Columbia Gorge Community College

Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report

Prepared for the
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

March 1, 2023

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT CERTIFICATION FORM

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On behalf of the Institution, I certify that:

☑ There was broad participation/review by the campus community in the preparation of this report.

☑ The Institution remains in compliance with NWCCU Eligibility Requirements.

☑ The Institution will continue to remain in compliance throughout the duration of the institution's cycle of accreditation.

I understand that information provided in this report may affect the continued Candidacy or Accreditation of my institution. I certify that the information and data provided in the report are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Columbia Gorge Community College

(Name of Institution)

Dr. Marta Yera Cronin

(Name of Chief Executive Officer)

(Signature of Chief Executive Officer)

2/28/23

(Date)

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Mission Fulfillment

Columbia Gorge Community College is a rural, Hispanic-Serving Institution in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area that, by its mission, aspires to "build dreams and transform lives by providing lifelong educational programs that strengthen our community". As it continues through its seven-year accreditation cycle, college administration, staff and faculty have re-committed themselves to this transformative mission of higher education.

Building on what has been learned from its accreditation evaluators, its peer institutions, and from the needs of its students expressed through data, the college has reevaluated how it identifies and assesses mission fulfillment, resulting in the adoption of a new strategic framework. Moving away from the former Core Themes framework, the college identified Strategic Priorities and Goals to measure and guide services to students and community, and, through institutional planning, to bridge planning, assessment, and budgeting.

Institutional Strategic Priorities

Following completion of its Seven-Year Comprehensive Self-Evaluation in spring 2020, the college acknowledged the good work that had been done to systematically measure and improve service to students and community; however, its recommendations initiated robust discussion on where to strategically focus and drive the institution over the next seven-year accreditation cycle. Conversations about the future of institutional assessment framework were held within President's Council (executive leadership), Leadership Council (institutional managers), the former Institutional Assessment Committee, and between the vice president of Instructional Services and the director of curriculum and academic assessment. Feedback from these conversations, and guidance about peer efforts from the NWCCU liaison, inspired the college to move on from its Core Themes framework of the past.

In winter 2021, a survey was sent across the institution to discover where constituents felt the institutional focus should be for the achievement of its mission. ([MF.1](#)) Survey results were discussed by a new Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and ultimately honed to four Strategic Priorities, for which indicators and baselines would be set by the group and by those whose areas specifically impacted these metrics:

- **Fiscal Responsibility.** With national community college enrollment on a decade-plus decline, and the biennial conversation of state support funding in constant flux, survey feedback indicated that fiscal sustainability and responsibility was an appropriate priority for students and institution. Indicators for this goal focus on the institutional budget and on the cost of education to students, including textbook affordability.

- **Student Success.** The college continues to monitor student achievement throughout the student learning life-cycle: the role of developmental education, persistence of new

students, achievement of institutional learning outcomes, timely achievement of self-identified award goals, and transfer data.

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** Survey feedback, perhaps inspired by Guided Pathways work and NWCCU Recommendations, demonstrated a desire to acknowledge and monitor how the college specifically supports students from priority populations to pursue their self-identified goals. This looks at district composition to inform approaches for outreach and recruitment, teaching and learning, and overcoming financial barriers to education.

- **Community Connections.** Survey feedback identified a need to measure connections with the community in myriad ways, such as connections with high schools, business, and industry. Ultimately, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee determined that the priority indicators for mission fulfillment should focus on alumni involvement (through the Foundation) and non-credit learning (through Community Education).

College Strategic Priorities were presented to the Board of Education in winter 2021, with the work of refining indicators, baselines, and targets beginning in spring 2021 and continuing through academic year 2021-22. During this time, data collection continued, although multiple shifts in leadership positions meant differing perceptions on acceptable baselines or targets. As of 2023, baselines are set and the story told by Strategic Priority indicators will stimulate discussion at the institution. This will begin with Leadership Council, comprised of unit managers, faculty representation, and President's Council, and extend further as units connect institutional priorities to strategic planning. ([MF.2](#))

Institutional Strategic Goals

The President's Council desired to further articulate short term strategic goals that would prioritize the focus of institutional efforts, and would positively impact institutional health as demonstrated in the Strategic Priorities. In August 2022, the President's Council convened in a facilitated summit and created its Institutional Strategic Goals, subject to a 90-day review, that would be presented to the Board of Education and the college as a whole in September 2022. In addition, it was determined that to achieve a key, tangible enrollment metric of increasing college FTE to surpass the next largest community college, the college would adopt three strategic goals:

- **Improve Performance Management.** Growing beyond its recommendation around regular, substantive evaluation of employees, the college wanted to ensure a systematic approach to professional development, direction, and appropriateness of responsibilities in the achievement of other institutional goals and priorities.

- **Make Anthology Work for Us.** The integration of the new Student Information System has not been without bumps. Its importance to the success of so many interconnected

processes institution-wide bears specific focus on resolving all issues related to integration and data collection.

- **Total Alignment Between Instructional Services and Student Services.** To best serve students and community, the college prioritized this alignment to improve processes and procedures that systematically impact the student life-cycle, from the pre-college pipeline, to non-credit learning, to adult basic education matriculation, to cross-divisional performance management.

These Institutional Strategic Goals are couched in a five-year big achievable goal to be the first choice for training and education in the college's service area. ([MF.3](#))

Institutional Strategic Planning

With Institutional Strategic Goals and Priorities in place, and executive leadership aimed at refining processes and addressing systems habits that no longer support the new direction, the college is energized to integrate budgeting, planning, and assessment:

- **Budgeting.** The annual and ongoing budget process and practices continue to be refined. With direct input from faculty chairs, budget managers are asked to consider how their requests tie to Strategic Priorities, their own strategic departmental planning, and to historical data. Budgeting in 2022-23 was particularly responsive to enrollment declines and the need to strengthen scheduling and outreach. This year, the budget process continues to connect budget resources to areas of need demonstrated by progress on institutional goals and priorities, and gaps and barriers identified in planning processes.

- **Planning.** President's Council is working with both Leadership and Instructional Councils to breakdown the new Institutional Goals to relevant action items for these groups. These groups are tasked with tying department level initiatives to the broad institutional goals by soliciting feedback from their departments and their peers. Feedback from this planning process will highlight priorities for the budget process and articulate why budget adjustments were decided upon. It will also improve standardized unit planning processes. ([MF.4](#))

- **Assessing.** Academic Assessment and Program Review processes continue to highlight instructional needs in the budget processes. Assessment of Institutional Strategic Goals occurs in a 90-day cycle, with 30-day check-ins along the way ([MF.5](#)). While the college works to ensure collection of the appropriate data, it is mindful of the need to be nimble in response to that data. Failure to address immediate barriers to mission and goals could create future issues in goal attainment. The college strives to remain adaptive to change and not just fixed on static, ineffective measurements.

Conclusion

Columbia Gorge Community College is energized by its new strategic approach to mission fulfillment, with clear goals and priorities to systematically help improve service to students and community. Support from the Board of Education for this approach and for institutional leadership is clear. As the college moves through the accreditation cycle, the focus on building effective systems informed by actionable data, is a cause for excitement.

Evidence

MF.1	[Institutional Focus Survey Results](#)
MF.2	[Strategic Priorities and Institutional Effectiveness Indicators](#)
MF.3	[Institutional Strategic Goals](#)
MF.4	[Leadership Council ISG planning notes 1.23. 23 and 2.23.23](#)
MF.5	[90-Day Assessment](#)

Student Achievement

Addressing success gaps at Columbia Gorge Community College requires examination and assessment of the college's actions as they apply to student success measures. As the institution evaluated its student success and achievement metrics, there was ongoing conversation around the COVID-19 pandemic and how it impacted student success data. Strategic plans and priorities had to be put on hold, reexamined, or completely reworked due to circumstances in higher education that changed dramatically with the onset of the pandemic. CGCC continues to reexamine the relevance of its circumstances, and in doing so, has adopted a new strategic direction, as indicated in the Mission Fulfillment section. This shift is designed to guide policy and practice enhancements that recognize the realities of CGCC students while striving to shape the optimal student experience. As a result, CGCC has been more deliberate in shifting and realigning its institutional priorities and goals and applying new performance indicators and tactical measures to its work, particularly in the area of student success. Because of this, CGCC has a solid framework and is poised to meet the standards it has committed to.

CGCC is a designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), which necessitates an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least twenty-five percent (25%) Hispanic self-identifying students. As an HSI, Columbia Gorge Community College seeks to connect its mission and strategic priorities for student success to increase the number of Hispanic as well as low-income students attaining degrees. This is in line with overall institutional efforts to fulfill strategic priorities centered on successful student outcomes, and is foundational to goals that account for improving college readiness, enrollment, math and writing completion, retention, and completion – while narrowing student performance gaps.

In 2020, Columbia Gorge Community College committed to the Guided Pathways program model, which is in line with the college's mission to empower students with the necessary framework and resources to achieve their individual educational goals. Schools following the Guided Pathways model offer clear, educationally coherent program maps which include specific course sequences, progress milestones, and program learning outcomes. CGCC's Guided Pathways goals, in relation to the overall institutional student success and achievement indicators, are to (a) improve student intake and advising experiences that get students on a path, and (b) to improve student support services that help students succeed on that path. Student Services has been moving forward in the realization of these goals. Its work, particularly over the past nine to 12 months, has primarily been to build capacity for goal achievement by focusing on right-sized, specific, and sustainable tactics that are foundational.

Student Success Indicators Defined

CGCC measures student success by following specific student achievement indicators and integrates several indicators of student success into its goals and priorities. They are aligned with aforementioned Strategic Priorities and Goals, as well as indicators derived from the Guided Pathways initiative, all of which are foundational to student success.

- **Enrollment**: Headcount in credit programs, non-high school (dual) enrollment headcount in credit programs. This indicator is derived primarily from the Institutional Strategic Goals.
- **College Readiness**: Rate of developmental math cohort students who successfully completed a college-level math course within four terms of initial enrollment; and the rate of developmental writing cohort students who successfully completed a college-level writing course within four terms of initial enrollment. This indicator is derived from the Institutional Strategic Priorities as well as from the Guided Pathways initiative.
- **Fall-to-Winter Persistence**: Students who enroll during the fall term and then continue enrollment in the immediate winter term. This indicator is derived from the Institutional Strategic Priorities as well as from the Guided Pathways initiative.
- **Retention**: Fall-to-spring retention as defined by the number of fall students who enrolled in the spring of the same academic year; fall-to-fall retention as defined by the number of fall students who enrolled in the fall of the following academic year. This indicator is derived from the Institutional Strategic Priorities as well as from the Guided Pathways initiative.
- **Completion**: Total awards for the academic year, awards overall per student per year; rate of graduation of full-time new students seeking degree or certificate within 150% of normal time to completion; rate of graduation of full-time new students seeking degree or certificate within 200% of normal time to completion. This indicator is derived from the Institutional Strategic Priorities as well as from the Guided Pathways initiative.

Peer Benchmarking

Columbia Gorge Community College is among seventeen community colleges located in Oregon. To begin to understand the efficacy of student success measures in relation to institutional priorities and goals, CGCC selected similarly-sized community colleges within the state, all of which are under the Guided Pathways model, and all of which are either designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) or Emerging HSIs (EHSI). This is important due to the organizational alignment of the institutions within the state, the similar demographic makeup of each, as well as the shared commitments to significant student achievement initiatives, such as Guided Pathways. In measuring student success against peer institutions, the college is accessing publicly-available data from a mix of comparable in-state and regional institutions (SA.1), including:

- Oregon Coast Community College - EHSI
- Klamath Community College - EHSI
- Blue Mountain Community College - HSI
- Treasure Valley Community College - HSI
- Clatsop Community College – EHSI

Measures and Planning for Improvement

Student Services and Instructional Services is currently working collaboratively on the tactics and initiatives that will produce measurable assessment of institutional student success and achievement metrics, and allow for peer benchmarking, based on the strategic goals and priorities. While the assessment is still in progress, the initial work has begun through specific tactics that are foundational and directly tied to the aforementioned success and achievement indicators. (SA.2) CGCC has further committed to understanding its institutional performance gaps through the disaggregation of data by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and first generation status (SA.3). The college will seek to apply the lessons learned to identify and remove barriers throughout the data collection and review process. The status of planning as it relates to college measures and their achievement is as follows:

Measure: Completion
Goal: A target percentage of incoming students will complete a certificate and/or degree within three years.
- Baseline: To Be Determined. (IPEDS, Cohort 2017: 15%, Cohort 2018: 15%)
- 3-year indicator: In Progress. Data will be available post-Spring 2023 graduation.
- 7-year indicator: In Progress
- Performance Indicators:
    - Refine student intake and advising experiences that get students on a path
    - Organize student support services that help students succeed on that path
- Tactics:

- Create a new student life-cycle starting with initial expressed interest
- Update an intake process that is designed with specific information and that is well-cataloged within CRM and SIS systems

Measure: College Readiness

Goal: A target percentage of incoming students will complete their gateway math course
- Baseline: 12%, 5-year average (Falls 2015-2019) of OSSC Guided Pathways Cohort Data. (Fall 2020: 14.5%, Fall 2021: 7.6%)
- 3-year indicator: In Progress
- 7-year indicator: In Progress
- Performance Indicators:
    - Appropriate course offerings each term
    - DFW rate below 10%
    - Hire new Student Success Navigator & new Tutoring & Mentoring Coordinator
- Tactics:
    - Create and/or enhance an early alert system
    - Offer new FYE course

Measure: College Readiness

Goal: A target percentage of incoming students will complete their gateway writing course
- Baseline: 37%, 5-year average (Falls 2015-2019) of OSSC Guided Pathways Cohort Data. (Fall 2020: 46.8%, Fall 2021: 32.6%)
- 3-year indicator: In Progress. Data will be available post-Spring 2023 graduation.
- 7-year indicator: In Progress
- Performance Indicators:
    - Appropriate course offerings each term
    - DFW rate below 10%
    - Hire new Student Success Navigator & new Tutoring & Mentoring Coordinator
- Tactics:
    - Create and/or enhance an early alert system
    - Offer new FYE course

Measure: Retention

Goal: A target percentage of incoming students will return for their second fall term
- Baseline: 32%, 3-year average (Falls 2017-2019) of OSSC Guided Pathways Cohort Data. (Fall 2020: 33.9%, Fall 2021: 33.8%)
- 3-year indicator: In Progress. Data available Fall 2023.
- 7-year indicator: In Progress
- Performance Indicators:
    - Hire STEP Coordinator & Benefits Navigation
    - Hire new Military & Veteran Student Success Role

- o Appropriate course offerings each term
- o Hire new Student Success Navigator & new Tutoring & Mentoring Coordinator
- Tactics:
  - o Create and/or enhance an early alert system
  - o Offer new FYE course
  - o Offer new Bridge Programming
  - o Culturally competent co-curricular campus events and activities on a monthly schedule

Measure: Enrollment

Goal: Fall Enrollment will increase each year

- Target: 7% annual increase in credit FTE. (HECC Student Full-Time Equivalent Report, 2019-20: 763, 2020-21: 757, 2021-22: 660)
- 3-year indicator: In Progress. Data available Fall 2023.
- 7-year indicator: In Progress
- Performance Indicator(s):
  - o Create a student life-cycle starting with initial expressed interest
  - o Refine an intake process that is designed with specific information and expectations
  - o Hire Student Outreach and Recruitment personnel
- Tactics:
  - o New CRM (Anthology Reach) implementation and integration
  - o Install new Outreach and Communications flow(s) from Prospect to Enroll
  - o Create new Application for Admission with updated student data points
  - o Launch personalized and segmented recruitment communications

Measure: Persistence

Goal: A target percentage of incoming Fall students will return for the Winter term

- Baseline: 63%, 5-year average (Falls 2015-2019) of OSSC Guided Pathways Cohort Data. (Fall 2020: 71.5%, Fall 2021: 59.7%)
- 3-year indicator: In Progress. Data available Fall 2023.
- 7-year indicator: In Progress
- Performance Indicator(s):
  - o Refine an intake process that is designed with specific information and expectations
  - o Improve student support services that help students succeed on their path
  - o Hire STEP Coordinator, Benefits Navigation, new Military & Veteran Student Success Role, new Student Success Navigator & new Tutoring & Mentoring Coordinator
- Tactics:
  - o Invest in Case Management software

- o   Create and/or enhance an early alert system
- o   Offer new FYE course
- o   Offer new Bridge Programming

Conclusion

CGCC looks forward to the data gathering and assessment process, as well as the work of benchmarking assessment to peer data. In doing so, CGCC aspires to launch a data dashboard that will be made available to internal faculty and staff employees. Comprehensive access to data will allow for informed, collaborative decision making across the institution. Having relevant, accurate information available guides planning efforts – both at the institutional and divisional level. This work is deep and complex, and it dictates that Columbia Gorge Community College continues to refine and improve its process, including the success measures that are used to inform goal-setting, planning, decision making and resource allocation for the future.

Evidence

SA.1   [Peer Benchmark Data – Enrollment](#)
SA.2   [Strategic Priorities and Institutional Effectiveness Indicators](#)
SA.3   [OSSC Guided Pathways Annual Cohort Data CGCC Disaggregated](#)

Programmatic Assessment

Overview

Columbia Gorge Community College's cyclical programmatic assessment is rooted in the following principles:

- Ensuring student proficiency in course, program and institutional student learning outcomes
- Systematically improving teaching and learning at the course, degree, certificate and program level
- Creating a continuous process that is collaborative and dynamic, engaging faculty and students to improve student success throughout the entire institution
- Utilizing assessment to improve instruction, while providing usable data that demonstrates this improvement to our community
- Balancing the process of assessment between the requirements of external compliance, and a meaningful and thoughtful practice, which is part of what educators do on a regular basis

Every five years, each academic program is required to complete Program Review. The review includes assessment and analysis of student learning as determined through quantitative

assessment data (student completion and retention, achievement of student learning outcomes, and enrollment trends) and qualitative assessment (student self-perception of achievement and faculty perception of student achievement). Additionally, working in partnership with university partners and local industry advisory boards, programs conduct a thorough evaluation of program curriculum, comparing it against current industry standards and/or transferability requirements. Finally, based on their findings, the department formulates goals to be achieved over the intervening five years, providing annual updates on progress. (PA-O.1)

For this report, the college is providing descriptions of assessment and improvement activities conducted in regards to Institutional Learning Outcomes (the academic backbone of the college's General Education program) and the programmatic growth and continuous improvement of the Electro-Mechanical Technology Program.

Evidence

PA-O.1   2022-23 Instructional Program Review Template

🔸 Programmatic Assessment – ILO Assessment

CGCC's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are the educational foundation of its General Education program and provide the foundation of essential skills, knowledge, habits of mind and values that transcend the boundaries of specialization, providing all degree-seeking students with a common language and skills. The goal of the ILOs within the General Education program is to transmit a common cultural heritage and provide students with a shared experience and set of essential skills that prepare them for success in their majors, as citizens of the US and the world, and in their personal and professional lives after graduation.

CGCC makes the commitment that:

Through their respective disciplines, CGCC students who earn a degree can:

1. Communicate effectively using appropriate reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. (Communication)

2. Creatively solve problems by using relevant methods of research, personal reflection, reasoning, and evaluation of information. (Critical thinking and Problem-Solving)

3. Extract, interpret, evaluate, communicate, and apply quantitative information and methods to solve problems, evaluate claims, and support decisions in their academic, professional and private lives. (Quantitative Literacy)

4. Use an understanding of cultural differences to constructively address issues that arise in the workplace and community. (Cultural Awareness)

5. Recognize the consequences of human activity upon our social and natural world. (Community and Environmental Responsibility)

The ILO Assessment schedule is aligned with the General Education program review, with the completion of each five-year cycle occurring in the spring prior to the beginning of the General Education review year. Although the ILO Assessment Committee is responsible for the annual analysis of student achievement of each ILO, this schedule allows for the analysis of student achievement of all five ILOs per assessment cycle, to be completed by the General Education department. While ILOs fall under the purview of the General Education department, teaching to and assessment of ILOs is not limited to General Education courses. All departments participate in teaching to the ILOs and appropriate Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes are also involved in the assessment process.

Process

Gathering Baseline and Ongoing Assessment – Cycle 1 and Going into Cycle 2

ILO assessment aligns with the General Education Department Review schedule, with each ILO being assessed once in the five-year period (PA-ILO.1). Applying a rubric that was adapted from the AACU's (Association of American Colleges and Universities) LEAP Value Rubrics (PA-ILO.2), instructors who taught courses that students would be taking towards the end of their degree (sophomore or 200-level courses) were asked to assess student achievement of an ILO. General Education courses are chosen based upon whether they have a major or minor designation for an ILO, and CTE courses are included if they have a course outcome that reflects the ILO. Certain 100 level courses are included in ILO assessment if appropriate. Once instructors have scored student work with the applicable rubric, data is submitted electronically to the academic assessment coordinator at the end of the term.

The first cycle of ILO assessment (2015-20), resulted in a baseline of student achievement for each ILO. The second cycle of ILO assessment began in 2021, with Communication (ILO #1). Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving (ILO #2) was completed in 2022, and Cultural Awareness (ILO #4) will be completed by the end of 2023. Community and Environmental Responsibility (ILO #5) and Quantitative Literacy (ILO #3), will follow respectively. The entire second cycle will be completed as of spring 2025.

Faculty involvement

The Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO) Assessment Committee, comprised of faculty and the director of curriculum & academic assessment, reviews and analyzes results, providing recommendations based on the results to improve student achievement of the ILOs. Using the data related to the criteria of the rubric, the ILO Assessment Committee makes recommendations for faculty focused instruction to help move more students towards achievement in particular criteria where students were identified as struggling. The results, analysis, and recommendations are compiled into a report by the academic assessment coordinator (PA-ILO.3).

During the first cycle of ILO assessment (2015-20), results were shared with faculty during fall in-

service as well as the committee's recommendations to help improve student achievement of each ILO. Faculty used time during in-service to develop strategies for instruction, curriculum and/or assessment based on the committee's recommendations (PA-ILO.4). Faculty then committed to integrating these strategies into their instruction and reported which strategies were used to support students in improvement for the various dimensions. This evidence has been captured through the Course Outcomes Assessment (COA) process with a reported total of 110 ILO #1 strategies and 131 ILO#2 strategies integrated into faculty classrooms (PA-ILO.5). (PA-ILO.6)

During the second cycle of ILO assessment (2020 to the present), faculty again scored student artifacts using the rubrics. Scores were submitted and results were analyzed; however, this time the ILO Assessment Committee used the baseline from the first ILO cycle to compare with students' scores from the second cycle of assessment. This comparison was used to gauge the impact of faculty instruction on student achievement of the ILOs. Since faculty in all departments, from Pre-College to CTE and General Education, participated by integrating more intentional ILO instruction, students from all departments have had the benefit of focused ILO instruction.

The ILO results from the second cycle were shared with faculty during fall in-service. During this 2nd cycle, the focus shifted from faculty creating teaching activities/strategies specific to targeted criteria, and instead narrowed in on the creation of assignments/assessments that aligned to the ILO rubric criteria. With this change in perspective, workshops/trainings were developed to support faculty in their ongoing efforts to improve student learning of ILOs, including: "Creating Assignments and Activities to Support Student Achievement of ILO#1: Communication" (fall 2020) and "Building Assignments and Assessments to Measure Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving Outcomes" (fall 2021).

In 2021, following the creation of a faculty professional development coordinator position, faculty began to take greater responsibility and leadership in the discussions related to ILOs. For example, nursing faculty began a conversation with the AAC regarding critical thinking and problem-solving based on student ILO assessment results. Ultimately this conversation grew to include department chairs from different disciplines and finally resulted in broader discussion with faculty as part of the college's Faculty Coffee Hour in February 2022. Nursing student results for Critical Thinking and Problem Solving indicated that there were some common issues, and that many of their students struggled with application of knowledge, evidence-based research and APA style formatting. Using this data, faculty discussed whether pre-requisite courses could implement strategies that would help support students in these areas, so that they have a better chance to be successful once they enter into the program. This Faculty Coffee Hour discussion is an example of faculty using ILO assessment-driven data to improve student achievement of ILOs, PLOs and CLOs. In addition, a faculty training led by Writing, Literature, & Foreign Language instructors in April of 2022 focused on a "A Critical Look at Critical Thinking." This training was an interactive workshop that looked at some of the latest research about critical thinking. It also provided faculty with an opportunity to examine recent examples and strategies of how to increase critical thinking in

students, across courses and departments.

Comparative Results from 1st to 2nd Cycle

2023 sees the college in the middle of the second five-year ILO assessment cycle, and the results have already shown substantial growth in student achievement.

Table 1 *Comparison of 2015-16 and 2020-21 Results from Assessment of Student Achievement of Combined Written and Oral Communication scores followed by Written Communication Scores*

Institutional Learning Outcome #1: Through their respective disciplines, CGCC students who earn a degree can: Communicate effectively using appropriate reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. (Communication)			
Year of Assessment	**2015-16**	**2020-21**	**Comparative Difference**
Total Number of Students who completed scored assignments for Written & Oral Communication	269	601	332
Total Percentage of Students Scored as Accomplished or Better for Communication:	71%	81%	10%
Written Communication:	**Total Percentage for Accomplished or better**	**Total Percentage for Accomplished or better**	
Written Communication Rubric: Audience, Context and Purpose: TOTALS	77%	82%	5%
Written Communication Rubric: Content Development: TOTALS	73%	78%	5%
Written Communication Rubric: Sources and Evidence TOTALS	68%	80%	12%
Written Communication Rubric: Organization and Presentation: TOTALS	67%	79%	12%
Written Communication Rubric: Control of Syntax and Mechanics: TOTALS	73%	79%	6%
Written Communication Rubric: Visual Aids: TOTALS	98%	82%	-16%
Total Percentage of Students who Scored Accomplished or Better with Written Communication Rubric	63%	80%	17%

Comparative Results from 1st to 2nd Cycle: ILO #1 Communication (2015-16 to 2020-21)

The 2020-21 Communication 2nd-cycle results indicated an increase in the percentage of students who were scored into "Accomplished" or better in all rubric criteria with the exception of "Visual Aids." There was a 17% increase for students who scored into "Accomplished" or better using the Written Communication rubric, and an increase of 14% of students scored into Accomplished or better using the Oral Communication rubric. Overall, student achievement increased by 10% when scores from both rubrics were combined.

Of note are the increases in the percentage of students scoring into "Accomplished" or better in the criteria that faculty were focusing on for the previous five years: a 12% increase for both "Organization and Presentation" and "Sources and Evidence" (Written Communication) (see table 1).

Table2 *Comparison of 2015-16 and 2020-21 Results from Assessment of Student Achievement of Oral Communication Scores*

Institutional Learning Outcome #1: Through their respective disciplines, CGCC students who earn a degree can: Communicate effectively using appropriate reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. (Communication)			
Year of Assessment	**2015-16**	**2020-21**	**Comparative Difference**
Oral Communication:	**Total Percentage for Accomplished or better**	**Total Percentage for Accomplished or better**	
Oral Communication Rubric: General Purpose: TOTALS	84%	92%	8%
Oral Communication Rubric: Organization: TOTALS	84%	93%	9%
Oral Communication Rubric: Language: TOTALS	94%	96%	2%
Oral Communication Rubric: Delivery: TOTALS	59%	92%	33%
Oral Communication Rubric: Evidence Based Support: TOTALS	75%	93%	18%
Total Percentage of Students who Scored Accomplished or Better with Oral Communication Rubric	79%	93%	14%

Similar increases in student achievement were seen in those artifacts scored with the Oral Communication rubric. Although faculty did not focus efforts on the categories of this rubric, all dimensions saw an increase in student achievement. Of note is the 33% increase in student achievement related to "Delivery," one of the three dimensions on which the ILO Assessment

Committee initially suggested faculty focus their efforts (see table 2).

Comparative Results from 1st to 2nd Cycle: ILO #2 Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving (2016-17 to 2021-22)

ILO#2, Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, had even more dramatic increases, with a 22% increase overall of students scored into "Accomplished" or better when scores for both the Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Rubrics were combined, with all criteria showing an increase (see table 3). Overall, there was a 20% increase for students who scored into "Accomplished" or better using the Critical Thinking rubric and an increase of 28% of students scored into "Accomplished" or better using the Problem-Solving rubric (see table 4).

Table 3 *Comparison of 2016-17 and 2021-22 Results from Assessment of Student Achievement of Combined Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving scores followed by Critical Thinking Scores*

Institutional Learning Outcome #2: Through their respective disciplines, CGCC students who earn a degree can: Creatively solve problems by using relevant methods of research, personal reflection, reasoning, and evaluation of information. (Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving)			
Year of Assessment	**2016-17**	**2021-22**	**Comparative Difference**
Total Number of Students who completed scored assignments for Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving	385	321	-64
Total Percentage of Students Scored as Accomplished or Better for Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:	67%	89%	22%
Critical Thinking Rubric			
Critical Thinking Rubric: Total Number of Students who completed scored assignments for Critical Thinking	262	260	-2
Critical Thinking:	**2016-17 Total Percentage for Accomplished or better**	**2021-22 Total Percentage for Accomplished or better**	**Comparative Difference**
Critical Thinking Rubric: Explanation of Issues: TOTALS	73%	88%	15%
Critical Thinking Rubric: Evidence: TOTALS	67%	89%	22%
Critical Thinking Rubric: Influence of Context and Assumptions TOTALS	64%	85%	21%

Critical Thinking Rubric: Student's Position: TOTALS	67%	88%	22%
Critical Thinking Rubric: Conclusions and Related Outcomes: TOTALS	68%	88%	20%
Total Percentage of Students who Scored Accomplished or Better with Critical Thinking Rubric	68%	88%	20%

Table 4 *Comparison of 2016-17 and 2021-22 Results from Assessment of Student Achievement of Problem-Solving Scores*

Institutional Learning Outcome #2: Through their respective disciplines, CGCC students who earn a degree can: Creatively solve problems by using relevant methods of research, personal reflection, reasoning, and evaluation of information. (Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving)			
Year of Assessment	2016-17	2021-22	Comparative Difference
Problem-Solving Rubric: Total Number of Students who completed scored assignments for Critical Thinking	123	61	-62
Problem-Solving:	Total Percentage for Accomplished or better	Total Percentage for Accomplished or better	
Problem Solving Rubric: Define Problem: TOTALS	67%	93%	26%
Problem Solving Rubric: Identify Strategies: TOTALS	65%	89%	23%
Problem Solving Rubric: Propose Solutions/Hypothesis: TOTALS	70%	92%	22%
Problem Solving Rubric: Evaluate Potential Solutions: TOTALS	66%	95%	29%
Problem Solving Rubric: Implement Solutions: TOTALS	65%	97%	31%
Problem Solving Rubric: Evaluate Outcomes: TOTALS	62%	98%	28%
Total Percentage of Students who Scored Accomplished or Better with Problem-Solving Rubric	66%	94%	28%

Of note are the increases in the percentage of students scoring into "Accomplished" or better in the criteria that faculty had been focusing on for the previous five years: 22% for Student's Position (Critical Thinking) and 29% for Evaluating Potential Solutions (Problem-Solving).

Is the Data True?

With such a significant increase in student achievement between 2015-17 and 2020-22, the ILO Assessment Committee felt it was important to discuss whether the results could be considered as real and valid ([PA-ILO.7](#) p.12). The committee came to the conclusion that the results could be recognized as reasonable and potentially actionable due to the following factors:

- Faculty reported, as part of their COA assessment, the use of 241 focused teaching strategies ([PA-ILO.5](#))

- ILO assessment results mirror transfer degree program assessment data results which use the same outcomes ([PA-ILO.8](#))

In addition, the following factors were thought to have potential for impact on student achievement:

- Greater ILO familiarity has become a part of CGCC assessment culture as demonstrated through faculty interest and engagement in professional development related to ILO assessment. ([PA-ILO.9](#))

- Students are more familiar with the ILOs and the rubric; faculty include ILOs in their syllabi and are more intentional in their teaching and transparent in the use of the assessment rubric.

- Classes may have been smaller during the pandemic, when the first two ILOs were reassessed, allowing for more instruction related to the ILO.

Looking Forward

Assessing the last three ILOs – ILO #4 Cultural Awareness in 2022-23, ILO #5 Community and Environmental Responsibility in 2023-24 and ILO #3 Quantitative Literacy in 2024-25 – will complete the second cycle of ILO assessment (PA.ILO.1). The ILO Assessment Committee has recommended that ILO assessment continue using the current rubrics through the second cycle, focusing on new criteria as identified by the results of each ILO assessment. Using the same rubrics for the second cycle will keep the data consistent, allowing for comparison between the results of the first and the second cycle.

Looking forward to cycle three, the ILO Assessment Committee recommended that the rubrics be updated to better reflect CGCC's ILO language and to provide more student friendly language in the rubrics.

Conclusion

As a result of combined faculty efforts in focused instruction, ILO assessment supported by professional development opportunities, faculty have not only accomplished their goal of increasing the percentage of students who achieve the Institutional Learning Outcomes of Communication and Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, but faculty have worked together to build a "culture of assessment," measuring student achievement of an outcome by scoring student artifacts with rubrics, analyzing data to determine where efforts should be focused, documenting the implementation of strategies to produce positive change, then re-assessing students to determine whether faculty efforts have been effective.

This growing culture of academic assessment at CGCC has positively impacted the institution through the greater internalization of outcomes assessment and its intuitive connection to teaching and learning. Working together towards a common goal, faculty and administration have increased the number and quality of student achievement of Institutional Learning Outcomes, and have already surpassed CGCC's Strategic Priority third year goal of 82% student achievement of ILOs (PA-ILO.10).

Evidence

PA-ILO.1   Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment Schedule
PA-ILO.2   website: ILO Assessment: Resources/ILO Assessment Rubrics
PA-ILO.3   website: ILO Assessment: Resources/Results and Reports
PA-ILO.4   Ideas & Resources for Teaching ILOs
PA-ILO.5   Evidence of Focused Instruction for ILO Student Achievement
PA-ILO.6   website: Course Outcomes Assessment Process
PA-ILO.7   2021-22 Analysis of ILO#2 Assessment, (p. 12)
PA-ILO.8   2021-22 AS/AGS/ASOT-BUS Degree Results
PA-ILO.9   2021-23 Professional Development Schedules and Tracking
PA-ILO.10   Strategic Priorities and Institutional Effectiveness Indicators

✤ Programmatic Assessment – Electro-Mechanical Technology

Evolving over nearly two decades, Electro-Mechanical Technology (EM-Tech) is a valued program at CGCC as well as in the local and regional community. Its origins are found in the early 2000s as the Electro-Engineering Technology (EET) program which was designed primarily to train students for available employment with the US Army Corps of Engineers. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, employment in the region was severely impacted when the local timber and aluminum industries began to downsize and ultimately close, leaving a significant number of skilled laborers unemployed. The EET program was a good fit for these newly unemployed workers. Then in and around 2005, a growing focus nationally on use of renewable energies (solar, hydro, wind) led to a rapid growth of wind farms within the Pacific Northwest. Wind turbine blades travelled I84

continuously, heading east to the Columbia River Gorge as well as neighboring counties. As this industry sector grew, so did the need for trained workers as wind energy technicians. CGCC saw an opportunity and stepped in to fill the need in 2007 by developing and implementing the first Renewable Energy Technology (RET) program on the west coast to offer comprehensive training for wind technicians. Between 2007 and 2013, running two cohorts a year, the program successfully trained and placed qualified graduates into this booming industry.

In its 2013-14 Program Review, the RET program recognized that it had begun to experience some potential program sustainability issues, including: sufficient enrollment, meeting changing industry standards/needs, and concerns regarding student success in classrooms/labs. These areas of concern have been the focus for the interim years and were continued to be addressed in the 2017-18 Program Review. It is important to note that these are not discreet issues, and interventions and their results may apply across one or all of the three areas. That being said, what follows is how these concerns were addressed.

Decreasing Enrollment

By 2014, RET had begun experiencing a drop in enrollment that resulted in only offering one cohort per year. In 2015-16, enrollment in gateway courses (EET 111, 112, and 113) had dropped to 12 students, with second year courses (EET 221, 222, and 242) averaging nine students in 2016-17. There began to be nervous conversations regarding the sustainability of the program. The local job market for wind technicians was showing signs of being filled, and graduates were needing to look further afield to find openings. While there was interest in program graduates from employers in different sectors beyond the wind farms, primarily the growing avionics industry, program design did not necessarily match their specific requirements, and RET was still marketed primarily as a wind energy technician program. Three strategies were initiated to combat the enrollment decline:

- **Removed Limited-Entry Requirements** – Starting in the fall of academic year 2016-17, CGCC removed entry restrictions from the RET program, making it open-entry rather than limited-entry. Separate program applications were no longer required, and students were allowed to start in any term. Some limitations still existed in that there were courses that had to be taken in a series; however, it was recognized that not all of the program coursework relied on strict prerequisites that would require students to enter only in the fall of year one.

- **Opened Technical Courses to Non-Certificate/Degree Seeking Students** – With the removal of limited-entry requirements, RET technical courses became available to be taken by students who were not necessarily certificate or degree seeking upon entry. Students who were already working in the field could now enroll in individual courses to improve skills in specific content areas. As a result, local employers (Cardinal Glass, Full Sail Brewery, Turtle Island, and the US Army Corps of Engineers) began to send employees to take one or two

courses that would support the employee in their current positions or prepare them for additional responsibilities and potential promotion. In addition, introductory courses were made available and promoted at local high schools, not only to gain enrollment in these specific courses, but also as recruitment opportunities for potential degree seeking students. Finally, in 2020, the US Army Corps of Engineers adopted the CGCC EM-Tech curriculum as part of the Power Plant Trainee program and has been regularly sending apprentices to the college.

- **Lowered Math Requirements** – Also in conjunction with the change to open-entry and after reviewing program curriculum and student success in technical courses, program faculty determined that the math requirement could be lowered, removing a potential roadblock for many students. The program's math requirement was changed from MTH 111 to MTH 95, and first-year technical courses revised their prerequisites from MTH 95 to MTH 65 with a "B" or better.

The program began to see positive enrollment trends immediately. Enrollment in gateway courses in 2016-17 showed a 142% increase over 2015-16. Second year courses in 2017-18 showed a 78% increase over 2016-17. Enrollment stayed strong until 2020-21 when numbers plummeted due to the impacts of COVID 19 restrictions. However, in fall of 2022-23, enrollment in gateway courses is once again on the rise. (PA.ET.1)

Changing Industry Standards/Needs

Between 2013 and 2017, the job market for wind technicians began to slow in the Pacific Northwest, and competition from similar training programs grew. In the 2013 Program Review, the forecast for future employment opportunities was described as:

… new wind development projects are looking flat; however, the UAS sector and solar industries are growing and have a promising employment outlook. (PA.EMT.2 p. 9)

The 2017-18 Program Review noted that graduation rates had declined since 2012:

Program graduation rates have declined since spring 2012 when 32 students earned their RET certificate and 34 earned their AAS degree. The table below reflects that decline.

Graduation Year	RET Certificates Awarded	RET AAS Degrees Awarded	Total
2013	26	17	43
2014	9	10	19
2015	10	7	17
2016	9	11	20

The decline is attributed to the leveling off of wind energy jobs. The demand decreased by 2014. However, graduation rates have remained somewhat consistent from 2014-2016 with an

increase in 2016. We continue to see an increase in enrollment in the program with 32 total students enrolled in 2017-18. ([PA.EMT.3 p. 6](#))

Review of program curriculum clarified that the program provided a strong foundational training in electronics, mechanical systems, hydraulics and motor controls and had the potential to set students up for a variety of career tracks. Shifting from a wind energy focus to address a broader scope of career opportunities was doable, and this revision was supported by the local Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Advisory Committee.

As a result, for the 2017-18 academic year, the program was renamed Electro-Mechanical Technology or EM-Tech for short. Emphasis was placed on courses in Electronic Engineering Technology (EET) and Mechanical Systems (MEC). Technical courses were updated, consolidated, and reorganized, and, to address the reported growth in the UAS sector, an introductory UAS course was added.

In 2020, the EM-Tech Department collaborated with the Math Department to develop MTH 110 Technical Math, which provides instruction with greater application to technical and industrial systems. In 2021-22, series of EET and MEC courses were retitled and credits were adjusted to more accurately reflect course content and the organization/flow of technical courses.

The STEM Advisory Committee has also encouraged the college to lower the number of requirements/credits so that students could complete and enter the workforce more quickly. In some cases, this was achieved by condensing a three course series to two courses, or removing a course entirely. In 2016-17, the AAS degree required a total of 106 credits for completion. By 2020-21, the total number of credits was trimmed to 99. And in 2022-23, it is now at 98 credits. The one-year certificate has also lowered its credit requirements, from 54 in 2016-17 to 42 in 2022-23.

The number of graduates increased after 2015 with a spike in 2018. Low numbers in 2021 and 2022 were likely the result of COVID restrictions in 2020 and part of 2021 (see table 5).

Table 5: Number of RET and EM-Tech certificates and degrees awarded between 2013 and 2022.

Graduation Year	RET/EM-Tech Certificates Awarded	RET/EM-Tech AAS Degrees Awarded	Total
2013	27 RET	18 RET	45
2014	9 RET	10 RET	19
2015	10 RET	8 RET	18
2016	9 RET	11 RET	20
2017	12 RET	9 RET	21
2018	6 RET, 12 EM-Tech	6 RET, 7 EM-Tech	31
2019	2 RET, 11 EM-Tech	8 RET, 4 EM-Tech	25
2020	13 EM-Tech	10 EM-Tech	23
2021	2 EM-Tech	5 EM-Tech	7
2022	5 EM-Tech	0 EM-Tech	5

Recent changes to the program have been difficult to assess since they were implemented during the COVID restrictions; however, job placement remains high. As COVID restrictions have ended, numerous employers have sought to renew their recruitment efforts with face to face information sessions hosted at CGCC.

Addressing Student Success – Redesigning Delivery of Instruction

In addition to these adjustments in program curriculum and design, EM-Tech faculty researched ways to improve course delivery in order to achieve better student success in lecture and lab portions of classes.

With National Science Foundation (NSF) funding, program faculty redesigned instructional delivery, embracing a "flipped classroom" model for teaching technical subjects. The lecture content of courses is now presented using YouTube videos, and all in-class time is dedicated to hands-on lab activities (PA-EMT.4). Several benefits were realized from this new model of teaching:

- **Better student comprehension** – Students are able to watch and review YouTube lectures at their own pace, repeating sections as needed for better comprehension. Students are required to complete a worksheet for each video prior to participation in the corresponding lab, and may not enter the lab without the successfully completed worksheet. Videos remain available throughout the term, and beyond, so that students may return to them as needed throughout their program.

- **Labs provide opportunity for student interaction and teamwork** – The activity-based learning of the lab exercises fosters a cohort environment where students look to each other to support their learning through study groups and lab partners. The benefit of a cohort program was therefore not lost with the shift to open-entry, and instead continues to provide an interactive and dynamic setting for students to grow their knowledge and skills.

- **Potential of improved school/life balance for students** – Asynchronous delivery of lecture material allows students to make their own schedule for at least part of the curriculum and limits the number of hours required to be on campus. The model helps them budget their time more appropriately.

Adopting the flipped classroom approach to teaching has positively affected student comprehension and success in that it offers students the opportunity to revisit material they may have struggled with, as well as a chance to review material prior to exams. A larger portion of students quickly adapt to this approach and achieve "A"s and "B"s, and only a small number fail the course. The reorganization allows for more hands-on experience with real world instrumentation and lab activities. Additionally, the reconfigurable nature of the online lectures allows a degree of overlap between courses and a refreshment of critical concepts. Lastly, the online material made it possible to conduct classes during COVID restrictions and during sever weather events. (PA-EMT.5)

Conclusion

By staying alert to changing industry standards and student success needs, the Electro-Mechanical Technology Program has kept their program relevant while overcoming difficult circumstances, showing that they are responsive, flexible and resilient. The program has adapted over the years to match a changing economic and employment landscape, and they have carried this out through thoughtful research, assessment and analysis, with student success always remaining a priority.

Evidence

PA-EMT.1   [2014-2023 Electro-Mechanical Technology Course Enrollment by Year](#)
PA-EMT.2   [2013 Renewable Energy Technology Program Review (p. 9)](#)
PA-EMT.3   [2017-18 Renewable Energy Technology Program Review (p. 6)](#)
PA-EMT.4   webpage: [EM-Tech YouTube Lecture Video Examples](#)
PA-EMT.5   [2013-2022 RET.EM-Tech Grades by Course](#)

Moving Forward

In this seven-year accreditation cycle, CGCC's focus has been to sustainably thrive in its service to the community. Indeed, the mission of Columbia Gorge Community College is to "build dreams and transform lives by providing lifelong educational programs that strengthen our community." As a rural, Hispanic-serving community college in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, the college serves a diverse student population with education and training that can transform lives, communities, and workforce. However, institutional success requires an understanding of the individual student context, and how that relates to the identification and closing of gaps in access, as well as the achievement of transformative learning. Looking ahead, college administration, staff and faculty are excited to see how the fruits of three specific initiatives – Guided Pathways, Title III, and Credit for Prior Learning – will help in advancing and achieving CGCC's mission.

Guided Pathways: Building and Strengthening Student Systems

In 2020, CGCC kicked off its new seven-year accreditation cycle by committing to the implementation of Guided Pathways principles. In fall 2020, the vice president of Instructional Services led an institution-wide book read to make the case for Guided Pathways, and to help build an understanding of where the primary foci should be over the subsequent years. A Steering Committee was named, comprised of faculty and administrators who were energized to develop, implement, and drive this student-centered work forward. The Steering Committee would convene regularly during the first two years to strategize the work, and reviewed at least an annual cohort of data for first-time-ever-in-college (FTEIC) students – the benchmark for gap analysis ([MVF.1](#)). In reaction to this data, a multi-year action plan was developed, divided into work to be led by Subcommittees ([MVF.2](#)). What follows is an update of that work, by subcommittee:

- **Student Services Redesign**. The primary goal is to review and adapt the life-cycle of students. In year two, there was a transition in the office of the vice president of Student Services, which has precipitated a reorganization of academic advising and outreach and recruitment. Another large focus over the last year has been the consolidation of Student Wraparound Services, which previously had been located across Student Services and Instructional Services. By relocating certain positions and grants (i.e., STEP, Benefits Navigator), these two departments have begun to develop a cohesive procedure for ensuring students who most need supports to overcome barriers to learning can do so with fewer hand-offs. Forthcoming efforts include: a review of Disability Resources through a vocational rehabilitation grant that will help to increase access to career and technical education programs as well as the hiring of a veteran's benefits and underrepresented populations advisor. ([MVF.3](#))

- **First Year Experience.** The ongoing effort to increase persistence and completion of the enrolled student population has focused on the first year student experience (FYE) and developmental education ("dev ed") redesign. In the first two years of the accreditation cycle, the FYE Subcommittee developed the curriculum for a FYE 100 College Survival Skills course – an evidence-based course aimed at unveiling the hidden curriculum of higher education, building belonging through cohorting, and calibrating a baseline of skills for college success ([MVF.4](#)). In Fall 2022, the first cohort of FYE students was taught, and evaluation of its success is ongoing. There is anticipation to see how the fruits of this course – and of the redesigned New Student Orientation and Summer Bridge program – are contributing to equitable student success.

- **Developmental Education Redesign.** Data indicates that accelerating student pathways through dev ed math and writing predicts persistence. After one year of development, Math has rolled out corequisite labs for four levels of math ([MVF.5](#)). As of 2023, Writing implemented two corequisite labs, IRW 115 Critical Reading and Writing and WR 121 College Composition ([MVF.6](#)). These labs, accompanied by the elimination of some introductory levels of math and writing, are intended to help students move more quickly to college level. Evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative successes is ongoing.

- **Pathways and Mapping.** Articulating clear pathways to career and transfer goals is the primary goal of this subcommittee. Six Pathways – the college's name for meta-majors – were identified with faculty, staff, and student input: Arts, Culture, & Communication; Business; Education & Social Sciences; Health; Math & Science; and Technology & Trades. Pathway webpages are being created, along with advising materials. The long-term goal is to ensure that these materials include up-to-date industry and career information for students. In addition, curriculum mapping work is currently being updated and completed, ensuring the alignment of student course learning outcomes, program learning outcomes,

and institutional learning outcomes. Finally, this work will also identify gateway and common courses for programs or disciplines within a pathway. ([MVF.7](#))

- **Professional Development**. Inspired by best practices, the college has developed a robust, grassroots faculty professional development ("PD") program, with collaboration between the Library and Learning Commons and a faculty PD coordinator. PD has become more distributed throughout the year (beyond fall and spring in-services), a Moodle page was created to aggregate content, and regular PD videos are made available to faculty. It is anticipated that the recent onboarding of the college's first director of diversity, equity, and inclusion will further help to align to student needs. ([MVF.8](#))

Further Initiatives

In addition to ongoing efforts to make systems more sustainable and student-centric through Guided Pathways, three other initiatives are poised to help realize the college's mission of building dreams and transforming lives:

- **Title III - Preparing the institution for learners.** In 2021-22, CGCC was awarded a five-year grant with the goal of better serving all students by strengthening supports to low-income and first-generation college students. To improve student learning, a bilingual tutoring & mentoring services coordinator and a student success navigator were hired. These positions provide triaging support for student self-identified needs. To improve the student experience, a faculty and staff committee identified new classroom technology to replace the old podium system, which will be upgraded this year, Hyflex classrooms have been fully installed and training for instructional use set to begin, and a physical Tutoring Cove space has been created for focused student support. ([MVF.9](#))

- **Credit for Prior Learning – Increasing access to higher education.** In 2022-23, CGCC was awarded a $1.2 million grant to improve and grow the current Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) opportunities. Steering Committee members, pursuant to having CPL training, developed an action plan for development of assessment criteria, institutional training, and outreach and recruitment. A particular focus has been on capturing the perspective and recognizing the learning of our Hispanic and Indigenous communities. The team is also developing a credit-bearing portfolio program that will help new students capture their personal and professional experience to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. ([MVF.10](#))

- **Facilities Master Plan** - **Imagining the future campus, based on current and projected needs.** During 2021-23, a core committee, overseen by the president, conducted an institutional survey to align physical plan needs with projected growth and change in academic and non-academic strategic plans. ([MVF.11](#))

Conclusion

The future of Columbia Gorge Community College is exciting, anchored in clear strategic goals and priorities, informed by student achievement data aimed at identifying and closing gaps, and driven by grant projects and initiatives that improve its infrastructure, organization, procedures, and its overall ability to serve its community. Most importantly, perhaps, these efforts are institutional efforts, harnessing the energy, expertise, and perspectives across divisions and across roles. By year seven of the accreditation cycle, the college's initiatives – Guided Pathways, Title III, Credit for Prior Learning, and Facilities Master Planning – will have reshaped how students are equitably supported throughout their achievement of their self-identified goals, achievement as measured across our disaggregated metrics will be more equitable, and teaching and learning will occur in spaces and with equipment and materials that are modern and aligned to demonstrated need by students, faculty, community, business and industry.

Evidence

MVF.1	[OSSC Guided Pathways Annual Cohort Data CGCC](#)
MVF.2	[Guided Pathways Action Plan UPDATE 2021-22](#)
MVF.3	[Student Services Redesign and Strategic Planning](#)
MVF.4	[First-Year Experience Course Content and Outcome Guide](#)
MVF.5	[Corequisite Courses in Math – Course Content and Outcome Guides](#)
MVF.6	[Corequisite Courses in Writing – Course Content and Outcome Guides](#)
MVF.7	[Program Mapping Project: Agenda with Notes Examples](#)
MVF.8	[2021-23 Professional Development Schedules and Tracking](#)
MVF.9	[Title III Grant Deliverables](#)
MVF.10	[Credit for Prior Learning Action Plan 2022](#)
MVF.11	[Facilities Master Plan Timeline](#)

Addendum

Response to 2013 and 2020 NWCCU
Recommendations

Recommendation #2 (2013)

CGCC has responded to the recommendations 1 and 2 made after the 011 NWCCU visit. The Core Themes are essentially the same but objectives and measures are more clearly defined and more relevant in assessing the goal of accomplishing the college's mission. Likewise, there is evidence that substantial work has been done in the assessment of outcomes at the course and program level. It is, however, recommended that the mapping of course and core outcomes (particularly) to program outcomes be completed and that the body of systematically collected relevant data at the course and program levels be increased. These data need to be used as indicators of achievement in verifying the assertion that educational programs are transforming lives (Effectiveness and Improvement – 4.A.3, 4.B.2 – Previous Standards).

2020 updated evaluation response:

This summary statement addresses the response to recommendation #2 under the old standards (stated above). As the evaluators reviewed the 2013 recommendation #2 within the 2020 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness report (xxix) as well as supporting and supplemental materials, conducted interviews and verified compliance with accreditation standards, they found evidence that CGCC has made progress in some but not all of what was recommended. The college has mapped its course and core learning outcomes to program outcomes, and it has increased the systematic collection of relevant data at the course and program level. However, these data are not fully integrated into the Transforming Lives Core Theme. These data are shared with that Core Theme Team, but they are not explicitly addressed in the Core Theme Team's work. (2020 Standards 1.C.5, 1.C.6, and 1.C.7)

Transforming Student Lives

Student achievement of outcomes is at the core of how CGCC measures meeting its mission of "transforming lives". CGCC believes that students' lives can be transformed when they achieve their personal, educational and vocational goals which enable them to engage in personally satisfying lives and useful careers.

As students move forward in their academic careers, they work towards achieving Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), which allows them to make progress towards the achievement of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). This step-by-step process occurring at the 3 levels (course, program, institutional) runs a parallel path to making progress towards completion of coursework, certificates and degrees, preparing students to meet their vocational goals, become career ready and ultimately move forward towards becoming responsible and contributing global citizens.

Achievement of Institutional Learning Outcomes as Indicators of Transforming Lives

CGCC has five Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that are the foundation of its General Education philosophy and provide all degree seeking CGCC students with a common experience. CGCC makes the commitment that:

Through their respective disciplines, CGCC students who earn a degree can:

1. Communicate effectively using appropriate reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. (Communication)

2. Creatively solve problems by using relevant methods of research, personal reflection, reasoning, and evaluation of information. (Critical thinking and Problem-Solving)

3. Extract, interpret, evaluate, communicate, and apply quantitative information and methods to solve problems, evaluate claims, and support decisions in their academic, professional and private lives. (Quantitative Literacy)

4. Use an understanding of cultural differences to constructively address issues that arise in the workplace and community. (Cultural Awareness)

5. Recognize the consequences of human activity upon our social and natural world. (Community and Environmental Responsibility) ([Rec-2(2013).1](#))

CGCC believes that achieving these five ILOs transforms students' lives by providing them with the possibilities for intellectual and personal growth. This kind of growth is critical to an enriched life, as well as necessary to attain the essential skills required for successful employment. The ILOs further support students in becoming informed and responsible citizens, a critical factor in the present and future state of the world and humankind. Supporting students in achieving these five ILOs, and thus moving them towards achieving their personal, academic and vocational goals, is the basis of CGCC's institutional purpose in the work of transforming students' lives.

Continuous Improvement to Outcome Mapping – Course, Program, Institutional

Previous Mapping Action

Mapping of ILOs has grown out of the curriculum process for granting General Education designations. To be recognized as having a General Education designation, course content must address the following:

1. CGCC's General Education Philosophy Statement: Through a broad, well-balanced curriculum, the General Education program strives to instill a lifelong love of learning and to foster civic competence within our students.

2. CGCC Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO):
   Course outcomes and content are required, at a minimum, to demonstrate that ILOs 1 (Communication) and 2 (Critical Thinking and Problem Solving) are addressed as having a "major designation," and at least one additional ILO is addressed as having a "minor designation."

Major and minor designations require that each ILO have a clear definition of instructional strategies, evidence of recurrent instruction, and employment of several assessment modes.

A Major Designation requires:
1. The outcome is addressed recurrently in the curriculum, regularly enough to establish a thorough understanding.
2. Students can demonstrate and are assessed on a thorough understanding of the outcome.
   - The course includes at least one assignment that can be assessed by applying the appropriate ILO rubric.

A Minor Designation requires:
1. The outcome is addressed adequately in the curriculum, establishing fundamental understanding.
2. Students can demonstrate and are assessed on a fundamental understanding of the outcome.
   - The course includes at least one assignment that can be assessed by applying the appropriate ILO rubric.

Based on recognition of General Education designations, a spreadsheet was created by the Curriculum and Academic Assessment Department to demonstrate which courses mapped to each ILO. (REC-2(2013).2) An added benefit was found that since General Education / Transfer degrees use ILOs predominantly as their program outcomes, the spreadsheet provided a practical mechanism that mapped course outcomes not only to ILOS but to general degree outcomes as well. (REC-2(2013).3)

Current Mapping Activities

In winter 2022, a second academic assessment coordinator was funded under the Title III grant (Title III Academic Assessment Coordinator – TAAC) for 10 hours a week. The TAAC's duties included working with department faculty to improve program and assessment plans through mapping of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) to ILOs, ensuring comprehensive coverage of PLOs and ILOs and to improve PLO Assessment Plans. Over the course of 2022, the TAAC has met with the majority of departments to complete this mapping project. (REC-2(2013).4).

The department faculty have been supportive of these meetings and the result has been a more comprehensive understanding on the part of faculty in regards to how courses lead to students'

achievement of both PLOs and ILOs. By faculty identifying holes in the coverage of PLOs and ILOs, this alignment project has produced concrete and intentional improvements in programming and assessment plans. These changes support improvements in curriculum and teaching.

Finally, these improvements lead to improved student achievement of PLO outcomes and ILOs due to more deliberate coverage of these outcomes. PLOs lead to certificate and degree attainment (student educational goals), and ILOs lead to the essential skills for future success in employment (student vocational goals). The mapping project supports the transformation of students' lives through their educational experience at CGCC.

ILO Assessment

ILO assessment aligns with the General Education Department Review schedule, with each ILO being assessed once in the five-year period. (REC-2(2013).5) Applying a rubric that was adapted from the AACU's (Association of American Colleges and Universities) LEAP Value Rubrics (REC-2(2013).6), instructors assess student achievement of an ILO and submit data electronically to the academic assessment coordinator at the end of the term.

The results are compiled into a report by the academic assessment coordinator. The Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO) Assessment Committee reviews and analyzes results, providing recommendations based on the results to improve student achievement of the ILOs. Using the data related to the criteria of the rubric, the ILO Assessment Committee makes recommendations for faculty focused instruction to help move more students towards achievement in particular criteria where students were struggling. (REC-2(2013).7)

During the first cycle of ILO assessment (2015-2020), results were shared with faculty during fall in-service, as well as the committee's recommendations to help improve student achievement of the ILO. Faculty used time during in-service to develop strategies for instruction, curriculum and/or assessment based on the committee's recommendations (REC-2(2013).8). Faculty then committed to integrating these strategies into their instruction and reported which strategies were used to support students in improvement of the various criteria. This evidence has been captured through the Course Outcomes Assessment (COA) process with a reported total of 110 ILO #1 strategies and 131 ILO#2 strategies integrated into faculty classrooms (REC-2(2013).9).

During the second cycle of ILO assessment (2020 to the present), faculty again scored student artifacts using the rubrics. Scores were submitted and results were analyzed, however this time the ILO Assessment Committee used the baseline from the first ILO cycle to compare with students' scores from the second cycle of assessment. This comparison was used to gauge the impact of faculty instruction on student achievement of the ILOs. Since faculty from all departments participated by integrating more intentional ILO instruction, students from all departments have had the benefit of focused instruction in communication, critical thinking and problem solving, quantitative literacy, cultural awareness and community and environmental responsibility.

Although only the first two ILOs (Communication and Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving) have gone through the second cycle, the results have shown substantial growth in student achievement. ILO#1, Communication, had a 10% increase in students scored into Accomplished or better when the scores of both the Written and Oral Communication Rubrics were combined (71% in 2015-16 and 81% in 2020-21). Of particular interest was the increases in the percentage of students scoring into Accomplished or better in criteria that faculty had focused on for the past five years: 12% increase for both "Organization and Presentation" (67% in 2015-16 and 79% in 2020-21) in and "Sources and Evidence" (68% in 2015-16 and 80% in 2020-21) (Written Communication Rubric). (REC-2(2013).10)

ILO#2, Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving had even more dramatic increases, with a 22% increase overall in students scored into Accomplished or better when scores for both the Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Rubrics were combined (67% in 2016-17 and 89% in 2021-22). The increases in the percentage of students scored into Accomplished or better in criteria that faculty focused on between 2017 and 2022 again confirmed faculty's efforts: 21% in "Student's Position – Critical Thinking Rubric (67% in 2016-17 and 88% in 2021-22) and 29% in "Evaluate Potential Solutions – Problem-Solving Rubric (66% in 2016-17 and 95% in 2021-22. (REC-2(2013).11)

With such a significant increase in student achievement between 2015-17 and 2020-22, the ILO Assessment Committee spent a considerable amount of time discussing whether the results could be considered as real and valid. The committee came to the conclusion that the results could be recognized as reasonable and potentially actionable due to the following factors:

- Faculty reported, as part of their COA assessment, the use of 241 focused teaching strategies (REC-2(2013).9)
- ILO assessment results mirror transfer degree program assessment data results which use the same outcomes (REC-2(2013).12)

In addition, the following factors were thought to have potential for impact on student achievement:

- Greater ILO familiarity has become a part of CGCC assessment culture as demonstrated through faculty interest and engagement in professional development related to ILO assessment (REC-2(2013).13)
- Students are more familiar with the ILOs and the rubric; faculty include ILOs in their syllabi and are more intentional in their teaching and transparent in the use of the assessment rubric.
- Recognized that classes may have been smaller during the pandemic, when the first two ILO were reassessed, allowing for more instruction related to the ILO

Sharing with Institution – Building the Culture of Assessment

The ILO results from the second cycle were shared with faculty during fall in-service. During this 2nd cycle, the focus shifted from faculty creating teaching strategies specific to targeted criteria, and instead narrowed in on the creation of assignments/assessments that aligned to the ILO rubric criteria. Workshops included: "Creating Assignments and Activities to Support Student Achievement of ILO#1: Communication" (fall 2020) and "Building Assignments and Assessments to Measure Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving Outcomes" (fall 2021).

In 2021, a faculty professional development coordinator position was created, resulting in numerous faculty discussions and workshops related to the ILOs. For example, nursing faculty began a conversation with the AAC regarding critical thinking and problem-solving based on student ILO assessment results. Ultimately this conversation grew to include department chairs from different disciplines and finally resulted in broader discussion with faculty as part of the college's Faculty Coffee Hour in February 2022. Nursing student results for Critical Thinking and Problem Solving indicated that there were some common issues, and that many of their students struggled with application of knowledge, evidence-based research and APA style formatting. Using this data, faculty discussed whether prerequisite courses could implement strategies that would help support students in these areas, so that they have a better chance to be successful once they enter into the program. This Faculty Coffee Hour discussion is an example of faculty using ILO assessment-driven data to improve student achievement of CLOs and PLOs, transforming not only nursing students lives, but any students in those prerequisite classes, by providing them with the necessary instruction to succeed in their courses and programs of study.

In addition, a faculty training led by Writing, Literature, & Foreign Language instructors in April of 2022 focused on a "A Critical Look at Critical Thinking." This training was an interactive workshop that looked at some of the latest research about critical thinking. It also provided faculty with an opportunity to examine recent examples and strategies of how to increase critical thinking in students, across courses and departments. Recognizing that improved critical thinking skills are important not only in academic success, but in future vocational endeavors as well, faculty's focus on building these essential skills helps to transform CGCC students into discerning global citizens.

As a result of combined faculty efforts in focused instruction and ILO assessment, supported by professional development opportunities, faculty have not only accomplished their goal of increasing the percentage of students who achieve the Institutional Learning Outcomes of Communication and Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, but faculty have worked together to build a "culture of assessment", measuring student achievement of an outcome by scoring student artifacts with rubrics, analyzing data to determine where efforts should be focused, documenting the implementation of strategies to produce positive change, then re-assessing students to determine whether faculty efforts have been effective.

Conclusion

The growing culture of academic assessment at CGCC has positively impacted the institution through the greater internalization of outcomes assessment and its intuitive connection to teaching and learning. Working together towards a common goal, faculty and administration have increased the number and quality of student achievement of Institutional Learning Outcomes. These outcomes will support students in meeting their personal, educational and vocational goals, transforming their lives through education.

Evidence

REC-2(2013).1	webpage: Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment
REC-2(2013).2	ILO Gen Ed List
REC-2(2013).3	AS/AGS/ASOT-BUS PLO 2022-23 Assessment Plans
REC-2(2013).4	Program Mapping Project – Map Examples
REC-2(2013).5	Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment Schedule
REC-2(2013).6	webpage: ILO Assessment: Resources/ILO Assessment Rubrics
REC-2(2013).7	2015-20 Analysis of Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment
REC-2(2013).8	Ideas & Resources for Teaching ILOs
REC-2(2013).9	Evidence of Focused Instruction for ILO Student Achievement
REC-2(2013).10	Comparison Results for ILO 1 2015 to 2021
REC-2(2013).11	Comparison Results for ILO 2 2016 to 2022
REC-2(2013).13	2021-22 AS/AGS/ASOT-BUS Degree Results
REC-2(2013).14	2021-23 Professional Development Schedules and Tracking

Recommendation #1 (2020)

The Commission recommends that Columbia Gorge Community College review its process for monitoring the internal environment and gathering input related to institutional decisions and planning to ensure the flow of communication is working efficiently and effectively across the entire institution. (2020 Standard – 1.B.4)

Following the Commission's recommendation in 2020, the college has organized several initiatives to improve the sharing of information as well as the gathering of diverse perspectives. The primary areas of focus were internal communication, college-community communication, and college-student communication.

Internal Communications

In an effort to improve the flow of internal communication, the college contracted with the Higher Performance Group in 2022 to work with both the President's Council and Leadership Council to build leadership and communication skills. Following initial trainings with each group, the Higher

Performance Group has continued working with college leadership by providing mentorship in the areas of coaching, professional development, team building activities, and guidance/training in effective leadership and communication. As part of the coaching process, an evaluation and ultimate restructuring of the Leadership Council's membership and purpose was undertaken. The purpose of this restructured group is as follows:

> *LC contributes to college wide decision-making by examining and discussing issues/topics brought to them by President's Council or by a member of Leadership Council, determining a course of action, reaching a conclusion by majority vote and sharing the results with President's Council, who will make the final decision. Topics addressed by LC consist of items that impact the success of the institution by aligning with the college's strategic goals and, whenever possible, focusing on specific, measurable outcomes.*

Additionally, open forums with the president are conducted on the third Friday of each month. This 1.5-hour session gives staff and faculty members the opportunity to ask questions of the president and President's Council. Attendees also share updates on their department, campus-wide events, new projects, successes, and challenges.

To improve accessibility, as well as support their open-door policy, the president's and Foundation offices moved from the fourth floor to the more trafficked first floor of building 2. The president felt that being on the fourth floor distanced the president and staff too much from the rest of the college.

Communicating with the Community

In August 2022, the college launched a new website which provides clearer information and lines of contact and communication between community members, prospective students and the college. ([REC-1.1](#)) At several key points throughout the development process, students, staff, and faculty were engaged to determine their needs and how the new site could address issues of communication and information flow. In evaluating the previous website, three main issues were recognized. First, though more than 35% of users accessed the site on mobile devices, the old site did not perform well on such devices, creating possible issues with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The new site is optimized to work on all devices, so all users are accommodated while maintaining ADA and WCAG compliance. Second, the structure of the old site did not allow data to be easily updated, which led to out-of-date information being presented. Content is easily updatable on the new site, though providing and training staff to maintain updates is an issue CGCC is still working on. Third, though the primary use of the site was to present information on CGCC's programs and services, the old site was poorly organized and information was difficult to find. The new site was planned to ensure an optimal user experience and user interface, and future additions to the site will keep those principles in mind.

In addition, direct communication with the community occurs through the publication of an electronic newsletter and radio broadcasts. The president writes a monthly address in Campus Currents, the electronic newsletter that goes to all staff, faculty, students, and interested community members. (REC-1.2) Members of President's Council also participate in monthly radio interviews, providing mini "state of the college" progress reports to the community at large. The radio interviews are conducted in English and Spanish.

Communicating with Students

Addressing the issue of student communication has been accomplished in several ways, in addition to Campus Currents and the website. The director of housing and student life actively recruits students to participate in student leadership, on-campus events, and off-campus student-led events. Additionally, a monthly newsletter is circulated to our on-campus residents. Increasing student engagement has also increased student-staff/faculty communication. Outreach to current and prospective students via social media channels, including Instagram, Facebook, as well as integrated YouTube-related content, has been particularly effective in interest-generation for students across several initiatives, including co-and-extra-curricular campus activities, scholarship and financial aid opportunities, and prospective student events. CGCC has recently invested in a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is designed to improve the ways prospective students receive information and expectations from CGCC as they progress through the front-end student life-cycle toward entry to the college. Included will be an enhanced automated and personalized communications master plan which will include HTML email communication, text message capabilities, and interactive content. It will enable students to gain a deeper and more complete picture of how they navigate their journey to CGCC and beyond.

Conclusion

Whether through forums, electronic newsletters, the college website, revised leadership structures and upgraded student information systems, CGCC is improving its internal, college-community and college-student communication. Access to information and transparency is at the forefront of the college's efforts in this arena. While the college is confident that recent improvements have resolved this recommendation, all parties acknowledge that ensuring communication that promotes confidence and understanding is a goal that requires continuous review and dedication.

Evidence

REC-1.1	website: cgcc.edu
REC-1.2	Campus Currents Examples

Recommendation #2 (2020)

The Commission recommends that the college provide resources necessary to fully implement assessment plans, collect direct measures of learning, and create a culture of learning outcomes assessment at the institutional, program, and course level. (2020 Standard 1.C.5, 1.C.6, 1.C.7)

Columbia Gorge Community College values student learning assessment for all of its academic programs, and implements best practices through a collaboration between faculty and administration. Academic assessment is guided and supported by the Curriculum & Academic Assessment Department (CAAD), which has existed in one form or another at the college since 2013. The department defines the purpose of academic assessment as:

- Ensuring student proficiency in course, program and institutional student learning outcomes

- Systematically improving teaching and learning at the course, degree, certificate and program level

- Creating a continuous process that is collaborative and dynamic, engaging faculty and students to improve student success throughout the entire institution

- Utilizing assessment to improve instruction, while providing usable data that demonstrates this improvement to our community

- Balancing the process of assessment between the requirements of external compliance, and a meaningful and thoughtful practice, which is part of what educators do on a regular basis

The primary assessment activities supported by CAAD are:

- Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) Assessment – measures student achievement of individual course outcomes. Results and analysis from the outcomes assessment are used by faculty to improve teaching and learning at the course level.

- Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) Assessment – annually measures student achievement of degree, certificate and program outcomes. Departments analyze the cumulative effect of the course work that constitutes a degree, certificate or program as part of their Program Review. Information from the assessment is used by departments to make improvements that strengthen degrees, certificates and programs and help increase student success.

- Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO) Assessment – measures whether degree-seeking students graduate with a community college level mastery of the Institutional Learning Outcomes, achieving the skills and knowledge that are at the foundation of CGCC's General Education program.

- Academic Program Review – reviews program curriculum and delivery to ensure relevancy, currency and alignment with professional standards and workforce needs. Brings together the three levels of student learning outcomes assessment and evaluates overall student achievement of departmental programs.

- Academic Assessment Training – provide training for faculty related to assessment practices and concepts.

Since CGCC's last self-evaluation in 2020, the college has continued to further invest in ensuring that the necessary resources are available in order to carry out its assessment efforts and create a culture of learning outcomes assessment at the institutional, program and course level.

New Investment into PLO Assessment and Mapping

Scope of Work

As part of the college's Title III grant, awarded in 2021, CGCC contracted with an existing adjunct faculty member to provide part-time program outcomes assessment and mapping coordination. The Title III academic assessment coordinator (TAAC) is assigned to CAAD, and is funded for the duration of the five-year grant.

The responsibilities of the TAAC is to support existing Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) Assessment, the introduction of expanded assessment activities, and the development of related Guided Pathways initiative work. (REC-2(2020).1) Primary responsibilities include:

- Outcomes Assessment Mapping: Organize meetings to work with departments on mapping course outcomes to program outcomes, looking for gaps in coverage, and identifying areas for improvement.

- PLO Assessment Plans: Ensure that departments' PLO Assessment Plans were current, reflective of student learning, relevant, and part of continuous improvement efforts.

- Positioning of programs within new Pathways structure: In collaboration with department faculty, determine gateway and common Pathway courses, and choose recommended courses to fulfill General Education Elective requirements within degree programs.

Throughout the winter, spring and fall of 2022, meetings were scheduled by the TAAC to bring together academic program leads, department faculty, and academic assessment staff. In preparation for each meeting, The TAAC created individualized Course-Program Learning Outcome Maps that charted how Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) from each applicable degree/certificate course mapped to specific PLOs. These were sent to department leads and faculty, who reviewed the maps, discussed, and made corrections as needed. Maps were then reviewed in the mapping meetings in order to identify gaps in PLO coverage and whether Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were addressed in programmatic coursework. (REC-2(2020).2)

In addition, the TAAC reviewed PLO Annual Assessment Plans and results with the department, checking for missing information and clarifying the annual schedule. Emphasis was placed on process, ensuring that department faculty understand how to complete the assessment, the meaning and value of results, and how PLO Assessment tied in with cyclical Program Review and continuous improvement of student learning.

Finally, each mapping meeting included discussion around the newly structured program Pathways and how each program degree and/or certificate fit within this structure. The goal was to strategize with faculty in identifying gateway courses for each program, courses that would introduce undecided students to different options within the Pathway, potential cross-over courses between programs within a Pathway, and develop a list of recommended General Education Electives for the discipline areas for each degree.

Initially, the focus was on Career and Technical (CTE) programs, degrees and certificates. This work will be expanded to general education and transfer programs in the coming year. ([REC-2(2020).3](#))

Impacts/Improvements

This direct engagement between academic departments and assessment staff resulted in several improvements in academic assessment:

- Opportunity for faculty and department leads to interact directly with academic assessment staff, ask questions, clarify areas of confusion, relate concerns, and gain a greater understanding of the purpose of outcomes assessment;

- Improved understanding of how CLOs map to PLOs and why this has importance;

- Added recognition of how Career and Technical Education content courses have the potential to address ILOs;

- and, growing recognition of how CLO and PLO assessment fits within Program Review.

In addition, this work supported development and understanding of the college's Guided Pathways initiative:

- Provided an opportunity for department faculty to discuss Guided Pathways and ask questions about its impacts on individual departments;

- Identified introductory courses within program curriculum that may potentially help students in deciding on a specific program declaration;

- and, identified General Education Elective courses that best fit student needs within specific programs, with the potential to direct them to better choices and to minimize student indecision.

Each of these improvements have the potential to lead to improvements in curriculum design, instructional practices, and student information/advising.

New Investment into Faculty Professional Development

Scope of Work

In fall 2021, the college increased its commitment towards developing a more robust faculty professional development program, led by a full-time faculty member who was given release time to design, coordinate and implement the professional development programming. This work was funded by the college's Title III grant. The result was an offering of monthly workshops and faculty coffee hours that were geared toward engaging faculty in cross-departmental conversations about topics that were of interest to them. Topics have ranged from "Tips and Tools for Engaging Students" and "Becoming an Anti-Racist Instructor" to "10,000 Hours of Critical Thinking." ([REC-2(2020).4](#))

Over the two years, the following topics more specifically related to assessment were discussed:

- OCNE and our Nursing Program (focused on bridging the skill gap in critical thinking and problem solving for nursing students)
- 10,000 Hours of Critical Thinking
- Rigor in Instruction
- The Joy of Assessment
- Contract Grading: A Deep Dive into a more Equitable Grading Strategy

Impacts/Improvements

Prior to this new investment in faculty professional development, these types of activities were hit and miss, relegated to the occasional workshop and faculty in-service programming. Now with a dedicated faculty lead, regular scheduling, and the opportunity for faculty to request topics of interest to them, there has been increased engagement around teaching and student learning.

It also became somewhat apparent that there was a new feeling regarding assessment and its incorporation in the classroom. Faculty who were formerly unwilling to recognize the value of assessment, even as they made use of it, are more open to think about and discuss assessment without the usual resistance. The understanding of assessment seems to be moving subtly toward a more accepted and intrinsic part of their teaching, and less a required activity related to compliance.

Finally, these investments into professional development are recognized as sustainable, and the Instructional Service Department is committed to continuing the process going forward.

Conclusion

CGCC has had a reasonably robust program of academic assessment since becoming independently accredited in 2013. However, assessment has not always been a popular subject and a word often avoided. The recent new investments in Program Outcomes Assessment & Mapping as well as Faculty Professional Development, have resulted in college administration and faculty expanding the conversations around academic assessment and student learning, allowing for direct dialogue faculty to faculty. It has made it possible for assessment administrators to take a step back, getting out of the way of these conversations, while still providing supports as needed. There is a tentative feeling that the word "assessment" is less likely to be the cause of stress and unhappiness, and instead is beginning to be recognized, maybe even accepted, as an integral part of teaching and learning.

And that would be the planting and growth of a culture of assessment.

Evidence

REC-2(2020).1	Title III Academic Assessment Coordinator Job Description
REC-2(2020).2	Program Mapping Project: Spreadsheet Map Examples
REC-2(2020).3	Program Mapping Project: Agenda with Notes Examples
REC-2(2020).4	2021-23 Professional Development Schedules and Tracking

Recommendation #5 (2020)

The Commission recommends that the college evaluate faculty, staff, and administrators regularly and systematically in alignment with institutional mission and goals, educational objectives, and policies and procedures. (2020 Standard 2.F.4)

Prior to the 2020 Accreditation visit, the college process for regular and systematic annual evaluations of faculty, staff, and administrators was loosely implemented. The faculty evaluation process, codified in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (REC-5.1), was not conducted consistently across probationary and regular status faculty employees due in large part to a lack of a formal, centralized system for communicating and tracking evaluation progress. A reliance upon individuals to implement the faculty evaluation system likely contributed to questions about the import or relevance of the process overall. For staff and administrators, on the other hand, the evaluation process was a lengthy five pages with eleven categories and forty-four individual areas to be evaluated. Due to the cumbersome nature of the evaluation, many employees and managers were reluctant to complete them in a timely, consistent manner. Additionally, feedback and goals on completed evaluations were often not seen as tied to institutional mission, goals and objectives, or not clearly aligned. Through work addressing Recommendation 5, the college resolved to ensure regular, systematic evaluation of all employees, demonstrating a commitment to improved

performance management, as a reflection of the continuous improvement cycle that is institutional assessment.

Attaining a Regular and Systematic Process

For Faculty

As it pertains to faculty evaluation, Instructional leadership discussed and struck an agreement with the Union on a restart of the evaluation process, with administrative commitment to centralizing tracking and improving communication with deans, directors, chairs and faculty. In year one of the new accreditation cycle (2020-21), Instructional leadership created a tracking spreadsheet to identify employee status, hire date, and current evaluation status, and then began regular, timely instruction and reminders (i.e., term-by-term) for the completion of evaluation steps. (REC-5.2) The tracking and communication process has been tweaked over subsequent years, with plans to review and suggest improvements for next year.

For Staff and Administration

In 2020-21, the President's Council (executive leadership) reviewed the then-current evaluation form and discussed what performance management attributes were most important to institutional progress in mission fulfillment, and how those attributes are best graded (i.e., ratings, narrative). The proposal for a new, more precise staff and administrator evaluation document was brought before the Leadership Council (unit managers) for review, and was ultimately approved and implemented. Over the course of its implementation, feedback about the experience of managers and employees with the new process was provided to President's Council members and led to more changes in the assessment process. As of the end of 2022, the college has redesigned the evaluation form to be a one-page evaluation with ten areas to be evaluated. (REC-5.3) The redesign was brought to the Leadership Council for feedback prior to being implemented in early 2022. The new redesigned evaluation had the ability to include goals in the evaluation process, and supervisors were encouraged to utilize the goal feature beginning in 2022, as in 2023 they would become required. Staff are evaluated twice during a rolling year. They receive an annual performance evaluation, which includes a self-evaluation and a mid-year evaluation that consists of a brief narrative without self-evaluation. Evaluations are tracked through the Paylocity payroll system and can be accessed by employees and supervisors, which allows both to see what evaluations are currently due. The system also allows Human Resources to generate reports and reminder emails.

Conclusion: Evaluation as Part of Mission Fulfillment

In August 2022, the President's Council further codified performance management as one of three Institutional Strategic Goals, recognizing regular, systematic evaluation as one of the most important parts of performance management and requisite to successful mission fulfillment efforts.

([REC-5.4](#)) Strategic goals have been shared with the Board of Education and institution, and President's Council reviews its performance on this goal every ninety days. The college believes it has successfully addressed this recommendation, and is excited to continue to see the fruits of quality, regular evaluation in its mission fulfillment activities.

Evidence

REC-5.1	[Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement: Article 12 Evaluation](#)
REC-5.2	[Evaluation Tracking Spreadsheet](#)
REC-5.3	[Annual Performance Evaluation - Manager and Employee](#)
REC-5.4	[Institutional Strategic Goals](#)

Recommendation #6 (2020)

The Commission recommends that the college provide sufficient personnel and funds to ensure that library and information resources support the programs and curriculum. (2020 Standard 2.H.1)

The Columbia Gorge Community College Library and Learning Commons (LLC) has the necessary staff and resources to fulfill its mission to "break down systemic barriers, foster inclusivity, and provide equitable access to resources that fulfill the curricular mission of the college."

Library Staff

In September 2020, CGCC hired an MLIS-certified digital access and public services librarian to manage the LLC. Current staff includes one full-time librarian, one part-time cataloger/desk manager, and Federal Work Study Students. Recently, LLC staff reassessed its ability to meet student needs and found that the biggest request was for expanded hours. As a result, an additional part-time library assistant I position was developed that will allow the library to expand its hours of operation to 8:00 am – 5:00 pm on Monday, 1:00 – 7:00 pm on Saturdays, and 8:00 am – 7:00 pm for the remainder of the week.

In addition, the library expanded to include the Tutoring and Mentoring Cove. Title III grant money is being used to support subject-specific, in-house tutoring in math, science, and writing. The college also invested in 280 hours of NetTutor, which will give students the opportunity to seek help with higher level courses. Finally, a new Tutoring and Mentoring Committee, led by the library director, includes faculty and staff who field tutoring requests, direct students to appropriate academic and non-academic related resources, and pair students with the committee or campus community member who is best equipped to meet their need.

Physical Resources

The LLC began its most recent weeding cycle in January 2023. The library staff are working closely with student and faculty focus groups to ensure the materials are adequately discarded, updated, and replaced in ways that support the curricular mission of the college ([REC-6.1](#)). The library also received an Enhancing Academic Library Collections Grant from the Oregon State Library for FY 2021. This $5,000.00 in funding went to the expansion of the library's physical Spanish collection, which seeks to better serve the needs of LatinX students and honor the college's HSI designation.

Other future adjustments include reallocation of the physical space to expand tutoring/mentoring services and integrate the Teaching and Learning Center, which currently uses the library as a professional development space.

Technological Resources

The LLC is able to provide additional technological, virtual learning, and database support. A general research guide with subject-specific guidance is imported into research-focused courses each term. ([REC-6.2](#)) This includes an embedded librarian feature that allows students to contact a librarian directly from their course shell. Students can also book virtual or face-to-face research appointments, and instructors can request multi-modality tours and research demos during their courses.

The college website redesign improved the user experience of the virtual library. ([REC-6.3](#)) Access to over 100 free and subscription-based databases in over 20 disciplines are easily accessible online. Student volunteers, workers, and library staff dedicated the 2022 fall term to expanding the research database selection to include the "Voices from the Global Majority" collection, which contains 30 diverse resources in subject areas relevant to CGCC's program and curricular offerings. ([REC-6.4](#)) Through grant money, the LLC was able to obtain headsets, laptops, and webcams that students use to meet their remote learning needs. These materials can be rented on a term-length basis. Finally, additional grant funding also allowed for the purchase or upgrade of lighting technology used in distance education delivery, improving hybrid and asynchronous learning environments.

Textbook Affordability

The LLC collaborated with Pre-College to incorporate course materials into the library circulation system in September 2020. Removing this cost barrier for some of the college's most vulnerable student population was so effective that the library extended their efforts to include many of the college-level math and science courses. As a result, many students who are taking lower division general education courses can do so without having to incur textbook costs.

In spring 2022, the LLC and the campus store also formed a textbook affordability committee alongside faculty members who are committed to reducing external-to-enrollment costs. In addition to identifying instructional areas that could be made more equitable through lowered material costs, this committee also identifies professional development opportunities for faculty who wish to work toward redistributive, recognitive, and representational justice through adoption, adaptation, and/or creation of Open Educational Resources. In spring 2023, the LLC plans to pair up with the research writing course to produce the college's first open access journal, which will be developed through open pedagogy.

Professional Development

In cooperation with faculty leadership, the LLC helps produce monthly professional development workshops for faculty and offers access to weekly Monday Morning Mentor videos for instructors who wish to expand their teaching skills. ([REC-6.5](#)) The library is sponsoring two keynote and workshop sessions in March and April to support distance learning at Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Conclusion

A vibrant, living segment of CGCC, the LLC is committed to providing student and faculty centered services. Since the college's last self-evaluation, the LLC has been able to resolve its previous staffing concerns and resultantly increase services that support student success.

Evidence

REC.6.1	[Library Weeding AR/OP draft](#)
REC-6.2	[Research Guide Example](#)
REC-6.3	website: [Library and Learning Commons](#)
REC-6.4	website: [Research Data Bases - Voices from the Global Majority](#)
REC-6.5	[2021-23 Professional Development Schedules and Tracking](#)

Recommendation #7 (2020)

> *The Commission recommends that the college provide sufficient information technology resources and infrastructure in quantity and quality to support the learning and working environment consistent with the college mission. (2020 Standard 2.I.1)*

Since the last NWCCU visit, Information Technology (IT) staffing has remained stable and resources have been identified to allow for updates and upgrades to various systems.

Information Technology Staffing

Staffing continues to be a challenge due to budget and the lack of a recruitment pool of individuals with applicable experience. However, IT staffing and resources are being built into current and future grant applications to allow for expanded training, professional development, and IT infrastructure.

In 2021 the college received a Title III grant which allowed for a new position to be created around Instructional IT needs. Additionally, in spring of 2021, the college applied for a grant through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), titled Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program, which would enable the college to fund additional training for IT staff and to add an additional instructional technician and a systems administrator. The NTIA is continuing to make awards to this submission slowly. In late 2022, the executive director of infrastructure job description was revised, refocusing responsibilities solely to Information Technology and shifting previous responsibility for managing Facilities elsewhere. This restructure will allow the executive director to make the necessary assessments of current and future needs of the college's IT services.

Information Technology Resources

The Title III grant also contains funding to upgrade and update IT systems. The college has begun upgrades to current classroom podium systems and to student computers in the Library and Learning Commons. In winter 2022, IT met with instructional staff and faculty to create a plan to replace aging podium systems used in classrooms. Summer 2022, the Classroom Technology Replacement Task Force, consisting of faculty and staff members, was convened to review available classroom technology options. The plan is to revamp podiums to include multi-touch displays and more user friendly interface, which will allow faculty to expand learning modalities. Zoom Room training was provided for instructors who were scheduled to use the multi-modality Hyflex technology in winter 2023, with a full roll out in spring 2023.

Remaining NTIA grant funds provided funding for upgraded Wi-Fi, remote access upgrades, and multiple different forms of IT equipment for students, i.e. hotspots, laptops, iMacs, and software. The college was also able to provide Wi-Fi with better range, more capacity, faster connection, better security, and make available current, updated technology to our students, staff, and faculty.

In May 2021, CGCC launched its new student information system. This system is cloud-based and allows employees to access the system from anywhere with an internet connection. There were many security and technology improvements that came with this upgrade. It provides students with more self-service options, is mobile friendly, and has improved security.

Lastly, the college made the following technology improvements in the summer of 2022:

- Launched a redesigned website, including security improvements and mobile friendly themes.

- Through funding from a USDA grant, installed two connected "Zoom Rooms" one in The Dalles and the other in Hood River. These rooms allow an instructor to teach from a room that is outfitted with cameras and microphones that automatically follow the instructor's movements, and has the added advantage that the instructor is able to control the technology equipment shown in the opposite room.

- The college vendor that provides internet and firewall services for CGCC upgraded and installed newer firewall equipment to improve internet security for the campus.

Conclusion

It is thought that the college currently has an adequate number of IT personnel; however, there may be a shortage of some specific skills that are still needed. CGCC has contracted with Campus Works to make an assessment on whether the college has sufficient resources and staff to implement and maintain the technology integrations in process. Once this assessment has been completed, CGCC administration will decide what is needed moving forward.

In general, based on additional access to financial resources and restructuring of IT management and work processes, the college has been able to institute many improvements in its Information Technology staffing and services. These improvements are considered to be sustainable, and will allow the college, going forward, to provide the necessary IT services to students, staff and faculty.

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