



Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report



Submitted to Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

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Accreditation Reporting History

Highline College has been proactively engaged in the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities' (NWCCU's) seven-year accreditation process for the past five years, following an abbreviated 2011-13 transition from the previous ten-year cycle. As of fall 2016, Highline College has completed the following reports:

2011 – 2013 Accreditation Cycle (compressed/abbreviated)

- [Year One Self-Evaluation Report](#) (March 2011)
- [Year Three Self-Evaluation Report](#) (March 2012)
- [Year Seven Comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report](#) (August 2013)
- [Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report on Recommendation 2 of the Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report](#) (September 2014)
- [Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report on Recommendation 1 of the Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report](#) (September 2016)

2014 – 2021 Accreditation Cycle

- [Year One Self-Evaluation Report](#) (August 2014)

As a next step in the 2014-21 reporting cycle, Highline College is pleased to submit this Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report. In accordance with NWCCU guidelines, the narrative evaluates the college's institutional plan, provides two examples of that plan in action, and concludes with a self-assessment of priorities in anticipation of 2021's Year Seven Comprehensive Evaluation.

Part I: Overview of Institutional Assessment Plan

Highline College's plan for aligning mission (Standard One) with mission fulfillment and sustainability (Standard Five) is well-established, widely participatory, and improvement-oriented.

Processes: Methods of Assessing Mission Fulfilment

Highline's college-wide comprehensive planning, assessment, and improvement process begins with the institution's [Mission Statement](#), which integrates the college's four Core Themes:

1. Promote student engagement, learning and achievement
2. Integrate and institutionalize diversity and globalism throughout the college
3. Build valuable relationships and establish a meaningful presence within Highline College's communities
4. Model sustainability in human resources, operations, and teaching and learning.

These Core Themes provide the lenses through which Highline views and assesses mission fulfillment. As detailed in Highline's annual [Mission Fulfillment Report \(MFR\)](#), each of the Core Themes incorporates a set of objectives which redefine the theme's aspirations in concrete, action-oriented terms. Every objective is further refined by a limited set of indicators of

achievement. Within each indicator, each measure has an identified benchmark, which represents a minimum threshold of fulfillment. Benchmarks are tied either to externally validated standards of achievement or, in the absence of an external reference, an internally defined standard for continuous improvement.

Core Theme attainment is evaluated through the collection and analysis of *MFR* data. To monitor mission fulfillment, the vice president for academic affairs, who serves as accreditation liaison officer, meets regularly with the institutional research program manager to review the college's *MFR* data. The data is published annually by the [Office of Institutional Research](#) and, as a planning tool, informs the development of divisional and program-level plans college-wide.

Intentionally, the *MFR*'s benchmarks reflect minimum acceptable standards of mission fulfillment. That baseline approach has served the college well, allowing the institution to distinguish between its goals for remediation and for continuous improvement. Each year, based on assessment of *MFR* metrics, the college identifies areas of below-threshold performance as the highest priorities for intervention. At the same time, areas of consistent success illuminate opportunities where "stretch goals" can motivate additional improvements. Two sets of examples will illustrate those distinctions:

Remediation Examples: Over recent years, college-wide initiatives have been designed around several below-benchmark priorities for remediation, including African American attainment, ABE/ESL transition-to-college rates, and math completions. As another example, in light of persistent shortfalls in the benchmark for Latino participation in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 *MFRs*, the college initiated a comprehensive response, beginning with securing grant funds to initiate the planning process. The president's Executive Staff allocated over \$50,000 in discretionary funds to match the grant dollars and reassigned key staff in Academic Affairs to lead the initiative. Remedial efforts included the creation of a Latino advisory committee, bilingual academic services, and a Spanish-language website. Additionally, the college hired staff to coordinate the initiative. As a result, in 2014-15 Highline met its benchmark and continues to improve.

Continuous-Improvement Examples: Wary of the complacency that a low bar can foster, Highline looks for areas where current successes can drive additional gains. For instance, when several years of *MFR* data indicated that college-level math completions were consistently above benchmark, the president in 2014 challenged the campus to increase that rate by another three percentage-points. Similar self-challenges have emerged from positive trends in 15-credit and 45-credit attainment benchmarks. In sponsoring institution-wide initiatives to further improve student progression, Executive Staff has incorporated an accountable entity(ies) and a reallocation of staff and resources. The current stretch goals appear in the college's [Mid-Cycle Strategic Plan](#).

People: Planners and Decision-Makers in the Assessment of Mission Fulfillment

To balance accountability and participation, Highline College has organized its institutional planning processes to be both collaborative and hierarchical. The planning cycle begins with the present and trustees, who review the college's Core Themes metrics and associated *MFR* data as

a core element of their annual retreats. From there, the accountabilities proceed to the four vice presidents who make up the president’s Executive Staff, each of whom assumes primary responsibility for one Core Theme. Collectively, Executive Staff determines priorities, directs resources, and develops long- and medium-term strategic plans. As individual priorities are articulated, resources are allocated by the vice president in that area to address deficiencies or opportunities in outcomes. The resulting initiatives are delegated through the vice presidents to the appropriate administrative structures, governance groups, or task forces within their division’s planning, assessment, and improvement processes. These groups then plan and execute interventions which may include re-assigning faculty or staff workload, hiring new staff, allocating discretionary funds, and re-allocating use of campus space. Thus, planning and budgeting support mission fulfillment with an emphasis on multi-year initiatives that will continuously improve institutional performance.

Once this planning cycle is in motion, its progress is monitored by Institutional Research in collaboration with faculty and staff who measure mission fulfillment, learning outcomes, and progress towards stretch goals in their respective areas. Institutional Research shares reports with the campus community, creating opportunities for feedback. Where student learning outcomes are concerned, the [Assessment Committee](#) shares results of assessments with all academic departments. Throughout the process, and especially when approaching the Year One and Mid Cycle Self-Evaluation Reports, the [Accreditation Steering Committee](#) monitors *MFR* indicators and measures and, when more meaningful measures better align with the mission, recommends refined measures and indicators to Executive Staff.

As an end-point to the cycle, the Board of Trustees regularly revisits and reaffirms the college’s Mission Statement, Core Themes, metrics, and plans. This cycle is summarized in Figure 1.

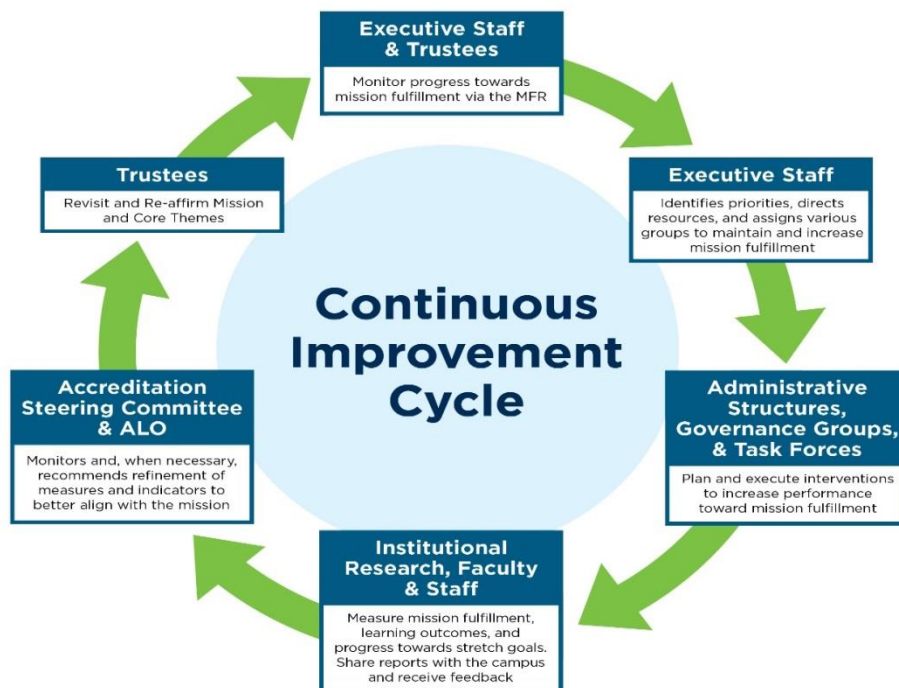


Figure 1

Roles and Responsibilities: Guiding and Maintaining Mission Fulfillment

To carry out and maintain Highline College's cycle of mission fulfillment, clear organizational structures and roles have been established, beginning at the board and executive level:

Board of Trustees: The five-member [Board of Trustees](#) governs Highline College by providing strategic perspective and leadership in determining the institution's priorities and by specifying the guiding policies and principles for college operations.

Executive Staff: As the chief governance body of the college, Executive Staff includes the college president and the vice presidents for academic affairs, administrative services, student services, and institutional advancement, as well as the executive director of human resources.

At an operations level, in turn, each division maintains its own set of planning, assessment, and improvement processes toward mission fulfillment:

Academic Affairs: Within Academic Affairs, the planning, assessment, and improvement processes rest with two primary bodies: Instruction Cabinet and the Assessment Committee.

Instruction Cabinet: As the chief governance body within Academic Affairs, Instruction Cabinet guides instructional policy and practice college-wide. The academic deans, division chairs, and several key directors are the members of [Instruction Cabinet](#). The planning, assessment, and improvement process for Instruction Cabinet follows an annual calendar. Members review data from the *MFR* to develop an [annual work plan](#) organized around all four Core Themes.

Assessment Committee (AC): Student learning assessment is understood and supported at multiple levels within Academic Affairs in support of Core Theme 1. The [Assessment Committee](#) — formerly the Standards, Outcomes, and Competencies Committee (SOCC) — is a faculty body charged by the vice president for academic affairs with coordinating and reviewing faculty-driven assessment of student learning. Institutional Research, the deans of professional-technical education and of transfer and pre-college education, and a liaison from the Accreditation Steering Committee are ad hoc AC members.

Student Services: Within Student Services, the planning, assessment, and improvement processes are guided by Student Affairs Cabinet and the Assessment Task Force.

Student Affairs Cabinet (SAC): As the chief governance body within Student Services, [Student Affairs Cabinet](#) guides student services policy and practice. The members include the associate deans in leadership/engagement, enrollment, and counseling, as well as department directors of financial aid, entry services, TRiO, women's program/WorkFirst services, registration, educational planning, transfer center, and multicultural affairs. Cross-over membership from the divisions of Academic Affairs and Institutional Advancement ensures a link between the two areas participating in fulfilling Core Themes 1 and 2. The planning, assessment, and improvement process for Student Affairs Cabinet follows an annual calendar, where staff conduct annual planning and choose

assessment priorities for the year based on a review of *MFR* data and from departmental assessment activities. They then select initiatives to address in the coming year to support mission fulfillment.

Assessment Task Force (ATF): The Student Services' [Assessment Task Force](#) maintains an infrastructure for assessment initiatives that facilitate continuous improvement in student learning and departmental effectiveness for Core Themes 1 and 2. The ATF has three focus areas: institutional, divisional, and departmental assessment.

Institutional Advancement: [Institutional Advancement \(IA\)](#) supports Highline's mission through public information activities and legislative liaison activities. IA annually realigns its departmental goals with IA division-wide goals toward mission fulfillment. IA department heads collectively establish divisional goals, collect, assess, and report data related to those goals, primarily in support of Core Theme 3. Within IA, planning, assessment, and improvement processes are undertaken by the whole division under leadership from IA's vice president.

Administrative Services: [Administrative Services](#), which includes the Budget Office, Facilities Services, Finance and Auxiliary Services, and Public Safety, has primary responsibility to ensure that the goals of Core Theme 4 are successfully met, providing secondary support of the business services elements of Core Theme 2. Each department within Administrative Services identifies key areas to evaluate to determine mission fulfillment. Measurement targets for Core Theme 3 are chosen based on factors such as system- or industry-defined benchmarks or college-identified priorities. These indicators of mission fulfillment are themselves assessed regularly for relevance and effectiveness in support of mission fulfillment. The entire process is reviewed on an annual basis, and work plans are developed based on these ongoing assessment activities.

Cross-Divisional Coordination: In addition to the college's trustees, executive leadership, and divisional governance bodies, two cross-constituent groups facilitate and inform the college's assessment, planning, and goal-setting activities across the institution.

Accreditation Steering Committee: The [Accreditation Steering Committee](#) (ASC) includes representation from the major college divisions including Academic Affairs, Student Services, Institutional Advancement, and Administrative Services. It is chartered by the accreditation liaison officer. ASC regularly reviews both the *MFR*'s data and its metrics, evaluating the college's mission-fulfillment initiatives and forming recommendations to Executive Staff on the most meaningful indicators and measures to evaluate institutional performance.

Policy Development Council: The [Policy Development Council](#) (PDC) evaluates, assesses, and makes recommendations on all proposals for new or modified board or college policies and college-wide procedures. The PDC includes representation from Administrative Cabinet, Instruction Cabinet, Student Affairs Cabinet, Faculty Senate, Highline College Student Government, Highline College Education Association, and the Washington Public Employees Association. The PDC is overseen by the vice president for administrative services.

Validity of Current Core Themes and Objectives

Based on a half-decade of experience with them, Highline College remains satisfied that its Core Themes remain meaningful and relevant. The four themes themselves grew from institutional planning touchstones — formerly called Strategic Initiatives — whose roots reach back to the mid-1990s. In the lead-up to the college’s inaugural *Year One Self-Evaluation Report* in 2011, the campus undertook a substantive and widely-participatory initiative to refine its Strategic Initiative framework, recasting the language of those institutional goals and adding objectives, benchmarks, and measures to define mission fulfillment. The Board of Trustees adopted the resulting Core Themes in 2010. An updated mission statement, incorporating those themes, was adopted May 2013. Without alteration, the Mission Statement and Core Themes were reaffirmed by the board as recently as late-July 2016 in [Resolution No. 139-2016](#). As further evidence of the Core Themes’ relevance, the 2013 *Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report* commended the college for its success in “imbedding the core themes seamlessly into the planning and decision making processes of the college.”

Sufficiency of Evidence to Assess Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability

The college is equally confident that its Core Theme indicators provide sufficient evidence to assess mission fulfillment and sustainability. Over six years, the institution has been able to collect data and measure its progress through a consistent set of measures. Throughout that effort, Highline College has moved deliberately and continuously toward a deepening a “culture of evidence” for its work. Efforts in this direction have been supported by the structures and requirements of the nationwide [Achieving the Dream](#) initiative, Washington’s [Student Achievement Initiative \(SAI\)](#) performance-funding metrics, and NWCCU’s accreditation processes. The development of the Core Themes and their related elements is a natural extension of the work Highline has undertaken to become a more data-driven, mission-directed campus.

Determining if Core Themes and Objectives are Meaningful

The process of reevaluating, refining, and reaffirming the college’s Core Themes is aligned with NWCCU’s seven-year cycle of self-evaluation. In preparing for each Year One and Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report, the accreditation liaison officer formally asks both the Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC) and Executive Staff to reexamine the college’s Core Theme indicators and measures, compiling suggestions and additions that have been collected since the last reporting period. The accreditation liaison officer presents findings from the ASC to Executive Staff and vice versa. Executive Staff, after final consultation with the ASC, comes to agreement on which, if any, measures and indicators should be modified.

In short, Highline College is committed to its Core Themes and objectives and, at this point, contemplates no changes there. However, measurement indicators are periodically modified if a more meaningful metric is recommended. For example, since Highline’s 2014 *Year One Self-Evaluation Report*, two indicators have been altered. Both were for Core Theme 3, Objective 3, which measures Highline’s ability to meaningfully assess mission fulfillment and sustainability in its relationships with local communities. The new indicators 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 track community-based educational offerings, campus-hosted community events, and alignment of training

programs to local labor-market needs. These data better reflect Core Theme 3’s impact on the college mission. However, as do all colleges, Highline continues to struggle to create an even more effective benchmark to measure success in meeting the communities’ needs.

Part II: Examples of Mission and Core Theme Operationalization

As directed by NWCCU’s Guidelines for the Mid-Cycle Evaluation, below are two examples illustrating how Highline College has operationalized its mission and Core Themes and, in the process, has institutionalized its assessment, planning, intervention, and reassessment cycle. Both examples derive from student learning-focused Core Theme 1, “Promote student engagement, learning, and achievement.”

Example A: Student Learning Assessment

Core Theme 1, Objective 2: Diverse teaching methods, innovative curricula, and student support services fulfill the learning needs of students.

Indicator 2.1: Faculty engage in continuous course-level assessment

The first example focuses on faculty-wide assessment of student learning. Highline College views student learning assessment as a process that itself undergoes continuous improvement. Accordingly, for over a decade, the institution has devoted attention to strengthening its student learning assessment processes, with central support from the faculty [Assessment Committee](#) (AC), formerly SOCC. Figure 2 illustrates some of the recent milestones of this work.

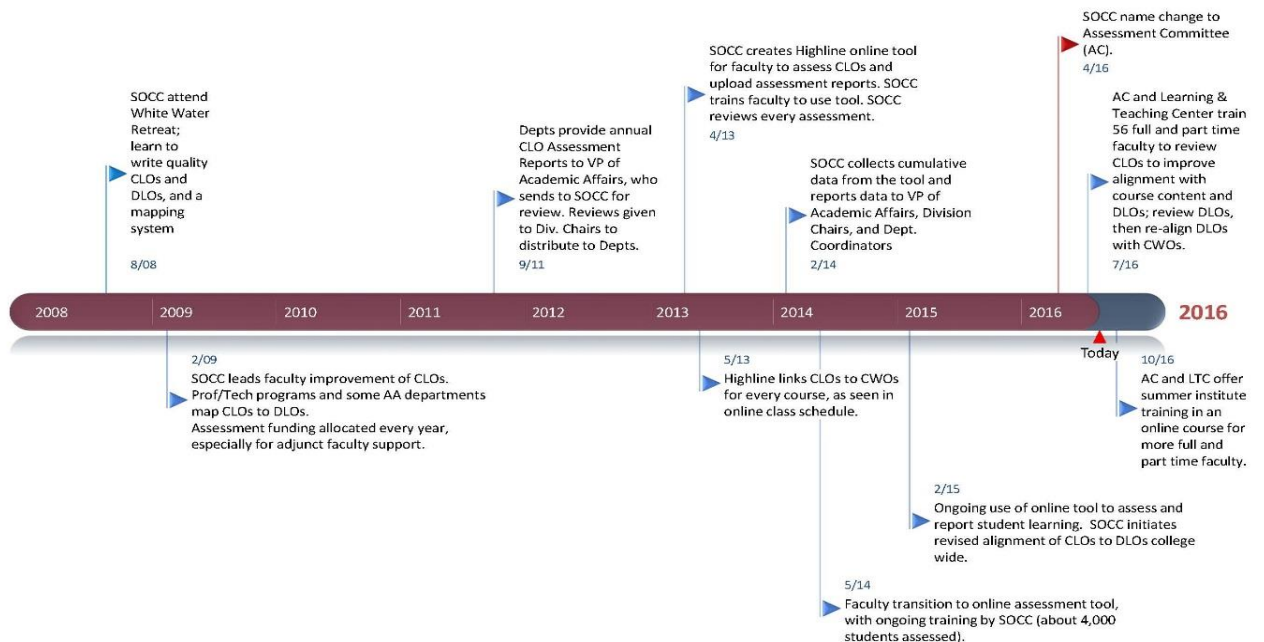


Figure 2

Over its long history of robust assessment efforts, Highline has consistently fostered authentic faculty leadership of that work and, along the way, has developed deep faculty expertise in

classroom-level assessment tasks. As Figure 2 illustrates, recent initiatives have emphasized two goals — first, the development of sustainable online reporting tools and, second, better integration of course-level outcomes and degree-level outcomes within that infrastructure.

In 2013, Highline built and began using its own online [data collection and assessment tool](#) to compile and report assessment of student learning outcomes for both formative and summative purposes. The new resource makes it much easier for full- and part-time faculty college-wide to assess student learning and teaching in order to implement improvements that maximize student achievement. Before 2013, faculty and departments produced annual [paper reports](#) on their student learning outcomes assessment activities. These paper reports were painstakingly tracked, reviewed, and summarized by Assessment Committee members in annual reports to the division chairs and the vice president. Now, faculty can access the online tool any time, conduct assessments each quarter, and compare student learning results before and after making improvements to curriculum and instruction. The tool produces an annual department data report and division data report which are sent to the vice president for academic affairs, then given to department coordinators and division chairs. Departments can see the degree of assessment being conducted in face-to-face versus online classes, by full-time versus part-time instructors, and in daytime versus evening classes, as well as which courses have been assessed that year. Using these data reports, faculty department coordinators can more easily analyze their department's progress, set goals for the next year, and identify areas that need more time, attention, or resources devoted to them in the following year, as well as any assistance the department needs to achieve its goals.

Lessons Learned

So far, in the spirit of continuous improvement, faculty assessment leaders have taken away three lessons from these recent initiatives:

- *Sustainability:* Initially, the Assessment Committee members provided a peer review to every online assessment completed by faculty, as with the earlier hard-copy reports. By fall 2015, however, it became clear that the online assessments had become too numerous and too complex for the Assessment Committee to review in a timely manner. In response, the Assessment Committee is re-organizing to scale up the way faculty are supported in doing assessments. Going forward, committee members will train other faculty to be peer evaluators so that faculty assessments continue to receive quality peer review, but with a quicker turnaround. In the revised model, an instructor's first review will be conducted by an AC member. After that, a department colleague will review the assessment. Due to the number of faculty participating in the process, the Assessment Committee reached out to the [Learning and Teaching Center](#), working in tandem with the Center to expand the number of faculty undertaking online assessments. The annual department- and division-level reports and reviews continue as before. Through presentations at faculty meetings, training sessions offered on campus, and one-on-one support in faculty offices, the Assessment Committee has established a culture in which faculty are committed to ongoing peer assessment of student learning via the online tool.

- *Software needs:* Regrettably, due to unanticipated limitations of Highline’s new Curriculog® catalog software and the complexity of the college’s course-level outcome (CLO) information, the online assessment tool has been limited solely to assessment of the CLOs, unable to link that functionality to degree-level learning outcomes (DLOs). In response, the college’s Instructional Technology team undertook yet another revision to the online tool. Nearly complete as of fall 2016, the new version will serve as the repository for all course-level outcomes and will continue to collect student learning data for assessments of those CLOs. However, significantly, the updated tool will allow multiple stakeholders to see the percent of students meeting the outcomes at both the course level and the college-wide level, extending the alignment as it currently appears in the [online class schedule](#). The college expects to complete this linking in 2016-17.
- *Outcomes quality:* The task of writing high-quality outcomes statements requires constant professional development, especially as newcomers join the faculty. In the process of creating the new online tool, the Assessment Committee also saw an opportunity to facilitate a [faculty review of course level outcomes and their alignment with degree level outcomes](#). This work began in 2015 and is continuing through 2016. The result will be a more manageable number of streamlined CLOs, more closely aligned with newly reviewed DLOs. A 2016 Summer Institute kicked off this effort. Over 44 part- and full-time faculty participated. An online course, available through the Canvas® learning platform, will make the training permanently available faculty-wide.

Current Status

Even as Highline works to sustain and improve its assessment resources, the reports generated by the current online assessment tool allow faculty to measure the number of students, courses, and sections assessed each year, as seen in the *Annual Statistics Report* that the tool generates.

Year	Number of Students Assessed	Met Outcome	Percentage Met Outcome
2014-15	5483	4297	78%
2015-16	5089	4003	79%

Currently, roughly 5,000 students are being assessed annually. At least 78% of them meet their course learning outcomes. This assessment of student learning is a significant measure of mission fulfillment. Highline collects this data every term, every year, so that multi-year analysis can be conducted and faculty can mine the reports for more meaningful data.

Instructors and departments use this tool for continuous-improvement planning. To encourage and document that loop-closing process, the online tool requires instructors to answer these questions in their annual reports to the vice president for academic affairs, division chairs, and Assessment Committee:

1. Using the information gained from this process, describe how you revised or intend to revise your teaching methods, assignments, and/or activities to improve student achievement. If you believe no changes are needed, then state that explicitly.
2. Closing the loop: If this assessment was a follow-up to changes made to a previous assessment, then please describe whether or not your changes have been effective at increasing how well students met the learning outcome.

These questions hold instructors accountable for reflecting on how instruction and assessment choices affected student learning, then describing their next steps and plans to reassess.

Summary and Implications

Though improvement is always possible, the Assessment Committee’s data provide sufficient information to evaluate mission fulfillment at this time. The Annual Statistics Report illustrates the entire college’s assessment of student learning, generating reports that allow multiple stakeholders to evaluate that information. At the classroom-level, individual instructors can track how well their students learned the content and which adjustments to instruction or curriculum led to increased student learning. At the department level, coordinators can monitor what assessments are being conducted in which areas, and plan for future work to ensure assessment across all delivery formats and times for both full-time and adjunct faculty. At the institutional leadership level, the data can be aggregated to present a campus-wide picture of student gains.

As a result of the process’s recent refinements, the Assessment Committee and Accreditation Steering Committee have recommended a future revision to Indicator 2.1. The original language, “Faculty engage in continuous course-level assessment,” helped the college reach its current level of assessment compliance. Now, with the online tool’s greater capacities, Highline has the ability to replace Measure 2.1.A with a more meaningful and specific measure of continuous engagement in course-level assessment. As proposed, the new metric would track not only the proportion of faculty who complete their assessments, but also the percentage of students who meet their learning outcomes. As a corollary measure, Indicator 2.2 will continue to measure student perceptions of their gains. That metric, “Students experience HC courses as challenging and engaging,” provides a useful data-triangulation point, assuring faculty that their expectations of are robust enough to challenge Highline’s diverse learners.

Example B: Student Support Services

Core Theme 1, Objective 2: Diverse teaching methods, innovative curricula, and student support services fulfill the learning needs of students.

Indicator 2.3 Faculty and student services personnel provide effective support to students.

The second example focuses on student services. Through its planning processes, the Student Services Division has identified the college-wide system of academic probation as a focal point for improvement. This now-institutional attention grew from ongoing outcomes assessment work within the division.

Background

At Highline College, students attempting six or more college-level credits who achieve less than a 2.0 accumulated grade-point average (GPA) are placed on Level One Academic Probation. Those who continue with less than a 2.0 GPA the next quarter advance to Level Two Probation. Achieving less than a 2.0 GPA for a third quarter triggers an Academic Suspension for one year. Many suspended students do not return. In its data-gathering efforts, the Advising Center tracked student GPA quarterly and reviewed its own methods for coordinating and monitoring probation rates. Early assessments showed that students on probation *with no intervention* remained on probation at a higher rate. Also, these students did not progress toward a degree or certificate with the same frequency as students who received interventions.

These findings led to the creation of the division's Focused Assessment Collaborative Team (FACT) to further study the probation progression rates. Professional research suggested that intervention can make a difference for struggling students. Meantime, Highline's local data showed that one of the biggest predictors of student attrition for those on academic suspension was merely entering the college's academic probation system early in their college career. A resulting effort to reduce the number of students progressing through the probation levels became the focus of Measure 2.3.B, "Percent of first level academic probation students who do NOT move to second level probation in the second quarter."

The college's current Mid-Cycle Strategic Plan specifically calls for Academic Affairs and Student Services "to jointly expand cohort-based and targeted-need supports...that promote early intervention and whole student engagement and success." To implement this plan, FACT identified best practices to be used with probationary students who need greater engagement and support to achieve academic success. FACT gathered constituents from various departments and formed committees to study data, conduct surveys of faculty and students, and suggest policy changes to decrease the second level probation rate. FACT posited that both providing wrap-around services and reaching out to students with orientation-type programs would improve student retention and achievement, in part through helping students navigate college. The Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) accepted these recommendations, identifying probation processes as the focus of SALT's monthly meetings.

Lessons Learned

To shape the college's intervention plan, SALT conducted interviews and focus groups with probationary student. From those inquiries, the staff learned two things.

- *Negative messaging:* Students who successfully moved off probation revealed that they perceived nearly all communication from Student Services regarding probation as negative and/or punitive. In essence, the data showed that students felt that Student Services only "connects with us when something is wrong," and that Student Services contacted them only with "bad news," such as being on probation, tuition being due, owing fines on their student account.
- *Reader persistence:* The data also suggested that students effectively did not read past

the first paragraph of the letter of probation to see the resources that could help them.

In response to these findings, Student Services conducted additional surveys and focus groups to study how successful students moved off probation. Based on these inputs, staff redesigned the approach to students using that information. Specifically, the following changes were made:

- *Communications improvements:* The division revamped and revised many communications practices and message templates to improve how they would be received. These changes have helped to transform the campus's culture of communication. The revised [probation letter](#) offers one example of this change. In addition, Student Services has also revamped websites, student orientation programs, and other vehicles of communication to reflect this paradigm shift. Contact is now positive, regular, and focused on teaching the students how to navigate the college, replacing the earlier somewhat dispassionate and transactional approach.
- *Intervention workshops:* In 2015, for students on Probation Level 1, the Student Services Division created half-day [THRIVE](#) intervention workshops. Under the old probation system, students on Probation Level One were required to meet with an advisor to have a block removed from registering. Now they can choose to attend a THRIVE workshop instead. Based on the top five self-reported personal practices that helped students move off probation status, THRIVE curriculum was developed to provide student empowerment, celebrate student achievement and success, and share resources with them. Its strength-based, not deficit-based or punitive, communication is designed to motivate students to continue to move forward. It coaches students to be aware of their personal choice-points and encourages their self-commitment as students.
- *Achievement socials:* To further counteract student concerns that the college only "connects with us when something is wrong," in 2015 Highline began celebrating students who earn their first 15, 30, and 45 credits. These quarterly [Achievement Socials](#) demonstrate that Highline College is committed to highlighting student success with equal or greater vigor than highlighting student deficiencies. All students who meet these attainment levels receive congratulatory messaging from the college and a certificate to mark their attainment milestone. Staff invite all eligible students to a formal social event with food, speakers, and promotional prizes to honor their hard work.
- *Guidelines for advising groups:* Also in 2016, SALT suggested recommendations for faculty advisors who are being enlisted to help students lift their probation-related registration blocks. Using the recommendations from FACT's research and Academic Advising staff, Student Services created new guidelines to use when advising students who are on probation. This standardization assures that all students will have access to the same probation intervention service, with a consistently encouraging tone, sending a message that Highline believes that they can succeed in college.

Current Status

The SALT probation initiative exemplifies how Student Services planning, assessment and improvement process works to improve student learning and attainment, leading ultimately to better fulfillment of the institutional mission. As the *MFR* data show, in 2013-14, Highline did not meet its benchmark for Measure 2.3.B. Following the institution’s standard planning protocols, Executive Staff delegated the matter to the vice president for student services. From there, SALT took over. Based on its interventions, in 2014-15 the benchmark was met.

Measure 2.3B		2014-15	2013-14	Benchmark
	Percent of first level academic probation students who do NOT move to second level probation in the second quarter.	45% (n=392)	38% (n=418)	42%

Summary and Implications

As part of its ongoing assessment efforts, Student Services regularly generates reports, analyzes data, and shares the data to allow multiple stakeholders to make a positive difference in student attainment. Where Measure 2.3.B is concerned, data and evidence guided the Student Services Division to interventions and new practices that have transformed the division’s communication methods. As a consequence, at the institution’s executive-leadership level, stakeholders can see increased academic performance through macro-level *MFR* measures. Meantime, at the staff level, individual work teams and groups track how student groups are performing in response to the new probation interventions. This feedback closes the assessment loop, setting a direction for future work.

Globally, Indicator 2.3 “Faculty and student services personnel provide effective support to students,” allows the institution to focus specifically on promoting student learning and achievement, the first Core Theme. As Highline College moves toward the Year Seven Self-Evaluation, the campus will continue to monitor these data to determine whether they are reliable and sustainable over time.

Part III: Year Seven Action Priorities

The Board of Trustees, the leadership of the college, and the college as a whole are committed to Highline’s mission, Core Themes, and objectives. Based on the mid-cycle analysis of the institution’s overall assessment plan, the college will continue to improve in the following areas:

Ongoing Institutional Planning and Assessment

- Improve selected metrics and measures for the *MFR* as identified by Executive Staff and the Accreditation Steering Committee. Potential examples include the following:

- Core Theme 3's community element presents a long-term, ongoing challenge. Establishing a meaningful, measurable metric in this area remains a priority.
- Core Theme 4's might profitably replace some obscure sustainability metrics with others that are meaningful to a larger group of campus constituents.
- Increase the campus-wide understanding and use of data measures in Highline's daily work. Potential examples include the following:
 - Send the *MFR* to all campus staff and faculty quarterly, along with an update in relevant areas.
 - Encourage faculty and staff to use the link to an *MFR* archive where they can track data across multiple years to inform their current work.
 - Formalize the process of scheduled reporting to campus governance groups on *MFR* measures, and promote the use of *MFR* metrics in different governance groups.
 - Incorporate *MFR* metrics into campus-wide messages.
- Explore other ways to drive the college-wide *MFR* data back to the departments for use. Potential examples include the following:
 - Provide departments with more specific tools that allow them to measure learning on specific items that roll up to *MFR* data.
 - Educate departments to see how their work connects to the larger *MFR* data.
- Increase IR capacity and develop more sophisticated tools for analyzing and sharing of data. Potential examples include the following:
 - Leverage AANAPISI grant to fund a data analyst position in the IR office.

Continuous Improvement of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

- Continue to refine the new online data tool to make it easier to document and assess student learning outcomes to college wide outcomes and on the pathway to degree level outcomes.
- Continue to provide professional development opportunities for full time and adjunct faculty to be able to make better use the online tool and how to develop and improve student learning outcomes at the course, program, and degree levels.
- Further promote use of Assessment Committee feedback on annual department assessment reports to move more departments into fuller, multi-year planning for assessment goals.

Increases in Student Retention and Attainment

- Further increase the percentage of students who successfully move off probation following their first quarter on probation.

- Review the college-wide probation policy for possible additional improvements.
- Track probation rates and identify best intervention practices to scale up successful interventions.

Conclusion

The trustees, executive leaders, faculty, and staff of Highline College feel confident in the institution's process and progress toward its Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report. The college's institution-wide assessment processes are comprehensive and representative, with all four of the college's major divisions participating in data use, monitoring, and reporting on mission fulfillment goals. Equally important, the campus community is comfortable with — and committed to — a continual process of improvement for institutional assessment itself.

Further, Highline's progress is encouraging. Its Core Theme measures are largely meeting established benchmarks, and plans are taking shape for addressing the strategic plan's stretch goals in the coming years. The work presented in this report is emblematic of the campus community — inclusive, community-oriented, data driven, student-centered, and striving for excellence.

As a standing committee that reports to Executive Staff and the accreditation liaison officer, the Accreditation Steering Committee will remain active to keep the college monitoring and reporting progress toward mission fulfillment to ensure the college is prepared for its Year Seven Comprehensive Evaluation. The college community looks forward to the feedback from the current mid-cycle visit to inform its work toward measuring and achieving mission fulfillment.

In preparation for that feedback, the college has completed a set of self-assessment rubrics for the elements of the mid-cycle review. They are appended as part of the supplementary materials to this report.

Appendices

1. [Mission Fulfillment Report 2014-15](#)
2. [Mid Cycle Strategic Plan 2013-2017](#)
3. [Self-Evaluation per Rubric Evaluating Outcomes Assessment Plan and Progress](#)
4. [Self-Evaluation per Rubric for Standards 3.A.1 – 3.A.5](#)
5. [Self-Evaluation per Rubric for Standards 3.B., 4.A and 4.B](#)