Core Learning at NOVA:

Written Communication and Civic Engagement

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success
Northern Virginia Community College

Fall 2018

Overview of Presentation

I. **Context for General Education/Core Learning Assessment at NOVA**

II. **SACSCOC and General Education Assessment**

III. **SCHEV/ VCCS and General Education Assessment**

IV. **Benchmarking WC and CE Assessment at NOVA**

V. **Resources**

Part I:

Context for General Education/ Core Learning Assessment at NOVA

What is General Education?

What is Core Learning?

Thinking beyond the course, even the program, about broader skills and how they transfer- to other courses and programs- to life!

https://www.collegexpress.com/articles-and-advice/majors-and-academics/articles/college-academics/general-education-requirements-whats-point/

Why is General Education/ Core Learning important?

Why Is Core Learning Important?

Hart Research Associates on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. 2015. *Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success.*

"Employers feel that today's college graduates are not particularly well prepared to achieve the learning outcomes that they view as important. This critique applies to all of the 17 learning outcomes tested, including the cross-cutting skills that employers highly value."

Top Priorities for Improvement

In which area do you think colleges and universities need to improve more?

- Ensure college graduates gain knowledge and skills that apply to a specific field or position
- Equal amount of improvement needed in both areas
- Ensure graduates gain range of knowledge and skills that apply to a range of fields or positions
- Neither area needs improvement

Employers

5%
14%
47%
34%

Students

17%
21%
31%
31%
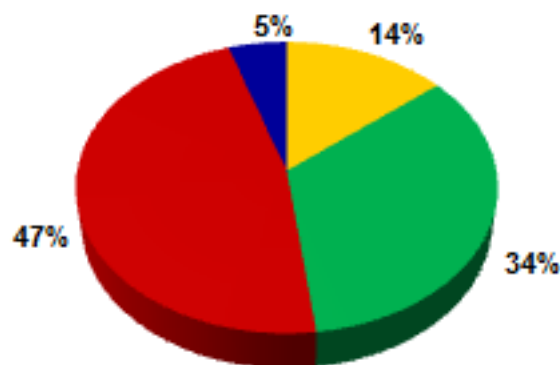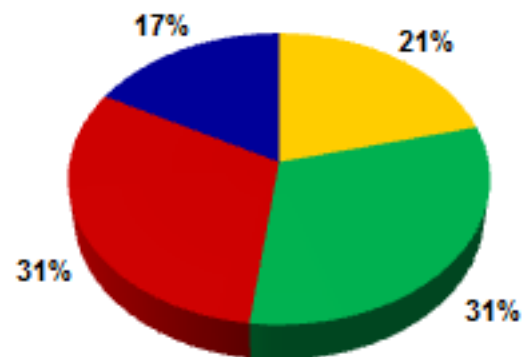
Top 6 Skills and Knowledge
Employers and College Students Rate as Very Important
(Proportion of employers and students who rate each outcome an 8, 9, or 10 on a zero-to-10 scale)

	Employers %	College Students %
The ability to effectively communicate orally	85	78
The ability to work effectively with others in teams	83	77
The ability to effectively communicate in writing	82	75
Ethical judgment and decision-making	81	74
Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills	81	79
The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings	80	79

Learning Outcomes More Than Half of Employers Rate as Very Important

(Proportion of employers who rate each outcome an 8, 9, or 10 on a zero-to-10 scale)

	Employers %
The ability to analyze and solve complex problems	70
The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources	68
The ability to innovate and be creative	65
Staying current on changing technologies and their applications to the workplace	60
The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics	56
The ability to analyze and solve problems with people from different backgrounds and cultures	56

"Employers say they are more likely to consider hiring recent college graduates who have completed an applied learning or project-based learning experience (p. 7)."

Examples ranked by Employers

Internship/apprenticeship	**94%**
Senior thesis/project	**87%**
Multiple courses involving writing	**81%**
Collaborative research project	**80%**
Service-learning project	**69%**
Field project	**66%**
Study abroad	**51%**

Students agree with employers.

So how do we know whether students have learned these skills or not?

Assessment Is Part of Teaching and Learning

"**Assessing student learning is not a new technique;** it is an integral part of the job when it comes to evaluating student work."

Now the process, however, "involves more explicit and purposeful activities with respect to work that faculty have always done."

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2007

Benefits of Core Learning Assessment

- To help students develop Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSAs) needed for further studies or career;

- To review learning at the program-level and institutional-level, not just at course-level;

- To improve teaching.

Part II:

SACSCOC and General Education Assessment

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SACS Accreditation for Public Accountability

- **SACSCOC is not the reason we assess.**

- **NOVA documents and makes our processes transparent for SACSCOC for public accountability.**

- **SACSCOC impacts NOVA's assessment timetable.**

SACS Reaffirmation Cycle

2010: Compliance Certification due to SACSCOC.

2011: SACSCOC on-site visit

2012: Recommendation from SACSCOC

- Not all programs assessing SLOs.
- Need for continuous improvement, regardless of target met.

2017: 5th year interim report due to SACSCOC

2022: Next Reaffirmation

SACSCOC Revised General Education Standard (previously 3.5.1)

Student Achievement (Section 8)

Student learning and student success are at the core of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support student learning outcomes for its educational programs. To meet the goals of educational programs, an institution provides appropriate academic and student success services to support student success.

SACSCOC Revised General Education Standard (previously 3.5.1)

Student Achievement (Section 8)

1. The institution **identifies**, **evaluates**, and **publishes** goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institutions mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution **uses multiple measures** to document student success. **(Core Requirement)**

Student Achievement: Principle 8

2. The institution **identifies expected outcomes**, **assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes**, and **provides evidence of actively seeking improvement based on analysis of the results** in the areas below:

a. Student outcomes: educational programs- student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs (Formerly CS 3.3.1.1)

b. Student outcomes: general education- student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs (Formerly CS 3.5.1)

c. Student outcomes: academic and student services- academic and services that support student success

Continued Progress

- SACSCOC expects us to have made progress since 2012 reaffirmation.
  - Making changes based on results
  - Assessing after changes were instituted
  - Analyzing recent results for evidence of improvements
    - i.e., Closing the Loop

Part III:

SCHEV/ VCCS and Core Competency Assessment

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SCHEV General Education Assessment Policy Changes

Approved by Council Action July 18, 2017

- Each institution will assess student achievement in at least six competency areas, representing several different types of knowledge and/or skills.

- Four core competencies, determined by SCHEV, will be assessed by all institutions.

- Two competencies will be selected by the VCCS.

Four Core Competencies

1) Critical thinking – the ability to subject one's own and others' ideas, arguments, assumptions, and evidence to careful and logical scrutiny in order to make an informed judgment, draw a sound conclusion, or solve a problem.

2) Written communication – the ability to develop and communicate ideas effectively in writing as appropriate to a given context, purpose, and audience. It includes a variety of styles, genres, and media, including computer-mediated communications.

Four Core Competencies

3) Quantitative Reasoning – the ability to manipulate, analyze, and/or evaluate numbers and numerical data. It may involve calculation and/or analysis and interpretation of quantitative information derived from existing databases or systematic observations, and may be based in a variety of disciplines, not limited to mathematics and the natural and physical sciences.

4) Civic engagement – an array of knowledge, abilities, values, attitudes, and behaviors that in combination allow individuals to contribute to the civic life of their communities. It may include, among other things, exploration of one's role and responsibilities in society; knowledge of and ability to engage with political systems and processes; and/or course-based or extra-curricular efforts to identify and address issues of public or community concern.

VCCS General Education Task Force to Determine Two Core Competencies
by February 21, 2018 ASAC Meeting

The charge is to:

1. Review existing General Education outcomes and make adjustments as needed.

2. Determine the 2 additional General Education outcomes for the VCCS system.

3. Determine the minimum reporting structure and template to provide VCCS colleges.

See Handout with most recent VCCS draft.

Part IV:

Benchmarking General Education Assessment Methods

Assessment Goal for NOVA

To complete a cycle of at least 2 years reports for each competency, including the two that will be chosen by VCCS, in order to demonstrate to SASCOC and SCHEV that NOVA "assesses the extent to which students achieve these outcomes, and provides evidence of actively seeking improvement based on analysis of the results " by our Reaffirmation in 2022.

Beginning by Benchmarking What We Currently Do at NOVA First

2017-18

Critical Thinking & Quantitative Reasoning

2018-19

Civic Engagement & Written Communication

2019-20

Professional Readiness & Scientific Literacy

General Education Assessment Proposal:

2018-2018
Civic Engagement & Written Communication

1. Programs and disciplines assessed two SLOs in the Fall 2018, as usual.

2. Then just one SLO along with benchmarking one Core Learning Outcome (CLO), either Civic Engagement or Written Communication in Spring 2019 , instead of the usual 2 SLOs. Cluster determined best course to assess CLO in by Curriculum Map and chose an assessment method.

3. The Core Competency was then be analyzed and reported in the APER format with the other SLOs in September 2019.

Led by Discipline chair or SLO Lead.

Annual Planning and Evaluation Report: 2017-2018
Academic Program/Discipline:

NOVA Mission Statement: With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

Program/Discipline Purpose Statement:

Student Learning Outcomes	Evaluation Methods	Assessment Results	Use of Results
	Course: Direct Measure: Rubric Criteria/Question Topics: Sample size:	When Data Collected: Semester/Year Target: Results by Criteria & by Modality (In-class, ELI, DE) Strengths/Weaknesses: Results compared to past assessment(s):	Previous action(s) to improve SLO: Target met: Areas needing improvement: Action Plan based on results: Next assessment of this CLO:
Core Learning Outcome	**Evaluation Methods**	**Assessment Results**	**Use of Results**
QR or CT	Course: Direct Measure: Rubric Criteria/Question Topics: Sample size:	When Data Collected: Semester/Year Target: Results by Criteria & by Modality (In-class, ELI, DE) Strengths/Weaknesses: Results compared to past assessment(s) (if applicable):	Previous action(s) to improve CLO (if applicable): Target met: Areas needing improvement: Action Plan based on results: Next assessment of this CLO:
Program/Discipline Goals	**Evaluation Methods**	**Assessment Results**	**Use of Results**

VCCS Civic Engagement Competency

Civic Engagement is the ability to contribute to the civic life and well-being of local, national, and global communities. It is both a social responsibility and a life-long learning process. Degree graduates will demonstrate the knowledge and values necessary to become informed and contributing participants in a democratic society.

Civic Engagement Outcomes

Outcomes of **Civic Engagement** could include:

– <u>Civic Knowledge</u>: Summarize fundamental principles and debates about democracy and citizenship, both within the United States and in other countries

– <u>Civic Identity</u>: Reflect on personal social/civic identity and how that identity differs from others in their communities

– <u>Civic Discourse</u>: Deliberate on issues and problems to advance or achieve a civic aim

– <u>Diversity in Civic Life</u>: Recognize the value of diverse feelings, perspectives, and life experiences, and the strength that such diversity brings to civic life

– <u>Ethical Reasoning:</u> Examine the ethical implications of community and civic actions and decisions

– <u>Civic Responsibility</u>: Consider and respond to civic, social, environmental, or economic challenges at local, national, or global levels

– <u>Social Justice</u>: Identify personal and collective actions that could be taken to address injustices in society

Civic Engagement Resources

Additional suggested outcomes:

- Tufts University Student Civic Learning Outcomes Civic and Global Learning Outcomes, DQP

- Weber State University Civic Engagement Outcomes Rubric

Rubrics

- Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric

- IUPUI Center for Service and Learning Rubric for CMG INTERVIEWS

- APSA Assessment Toolkit

- Massachusetts Civic Learning and Engagement Assessment Framework (Student Learning Framework)

- Assessing Civic Mindedness (AAC&U)

Civic Engagement Assignments

Assignments asking students to reflect…

- **Level of participation in civic activities, to include voting, volunteerism, and community involvement**

- **Rubric scoring of student reflection assignments related to their participation in activities**

- **Rubric scoring of discussion board discourse related to civic knowledge, values, or behaviors**

- **Rubric scoring of student work samples related to civic knowledge, values, or behaviors**

- **Student survey related to self-assessment of civic engagement skills or preparedness to engage in civic life**

Written Communication Resources

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Written Communication Rubrics

- Written Communication VALUE Rubric

- Writing NEIU Writing Rubric

- Writing Scoring Sheet NEIU Business Writing Scoring Sheet

- Writing Handouts for Students https://ctl.yale.edu/writing/undergraduate-writing/writing-handouts

Written Communication Assignments

- Quantitative Writing https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/carl_ltc/quantitative_writing/index.html
- Research Paper
- Critique a Policy Brief
  https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/2012_global_health_low_res_final- 1.pdf
- Essay Questions https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/essay-exams/
- Expository Papers https://www.time4writing.com/writing-resources/expository-essay/
- Fact Sheet
  https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/2012_global_health_low_res_final- 1.pdf
- Grant Proposal and Oral Presentation
  https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/science_of_living_guide_final.pdf
- Mini Papers
- Module papers (Comparative, Reoccurring themes or Issues
- iMovie Assignments
  https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/pyramid_schemes_imovie_guide.pdf
- Policy Brief
  https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/2012_global_health_low_res_final- 1.pdf
- Response Paper

Written Communication Assignments

Professional Writing

– Blogs and Journals

– Business Writing

– Donation Request Letter
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/donation_request_letters/beginning_donation_request_letters.html

– Email

  Email Guidelines for Students (Writing Commons)
  https://writingcommons.org/index.php/open-text/new-media/netiquette/1024-e-mail-guidelines-for-students

– Grant writing

– Memos

– Proposals

– Social Media

– Technical reports

– Job Search Writing (Letters concerning employment, Applications, Cover letters, Resumes)

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/job_search_letters/job_search_letters_introduction.html

SMART Learning Goals

- **S**pecific

- **M**easurable

- **A**ttainable

- **R**esults-Focused

- **T**ime-Focused

How Should We Assess?

- APPROPRIATE METHODS
  - Are "diagnostic" and allow programs to determine strengths and areas for improvement
  - Provide actionable information to improve student learning
  - Overall grade does not provide these.

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Examples of Core Learning Assessment

Most common approach:

Faculty and programs assess general education courses with rubrics, e-portfolios, general education exams, and course surveys.

Institutions' Use Of Methods to Assess Learning Outcomes in General Education (among institutions that assess cumulative learning outcomes in general education)

	2008 %	2015 %
Rubrics applied to examples of student work (Institutionally created or AAC&U VALUE rubrics)	77	91
Culminating or capstone projects	70	78
Student surveys and self-reports	67	64
Locally developed common assignments in some courses	52	62
Locally developed examinations	44	46
Standardized national tests of general skills, such as critical thinking	49	38
Standardized national tests of general knowledge, such as science or humanities	31	33

Core Learning Assessment: Rubrics

Rubrics should separate the learning outcome into several proficiencies.

For example

NOVA General Education Goal 2:

Critical Thinking

A competent critical thinker evaluates evidence carefully and applies reasoning to decide what to believe and how to act.

Co-curricular Learning and General Education

Example: University of South Carolina-Aiken
integrates co-curricular learning into general education programs through an experiential learning requirement to reinforce the holistic mission of the general education program. Students complete this requirement through study abroad, internships, service learning courses, faculty-mentored research, or a capstone course.

Collaboration with Student Services

Ideas:

Extra curricular events

Voter registration

Civic events

Forums/debates on relevant issues

Student club activities

Resources

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ACADEMICS   ADMISSION & REGISTRATION   CAMPUSES & CENTERS   SERVICES & SUPPORT   STUDENT LIFE   ABOUT NOVA

IN THIS SECTION

> The Office of Academic Assessment

> Assessment Loop Resources

> Staff

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Welcome to Academic Assessment

The Office of Academic Assessment, a part of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives, provides college-wide leadership and coordination for assessment activities, which include program review, annual planning and evaluation of instructional programs, and a wide variety of student learning outcomes assessment activities.

The focus of academic assessment is on student learning outcomes and includes the review of all academic programs that award a degree or certificate as well as classroom-based assessment and research. The assessment coordinator serves as a resource for program review committees and for faculty who wish to engage in assessment research.

Dr. Jennifer Roberts is the Coordinator of Academic Assessment and assumes the overall responsibility for assessment at NOVA. Dr. George Gabriel is the Vice President of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives.

- Procedures for Documenting SLO
- NOVA's Focus on Student Learning Outcomes
- Improving Student Learning Outcomes
- Student Learning Outcomes - Degree-Awarding Programs and Select Certificates
- Student Learning Outcomes - Lead Faculty and Coordinating Deans
- OIR's Role in Assessing Student Learning Outcomes
- Outcome-Based Institutional Effectiveness Plan Highlights
- Outcome-Based Institutional Effectiveness Plan
- Academic Assessment at NOVA
- Overview of Program/Discipline Review

+ **Student Assessment**

+ **Program Evaluation**

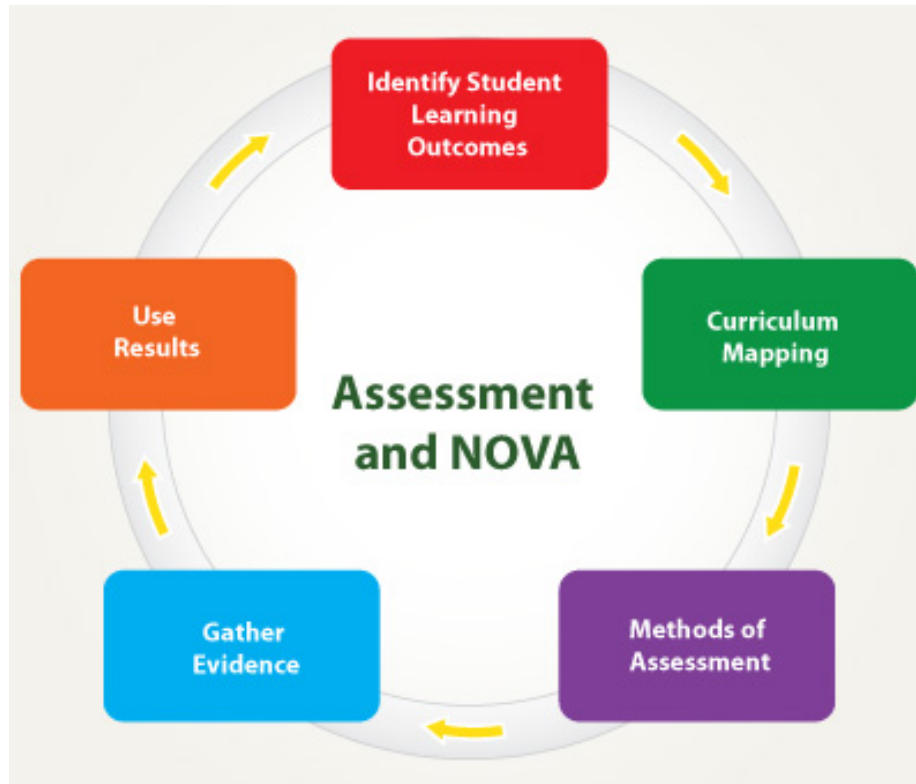+ **Student Learning Outcomes**

+ **Reports**

+ **Resources**

+ **Helpful Links**

Top

NOVA's Assessment Loop Resources

www.nvcc.edu/assessment/loop/index.html

Resources

- **SACSCOC Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation**
http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/Resource%20Manual.pdf

- **The Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees**
http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Quality%20and%20Integrity%20of%20Undergraduate%20Degrees.pdf

- **NOVA's General Education Goals**
https://www.nvcc.edu/curcatalog/general/goals.html

- **MSC: Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment** http://www.sheeo.org/projects/msc-multi-state-collaborative-advance-learning-outcomes-assessment#Which%20states%20are%20involved

- http://www.sheeo.org/msc-pilot-study-results

- **Benchmarking General Education Programs (EAB)**
http://www.shawnee.edu/academics/GEP-essential-learning-outcomes/media/Benchmarking-General-Education-Programs.pdf

- **Values Rubrics Case Studies (AAC&U)**
http://www.aacu.org/value/casestudies

Resources

- Hart Research Associates. (2015). **Falling short? College learning and career success**: Selected findings from online surveys of employers and college students https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2015employerstudentsurvey.pdf

- **Degree Qualifications Profile:** https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/dqp.pdf

- **Burning Glass Reports**- http://burning-glass.com/wp-content/uploads/BGTReport**LiberalArts**.pdf, http://burning-glass.com/wp-content/uploads/**BRIDGE THE GAP REBUILDING AMERICAS MIDDLE SKILLS**.pdf, http://burning-glass.com/research/**quant-crunch-data-science-job-market**/, http://burning-glass.com/research/**digital-skills-gap**/

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