

Academy Application 2013-14

Black Hawk College, Moline, Illinois

Preferred Point of Entry to the Academy: October 2013 X June 2014					
Note: The Commission determines Academy entry point based on the Admissions Panel's recommendations and the process of constructing cohorts based on needs, goals, institutional types, mission, size, and other factors.					
Application Questions Check the appropriate request for Academy participation:					
Open Pathway Quality Initiative X_AQIP Action Project(s) While in Standard Pathway Other					
institutional purposes					

Recent Efforts

1. What is your "assessment story"? Evaluate your past and present efforts (include here things such as your accomplishments, issues, barriers, results, strategies).

The college has worked to implement a system of collecting and utilizing student outcomes data for course-level and program-level improvement. This system has incorporated a variety of assessment methods appropriate to individual disciplines and methods, which have been adapted over the years, to better address the needs of faculty as they continue to improve the educational outcomes of BHC students.

A formal Student Learning Executive Summary details a student learning outcomes plan that dates back to a DACUM process (prior to 1993) that the faculty participated in to begin to identify and describe general education at the institution. In 1993, a small committee was appointed by the Vice President of Instruction to study outcomes and develop the plan for assessment of student learning for the college. This plan was completed in 1995 and received NCA approval. Much of the plan concentrated on ongoing Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) and training was implemented across the college. By 2002, members of the committee (designated as the Student Learning Committee) revised and updated the plan to move beyond CATs to insuring the outcomes were clearly identified in the course syllabi and to initiate formative data collection at the course level. At this time in the college's assessment journey, the focus expanded from classroom/course to program and general education outcomes. With the direction of HLC, the college focused on: (a) what data the college collected in the assessment of general education outcomes and degree programs through direct and indirect measures; (b) what changes in curriculum, methods of instruction, and/or academic activities occurred based on the results of departmental assessments; and, (c) what impact assessment had on departmental planning and budgeting processes.

This departmental focus led to many productive cycles of assessment, reported in annual reports, including 2003-2004; 2004-2005; 2005-2006, 2007-2008, and a progress report to HLC on Improving Student Learning 2003-2006. For example, the 2003-2004 report noted how an error analysis of exit essays in Composition 1 led to increased focus on grammar and mechanics in the curriculum and providing the Composition faculty with holistic grading training. Pre-and post-tests were conducted in a number of programs where, in some cases, led to changes at the course level and in the case of Mathematics to a department-wide common final exam in Math 108. The

2004-2005 activities continued to expand into portfolio assessment in Art, additional pre/post-test assessment constructions, gap analyses in content and exam scores, etc. These also led to changes in revisions of course materials, review of prerequisite placement scores, the move to blend lecture and lab sections of accounting classes, etc. Reports were given to the Student Learning Committee and the Administration and compiled into the Annual Summaries, which identify the types of data collected and the data based changes that occurred.

In 2005, a committee composed of college-wide representatives from all transfer disciplines as well as career and technical programs was formed to assist a review team to review outcomes for general education. A revised General Education Core Curriculum was developed and approved by campus senates. This grid identified five strands within the core curriculum: (a) apply scientific thinking skills, (b) apply quantitative skills, (c) apply communication skills, (d) evaluate human experiences, and (e) develop an appreciation of human continuity, diversity, and change. The 2003-2006 Progress Report to the Higher Learning Commission extensively identifies assessments that were conducted and course and program-level changes that were made based on those assessments (pages 44-48). This progress report also discusses the alignment and coordination of institutional assessment strategies that support and promote faculty assessment of student learning through Curriculum Review, Program Review, Unit Plans, and Listening and Learning Tools (page 49).

The Student Learning Outcomes reports for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 continued to document the progress made by the institution in collecting department and general education assessment data and how it was used to improve classroom and program delivery and content. Individual department reports were transitioned to a web-based repository managed by the Teaching Learning Center. The 2008-2009 Report notes on page 5: "The College's initial assessment initiatives directed toward formative and summative assessment at the class and course levels have expanded dramatically to the arena of program-level assessment, particularly in career and technical degree and certificate programs. Ways the faculty have been assessing program-level outcomes include such direct and indirect measures as advisory committee feedback, graduate surveys, standardized tests, licensure and certification examinations, portfolio analysis, capstone projects, juried performances, and feedback from accreditation teams. The 5-year cycle of program review established by the ICCB creates a logical sequence for organizing program-level assessment. Black Hawk College began the process of integrating program-level assessment into the program review process in the 2008-2009 cycle and detailed a more robust, collaborative process for approaching program review in 2009-2010."

By 2009-2010, the college further refined the system of assessment of student outcomes. In February 2009, the decision was made by the Student Learning Committee to adopt WEAVEonline as the management system for documenting student learning activities and follow-up actions. In October 2010, the Committee appointed a sub-committee to draft a structure of program review that integrated class/course-level assessment, thus replacing the past practice of producing a separate report. The intent was to align the Improving Student Learning Report with ICCB Program Review Guidelines and HLC/AQIP "Principles and Categories for Improving Academic Quality" (2008 Revision). The structure is a five-year process that, once designed, is continually refined, implemented and analyzed, at which point gaps are identified between desired and actual results and changes in curriculum, instructional materials or teaching strategies are documented.

In 2009, the Student Learning Committee was charged to: (a) collect, edit, and publish department reports on assessment; (b) review student learning instructions and forms in the context of WEAVEonline; (c) convene the General Education Review Team (GERT) to review the general education student learning data and make recommendations back to the Student Learning Committee; (d) make regular reports regarding committee activities to departments; (e) plan for a Student Learning Retreat; (f) create a Dictionary of Terminology; and (g) clarify the function of the Student Learning Committee by working to simplify the process and work to continually advance the culture, purpose and process of student learning outcomes assessment.

In Spring 2011 and Fall 2011, the SLC implemented student learning "conversation days" and continued work on expanding the 5-year Program Review process to include annual assessment activities. Additionally, the Student Learning Committee, in Spring 2011, formed the Career and Technical Education Review Team (CERT) to examine tools and resources for developing program level outcomes. Program-related functions of the CERT committee include

listing program accrediting and licensing agencies BHC works with (or may work with) and considering the development of a college internship evaluation form to supplement specific program assessment plans.

By the 2012 report, the Student Learning Committee incorporated into its focus the New HLC Criteria for Accreditation. With course-level assessment continuing to be documented in the unit plans and program-level assessment incorporated in the Program Review process, the Student Learning Committee recommended suspending the General Education/Core Curriculum Grid and replacing it with three items assessed across the curriculum: (a) students can think critically, (b) students can solve problems; and (c) students can communicate effectively. In anticipation that these cross-curriculum goals would possibly require a standardized test, the committee identified the ETS Proficiency Profile, which is a general education outcomes assessment. Thus, a pilot of the ETS Proficiency Profile was done during the Spring 2012 semester. It should be noted that the pilot was conducted within the Mathematics department only and is not a representative sample of the larger student body. The results were reviewed by the GERT and recommended that BHC continue the use of the ETS Proficiency Profile during the Spring 2013 semester. Graduates in 2013 received a recruitment letter inviting them to participate in the assessment. The sample collected was fewer than 50 and, as suggested by ETS, was not considered representative of the larger group. As a result of the critical thinking scores on ETS test administered in Spring 2012 (even with a skewed sample), the SLC proposed to focus on critical thinking as a main student learning outcome for the next 5 years.

In October of 2013, the college hosted peer reviewers from the HLC for a Quality Check Up/Federal Compliance Reporting visit. Reviewers acknowledged progress in the college's course level assessment processes, but found inadequate evidence of systematic processes related to the assessment of program level student learning outcomes. They were provided with the previously used General Education Grid and responded favorably to the tool, recommending that something similar be developed to serve the college in the next phase of assessment. In response to the finding, the VP for Instruction tasked the Deans with planning an off campus student learning retreat/work day to include members of the Student Learning Committee, AQIP Steering Committee, Department Chairs, Senate Presidents, Deans, VP for Instruction, the Director of the Teaching Learning Center, and other interested constituents.

The workday charges were as follows: First, the group would agree on a grid-like structure for the evaluation of general education student-learning outcomes. Second, the group would agree on a rubric to use for the evaluation of data. Third, invitees would bring appropriate data for discussion and trial of the grid and rubric. Following the workday, Chairs met with all department members to discuss the wording of the grid and to determine which strands and cells could be measured by courses in their respective disciplines. The Program Level Outcomes for AA/AS Degrees, General Education Core Curriculum Grid was finalized in December of 2013 and distributed to faculty during the college's Assembly Day in January 2014. Faculty members are currently using the grid to evaluate student learning during the spring 2014 semester. Data will be collected and analyzed over the summer and faculty will receive the resulting reports at the fall Assembly Day event.

Needs and Benefits

1. What are the most pressing needs that you expect to address via your participation?

Need #1: While the college has, a robust course level assessment processes in place, systematic processes for collecting and analyzing institutional program level data to improve student outcomes is lacking.

The college has successfully integrated course level assessments, standardized exams and the award of certificates and associate degrees as measurements to define successful completion and student learning at the course level. Additionally over the last ten years, the college has developed and implemented approaches to determining general education student learning accomplishments. During the 2010 Program Review, the college found "while college review processes provide for robust review of programs, there is not solid evidence or process documentation indicating how the college uses the results of its review to inform continuous improvement. Further, assessment is

limited to the course, and in some cases, the program level and despite demonstrated progress in student learning assessment and improvement, momentum has slowed through ongoing structural and staffing changes.

Systems Portfolio Feedback Appraisal Feedback: "BHC indicates that it "determines that students awarded degrees have met learning objectives" but it provides no description of the process by which this occurs. BHC further indicates that it uses data from several measures to inform successful completion and transfer rates. Standardized exams and those awarding certification are used to demonstrate knowledge and skills for those fields requiring one. These are indirect measures of student learning and by themselves cannot provide the Institution with the information it needs to assess the quality of its academic programs. Further, the College does not explain how students in other disciplines demonstrate, other than through the grading system, whether students meet learning expectations. The College has an opportunity to develop and implement a comprehensive assessment program concentrating on its general education core learning objectives through which student accomplishment across its varied degree and certificate programs can be evaluated and documented for all graduates. The assessment plan should also include program-specific learning goals when appropriate."

Need #2: The college has seen a significant growth of co-curricular offerings and student participation; however, these opportunities have not been clearly aligned with curricular learning goals.

Through the AQIP self-assessment, process the college has begun the journey of understanding the value of a new paradigm for where learning outcomes are experienced and reinforced. The traditional understanding is that direct learning outcomes are aligned at the instructional course and program level, indirectly at the institutional level. As the college continues to successfully implement co-curricular activities, it now has the the opportunity to expand the boundaries of where learning occurs from the traditional academic content and processes to include student development co-curricular content and processes.

Systems Portfolio Feedback Appraisal Feedback: "The College offers a range of co-curricular activities that contribute positively to the students' experience, but the portfolio does not indicate whether they have co-curricular goals nor does it describe how it ensures that such activities are aligned with curricular learning goals. The college has an outstanding opportunity to more intentionally define learning goals and outcomes for its co-curricular activities that linked directly to one or more course or program learning outcomes so as to ensure alignment."

Need #3: Program level assessment plans complete with program level student learning outcomes are not clearly identified in many career and technical education programs thereby making program level assessment difficult.

The Student Learning Committee has defined student-learning outcomes to be all about developing a deep understand of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experience. The maturity of the college's processes have not yet developed to a level that these learning outcomes are widely expressed transparently to the public or to prospective students, and therefore the unique and valuable opportunities of being a Black Hawk College graduate are often not realized. Further, while the college has several programs of excellence where program outcomes are widely known and assessed, there is an opportunity to develop a more systematic cycle of planning and assessment that incorporates outcomes assessment.

Systems Portfolio Feedback Appraisal Feedback: "While activity has been on-going regarding the general education student learning outcomes, there appears to be only a goal for building processes for program outcomes that align with program reviews. It is imperative that the College develop an assessment plan that describes a cyclical plan for on-going learning assessment both in general education and specific disciplines for program attainment. It is also necessary to develop a plan for how the College will align and assess co-curricular outcomes within a continuous improvement cycle. The College has an outstanding opportunity to develop a more formal and structured process for designing, implementing and evaluating student learning."

Need #4: No clearly defined cohesive measures and metrics to evaluate student learning at the program and institutional level.

With the growing culture of accountability and evidence-based assessment, the college has the opportunity to further develop its direct measures of student learning outcomes. Generally, the college reviews educational inputs such as student characteristics and enrollment patterns, education processes and experiences through satisfaction, and

retention and graduation rates. Finally, educational outcomes such as what the student knows and can do round out the metrics used to determine the quality of programs. The opportunity lies in aligning these three distinct approaches into one overall cohesive methodology to evaluating student learning and consequently program quality.

Systems Portfolio Feedback Appraisal Feedback: "While the College results are extensive with indirect measures for transfer, graduation, degrees awarded, persistence rate, course success rates, and developmental course advancement, it does not provide direct learning results for common, development, and specific program learning outcomes. The metrics do not appear to be connected to specific student learning outcomes. It is imperative that BHC select a cohesive and comprehensive set of measures and metrics to evaluate student learning and development".

Need #5: Continued faculty engagement with assessment as a means to improve student learning. Black Hawk College has a highly competent and qualified senior faculty facilitating learning. While our senior faculty are trained to be scholarly experts in their field, they may not have been trained in assessment (formulating learning outcomes, designing assignments and exams, and using data for improvement) nor provided the opportunity to gain those competency skills through professional development. Through the college self-assessment process it has been noted that our faculty is very engaged in robust course level assessment but that many faculty members do not have the same understanding for program level assessment outcomes nor do they have the opportunity to share assessment information with other department faculty. This then inhibits the formal, intentional improvement of programs and curricula based on assessment data and information. Changes are in fact made, but not as evidence-based or with as much inclusivity as could be across the college.

2. Why is the Academy key to your success at this time?

While the first motivator to participate in the Academy was in response to the potential accreditation issue relative to program level learning goals and co-curricular goals, the intrinsic reason the Academy is key to success is the opportunity it affords the college in guiding conversations and explorations into new assessment paradigms. The college continues to seek new approaches and effective practices that engage faculty in assessment activities that are meaningful and lead to program improvements while setting aside attitudes that this is important only because the Higher Learning Commission requires it. As the college has engaged with the AQIP process over the last two years, faculty and staff increasingly are recognizing how assessment plays a key role in continuous improvement, driving curricula, programs, co-curricular activities, and budgeting decisions. Participation in the Academy is intended to reinforce this paradigm shift, signaling an acceptance of and willingness to embrace assessment and use it in strategic ways. Change is difficult at best, and the college recognizes the need for peer guidance and assistance to continue this movement away from a once engrained belief that assessment was intrusive to faculty and only done to appease accrediting commissions.

Quality Check Up Feedback: "The systems appraisal team identified one possible accreditation issue relative to Core Component 4.B. The systems appraisal team observed, "[t]he College has recently developed curriculum-level learning goals for general education, but there does not appear to be the same level of effort for determining specific program-level learning goals and co-curricular goals. Further, the efforts related to assessment, although underway in a variety of areas, appear uncoordinated and have yet to be tied to specific goals, outcomes, and levels of desired achievement for student learning and development at the curriculum and program levels. It is vitally important for the College to develop an integrated system of planning and assessment that ensures alignment of activities and efforts across disciplines and programs, curricular and co-curricular opportunities and non-credit offerings, that includes processes for defining measurable goals and objectives for its numerous and varied activities."

3. What are your goals for the Academy participation? What do you think will be your focus during the Academy (e.g., projects, initiatives, activities, work)?

Overall Strategic Participation Vision: Assessment will be systemic and an expected and accepted part of what Black Hawk College does. The goals are outlined here as they relate to the needs articulated in question #1

above.

Need #1: Systematic processes for collecting and analyzing data to improve student learning.

The College continues its quality journey defining and improving processes utilizing the Baldrige-style organizational assessment, a factual and objective appraisal of how the college manages its leadership, human resources, strategic planning and process management. The Illinois Performance Excellence Award is modeled after the Bladrige National Quality Program and awarded the College the Bronze Award for Commitment To Excellence. Baldrige defines process as "linked activities with the purpose of producing a program or service for students and/or stakeholders within or outside the organization", while Norris and Poulton, 2008 define it as "a group of logically related activities which utilizes the resources of the college to produce results".

• Goal 1A: The process of the assessment of student learning will be integrated into college systems such as planning and budgeting, hiring, curriculum development, and curriculum review.

Need #2: The college has seen a significant growth of co-curricular offerings and student participation; however, these opportunities have not clearly been aligned with curricular learning goals.

In 2010, BHC recognized that a key to student retention was engaging them in meaningful experiences outside the classroom. To respond to this need the college developed the Student Life Office, which is responsible for promoting student learning and student success, to encourage student involvement and development, and to provide opportunities for student leadership through the planning and promotion of diverse student activities, workshops, and conferences. While these initiatives on our campuses are very successful, the college sees the need to better align the co-curricular student development goals to curriculum.

Goal 2A: In all key support service (co-curricular) areas, define and assess student learning outcomes that
are further aligned to the core curriculum reflecting what all students should know, understand, and do
with the knowledge gained in content curriculum.

Need #3: Program level assessment plans complete with program level student learning outcomes are not clearly identified in many career and technical education programs thereby making program level assessment difficult.

- Goal 3A: All programs will achieve annual milestones in the five year Program Review cycle including:
 - o Program Review Year 1: Mission Statements, Program Goals, Student Learning Program Objectives
 - Program Review Year 2: Identification of measurements, metrics and assessment techniques for program level student learning outcomes
 - o Program Review Year 3-4: Collection of data
 - o Program Review Year 5- Analysis, action plan development and final Program Review Report

Need #4: No clearly defined cohesive measures and metrics to evaluate student learning at the program and institutional level.

• Goal 4A: Expand and integrate measures and metrics for evaluating student-learning outcomes at the program and institutional level.

Need #5: Faculty Engagement with assessment as a means to improve student learning

- Goal 5A: Develop employee (faculty and staff) competencies in the assessment of student learning
- Goal 5B: Define and communicate appropriate roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Senate Student Learning Committee and the newly created Assessment Team.
- Goal 5C: There will be evidence of "closing the loop" in the assessment of student learning with documented findings on measures and metrics and evidence of changes in pedagogy/curriculum.

Commitment and Focus

4. What evidence demonstrates your commitment to and capacity for assessment of student learning (include things such as evidence of presidential and academic commitment to full participation, plans for involving the people and groups to accomplish your goals, financial and other resource support, inclusion of the broader institutional community)?

Dr. Baynum, President of Black Hawk College recently wrote the following in response to the Quality Check Up Report, which demonstrates the leadership commitment for full participation in the Academy.

"We (BHC) take seriously the primary issues and opportunities for improvement in assessment. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on recent initiatives since our Quality Check Up. Under the leadership of our Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and the relatively new academic structure that increased the academic leadership team from two academic Deans to five, I believe BHC is positioned to address the strategic issues regarding assessment of student learning. Since the Quality Check Up, the CAO has worked collaboratively with the Deans, Academic Department Chairs, Faculty Senates, Student Learning Committee and the office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness to assimilate the recommendations of the Peer Reviewers into an Action Project and working plan for Black Hawk College. The team has revised the program level outcomes for the AA/AS Degrees-General Education Core Curriculum and outlined a plan to further design and implement an assessment approach that provides consistent oversight and meets the needs of faculty and students to ensure that students have an excellent academic experience at Black Hawk College.

Finally, I have directed the CAO to prepare the College for application and subsequent participation in the HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning. It is through this experience that I believe the College will accelerate and deepen its understanding how to fully assess those learning outcomes and use the information gained to improve student learning."

The relationship among the Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, Director of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, Academic Deans, and Faculty Senate is poised to be the driving leadership behind the initiatives in this proposal. It is proposed that the Assessment Team be comprised of representatives from staff, faculty, and administrative positions.

Budget has been allocated from the AQIP Action Project Funding. While this budget is absorbing the initial costs of this effort, the college will seek future funding from other areas of the college including the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, the assessment committee and the office of the Vice President for Instruction and Student Services to ensure resources support the assessment initiatives.

Black Hawk College is dedicated to providing a strong leadership team to attend the HLC Academy. This planned team consists of senior leadership (President, CAO, and VP of East Campus), two academic deans, (one from Career and Technical areas, the other from transfer), faculty members from CTE and transfer, as well as representation from the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness office. We are confident that these individuals will be able to share and implement knowledge on assessment to the appropriate college stakeholders.

Potential Impact

1. What results do you want to achieve in the Academy? What is the potential for impact on the institution? On learning and teaching? On organizational culture?

BHC will hold itself accountable to the improvement of student learning by fully engaging in assessment processes at all level of the institution. Students will be successful in transitioning their learning by experiencing co-curricular efforts that align and support curriculum. Strategic and budget decisions will be informed through the assessment process. Faculty will be engaged as significant leaders in the assessment process. Finally participation in the Academy will further guide the college as it embraces its vision to have quality instructional programs, student centered services and strategic alliances that position Black Hawk College as the preferred choice for education and training.

2. How will your work in the Academy contribute to improvement of student learning at your institution?

Participation in the Academy will enable the team to review policies and procedures and facilitate conversations with faculty intended to improve knowledge and use of assessment at the program and institutional level.

Participation is expected to yield additional resources and effective practices that will benefit faculty as they

continue to develop effective program level assessment plans that can be used to improved curriculum and pedagogy. Lastly, the participation in the Academy will enable the college to better demonstrate to its constituents that the College's quality programs provide the environment and resources for students to be successful in their learning.

Institutional Contact Information

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HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

Before you email your *Academy Application* to <u>academy@hlcommission.org</u>, make certain it has been reviewed and approved by your institution's CEO. See Affirmation page.

Academy Application Affirmation

I affirm that the application emailed to academy@hlcommission.org presents our institution accurately, and that we agree, if admitted, to commit to meaningful and productive participation in the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning.

Signature of Institutional GEO Date

Dr. Thomas Baynum

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Black Hawk College

Institution name

Moline, Illinois 61265

Institution City, State, Zip

Include the affirmation in the electronic delivery of the application or fax it to the Commission, attention Academy: (312) 263-7462.