

17 October 2013

Dear Colleagues,

Please indulge me in a prefatory email before the A-Team sends out the RFP for assessment projects. I'd like to provide a short history of our journey to the general education assessment plan that was developed last spring and articulate some of the assumptions that undergird it.

An email with the RFP will be forthcoming shortly.

As you may well remember, in 2010, we decided to revise our core abilities¹ to encompass learning goals not just for general education transfer classes but for all coursework offered at the institution. After soliciting input from a variety of stakeholders across campus, a subcommittee generated our [Core Learning Outcomes \(CLOs\)](#), which were then vetted and approved by faculty in 2012. These CLOs—Think, Engage, Create, Communicate, and Apply—are linked to our strategic direction and mission and describe the transferable skills that students should be exposed to across the curriculum and that will serve as the framework for the liberal education that LCC affords all transfer and C/T students.

Over the past few years, under the leadership of Barbara Breaden, JS Bird, and now Christina Howard, the Assessment Team has shepherded the college through our nascent assessment endeavors, and, to date, approximately 50 faculty members have been involved in thirty-six assessment projects, ranging from [rubric development](#) to [artifact scoring](#), and we've arrived at the stage where we may productively engage in a progressively more systematic and encompassing approach to assessment.

With this goal in mind, the college sent five team members to a general education assessment development workshop sponsored by the AAC&U in Vermont last June, a process that resulted in our general education assessment plan (below), which is a three-year process and includes the following goals:

1. Increase visibility and understanding of the strategic direction: "a liberal education approach to student learning."
2. Increase visibility and ownership of core learning outcomes.
3. Link general education curriculum to core learning outcomes.
4. Assess student proficiency in core learning outcomes.

We understand these goals as we see the process of assessment: as something that should be at the heart of teaching and learning and part of an on-going recursive process, as a mechanism for faculty and students to determine what students are learning, and how to improve the teaching and learning environment. We hope that everyone on campus will embrace and engage with the first two goals as part of our continuing work. In the near future

¹ The four core abilities were: communicate effectively; think critically and solve problems effectively; increase understanding of the relationship between self and community, including self-awareness and personal responsibility; explore academic disciplines of liberal arts, social sciences, and physical sciences.

Think

Engage

Create

Communicate

Apply

will be distributing posters and other materials that will assist faculty and staff in both increasing understanding of the link between a liberal education approach to general education and facilitate ownership of our CLOs.²

We have some funding for the latter of the goals: linking general education courses to our CLOs and assessing student proficiency against these same outcomes. The forthcoming RFP will detail how to apply for this funding.

We realize that departments and programs are at different stages in terms of enacting systematic assessment, and the project funding available reflects this reality. No matter where you are in the process, the A-Team would like to help you with your endeavors, and Christina Howard and I are available to visit divisions, departments, and programs and provide mentoring.

We are excited at the opportunity that this new stage of assessment affords us and hope that faculty across campus will join us in the work that is an integral part of improving teaching and learning and, ultimately, also tied to program review and refinement.

In Solidarity,

Kate Sullivan

² We are funding teams of faculty, rather than individuals, to work on assessment projects that are tied to departmental goals. It is our hope, though, that individual faculty undertake the work of mapping the CLOs to their courses and assignments, too. Examples of such mapping can be found [here](#) and [here](#). I've also attached an example of how one might use the syllabus to indicate to students when and how they will be engaging with the CLOs in a given a course.

Think

Engage

Create

Communicate

Apply