2016-2017
Outcomes Assessment Report

Harper College
*Go*Forward®

Overview

Outcomes assessment at Harper College is the process of collecting, analyzing and using data about student learning to focus institutional efforts on improving student achievement and the learning experience. Learning assessment at Harper is based on the following principles:

- The most effective assessment processes are faculty driven.
- Assessment is an ongoing process that leads to change and improvement.
- Assessment is never perfect.
- Academic freedom can be maintained while engaged in assessment.
- Assessment is not a task solely performed as a requirement of accrediting agencies; the reason for assessment is improvement.
- Assessment is not linked to faculty evaluation and results will not be used punitively.
- The use of data to support change leads to the most meaningful improvements.
- Course-embedded assessment is the most effective authentic method of conducting assessment.
- Assessment raises as many questions as it answers.
- Assessment focuses the attention of the College on continuous quality improvement.

The Nichols five-column model of assessment has been adopted by Harper College. This model organizes the assessment process by guiding programs and departments through the process of developing an assessment plan, collecting evidence of student learning, communicating results and developing data-based action plans focused on continuous improvement. The five columns represent the following:

- Identifying the program or department mission (Column 1)
- Defining outcomes (Column 2)
- Selecting assessment measures and establishing the criteria for success (Column 3)
- Implementation and data collection (Column 4)
- Using assessment results to improve student learning or department quality (Column 5)

Academic course-level and program-level assessment, as well as student support and administrative services assessment follow an annual cycle in which the plan for assessment is developed during the fall semester, the assessment is conducted during the spring semester, assessment results are entered in summer, and improvement plans are completed after discussing results with department faculty the following fall semester (see Table 1).

Outcomes Assessment at Harper

The chair or coordinator of the department is customarily responsible for ensuring the annual assessment process is followed. In some cases, the dean may approve a faculty designee other than the chair or coordinator to oversee the assessment process within the department. All faculty members within a department are expected to participate in the assessment process as defined by the department's assessment plan.

Table 1 – Annual Outcomes Assessment Process

PLAN ✓ **Columns 1-3** Enter Mission Statement, Student Learning Outcomes, Assessment Methods and Criteria for Success	October to December	Create assessment plan based on discussion with faculty and dean. Submit assessment plan in TracDat[1] (Columns 1-3). Assessment plan includes mission statement, learning outcomes, assessment methods and criteria for success. Plan for assessment shared with the faculty. (Columns 1-3)
IMPLEMENT ✓ Collect assessment data	January to May	Implement assessment plan and collect data.
ANALYZE ✓ **Column 4** Enter Results	May to August	Analyze assessment data. Data collected is analyzed to identify trends, areas for improvement, and to generate initiatives to improve student learning. Results are entered into TracDat in preparation for the beginning of the fall semester.
IMPROVE ✓ Discuss findings with appropriate constituents ✓ **Column 5** Enter Use of Results	August to early October	Discuss results among department faculty during Orientation Week. Meet with Dean to review findings and initiatives from previous cycle and discuss interventions and resources needed to initiate changes. Based on conversations with department faculty and dean, enter use of results (Column 5) in TracDat. Assessment report completed (Columns 1-5). Begin initial planning for current academic year's assessment plan.
CLOSE THE LOOP ✓ Initiate changes defined above ✓ Begin new assessment cycle (Plan)	October	New assessment cycle begins. (See "Plan" above.) Incorporate revisions from last year.

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[1] TracDat is Harper's assessment management system. For more information, please visit Assessing Our Students on the HIP.

Course-Level Outcomes Assessment

Academic departments without AAS degrees or certificates of 30 hours or more participated in the course-level assessment process.[2] In 2016-17, the total number of academic departments involved in course-level outcomes assessment was 26. Table 2 contains information about the outcomes assessment activities of these departments.

Table 2 – Course Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2016-17

Assessment Submissions	Number of Departments (%)
Documented consultations*	26/26 (100%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	26/26 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	26/26 (100%)
Results	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	8/102 (8%)
Criteria met, no further action	33/102 (32%)
Criteria met, action taken	10/102 (10%)
Criteria not met, action taken	51/102 (50%)
Total Assessments	102/102 (100%)

*Includes meetings, working e-mails, and working phone calls.

Of the 26 departments engaging in course-level assessment in 2016-17, all 26 (100%) completed the full outcomes assessment cycle, an increase from 96% in 2015-16 and 88% in 2014-15.

Faculty are encouraged to continue identifying actions for improving student achievement of learning outcomes. Data indicate that 61 of the 102 course-level assessment results (60%) led to improvements in course content, pedagogy or assessment methods. Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of course-level assessment findings.

Biology—BIO101

In 2016-17, the Biology department piloted a common final exam in Biology 101. Results showed that students performed well in identifying various characteristics of different groups of organisms, but did not perform well on other outcomes such as describing biological principles. After examining questions to determine intended difficulty in relation to results, the exam is being revised and retested in 2017-18. The Biology department is also in the process of revising outcomes across all courses. Approximately half of the courses were revised in 2016-17, with the remaining revisions scheduled for completion in 2017-18.

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[2]Some departments conducted formal assessments at both the program and the course level: Accounting, Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, and Law Enforcement and Justice Administration.

Business Administration—MGT111

The Business Administration department began using an automated assessment system for various assignments in Management 111. Results were mixed in the first year of the new assessments, with many students missing the 80% criterion but meeting 75%. Furthermore, a relatively small number of course sections were included in the initial assessments. The department discussed these issues, and in spring 2018 will redeploy the assessment with improved information for instructors and integration with the new assessment tool. Instructors also reviewed student results and techniques for improving student success on the assessment.

Chemistry—CHM122 and Laboratories

The Chemistry department found mixed results when assessing the laboratory outcome "Interpret experimental results and draw evidenced-based conclusions" across a variety of courses. Overall, students were able to interpret the quantitative data correctly. However, assessment results revealed continued difficulty interpreting molecular structures to predict polarity and intermolecular forces of attraction, especially in relation to applying concepts to specific problems. In order to provide students with additional opportunities to interpret data and apply concepts to problems, a new lab pilot was planned for two sections of general chemistry in fall 2017 and three sections in spring 2018. Additionally, resources and student activities were shared with faculty for use in their classes. As a result, activities will be uploaded to the chemistry faculty blackboard site for instructors to use in their classes.

Communication Arts—SPE101

The Communication Arts department continued to assess Speech 101 in an effort to improve student learning. Faculty used a multi-category rubric to pinpoint specific outcomes in need of improvement. The results revealed students were not meeting the expected outcomes related to delivery, transitions and topic choice. Thus, in FY2018 instructors planned interventions focusing on these areas. Interventions include an activity to improve innovation when choosing a speech topic, as well as tools to help students learn how to transition between points in their speeches.

Career Program Outcomes Assessment

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, various certificate programs, developmental math, and English as a Second Language are involved in academic program outcomes assessment activities. During the 2016-17 academic year, 37 total academic programs/departments were involved in program-level outcomes assessment. However, two AAS programs were unable to participate in the outcomes assessment process due to low enrollment. Table 3 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these programs/departments.

Table 3 – Program Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2016-17

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Programs unable to assess due to low enrollment	2* (these programs not included in data)
Documented consultations**	37/37 (100%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	37/37 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	37/37 (100%)
Results	**Number of Items (%)**
Outcomes process issues	2/214 (1%)
Criteria met, no further action	79/214 (37%)
Criteria met, action taken	63/214 (29%)
Criteria not met, action taken	70/214 (33%)
Total Assessments	214/214 (100%)

* CIS – Software Development and Sign Language Interpreting
**Includes meetings, working e-mails, and working phone calls.

In 2016-17, the completion rates of columns 1-5 remained constant, with 100% of programs completing the full outcomes assessment cycle for the second year in a row. Data indicate that 133 of the 214 assessment results (62%) were used to improve course content, pedagogy or assessment methods, an increase of 6% from 2015-16. Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of program-level assessment findings.

Computer Information Systems

In 2016-17, IT Project Management students from CIS 211 began taking a new assessment focusing on five areas: Initiating, Planning, Executing, Control, and Closure. The new assessment from "Transcender" was expected to be more challenging. Results for Harper students reflected this challenge, as student scores decreased from previous years' assessments. After reviewing these results, department faculty will continue this assessment in 2017-18, with additional tactics being implemented to ensure students are invested in the exam. The department will also make improvements related to assessment of dual credit sections of courses such as NET 112, A+

Operating Systems Technologies. The department plans to move toward a competency/proficiency model to assure successful assessment and completion of dual credit sections.

English as a Second Language

In fall 2016, the department found that students who completed their ESL courses and registered for English 101 were more likely than other students to pass English 101 with a C or better (a 96% success rate versus the 68% overall English 101 success rate). However, internal assessments relating to writing paragraphs and summarizing information have shown lower than expected results. To address this concern, instructors will implement resources that specifically address topics such as summary writing, and rubrics will be reviewed for clarity and accuracy. Assessments will then be administered again in 2017-18.

Fire Science and Emergency Management

In 2016-17, the Fire Science and Emergency Management programs reviewed indirect assessment data in order to better understand decreases in enrollment over time. For example, graduate follow-up surveys were reviewed, which indicated high rates of satisfaction and preparation among graduates. The programs also reviewed trends in course enrollment and success, finding that enrollment was low in some courses required for degree completion, such as FIS 102, Fire Service Management/Leadership. This information allowed the department to consider changes in course offerings that may help more students reach their completion goals. Additionally, the department plans to conduct focus groups with students, and in 2017-18, continue researching these issues.

Radiologic Technology

Graduates of the Radiologic Technology program are expected to exhibit the ability to "modify procedures to meet patient needs." However, students in the program have lower assessment scores for this outcome than many other learning outcomes. Thus, in 2017-18, the department is implementing changes based on suggestions from clinical instructors, such as encouraging students to practice modification scenarios at the clinical sites. Clinical instructors will also increase their focus on writing, evaluating, and performing trauma scenarios. The department will discuss this issue with students as well, emphasizing the importance of practicing scenarios during tutoring sessions and during Radiologic Procedures courses.

General Education Outcomes Assessment

Diverse Perspectives and Cultures

In 2016-17, the Learning Assessment Committee and the General Education—Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Work Group assessed the following general education outcome: Examine diverse perspectives and cultures as they relate to the individual, the community, and the global society. After a summer 2016 review of assessment tools that relate to issues of diversity and multicultural awareness, the work group determined no external tool appropriately fit Harper's unique general education outcome. Thus, the work group developed an internal assessment tool that was piloted in fall 2016, revised, and fully implemented in spring 2017.

The implementation of the assessment was conducted by drawing a random sample of class sections for participation from courses designated as meeting the World Cultures and Diversity graduation requirement. The sampling technique also focused on sections with a relatively high percentage of students with 45+ credit hours earned. The 15-minute assessment was conducted in class by representatives from the Learning Assessment Committee and the Outcomes Assessment Office.

Members of the committee and work group attended norming sessions, and then scored the assessments on three categories: Assumptions/Biases, Skills and Knowledge/Use of Evidence. Scoring was based on a 4-point scale (4=excellent, 3=good, 2=fair, and 1=poor). In all, 565 assessments were scored, and each assessment was read by two or three scorers. Upon analysis of the results, the Outcomes Assessment Office determined that the results for certain components of the assessment were not high quality (e.g. not valid across versions of the assessment). Thus, the work group focused its examination on the highest quality results, those for assessment Question 1, Assumptions/Biases and Skills. The aggregate results for are reported in Table 4:

Table 4 – Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Results, 2016-17

Participation by credit hours earned	% scoring 3 or higher	
	Assumptions/Biases	Skills
1-15 *(N=31)*	12.9%	12.9%
16-30 *(N=106)*	30.2%	28.3%
31-44 *(N=116)*	20.7%	21.6%
45+ *(N=292)*	32.5%	22.3%
TOTAL *(N=565)*	28.4%	22.8%

The assessment also included a student feedback question, "To what extent have you addressed/discussed questions similar to the ones on this survey in your classes at Harper?" The results of the feedback question are reported in Table 5:

Table 5 – Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Student Feedback Results, 2016-17

N = 518	N	%
Never discussed	124	23.9%
Very little discussion	73	14.1%
Personal discussion, not in class	19	3.7%
Discussed in specific course	179	34.6%
Discussed in multiple courses	94	18.1%
Extensively discussed	29	5.6%

Please see Diverse Perspectives and Cultures on the HIP for more detailed results.

Upon review of the assessment results, improvement planning is scheduled for 2017-18. The improvement plan is expected to review integration of curriculum and the College's Global Learning Outcomes in order to more substantially address Diverse Perspectives and Cultures prior to a student's graduation.

Quantitative Reasoning
In 2015-16, the Learning Assessment Committee and the General Education–Quantitative Reasoning Work Group assessed quantitative reasoning skills at the General Education level. Results of the assessment were mixed, showing both positive results and areas for improvement. After reviewing feedback gathered in FY2017 as well as the fall 2017 "Improving General Education Outcomes at Harper" faculty survey, the Work Group developed the Quantitative Reasoning Improvement Plan, which was released College-wide in fall 2017.

The Improvement Plan is designed to help faculty members improve quantitative reasoning skills among Harper students through embedded class exercises and other enhancements in pedagogy. The Plan focuses on use of quantitative reasoning concepts across the College, not exclusively in math and science courses. The Improvement Plan is also designed to increase student awareness of quantitative reasoning issues and resources. Components of the plan include: 1) a review of course and program quantitative reasoning assessment results as well as indirect evidence from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and graduate follow-up surveys; 2) development of a resource page on the HIP to provide faculty with access to quantitative reasoning resources and assessment information; 3) development and dissemination of an online quiz to increase knowledge of quantitative reasoning concepts and resources in a way that is fun and engaging for students; and 4) a follow-up assessment of Quantitative Reasoning at the General Education level in FY2019. The full Quantitative Reasoning Improvement Plan, along with the results, feedback, and faculty survey mentioned above, can be found on the HIP.

Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment

During the 2016-17 academic year, 39 total student support and administrative units took part in the outcomes assessment process. Units from across all non-academic divisions participated, such as Academic Advising and Counseling, the Job Placement Resource Center and Public Safety. Table 6 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these programs/units.

Table 6 – Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2016-17

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Documented consultations*	25/39 (64%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	39/39 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	39/39 (100%)
Results	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	5/118 (4%)
Criteria met, no further action	31/118 (26%)
Criteria met, action taken	35/118 (30%)
Criteria not met, action taken	47/118 (40%)
Total Assessments	118/118 (100%)

* Includes meetings, working e-mails, and working phone calls.

In 2016-17, 100% of units completed the full assessment cycle for the third consecutive year. The Student Support and Administrative Services assessment process had been in place for many years at the College, and many departments have integrated these processes into their regular workflow. Thus, many departments complete their assessment work without requiring consultation with the Outcomes Assessment Office. However, the office continues to support all non-instructional areas through online materials, assessment handbooks, drop-in sessions, and individual consultations on an as-needed basis.

Among the non-instructional assessments for 2016-17, 70% led to improvements in services, programs or other operations, a slight increase from 67% in 2015-16. Following are samples of plans and actions taken as a result of assessment findings.

Academy for Teaching Excellence

The Academy for Teaching Excellence has implemented a multi-tier assessment and implementation plan that considers practices designed to improve faculty development and ultimately student learning. In 2016-17, one focus of the department was improving faculty development in relation to distance courses. The department implemented a new online course development process, a course design rubric, and additional professional development opportunities for faculty members teaching online and blended sections. Additionally, the

Academy began review of course completion and success rates by modality. This work has led to improvements in faculty engagement relating to online courses. The department plans to expand this work to additional faculty and course sections in FY2018, continuing to review data to assess for effectiveness.

Center for New Students and Orientation
In 2016-17, the Center for New Students and Orientation began redesign of New Student Orientation and onboarding to align with and facilitate the new Areas of Interest model at the College. This new model is designed to provide advising to new students by their intended major or goal. The department found that additional information would be needed at time of application in order to fully integrate orientation with the areas of interest. Thus, the department planned to work with other areas of the College, including the Academic Planning and Pathways Strategic Plan Goal Team, to reframe the application for admission and the College website to provide students with essential information about Areas of Interest. The department also planned additional work on the "Focus 2" career assessment and online service delivery to new students via the "Comevo" online Orientation platform.

Institutional Research and Information Technology
The Institutional Research department worked with Information Technology to improve reporting to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) through system "freeze views." These views were found to have 99% accuracy in building the ICCB Annual Enrollment and Completion Data (A1) report. After implementation, the departments identified the areas where improvements could be made in the process and planned enhancements for FY2018. The enhanced reports will be reevaluated after the next A1 submission.

Student Financial Assistance
After reviewing continuing concerns regarding student loan default, a campus-wide financial literacy team was established. The team includes representation from the Office of Student Financial Assistance, Academic Advising and Counseling, Center for New Students and Orientation, Business Office, Admissions Outreach, the Center for Student Involvement, and One Stop. Examples of actions taken include creation and implementation of a financial literacy pilot activity for Summer Scholars and collaboration with "iontuition" to improve service to students. After implementing these activities, Harper College's federal three-year default rate decreased from 12.9 to 9.9 percent from the previous year. The department will continue to make improvements based on these results.

Other Assessment Efforts at Harper College

In addition to the assessment processes and outcomes analyses described above, the College continued its assessment efforts in 2016-17 through:

- The Assessing Global and Intercultural Learning Conference, held on March 3, 2017. This conference was a joint professional development experience that merged Harper's annual Assessment Conference and Share Fair with the annual International Education Summit. The conference featured international education and assessment expert Dr. Larry A. Braskamp, who presented "Creating Global Learning Encounters That Make a Difference." Breakout sessions included "Forget Grades: (Re)developing a Desire to Learn," "Creating a Global Perspective – From Culture to the Classroom" and "Through the Lens of Anime and Manga."

- The Outcomes Assessment Faculty Fellowship program. Therese Hart (Humanities) completed her fellowship and presented her results at the conference poster session: "Assessing the Humanities: An Interdisciplinary Challenge."

- The Learning Assessment Committee began working toward design of a Learning Assessment Community of Practice (LACoP), a new faculty professional development experience, which will take place of the fellowship program beginning in 2017-18. The LACoP will bring faculty members from a variety of divisions together in investigating and implementing assessment projects that will then be shared with the campus more broadly.

- Learning Assessment Workshops, in partnership between the Outcomes Assessment Office and the academic deans. Workshops were designed to improve faculty knowledge and use of assessment results for improvement. A total of 36 department chairs and coordinators participated in the workshops.

- Assess for Success newsletters, which share academic assessment information across the campus. Newsletters can be found on the Assessing Our Students and Assessing Our College pages of the Harper Intranet Portal (HIP).

- Outcomes Assessment Office support of faculty and staff assessment efforts, including individual consultations, workshops, drop-in sessions, and development and updates to assessment handbooks and online support materials.