



Higher Learning Commission's  
**Academy for  
Assessment of  
Student Learning**

## June 2014 Academy Cohort

Dear Academy member,

In order to facilitate your entry into the Collaboration Network, please complete the following:

- a. Submit the name, position title and contact information of the Academy team leader.

Dr. Michael Merica, Ph.D. Director of Institutional Research and Assessment  
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- b. Submit the Academy project title.

- c. Answer the following questions regarding your Academy Plan and Project. Send the information to Kim Davis at [kdavis@hlcommission.org](mailto:kdavis@hlcommission.org). **The submission deadline is Friday, August 01, 2014.**

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### PROJECT TITLE:

**Improving student learning through a comprehensive, systematic,  
and sustainable assessment practice.**

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### PLAN

#### 1. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Describe your plan for creating shared responsibility for assessing and improving student learning. (100 - 200 words).

Shared responsibility will occur through the organization of the assessment process. The practice will rely on the office of Institutional Research (IR), Student Services (SS), and Faculty Representatives (FR) from the colleges' primary academic discipline areas forming an organized assessment committee. The assessment committee members will have staggering terms, with the intent of establishing redundancy, continuity, and involvement in assessment practices. The IR office will be responsible for coordinating data collection and compilation, while FR/SS will coordinate assessment and reporting strategies with stakeholders across the institution. The formal Assessment Committee will write the annual assessment report collaboratively.

#### 2. IMPACT OF ACADEMY PARTICIPATION

What is the broader impact of your Academy work on the institution, faculty and staff, students, or other stakeholders? How will this work influence the culture of your organization, build institutional capacity, advance teaching and learning...etc.? (100 - 200 words)

Coconino Community College is going through several transitions which make Assessment Academy work particularly valuable at this point in time. Specifically, the institution is enacting a financial austerity plan, while beginning a new strategic planning cycle. In addition, the Academic Affairs division is undergoing significant organizational changes, which has eliminated the positions of department chairs; individuals that had been responsible for compiling student learning assessment data into annual reports. Given this context, establishing a sustainable assessment practice is essential.

Our Academy project has far reaching potential within this climate. In essence, we believe that enacting a comprehensive, systematic, and sustainable assessment process that yields actionable information that is directly related to student learning will improve curriculum, programs, and instruction. This project will also pull in various splintered groups across the college, forming a more cohesive whole that is re-focused on the common goal of student success.

### **3. OTHER IMPORTANT ASPECTS**

Optional: What else is important to know about your work on assessing and improving student learning? (100 - 200 words)

CCC is a small institution. A few individuals, in the recent past, were responsible for initiating, coordinating and directing assessment of student learning. This foundational process has been difficult to keep up when those that are primarily responsible are no longer with the institution. Therefore, a primary emphasis of our project is to develop an integrated assessment process that is inherently more sustainable.

This integration takes the form of involving primary stakeholders, while not burdening them with excessive responsibility. Those individuals include: faculty, student services, Deans, Vice Presidents, President, and ultimately, District Governing Board Members. Obviously each role is invested differently, and would be interested in different levels of information. The objective is to compile program review and assessment of student learning data in a manner that it can be collected fairly easily, and translated into actionable information for various stakeholders.

## **PROJECT** (First version of project)

### **1. DESCRIBE THIS STUDENT LEARNING PROJECT**

Describe the project you developed at the Roundtable. Focus particularly on the general strategies you developed. (500 words)

Coconino Community College has many fundamental assessment practices in place. Those processes do not need to be entirely re-invented, rather, as a senior faculty member noted “they need to be reinvigorated.” We will focus on refining existing general education assessment tools, incorporate some new processes, and cultivate faculty ownership with the intent of creating an ingrained and sustainable assessment of student learning practice.

#### General Strategy:

- Create an inventory of our recent institutional assessment efforts
- Identify practices being used in colleges that are “similar” to ours
- Communicate refined set of results for feedback
- Create and convene new standing assessment committee with responsibility for college wide assessment and reporting
- Design process/product that links course-level, program level, and institutional-level assessment.
- Determine Gen. Ed. pilot areas, enact process and document
- Review, modify, and repeat

### **2. CONTRIBUTIONS TO ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

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

An accurate and timely feedback loop is essential for improvement of student learning. We aspire to provide pertinent feedback to instructors so that they can make the adjustments that are necessary to improve student learning by creating a feedback loop that includes annual assessment reports and consistent forums such as an Assessment Showcase in faculty meetings and an Assessment Day.

### **3. DESIRED RESULTS FROM THE PROJECT**

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

The following outcomes will point towards success. In general, assessment is an opportunity to gain access to valuable information. When stakeholders are enthusiastically participating because they value the information found in annual reports, it will represent a truly valuable practice. In addition, when the processes required to generate annual reports are not an excessive burden on individuals, then we will know that a sustainable institutional practice is being developed. Additionally, the formation of a well-defined, functional, and organized standing committee focused on improving student learning indicates that we're well on our way.

#### **4. CHALLENGES AND EXPECTATIONS**

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

A likely challenge takes the form of competing projects and priorities, often resulting in employee burnout. Though there will continue to be many tasks to be done, the institution is currently in the process of narrowing its focus to improve fiscal responsibility, student success, and overall sustainability. We will integrate the assessment of student learning into this effort. We will strategically communicate the development of this project so that institutional awareness and momentum is generated. In addition, the strategic design of the assessment process within the committee will minimize burnout.

A second challenge may be to create faculty, department, and college-wide buy-in for our assessment efforts. This challenge will be minimized by encouraging and promoting current assessment practices that are meaningful, by creating educational opportunities regarding best practices in assessment, and by creating a standing Assessment Committee.

#### **5. PLANNING AND MANAGING THE STUDENT LEARNING PROJECT**

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

##### SU 2014

- Review Historic Assessment/Program Review Processes and Reports
- Identify Comparable Institutions for Potential Practices to Adopt
- Document Roundtable Notes
- Create Presentation and Prepare To Present Plans in Upcoming Meetings
- Begin Drafting Charter for Assessment Committee

##### FA 2014

- Meet With General Education Committee
- Present to faculty the institutional expectations for assessment
- Refine Processes and Begin Drafting Annual Report
- Verify That Necessary Data is Being Collected
- Collect and Compile End of Term Data
- Document Processes
- Review Projects of Comparable Institutions in the Academy Collaboration Network
- Identify Faculty Assessment Representatives
- Create and Convene Assessment committee

##### SP 2015

- Assessment Committee Faculty Members Strategically Collaborate with Faculty Representatives and Instructors to Refine and Solidify the Annual Assessment Report

##### SU 2015

- Gather and Compile all Data for Annual Reports

##### FA 2015

- Work With Faculty Representatives to Produce Annual Assessment Reports