1.2 - Program Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes focuses on the knowledge, skills and abilities graduates from particular programs are expected to possess. The institution should provide evidence for Core Components 3.B., 3.E. and 4.B. in this section.

1P2: PROCESSES

Describe the processes for determining, communicating and ensuring the stated program learning outcomes and identify who is involved in those processes. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of key processes for the following:

- Aligning learning outcomes for programs (e.g., nursing, business administration, elementary teaching, etc.) to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution (3.E.2)
- Determining program outcomes (4.B.4)
- Articulating the purposes, content and level of achievement of the outcomes (4.B.1)
- Ensuring the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs (3.B.4)
- Designing, aligning and delivering cocurricular activities to support learning (3.E.1, 4.B.2)
- Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess attainment of program learning outcomes (4.B.2)
- Assessing program learning outcomes (4.B.1, 4.B.2, 4.B.4)

1R2: RESULTS

What are the results for determining if students possess the knowledge, skills and abilities that are expected in programs? The results presented should be for the processes identified in 1P2. All data presented should include the population studied, response rate and sample size. All results should also include a brief explanation of how often the data is collected, who is involved in collecting the data and how the results are shared. These results might include:

- Overall levels of deployment of the program assessment processes within the institution (i.e., how many programs are/not assessing program goals)
- Summary results of assessments (include tables and figures when possible)
- Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks
- Interpretation of assessment results and insights gained

1I2: IMPROVEMENT

Based on 1R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years? (4.B.3)

Responses

1P2a. Aligning learning outcomes for programs (e.g., nursing, business administration, elementary teaching, etc.) to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution (3.E.2)

The Institution's process for aligning program learning outcomes (called competencies at LCCC) to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels is embedded in its quality assurance processes for assessment planning, program review, and course management. Annual assessment planning (pg. 2) requires academic programs to describe the program's alignment, including learning competencies, to the LCCC mission (student preparation, workforce development, transfer, and community engagement). Moreover, programs going through the program review process list program-level learning competencies (pg. 4) and demonstrate alignment with the programs' mission-centered values in the self-study. Best practices for both academic assessment and program review are accessible in the campus portal (myLCCC), providing faculty with resources for developing effective mission alignments. Finally, the Master Course of Record (MCOR) (pg. 3) procedure requires programs to align their course learning competencies to applicable program-level competencies to ensure their alignment with educational offerings (**3.E.2**).

1P2b. Determining program outcomes (4.B.4)

The College's process for determining program outcomes/competencies is incorporated in its mission alignment process (1P2a above), quality assurance processes, and procedures. Through the academic standards embedded in the program review process, faculty demonstrate how their competencies meet stakeholders' needs. Stakeholder input regarding program competencies is collected in various ways, including advisory committees. Transfer program faculty attend annual articulation meetings with the University of Wyoming to inform competencies. Some programs align competencies to accreditation requirements or associated certification exams, while others, such as Psychology and Education, align learning competencies to professional association guidelines. Faculty developing new programs follow LCCC's Program Development and Approval Procedure (pg. 2), which requires new program learning competencies to incorporate advisory committee feedback.

Faculty's peer review of annual program-level assessment plans strengthens program learning competencies. The College's planning standards use the best practices found in learning assessment literature, including the *Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning* developed in 1991 with support from the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), Trudy Banta's 2002 *Characteristics of Effective Outcomes Assessment*, and Linda Suskie's 2004 *Good Assessment Practices* (**4.B.4**).

1P2c. Articulating the purposes, content and level of achievement of the outcomes (4.B.1)

As above, the College's process to articulate the purposes, content, and level of achievement of the program outcomes/competencies is embedded in its evaluative, quality assurance processes (annual assessment planning, academic program review, and MCOR process). Faculty members articulate the purpose and content of their program competencies in the annual assessment plans (pg. 5), in their program review self-studies (Section I) (pg. 4), on the MCOR (pg. 3), and list

them on their LCCC program websites. Faculty articulate the students' level of achievement of competencies through competency rubrics in the LMS, and display student learning achievement levels/targets in annual assessment plans (Section D: Expected Level of Learning Performance) (pg. 3).The levels of achievement for competencies are internally peer-reviewed, which increases faculty participation and sharing of competency achievement levels (**4.B.1**).

1P2d. Ensuring the outcomes remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs (3.B.4)

LCCC uses its evaluative and quality assurance processes to ensure that learning outcomes/competencies remain relevant and aligned with student, workplace and societal needs. Academic program review Standard II.A.2 (pg. 5) requires faculty to demonstrate how the program sustains relevancy, while Standard II.C.1 (pg. 6) requires alignment to stakeholder and societal needs. Faculty use a variety of mechanisms to meet these requirements, including advisory councils, special accreditation standards, state agencies, articulation meetings, professional guidelines, and surveys of students. Best practices (pg. 29) for responsiveness to stakeholder needs, shared across campus, provide faculty resources to strengthen competencies. Coursework that develops and satisfies the Cultural Awareness competency (described in 3P1e), often align to program level competencies that are aligned with professional association standards focused on cultural diversity (e.g., National Council of Teachers of English) (**3.B.4**).

1P2e. Designing, aligning and delivering cocurricular activities to support learning (3.E.1, 4.B.2)

The College uses several processes to design, align, and deliver cocurricular activities to support student learning, including student organizations, funding procedures, and academic program review. Additionally, the College participates in the AACC Pathways 2.0 project; one "must-have" team is developing and implementing formalized Essential Student Experiences that include purposeful co-curricular activities and their assessment.

The students' Campus Activities Board plans cultural, co-curricular, and social events for the student body. One of its objectives is to provide faculty opportunities to partner with Campus Activities to help promote learning in coursework. Additionally, some academic program areas have associated student organization, such as the Collegiate Music Association, that target specific co-curricular activities to support their program learning competencies (see Clubs and Organizations) (**3.E.1**).

The College formally supports co-curricular activities through its Scholarships and Waivers Procedure (pg.3), which emphasizes structured environments that develop students' abilities to collaborate, communicate, and meet other LCCC institutional competencies. The College's Student Activity Fee Allocation Committee Procedure (pg. 2) provides the financial base for developing co-curricular activities to support classroom learning (**3.E.1**).

Academic program faculty design and align co-curricular activity to support learning through the program review process; self-study Section II.B.5 (pg. 6) requires faculty to describe *Co-curricular Opportunities for Students' Engagement with Each Other*, *The Campus, and Broader*

Community. The program review process includes internal, faculty peer review to ensure these opportunities satisfy the requirements (**4.B.2**).

1P2f. Selecting the tools, methods and instruments used to assess attainment of program learning outcomes (4.B.2)

The College uses a collaborative process, involving broad faculty and staff representation to select tools used to assess attainment of program learning outcomes/competencies. In fall 2013, an ad hoc faculty and staff committee selected Campus Labs Compliance Assist and Planning modules for its assessment management system. Two Campus Labs survey tools (Baseline and Course Evaluation) were also purchased to support learning assessment. Simultaneously, the College's Student Learning Assessment (SLA) subcommittee, made up of faculty and staff, developed nine learning rubrics for assessing the Institutional Learning Competencies in 2013-14; these are also used to measure related program-level competencies (**4.B.2**). Both the Canvas and Tableau tools were recently selected, in part, because the state's community college system provides funding support and server resources.

Using commonly-held best practices in learning assessment, the Institutional Effectiveness Department developed templates and quality standards that populate the Campus Labs management system. The internal review engages faculty members in review of assessment plans outside their school to encourage cross-departmental collaboration and identify best practices that are shared with the campus (**4.B.2**). Based on stakeholder feedback, the College selected myLCCC, a campus portal that provides single sign-on access to assessment planning and to the IE Department's "virtual office" for best practices resources and example assessment plans. The College won a Champion User award from Campus Labs in 2018 (**4.B.4**).

1P2g. Assessing program learning outcomes (4.B.1, 4.B.2, 4.B.4)

The College uses its continuous improvement process, consisting of two mutually reinforcing evaluation platforms, to assess program learning competencies. The Academic Program Review Procedure (pg. 2) establishes this integration of self-evaluation processes. An annual, online, assessment management platform provides structure for academic programs to evaluate two or more program-level student learning competencies and two or more program operational outcomes that support learning. This platform is closely integrated with the College's five-year program review online evaluation platform, which reinforces the annual assessment of student learning.

Program review standards and guidelines ensure that programs annually assess two or more learning competencies and demonstrate that they are achieving these competencies. Program review includes a feedback self-study section that that describes characteristics of feedback systems to inform student learning assessment. A subsequent self-study section aligns to programs' assessment planning module so that peer reviewers can view annual planning and data reporting activity, including peer review feedback. All programs must define the expected student learning performance on competencies and verify student achievement of success in their data findings and summaries (**4.B.1**, **4.B.2**).

Both platforms use internal peer review as feedback systems for programs to improve their student learning assessment planning. Therefore, programs annually receive faculty feedback from within and from outside their schools, and every fifth year receive an additional set of faculty feedback comments. Faculty peer review involves about 40 faculty per year in either learning assessment planning or program review of learning assessment. The templates and embedded quality standards used in annual learning assessment relate to best practices found in learning assessment literature (see 1P2b) (**4.B.4**).

1R2a. Overall levels of deployment of the program assessment processes within the institution (i.e., how many programs are/not assessing program goals)

The deployment of program assessment is extensive across campus with 96% of programs having complete assessment plans including a planning context description with mission alignments, two student learning competencies, and two operational outcomes. However, there is variation in the frequency that programs respond to peer-review comments and report evaluation data that verify student achievement of competencies/outcomes. The Institutional Effectiveness Department (IE) monitors academic assessment activity annually and reports the amount of variation to Academic Affairs. The most recent report shows that 44% of plans responded to internal peer review comments, 64% of plans reported data findings, and 96% of plans were complete.

1R2b. Summary results of assessments (include tables and figures when possible)

The assessment results of each academic program are reported in the data summary section of the LCCC assessment plans (55 plans from 49 programs), which are maintained in the Campus Labs assessment management system. The following four academic assessment plans are representative of the template design and planning content that appears in the majority of plans for learning competencies: English AA (from the School of Arts and Humanities), Business and Finance/Accounting AS (School of Business and Technical Studies), Diagnostic Medical Sonography AAS (School of Health Sciences and Wellness), and Natural Sciences AS (School of Math and Sciences).

Most health science programs prepare students for licensure or certification. The most recently available pass rates are quite strong.

As stated earlier, the assessment plan's operational outcomes support the success of student learning. An example operational outcome from Business and Finance/Accounting shows the success of LCCC students transferring to the University of Wyoming.

1R2c. Comparison of results with internal targets and external benchmarks

The College's assessment plan template includes a target-related section named Expected Level of Learning Performance (see any above assessment plan). Each academic program sets an internal target for each learning competency and each operational outcome; targets are reviewed annually by faculty on the SLA subcommittee of Academic Standards to ensure integrity.

Assessment plan standards require programs to report data demonstrating student achievement of planning targets. In 2018, 64% of programs reported data (see report referenced in 1R2a).

The College's program review process uses a peer-review rating rubric to determine patterns of strengths and weakness for the institution. It establishes an average of 3.0 on a four-point scale for program performance on each section of program review quality standards as an internal target (see Agriculture rubric 2018). In recent years, programs on average have performed above 3.0 on all self-study sections except continuous improvement of student learning (see table 1R2b).

1R2d. Interpretation of assessment results and insights gained

The deployment of the College's assessment planning process is broad, including all academic programs. However, there remains significant variance among programs in responding to internal review comments and in reporting of data summaries and accounts of improvements. Continuous improvement of student learning remains one of the lowest performing sections in program review and performs below the college target for success (see peer-review rubric ratings).

The continuous improvement process for program competencies/outcomes is now better aligned through integration of MCOR, annual assessment, Baseline survey tool, and program review that yield institutional rankings for 50 plus College standards. Integration includes robust data resources such as KPIs and Tableau dashboards (see Criminal Justice Pre-Law) that appear in program review self-studies and faculty use for analyzing student learning performance.

1I2. Based on 1R2, what process improvements have been implemented or will be implemented in the next one to three years? (4.B.3)

The College's continuous improvement processes have generated multiple improvements to programs' annual assessment of learning competencies/outcomes through peer review of program reviews and assessment planning and its program review procedure. Based on faculty feedback after the first year of the current program review process (2014-2015), the College organized a faculty ad-hoc committee to revise the self-study template, vastly reducing jargon, clarifying standards, and reducing duplication of effort. Additionally, the IE Department formally gathers feedback from faculty each year to continuously improve the process. Based on what program faculty have learned from program review experiences over the last four years, they developed several action plans (see example) to strengthen program assessment plans and improve student learning **(4.B.3)**.

From four years of program review experience, faculty in many programs have realized that they were not evaluating their program-level learning competencies effectively by using only institutional competency rubrics. Many faculty are beginning to design program-specific rubrics or instruments to more accurately measure student achievement of program learning competencies.

Through the College's participation in AACC's Pathways 2.0 project, the "must-have" [Course and Program Competencies](#) (pg. 4) team is developing plans for strengthening the methodology, resources and training for academic program learning assessment. Learning assessment will become a more integral part of the development of a College pathway for student attainment of learning competencies.