2017-2018
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)
- Implementing assessments and collecting data (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 assessment plan 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 through department discussions 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 Nuventive[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 to identify trends, areas for improvement, and initiatives to improve student learning. Enter results into Nuventive in preparation for the beginning of the fall semester. (Column 4)
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 Nuventive. Assessment report completed (Columns 1-5). Begin planning for current academic year's assessment.
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] Nuventive is Harper's assessment management system, formerly known as TracDat. 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 participate in the course-level assessment process.[2] In 2017-18, 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, 2017-18

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)	25/26 (96%)
Results	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	9/106 (8%)
Criteria met, no further action	27/106 (25%)
Criteria met, action taken	19/106 (18%)
Criteria not met, action taken	51/106 (48%)
Total Assessments	106/106 (100%)

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

Of the 26 departments engaging in course-level assessment in 2017-18, 25 (96%) completed the full outcomes assessment cycle. The results are equal to 2015-16, but a slight decrease from 100% in 2016-17.

Faculty are encouraged to identify actions for improving student achievement of learning outcomes. Data indicate that 70 of the 106 course-level assessment results (66%) led to improvements in course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods, an increase from 60% the previous year. Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of course-level assessment findings.

Art—ART110

In 2017-18, the department assessed the outcome, "Demonstrate control of at least one black and white medium to render simple three-dimensional forms in space." Although the students averaged a score near the intermediate level in four of the five categories, one rubric area had low scores relative to the others: "Establishment of figure/ground relationships to support the illusion of a three-dimensional environment including use of atmospheric perspective and gradations on receding planes." In response, a PowerPoint presentation was created for faculty use to address

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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.

this area. The presentation includes examples of student drawings with indications and comments where problems were found, as well as examples displaying appropriate techniques. In addition, department meetings and one-on-one discussions highlighted the importance of this criterion to course instructors. The department will reassess in 2018-19 to measure improvement in this area.

Geography—GEG111

In assessing the outcome, "Apply an understanding of the geographic grid, scale, and map projections to map interpretation," the Geography department saw relatively low scores on the overall map reading assignment used to assess the outcome. The department considers the outcome central to the work in this course, and will therefore continue with the map reading assignment. However, the success rates and potential limiting factors on the assessment were discussed with faculty in order to improve student success. As a result, the department developed a study guide that faculty can use to better prepare students who are struggling with map reading and interpretation.

Philosophy—PHI105

The Philosophy department conducted an analysis to compare assessment results in Philosophy 105 over a four-year period. The results showed that students of faculty who attended department retreats during this period consistently score higher on their assessments than the students of faculty who do not attend those retreats. The department is using these results to inform a plan to improve instruction and assessment of Philosophy 105. These improvements will focus on redeveloping the assessment instrument in order to target additional course learning outcomes. Additionally, the department plans to develop a more sustainable faculty retreat model that emphasizes peer-to-peer faculty development and will explore the pros and cons of adopting a common text to use in all sections of Philosophy 105 by forming a text-selection task force.

World Languages—SGN101

In response to lower than expected assessment scores on several Sign Language 101 learning outcomes, both full-time and adjunct sign language faculty reviewed expectations for students in order to improve student scores on the assessment. Additionally, the assignment was updated in order to improve consistency across instructors. The course will be reassessed to determine if additional actions need to be taken to improve success in the course.

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 2017-18 academic year, 39 total academic programs/departments were involved in program-level outcomes assessment. However, one AAS program was 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, 2017-18

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Programs unable to assess due to low enrollment	1* (this program not included in data)
Documented consultations**	39/39 (100%)
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	13/336 (4%)
Criteria met, no further action	193/336 (57%)
Criteria met, action taken	41/336 (12%)
Criteria not met, action taken	89/336 (27%)
Total Assessments	336/336 (100%)

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

In 2017-18, the completion rates of columns 1-5 remained constant, with 100% of programs completing the full outcomes assessment cycle for the third year in a row. Data indicate that 130 of the 336 assessment results (39%) were used to improve course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods. Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of program-level assessment findings.

Emergency and Disaster Management and Fire Science Technology

In response to several questions that the department had regarding its students and possible areas for improvement, focus groups were conducted in spring 2018 through the Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Assessment Office. Major themes provided insights into students' experiences, including reasons students were drawn to the programs, the obstacles students face in completing the programs, and suggestions for improvement. The results of the focus groups were reviewed with the Dean of Career and Technical Programs to determine areas for improvement.

Human Services

The department found that students were not successfully meeting the outcome "Maintain records including the preparation of clinical records, assessment and interim notes, and development of service plans" despite revisions to the assignment after 2016-17. Additional revision of this assignment will be implemented in 2018-19 in order to better help students achieve this outcome. Improvements include offering additional steps in the assignment development process for students, such as supervised, collaborative rough draft time in the classroom and during office hours, and a graded rough draft "script" leading into the final assignment.

Manufacturing Technology

In 2017-18, the Manufacturing Technology Program experienced lower than expected success rates on the National Institute of Metalworking Skills Measurement, Materials and Safety online exam. In response to this issue and other difficulties students faced during the program, the department modified the course sequence. The department redistributed course content effective fall 2019, dividing the material covered in Manufacturing 105 and Manufacturing 120 into three revised courses. These changes will allow more time for students to prepare for the exam and ensure they are meeting other program outcomes.

Nursing

The Nursing department saw a lower than expected first attempt pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) in 2017-18. In response to this issue, the department is infusing a new product by the Assessment Technologies Institute throughout the nursing program to expose students to NCLEX questions. Additionally, all first, second, and third semester students will attend a test-taking strategy workshop. All fourth semester students in fall 2018 will attend a three-day NCLEX prep workshop. These scores will continue to be reviewed by the department to ensure students are passing their required exams at the expected rate.

General Education Outcomes Assessment

Critical Thinking

In 2017-18, the Learning Assessment Committee and the General Education-Critical Thinking Work Group assessed the following general education outcome: Use evidence to develop arguments, make decisions, and evaluate outcomes. The implementation of the assessment was conducted by drawing a random sample of sections for participation from courses mapped to the Critical Thinking general education outcome. The sampling technique focused on sections with a relatively high percentage of students with 45+ credit hours earned. Faculty administered an 11-question assessment in class and submitted student-level results to the Outcomes Assessment Office for analysis.

In total, 871 assessments were completed from 736 individual students. Aggregate results of the assessment are reported in Table 4:

Table 4 – Critical Thinking Results, 2017-18

Participation by credit hours earned	% of students scoring 70% or higher
1-15 *(N=31)*	54.8%
16-30 *(N=76)*	64.5%
31-44 *(N=86)*	64.0%
45+ *(N=543)*	61.5%
Total Participation (N=736)	61.7%

While the results of the Spring 2018 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and Harper Follow Up Survey revealed a strong perception among students that they were engaging successfully in critical thinking in the classroom, results of the assessment showed a need for improving students' capabilities in critical thinking. This issue was especially prominent for students with fewer than 15 and those with 45 or more earned credit hours, first-generation college students, and students eligible for Pell grants.

The results also indicated that the majority of students showed significant room for improvement with respect to all three of the areas related to the outcome: developing arguments, making decisions, and evaluating outcomes. These results are reported in Table 5:

Table 5 – Critical Thinking Results, 2017-18

Use evidence to…	% of students scoring 70% or higher
Develop arguments	65.4%
Make decisions	58.2%
Evaluate outcomes	58.5%

Please see Critical Thinking on the HIP for more detailed results. Review of results and development of an improvement plan are scheduled for 2018-19.

Diverse Perspectives and Cultures

In 2016-17, the Learning Assessment Committee and the General Education-Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Work Group assessed the general education outcome "Examine diverse perspectives and cultures as they relate to the individual, the community, and the global society." Results of the assessment showed a need for improving students' capabilities in Assumptions/Biases and Skills related to the outcome. The results also indicated that students needed additional help connecting a variety of topic areas (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, disability) to course content. Although program, course, and indirect assessments related to Diverse Perspectives and Cultures had somewhat better results, the majority of students consistently show substantial room for improvement on this outcome.

After reviewing the assessment results, feedback gathered in fall 2017, and the fall 2017 "Improving General Education Outcomes at Harper" faculty survey, the Work Group developed the Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Improvement Plan. Much of the plan focuses on faculty development around infusing Diverse Perspectives and Cultures topics into their courses, as well as helping students make connections across a variety of topic areas. Additional information can be found on the HIP.

Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment

During the 2017-18 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 the Academy for Teaching Excellence, the Business Office, and Student Involvement. Table 6 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these units.

Table 6 – Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2017-18

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Documented consultations*	24/39 (62%)
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	7/113 (6%)
Criteria met, no further action	42/113 (37%)
Criteria met, action taken	38/113 (34%)
Criteria not met, action taken	26/113 (23%)
Total Assessments	113/113 (100%)

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

In 2017-18, 100% of units completed the full assessment cycle for the fourth year in a row. The Student Support and Administrative Services assessment process has 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, Outcomes Assessment 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 2017-18, 57% led to improvements in services, programs or other operations, a decrease from 70% in 2016-17. Following are samples of plans and actions taken as a result of assessment findings.

Academic Advising and Counseling Center

The Academic Advising and Counseling Center began working toward a new case management advising model in 2017-18. Under this model, the goal was to have at least 70% of case management enrolled students meet face-to-face with their counselor or advisor in spring 2018. Results showed that only 32% of these spring 2018 students met with their assigned advisor/counselor for a face-to-face appointment during that time. In response, the department

developed additional strategies to increase the number of meetings between students and their assigned advisor/counselor, and the outcome will be reassessed in 2018-19.

Child Learning Center

The Child Learning Center continued its use of a parent survey to ensure it is meeting the needs of the families it serves. On the 2017-18 survey, the category of Parent Involvement earned the lowest score, at 87%. Despite this relatively high satisfaction rate, the school responded by assigning one Master Preschool Teacher to be a liaison between parents and teachers. They also worked to update their communication techniques with parents, such as using social media to promote communications amongst parents and strengthen families' connections with the school.

Testing and Assessment Center

Testing and Assessment developed a goal of decreasing the number of "defects" in the testing process based on improvements made between 2014 and 2017. In reviewing their assessment results, the department saw a 69% decrease in the number of defects for distance learning exams and a 58% decrease for course make-up exams. Additionally, a majority of the defects were associated with faculty mistakenly using the previous process. The department went on to ensure the forms involved with the previous process were removed from use, resulting in further improvements. They also developed plans to pilot additional enhancements that will help efficiency for both the department and faculty.

Women's Program

The Women's Program launched a "laptop loaner" program in fall 2017 to provide technology support to students who were identified as high risk and high need. Assessment results show that given a lack of access to suitable technology at home, the opportunity to have a loaner laptop has become an important benefit for participants. The program has been helpful for single parents who otherwise may have had to come to campus to utilize labs, giving them the opportunity to focus on homework and projects instead of supervising a child on campus. Given the success of the program, the department will pursue additional opportunities to expand the program.

Other Assessment Efforts at Harper College

In addition to the assessment processes and outcomes analyses described above, the College continued its assessment efforts in 2017-18 through:

- The 9th Annual Assessment Conference and Share Fair, held on September 29, 2017. This professional development event featured accomplished scholar, Dr. José Antonio Bowen, who presented, "Assessment as Strategy: You Are What You Measure" and "Teaching Naked Techniques: A Practical Workshop on Designing Better Classes." Breakout sessions included "Making the Case: Blended Learning for First Year Students" and "Graphs and Tables are More Than Just Pictures!" An afternoon session provided dedicated work time and roundtable discussions on topics including Using Assessment for Improvement, Classroom Assessment Techniques, Building a Better Rubric, and Writing Effective Learning Outcomes.
- The submission and receipt of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Excellence in Assessment designation for 2018. Through the Excellence in Assessment program, NILOA sets the bar for higher education learning assessment and improvement nationwide. Harper was one of only five institutions recognized in 2018 and the only community college in the cohort. Harper received the designation based on its strong work in general education assessment and improvement, its use of research and best practices, and its inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholders.
- The Learning Assessment Committee began a Learning Assessment Community of Practice (CoP), a faculty professional development experience that takes the place of the previous assessment fellowship model. Seven faculty members were involved in the inaugural CoP, and members presented their findings at the Assessment Conference and Share Fair in September 2018.
- The Student Learning Showcase blog, which provides biweekly updates to faculty and staff regarding student success and learning assessment. The blog is posted on the Academy for Teaching Excellence website and in its newsletters.
- A General Education Learning Outcomes dashboard. An external dashboard was created to continually share the assessment results of the College's five General Education Learning Outcomes.
- 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.