

This is a DRAFT document.

Options for how this doc could be shared (if we decide to share it):

- Post this on the Spaces strategic planning page (link to google drive doc- under “learning assessment”)?
- Send this to all strategic planning members (cc all LAC members)?
- Hand this document to whoever is running Sylvania’s comment session on Tuesday?

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**Learning Assessment Council Strategic Priority Development - First Draft**

Although the strategic planning steering committee is only asking for individual feedback, the LAC believes it is important to share our collective vision regarding assessment of student learning for the steering committee’s consideration. Below is our *first draft* for a strategic vision related to assessment of student learning (which began before the version 1 document was released). We welcome the opportunity to discuss our vision and the assessment-related items in the strategic plan version 1 draft with steering committee members.

**Overarching Goal**

Establish and maintain organizational structures and processes that promote and support academic excellence\*

\*This is Cornell’s 5th umbrella university goal in their strategic plan, page 10,  
<http://www.cornell.edu/strategicplan/docs/060410-strategic-plan-final.pdf>

**Priority Statement for the Overarching Goal (Related to Assessment of Student Learning)**

Create a culture of assessment of student learning for improvement (as opposed to accountability) to support student progression and academic excellence.

**Meaning of “culture of assessment of student learning”**

LAC members believe it is critical to be clear in meaning. Here is what a culture of assessment of student learning *might* look like:

- Faculty develop assessment processes and activities that investigate areas of concern or curiosity for student learning
- As appropriate, assessment activities capture authentic student work.
- Curriculum is “connected” (ie, course outcomes are mapped to degree and certificate outcomes which are mapped to core outcomes).
- Faculty, regardless of job classification, have an appropriate shared understanding of expected learning for outcomes and an appropriate shared understanding of levels of student work (eg, emerging, meets expectation, exceeds expectation).
- Data are valid and reliable
- Faculty use data to make appropriate changes to curriculum, content, materials, instruction, pedagogy, etc.
- Assessment loop is closed (ie, assess, evaluate, change appropriately, reassess, evaluate, etc.)
- Students experience a cohesive educational path and are aware of the student learning outcomes for their courses and degrees/certificates which focuses them on the learning vs grades.

- There are feedback loops that enable students to correct any deficiencies in their learning.
- There are mechanisms to capture and transcript learning from student groups (eg, STEAM) and community-based learning.

### **Overlap with Completion Investment Council**

LAC members did a brief “needs analysis” for assessment of student learning. We realized that two of our needs mirrored two of the priority statements of the Completion Investment Council (CIC).

#### CIC priority statements that overlap with LAC “needs analysis”:

- Provide professional development to empower faculty and staff with knowledge and skills to contribute to student success and completion.
- Improve internal communication and collaboration throughout the organization

We believe that since the LAC needs analysis overlaps with the CIC’s work, professional development, collaboration, and communication the strategic planning steering committee members should consider including these as top priorities in the strategic plan.

### **Assessment of student learning as professional development**

Assessment of student learning is a collaborative task (vs grading that is an individual task). Evaluation of authentic student work can be some of the most exciting, challenging, and worthwhile inexpensive professional learning available -- and it contributes directly to student success.

While respectful collaboration can help develop shared understanding for student learning across sections and between pre- and post-requisite courses, this work needs to be supported within the institution. While many PCC faculty are doing good work developing their processes for assessing student learning, we believe that PCC strategic plan should include grounded-in-reality ways of developing and maintaining supportive structures, time, and incentives for assessment-focused collaboration between all faculty groups and, where appropriate, between faculty members and students service personnel (eg, Developmental Education faculty and Advisors).

LAC members believe that it is critical to know how one might reach a strategic priority. As such, we have developed objectives to reach our strategic priority. [Of course, if this work were to develop, we would first vet it with other stakeholders and in a collaborative frame create action items, timelines, feedback loops, and checkpoints to ensure that the 2020 goal was met.](#)

### **LAC Objectives for Assessment of Student Learning**

1. Offer professional learning opportunities for all faculty that
  - are focused on educational research regarding effective practices for adult learning and support the integration of this knowledge, as appropriate, for the program/discipline.
  - include the methods of assessment of student learning that could be used for both course-level and SAC-level work to measure the effectiveness.
  - are aware of the changes in higher education with regard to assessment of student learning and completion.
2. Address communication and collaboration barriers
  - to support faculty sharing of teaching successes as a inexpensive way for faculty to develop professionally as educators.

- so that changes from assessment work (eg, curriculum, content, materials, instruction, pedagogy) are communicated to all relevant faculty.
  - so that faculty members are able to develop a common and appropriate understanding of student learning expectations between course sections and between pre- and post-requisite classes.
  - so that faculty members who teach general education classes develop a common and appropriate understanding of student learning expectations in order to ensure students are meeting the degree outcomes for the AS, ASOT, AAOT and AGS degrees (a collective responsibility across many disciplines).
  - so that all faculty are able to develop a common and appropriate understanding of student learning between course sections and between pre- and post-requisite classes
  - so that all faculty have an understanding around assessment practices for their particular program/discipline.
3. Create assessment days to evaluate student work for SAC assessment and/or share learning from evaluation of student work.
  4. Develop ways to recognize and celebrate risk-taking and innovation in teaching practices.
  5. Ensure that academic leaders (department chairs, SAC chairs, deans liaisons) communicate clear expectations about the importance of assessment.

### **Assessment of Student Learning in National Context**

Assessment of student learning is one of the many changes in higher education sweeping across the nation. It is multi-faceted and wildly complex. Some institutions are responding by top-down mandates. We are proud to be at an institution whose processes for assessment of student learning follows the recommendations of national assessment leaders and national professional organizations (ie, faculty should be deeply involved in all elements of assessment of student learning, including the development of processes). We hope the college continues to value this approach.

### **Concerns about the 2013-2014 strategic planning process**

LAC members are excited to see assessment of student learning present in the strategic plan version 1 draft as it relates to experiential learning, competency, and credit-for-prior learning (1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-8, 3-4). However, the intent is unclear and the path to attain these goals by 2020 is not defined. There is concern that some of the strategic priorities are unattainable even if the institution had unlimited money, time, and no communication or structural barriers.

The LAC appreciates the steering committee's opportunities for individual feedback this year in the development of the strategic plan and the current opportunities for individual feedback on version 1. However, while we recognize the importance of individual voice, we believe that the collective voice of groups within the institution are also critical. We are concerned that the steering committee did not wish to take in consideration ideas and/or feedback of the most knowledgeable group of individuals in PCC regarding PCC's processes for assessment of student learning, including the current strengths, struggles, and barriers. Without this type of collective faculty input from existing college councils and committees, there is the risk of creating unattainable priorities and/or the priority being rejected by faculty as a top-down mandate.

### **Next Steps for PCC's Strategic Plan?**

With our representation of 17 different disciplines/programs and our knowledge of PCC's assessment processes and assessment in general, our collective voice should be taken into consideration. We hope there will be ample opportunity to share our collective thoughts on the priority items that relate to assessment of student learning.

We believe that a strategic plan for an institution of higher education should have a bold vision, but **MUST** be grounded in reality for the resources and needs of the institution. We fear that without this, the college will not move forward with purpose-- and, in terms of assessment of student learning, this means PCC will have not given our students the best that they deserve. Let's work together to create a strategic plan that makes sense for PCC and guides the institution.

#### **LAC Voting Members:**

- Chris Brooks (History)
- Sally Earll (Curriculum Coordinator)
- Marc Goodman (Computer Information Systems)
- Allison Gross (Composition/Literature)
- Wayne Hooke (Psychology, LAC Vice-Chair)
- Gabe Hunter-Bernstein (Director of Educational Programs)
- Jamee Kristen (Sociology)
- Katie Leonard (Aviation Science)
- Priscilla Loanzon (Nursing)
- Christine Manning (Physical Education)
- Michele Marden (Math, LAC Chair)
- Scott McBeth (Career Guidance)
- Linda Paulson (Management/Supervisory Development)
- \*\*\* Amara Perez (Retention Coordinator)
- Davina Ramirez (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Julie Romey (Computer Applications and Office Systems)
- Lisa Rosenthal (Developmental Reading/Writing)
- Julianne Sandlin (Art History)
- Torie Scott (Library)
- Doug Smith (Fire Protection Technology)
- Susan Wilson (Academic Support Specialist)
- Stephanie Yurasits (Math)

[\\*Not present when this response was voted upon](#)

#### **LAC Non-Voting Members**

- Kendra Cawley (Dean of Academic Affairs, admin support)
- Shirlee Geiger (LAC Chair Emeritus)
- Sylvia Gray (LAC Chair Emeritus)
- Anne Haberkern (Curriculum Director, admin support)
- Linda Reisser (Student Services liaison)