

# Committee for Assessing Student Learning (CASL) - Minutes

Meeting Held Friday, January 14, 2022, from 12:30 – 2pm – via Webex

## Team Members:

### Present:

Dana Cogswell, Timothy Deines, Sandra Etherly-Johnson, Melinda Hernandez, Karen Hicks, Heidi Jordan, Mark Kelland, Mark Khol, Zack Macomber, Rafeeq McGiveron, Rob McLoone, Dale Moler, Tracy Nothnagel, Chuck Page, Danielle Savory, and Kara Wiedman

### Absent:

Patti Ayers

### Guests:

Cheryl Garayta

## Action Items:

* Continue workgroup conversations as needed outside of CASL meeting time.

## Approval of 01/14/22 Agenda

* Call for approval of agenda.
* Hearing no objections, the agenda stands approved.

##  Approval of 12/03/21 Notes

* Call for correction/approval of minutes.
* Hearing no objections, the notes stand approved.

## Assessment’s role in HLC Accreditation and Federal Agenda – Mark Kelland

* Currently Mark performs several duties which give him a comprehensive perspective on this topic.
	+ LCC Faculty
	+ LCC’s Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Accreditation Liaison Officer
	+ HLC’s Peer Reviewer
* [HLC Accreditation Criteria](https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html) consists of 5 criteria with 13 core components and 63 subcomponents.
	+ Accreditation teams focus their evaluation on how an institution addresses the 13 core components within the 5 criteria
	+ 5 Criteria:
		1. Mission
		2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct (Basically the governance of the college)
		3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support (Teaching)
		4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement (Assessment)
		5. Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning (Strategic Planning)
	+ While each accreditation reviewer will be responsible for looking at the institution as a whole they specialize and Mark’s focus is on Criteria 4 which has three core components in it

4A. Institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings

4B. Institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the education outcomes of its students

4C. The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certification programs

* + When reviewing Criteria 4B, there are two key words and one phrase that Mark thinks encapsulates what he is looking for at an institution
		1. Ongoing
		2. Commitment
		3. “Actively involving faculty in the educational outcomes of the students.”
* Mark shared several examples of what he has seen at other colleges while being a peer reviewer.
	+ Main tripping area of institutions is their assessment work
	+ Program review is a key component in educational improvement and the process is looked at by HLC reviewers
* In 2015/16 LCC was just beginning the refinement of our assessment process.
	+ Newly created college wide assessment plan
	+ CASL established
	+ Karen hired as Director of Assessment
* Interesting to note, the LCC Curriculum Committee was formed as an Academic Senate Standing Committee in response to HLC Criteria 3 while CASL was created in response to HLC Criteria 4.
* Co-curricular assessment is one of the 63 subcomponents, not a core component being evaluated by HLC at this time. But it is also referenced in criteria and it is good LCC is working on this aspect.
* Questions from the group for Mark:
	+ What type of evidence do you typically see for Criteria 4B?
		1. A good assessment plan for the institution
		2. Look at retention/persistence and success information
			- Not required but hope to see a steady improvement there
			- COVID’s effects on several elements are recognized
		3. Will also look at the Program Review process used throughout the institution
	+ What, if anything, does diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) have to do with assessment?
		1. HLC does not tell schools what to do, in fact it is avoided at all costs.
			- HLC evaluates everything from tiny tribal schools to major research universities so tries to keep their guidelines very general
		2. The assessment aspect would look at student learning of the entire group and if that showed issues would then indicate a need for closer study
			- At that point, if that area is where the issue lies, DEI would become part of the discussion
		3. Other core criteria components would also include DEI review as needed
	+ How important is Program Review information to HLC?
		1. Very, Criteria 4A is primarily program review
		2. If the review group doesn’t see assessment and persistence information they dig deeper
			- Room for improvement is acceptable, no one needs to be perfect
			- However there must be a process that is being followed that shows a commitment to student success
	+ Does the HLC review team look differently at PROE programs (occupational education programs through Perkins grant funding) than others? Specifically in awards information. Recent change to LCC Program Review made it no longer mandatory for non PROE programs to answer questions related to looking at award data.
		1. HLC wants to see persistence, completion and retention across the board, some of that would be presented as award information
		2. The main reason many colleges get accredited with HLC is to be able to receive financial aid (Title 4 funds and other) for their students
			- The government wants to be sure that money is well spent. Therefore all courses will need to show their worth, whether they are general ed or occupational
		3. Cheryl, from AA is at the meeting and noted that they can revisit this decision at the next during the next annual meeting to review the Program Review process itself
			- The change had been made due to faculty input, they felt overwhelmed with information and it was hoped this would reduce some of what they had to review
		4. Again, the peer review team of HLC has a lot of maneuverability when looking at a program
			- The Assurance Statement is very important and dictates a lot of what the team looks at
				* Making sure institutions are living up to their claims, living their mission and vision
			- Therefore when reviewing programs will be looking at their whole package. This helps stop college’s from “gaming the system”
				* For example if stated specifically that HLC would be looking at awards a course might start inflating grades to increase completion
	+ Please give an example of what type of data is adequate to show academic integrity?
		1. An outline of a lesson plan
		2. In the case of the library scenario Mark had shared a Library website research guide would help when reviewing that area
		3. Not necessarily just assessment results from student work

## Workgroup Discussions

* 15 minute breakout session while folks went to their workgroups to relook at goals written during the last CASL meeting and brainstorm how CASL can be supportive to faculty colleagues
	+ Think about time spent here and how each member might function as a liaison between CASL and their programs
		- At a course, program and institutional level
* Blue Group plans on continuing looking at varied notes and comparing issues via email as needed.
* Research Group plans on reevaluating some of their topics which seem to be overlapping with work eLearning is already doing.
* Assessment Learning Lab Group might shift the focus from a single course to the entire program as well as researching what others in the field have done regarding creating equitable outcomes.
	+ This might dovetail with some work the Research Group is doing
	+ Need to determine best way to share this knowledge with faculty
* Should we revisit student learning outcomes (SLOs)?
	+ Some fundamental elements of a program, and/or the field they are teaching, remain constant which means the SLOs are fundamentally the same but the methodology of teaching them to students might change
	+ Assessment can lead to changes in pedagogy
	+ SLOs might not be the issue in an equity gap, it could be the faulty pedagogy that needs to be changed, how a topic is approached
		- This is not to say all SLOs are inherently equitable, there might be inequitable SLOs
	+ SLOs can also be interpreted differently from one point of time to another
		- Example, history has something like “study significant events from the past” but our understanding of what is and isn’t significant has changed a lot and continues to change
* Curriculum plays an equity role in promoting DEI as well.
	+ For example in world literature it is important to not only have Shakespeare represented, there is a lot of indigenous literature that also needs to be represented
		- Western culture deserves to be studied but other cultures need to be studied too
		- For example the book “Things Fall Apart” by Nigerian Author Chinua Achebe, which was first published in 1958 and depicts the European invasion of southeastern Nigeria during the late 19th century
		- If teaching a Shakespeare course, could make it more equitable by spending time looking at how the cultures are being represented within the play
			* Examples Othello and The Tempest have some good diversity discussion potential
		- Perhaps pursue a unit on European authors, a unit on Black authors, and a unit on Native American authors
			* No need to only have one diversity course
	+ Need to make sure all students are given tools to enter our multicultural society and deal with, while hopefully enjoying, diversity
		- This runs across all curriculums
* Important to continue this discussion both in the large group and the smaller workgroups.
	+ What do we mean when we talk about culture and diversity?
	+ Can we arrive at usable definitions to take to other faculty groups?

## New Business & Future Agenda Items

* None

## Meeting Adjourned at 1:55pm

* Next meeting Friday, January 28, 2022 from 12:30pm to 2:00pm, via Webex.

*Respectfully submitted by Terri Christian*

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