



### ***Why does KBOCC engage in assessment?***

Assessment is a strategic process that is part of continuous improvement and fostering a culture of evidence. Assessment allows for evidence-based decisions about curriculum and instruction, academic programs and student/support services. In addition, the Higher Learning Commission considers ongoing assessment a cornerstone of our institutional accreditation.

Currently, all academic programs at KBOCC implement assessment plans. Additionally, a curriculum map, outlining how student learning outcomes are addressed throughout an academic program's curriculum, have been created by faculty. Newly proposed academic programs should prepare an assessment plan as it is considered for approval. As part of an on-going institution-wide effort, student support/success and operational areas will begin implementing assessment plans as well.

### ***What is the link between assessment and accreditation?***

For many, thinking about assessment also points to accreditation. While this may be the case in some instances, accreditation is not the only purpose of assessment. KBOCC has always assessed, reflected on our courses, programs, and services, and made changes as necessary; however, we had not documented our efforts to the degree to which is now required both for internal (e.g. strategic initiatives) and external (e.g. accreditation) verification.

According to Dr. Gianina Baker of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA):

“Dating back to the late 1800s, accreditation in the United States has always been related to protecting what we now call “consumers” (students) and ensuring that higher education serves the public interest. Part of this has included efforts designed to ensure consistency among varying institutions through established credit hours, admissions practices, standardized degree requirements, and so on.

Eventually, accreditors turned their attention to the impact and effectiveness of institutions of higher education. This meant determining not just that students were graduating, but that institutions' claims about what students were learning could be confirmed. Since the 1980s, accrediting bodies' expectations regarding assessment of student learning have evolved from first expecting institutions to develop plans for assessment, to showing evidence that plans for assessment were being implemented in the 2000s, to looking for proof that institutions were using results of assessment to drive improvements in the 2010s (Gaston, 2018, April).

Just as accreditors' expectations have changed over time, so has our understanding of good assessment practice. As institutions of higher education continue to shift from assessing for accountability to that of assessing for improvement (Ewell, 2009), availability of examples of good assessment practice increases. In the midst of this shift, institutions still view the process of accreditation as the primary driver of assessment work on campus, however, chief academic officers reported on NILOA's 2017 national survey that their institutions are increasingly using assessment results for internal improvement efforts (i.e., program review, modifying curriculum, etc.)”



***Who “does” assessment?***

In short, everyone! IE does not conduct assessments of programs and services; faculty and staff do. The purpose of IE is to support faculty and staff in the systematic, meaningful, and manageable assessment of programs, services, and operations through consultation, workshops, forums, documentation tools and platforms, and other useful resources. It is in the interest of each program, department, or area to conduct their own assessment and use the results to improve student learning, supports, or services. As part of academic assessment, faculty have the core responsibility for articulating student learning outcomes, conducting those assessments, and revising curriculum accordingly.

***Why should I engage in assessment?***

Assessment provides many benefits, including information so that academic departments, student support, and operations areas can make informed decisions regarding changes and improvement. When done well, the practice of assessment can have positive impact and direct value beyond simply being a checkbox for future accreditation processes. Assessment facilitates discussion between faculty and staff, within and across disciplines, about goals, collecting and sharing detailed feedback with students, and establishing a clear and effective bigger picture for individual programs and services. Assessment provides results that strengthen arguments for increased funding and resources for departments, programs, and area producing valued outcomes. Assessment informs professional development for faculty and staff, as well as changes to policies, resources, and institutional development.

***How is assessment information used?***

Assessment information is gathered and used by faculty and staff to identify areas for action and guide decision-making. Assessment is a reflective process and is intended to be collaborative. Results are intended to be discussed and provide feedback for continuous improvement. Results are not used to evaluate individual students, faculty, or staff.

***When should we assess?***

For assessment to be meaningful and effective, it is important that it be on-going. Some areas may assess all outcomes each year while others may assess select outcomes each year over the assessment cycle. An assessment plan, crafted by faculty and staff, lays out the intended schedule and methodology for assessing outcomes for an area.

***What resources does KBOCC have for supporting assessment?***

The Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator as well as the Assessment Committee is available for consultation, guidance, and can work with departments and areas to develop and implement assessment plans. The IE website also includes resources on assessment and institutional effectiveness.



***Academic Assessment/Student Learning Outcome Assessment:***

***How should student learning outcomes be assessed in an academic program?***

Multiple, culturally responsive means of assessment should be used to get the most complete and accurate picture of student learning. Direct measures should be the primary means of demonstrating that student learning outcomes have been achieved. Direct assessment of student outcomes can be examined using embedded course assignments, capstone projects, portfolios, field experiences, performances, etc. If an academic program uses published exams, such as exams for licensure or certification, as a requirement for completion of the program, the exam results can be used as a direct measure. Indirect measures operate best as a support to the information gathered through direct measures. Alone, they are not sufficient to demonstrate the achievement of student learning outcomes. Indirect information is often gathered through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. It reflects the opinions and perceptions about a student's learning outcome. Indirect measures can also include course grades and grade distributions, retention and graduation rates, and placement rates.

In course, programs, and other learning experiences, faculty and instructional staff choose which direct and indirect measures to utilize, how evidence will be collected, and what the results mean for the program. Based on their findings, faculty and staff identify and implement improvement actions.

***Is course feedback useful for student learning outcomes assessment?***

Yes and no. Student course feedback can be used as an indirect measure in support of the direct measures of student work if students are asked to rate their knowledge and skills and reflect on what they have learned in the course. Student perceptions can be an important contribution to the assessment process.

***When assessing student learning outcomes, why are course grades not enough?***

A course grade may include aspects that are not necessarily related to student learning in the course, such as attendance. While attendance may impact student learning, it is not directly related to what the student learned. Additionally, a course grade often reflects progress toward many learning outcomes and is a compilation of student progress toward all of these outcomes. Course grades can be useful as an indirect measure of student learning if they are used to complement direct measures and are primarily based on student work related to the learning outcome, such as exams, papers, and presentations.