities was a good reminder that the institution did accomplish a number of important tasks, including revised ILOs, revised processes and rubrics for assessing ILOs, and revised assessment processes and reports for Career and Technical Programs and General Education/Liberal Arts and Sciences. The new processes and forms were piloted during 2021-2022, and the institution held its first dedicated Assessment Day for faculty in the spring of 2022! All of this groundwork helped to build a foundation for full implementation of the new process in 2022-2023. The team should feel good about the work they accomplished through the Academy and their overall contributions to improving assessment of student learning outcomes throughout the institution.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Your Mentor has captured it.

Your listed activities, planned actions steps, and the specifics on your sustainability approach declare that you are ready to move this work to the next level of implementation. With training, tools and new understanding shared with faculty colleagues, you should have a particularly rewarding 2022-23 year. This coming year is when all of the in-the-trenches work will have practical application and I think a real pay off. Still, be prepared for pilots that might not go as planned and remain flexible with participating colleagues. Do all that you can as data comes in to showcase good practice and the utility of the work which you already know is bring done got its potential to inform improvement—not just for doing and reporting!

A:

Q: Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

All of the work that was done by the team was in consultation with administration and included involvement from the faculty. The new processes and tools developed appear to be appropriate for the institution given its size, mission and programs. As noted in your posting, you did not make as much progress as originally intended and the institution still needs to develop and implement a plan for the assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

There are no specific concerns though your Mentor and I recognize the challenges ahead. With changing leaders and/or roles, some of this work could lose the central role it has enjoyed with the Academy project profile. Do all that you can to follow your own stated action steps (above) and insights on keeping faculty and staff engaged (above). They offer a practical approach and sequence of events that will keep assessment work in front of colleagues regularly. Your next steps are building on solid preparation.

Q: In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

In my opinion, the institution is prepared to sustain its assessment efforts. Several action steps were outlined in the sustainability section of the Impact Report that will keep assessment efforts moving forward. The team leader, who was also the chief academic officer, has recently left the institution so a new leader will have to be selected and brought up to date on past and future assessment initiatives. It was also mentioned that the institution will be hiring a Director of Institutional Research; this individual will need to be involved in assessment initiatives as well. Specifically, this individual should be particularly helpful in addressing the challenges this institution is experiencing relative to implementing a system for collecting, analyzing and utilizing assessment data.

It will be important to keep assessment at the forefront of the institution as the HLC has required the institution to submit an Interim Monitoring Report on assessment in 2024 as this area was "met with concerns" during the institution's last comprehensive evaluation. Although I recognize that the goals of the Assessment Academy are separate from accreditation processes, the work of the Academy team needs to continue as the important steps they are in fulfilling expectations in assessment.

Continued communication, faculty development and designated time for faculty to work on assessment will be extremely important to ensure that the processes and tools developed over the past four years can be implemented and faculty members can use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Ditto to all that your Mentor has shared.

I want to endorse the comments/plans suggested for moving forward on co-curricular assessment. Relating the co-curriculum to the ILOs makes great sense and starting with a Pilot on how those areas contribute to learning---not that they are providing satisfactory services---is sensible. Great idea to use the same ILO tool/rubric but change the rating approach.

A:

Q: Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I have enjoyed working with this team over the past four years. They have persisted despite challenges related to the pandemic as well as challenges caused by technology, faculty turnover and the recent change of senior leaders. I encourage them to keep moving forward and to keep connected with other Academy participants as well as similar institutions in the Minnesota State System to share ideas and practices. And I am certainly available if additional assistance is needed at any time.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Though you state that you did not accomplish all that you intended, please recognize that a great deal of important foundational work has been accomplished. The stage is well set for continued engagement and maturity in assessment work. Be sure to recognize (reward?) contributions that can be models for others.

You are well positioned to reach stated goals in the upcoming academic year(s).

Bravo on accomplishments.

A:
Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: ASL Consolidated Response Questions

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

There is continuity from the last update (the third year mentor consultation) to the current update with continued emphasis on the adoption of a competency model, rather than a numeric score, for ILO assessment as well as continued efforts to involve more faculty members in assessment processes. The group has outlined detailed plans for the next two years relative to assessment in both the liberal arts and technical programs. The proposed changes should improve reporting and allow the institution to collect the desired information more efficiently. Finally, the group appears to be making continued progress, over the past year and a half, despite the pandemic and associated schedule interruptions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

You are making slow but sure progress on assessment activities.

It is always a good idea to update/improve forms as time allows, especially, if changes are in response to faculty users who are suggesting same.

I also want to recognize the importance of the follow-up on reports that you conduct. Explicit follow-up reinforces the idea that reports aren't something *to do* but rather are pieces of a process that contribute to positive change in student achievement.

Lastly, The revision of program outcomes and mapping courses supporting the outcomes to the ILOs is a huge alignment that hopefully send the message to faculty that the work is purposeful.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The team continues to affirm its focus on assessing Institutional Learning Objectives although it appears that the specific activities have changed relative to ILO assessment since the spring report. Perhaps those changes were made as you evaluated your progress at the Mid-Point Roundtable and established your goals for the next two years of the Academy. A review of the team's goals for the next two years reflects a focus on program assessment, in both the liberal arts program and the technical programs. There also

appears to be a new focus on the content/format of program assessment reports. You have outlined three tasks for the next six months, two dealing with changes to reporting forms.

By this point, many college faculty have been engaged with the project through their participation on the Academy team, college committees and faculty in-services. The team has recognized that faculty will need to be further involved in the modifications to the program assessment processes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

It seems that the Midpoint Roundtable gave you some new insights and energy for the remaining work.

Your work remains focused on the ILOs and the processes intended to secure useful assessment data to inform improved student learning.

Q: **What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

It looks like many of the tasks in your two-year plan are already completed or close to completion. Once all of the adjustments have been made to reporting forms and processes, will the remainder of the project period be focused on collecting data, analyzing data and using data for improvement? Who will manage this process and be responsible for documenting and sharing the results.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

In addition to Julie's important question I am adding: Do you have curriculum maps in broad use so you can be sure where best to measure achievement in courses already identified as ILO contributors? Is this an effort still ahead of you? If yes, consider how quickly you might be able to complete maps and direct work to next steps of measuring and gaining insight.

Recognizing that many processes/forms are being re-worked---and this certainly is important work---I still need to ask if results are already available?   Action items established? I am not clear that this part of your assessment work is ongoing? Otherwise, how close are you to regular use of data from program and ILO measures? Are faculty engaged in analysis and decisions on next steps for potential curricular change---definitely the more rewarding part of assessment work or is that still ahead?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Several changes appear to have been made since the report from earlier this year, including a change in the Academy team leader as well as specific project activities. Here are my questions:

1.) Project Update 4 indicates that the team will focus on finalizing assessment rubrics and assessing ILO #1, 4 and 5 during the 20-21 academic year; yet there is no mention of this activity in the current Project Update. Will this activity still occur?

2) One of the tasks for the next six months is to "research and review ILO assessment process to improve it." What is involved in that process? I was under the impression that is the work your team had been doing for the past two years. Help clarify.

3) Although you joined the Assessment Academy and established your goals prior to your recent HLC Comprehensive Visit, I understand that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? Is this the reason you changed your planned activities from what was posted in the spring to what is reported above? Help us understand how best to offer guidance.

Given the changes, I recommend a conference call or virtual meeting between your team, Susan and myself so we can better understand the plan for the next two years. I would like to be able to help your team rather than continue to question you or guess what additional information is behind some of the responses above.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I also have questions about the substance of the plan, appreciating that the forms may need updating. Will the Academy Team tackle this or the APR Committee or some subset? Be sure to ask faculty about their ideas to improve the form; they'll be living with it for a while!

I am curious as well to understand the Monitoring Report expectations. (Accreditation and Academy work are absolutely distinct but if there is some way for us to provide insight on your current project that would have a positive corollary effect for the Report, we are poised to assist.)

Is there hard data on the previous cycles of ILO measurement that suggested areas for action/improvement?

Even with a Zoom-type world, are you able to work with faculty who need guidance on assessment activity or tools?

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I think you have outlined a clear plan of activities for the next six months. Beyond that, I would recommend the institution focus on the continued collection and analysis of assessment data on student learning across all programs. By doing so, you will have adequate information, i.e., multiple cycles of assessment results and related improvement actions, to demonstrate fulfillment of expectations for Core Component 4B in your interim monitoring report that is due in advance of the Year 4 review in 2024.

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, there is no one correct or perfect method for conducting assessment of student learning. At some point, you need to decide that your forms, software, processes, etc., are adequately designed and you'll need to begin to implement and then expand your assessment processes. You can always make refinements along the way but you will lose momentum---and be unable to demonstrate meaningful progress---if your work continues disproportionately to focus on modifying forms, tools and processes.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Julie's point is well taken and I agree with the importance of having cycles of assessment accomplished in order to provide evidence of assessment activity at the college. I also recognize that you will need to provide support and guidance to faculty....and colleagues to each other...as quickly as is reasonable and practical. If there is currently no ongoing practice of gathering and analyzing data and responding to results with action, consider how quickly this can be undertaken in cooperative programs and volunteer faculty willing to experiment and share their experience. Maybe first steps will be a matter of securing baseline data.

Much work accomplished; still work ahead.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

You indicate that for the first two year of the project the HLC Team and the college's Assessment and Program Review Committee were combined but now it appears as though you are going to go back to meeting separately.Given recent HLC concerns relative to assessment, it seems particularly important that these two groups continue to work collaboratively and that they are "on the same page" relative to panned activities.

You also realize that the pandemic complicates communication with faculty and makes it more difficult to engage faculty in discussions, work sessions and other faculty development activities. Perhaps by now, we are all becoming more accustomed to working in a virtual world compared to last spring and you will be able to reconnect with colleagues.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

The work on forms could go swiftly if you are updating or simplifying. If that is the case, I thought that the work mentioned in Version 4, i.e., review of all PLOs (to confirm that they are measurable & manageable?), identification of assessment tools, creation of an Assessment Handbook (if that is still desirable) and, determination on professional development needs would also be time well spent in the next cycle. Yes, there are huge challenges with the remote world we are in so maybe not all of these can be accomplished.

Keeping with your project interests, is there ongoing assessment activity that has produced results for analysis?

Have the ILOs and Gen Ed outcomes been reviewed for overlap? Are they synonymous? Would this be useful in streamlining assessment demands?

Will Liberal Arts and Technical programs have results of PLO or ILO measures in this academic year?

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, you may want to check in with other Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to see how they are using their Learning Management Systems to collect and analyze information on student learning outcomes if you haven't done this already.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Good idea. Your state colleagues may have tips and techniques that you hadn't thought of yet.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Typically, you would have received a great deal of information and opportunity to network and benchmark with other institutions at the Mid-Point Roundtable. I hope this was the case although I realize the Roundtable was a virtual experience for your team.

Assuming we have a phone conversation or virtual meeting, I will be able to suggest some focused resources as well as resources related to working remotely with teams.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I want to strongly encourage taking Julie---or both of us---up on the idea of a call or Zoom. We welcome time with you and the Academy team or some subset. We are eager to help you determine how to get the best and the most out of the project work you are taking on over the next 2 years.

A:
> Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: Version: 4 - Scholar Response

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Julie

As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength for this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

Your team has set specific goals and action steps for the upcoming Midpoint Roundtable and beyond including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

Susan

You are in good shape for this point in your project. You continue to enjoy faculty support/participation which is imperative for future efforts. As Julie noted, the completion of the ILO review and the initial phase of ILO measures means that you have a positive trajectory for other scheduled assessment work. With the ILOs complete, determining performance indicators and rubrics should be straightforward.

Having new data available in June offers the chance to have analysis completed and ready for discussion with colleagues at the start of the fall semester.

A: As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength of this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

It appears your team set some focused goals and specific future action steps during the Midpoint Roundtable, including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Julie

As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the work you undertake at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

Are a sufficient number of faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs #2 and #3 this year? Is this year more of a pilot? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs able to guide faculty in making improvements in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I understood that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? *What can we do in these next two years to help you fulfill expectations of Core Component 4B? Would a phone call or meeting/discussion at the annual conference be beneficial?*

Susan

Julie already made the offer---how can we help with project related work on 4B? Is there anything more specific re: process, tools, etc., that we can offer? We are open to a conference call and certainly to meeting in April at the Annual Conference to discuss issues and offer insight.

Time is always an issue and searching the Collaboration Network, even with the tags, will still take time. Consider whether you might assign an individual or two to take a first pass at the Network to identify potential institutions for further review.

For ILOs 1,4, and 5 scheduled for the upcoming academic year---any chance you can get a jump on those areas by piloting in the summer? Are there possible volunteers from your own team? Colleagues who would be willing?

Is ILO assessment work taking place in tandem with Program Level assessment? Are there results from the latter that can be showcased for colleagues as examples of good practice even before the fall semester?

Re: the goals identified for the Midpoint Roundtable, I agree that prioritizing is the task ahead. How can you leverage your Academy work to serve (possible) double-duty as you look ahead to your Monitoring Report.

As you think about any potential for Professional Development activity be sure that you pulse the faculty on what they want/need. Ask where they have issues/difficulties and seek to remove barriers to understanding or practice.

I think that Julie and I remain uncertain whether ILO and general education assessment are synonymous. Could you confirm for us either way before or in the next posting?

Have you created/used curriculum maps? They are so helpful in identifying where to measure outcomes.

Are the program level rubrics in good shape? Would programs appreciate a review or assist from your team to update if needed---especially as the ILO rubrics gain momentum?

A: As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. I am also unclear if you have begun to address the issue of identifying and assessing co-curricular learning

outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the goals you established at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

In your report, you also state that the lack of faculty participation in assessment is a significant concern. Has this improved in the two years you have been in the Assessment Academy, involving faculty and sharing information at faculty in-services? Are faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs (#2 and #3) this year? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs more useful in guiding faculty to make improvement in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I noted that the Visiting Team and the IAC agreed that the institution met core component 4B "with concerns" and you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. What was the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and from Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? ***What can we do in these next two years to help you become fully compliant with core component 4B? Would a phone call or brief visit at the annual conference be beneficial?***

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Julie

The Academy team likely needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Visit to ensure that action plans---consistent with your project---are in place to address this feedback. Will the items you identified for the Midpoint Roundtable help you address any of the reviewer concerns?

With assessment flagged for monitoring you probably have the attention of senior leadership and faculty; this reality should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution needs a focal point (an individual? an office? standing committee?) where assessment activities (work with faculty and staff) and maintenance of assessment processes is managed.

Susan

Don't be specifically concerned with implementing curricular change when the June data comes. (Well, sure, if there is something obvious.) Some data will need to be trended; other insights may just lead to different questions; but all results should lead to discussion among colleagues. You may need to wait for additional results before you choose specific action; some faculty may want to pilot an intervention/change and then assess to see if there was an effect. Be open to different approaches.

Be sure to share data with colleagues asking for what they see in the results. I am regularly surprised by different insights from different audiences.

As you prioritize and decide on tasks for the next 2 years is it possible to add colleagues to the team...even ad hoc? Is it possible/practical to create sub-groups to juggle all that you want to accomplish or are you at capacity already?

A: As I wrote above, the academy team needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Comprehensive Visit and ensure that action plans are in place to address this feedback. I am unclear if the future actions identified at the Midpoint Roundtable will help you address the reviewer concerns. Once I have the information on why 4B was "met with concerns," I will be able to suggest specific actions to take over the next six months, and the next two years, for the institution to become compliant with this core component.

On a positive note, now that this area has been "flagged" by the HLC as having been "met with concerns," you will have the attention of senior leadership and of the faculty. This should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution does need an individual dedicated to working with faculty and staff on assessment of student learning as well as managing and maintaining assessment processes.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Julie

As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Consider what processes/approaches at peer institutions might appeal to you for adaptation.

Susan

Review the Collaboration Network as time permits and also consider investing time in understanding what peer institutions are doing (each team member calls a colleague at another institution in or out of state). Position yourselves to learn some quick lessons or get some quick takeaways from others' experiences.

Plan to maximize opportunities to learn from colleagues at the Midpoint Roundtable. Bring a few key questions and take time to ask others how they manage an issue.

A: As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Again, now that this area has been "flagged" as an area of concern by the HLC, you don't have years to spend "re-inventing" the wheel relative to student learning assessment. You may need to adapt processes from similar institutions.

> Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Supplemental Update Questions

Q: Document any additional progress on the Academy Team has made on the Academy Project since the last posting?

A: All five of our Institutional Learner Outcomes have been reviewed, revised, and accompanying rubrics developed.

Q: Document any changes to the Academy Project scope or any shift in goals for the Academy since the last posting?

A: In a meeting this fall, our Team has identified two key areas of focus going forward. These are consistent with and in scope of th original project, but based on feedback from our ten year HLC Accreditation visit last Fall.

First, with respect to ILOs: (a) We plan to research building the rubrics into our Brightspace course management system for use and collection. We further need to complete this by having an effective way to demonstrate that the assessment process includes adjustments to teaching strategies, reassessment, and so on. (We need to close the loop.) (b) Tied to this, we need to revisit our General Education (AA Degree) program learner outcomes - a challenge for us is that faculty in this area carry the brunt of much of the assessment work. A recommendation from our site team is that we revisit the separation of program outcomes for general education and institutional outcomes with respect to assessment.

Second, we planned to revisit our annual program assessment forms and processes. Our site team provided some useful feedback here that will help share this next step in our HLC Academy project.

Q: Given the challenges of recent months, are there additional topic the Academy Team like to discuss at the Midpoint Roundtable?

A: Engaging in ongoing contingency planning and crisis management is making it difficult to keep a focus on larger projects (such as this). Perhaps discussion of balancing this dynamic, and also discussion of what realistic expectations are during an extended event like this.

> Reviewed by **Brian Huschle** on 10/15/2020 03:19 PM.

Project Update 3

Project Update

Q: Describe your team's initial implementation of the project. Have you met Year 1 goals outlined in your previous posts? Why or why not?

A: After we revised our initial goal to spread the ILO revisions over two years we feel we are on track and have met our outlined goals. During the 18-19 academic year we worked to revise ILO #2 – Critical Thinking and ILO #3 Social Engagement. We were very deliberate about the process used to make these revisions, as we wanted to ensure all faculty had the opportunity to provide input. As mentioned in our previous update, the two revised outcomes were presented at the January faculty in-service and the feedback received was taken into consideration as updates were made. The final versions if ILO #2 and #3 (listed below) were approved by the colleges Academic Affairs & Standards Council during their April meeting. During the late spring and early summer months, the Assessment & Program Review Committee, along with the Assessment Academy team developed the rubrics to be used with these two new ILO's (attached). These new rubrics were shared with faculty during the August in-services and are going to be utilized this academic year as ILO #2 and #3 are assessed with our students.

ILO Revisions

OLD	**NEW**
-	-
ILO #2 – Critical Thinking	**ILO #2 – Critical Thinking**
Students will be able to evaluate arguments, separate fact and opinion, analyze information, and recognize points of view. Students will be able to understand implications and consequences of decision-making. Students will be able to acknowledge diverse values, develop effective problem-solving skills, and employ creativity in a variety of situations.	Students will gather information, develop solutions, and apply a viable plan of action
-	-
ILO #3 Global and Civic Responsibility	**ILO #3 – Social Engagement**
Students will be able to interact in ways that exhibit a sense of community and be sensitive to issues of cultural and global diversity and understand the importance of exercising civic responsibility on local, regional, and national levels. Students will understand and respect the need to give service to others. Students will respect and care for our natural environment.	Students will be prepared to practice social engagement that addresses environmental responsibility, civic engagement, and global diversity.

FY20 Northland ILO's (http://www.northlandcollege.edu/about-northland/_docs/northland_institutional_learner_outcomes_fy20.pdf)

Q: How did you incorporate the feedback from your previous posting?

A: We had all the administrators from the team attend the HLC annual conference this past April. We were intentional about attending breakout sessions related to our work, as well as attending Julie's breakout session on engaging the institution in assessment of student learning.

We have been able to take some of the highlights from our Annual Assessment report and not only share them with the college but incorporate them in our recently completed HLC Assurance Argument.

One of the feedback suggestions we received was developing a revised timetable of activities to share with the college, we will be working on this and sharing at the January in-service.

One question raised in the previous feedback was "how do faculty get feedback on their report submissions". The Provost at the college does review each program annual assessment and provides them with feedback each summer.

Q: Thus far, what has the team discovered about student learning at your institution?

A: The 2018-2019 Northland Annual Assessment report was recently completed, this report provides the college with a wealth of data related to student learning, below is the data specific to ILO assessment:

During the 2018 -19 Academic Year, ILO #1 Communication Skills and ILO #5 Personal Development were assessed. Overall, ILO assessment for 2018-2019 reflects that students are meeting outcomes on the whole, with scores above 3.0 in all cognate areas. Personal Development and Communication skills are both strong areas for Northland.

Q: What successes and challenges have you encountered working as a team? What strategies are you using to help maintain your Academy team's progress?

A: A large success for our team has been the representation from various disciplines at the college, we are fortunate to have health, trades, technical, and liberal arts faculty as part of our APR and Assessment team. This cross section of faculty brings a wealth of information and various perspectives to the table, making for a very holistic approach to the new ILO's. One of the challenges with this large of a group can be finding times that work with everyone's schedule. While we do have instances where not all team members are able to be at the meetings, we make sure to communicate with them, so we have their input on the work we are doing.

Having the Assessment Academy team work in collaboration with the APR has been very beneficial to assist in moving our project forward. The APR committee has standing monthly meetings and we have incorporated the assessment academy work into those meetings and their work plans.

Q: How will you continue to advance your project in the next six months?

A: The newly revised ILO's are being assessed this year and we will have that data available at the end of this fiscal year. Prior to January, the team plans to have draft versions of the remaining three ILO's developed (#1 Communication Skills, #4 Information and Applied Technology, #5 Personal Development). Similar to last year, these drafts will be shared with faculty at the January in-service and we will seek their input on revisions. We will then make any necessary changes and bring the ILO's to the AASC for approval prior to April 2020.

> Reviewed by **Jodi Stauss Stassen** on 09/06/2019 04:00 PM.

Consolidated Response

Q: ASL IR Part II Consolidated Response

Q: Please describe your general impression of the institution's progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The institution has made slow and steady progress over the past four years. Like the other institutions in this cohort, their progress was delayed by the pandemic which has been creating disruptions of educational processes for the past two and a half years.

Reviewing the list of completed activities was a good reminder that the institution did accomplish a number of important tasks, including revised ILOs, revised processes and rubrics for assessing ILOs, and revised assessment processes and reports for Career and Technical Programs and General Education/Liberal Arts and Sciences. The new processes and forms were piloted during 2021-2022, and the institution held its first dedicated Assessment Day for faculty in the spring of 2022! All of this groundwork helped to build a foundation for full implementation of the new process in 2022-2023. The team should feel good about the work they accomplished through the Academy and their overall contributions to improving assessment of student learning outcomes throughout the institution.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Your Mentor has captured it.

Your listed activities, planned actions steps, and the specifics on your sustainability approach declare that you are ready to move this work to the next level of implementation. With training, tools and new understanding shared with faculty colleagues, you should have a particularly rewarding 2022-23 year. This coming year is when all of the in-the-trenches work will have practical application and I think a real pay off. Still, be prepared for pilots that might not go as planned and remain flexible with participating colleagues. Do all that you can as data comes in to showcase good practice and the utility of the work which you already know is bring done got its potential to inform improvement---not just for doing and reporting!

Q: **Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

All of the work that was done by the team was in consultation with administration and included involvement from the faculty. The new processes and tools developed appear to be appropriate for the institution given its size, mission and programs. As noted in your posting, you did not make as much progress as originally intended and the institution still needs to develop and implement a plan for the assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

There are no specific concerns though your Mentor and I recognize the challenges ahead. With changing leaders and/or roles, some of this work could lose the central role it has enjoyed with the Academy project profile. Do all that you can to follow your own stated action steps (above) and insights on keeping faculty and staff engaged (above). They offer a practical approach and sequence of events that will keep assessment work in front of colleagues regularly. Your next steps are building on solid preparation.

A:

Q: In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

In my opinion, the institution is prepared to sustain its assessment efforts. Several action steps were outlined in the sustainability section of the Impact Report that will keep assessment efforts moving forward. The team leader, who was also the chief academic officer, has recently left the institution so a new leader will have to be selected and brought up to date on past and future assessment initiatives. It was also mentioned that the institution will be hiring a Director of Institutional Research; this individual will need to be involved in assessment initiatives as well. Specifically, this individual should be particularly helpful in addressing the challenges this institution is experiencing relative to implementing a system for collecting, analyzing and utilizing assessment data.

It will be important to keep assessment at the forefront of the institution as the HLC has required the institution to submit an Interim Monitoring Report on assessment in 2024 as this area was "met with concerns" during the institution's last comprehensive evaluation. Although I recognize that the goals of the Assessment Academy are separate from accreditation processes, the work of the Academy team needs to continue as the important steps they are in fulfilling expectations in assessment.

Continued communication, faculty development and designated time for faculty to work on assessment will be extremely important to ensure that the processes and tools developed over the past four years can be implemented and faculty members can use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Ditto to all that your Mentor has shared.

I want to endorse the comments/plans suggested for moving forward on co-curricular assessment. Relating the co-curriculum to the ILOs makes great sense and starting with a Pilot on how those areas contribute to learning---not that they are providing satisfactory services---is sensible. Great idea to use the same ILO tool/rubric but change the rating approach.

Q: Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I have enjoyed working with this team over the past four years. They have persisted despite challenges related to the pandemic as well as challenges caused by technology, faculty turnover and the recent change of senior leaders. I encourage them to keep moving forward and to keep connected with other Academy participants as well as similar institutions in the Minnesota State System to share ideas and practices. And I am certainly available if additional assistance is needed at any time.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Though you state that you did not accomplish all that you intended, please recognize that a great deal of important foundational work has been accomplished. The stage is well set for continued engagement and maturity in assessment work. Be sure to recognize (reward?) contributions that can be models for others.

You are well positioned to reach stated goals in the upcoming academic year(s).

Bravo on accomplishments.

A: Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: ASL Consolidated Response Questions

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

There is continuity from the last update (the third year mentor consultation) to the current update with continued emphasis on the adoption of a competency model, rather than a numeric score, for ILO assessment as well as continued efforts to involve more faculty members in assessment processes. The group has outlined detailed plans for the next two years relative to assessment in both the liberal arts and technical programs. The proposed changes should improve reporting and allow the institution to collect the desired information more efficiently. Finally, the group appears to be making continued progress, over the past year and a half, despite the pandemic and associated schedule interruptions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

You are making slow but sure progress on assessment activities.

It is always a good idea to update/improve forms as time allows, especially, if changes are in response to faculty users who are suggesting same.

I also want to recognize the importance of the follow-up on reports that you conduct. Explicit follow-up reinforces the idea that reports aren't something *to do* but rather are pieces of a process that contribute to positive change in student achievement.

Lastly, The revision of program outcomes and mapping courses supporting the outcomes to the ILOs is a huge alignment that hopefully send the message to faculty that the work is purposeful.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The team continues to affirm its focus on assessing Institutional Learning Objectives although it appears that the specific activities have changed relative to ILO assessment since the spring report. Perhaps those changes were made as you evaluated your progress at the Mid-Point Roundtable and established your goals for the next two years of the Academy. A review of the team's goals for the next two years reflects a focus on program assessment, in both the liberal arts program and the technical programs. There also appears to be a new focus on the content/format of program assessment reports. You have outlined three tasks for the next six months, two dealing with changes to reporting forms.

By this point, many college faculty have been engaged with the project through their participation on the Academy team, college committees and faculty in-services. The team has recognized that faculty will need to be further involved in the modifications to the program assessment processes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

It seems that the Midpoint Roundtable gave you some new insights and energy for the remaining work.

Your work remains focused on the ILOs and the processes intended to secure useful assessment data to inform improved student learning.

A:

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

It looks like many of the tasks in your two-year plan are already completed or close to completion. Once all of the adjustments have been made to reporting forms and processes, will the remainder of the project period be focused on collecting data, analyzing data and using data for improvement? Who will manage this process and be responsible for documenting and sharing the results.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

In addition to Julie's important question I am adding: Do you have curriculum maps in broad use so you can be sure where best to measure achievement in courses already identified as ILO contributors? Is this an effort still ahead of you? If yes, consider how quickly you might be able to complete maps and direct work to next steps of measuring and gaining insight.

Recognizing that many processes/forms are being re-worked---and this certainly is important work---I still need to ask if results are already available?   Action items established? I am not clear that this part of your assessment work is ongoing? Otherwise, how close are you to regular use of data from program and ILO measures? Are faculty engaged in analysis and decisions on next steps for potential curricular change---definitely the more rewarding part of assessment work or is that still ahead?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Several changes appear to have been made since the report from earlier this year, including a change in the Academy team leader as well as specific project activities. Here are my questions:

1.) Project Update 4 indicates that the team will focus on finalizing assessment rubrics and assessing ILO #1, 4 and 5 during the 20-21 academic year; yet there is no mention of this activity in the current Project Update. Will this activity still occur?

2) One of the tasks for the next six months is to "research and review ILO assessment process to improve it." What is involved in that process? I was under the impression that is the work your team had been doing for the past two years. Help clarify.

3) Although you joined the Assessment Academy and established your goals prior to your recent HLC Comprehensive Visit, I understand that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? Is this the reason you changed your planned activities from what was posted in the spring to what is reported above? Help us understand how best to offer guidance.

Given the changes, I recommend a conference call or virtual meeting between your team, Susan and myself so we can better understand the plan for the next two years. I would like to be able to help your team rather than continue to question you or guess what additional information is behind some of the responses above.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I also have questions about the substance of the plan, appreciating that the forms may need updating. Will the Academy Team tackle this or the APR Committee or some subset? Be sure to ask faculty about their ideas to improve the form; they'll be living with it for a while!

I am curious as well to understand the Monitoring Report expectations. (Accreditation and Academy work are absolutely distinct but if there is some way for us to provide insight on your current project that would have a positive corollary effect for the Report, we are poised to assist.)

Is there hard data on the previous cycles of ILO measurement that suggested areas for action/improvement?

Even with a Zoom-type world, are you able to work with faculty who need guidance on assessment activity or tools?

A:

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I think you have outlined a clear plan of activities for the next six months. Beyond that, I would recommend the institution focus on the continued collection and analysis of assessment data on student learning across all programs. By doing so, you will have adequate information, i.e., multiple cycles of assessment results and related improvement actions, to demonstrate fulfillment of expectations for Core Component 4B in your interim monitoring report that is due in advance of the Year 4 review in 2024.

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, there is no one correct or perfect method for conducting assessment of student learning. At some point, you need to decide that your forms, software, processes, etc., are adequately designed and you'll need to begin to implement and then expand your assessment processes. You can always make refinements along the way but you will lose momentum---and be unable to demonstrate meaningful progress---if your work continues disproportionately to focus on modifying forms, tools and processes.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Julie's point is well taken and I agree with the importance of having cycles of assessment accomplished in order to provide evidence of assessment activity at the college. I also recognize that you will need to provide support and guidance to faculty….and colleagues to each other…as quickly as is reasonable and practical. If there is currently no ongoing practice of gathering and analyzing data and responding to results with action, consider how quickly this can be undertaken in cooperative programs and volunteer faculty willing to experiment and share their experience. Maybe first steps will be a matter of securing baseline data.

Much work accomplished; still work ahead.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

You indicate that for the first two year of the project the HLC Team and the college's Assessment and Program Review Committee were combined but now it appears as though you are going to go back to meeting separately.Given recent HLC concerns relative to assessment, it seems particularly important that these two groups continue to work collaboratively and that they are "on the same page" relative to panned activities.

You also realize that the pandemic complicates communication with faculty and makes it more difficult to engage faculty in discussions, work sessions and other faculty development activities. Perhaps by now, we are all becoming more accustomed to working in a virtual world compared to last spring and you will be able to reconnect with colleagues.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

The work on forms could go swiftly if you are updating or simplifying. If that is the case, I thought that the work mentioned in Version 4, i.e., review of all PLOs (to confirm that they are measurable & manageable?), identification of assessment tools, creation of an Assessment Handbook (if that is still desirable) and, determination on professional development needs would also be time well spent in the next cycle. Yes, there are huge challenges with the remote world we are in so maybe not all of these can be accomplished.

Keeping with your project interests, is there ongoing assessment activity that has produced results for analysis?

Have the ILOs and Gen Ed outcomes been reviewed for overlap? Are they synonymous? Would this be useful in streamlining assessment demands?

Will Liberal Arts and Technical programs have results of PLO or ILO measures in this academic year?

A:

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, you may want to check in with other Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to see how they are using their Learning Management Systems to collect and analyze information on student learning outcomes if you haven't done this already.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Good idea. Your state colleagues may have tips and techniques that you hadn't thought of yet.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Typically, you would have received a great deal of information and opportunity to network and benchmark with other institutions at the Mid-Point Roundtable. I hope this was the case although I realize the Roundtable was a virtual experience for your team.

Assuming we have a phone conversation or virtual meeting, I will be able to suggest some focused resources as well as resources related to working remotely with teams.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I want to strongly encourage taking Julie---or both of us---up on the idea of a call or Zoom. We welcome time with you and the Academy team or some subset. We are eager to help you determine how to get the best and the most out of the project work you are taking on over the next 2 years.

A:
Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: Version: 4 - Scholar Response

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Julie

As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength for this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

Your team has set specific goals and action steps for the upcoming Midpoint Roundtable and beyond including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

Susan

You are in good shape for this point in your project. You continue to enjoy faculty support/participation which is imperative for future efforts. As Julie noted, the completion of the ILO review and the initial phase of ILO measures means that you have a positive trajectory for other scheduled assessment work. With the ILOs complete, determining performance indicators and rubrics should be straightforward.

Having new data available in June offers the chance to have analysis completed and ready for discussion with colleagues at the start of the fall semester.

A: As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength of this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

It appears your team set some focused goals and specific future action steps during the Midpoint Roundtable, including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

A: <u>Julie</u>

Your project appears to be moving along according to the schedule, and there has been notable progress over the past year. This is important as it indicates that the institution is taking this project very seriously and now has tangible results to demonstrate to faculty and staff members. The new revised ILOs are concise and more measurable, especially when compared to the previous versions. In addition, there continues to be substantial faculty involvement in this project through in-service work and by members of the Assessment and Program Review Committee along with the Assessment Academy Team. The plan of work for the current academic year, 2019-2020, appears to be clear and well organized.

 <u>Susan</u>

Agreed. You have momentum and a clear direction for tasks.

Spreading out the ILOs revisions and seeking colleague feedback will hopefully lead to more faculty acceptance and engagement. And feedback from the Provost on annual reports should give faculty a strong sense of the value of the work they are doing.

Having team members attend the HLC Conference to hear about others' experiences can only expand team thinking and possibly professional connections.

A: Your project appears to be moving along according to the schedule, and there has been notable progress over the past year. This is important as it indicates that the institution is taking this project very seriously and now has tangible results to demonstrate to faculty and staff members. The new revised ILOs are concise and measurable, especially when compared to the previous versions. In addition, there continues to be substantial faculty involvement in this project through in-service work and by members of the Assessment and Program Review Committee along with the Assessment Academy Team. The plan of work for the current academic year, 2019-2020, also appears to be clear and well organized.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: <u>Julie</u>

As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the work you undertake at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

Are a sufficient number of faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs #2 and #3 this year? Is this year more of a pilot? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs able to guide faculty in making improvements in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I understood that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? ***What can we do in these next two years to help you fulfill expectations of Core Component 4B? Would a phone call or meeting/discussion at the annual conference be beneficial?***

<u>Susan</u>

Julie already made the offer---how can we help with project related work on 4B? Is there anything more specific re: process, tools, etc., that we can offer? We are open to a conference call and certainly to meeting in April at the Annual Conference to discuss issues and offer insight.

Time is always an issue and searching the Collaboration Network, even with the tags, will still take time. Consider whether you might assign an individual or two to take a first pass at the Network to identify potential institutions for further review.

For ILOs 1,4, and 5 scheduled for the upcoming academic year---any chance you can get a jump on those areas by piloting in the summer? Are there possible volunteers from your own team? Colleagues who would be willing?

Is ILO assessment work taking place in tandem with Program Level assessment? Are there results from the latter that can be showcased for colleagues as examples of good practice even before the fall semester?

Re: the goals identified for the Midpoint Roundtable, I agree that prioritizing is the task ahead. How can you leverage your Academy work to serve (possible) double-duty as you look ahead to your Monitoring Report.

As you think about any potential for Professional Development activity be sure that you pulse the faculty on what they want/need. Ask where they have issues/difficulties and seek to remove barriers to understanding or practice.

I think that Julie and I remain uncertain whether ILO and general education assessment are synonymous. Could you confirm for us either way before or in the next posting?

Have you created/used curriculum maps? They are so helpful in identifying where to measure outcomes.

Are the program level rubrics in good shape? Would programs appreciate a review or assist from your team to update if needed---especially as the ILO rubrics gain momentum?

A: As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. I am also unclear if you have begun to address the issue of identifying and assessing co-curricular learning outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the goals you established at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

In your report, you also state that the lack of faculty participation in assessment is a significant concern. Has this improved in the two years you have been in the Assessment Academy, involving faculty and sharing information at faculty in-services? Are faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs (#2 and #3) this year? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs more useful in guiding faculty to make improvement in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I noted that the Visiting Team and the IAC agreed that the institution met core component 4B "with concerns" and you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. What was the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and from Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? ***What can we do in these next two years to help you become fully compliant with core component 4B? Would a phone call or brief visit at the annual conference be beneficial?***

A: <u>Julie</u>

Most of my questions were addressed in the institution's response or by reading the 2018-2019 Annual Assessment Report. The annual report provided detailed descriptions of the ILOs, the plan to update them and the results from last year's assessment of two ILOs: Communication and Personal Development. However, it is not clear what improvement actions were taken to improve teaching and learning (if any) based on the results of the ILO assessments. The only action plan appears to be to update the wording of the remaining ILOs and the associated assessment rubrics.

According to the annual report, your college is also making significant progress on Program Assessment with a steady increase in the number of programs participating in annual program assessments and the number of programs reporting improvement actions. Specific program improvement actions from a large cross-section of programs were also listed in the annual report. Participation and improvement actions from 5-year Program Reviews were also included in the annual report.

Currently, assessment of General Education is done by each discipline area. However, this work has been uneven and was put "on hold" for a number of years with the introduction of ILO assessments. It is somewhat unclear how these discipline assessments differ from ILO assessments and some concern whether both are necessary given the number of faculty members and students at the institution. Is there a way for these two processes to become integrated in the future?

How is the work going in co-curricular assessment? Although you conduct student satisfaction and engagement surveys and have recently implemented a service learning requirement, I am unsure of your ongoing progress in this area. (Unrelated to the Academy project, co-curricular assessment may be an area of inquiry for your comprehensive visit at the end of the month.)

<u>Susan</u>

I want to underscore the ILO/Gen Ed relationship and Julie's question about managing both. Perhaps we don't understand enough detail about these areas and if you are working both in parallel and it serves you, fine. However, if you see some overlap and the potential to integrate, as Julie offers, that approach could lighten some of the work load. Is this an area worth exploring or would it complicate your project?

Re: co-curriculum, you mentioned this area in your last posting and though you are plenty busy with ILOs and rubrics...has there been additional development?

A: Most of my questions were addressed in the institution's response or by reading the 2018-2019 Annual Assessment Report. The annual report provided detailed descriptions of the ILOs, the plan to update them and the results from last year's assessment of two ILOs: Communication and Personal Development. However, it is not clear what improvement actions were taken to improve teaching and learning (if any) based on the results of the ILO assessments. The only action plan appears to be to update the wording of the remaining ILOs and the associated assessment rubrics.

According to the annual report, your college is also making significant progress on Program Assessment with a steady increase in the number of programs participating in annual program assessments and the number of programs reporting improvement actions. Specific program improvement actions from a large cross-section of programs were also listed in the annual report. Participation and improvement actions from 5-year Program Reviews were also included in the annual report.

Currently, assessment of General Education is done by each discipline area. However, this work has been uneven and was put "on hold" for a number of years with the introduction of ILO assessments. It is somewhat unclear how these discipline assessments differ from ILO assessments and some concern whether both are necessary given the number of faculty members and students at the institution. Is there a way for these two processes to become integrated in the future?

And although I realize that improving co-curricular assessment was not included in your project goals, there appears to be some work needed in this area. Although the college conducts student satisfaction and engagement surveys, and has recently implemented a service learning requirement, the institution's process for co-curricular assessment is unclear at this time. This may be an area of inquiry when the HLC team arrives for your comprehensive visit at the end of the month.

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: <u>Julie</u>

The Academy team likely needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Visit to ensure that action plans---consistent with your project---are in place to address this feedback. Will the items you identified for the Midpoint Roundtable help you address any of the reviewer concerns?

With assessment flagged for monitoring you probably have the attention of senior leadership and faculty; this reality should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution needs a focal point (an individual? an office? standing committee?) where assessment activities (work with faculty and staff) and maintenance of assessment processes is managed.

<u>Susan</u>

Don't be specifically concerned with implementing curricular change when the June data comes. (Well, sure, if there is something obvious.) Some data will need to be trended; other insights may just lead to different questions; but all results should lead to discussion among colleagues. You may need to wait for additional results before you choose specific action; some faculty may want to pilot an intervention/change and then assess to see if there was an effect. Be open to different approaches.

Be sure to share data with colleagues asking for what they see in the results. I am regularly surprised by different insights from different audiences.

As you prioritize and decide on tasks for the next 2 years is it possible to add colleagues to the team...even ad hoc? Is it possible/practical to create sub-groups to juggle all that you want to accomplish or are you at capacity already?

A: As I wrote above, the academy team needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Comprehensive Visit and ensure that action plans are in place to address this feedback. I am unclear if the future actions identified at the Midpoint Roundtable will help you address the reviewer concerns. Once I have the information on why 4B was "met with concerns," I will be able to suggest specific actions to take over the next six months, and the next two years, for the institution to become compliant with this core component.

On a positive note, now that this area has been "flagged" by the HLC as having been "met with concerns," you will have the attention of senior leadership and of the faculty. This should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution does need an individual dedicated to working with faculty and staff on assessment of student learning as well as managing and maintaining assessment processes.

A: <u>Julie</u>

The institution has a clear approach for updating the remaining ILOs using the same processes, committees and timeline as in 2018-2019. However, it would also be helpful to highlight the results from the ILOs that are being assessed this year with a focus on actions taken---if any--- to improve teaching and learning based on the results.

I would also recommend that some thought be given to the role of general education assessment in light of the ILO assessment process. To be assessing 2 ILOs and 12 general education disciplines (along with every program) each year seems to be a lot of processes to manage and I am not sure the additional work will lead to additional value for the college or the students. The institution now has numerous assessment processes for committees to implement, oversee and document, and there is not a dedicated Institutional Research Office to assist in these processes.

<u>Susan</u>

Per Julie's comments...are there areas that overlap or are somewhat redundant where you might be able to reduce workload or combine assessment efforts? The concern we both have relates to burnout. Asking/requiring colleagues to work on multiple fronts is demanding and only you can determine a rotation/cycle that gives you the insight you want through assessment tools and still recognizes how much colleague time is needed.

A: The institution has a clear approach for updating the remaining ILOs using the same processes, committees and timeline as in 2018-2019. However, it would also be helpful to highlight the results from the ILOs that are being assessed this year with a focus on actions taken to improve teaching and learning based on the results.

I would also recommend that some thought be given to the role of general education assessment in light of the ILO assessment process. To be assessing 2 ILOs and 12 general education disciplines (along with every program) each year seems to be a lot of processes to manage, and I am not sure the additional work will lead to additional value for the college or the students. The institution now has numerous assessment processes for committees to implement, oversee and document, and there is not a dedicated Institutional Research Office to assist in these processes.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Julie

As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Consider what processes/approaches at peer institutions might appeal to you for adaptation.

Susan

Review the Collaboration Network as time permits and also consider investing time in understanding what peer institutions are doing (each team member calls a colleague at another institution in or out of state). Position yourselves to learn some quick lessons or get some quick takeaways from others' experiences.

Plan to maximize opportunities to learn from colleagues at the Midpoint Roundtable. Bring a few key questions and take time to ask others how they manage an issue.

A: As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Again, now that this area has been "flagged" as an area of concern by the HLC, you don't have years to spend "re-inventing" the wheel relative to student learning assessment. You may need to adapt processes from similar institutions.

A: Julie

Linda Suskie, A Common Sense Approach to Assessment in Higher Education, Rethinking the assessment of gen ed and institution-wide learning outcomes (https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/43462837-rethinking-the-assessment-of-gen-ed-and-institution-wide-learning-outcomes)

Susan

Not an actual resource but a question. Does the MNSCU office offer any resources to the system that you could take advantage of? Useful examples or experiences from peers?

Feel free to contact us if our comments prompt questions.

A: Linda Suskie

A Common Sense Approach to Assessment in Higher Education, Rethinking the assessment of gen ed and institution-wide learning outcomes (https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/43462837-rethinking-the-assessment-of-gen-ed-and-institution-wide-learning-outcomes)

> Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Project Update 2

Project Update

Q: What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects

A:

The team has looked at a few other projects, but has not spent a great deal of time following any specific ones. We recognize that this is something we need to make a more concerted effort to accomplish.

Q: In 4-6 sentences, how has your project developed and changed since the Roundtable? Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope or design.

A:
- The second annual assessment report was completed, the purpose of this report is to gather and inform the college about all facets of assessment that are occurring at Northland. This report includes program annual assessment, institutional learner outcome assessment and five year program from academics. The report also includes employer and graduate survey data, SENSE and CCSSE data, current student satisfaction and other related assessment data.
- We focused on assessment at the January in-service, a great deal of time was spent explaining the project to the faculty and collecting feedback on the two ILO revisions. The APR and Assessment Academy Team utilized the feedback to update the revisions. That updated information will be shared with the faculty for further feedback and then sent to the AASC committee for approval.
- The initial goal of our project was to revise all five ILO's in our first year of the project. After meeting with the APR and Assessment Academy Team, we realized that this would not be feasible in one year. As a group we chose to only revise two ILO's this first year and next year will do the remaining three ILO's.
- We have five ILO's and are currently assessing two each year in an offset rotation. We are considering shifting to assessing two ILO's one year and three ILO's the alternate year. This will allow us to assess all five ILO's in a two year period, the standard program of study for a full time student.

Q: How did you incorporate the feedback that you received on your previous posting?

A: The feedback we received was extremely valuable. A few things we incorporated are as follows:

- Based on the recommendation of addressing "How the current ILO's are not serving you?" we incorporated a session during our January in-service that focused on this for the faculty. We provided information to the group about where we had been with ILO's, the work that has been done since they were developed 6 years ago and where we envision the ILO's going. We shared with the faculty that the intention is not to reinvent what we have, rather to improve on our already existing structure by revising the outcomes to have more accurate language, a clear understanding of what the outcome is and what is being assessed, and to have assessment tools that are measurable.
- When looking at the amount of work to be done, rather than place it all on the shoulders of the Assessment Academy team we enlisted the Assessment and Program Review (APR) committee to work jointly on the project. The APR committee was an already existing committee on the campus whose purpose is to coordinate the Assessment and Program Review Plan by assisting faculty in identify student outcomes and linking Institution Learner Outcomes and program review. This committee provides the tactical application of the academic areas and is heavily involved with course data review, design, curriculum development, revision, and sustainment.
- We had an initial meeting to look at areas where we need to develop co-curricular assessment. We have initiated co-curricular assessment for the eight hour non-credit service learning graduation requirement. Currently our student service areas are measuring satisfaction/adequacy of their services. We are looking into other areas of co-curricular assessment if applicable. We are hoping that we may be able to receive some guidance from our mentor and scholar about expectations related to co-curricular assessment.

Q: Did you have any challenges regarding your project? How did you address them?

A: The primary challenge with our project is the magnitude of the work we hare undertaking. In our initial plan we hoped to have all five ILO's revised this academic year. After further evaluation it was decided that revising only two ILO's this first year would be most feasible. The group decided to tackle the two ILO's that have presented the greatest problems for faculty in assessing. While this is in the works we are continuing to collect data on our regular rotation schedule so that we will not have a lapse in our assessment cycle.

Q: What are the plans for the next six months? How will this work advance your project?

A: Finalize both of the newly revised ILO's related to social engagement (formerly Global and Civic Responsibility) and critical thinking. The new ILO statements for these two outcome,s as well as the rubrics will be brought forward to the Academic Affairs and Standards Council prior to the end of this academic year. Both of these revised ILO's are scheduled to be assessed during the 19-20 academic year.

Reviewed by **Jodi Stauss Stassen** on 03/01/2019 09:53 PM.

Consolidated Response

Q: ASL IR Part II Consolidated Response

Q: Please describe your general impression of the institution's progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The institution has made slow and steady progress over the past four years. Like the other institutions in this cohort, their progress was delayed by the pandemic which has been creating disruptions of educational processes for the past two and a half years.

Reviewing the list of completed activities was a good reminder that the institution did accomplish a number of important tasks, including revised ILOs, revised processes and rubrics for assessing ILOs, and revised assessment processes and reports for Career and Technical Programs and General Education/Liberal Arts and Sciences. The new processes and forms were piloted during 2021-2022, and the institution held its first dedicated Assessment Day for faculty in the spring of 2022! All of this groundwork helped to build a foundation for full implementation of the new process in 2022-2023. The team should feel good about the work they accomplished through the Academy and their overall contributions to improving assessment of student learning outcomes throughout the institution.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Your Mentor has captured it.

Your listed activities, planned actions steps, and the specifics on your sustainability approach declare that you are ready to move this work to the next level of implementation. With training, tools and new understanding shared with faculty colleagues, you should have a particularly rewarding 2022-23 year. This coming year is when all of the in-the-trenches work will have practical application and I think a real pay off. Still, be prepared for pilots that might not go as planned and remain flexible with participating colleagues. Do all that you can as data comes in to showcase good practice and the utility of the work which you already know is bring done got its potential to inform improvement---not just for doing and reporting!

Q: Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

All of the work that was done by the team was in consultation with administration and included involvement from the faculty. The new processes and tools developed appear to be appropriate for the institution given its size, mission and programs. As noted in your posting, you did not make as much progress as originally intended and the institution still needs to develop and implement a plan for the assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

There are no specific concerns though your Mentor and I recognize the challenges ahead. With changing leaders and/or roles, some of this work could lose the central role it has enjoyed with the Academy project profile. Do all that you can to follow your own stated action steps (above) and insights on keeping faculty and staff engaged (above). They offer a practical approach and sequence of events that will keep assessment work in front of colleagues regularly. Your next steps are building on solid preparation.

A:

Q: **In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

In my opinion, the institution is prepared to sustain its assessment efforts. Several action steps were outlined in the sustainability section of the Impact Report that will keep assessment efforts moving forward. The team leader, who was also the chief academic officer, has recently left the institution so a new leader will have to be selected and brought up to date on past and future assessment initiatives. It was also mentioned that the institution will be hiring a Director of Institutional Research; this individual will need to be involved in assessment initiatives as well. Specifically, this individual should be particularly helpful in addressing the challenges this institution is experiencing relative to implementing a system for collecting, analyzing and utilizing assessment data.

It will be important to keep assessment at the forefront of the institution as the HLC has required the institution to submit an Interim Monitoring Report on assessment in 2024 as this area was "met with concerns" during the institution's last comprehensive evaluation. Although I recognize that the goals of the Assessment Academy are separate from accreditation processes, the work of the Academy team needs to continue as the important steps they are in fulfilling expectations in assessment.

Continued communication, faculty development and designated time for faculty to work on assessment will be extremely important to ensure that the processes and tools developed over the past four years can be implemented and faculty members can use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Ditto to all that your Mentor has shared.

I want to endorse the comments/plans suggested for moving forward on co-curricular assessment. Relating the co-curriculum to the ILOs makes great sense and starting with a Pilot on how those areas contribute to learning---not that they are providing satisfactory services---is sensible. Great idea to use the same ILO tool/rubric but change the rating approach.

Q: **Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I have enjoyed working with this team over the past four years. They have persisted despite challenges related to the pandemic as well as challenges caused by technology, faculty turnover and the recent change of senior leaders. I encourage them to keep moving forward and to keep connected with other Academy participants as well as similar institutions in the Minnesota State System to share ideas and practices. And I am certainly available if additional assistance is needed at any time.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Though you state that you did not accomplish all that you intended, please recognize that a great deal of important foundational work has been accomplished. The stage is well set for continued engagement and maturity in assessment work. Be sure to recognize (reward?) contributions that can be models for others.

You are well positioned to reach stated goals in the upcoming academic year(s).

Bravo on accomplishments.

A:
Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: **ASL Consolidated Response Questions**

Q: **What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

There is continuity from the last update (the third year mentor consultation) to the current update with continued emphasis on the adoption of a competency model, rather than a numeric score, for ILO assessment as well as continued efforts to involve more faculty members in assessment processes. The group has outlined detailed plans for the next two years relative to assessment in both the liberal arts and technical programs. The proposed changes should improve reporting and allow the institution to collect the desired information more efficiently. Finally, the group appears to be making continued progress, over the past year and a half, despite the pandemic and associated schedule interruptions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

You are making slow but sure progress on assessment activities.

It is always a good idea to update/improve forms as time allows, especially, if changes are in response to faculty users who are suggesting same.

I also want to recognize the importance of the follow-up on reports that you conduct. Explicit follow-up reinforces the idea that reports aren't something *to do* but rather are pieces of a process that contribute to positive change in student achievement.

Lastly, The revision of program outcomes and mapping courses supporting the outcomes to the ILOs is a huge alignment that hopefully send the message to faculty that the work is purposeful.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The team continues to affirm its focus on assessing Institutional Learning Objectives although it appears that the specific activities have changed relative to ILO assessment since the spring report. Perhaps those changes were made as you evaluated your progress at the Mid-Point Roundtable and established your goals for the next two years of the Academy. A review of the team's goals for the next two years reflects a focus on program assessment, in both the liberal arts program and the technical programs. There also appears to be a new focus on the content/format of program assessment reports. You have outlined three tasks for the next six months, two dealing with changes to reporting forms.

By this point, many college faculty have been engaged with the project through their participation on the Academy team, college committees and faculty in-services. The team has recognized that faculty will need to be further involved in the modifications to the program assessment processes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

It seems that the Midpoint Roundtable gave you some new insights and energy for the remaining work.

Your work remains focused on the ILOs and the processes intended to secure useful assessment data to inform improved student learning.

A:

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

It looks like many of the tasks in your two-year plan are already completed or close to completion. Once all of the adjustments have been made to reporting forms and processes, will the remainder of the project period be focused on collecting data, analyzing data and using data for improvement? Who will manage this process and be responsible for documenting and sharing the results.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

In addition to Julie's important question I am adding: Do you have curriculum maps in broad use so you can be sure where best to measure achievement in courses already identified as ILO contributors? Is this an effort still ahead of you? If yes, consider how quickly you might be able to complete maps and direct work to next steps of measuring and gaining insight.

Recognizing that many processes/forms are being re-worked---and this certainly is important work---I still need to ask if results are already available?   Action items established? I am not clear that this part of your assessment work is ongoing? Otherwise, how close are you to regular use of data from program and ILO measures? Are faculty engaged in analysis and decisions on next steps for potential curricular change---definitely the more rewarding part of assessment work or is that still ahead?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Several changes appear to have been made since the report from earlier this year, including a change in the Academy team leader as well as specific project activities. Here are my questions:

1.) Project Update 4 indicates that the team will focus on finalizing assessment rubrics and assessing ILO #1, 4 and 5 during the 20-21 academic year; yet there is no mention of this activity in the current Project Update. Will this activity still occur?

2) One of the tasks for the next six months is to "research and review ILO assessment process to improve it." What is involved in that process? I was under the impression that is the work your team had been doing for the past two years. Help clarify.

3) Although you joined the Assessment Academy and established your goals prior to your recent HLC Comprehensive Visit, I understand that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? Is this the reason you changed your planned activities from what was posted in the spring to what is reported above? Help us understand how best to offer guidance.

Given the changes, I recommend a conference call or virtual meeting between your team, Susan and myself so we can better understand the plan for the next two years. I would like to be able to help your team rather than continue to question you or guess what additional information is behind some of the responses above.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I also have questions about the substance of the plan, appreciating that the forms may need updating. Will the Academy Team tackle this or the APR Committee or some subset? Be sure to ask faculty about their ideas to improve the form; they'll be living with it for a while!

I am curious as well to understand the Monitoring Report expectations. (Accreditation and Academy work are absolutely distinct but if there is some way for us to provide insight on your current project that would have a positive corollary effect for the Report, we are poised to assist.)

Is there hard data on the previous cycles of ILO measurement that suggested areas for action/improvement?

Even with a Zoom-type world, are you able to work with faculty who need guidance on assessment activity or tools?

A:

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I think you have outlined a clear plan of activities for the next six months. Beyond that, I would recommend the institution focus on the continued collection and analysis of assessment data on student learning across all programs. By doing so, you will have adequate information, i.e., multiple cycles of assessment results and related improvement actions, to demonstrate fulfillment of expectations for Core Component 4B in your interim monitoring report that is due in advance of the Year 4 review in 2024.

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, there is no one correct or perfect method for conducting assessment of student learning. At some point, you need to decide that your forms, software, processes, etc., are adequately designed and you'll need to begin to implement and then expand your assessment processes. You can always make refinements along the way but you will lose momentum---and be unable to demonstrate meaningful progress---if your work continues disproportionately to focus on modifying forms, tools and processes.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Julie's point is well taken and I agree with the importance of having cycles of assessment accomplished in order to provide evidence of assessment activity at the college. I also recognize that you will need to provide support and guidance to faculty....and colleagues to each other...as quickly as is reasonable and practical. If there is currently no ongoing practice of gathering and analyzing data and responding to results with action, consider how quickly this can be undertaken in cooperative programs and volunteer faculty willing to experiment and share their experience. Maybe first steps will be a matter of securing baseline data.

Much work accomplished; still work ahead.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

You indicate that for the first two year of the project the HLC Team and the college's Assessment and Program Review Committee were combined but now it appears as though you are going to go back to meeting separately.Given recent HLC concerns relative to assessment, it seems particularly important that these two groups continue to work collaboratively and that they are "on the same page" relative to panned activities.

You also realize that the pandemic complicates communication with faculty and makes it more difficult to engage faculty in discussions, work sessions and other faculty development activities. Perhaps by now, we are all becoming more accustomed to working in a virtual world compared to last spring and you will be able to reconnect with colleagues.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

The work on forms could go swiftly if you are updating or simplifying. If that is the case, I thought that the work mentioned in Version 4, i.e., review of all PLOs (to confirm that they are measurable & manageable?), identification of assessment tools, creation of an Assessment Handbook (if that is still desirable) and, determination on professional development needs would also be time well spent in the next cycle. Yes, there are huge challenges with the remote world we are in so maybe not all of these can be accomplished.

Keeping with your project interests, is there ongoing assessment activity that has produced results for analysis?

Have the ILOs and Gen Ed outcomes been reviewed for overlap? Are they synonymous? Would this be useful in streamlining assessment demands?

Will Liberal Arts and Technical programs have results of PLO or ILO measures in this academic year?

A:

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, you may want to check in with other Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to see how they are using their Learning Management Systems to collect and analyze information on student learning outcomes if you haven't done this already.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Good idea. Your state colleagues may have tips and techniques that you hadn't thought of yet.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Typically, you would have received a great deal of information and opportunity to network and benchmark with other institutions at the Mid-Point Roundtable. I hope this was the case although I realize the Roundtable was a virtual experience for your team.

Assuming we have a phone conversation or virtual meeting, I will be able to suggest some focused resources as well as resources related to working remotely with teams.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I want to strongly encourage taking Julie---or both of us---up on the idea of a call or Zoom. We welcome time with you and the Academy team or some subset. We are eager to help you determine how to get the best and the most out of the project work you are taking on over the next 2 years.

A:
Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: Version: 4 - Scholar Response

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Julie

As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength for this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

Your team has set specific goals and action steps for the upcoming Midpoint Roundtable and beyond including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

Susan

You are in good shape for this point in your project. You continue to enjoy faculty support/participation which is imperative for future efforts. As Julie noted, the completion of the ILO review and the initial phase of ILO measures means that you have a positive trajectory for other scheduled assessment work. With the ILOs complete, determining performance indicators and rubrics should be straightforward.

Having new data available in June offers the chance to have analysis completed and ready for discussion with colleagues at the start of the fall semester.

A: As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength of this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

It appears your team set some focused goals and specific future action steps during the Midpoint Roundtable, including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

A: Julie

Your project appears to be moving along according to the schedule, and there has been notable progress over the past year. This is important as it indicates that the institution is taking this project very seriously and now has tangible results to demonstrate to faculty and staff members. The new revised ILOs are concise and more measurable, especially when compared to the previous versions. In addition, there continues to be substantial faculty involvement in this project through in-service work and by members of the Assessment and Program Review Committee along with the Assessment Academy Team. The plan of work for the current academic year, 2019-2020, appears to be clear and well organized.

Susan

Agreed. You have momentum and a clear direction for tasks.

Spreading out the ILOs revisions and seeking colleague feedback will hopefully lead to more faculty acceptance and engagement. And feedback from the Provost on annual reports should give faculty a strong sense of the value of the work they are doing.

Having team members attend the HLC Conference to hear about others' experiences can only expand team thinking and possibly professional connections.

A: Your project appears to be moving along according to the schedule, and there has been notable progress over the past year. This is important as it indicates that the institution is taking this project very seriously and now has tangible results to demonstrate to faculty and staff members. The new revised ILOs are concise and measurable, especially when compared to the previous versions. In addition, there continues to be substantial faculty involvement in this project through in-service work and by members of the Assessment and Program Review Committee along with the Assessment Academy Team. The plan of work for the current academic year, 2019-2020, also appears to be clear and well organized.

A: Julie

The involvement of a wide range faculty members continues to be a strength of this project. The focus on assessment at the January in-service where time was spent explaining the project to the faculty and collecting feedback on the two ILO revisions is also a strength. My institution is currently in the Persistence and Completion Academy and we set aside time at every in-service (fall, winter and spring) for faculty to engage in Academy work specific to their courses and programs. This helps to ensure that the work is moving along according to schedule, and faculty appreciate the dedicated time and continued focus on student success.

Combining the APR Committee and Assessment Academy Team to work on this project is also a strength as this allows the institution to involve more individuals and the work is clearly aligned with the charge of the APR Committee. The combined group does appear to be making progress in revising the two identified Institutional Learning Outcomes with adequate input from faculty members. The fact that the project was scaled back to the revision of two ILOs this academic year and three ILOs next year is a strength that will make the project more manageable. A shift to assessing two ILO's one year and three ILO's in the alternate year makes sense and ensures that all of the ILOs are reviewed every two years.

The completion of the second annual assessment report is a strength as it appears to be a comprehensive source of various assessments that are utilized at the college. [It would be interesting to know how this report is distributed and actually utilized by faculty and staff at the college.]

You have reflected on feedback seriously and made changes that assist your project to be more meaningful and manageable.

Susan

There are many strengths in your continuing work. As Julie has noted, the comprehensive nature of your annual report gives colleagues the chance to see the big picture of results/performance in a single document.

Resizing how much you can reasonably take on (re: the ILO's) in years 1 & 2 is a service to all; this approach let's the team address fewer areas with more discussion and mutual understanding for forging agreement on the specific features (performance indicators)

that all agree should be the hallmark of a Northland graduate.

A: The involvement of a wide range faculty members continues to be a strength of this project. The focus on assessment at the January in-service, where time was spent explaining the project to the faculty and collecting feedback on the two ILO revisions, is also a strength. My institution is currently in the Persistence and Completion Academy and we set aside time at every in-service (fall, winter and spring) for faculty to engage in academy work specific to their courses and programs. This helps to ensure that the work is moving along according to schedule, and faculty appreciate the dedicated time and continued focus on student success.

Combining the APR Committee and Assessment Academy Team to work on this project is also a strength as this allows the institution to involve more individuals and the work is clearly aligned with the charge of the APR Committee. The combined group does appear to be making progress in revising the two identified Institutional Learning Outcomes with adequate input from faculty members. The fact that the project was scaled back to the revision of two ILOs this academic year and three ILOs next year is also a strength and should make the project more manageable. A shift to assessing two ILO's one year and three ILO's the alternate year makes sense and ensures all of the ILOs are reviewed every two years.

The completion of the second annual assessment report is also a strength as it appears to be a comprehensive source of various assessments that are utilized at the college. However, it would be interesting to know how this report is distributed and actually utilized by faculty and staff at the college.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: <u>Julie</u>

As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the work you undertake at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

Are a sufficient number of faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs #2 and #3 this year? Is this year more of a pilot? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs able to guide faculty in making improvements in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I understood that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? ***What can we do in these next two years to help you fulfill expectations of Core Component 4B? Would a phone call or meeting/discussion at the annual conference be beneficial?***

<u>Susan</u>

Julie already made the offer---how can we help with project related work on 4B? Is there anything more specific re: process, tools, etc., that we can offer? We are open to a conference call and certainly to meeting in April at the Annual Conference to discuss issues and offer insight.

Time is always an issue and searching the Collaboration Network, even with the tags, will still take time. Consider whether you might assign an individual or two to take a first pass at the Network to identify potential institutions for further review.

For ILOs 1,4, and 5 scheduled for the upcoming academic year---any chance you can get a jump on those areas by piloting in the summer? Are there possible volunteers from your own team? Colleagues who would be willing?

Is ILO assessment work taking place in tandem with Program Level assessment? Are there results from the latter that can be showcased for colleagues as examples of good practice even before the fall semester?

Re: the goals identified for the Midpoint Roundtable, I agree that prioritizing is the task ahead. How can you leverage your Academy work to serve (possible) double-duty as you look ahead to your Monitoring Report.

As you think about any potential for Professional Development activity be sure that you pulse the faculty on what they want/need. Ask where they have issues/difficulties and seek to remove barriers to understanding or practice.

I think that Julie and I remain uncertain whether ILO and general education assessment are synonymous. Could you confirm for us either way before or in the next posting?

Have you created/used curriculum maps? They are so helpful in identifying where to measure outcomes.

Are the program level rubrics in good shape? Would programs appreciate a review or assist from your team to update if needed---especially as the ILO rubrics gain momentum?

A: As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. I am also unclear if you have begun to address the issue of identifying and assessing co-curricular learning outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the goals you established at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

In your report, you also state that the lack of faculty participation in assessment is a significant concern. Has this improved in the two years you have been in the Assessment Academy, involving faculty and sharing information at faculty in-services? Are faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs (#2 and #3) this year? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs more useful in guiding faculty to make improvement in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I noted that the Visiting Team and the IAC agreed that the institution met core component 4B "with concerns" and you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. What was the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and from Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? ***What can we do in these next two years to help you become fully compliant with core component 4B? Would a phone call or brief visit at the annual conference be beneficial?***

A: <u>Julie</u>

Most of my questions were addressed in the institution's response or by reading the 2018-2019 Annual Assessment Report. The annual report provided detailed descriptions of the ILOs, the plan to update them and the results from last year's assessment of two ILOs: Communication and Personal Development. However, it is not clear what improvement actions were taken to improve teaching and learning (if any) based on the results of the ILO assessments. The only action plan appears to be to update the wording of the remaining ILOs and the associated assessment rubrics.

According to the annual report, your college is also making significant progress on Program Assessment with a steady increase in the number of programs participating in annual program assessments and the number of programs reporting improvement actions. Specific program improvement actions from a large cross-section of programs were also listed in the annual report. Participation and improvement actions from 5-year Program Reviews were also included in the annual report.

Currently, assessment of General Education is done by each discipline area. However, this work has been uneven and was put "on hold" for a number of years with the introduction of ILO assessments. It is somewhat unclear how these discipline assessments differ from ILO assessments and some concern whether both are necessary given the number of faculty members and students at the institution. Is there a way for these two processes to become integrated in the future?

How is the work going in co-curricular assessment? Although you conduct student satisfaction and engagement surveys and have recently implemented a service learning requirement, I am unsure of your ongoing progress in this area. (Unrelated to the Academy project, co-curricular assessment may be an area of inquiry for your comprehensive visit at the end of the month.)

<u>Susan</u>

I want to underscore the ILO/Gen Ed relationship and Julie's question about managing both. Perhaps we don't understand enough detail about these areas and if you are working both in parallel and it serves you, fine. However, if you see some overlap and the potential to integrate, as Julie offers, that approach could lighten some of the work load. Is this an area worth exploring or would it complicate your project?

Re: co-curriculum, you mentioned this area in your last posting and though you are plenty busy with ILOs and rubrics...has there been additional development?

A: Most of my questions were addressed in the institution's response or by reading the 2018-2019 Annual Assessment Report. The annual report provided detailed descriptions of the ILOs, the plan to update them and the results from last year's assessment of two ILOs: Communication and Personal Development. However, it is not clear what improvement actions were taken to improve teaching and learning (if any) based on the results of the ILO assessments. The only action plan appears to be to update the wording of the remaining ILOs and the associated assessment rubrics.

According to the annual report, your college is also making significant progress on Program Assessment with a steady increase in the number of programs participating in annual program assessments and the number of programs reporting improvement actions. Specific program improvement actions from a large cross-section of programs were also listed in the annual report. Participation and improvement actions from 5-year Program Reviews were also included in the annual report.

Currently, assessment of General Education is done by each discipline area. However, this work has been uneven and was put "on hold" for a number of years with the introduction of ILO assessments. It is somewhat unclear how these discipline assessments differ from ILO assessments and some concern whether both are necessary given the number of faculty members and students at the institution. Is there a way for these two processes to become integrated in the future?

And although I realize that improving co-curricular assessment was not included in your project goals, there appears to be some work needed in this area. Although the college conducts student satisfaction and engagement surveys, and has recently implemented a service learning requirement, the institution's process for co-curricular assessment is unclear at this time. This may be an area of inquiry when the HLC team arrives for your comprehensive visit at the end of the month.

A: <u>Julie</u>

In your project proposal, you had mentioned getting started with pilot programs; however, there is no mention of those pilots in the current narrative. Has this concept been eliminated or postponed until all of the ILOs have been revised? A revised timetable of activities would be helpful for everyone at the college. In a four-year project, it can be difficult to ensure that everyone is on the same page relative to expectations and responsibilities.

The lack of an IR Director/office is still of concern. You describe how several committees at the college are involved in this work and how eventually nearly all faculty and many staff members will be involved in collecting, analyzing and using data relative to the ILO assessment, program assessment and co-curricular assessment. It will be difficult for all of this activity and the resulting information to be appropriately tracked, managed, and documented without the assistance of dedicated staff in this area. Is there any opportunity to add a staff member in this area or provide release time for a faculty with expertise in this area to serve in this role on a part-time basis?

<u>Susan</u>

Financial/human resources are challenging to be sure! Apropos of Julie's comments on institutional research, consider a brainstorming session for ideas on how data (and its analysis and reporting) could possibly be managed over time. Is even a 1/2 time position in the realm of possibility? A joint appointment of some type? Some graduate student project as a short term idea.

Which 2 ILO's were tackled and what kind of feedback did you get? Solid? Insightful? Is there anything you need to do differently in the next cycle when you tackle three ILO's?

Is it practical to think of teasing out from the Annual Assessment Report a few highlights to showcase for your peers? Lessons learned? Some wow insight that might not have been known without the tools of clear outcomes and measures?

How do faculty get feedback on their report submissions? Is there an opportunity to discuss results across disciplines? Or are these items in the planning stages?

Just curious---does the college use curriculum maps once an ILO has been established to see where it might best be measured?

A: From my perspective, I have fewer questions than I had during the first round of narrative and response. It is clear that the college has taken feedback from both mentors seriously and used the feedback to make several changes, as noted above, to make the project both more meaningful and manageable.

In your project proposal, you had mentioned getting started with pilot programs; however, there is no mention of those pilots in the current narrative. Has this concept been eliminated or postponed until all of the ILOs have been revised? A revised timetable of activities would be helpful for everyone at the college. In a four-year project, it can be difficult to ensure that everyone is on the same page relative to expectations and responsibilities.

The lack of an IR director/office is still of concern. You describe how several committees at the college are involved in this work and how eventually nearly all faculty and many staff members will be involved in collecting, analyzing and using data relative to the ILO assessment, program assessment and co-curricular assessment. It will be difficult for all of this activity, and the resulting information, to be appropriately tracked, managed and documented without the assistance of dedicated staff in this area. Is there any opportunity to add a staff member in this area or provide release time for a faculty with expertise in this area to serve in this role on a part-time basis?

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: <u>Julie</u>

The Academy team likely needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Visit to ensure that action plans---consistent with your project---are in place to address this feedback. Will the items you identified for the Midpoint Roundtable help you address any of the reviewer concerns?

With assessment flagged for monitoring you probably have the attention of senior leadership and faculty; this reality should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution needs a focal point (an individual? an office? standing committee?) where assessment activities (work with faculty and staff) and maintenance of assessment processes is managed.

<u>Susan</u>

Don't be specifically concerned with implementing curricular change when the June data comes. (Well, sure, if there is something obvious.) Some data will need to be trended; other insights may just lead to different questions; but all results should lead to discussion among colleagues. You may need to wait for additional results before you choose specific action; some faculty may want to pilot an intervention/change and then assess to see if there was an effect. Be open to different approaches.

Be sure to share data with colleagues asking for what they see in the results. I am regularly surprised by different insights from different audiences.

As you prioritize and decide on tasks for the next 2 years is it possible to add colleagues to the team...even ad hoc? Is it possible/practical to create sub-groups to juggle all that you want to accomplish or are you at capacity already?

A: As I wrote above, the academy team needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Comprehensive Visit and ensure that action plans are in place to address this feedback. I am unclear if the future actions identified at the Midpoint Roundtable will help you address the reviewer concerns. Once I have the information on why 4B was "met with concerns," I will be able to suggest specific actions to take over the next six months, and the next two years, for the institution to become compliant with this core component.

On a positive note, now that this area has been "flagged" by the HLC as having been "met with concerns," you will have the attention of senior leadership and of the faculty. This should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution does need an individual dedicated to working with faculty and staff on assessment of student learning as well as managing and maintaining assessment processes.

A: <u>Julie</u>

The institution has a clear approach for updating the remaining ILOs using the same processes, committees and timeline as in 2018-2019. However, it would also be helpful to highlight the results from the ILOs that are being assessed this year with a focus on actions taken---if any--- to improve teaching and learning based on the results.

I would also recommend that some thought be given to the role of general education assessment in light of the ILO assessment process. To be assessing 2 ILOs and 12 general education disciplines (along with every program) each year seems to be a lot of processes to manage and I am not sure the additional work will lead to additional value for the college or the students. The institution now has numerous assessment processes for committees to implement, oversee and document, and there is not a dedicated Institutional Research Office to assist in these processes.

<u>Susan</u>

Per Julie's comments...are there areas that overlap or are somewhat redundant where you might be able to reduce workload or combine assessment efforts? The concern we both have relates to burnout. Asking/requiring colleagues to work on multiple fronts is demanding and only you can determine a rotation/cycle that gives you the insight you want through assessment tools and still recognizes how much colleague time is needed.

A: The institution has a clear approach for updating the remaining ILOs using the same processes, committees and timeline as in 2018-2019. However, it would also be helpful to highlight the results from the ILOs that are being assessed this year with a focus on actions taken to improve teaching and learning based on the results.

I would also recommend that some thought be given to the role of general education assessment in light of the ILO assessment process. To be assessing 2 ILOs and 12 general education disciplines (along with every program) each year seems to be a lot of processes to manage, and I am not sure the additional work will lead to additional value for the college or the students. The institution now has numerous assessment processes for committees to implement, oversee and document, and there is not a dedicated Institutional Research Office to assist in these processes.

A: <u>Julie</u>

It will be important to ensure that faculty continue to conduct assessment of student learning throughout the spring semester using existing processes and not "wait" until all of the ILOs, program assessments and other components of the project are completed. Any faculty development days at the end of the spring term or summer could be used to further the work of your Academy project.

Also, it would be helpful for the two main committees involved in the Academy work to develop a revised timetable of activities for the remainder of the project and begin to consider long-term sustainability.

If anyone from your college is attending the annual HLC conference, there will be numerous sessions and resources available to assist you in advancing your work. You may also schedule a consultation with Susan or me (or both of us!) to have a face-to-face conversation about your project.

As part of the Academy program, I will be facilitating a Roundtable on engaging the institution in assessment of student learning on Sunday. You are most welcome to attend and share your experiences in launching this project.

<u>Susan</u>

If you will be at the Conference please take Julie up on her offer; such consultations always prove to be valuable in both directions.

You say that you are continuing to measure the ILO's so that you don't have a lapse in the assessment cycle---this makes sense. Yet, as you look ahead to the new/revised ILO's you may find that you are measuring different elements which may mean losing some potential of comparing data. That's okay too; your process gets to evolve.

Would the potential of new ILO's and performance indicators suggest that some new tools/approaches might come into play? It may be premature to suggest but keep an open mind to new thinking coming from faculty.

I am eager to see the two "before" and "after" ILO's in your next posting.

A: As I wrote in the last round of feedback, it will be important to ensure that faculty continue to conduct assessment of student learning throughout the spring semester using existing processes and not "wait" until all of the ILOs, program assessments and other components of the project are completed. Any faculty development days at the end of the spring term or summer could be used to further the work of the academy.

And, as I mentioned above, it would be helpful for the two main committees involved in the academy work to develop a revised timetable of activities for the remainder of the project and also begin to consider long-term sustainability. If anyone from your college is attending the annual HLC conference, there will be numerous sessions and resources available to assist you in advancing your work. You may also schedule a consultation with Susan or I (or both of us!) to have a face-to-face conversation about your project. As part of the academy program, I will be facilitating a roundtable on engaging the institution in assessment of student learning on Sunday. You are most welcome to attend and share your experiences in launching this project.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Julie

As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Consider what processes/approaches at peer institutions might appeal to you for adaptation.

Susan

Review the Collaboration Network as time permits and also consider investing time in understanding what peer institutions are doing (each team member calls a colleague at another institution in or out of state). Position yourselves to learn some quick lessons or get some quick takeaways from others' experiences.

Plan to maximize opportunities to learn from colleagues at the Midpoint Roundtable. Bring a few key questions and take time to ask others how they manage an issue.

A: As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Again, now that this area has been "flagged" as an area of concern by the HLC, you don't have years to spend "re-inventing" the wheel relative to student learning assessment. You may need to adapt processes from similar institutions.

A: Julie

Linda Suskie, A Common Sense Approach to Assessment in Higher Education, Rethinking the assessment of gen ed and institution-wide learning outcomes (https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/43462837-rethinking-the-assessment-of-gen-ed-and-institution-wide-learning-outcomes)

Susan

Not an actual resource but a question. Does the MNSCU office offer any resources to the system that you could take advantage of? Useful examples or experiences from peers?

Feel free to contact us if our comments prompt questions.

A: Linda Suskie

   A Common Sense Approach to Assessment in Higher Education, Rethinking the assessment of gen ed and institution-wide learning outcomes (https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/43462837-rethinking-the-assessment-of-gen-ed-and-institution-wide-learning-outcomes)

A: Julie

Many institutions lack experience with co-curricular assessment. Although there is not one "right" model or methodology for co-curricular assessment, below are some resources that may be helpful. You will likely need to begin by defining co-curricular activities at your college (service learning, student government, clubs, athletics, etc.) and determining how these activities contribute to the college ILOs and/or program-specific learning outcomes. Since co-curricular activities often lack the formality associated with courses, including learning outcomes and assessment methods, there are a number of commercial software products that help institutions document co-curricular objectives, activities and results; manage co-curricular assessment processes; and generate "co-curricular transcripts for students.

   1). https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities (https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities)

   2). Outcomes-based Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review: A Compilation of Institutional Good Practices, Marilee J. Bresciani Ludvik (https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&text=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&search-alias=books&field-author=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&sort=relevancerank) (Author).

   3). https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/44719458-assessing-learning-in-co-curricular-experiences

Again, if you are attending the annual HLC conference you will find numerous sessions and resources on this topic.

Susan

Julie offers some practical resources to consider and the Conference itself should offer sessions in this vein.

As Julie has stated, YOU get to get to determine how the co-curriculum is defined. I have seen institutions decide that their many non-academic campus activities contribute to 2 but not all ILO's. Other institutions have determined that writing 1 or 2 learning outcomes for the different areas that define the co-curriculum---independent of the ILO's---makes more sense. This is an area where you have latitude to determine what, how, and when you will conduct indirect measures that inform you about features you care about and can do something about.

A: It appears the institution lacks knowledge and experience with co-curricular assessment. Although there is not one "right" model or methodology for co-curricular assessment, below are some resources that may be helpful. You will likely need to begin by defining co-curricular activities at your college (service learning, student government, clubs, athletics, etc.) and determining how these activities contribute to the college ILOs and/or program-specific learning outcomes. Since co-curricular activities often lack the formality associated with courses, including learning outcomes and assessment methods, there are a number of commercial software products that help institutions document co-curricular objectives, activities and results; manage co-curricular assessment processes; and generate "co-curricular transcripts for students.

  1). https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities (https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities)

  2). Outcomes-based Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review: A Compilation of Institutional Good Practices, Marilee J. Bresciani Ludvik (https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&text=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&search-alias=books&field-author=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&sort=relevancerank) (Author).

  3). https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/44719458-assessing-learning-in-co-curricular-experiences

  Again, if you are attending the annual HLC conference, you will find numerous sessions and resources on this topic.

Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Project Update 1

Project Update

Q: **How did your discussions with other teams at the Roundtable help as you began to plan and develop your project?**

To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects.

A: It was helpful to meet and network with other teams as they are beginning their enrollment in the academy. it was somewhat comforting to know that many institutions are facing similar challenges as our organization.

Q: Describe the project that you have developed at the Roundtable. Focus particularly on the general strategies you developed.

A: **GOAL** – our project will consist of the development of a revised comprehensive assessment plan for Northland Community and Technical College.

-       Revamp and affirm the annual assessment process at the institutional level

-       Educate faculty and staff on assessment

- Understanding of what assessment is.
- Assessment to improve student learning
- Assessment to improve student success

Specifics to work on:

- Revamp Institutional Learner Outcome's (ILO's)
- Develop a handbook as well as a simple one page plan for assessment
- Consistent language used relating to assessment
- Review of all program learner outcomes (see below)
- Improved participation across all academic program areas and college-wide services
- Any additions or revisions to assessment tools (e.g., surveys – need to be reported in same place, only do one employer survey per program)
- Professional development – different activities depending on the level programs are at with their outcomes and assessment

Program Learner Outcomes:

Need to review and categorize programs into three general categories

Category #1	Category #2	Category #3
Have solid outcomes – need to make sure accurate assessment is occurring.	Need to make slight revisions to program outcomes and assessment.	Need to actually develop or completely change program outcomes.
- Professionally accredited programs are somewhat of an outlier, they usually have solid outcomes and assessment processes in place.		

Q: What are the desired outcomes of this project? How will you know that you have achieved each of these outcomes?

A: Desired Outcomes:

-       ILO assessment schedule (needs revamping/rewriting first)

- Consider a three year rotation on each ILO (Yr.1 assess, Yr.2 evaluation, Yr.3 change)

-       Show how ILO assessment fits with rest of college (strategic plan, etc.)

-       Plan/structure for who implements, interprets (plan/summary)

-       Alignments of ILO's/ Program Learner Outcomes (PLO's)/ Course Learner Outcomes (CLO's) to support plan

-       Plan/structure for involvement of needed faculty (handbooks)

-       Integrate assessment for all college-wide services (key performance indicaters for all areas, i.e. Student success measure such as graduation, retention, etc.)

-       Alignment of co-curricular activities

We will have tangible data, the hope is that the data will show an improvement in student learning. As a result of putting all of this together we may also see improvement in our persistence and completion.

Q: How will your project contribute to making assessment an activity that leads to the improvement of student learning?

A:
- We will change our focus from assessment **of** learning to assessment **for** learning. We will change from assessment **of** student success to assessment **for** student success.
- Through revamping of ILO's, curriculum mapping, and assessment tools – faculty will be involved and re-involved in the development of those.

Q: Describe the specific steps that that you will be taking in Year 1 to develop and implement the early stages of your project.

A: Year 1 steps:

- Develop concrete action plan/steps
- Revamp of ILO's (goal for new ILO's to be in place by April 1, 2019)
- Until new process is complete, we will continue with our current assessment processes/practices
  - May have an opportunity for areas that have never assessed to be early adopters of the new processes (pilot projects).

Q: What serious challenges do you expect to encounter? How will you deal with them?

A: Challenges: Faculty and staff participation, no Institutional Research (IR)/Institutional Effectiveness (IE) department

How we will deal with challenges:

- Presentation to all faculty at fall 2018 in-service on the Assessment Academy Project
- Involving faculty in the revamping of tools in their areas – so it is meaningful to them and what they are doing (formalizing what we are already doing)
- Meaningful feedback is going to be provided on all the current data/reports we are already collecting

> Reviewed by **Jodi Stauss Stassen** on 05/18/2018 05:51 PM.

Consolidated Response

Q: ASL IR Part II Consolidated Response

Q: Please describe your general impression of the institution's progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The institution has made slow and steady progress over the past four years. Like the other institutions in this cohort, their progress was delayed by the pandemic which has been creating disruptions of educational processes for the past two and a half years.

Reviewing the list of completed activities was a good reminder that the institution did accomplish a number of important tasks, including revised ILOs, revised processes and rubrics for assessing ILOs, and revised assessment processes and reports for Career and Technical Programs and General Education/Liberal Arts and Sciences. The new processes and forms were piloted during 2021-2022, and the institution held its first dedicated Assessment Day for faculty in the spring of 2022! All of this groundwork helped to build a foundation for full implementation of the new process in 2022-2023. The team should feel good about the work they accomplished through the Academy and their overall contributions to improving assessment of student learning outcomes throughout the institution.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Your Mentor has captured it.

Your listed activities, planned actions steps, and the specifics on your sustainability approach declare that you are ready to move this work to the next level of implementation. With training, tools and new understanding shared with faculty colleagues, you should have a particularly rewarding 2022-23 year. This coming year is when all of the in-the-trenches work will have practical application and I think a real pay off. Still, be prepared for pilots that might not go as planned and remain flexible with

participating colleagues. Do all that you can as data comes in to showcase good practice and the utility of the work which you already know is bring done got its potential to inform improvement---not just for doing and reporting!

Q: **Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

All of the work that was done by the team was in consultation with administration and included involvement from the faculty. The new processes and tools developed appear to be appropriate for the institution given its size, mission and programs. As noted in your posting, you did not make as much progress as originally intended and the institution still needs to develop and implement a plan for the assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

There are no specific concerns though your Mentor and I recognize the challenges ahead. With changing leaders and/or roles, some of this work could lose the central role it has enjoyed with the Academy project profile. Do all that you can to follow your own stated action steps (above) and insights on keeping faculty and staff engaged (above). They offer a practical approach and sequence of events that will keep assessment work in front of colleagues regularly. Your next steps are building on solid preparation.

Q: **In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

In my opinion, the institution is prepared to sustain its assessment efforts. Several action steps were outlined in the sustainability section of the Impact Report that will keep assessment efforts moving forward. The team leader, who was also the chief academic officer, has recently left the institution so a new leader will have to be selected and brought up to date on past and future assessment initiatives. It was also mentioned that the institution will be hiring a Director of Institutional Research; this individual will need to be involved in assessment initiatives as well. Specifically, this individual should be particularly helpful in addressing the challenges this institution is experiencing relative to implementing a system for collecting, analyzing and utilizing assessment data.

It will be important to keep assessment at the forefront of the institution as the HLC has required the institution to submit an Interim Monitoring Report on assessment in 2024 as this area was "met with concerns" during the institution's last comprehensive evaluation. Although I recognize that the goals of the Assessment Academy are separate from accreditation processes, the work of the Academy team needs to continue as the important steps they are in fulfilling expectations in assessment.

Continued communication, faculty development and designated time for faculty to work on assessment will be extremely important to ensure that the processes and tools developed over the past four years can be implemented and faculty members can use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Ditto to all that your Mentor has shared.

I want to endorse the comments/plans suggested for moving forward on co-curricular assessment. Relating the co-curriculum to the ILOs makes great sense and starting with a Pilot on how those areas contribute to learning---not that they are providing satisfactory services---is sensible. Great idea to use the same ILO tool/rubric but change the rating approach.

A:

Q: Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I have enjoyed working with this team over the past four years. They have persisted despite challenges related to the pandemic as well as challenges caused by technology, faculty turnover and the recent change of senior leaders. I encourage them to keep moving forward and to keep connected with other Academy participants as well as similar institutions in the Minnesota State System to share ideas and practices. And I am certainly available if additional assistance is needed at any time.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Though you state that you did not accomplish all that you intended, please recognize that a great deal of important foundational work has been accomplished. The stage is well set for continued engagement and maturity in assessment work. Be sure to recognize (reward?) contributions that can be models for others.

You are well positioned to reach stated goals in the upcoming academic year(s).

Bravo on accomplishments.

A:
Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: ASL Consolidated Response Questions

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

There is continuity from the last update (the third year mentor consultation) to the current update with continued emphasis on the adoption of a competency model, rather than a numeric score, for ILO assessment as well as continued efforts to involve more faculty members in assessment processes. The group has outlined detailed plans for the next two years relative to assessment in both the liberal arts and technical programs. The proposed changes should improve reporting and allow the institution to collect the desired information more efficiently. Finally, the group appears to be making continued progress, over the past year and a half, despite the pandemic and associated schedule interruptions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

You are making slow but sure progress on assessment activities.

It is always a good idea to update/improve forms as time allows, especially, if changes are in response to faculty users who are suggesting same.

I also want to recognize the importance of the follow-up on reports that you conduct. Explicit follow-up reinforces the idea that reports aren't something *to do* but rather are pieces of a process that contribute to positive change in student achievement.

Lastly, The revision of program outcomes and mapping courses supporting the outcomes to the ILOs is a huge alignment that hopefully send the message to faculty that the work is purposeful.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

The team continues to affirm its focus on assessing Institutional Learning Objectives although it appears that the specific activities have changed relative to ILO assessment since the spring report. Perhaps those changes were made as you evaluated your progress at the Mid-Point Roundtable and established your goals for the next two years of the Academy. A review of the team's goals for the next two years reflects a focus on program assessment, in both the liberal arts program and the technical programs. There also

appears to be a new focus on the content/format of program assessment reports. You have outlined three tasks for the next six months, two dealing with changes to reporting forms.

By this point, many college faculty have been engaged with the project through their participation on the Academy team, college committees and faculty in-services. The team has recognized that faculty will need to be further involved in the modifications to the program assessment processes.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

It seems that the Midpoint Roundtable gave you some new insights and energy for the remaining work.

Your work remains focused on the ILOs and the processes intended to secure useful assessment data to inform improved student learning.

Q: **What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?**

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

It looks like many of the tasks in your two-year plan are already completed or close to completion. Once all of the adjustments have been made to reporting forms and processes, will the remainder of the project period be focused on collecting data, analyzing data and using data for improvement? Who will manage this process and be responsible for documenting and sharing the results.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

In addition to Julie's important question I am adding: Do you have curriculum maps in broad use so you can be sure where best to measure achievement in courses already identified as ILO contributors? Is this an effort still ahead of you? If yes, consider how quickly you might be able to complete maps and direct work to next steps of measuring and gaining insight.

Recognizing that many processes/forms are being re-worked---and this certainly is important work---I still need to ask if results are already available?   Action items established? I am not clear that this part of your assessment work is ongoing? Otherwise, how close are you to regular use of data from program and ILO measures? Are faculty engaged in analysis and decisions on next steps for potential curricular change---definitely the more rewarding part of assessment work or is that still ahead?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Several changes appear to have been made since the report from earlier this year, including a change in the Academy team leader as well as specific project activities. Here are my questions:

1.) Project Update 4 indicates that the team will focus on finalizing assessment rubrics and assessing ILO #1, 4 and 5 during the 20-21 academic year; yet there is no mention of this activity in the current Project Update. Will this activity still occur?

2) One of the tasks for the next six months is to "research and review ILO assessment process to improve it." What is involved in that process? I was under the impression that is the work your team had been doing for the past two years. Help clarify.

3) Although you joined the Assessment Academy and established your goals prior to your recent HLC Comprehensive Visit, I understand that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? Is this the reason you changed your planned activities from what was posted in the spring to what is reported above? Help us understand how best to offer guidance.

Given the changes, I recommend a conference call or virtual meeting between your team, Susan and myself so we can better understand the plan for the next two years. I would like to be able to help your team rather than continue to question you or guess what additional information is behind some of the responses above.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I also have questions about the substance of the plan, appreciating that the forms may need updating. Will the Academy Team tackle this or the APR Committee or some subset? Be sure to ask faculty about their ideas to improve the form; they'll be living with it for a while!

I am curious as well to understand the Monitoring Report expectations. (Accreditation and Academy work are absolutely distinct but if there is some way for us to provide insight on your current project that would have a positive corollary effect for the Report, we are poised to assist.)

Is there hard data on the previous cycles of ILO measurement that suggested areas for action/improvement?

Even with a Zoom-type world, are you able to work with faculty who need guidance on assessment activity or tools?

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

I think you have outlined a clear plan of activities for the next six months. Beyond that, I would recommend the institution focus on the continued collection and analysis of assessment data on student learning across all programs. By doing so, you will have adequate information, i.e., multiple cycles of assessment results and related improvement actions, to demonstrate fulfillment of expectations for Core Component 4B in your interim monitoring report that is due in advance of the Year 4 review in 2024.

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, there is no one correct or perfect method for conducting assessment of student learning. At some point, you need to decide that your forms, software, processes, etc., are adequately designed and you'll need to begin to implement and then expand your assessment processes. You can always make refinements along the way but you will lose momentum---and be unable to demonstrate meaningful progress---if your work continues disproportionately to focus on modifying forms, tools and processes.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Julie's point is well taken and I agree with the importance of having cycles of assessment accomplished in order to provide evidence of assessment activity at the college. I also recognize that you will need to provide support and guidance to faculty....and colleagues to each other...as quickly as is reasonable and practical. If there is currently no ongoing practice of gathering and analyzing data and responding to results with action, consider how quickly this can be undertaken in cooperative programs and volunteer faculty willing to experiment and share their experience. Maybe first steps will be a matter of securing baseline data.

Much work accomplished; still work ahead.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

You indicate that for the first two year of the project the HLC Team and the college's Assessment and Program Review Committee were combined but now it appears as though you are going to go back to meeting separately.Given recent HLC concerns relative to assessment, it seems particularly important that these two groups continue to work collaboratively and that they are "on the same page" relative to panned activities.

You also realize that the pandemic complicates communication with faculty and makes it more difficult to engage faculty in discussions, work sessions and other faculty development activities. Perhaps by now, we are all becoming more accustomed to working in a virtual world compared to last spring and you will be able to reconnect with colleagues.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

The work on forms could go swiftly if you are updating or simplifying. If that is the case, I thought that the work mentioned in Version 4, i.e., review of all PLOs (to confirm that they are measurable & manageable?), identification of assessment tools, creation of an Assessment Handbook (if that is still desirable) and, determination on professional development needs would also be time well spent in the next cycle. Yes, there are huge challenges with the remote world we are in so maybe not all of these can be accomplished.

Keeping with your project interests, is there ongoing assessment activity that has produced results for analysis?

Have the ILOs and Gen Ed outcomes been reviewed for overlap? Are they synonymous? Would this be useful in streamlining assessment demands?

Will Liberal Arts and Technical programs have results of PLO or ILO measures in this academic year?

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

As we discussed during our Third Year Consultation, you may want to check in with other Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to see how they are using their Learning Management Systems to collect and analyze information on student learning outcomes if you haven't done this already.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

Good idea. Your state colleagues may have tips and techniques that you hadn't thought of yet.

A: **Julie Furst-Bowe, Mentor:**

Typically, you would have received a great deal of information and opportunity to network and benchmark with other institutions at the Mid-Point Roundtable. I hope this was the case although I realize the Roundtable was a virtual experience for your team.

Assuming we have a phone conversation or virtual meeting, I will be able to suggest some focused resources as well as resources related to working remotely with teams.

Susan Murphy, Scholar:

I want to strongly encourage taking Julie---or both of us---up on the idea of a call or Zoom. We welcome time with you and the Academy team or some subset. We are eager to help you determine how to get the best and the most out of the project work you are taking on over the next 2 years.

A:
> Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: Version: 4 - Scholar Response

Q: **What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?**

A: Julie

As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength for this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

Your team has set specific goals and action steps for the upcoming Midpoint Roundtable and beyond including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

Susan

You are in good shape for this point in your project. You continue to enjoy faculty support/participation which is imperative for future efforts. As Julie noted, the completion of the ILO review and the initial phase of ILO measures means that you have a positive trajectory for other scheduled assessment work. With the ILOs complete, determining performance indicators and rubrics should be straightforward.

Having new data available in June offers the chance to have analysis completed and ready for discussion with colleagues at the start of the fall semester.

A: As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength of this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

It appears your team set some focused goals and specific future action steps during the Midpoint Roundtable, including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

A: <u>Julie</u>

Your project appears to be moving along according to the schedule, and there has been notable progress over the past year. This is important as it indicates that the institution is taking this project very seriously and now has tangible results to demonstrate to faculty and staff members. The new revised ILOs are concise and more measurable, especially when compared to the previous versions. In addition, there continues to be substantial faculty involvement in this project through in-service work and by members of the Assessment and Program Review Committee along with the Assessment Academy Team. The plan of work for the current academic year, 2019-2020, appears to be clear and well organized.

 <u>Susan</u>

Agreed. You have momentum and a clear direction for tasks.

Spreading out the ILOs revisions and seeking colleague feedback will hopefully lead to more faculty acceptance and engagement. And feedback from the Provost on annual reports should give faculty a strong sense of the value of the work they are doing.

Having team members attend the HLC Conference to hear about others' experiences can only expand team thinking and possibly professional connections.

A: Your project appears to be moving along according to the schedule, and there has been notable progress over the past year. This is important as it indicates that the institution is taking this project very seriously and now has tangible results to demonstrate to faculty and staff members. The new revised ILOs are concise and measurable, especially when compared to the previous versions. In addition, there continues to be substantial faculty involvement in this project through in-service work and by members of the Assessment and Program Review Committee along with the Assessment Academy Team. The plan of work for the current academic year, 2019-2020, also appears to be clear and well organized.

A: <u>Julie</u>

The involvement of a wide range faculty members continues to be a strength of this project. The focus on assessment at the January in-service where time was spent explaining the project to the faculty and collecting feedback on the two ILO revisions is also a strength. My institution is currently in the Persistence and Completion Academy and we set aside time at every in-service (fall, winter and spring) for faculty to engage in Academy work specific to their courses and programs. This helps to ensure that the work is moving along according to schedule, and faculty appreciate the dedicated time and continued focus on student success.

Combining the APR Committee and Assessment Academy Team to work on this project is also a strength as this allows the institution to involve more individuals and the work is clearly aligned with the charge of the APR Committee. The combined group does appear to be making progress in revising the two identified Institutional Learning Outcomes with adequate input from faculty members. The fact that the project was scaled back to the revision of two ILOs this academic year and three ILOs next year is a strength that will make the project more manageable. A shift to assessing two ILO's one year and three ILO's in the alternate year makes sense and ensures that all of the ILOs are reviewed every two years.

The completion of the second annual assessment report is a strength as it appears to be a comprehensive source of various assessments that are utilized at the college. [It would be interesting to know how this report is distributed and actually utilized by faculty and staff at the college.]

You have reflected on feedback seriously and made changes that assist your project to be more meaningful and manageable.

<u>Susan</u>

There are many strengths in your continuing work. As Julie has noted, the comprehensive nature of your annual report gives colleagues the chance to see the big picture of results/performance in a single document.

Resizing how much you can reasonably take on (re: the ILO's) in years 1 & 2 is a service to all; this approach let's the team address fewer areas with more discussion and mutual understanding for forging agreement on the specific features (performance indicators) that all agree should be the hallmark of a Northland graduate.

A: The involvement of a wide range faculty members continues to be a strength of this project. The focus on assessment at the January in-service, where time was spent explaining the project to the faculty and collecting feedback on the two ILO revisions, is also a strength. My institution is currently in the Persistence and Completion Academy and we set aside time at every in-service (fall, winter and spring) for faculty to engage in academy work specific to their courses and programs. This helps to ensure that the work is moving along according to schedule, and faculty appreciate the dedicated time and continued focus on student success.

Combining the APR Committee and Assessment Academy Team to work on this project is also a strength as this allows the institution to involve more individuals and the work is clearly aligned with the charge of the APR Committee. The combined group does appear to be making progress in revising the two identified Institutional Learning Outcomes with adequate input from faculty members. The fact that the project was scaled back to the revision of two ILOs this academic year and three ILOs next year is also a strength and should make the project more manageable. A shift to assessing two ILO's one year and three ILO's the alternate year makes sense and ensures all of the ILOs are reviewed every two years.

The completion of the second annual assessment report is also a strength as it appears to be a comprehensive source of various assessments that are utilized at the college. However, it would be interesting to know how this report is distributed and actually utilized by faculty and staff at the college.

A: Julie

In my experience, the composition of your team will prove to be a strength as your team members include faculty and administrators from general education, professional and technical programs as well as student services and distance learning. The goals of your project are a strength in that they include faculty and staff development in understanding assessment. You make a distinction between moving your institution from assessment **of** student learning and success to assessment **for** student learning and success. This distinction is important as you explain the "why" or the rationale for undertaking this comprehensive project that will require significant faculty involvement.

The specific activities you list align with the larger goals of the project. Dividing the academic programs into the three general categories, as you suggest, is a strength and will make the review of program learner outcomes much more manageable. For the most part, your desired outcomes align with the specific activities and program goals. And finally, the fact that you have clearly defined what action steps will be taken in the first year of the project is a strength.

This is a very large project, and I believe faculty and staff could become overwhelmed if you weren't able to clearly articulate what will be accomplished during each year of the academy timeframe.

Susan

Julie has identified your strengths going into the initial stage of the project. As she states, you have both the big picture and specific steps in mind to achieve your broader goal. In the "Context" section you described the college as currently conducting academic assessment activities so the good news is that you have a foundation to build on.

A: In my experience, the composition of your team will prove to be a strength as your team members include faculty and administrators from general education, professional and technical programs as well as student services and distance learning. I believe the goals of your project are a strength in that they include faculty and staff development in understanding assessment. You make a distinction between moving your institution from assessment **of** student learning and success to assessment **for** student learning and success. This distinction is important as you explain the "why" or the rationale for undertaking this comprehensive project that will require significant faculty involvement.

The specific activities you list align with the larger goals of the project. Dividing the academic programs into the three general categories, as you suggest, is also a strength and will make the review of program learner outcomes much more manageable. For the most part, your desired outcomes align with the specific activities and program goals. And finally, the fact that you have clearly defined what action steps will be taken in the first year of the project is also a strength. This is a very large project, and I believe faculty and staff could become overwhelmed if you weren't able to clearly articulate what will be accomplished during each year of the academy timeframe.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Julie

As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the work you undertake at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

Are a sufficient number of faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs #2 and #3 this year? Is this year more of a pilot? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs able to guide faculty in making improvements in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I understood that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? ***What can we do in these next two years to help you fulfill expectations of Core Component 4B? Would a phone call or meeting/discussion at the annual conference be beneficial?***

Susan

Julie already made the offer---how can we help with project related work on 4B? Is there anything more specific re: process, tools, etc., that we can offer? We are open to a conference call and certainly to meeting in April at the Annual Conference to discuss issues and offer insight.

Time is always an issue and searching the Collaboration Network, even with the tags, will still take time. Consider whether you might assign an individual or two to take a first pass at the Network to identify potential institutions for further review.

For ILOs 1,4, and 5 scheduled for the upcoming academic year---any chance you can get a jump on those areas by piloting in the summer? Are there possible volunteers from your own team? Colleagues who would be willing?

Is ILO assessment work taking place in tandem with Program Level assessment? Are there results from the latter that can be showcased for colleagues as examples of good practice even before the fall semester?

Re: the goals identified for the Midpoint Roundtable, I agree that prioritizing is the task ahead. How can you leverage your Academy work to serve (possible) double-duty as you look ahead to your Monitoring Report.

As you think about any potential for Professional Development activity be sure that you pulse the faculty on what they want/need. Ask where they have issues/difficulties and seek to remove barriers to understanding or practice.

I think that Julie and I remain uncertain whether ILO and general education assessment are synonymous. Could you confirm for us either way before or in the next posting?

Have you created/used curriculum maps? They are so helpful in identifying where to measure outcomes.

Are the program level rubrics in good shape? Would programs appreciate a review or assist from your team to update if needed---especially as the ILO rubrics gain momentum?

A: As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. I am also unclear if you have begun to address the issue of identifying and assessing co-curricular learning outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the goals you established at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to

address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

In your report, you also state that the lack of faculty participation in assessment is a significant concern. Has this improved in the two years you have been in the Assessment Academy, involving faculty and sharing information at faculty in-services? Are faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs (#2 and #3) this year? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs more useful in guiding faculty to make improvement in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I noted that the Visiting Team and the IAC agreed that the institution met core component 4B "with concerns" and you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. What was the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and from Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? **What can we do in these next two years to help you become fully compliant with core component 4B? Would a phone call or brief visit at the annual conference be beneficial?**

A: Julie

Most of my questions were addressed in the institution's response or by reading the 2018-2019 Annual Assessment Report. The annual report provided detailed descriptions of the ILOs, the plan to update them and the results from last year's assessment of two ILOs: Communication and Personal Development. However, it is not clear what improvement actions were taken to improve teaching and learning (if any) based on the results of the ILO assessments. The only action plan appears to be to update the wording of the remaining ILOs and the associated assessment rubrics.

According to the annual report, your college is also making significant progress on Program Assessment with a steady increase in the number of programs participating in annual program assessments and the number of programs reporting improvement actions. Specific program improvement actions from a large cross-section of programs were also listed in the annual report. Participation and improvement actions from 5-year Program Reviews were also included in the annual report.

Currently, assessment of General Education is done by each discipline area. However, this work has been uneven and was put "on hold" for a number of years with the introduction of ILO assessments. It is somewhat unclear how these discipline assessments differ from ILO assessments and some concern whether both are necessary given the number of faculty members and students at the institution. Is there a way for these two processes to become integrated in the future?

How is the work going in co-curricular assessment? Although you conduct student satisfaction and engagement surveys and have recently implemented a service learning requirement, I am unsure of your ongoing progress in this area. (Unrelated to the Academy project, co-curricular assessment may be an area of inquiry for your comprehensive visit at the end of the month.)

Susan

I want to underscore the ILO/Gen Ed relationship and Julie's question about managing both. Perhaps we don't understand enough detail about these areas and if you are working both in parallel and it serves you, fine. However, if you see some overlap and the potential to integrate, as Julie offers, that approach could lighten some of the work load. Is this an area worth exploring or would it complicate your project?

Re: co-curriculum, you mentioned this area in your last posting and though you are plenty busy with ILOs and rubrics...has there been additional development?

A: Most of my questions were addressed in the institution's response or by reading the 2018-2019 Annual Assessment Report. The annual report provided detailed descriptions of the ILOs, the plan to update them and the results from last year's assessment of two ILOs: Communication and Personal Development. However, it is not clear what improvement actions were taken to improve teaching and learning (if any) based on the results of the ILO assessments. The only action plan appears to be to update the wording of the remaining ILOs and the associated assessment rubrics.

According to the annual report, your college is also making significant progress on Program Assessment with a steady increase in the number of programs participating in annual program assessments and the number of programs reporting improvement actions. Specific program improvement actions from a large cross-section of programs were also listed in the annual report. Participation and improvement actions from 5-year Program Reviews were also included in the annual report.

Currently, assessment of General Education is done by each discipline area. However, this work has been uneven and was put "on hold" for a number of years with the introduction of ILO assessments. It is somewhat unclear how these discipline assessments differ from

ILO assessments and some concern whether both are necessary given the number of faculty members and students at the institution. Is there a way for these two processes to become integrated in the future?

And although I realize that improving co-curricular assessment was not included in your project goals, there appears to be some work needed in this area. Although the college conducts student satisfaction and engagement surveys, and has recently implemented a service learning requirement, the institution's process for co-curricular assessment is unclear at this time. This may be an area of inquiry when the HLC team arrives for your comprehensive visit at the end of the month.

A: Julie

 In your project proposal, you had mentioned getting started with pilot programs; however, there is no mention of those pilots in the current narrative. Has this concept been eliminated or postponed until all of the ILOs have been revised? A revised timetable of activities would be helpful for everyone at the college. In a four-year project, it can be difficult to ensure that everyone is on the same page relative to expectations and responsibilities.

The lack of an IR Director/office is still of concern. You describe how several committees at the college are involved in this work and how eventually nearly all faculty and many staff members will be involved in collecting, analyzing and using data relative to the ILO assessment, program assessment and co-curricular assessment. It will be difficult for all of this activity and the resulting information to be appropriately tracked, managed, and documented without the assistance of dedicated staff in this area. Is there any opportunity to add a staff member in this area or provide release time for a faculty with expertise in this area to serve in this role on a part-time basis?

Susan

Financial/human resources are challenging to be sure! Apropos of Julie's comments on institutional research, consider a brainstorming session for ideas on how data (and its analysis and reporting) could possibly be managed over time. Is even a 1/2 time position in the realm of possibility? A joint appointment of some type? Some graduate student project as a short term idea.

Which 2 ILO's were tackled and what kind of feedback did you get? Solid? Insightful? Is there anything you need to do differently in the next cycle when you tackle three ILO's?

Is it practical to think of teasing out from the Annual Assessment Report a few highlights to showcase for your peers? Lessons learned? Some wow insight that might not have been known without the tools of clear outcomes and measures?

How do faculty get feedback on their report submissions? Is there an opportunity to discuss results across disciplines? Or are these items in the planning stages?

Just curious---does the college use curriculum maps once an ILO has been established to see where it might best be measured?

A: From my perspective, I have fewer questions than I had during the first round of narrative and response. It is clear that the college has taken feedback from both mentors seriously and used the feedback to make several changes, as noted above, to make the project both more meaningful and manageable.

In your project proposal, you had mentioned getting started with pilot programs; however, there is no mention of those pilots in the current narrative. Has this concept been eliminated or postponed until all of the ILOs have been revised? A revised timetable of activities would be helpful for everyone at the college. In a four-year project, it can be difficult to ensure that everyone is on the same page relative to expectations and responsibilities.

The lack of an IR director/office is still of concern. You describe how several committees at the college are involved in this work and how eventually nearly all faculty and many staff members will be involved in collecting, analyzing and using data relative to the ILO assessment, program assessment and co-curricular assessment. It will be difficult for all of this activity, and the resulting information, to be appropriately tracked, managed and documented without the assistance of dedicated staff in this area. Is there any opportunity to add a staff member in this area or provide release time for a faculty with expertise in this area to serve in this role on a part-time basis?

A: Julie

As I read through your project proposal, I had questions in three areas. First, under Year 1 steps, you indicated that the current institutional ILOs will be "revamped" by April 2019. I was able to locate the current five ILOs on your college website; however, there was no date on the document. I was wondering how often the ILOs are reviewed and updated and what process is used for this review and modification.

Second, although alignment of co-curricular activities is listed under desired outcomes, I didn't see any specific project activities listed that would lead to that particular outcome. Do you have specific actions in mind or does this fall under one of the other activities, such as improved participation from all college areas?

Third, given the institution's lack of an IR/IE Department, I am concerned about the support for this project. Will the academy team be the group who provides direction and oversight to all of these activities or are there other committees, councils or groups involved? (The institution's academy application makes references to standing committees). Who is responsible for collecting, analyzing and sharing assessment data? Ultimately, who has final approval over the changes, including the modified ILOs?

And finally, who will assure that there is participation from all faculty and staff, particularly from areas that have not participated in previous assessment efforts.

Susan

I echo all of Julie's questions and want to explore even further.

How are the current ILOs not serving you? Or are you looking to re-frame or better define them so that all programs would be able to participate in measuring their achievement? [Your 5 categories: communication, critical thinking, civic responsibility, personal development and use of technology are standard.] I do think that if you were to retain some version of these you would need to sharpen the outcomes statements themselves with the idea of making the intended outcome more specific and relevant to all program faculty. When you re-write ILOs think about not including the performance indicators in the outcomes statement but rather get ALL faculty to agree on a crisp/concise statement (a la "..students will be able to write effectively...") Once a simpler statement is agreed to then you can set out to confirm the indicators that ALL faculty agree confirm effective writing. (Sometimes faculty can only all agree on a few indicators, that's fine.) With this approach, writing could be measured in courses in the major---a confirmation of achievement you want to be able to claim. Yes, students initially develop skills for English 101 and 102 performance but can these skills be maintained and mature as students move through courses where they apply the writing skills learned earlier on?

For the co-curriculum, I saw in one of your Annual Assessment reports that you do administer the SENSE and the CCSSE. In addition to these tools are student support areas looking to measure learning outcomes or is the focus more on measuring satisfaction/adequacy of the services they provide?

I saw just a few examples of Program Learning outcomes (PLOs) on your site and definitely think that you would do programs a favor to have them downsize. [I saw programs with up to 10 outcomes...and some of them seemed to duplicate the ILOs.] If possible, consider keeping PLOs to perhaps no more than five. There is no right number, of course, but the volume of outcomes for some programs seemed burdensome.

Whether institutional or program level, you want to keep outcomes meaningful, i.e., any colleague understands the statement at face value; measurable, i.e., the outcome can truly be measured/accomplished; and manageable, i.e., you don't have an unrealistic/unmanageable volume. Often I advise that a college claim less but measure more.

Do all programs have curriculum maps? If so, are they being used?

Are some of the areas that have not participated in assessment in academics vs. support services? As Julie asked above, will those programs now become accountable for participating due to the academy project expectations?

Just thinking out loud here---would it be possible to recruit some math/stats faculty in lieu of an IR function to assist in creating some data analysis? Think creatively about using the talents colleagues have even if they are not part of a committee or team.

How is the current Annual Assessment report used and by whom? Is it serving its intended purpose? Are the results of measures in academics and support services reviewed/discussed in curriculum groups?

A: As I read through your project proposal, I had questions in three areas. First, under Year 1 steps, you indicated that the current institutional ILOs will be "revamped" by April 2019. I was able to locate the current five ILOs on your college website; however, there was no date on the document. I was wondering how often the ILOs are reviewed and updated and what process is used for this review and modification. Second, although alignment of

co-curricular activities is listed under desired outcomes, I didn't see any specific project activities listed that would lead to that particular outcome. Do you have specific actions in mind or does this fall under one of the other activities, such as improved participation from all college areas. Third, given the institution's lack of an IR/IE Department, I am concerned about the support for this project. Will the academy team be the group who provides direction and oversight to all of these activities or are there other committees, councils or groups involved? (The institution's academy application makes references to standing committees). Who is responsible for collecting, analyzing and sharing assessment data? Ultimately, who has final approval over the changes, including the modified ILOs? And finally, who will assure that there is participation from all faculty and staff, particularly from the areas who have not participated in previous assessment efforts.

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Julie

The Academy team likely needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Visit to ensure that action plans---consistent with your project---are in place to address this feedback. Will the items you identified for the Midpoint Roundtable help you address any of the reviewer concerns?

With assessment flagged for monitoring you probably have the attention of senior leadership and faculty; this reality should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution needs a focal point (an individual? an office? standing committee?) where assessment activities (work with faculty and staff) and maintenance of assessment processes is managed.

Susan

Don't be specifically concerned with implementing curricular change when the June data comes. (Well, sure, if there is something obvious.) Some data will need to be trended; other insights may just lead to different questions; but all results should lead to discussion among colleagues. You may need to wait for additional results before you choose specific action; some faculty may want to pilot an intervention/change and then assess to see if there was an effect. Be open to different approaches.

Be sure to share data with colleagues asking for what they see in the results. I am regularly surprised by different insights from different audiences.

As you prioritize and decide on tasks for the next 2 years is it possible to add colleagues to the team...even ad hoc? Is it possible/practical to create sub-groups to juggle all that you want to accomplish or are you at capacity already?

A: As I wrote above, the academy team needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Comprehensive Visit and ensure that action plans are in place to address this feedback. I am unclear if the future actions identified at the Midpoint Roundtable will help you address the reviewer concerns. Once I have the information on why 4B was "met with concerns," I will be able to suggest specific actions to take over the next six months, and the next two years, for the institution to become compliant with this core component.

On a positive note, now that this area has been "flagged" by the HLC as having been "met with concerns," you will have the attention of senior leadership and of the faculty. This should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution does need an individual dedicated to working with faculty and staff on assessment of student learning as well as managing and maintaining assessment processes.

A: Julie

The institution has a clear approach for updating the remaining ILOs using the same processes, committees and timeline as in 2018-2019. However, it would also be helpful to highlight the results from the ILOs that are being assessed this year with a focus on actions taken---if any--- to improve teaching and learning based on the results.

I would also recommend that some thought be given to the role of general education assessment in light of the ILO assessment process. To be assessing 2 ILOs and 12 general education disciplines (along with every program) each year seems to be a lot of processes to manage and I am not sure the additional work will lead to additional value for the college or the students. The institution now has numerous assessment processes for committees to implement, oversee and document, and there is not a dedicated Institutional Research Office to assist in these processes.

Susan

Per Julie's comments...are there areas that overlap or are somewhat redundant where you might be able to reduce workload or combine assessment efforts? The concern we both have relates to burnout. Asking/requiring colleagues to work on multiple fronts is demanding and only you can determine a rotation/cycle that gives you the insight you want through assessment tools and still recognizes how much colleague time is needed.

A: The institution has a clear approach for updating the remaining ILOs using the same processes, committees and timeline as in 2018-2019. However, it would also be helpful to highlight the results from the ILOs that are being assessed this year with a focus on actions taken to improve teaching and learning based on the results.

I would also recommend that some thought be given to the role of general education assessment in light of the ILO assessment process. To be assessing 2 ILOs and 12 general education disciplines (along with every program) each year seems to be a lot of processes to manage, and I am not sure the additional work will lead to additional value for the college or the students. The institution now has numerous assessment processes for committees to implement, oversee and document, and there is not a dedicated Institutional Research Office to assist in these processes.

A: Julie

It will be important to ensure that faculty continue to conduct assessment of student learning throughout the spring semester using existing processes and not "wait" until all of the ILOs, program assessments and other components of the project are completed. Any faculty development days at the end of the spring term or summer could be used to further the work of your Academy project.

Also, it would be helpful for the two main committees involved in the Academy work to develop a revised timetable of activities for the remainder of the project and begin to consider long-term sustainability.

If anyone from your college is attending the annual HLC conference, there will be numerous sessions and resources available to assist you in advancing your work. You may also schedule a consultation with Susan or me (or both of us!) to have a face-to-face conversation about your project.

As part of the Academy program, I will be facilitating a Roundtable on engaging the institution in assessment of student learning on Sunday. You are most welcome to attend and share your experiences in launching this project.

Susan

If you will be at the Conference please take Julie up on her offer; such consultations always prove to be valuable in both directions.

You say that you are continuing to measure the ILO's so that you don't have a lapse in the assessment cycle---this makes sense. Yet, as you look ahead to the new/revised ILO's you may find that you are measuring different elements which may mean losing some potential of comparing data. That's okay too; your process gets to evolve.

Would the potential of new ILO's and performance indicators suggest that some new tools/approaches might come into play? It may be premature to suggest but keep an open mind to new thinking coming from faculty.

I am eager to see the two "before" and "after" ILO's in your next posting.

A: As I wrote in the last round of feedback, it will be important to ensure that faculty continue to conduct assessment of student learning throughout the spring semester using existing processes and not "wait" until all of the ILOs, program assessments and other components of the project are completed. Any faculty development days at the end of the spring term or summer could be used to further the work of the academy.

And, as I mentioned above, it would be helpful for the two main committees involved in the academy work to develop a revised timetable of activities for the remainder of the project and also begin to consider long-term sustainability. If anyone from your college is attending the annual HLC conference, there will be numerous sessions and resources available to assist you in advancing your work. You may also schedule a consultation with Susan or I (or both of us!) to have a face-to-face conversation about your project. As part of the academy program, I will be facilitating a roundtable on engaging the institution in assessment of student learning on Sunday. You are most welcome to attend and share your experiences in launching this project.

A: Julie

It makes sense to introduce this project and its rationale at the fall 2018 in-service. The rationale for change will be important as the college has had program assessment processes in place for several years. It will be important to emphasize that although changes are forthcoming, faculty and staff need to continue with their current assessment processes and practices. In my experience, it will be tempting for faculty and staff to "pause" on current efforts until the new ILOs, program outcomes and other components are in place. Although using pilot programs to test the new processes is a valid approach, it will be important to avoid confusion between the programs and services using the "new" processes versus those that are continuing to use existing processes. Again, relative to the previous section, I am unclear who is responsible for collecting, managing and reporting the data from the current processes since there is no IR/IE Department.

Finally, it is important to schedule dedicated time for the assessment team and others involved to work on this project. It appears as though everyone on the team has a full-time job in or out of the classroom and you will need to meet frequently to assure the ILO review and revision process is on track and that you have time to develop the specific, detailed action plans needed for the remaining years of the project.

Although you developed goals and high-level action steps at the recent Roundtable, there is still much work that needs to be conceptualized if the institution desires to improve assessment of institutional learning outcomes, program level outcomes, service unit outcomes and co-curricular outcomes.

Susan

Julie has zeroed in on some critical issues for this cycle. As she mentioned, the fall in-service is an important feature for the project goals. How will you briefly state the most specific goal to share with this audience? What goal statement might they relate to most readily? Consider how the in-service can best be designed to create interest and participation. Are there any colleagues currently who can offer their own successful experiences as examples of the value of assessment measures? Faculty influencing faculty colleagues can be more compelling than many other approaches.

Involving faculty in revamping of assessment tools in their areas may be the area where you can make the best inroads by helping see utility and value. Be very sure that you are satisfied with the outcomes statements and the attendant indicators before you move on to ideas/tools for measurement. Getting the outcome in good shape is imperative.

Decide whether you need to deal with the issue of units not participating by understanding the why of non-participation. (Many common reasons/explanations come to mind.)

You will be moving on multiple fronts simultaneously. Only you will know a few months into this whether you really have the human (and financial?) resources to do all that you hope to. Please know that you can re-size your project if needed, especially if some tasks simply taking longer than originally estimated.

A: It makes sense to introduce this project and its rationale at the fall 2018 in-service. The rationale for change will be important as the college has had program assessment processes in place for several years. It will be important to emphasize that although changes are forthcoming, faculty and staff need to continue with their current assessment processes and practices. In my experience, it will be tempting for faculty and staff to "pause" on current efforts until the new ILOs, program outcomes and other components are in place. Although using pilot programs to test the new processes is a valid approach, it will be important to avoid confusion between the programs and services using the "new" processes versus those that are continuing to use existing processes. (Again, relative to the previous section, I am unclear who is responsible for collecting, managing and reporting the data from the current processes since there is no IR/IE Department.) Finally, it is important to schedule dedicated time for the assessment team and others involved to work on this project. It appears as though everyone on the team has a full-time job, in or out of the classroom, and you will need to meet frequently to assure the ILO review and revision process is on track and that you have time to develop the specific, detailed action plans needed for the remaining years of the project. Although you developed goals and high-level action steps at the recent Roundtable, there is still much work that needs to be conceptualized if the institution desires to improve assessment of institutional learning outcomes, program level outcomes, service unit outcomes and co-curricular outcomes.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Julie

As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Consider what processes/approaches at peer institutions might appeal to you for adaptation.

Susan

Review the Collaboration Network as time permits and also consider investing time in understanding what peer institutions are doing (each team member calls a colleague at another institution in or out of state). Position yourselves to learn some quick lessons or get some quick takeaways from others' experiences.

Plan to maximize opportunities to learn from colleagues at the Midpoint Roundtable. Bring a few key questions and take time to ask others how they manage an issue.

A: As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Again, now that this area has been "flagged" as an area of concern by the HLC, you don't have years to spend "re-inventing" the wheel relative to student learning assessment. You may need to adapt processes from similar institutions.

A: Julie

Linda Suskie, A Common Sense Approach to Assessment in Higher Education, Rethinking the assessment of gen ed and institution-wide learning outcomes (https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/43462837-rethinking-the-assessment-of-gen-ed-and-institution-wide-learning-outcomes)

Susan

Not an actual resource but a question. Does the MNSCU office offer any resources to the system that you could take advantage of? Useful examples or experiences from peers?

Feel free to contact us if our comments prompt questions.

A: Linda Suskie

A Common Sense Approach to Assessment in Higher Education, Rethinking the assessment of gen ed and institution-wide learning outcomes (https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/43462837-rethinking-the-assessment-of-gen-ed-and-institution-wide-learning-outcomes)

A: Julie

Many institutions lack experience with co-curricular assessment. Although there is not one "right" model or methodology for co-curricular assessment, below are some resources that may be helpful. You will likely need to begin by defining co-curricular activities at your college (service learning, student government, clubs, athletics, etc.) and determining how these activities contribute to the college ILOs and/or program-specific learning outcomes. Since co-curricular activities often lack the formality associated with courses, including learning outcomes and assessment methods, there are a number of commercial software products that help institutions document co-curricular objectives, activities and results; manage co-curricular assessment processes; and generate "co-curricular transcripts for students.

1). https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities (https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities)

2). Outcomes-based Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review: A Compilation of Institutional Good Practices, Marilee J. Bresciani Ludvik (https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&text=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&search-alias=books&field-author=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&sort=relevancerank) (Author).

3). https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/44719458-assessing-learning-in-co-curricular-experiences

Again, if you are attending the annual HLC conference you will find numerous sessions and resources on this topic.

Susan

Julie offers some practical resources to consider and the Conference itself should offer sessions in this vein.

As Julie has stated, YOU get to get to determine how the co-curriculum is defined. I have seen institutions decide that their many non-academic campus activities contribute to 2 but not all ILO's. Other institutions have determined that writing 1 or 2 learning outcomes for the different areas that define the co-curriculum--- independent of the ILO's---makes more sense. This is an area where you have latitude to determine what, how, and when you will conduct indirect measures that inform you about features you care about and can do something about.

A: It appears the institution lacks knowledge and experience with co-curricular assessment. Although there is not one "right" model or methodology for co-curricular assessment, below are some resources that may be helpful. You will likely need to begin by defining co-curricular activities at your college (service learning, student government, clubs, athletics, etc.) and determining how these activities contribute to the college ILOs and/or program-specific learning outcomes. Since co-curricular activities often lack the formality associated with courses, including learning outcomes and assessment methods, there are a number of commercial software products that help institutions document co-curricular objectives, activities and results; manage co-curricular assessment processes; and generate "co-curricular transcripts for students.

   1). https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities (https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities)

   2). Outcomes-based Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review: A Compilation of Institutional Good Practices, Marilee J. Bresciani Ludvik (https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&text=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&search-alias=books&field-author=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&sort=relevancerank) (Author).

   3). https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/44719458-assessing-learning-in-co-curricular-experiences

   Again, if you are attending the annual HLC conference, you will find numerous sessions and resources on this topic.

A: Julie

Book: Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution. Peggy Maki.

This is a very practical book and she would also be an appropriate speaker, especially for an institution with limited resources to support assessment.

Book: Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing and Improving Assessment in Higher Education and Adult Education. Trudy Banta and Catherine Palomba.

This is another very comprehensive and highly regarded publication and would be appropriate for your institution.

Report: FACULTY BUY-IN AND ENGAGEMENT: REFRAMING THE CONVERSATION AROUND FACULTY ROLES IN ASSESSMENT. Tim Cain and Pat Hutchings. This is published by NIOLA, the National Institute for Learning Outcomes, and they have other assessment resources as well.

Susan

Julie has pointed you to some excellent resources. Consider how you might approach these, e.g., possibly splitting up the team to read chapters/portions to bring back to the group at monthly (?) meetings. Resizing the research will definitely make it more digestible.

Let us know how we can assist you as the project develops; feel free to email or call.

A: Book: Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution. Peggy Maki.

This is a very practical book and she would also be an appropriate speaker, especially for an institution with limited resources to support assessment.

Book: Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing and Improving Assessment in Higher Education and Adult Education. Trudy Banta and Catherine Palomba.

This is another very comprehensive and highly regarded publication and would be appropriate for your institution.

Report: FACULTY BUY-IN AND ENGAGEMENT: REFRAMING THE CONVERSATION AROUND FACULTY ROLES IN ASSESSMENT. Tim Cain and Pat Hutchings. This is published by NIOLA, the National Institute for Learning Outcomes, and they have other assessment resources as well.

> Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Q: Version: 1 - Scholar Response

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Julie

As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength for this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

Your team has set specific goals and action steps for the upcoming Midpoint Roundtable and beyond including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

Susan

You are in good shape for this point in your project. You continue to enjoy faculty support/participation which is imperative for future efforts. As Julie noted, the completion of the ILO review and the initial phase of ILO measures means that you have a positive trajectory for other scheduled assessment work. With the ILOs complete, determining performance indicators and rubrics should be straightforward.

Having new data available in June offers the chance to have analysis completed and ready for discussion with colleagues at the start of the fall semester.

A: As mentioned in previous responses, faculty involvement continues to be a strength of this project. Although it may appear to slow the pace of of the project, it is important that the three revised ILO's were shared with all of the faculty at a recent in-service program. Similar to the revised ILO 2 and ILO 3, the revised versions of #1, #4 and #5 are much more concise and easy to understand than the previous versions. Hopefully, the revised rubrics will be an improvement as well.

It appears your team set some focused goals and specific future action steps during the Midpoint Roundtable, including the development of both comprehensive and abbreviated informational materials, a review of program learner outcomes, additions and revisions to assessment tools and additional professional development activities.

A: Julie

Your project appears to be moving along according to the schedule, and there has been notable progress over the past year. This is important as it indicates that the institution is taking this project very seriously and now has tangible results to demonstrate to faculty and staff members. The new revised ILOs are concise and more measurable, especially when compared to the previous versions. In addition, there continues to be substantial faculty involvement in this project through in-service work and by members of the Assessment and Program Review Committee along with the Assessment Academy Team. The plan of work for the current academic year, 2019-2020, appears to be clear and well organized.

Susan

Agreed. You have momentum and a clear direction for tasks.

Spreading out the ILOs revisions and seeking colleague feedback will hopefully lead to more faculty acceptance and engagement. And feedback from the Provost on annual reports should give faculty a strong sense of the value of the work they are doing.

Having team members attend the HLC Conference to hear about others' experiences can only expand team thinking and possibly professional connections.

A: Your project appears to be moving along according to the schedule, and there has been notable progress over the past year. This is important as it indicates that the institution is taking this project very seriously and now has tangible results to demonstrate to faculty and staff members. The new revised ILOs are concise and measurable, especially when compared to the previous versions. In addition, there continues to be substantial faculty involvement in this project through in-service work and by members of the Assessment and Program Review Committee along with the Assessment Academy Team. The plan of work for the current academic year, 2019-2020, also appears to be clear and well organized.

A: Julie

The involvement of a wide range faculty members continues to be a strength of this project. The focus on assessment at the January in-service where time was spent explaining the project to the faculty and collecting feedback on the two ILO revisions is also a strength. My institution is currently in the Persistence and Completion Academy and we set aside time at every in-service (fall, winter and spring) for faculty to engage in Academy work specific to their courses and programs. This helps to ensure that the work is moving along according to schedule, and faculty appreciate the dedicated time and continued focus on student success.

Combining the APR Committee and Assessment Academy Team to work on this project is also a strength as this allows the institution to involve more individuals and the work is clearly aligned with the charge of the APR Committee. The combined group does appear to be making progress in revising the two identified Institutional Learning Outcomes with adequate input from faculty members. The fact that the project was scaled back to the revision of two ILOs this academic year and three ILOs next year is a strength that will make the project more manageable. A shift to assessing two ILO's one year and three ILO's in the alternate year makes sense and ensures that all of the ILOs are reviewed every two years.

The completion of the second annual assessment report is a strength as it appears to be a comprehensive source of various assessments that are utilized at the college. [It would be interesting to know how this report is distributed and actually utilized by faculty and staff at the college.]

You have reflected on feedback seriously and made changes that assist your project to be more meaningful and manageable.

Susan

There are many strengths in your continuing work. As Julie has noted, the comprehensive nature of your annual report gives colleagues the chance to see the big picture of results/performance in a single document.

Resizing how much you can reasonably take on (re: the ILO's) in years 1 & 2 is a service to all; this approach let's the team address fewer areas with more discussion and mutual understanding for forging agreement on the specific features (performance indicators) that all agree should be the hallmark of a Northland graduate.

A: The involvement of a wide range faculty members continues to be a strength of this project. The focus on assessment at the January in-service, where time was spent explaining the project to the faculty and collecting feedback on the two ILO revisions, is also a strength. My institution is currently in the Persistence and Completion Academy and we set aside time at every in-service (fall, winter and spring) for faculty to engage in academy work specific to their courses and programs. This helps to ensure that the work is moving along according to schedule, and faculty appreciate the dedicated time and continued focus on student success.

Combining the APR Committee and Assessment Academy Team to work on this project is also a strength as this allows the institution to involve more individuals and the work is clearly aligned with the charge of the APR Committee. The combined group does appear to be making progress in revising the two identified Institutional Learning Outcomes with adequate input from faculty members. The fact that the project was scaled back to the revision of two ILOs this academic year and three ILOs next year is also a strength and should make the project more manageable. A shift to assessing two ILO's one year and three ILO's the alternate year makes sense and ensures all of the ILOs are reviewed every two years.

The completion of the second annual assessment report is also a strength as it appears to be a comprehensive source of various assessments that are utilized at the college. However, it would be interesting to know how this report is distributed and actually utilized by faculty and staff at the college.

A: <u>Julie</u>

In my experience, the composition of your team will prove to be a strength as your team members include faculty and administrators from general education, professional and technical programs as well as student services and distance learning. The goals of your project are a strength in that they include faculty and staff development in understanding assessment. You make a distinction between moving your institution from assessment **of** student learning and success to assessment **for** student learning and success. This distinction is important as you explain the "why" or the rationale for undertaking this comprehensive project that will require significant faculty involvement.

The specific activities you list align with the larger goals of the project. Dividing the academic programs into the three general categories, as you suggest, is a strength and will make the review of program learner outcomes much more manageable. For the most part, your desired outcomes align with the specific activities and program goals. And finally, the fact that you have clearly defined what action steps will be taken in the first year of the project is a strength.

This is a very large project, and I believe faculty and staff could become overwhelmed if you weren't able to clearly articulate what will be accomplished during each year of the academy timeframe.

<u>Susan</u>

Julie has identified your strengths going into the initial stage of the project. As she states, you have both the big picture and specific steps in mind to achieve your broader goal. In the "Context" section you described the college as currently conducting academic assessment activities so the good news is that you have a foundation to build on.

A: In my experience, the composition of your team will prove to be a strength as your team members include faculty and administrators from general education, professional and technical programs as well as student services and distance learning. I believe the goals of your project are a strength in that they include faculty and staff development in understanding assessment. You make a distinction between moving your institution from assessment **of** student learning and success to assessment **for** student learning and success. This distinction is important as you explain the "why" or the rationale for undertaking this comprehensive project that will require significant faculty involvement.

The specific activities you list align with the larger goals of the project. Dividing the academic programs into the three general categories, as you suggest, is also a strength and will make the review of program learner outcomes much more manageable. For the most part, your desired outcomes align with the specific activities and program goals. And finally, the fact that you have clearly defined what action steps will be taken in the first year of the project is also a strength. This is a very large project, and I believe faculty and staff could become overwhelmed if you weren't able to clearly articulate what will be accomplished during each year of the academy timeframe.

A: <u>Julie</u>

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Julie

As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the work you undertake at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

Are a sufficient number of faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs #2 and #3 this year? Is this year more of a pilot? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs able to guide faculty in making improvements in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I understood that you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. Are you willing to share the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? *What can we do in these next two years to help you fulfill expectations of Core Component 4B? Would a phone call or meeting/discussion at the annual conference be beneficial?*

Susan

Julie already made the offer---how can we help with project related work on 4B? Is there anything more specific re: process, tools, etc., that we can offer? We are open to a conference call and certainly to meeting in April at the Annual Conference to discuss issues and offer insight.

Time is always an issue and searching the Collaboration Network, even with the tags, will still take time. Consider whether you might assign an individual or two to take a first pass at the Network to identify potential institutions for further review.

For ILOs 1,4, and 5 scheduled for the upcoming academic year---any chance you can get a jump on those areas by piloting in the summer? Are there possible volunteers from your own team? Colleagues who would be willing?

Is ILO assessment work taking place in tandem with Program Level assessment? Are there results from the latter that can be showcased for colleagues as examples of good practice even before the fall semester?

Re: the goals identified for the Midpoint Roundtable, I agree that prioritizing is the task ahead. How can you leverage your Academy work to serve (possible) double-duty as you look ahead to your Monitoring Report.

As you think about any potential for Professional Development activity be sure that you pulse the faculty on what they want/need. Ask where they have issues/difficulties and seek to remove barriers to understanding or practice.

I think that Julie and I remain uncertain whether ILO and general education assessment are synonymous. Could you confirm for us either way before or in the next posting?

Have you created/used curriculum maps? They are so helpful in identifying where to measure outcomes.

Are the program level rubrics in good shape? Would programs appreciate a review or assist from your team to update if needed---especially as the ILO rubrics gain momentum?

A: As in previous responses, I remain unclear as to how the ILO assessment is aligned with the assessment of program outcomes and general education outcomes. I am also unclear if you have begun to address the issue of identifying and assessing co-curricular learning outcomes. In your report, you indicate that there are several areas at the college that need a concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring throughout the college. Will the goals you established at the Midpoint Roundtable help you to address this concern? I am curious as to why the team plans to review all program learner outcomes when your have stated that you have a well established academic program annual assessment.

In your report, you also state that the lack of faculty participation in assessment is a significant concern. Has this improved in the two years you have been in the Assessment Academy, involving faculty and sharing information at faculty in-services? Are faculty involved in assessing the newly revised ILOs (#2 and #3) this year? Are the revised rubrics for these ILOs more useful in guiding faculty to make improvement in the classroom?

In the report from your recent HLC comprehensive visit, I noted that the Visiting Team and the IAC agreed that the institution met core component 4B "with concerns" and you are required to submit a monitoring report on your progress in this area. What was the specific nature of the concerns? Is the feedback from me (and from Susan) consistent with the observations of the Visiting Team? ***What can we do in these next two years to help you become fully compliant with core component 4B? Would a phone call or brief visit at the annual conference be beneficial?***

A: Julie

Most of my questions were addressed in the institution's response or by reading the 2018-2019 Annual Assessment Report. The annual report provided detailed descriptions of the ILOs, the plan to update them and the results from last year's assessment of two ILOs: Communication and Personal Development. However, it is not clear what improvement actions were taken to improve teaching and learning (if any) based on the results of the ILO assessments. The only action plan appears to be to update the wording of the remaining ILOs and the associated assessment rubrics.

According to the annual report, your college is also making significant progress on Program Assessment with a steady increase in the number of programs participating in annual program assessments and the number of programs reporting improvement actions. Specific program improvement actions from a large cross-section of programs were also listed in the annual report. Participation and improvement actions from 5-year Program Reviews were also included in the annual report.

Currently, assessment of General Education is done by each discipline area. However, this work has been uneven and was put "on hold" for a number of years with the introduction of ILO assessments. It is somewhat unclear how these discipline assessments differ from ILO assessments and some concern whether both are necessary given the number of faculty members and students at the institution. Is there a way for these two processes to become integrated in the future?

How is the work going in co-curricular assessment? Although you conduct student satisfaction and engagement surveys and have recently implemented a service learning requirement, I am unsure of your ongoing progress in this area. (Unrelated to the Academy project, co-curricular assessment may be an area of inquiry for your comprehensive visit at the end of the month.)

Susan

I want to underscore the ILO/Gen Ed relationship and Julie's question about managing both. Perhaps we don't understand enough detail about these areas and if you are working both in parallel and it serves you, fine. However, if you see some overlap and the potential to integrate, as Julie offers, that approach could lighten some of the work load. Is this an area worth exploring or would it complicate your project?

Re: co-curriculum, you mentioned this area in your last posting and though you are plenty busy with ILOs and rubrics...has there been additional development?

A: Most of my questions were addressed in the institution's response or by reading the 2018-2019 Annual Assessment Report. The annual report provided detailed descriptions of the ILOs, the plan to update them and the results from last year's assessment of two ILOs: Communication and Personal Development. However, it is not clear what improvement actions were taken to improve teaching and learning (if any) based on the results of the ILO assessments. The only action plan appears to be to update the wording of the remaining ILOs and the associated assessment rubrics.

According to the annual report, your college is also making significant progress on Program Assessment with a steady increase in the number of programs participating in annual program assessments and the number of programs reporting improvement actions. Specific program improvement actions from a large cross-section of programs were also listed in the annual report. Participation and improvement actions from 5-year Program Reviews were also included in the annual report.

Currently, assessment of General Education is done by each discipline area. However, this work has been uneven and was put "on hold" for a number of years with the introduction of ILO assessments. It is somewhat unclear how these discipline assessments differ from ILO assessments and some concern whether both are necessary given the number of faculty members and students at the institution. Is there a way for these two processes to become integrated in the future?

And although I realize that improving co-curricular assessment was not included in your project goals, there appears to be some work needed in this area. Although the college conducts student satisfaction and engagement surveys, and has recently implemented a service learning requirement, the institution's process for co-curricular assessment is unclear at this time. This may be an area of inquiry when the HLC team arrives for your comprehensive visit at the end of the month.

A: <u>Julie</u>

 In your project proposal, you had mentioned getting started with pilot programs; however, there is no mention of those pilots in the current narrative. Has this concept been eliminated or postponed until all of the ILOs have been revised? A revised timetable of activities would be helpful for everyone at the college. In a four-year project, it can be difficult to ensure that everyone is on the same page relative to expectations and responsibilities.

The lack of an IR Director/office is still of concern. You describe how several committees at the college are involved in this work and how eventually nearly all faculty and many staff members will be involved in collecting, analyzing and using data relative to the ILO assessment, program assessment and co-curricular assessment. It will be difficult for all of this activity and the resulting information to be appropriately tracked, managed, and documented without the assistance of dedicated staff in this area. Is there any opportunity to add a staff member in this area or provide release time for a faculty with expertise in this area to serve in this role on a part-time basis?

<u>Susan</u>

Financial/human resources are challenging to be sure! Apropos of Julie's comments on institutional research, consider a brainstorming session for ideas on how data (and its analysis and reporting) could possibly be managed over time. Is even a 1/2 time position in the realm of possibility? A joint appointment of some type? Some graduate student project as a short term idea.

Which 2 ILO's were tackled and what kind of feedback did you get? Solid? Insightful? Is there anything you need to do differently in the next cycle when you tackle three ILO's?

Is it practical to think of teasing out from the Annual Assessment Report a few highlights to showcase for your peers? Lessons learned? Some wow insight that might not have been known without the tools of clear outcomes and measures?

How do faculty get feedback on their report submissions? Is there an opportunity to discuss results across disciplines? Or are these items in the planning stages?

Just curious---does the college use curriculum maps once an ILO has been established to see where it might best be measured?

A: From my perspective, I have fewer questions than I had during the first round of narrative and response. It is clear that the college has taken feedback from both mentors seriously and used the feedback to make several changes, as noted above, to make the project both more meaningful and manageable.

In your project proposal, you had mentioned getting started with pilot programs; however, there is no mention of those pilots in the current narrative. Has this concept been eliminated or postponed until all of the ILOs have been revised? A revised timetable of activities would be helpful for everyone at the college. In a four-year project, it can be difficult to ensure that everyone is on the same page relative to expectations and responsibilities.

The lack of an IR director/office is still of concern. You describe how several committees at the college are involved in this work and how eventually nearly all faculty and many staff members will be involved in collecting, analyzing and using data relative to the ILO assessment, program assessment and co-curricular assessment. It will be difficult for all of this activity, and the resulting information, to be appropriately tracked, managed and documented without the assistance of dedicated staff in this area. Is there any opportunity to add a staff member in this area or provide release time for a faculty with expertise in this area to serve in this role on a part-time basis?

A: <u>Julie</u>

As I read through your project proposal, I had questions in three areas. First, under Year 1 steps, you indicated that the current institutional ILOs will be "revamped" by April 2019. I was able to locate the current five ILOs on your college website; however, there was no date on the document. I was wondering how often the ILOs are reviewed and updated and what process is used for this review and modification.

Second, although alignment of co-curricular activities is listed under desired outcomes, I didn't see any specific project activities listed that would lead to that particular outcome. Do you have specific actions in mind or does this fall under one of the other activities, such as improved participation from all college areas?

Third, given the institution's lack of an IR/IE Department, I am concerned about the support for this project. Will the academy team be the group who provides direction and oversight to all of these activities or are there other committees, councils or groups involved? (The institution's academy application makes references to standing committees). Who is responsible for collecting, analyzing and sharing assessment data? Ultimately, who has final approval over the changes, including the modified ILOs?

And finally, who will assure that there is participation from all faculty and staff, particularly from areas that have not participated in previous assessment efforts.

Susan

I echo all of Julie's questions and want to explore even further.

How are the current ILOs not serving you? Or are you looking to re-frame or better define them so that all programs would be able to participate in measuring their achievement? [Your 5 categories: communication, critical thinking, civic responsibility, personal development and use of technology are standard.] I do think that if you were to retain some version of these you would need to sharpen the outcomes statements themselves with the idea of making the intended outcome more specific and relevant to all program faculty. When you re-write ILOs think about not including the performance indicators in the outcomes statement but rather get ALL faculty to agree on a crisp/concise statement (a la "..students will be able to write effectively...") Once a simpler statement is agreed to then you can set out to confirm the indicators that ALL faculty agree confirm effective writing. (Sometimes faculty can only all agree on a few indicators, that's fine.) With this approach, writing could be measured in courses in the major---a confirmation of achievement you want to be able to claim. Yes, students initially develop skills for English 101 and 102 performance but can these skills be maintained and mature as students move through courses where they apply the writing skills learned earlier on?

For the co-curriculum, I saw in one of your Annual Assessment reports that you do administer the SENSE and the CCSSE. In addition to these tools are student support areas looking to measure learning outcomes or is the focus more on measuring satisfaction/adequacy of the services they provide?

I saw just a few examples of Program Learning outcomes (PLOs) on your site and definitely think that you would do programs a favor to have them downsize. [I saw programs with up to 10 outcomes...and some of them seemed to duplicate the ILOs.] If possible, consider keeping PLOs to perhaps no more than five. There is no right number, of course, but the volume of outcomes for some programs seemed burdensome.

Whether institutional or program level, you want to keep outcomes meaningful, i.e., any colleague understands the statement at face value; measurable, i.e., the outcome can truly be measured/accomplished; and manageable, i.e., you don't have an unrealistic/unmanageable volume. Often I advise that a college claim less but measure more.

Do all programs have curriculum maps? If so, are they being used?

Are some of the areas that have not participated in assessment in academics vs. support services? As Julie asked above, will those programs now become accountable for participating due to the academy project expectations?

Just thinking out loud here---would it be possible to recruit some math/stats faculty in lieu of an IR function to assist in creating some data analysis? Think creatively about using the talents colleagues have even if they are not part of a committee or team.

How is the current Annual Assessment report used and by whom? Is it serving its intended purpose? Are the results of measures in academics and support services reviewed/discussed in curriculum groups?

A: As I read through your project proposal, I had questions in three areas. First, under Year 1 steps, you indicated that the current institutional ILOs will be "revamped" by April 2019. I was able to locate the current five ILOs on your college website; however, there was no date on the document. I was wondering how often the ILOs are reviewed and updated and what process is used for this review and modification. Second, although alignment of co-curricular activities is listed under desired outcomes, I didn't see any specific project activities listed that would lead to that particular outcome. Do you have specific actions in mind or does this fall under one of the other activities, such as improved participation from all college areas. Third, given the institution's lack of an IR/IE Department, I am concerned about the support for this project. Will the academy team be the group who provides direction and oversight to all of these activities or are there other committees, councils or groups involved? (The institution's academy application makes references to standing committees). Who is responsible for collecting, analyzing and sharing assessment data? Ultimately, who has final approval over the changes, including the modified ILOs? And finally, who will assure that there is participation from all faculty and staff, particularly from the areas who have not participated in previous assessment efforts.

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Julie

The Academy team likely needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Visit to ensure that action plans---consistent with your project---are in place to address this feedback. Will the items you identified for the Midpoint Roundtable help you address any of the reviewer concerns?

With assessment flagged for monitoring you probably have the attention of senior leadership and faculty; this reality should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution needs a focal point (an individual? an office? standing committee?) where assessment activities (work with faculty and staff) and maintenance of assessment processes is managed.

Susan

Don't be specifically concerned with implementing curricular change when the June data comes. (Well, sure, if there is something obvious.) Some data will need to be trended; other insights may just lead to different questions; but all results should lead to discussion among colleagues. You may need to wait for additional results before you choose specific action; some faculty may want to pilot an intervention/change and then assess to see if there was an effect. Be open to different approaches.

Be sure to share data with colleagues asking for what they see in the results. I am regularly surprised by different insights from different audiences.

As you prioritize and decide on tasks for the next 2 years is it possible to add colleagues to the team...even ad hoc? Is it possible/practical to create sub-groups to juggle all that you want to accomplish or are you at capacity already?

A: As I wrote above, the academy team needs to review the feedback from the recent HLC Comprehensive Visit and ensure that action plans are in place to address this feedback. I am unclear if the future actions identified at the Midpoint Roundtable will help you address the reviewer concerns. Once I have the information on why 4B was "met with concerns," I will be able to suggest specific actions to take over the next six months, and the next two years, for the institution to become compliant with this core component.

On a positive note, now that this area has been "flagged" by the HLC as having been "met with concerns," you will have the attention of senior leadership and of the faculty. This should help to encourage faculty participation in assessment processes. This issue may also demonstrate that the institution does need an individual dedicated to working with faculty and staff on assessment of student learning as well as managing and maintaining assessment processes.

A: Julie

The institution has a clear approach for updating the remaining ILOs using the same processes, committees and timeline as in 2018-2019. However, it would also be helpful to highlight the results from the ILOs that are being assessed this year with a focus on actions taken---if any--- to improve teaching and learning based on the results.

I would also recommend that some thought be given to the role of general education assessment in light of the ILO assessment process. To be assessing 2 ILOs and 12 general education disciplines (along with every program) each year seems to be a lot of processes to manage and I am not sure the additional work will lead to additional value for the college or the students. The institution now has numerous assessment processes for committees to implement, oversee and document, and there is not a dedicated Institutional Research Office to assist in these processes.

Susan

Per Julie's comments...are there areas that overlap or are somewhat redundant where you might be able to reduce workload or combine assessment efforts? The concern we both have relates to burnout. Asking/requiring colleagues to work on multiple fronts is demanding and only you can determine a rotation/cycle that gives you the insight you want through assessment tools and still recognizes how much colleague time is needed.

A: The institution has a clear approach for updating the remaining ILOs using the same processes, committees and timeline as in 2018-2019. However, it would also be helpful to highlight the results from the ILOs that are being assessed this year with a focus on actions taken to improve teaching and learning based on the results.

I would also recommend that some thought be given to the role of general education assessment in light of the ILO assessment process. To be assessing 2 ILOs and 12 general education disciplines (along with every program) each year seems to be a lot of processes to manage, and I am not sure the additional work will lead to additional value for the college or the students. The institution now has numerous assessment processes for committees to implement, oversee and document, and there is not a dedicated Institutional Research Office to assist in these processes.

A: <u>Julie</u>

It will be important to ensure that faculty continue to conduct assessment of student learning throughout the spring semester using existing processes and not "wait" until all of the ILOs, program assessments and other components of the project are completed. Any faculty development days at the end of the spring term or summer could be used to further the work of your Academy project.

Also, it would be helpful for the two main committees involved in the Academy work to develop a revised timetable of activities for the remainder of the project and begin to consider long-term sustainability.

If anyone from your college is attending the annual HLC conference, there will be numerous sessions and resources available to assist you in advancing your work. You may also schedule a consultation with Susan or me (or both of us!) to have a face-to-face conversation about your project.

As part of the Academy program, I will be facilitating a Roundtable on engaging the institution in assessment of student learning on Sunday. You are most welcome to attend and share your experiences in launching this project.

<u>Susan</u>

If you will be at the Conference please take Julie up on her offer; such consultations always prove to be valuable in both directions.

You say that you are continuing to measure the ILO's so that you don't have a lapse in the assessment cycle---this makes sense. Yet, as you look ahead to the new/revised ILO's you may find that you are measuring different elements which may mean losing some potential of comparing data. That's okay too; your process gets to evolve.

Would the potential of new ILO's and performance indicators suggest that some new tools/approaches might come into play? It may be premature to suggest but keep an open mind to new thinking coming from faculty.

I am eager to see the two "before" and "after" ILO's in your next posting.

A: As I wrote in the last round of feedback, it will be important to ensure that faculty continue to conduct assessment of student learning throughout the spring semester using existing processes and not "wait" until all of the ILOs, program assessments and other components of the project are completed. Any faculty development days at the end of the spring term or summer could be used to further the work of the academy.

And, as I mentioned above, it would be helpful for the two main committees involved in the academy work to develop a revised timetable of activities for the remainder of the project and also begin to consider long-term sustainability. If anyone from your college is attending the annual HLC conference, there will be numerous sessions and resources available to assist you in advancing your work. You may also schedule a consultation with Susan or I (or both of us!) to have a face-to-face conversation about your project. As part of the academy program, I will be facilitating a roundtable on engaging the institution in assessment of student learning on Sunday. You are most welcome to attend and share your experiences in launching this project.

A: <u>Julie</u>

It makes sense to introduce this project and its rationale at the fall 2018 in-service. The rationale for change will be important as the college has had program assessment processes in place for several years. It will be important to emphasize that although changes are forthcoming, faculty and staff need to continue with their current assessment processes and practices. In my experience, it will be tempting for faculty and staff to "pause" on current efforts until the new ILOs, program outcomes and other components are in place. Although using pilot programs to test the new processes is a valid approach, it will be important to avoid confusion between the programs and services using the "new" processes versus those that are continuing to use existing processes. Again, relative to the previous section, I am unclear who is responsible for collecting, managing and reporting the data from the current processes since there is no IR/IE Department.

Finally, it is important to schedule dedicated time for the assessment team and others involved to work on this project. It appears as though everyone on the team has a full-time job in or out of the classroom and you will need to meet frequently to assure the ILO review and revision process is on track and that you have time to develop the specific, detailed action plans needed for the remaining years of the project.

Although you developed goals and high-level action steps at the recent Roundtable, there is still much work that needs to be conceptualized if the institution desires to improve assessment of institutional learning outcomes, program level outcomes, service unit outcomes and co-curricular outcomes.

Susan

Julie has zeroed in on some critical issues for this cycle. As she mentioned, the fall in-service is an important feature for the project goals. How will you briefly state the most specific goal to share with this audience? What goal statement might they relate to most readily? Consider how the in-service can best be designed to create interest and participation. Are there any colleagues currently who can offer their own successful experiences as examples of the value of assessment measures? Faculty influencing faculty colleagues can be more compelling than many other approaches.

Involving faculty in revamping of assessment tools in their areas may be the area where you can make the best inroads by helping see utility and value. Be very sure that you are satisfied with the outcomes statements and the attendant indicators before you move on to ideas/tools for measurement. Getting the outcome in good shape is imperative.

Decide whether you need to deal with the issue of units not participating by understanding the why of non-participation. (Many common reasons/explanations come to mind.)

You will be moving on multiple fronts simultaneously. Only you will know a few months into this whether you really have the human (and financial?) resources to do all that you hope to. Please know that you can re-size your project if needed, especially if some tasks simply taking longer than originally estimated.

A: It makes sense to introduce this project and its rationale at the fall 2018 in-service. The rationale for change will be important as the college has had program assessment processes in place for several years. It will be important to emphasize that although changes are forthcoming, faculty and staff need to continue with their current assessment processes and practices. In my experience, it will be tempting for faculty and staff to "pause" on current efforts until the new ILOs, program outcomes and other components are in place. Although using pilot programs to test the new processes is a valid approach, it will be important to avoid confusion between the programs and services using the "new" processes versus those that are continuing to use existing processes. (Again, relative to the previous section, I am unclear who is responsible for collecting, managing and reporting the data from the current processes since there is no IR/IE Department.) Finally, it is important to schedule dedicated time for the assessment team and others involved to work on this project. It appears as though everyone on the team has a full-time job, in or out of the classroom, and you will need to meet frequently to assure the ILO review and revision process is on track and that you have time to develop the specific, detailed action plans needed for the remaining years of the project. Although you developed goals and high-level action steps at the recent Roundtable, there is still much work that needs to be conceptualized if the institution desires to improve assessment of institutional learning outcomes, program level outcomes, service unit outcomes and co-curricular outcomes.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Julie

As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Consider what processes/approaches at peer institutions might appeal to you for adaptation.

Susan

Review the Collaboration Network as time permits and also consider investing time in understanding what peer institutions are doing (each team member calls a colleague at another institution in or out of state). Position yourselves to learn some quick lessons or get some quick takeaways from others' experiences.

Plan to maximize opportunities to learn from colleagues at the Midpoint Roundtable. Bring a few key questions and take time to ask others how they manage an issue.

A: As Susan previously suggested, you may want to look at how other MNSCU institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have developed their comprehensive (institution-wide) plans for the assessment of student learning. Again, now that this area has been "flagged" as an area of concern by the HLC, you don't have years to spend "re-inventing" the wheel relative to student learning assessment. You may need to adapt processes from similar institutions.

A: Julie

Linda Suskie, A Common Sense Approach to Assessment in Higher Education, Rethinking the assessment of gen ed and institution-wide learning outcomes (https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/43462837-rethinking-the-assessment-of-gen-ed-and-institution-wide-learning-outcomes)

Susan

Not an actual resource but a question. Does the MNSCU office offer any resources to the system that you could take advantage of? Useful examples or experiences from peers?

Feel free to contact us if our comments prompt questions.

A: Linda Suskie

 A Common Sense Approach to Assessment in Higher Education, Rethinking the assessment of gen ed and institution-wide learning outcomes (https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/43462837-rethinking-the-assessment-of-gen-ed-and-institution-wide-learning-outcomes)

A: Julie

Many institutions lack experience with co-curricular assessment. Although there is not one "right" model or methodology for co-curricular assessment, below are some resources that may be helpful. You will likely need to begin by defining co-curricular activities at your college (service learning, student government, clubs, athletics, etc.) and determining how these activities contribute to the college ILOs and/or program-specific learning outcomes. Since co-curricular activities often lack the formality associated with courses, including learning outcomes and assessment methods, there are a number of commercial software products that help institutions document co-curricular objectives, activities and results; manage co-curricular assessment processes; and generate "co-curricular transcripts for students.

> 1). https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities (https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities)

> 2). Outcomes-based Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review: A Compilation of Institutional Good Practices, Marilee J. Bresciani Ludvik (https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&text=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&search-alias=books&field-author=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&sort=relevancerank) (Author).

> 3). https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/44719458-assessing-learning-in-co-curricular-experiences

Again, if you are attending the annual HLC conference you will find numerous sessions and resources on this topic.

Julie offers some practical resources to consider and the Conference itself should offer sessions in this vein.

As Julie has stated, YOU get to get to determine how the co-curriculum is defined. I have seen institutions decide that their many non-academic campus activities contribute to 2 but not all ILO's. Other institutions have determined that writing 1 or 2 learning outcomes for the different areas that define the co-curriculum--- independent of the ILO's---makes more sense. This is an area where you have latitude to determine what, how, and when you will conduct indirect measures that inform you about features you care about and can do something about.

A: It appears the institution lacks knowledge and experience with co-curricular assessment. Although there is not one "right" model or methodology for co-curricular assessment, below are some resources that may be helpful. You will likely need to begin by defining co-curricular activities at your college (service learning, student government, clubs, athletics, etc.) and determining how these activities contribute to the college ILOs and/or program-specific learning outcomes. Since co-curricular activities often lack the formality associated with courses, including learning outcomes and assessment methods, there are a number of commercial software products that help institutions document co-curricular objectives, activities and results; manage co-curricular assessment processes; and generate "co-curricular transcripts for students.

1). https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities (https://www.watermarkinsights.com/blog/how-to-expand-meaningful-assessment-into-co-curricular-activities)

2). Outcomes-based Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review: A Compilation of Institutional Good Practices, Marilee J. Bresciani Ludvik (https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&text=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&search-alias=books&field-author=Marilee+J.+Bresciani+Ludvik&sort=relevancerank) (Author).

3). https://www.lindasuskie.com/apps/blog/show/44719458-assessing-learning-in-co-curricular-experiences

Again, if you are attending the annual HLC conference, you will find numerous sessions and resources on this topic.

A: Julie

Book: Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution. Peggy Maki.

This is a very practical book and she would also be an appropriate speaker, especially for an institution with limited resources to support assessment.

Book: Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing and Improving Assessment in Higher Education and Adult Education. Trudy Banta and Catherine Palomba.

This is another very comprehensive and highly regarded publication and would be appropriate for your institution.

Report: FACULTY BUY-IN AND ENGAGEMENT: REFRAMING THE CONVERSATION AROUND FACULTY ROLES IN ASSESSMENT. Tim Cain and Pat Hutchings. This is published by NIOLA, the National Institute for Learning Outcomes, and they have other assessment resources as well.

Susan

Julie has pointed you to some excellent resources. Consider how you might approach these, e.g., possibly splitting up the team to read chapters/portions to bring back to the group at monthly (?) meetings. Resizing the research will definitely make it more digestible.

Let us know how we can assist you as the project develops; feel free to email or call.

A: Book: Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution. Peggy Maki.

This is a very practical book and she would also be an appropriate speaker, especially for an institution with limited resources to support assessment.

Book: Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing and Improving Assessment in Higher Education and Adult Education. Trudy Banta and Catherine Palomba.

This is another very comprehensive and highly regarded publication and would be appropriate for your institution.

Report: FACULTY BUY-IN AND ENGAGEMENT: REFRAMING THE CONVERSATION AROUND FACULTY ROLES IN ASSESSMENT. Tim Cain and Pat Hutchings. This is published by NIOLA, the National Institute for Learning Outcomes, and they have other assessment resources as well.

> Reviewed by **Susan Murphy** on 07/24/2022 05:16 PM.

Context

Project Update

Q: Please introduce your institution to other Academy Teams. Provide contextual information on your institution including but not limited to institutional type, size and student populations served. (100 – 200 words).

A: Northland Community and Technical College (NCTC) is a comprehensive college offering many state-of-the-art nationally-renowned technical programs, as well as liberal arts programs. NCTC offers an Associate in Arts Degree (AA), an Associate in Science Degree (AS), an Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS), in addition to diploma and certificate programs. Northland has two campuses in northern Minnesota, approximately 52 miles apart, as well as a satellite site serving the aerospace programs. In addition to campus based offerings, they have a strong selection of online offerings. The college also serves a significant amount of post-secondary enrollment options (PSEO) students.

In recent years Northland's student enrollment has averaged approximately 2,100 FYE and 4,500 headcount. In regards to age demographics, the largest percentage of students falls in the 18-24 year age range, with an average age of 24. For gender distribution, Northland is split 60% female students and 40% male students. Students of color represent about 19% of the college population at Northland.

Q: Summarize what have your institution has done in the past related to the assessment of student learning and what are current assessment initiatives? (100 – 200 words).

A: We currently have a well-established academic program annual assessment process and a five year program review process.

The purposes of NCTC's Program Assessment Plan which measures student academic achievement of learning outcomes are as follows:

- To demonstrate achievement of student learning outcomes within an integrated curriculum including both technical and general education.
- To continuously improve program curriculum through review of student assessment results, validation of outcomes with business and industry and transfer institutions, and integration of general learning outcomes that contribute to graduates' bases of knowledge and our Institutional Learner Outcomes (
- To demonstrate accountability and value of a NCTC education to the College's various stakeholders.
- To continuously review the validity of our assessment process by providing meaningful information and reliable data.

The purpose of five-year program review is grounded in the recognition that the needs of students, the methods of teaching and learning, and the needs of business and industry constantly shift and change. The primary purpose of program review is threefold:

- Ensure that the program meets its stated mission and addresses the strategic directions of the college.
- To continuously review the validity of our assessment process for course, program and institutional learner outcomes with the goal of providing meaningful information and reliable data in meeting business and industry needs.
- To identify and plan for curricular development that meets changing workforce needs and anticipates future programming opportunities.

Initiative:

- Our most recent initiative was compiling a college wide annual assessment report. The first one was compiled with FY 17 data and it is our intent to continue this yearly.
- Our next initiative will be the project that is undertaken by this assessment team.

Q: Now that your team has a better idea of the structure and purpose of the Academy, what are your institution's primary needs for participation in the Academy? (100 – 200 words).

A: Our institution would like to strive to improve institutional assessment. Our goal is to determine how we can serve students better, help ensure that they are successful, and know we are making a difference in our student's lives. We want to be able to clearly answer the questions of "WHY ARE WE HERE?" for all of our stakeholders.

We are aware that there are several areas at the college that need a more concrete process to show that institutional assessment is occurring college wide

Q: What potential barriers does your team see to progress? (100 – 200 words).

A: In the academic arena we have identified two significant challenges, participation and collected ILO assessment data:

- Participation
  - There is limited participation by some technical programs and many liberal arts discipline's at the annual program assessment level.
  - Participation in the colleges ILO assessment has declined
  - ILO Assessment Data
    - No clear path from analysis of data to implementation/action in the classroom from the current structure we have.
      - We have data that we can now use to show trends, but we do not have a clear structure in place for how to use that data to modify instruction. It is not just a problem with analysis – the way our ILO assessment is built, we can clearly tie the data to a rubric outcome, but it does not necessarily guide the instructor to what they can do in the classroom.

- Rubric utilized for ILO Assessment
  - The rubrics are beneficial, but not all programs are able to apply them to their programs.
  - We have both Gen Ed and Technical programs doing ILO assessment and it is difficult to have one general rubric that applies to all and satisfies the different department needs.

Another college wide challenge we face is the lack of support in the Institutional Research (IR) area. At this time Northland does not have a dedicated Institutional Research or Institutional Effectiveness position at the institution.

> Reviewed by **Jodi Stauss Stassen** on 05/18/2018 05:33 PM.