Ad Hoc Evaluation

Shoreline Community College

Shoreline, Washington

October 14, 2022

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Introduction

The Ad Hoc Evaluation team conducted a campus visit at Shoreline Community College on Friday, October 14, 2022. Prior to the visit, the college provided a self-study report and numerous documents related to the two recommendations addressed in this report. Similar recommendations were first noted in a Fall 2012 site visit report for standards related to assessment for which the institution was found to be in need of improvement. As a result of an Fall 2020 comprehensive visit, the two recommendations below addressed standards for which Shoreline Community College was found to be out of compliance. The 2012 and 2020 visits were conducted using 2010 standards, however, in the more recent visit, the recommendations were updated to reflect 2020 standards.

As a point of context, Shoreline Community College has had four presidents in 18 months. One was permanent, one was acting, one was interim, and the current president began July 1, 2022. There are also a number of critical administrative roles that have been or are filled with acting or interim staff. The college is in the process of hiring two new administrators, one a Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the other an Executive Director for Institutional Effectiveness. Strong leadership is very important to the health and long-term viability of any institution. We are hopeful that Dr. Jack Kahn, with his extensive experience, will move Shoreline forward in the process of continuous improvement and mission fulfillment.

Part I: Recommendation 1

Recommendation 1: Fall 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability – Provide evidence of a systematic method for collecting, storing, accessing, using and sharing data for the purposes of on-going and systematic evaluation, planning, resource allocation and informing decision-making toward improving institutional effectiveness and achieving mission fulfillment. (Standards 1.B.1;1.B.2)

Standard 1.B.1 The institution demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

Standard 1.B.2 The institution sets and articulates meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators of its goals to define mission fulfillment and to improve its effectiveness in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions.

Team Observation
Shoreline Community College provided the team with a self-study report focused on two recommendations, supporting documents with evidence addressing the recommendations, and opportunities to interview a number of administrators, faculty, and staff regarding mission fulfillment and data used for decision-making. At the request of the evaluators, Shoreline also

provided a supplemental report addressing questions from the evaluators prior to the visit. We appreciated the prompt responses to our requests for information.

Elements of the Recommendation

Systematic Method for Data Handling: Like many institutions, Shoreline has abundant data, but they have not had a consistent, systematic method for handling, displaying, analyzing, and sharing their data. The college is in thefirst year of implementing Peoplesoft as their ERP, known as ctcLink, part of a statewide initiative for more efficient data handling at community colleges. They anticipate that this will provide them better access to appropriate data. They will learn as they grow with this system.

Pertinent data comes from a variety of sources, including course-level learning outcome assessments, program-level reviews, enrollment data, student persistence data, and various qualitative data from surveys and interviews. Finding or developing a robust system that allows Shoreline to aggregate, disaggregate, and crosswalk multiple data sets is a critical step in their progress to using data for continuous improvement and resource allocation to support mission fulfillment. This development work is in process.

Review of documents provided evidence that Shoreline has taken a number of steps toward developing this system. However, it is not yet functional, and only a select number of administrators and staff have a full vision of what this system must be able to do for the college.

Systematic Evaluation, Planning, and Resource Allocation: Shoreline does some targeted evaluation and much planning, but there is little evidence at this time of this work influencing resource allocation. The self-study report references budget cuts, allocations for hiring of tenure line faculty, and program requests for equipment as budget items that have been informed by student enrollment data and rolled into resource allocation decisions. At this time there is no direct evidence of student learning or achievement data being used to influence resource allocation. However, there are plans in place for this to happen in future budget cycles.

A significant step forward in this work may be the imminent hiring of a Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This role, along with the new Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, will be responsible for locating learning and service gaps that must be addressed at Shoreline. These two hires will report to President Kahn.

Shoreline has recently developed a revised planning framework. In this framework, evaluation, planning, and resource allocation flow from the college's mission, vision, and values. They have indicated three strategic initiatives for improvement: student access and success; disciplinary excellence; and equity in access, student progress, and completion/transfer. Internal and external program reviews will contribute data to a comprehensive operational planning process.

The revised planning framework appears to be comprehensive and implementable if the college remains focused on using data to make critical decisions leading to mission fulfillment.

Improving Institutional Effectiveness: Another step forward in this process will be the hiring of an Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness. Conversations with administrators and staff, along with the Board Chair, and review of documents provided evidence that Shoreline is clear on the expectations for improving institutional effectiveness through a cycle of continuous improvement. The college, with a new president on board, is undertaking a significant review of processes currently in place.

Shoreline has determined an appropriate list of peer and aspirational colleges, and they have some dashboards and other information available to the public. They have also identified a number of student groups for which they expect to disaggregate data. It will be important to remain focused on groups large enough to disaggregate meaningfully, and for which significant gaps exist and can be addressed.

From documents reviewed, we determined that Shoreline's focus to date has appeared to be on enrollment numbers, hiring of tenure line faculty, and equipment purchases. The lack of clear focus on student learning outcomes beyond a limited number of courses was apparent. Assessment is happening, but it is not consistent or pervasive, and the current calendar of assessment events does not support ongoing continuous improvement across all areas of the college.

Some student services, notably the library and student mental health services, have made excellent use of data for revamping their offerings and moving to meet current needs. Other areas have been less successful. Much of this is likely due to turnover in staffing and limited resources during enrollment downturns.

Shoreline seems to understand the importance of closing the loop on assessment, but in a conversation with administrators and staff, it was indicated that there is little consistency at this point, and depending on the area, an evaluator might find them anywhere on the cycle between planning for the first time and the beginning of a second iteration of the continuous improvement cycle. The acquisition of several new grants is making it possible for more faculty and staff to engage in much-needed assessment work outside their normal classroom teaching routines. Additionally, the College has provided continuous general fund (GF) allocations to support learning outcomes work for faculty and staff above and beyond the service requirements for faculty.

Achieving Mission Fulfillment: The mission/purpose of Shoreline is, "We serve the educational, workforce, and cultural needs of our diverse students and communities." In conversation with administrators and staff, it is evident that they are passionate about their mission and clear about their responsibilities to their students. It is also evident that the college is still in the process of determining the best way to measure mission fulfillment. Their Board has provided some guidance for their work with the phrase "healthy college" metrics. As the college

continues to consider what these metrics will be, they will gain a greater understanding of the data that will be needed to provide evidence for mission fulfillment.

Mission, Vision, and Values are woven together as Shoreline builds a system to provide evidence of mission fulfillment. The vision statement, "We are recognized for inclusive excellence in teaching and learning, student success, and community engagement." highlights the focus on learning and student success. These indicator categories seem to be where the college is coalescing as they move forward in pursuing continuous improvement and mission fulfillment:

- Access for Learners
- Equity in Access
- Student Learning
- Student Progress
- Equity in Student Progress
- Completion/Transition
- Equity in Completion/Transition
- Contribution to Workforce

Moving Forward

The evaluators found evidence that Shoreline believes in their mission, is passionate about fulfilling it as they serve students, and they are still in the planning phase of robust measurement of mission fulfillment. It is clear that great strides have been made in addressing this recommendation, but the evaluators did not see consistent or robust evidence across Shoreline Community College of a fully implemented cycle of assessment and improvement leading to institutional effectiveness and mission fulfillment. Shoreline administrators identified four gaps in creating a fully functioning assessment system. Filling these gaps will move the college to a place where assessment is pervasive and data is used for the purposes of on-going and systematic evaluation, planning, resource allocation, and informing decision-making toward improving institutional effectiveness and achieving mission fulfillment.

1. The college is missing a calendar of planning and assessment events with regularly scheduled activities for which all areas are held accountable.
2. Plans for institutionalizing and sustaining an assessment system are not yet in place.
3. More extensive campus-wide communication and buy-in is needed.
4. Current assessment efforts must be integrated into one system leading to a regularly completed cycle that fosters continuous improvement toward mission fulfillment.

Part II: Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2: Fall 2020 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability – Engage in assessment practices that focus on systematic and on-going assessment of course learning outcomes that lead to program learning outcomes in general education, all instructional and student support

areas. Assessments must be used to improve student learning outcomes and inform academic and learning support-planning and practices. (Standards 1.C.5; 1.C.6; 1.C.7)

Standard 1.C.5 The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of faculty to establish curricula, assess student learning, and improve instructional programs.

Observation

Shoreline has developed both Course Learning Outcome (CLO) and Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment processes in the past two years. Twenty CLOs were assessed as a pilot process in 2021-22. Of the 20, 17 completed reflections. Of the 20, nine were classes with a below 100-level designation, generally considered to be less than college-level. Twenty-six CLO assessments of one outcome each are slated for 2022-23, but not yet assessed.

The evaluation team reviewed the 20 Course Outcome Assessment Reports (COAR) that have been completed, and found they are informative. The assessments are authentically tied to the outcome being assessed, the assessment itself is tied to a rubric, the "next steps" sections contain concrete ways the instructor can use the results of assessment to improve instruction and positively impact the outcome in that course. Instructor reflections on the efficacy of the next steps are straightforward and, according to the reflections, generally appear to result in improved instruction and increased collaboration within the department.

Professional-technical programs

Eight professional-technical programs completed Program Outcome Assessment Reports (POAR) for one PLO in a program. The evaluation team reviewed all eight POAR reports and found a process similar to COAR reports. The assessment strategy was to identify an assessment within a course that direct-measured a program outcome. Most instructors selected significant, capstone-type projects as an assessment. As with COAR reports, rubrics are developed and utilized, and the instructor documents the results of the assessment to identify opportunities for improvement of student learning and support. Also, as with the COAR process, a follow-up reflection should take place after one year. Since year one assessments had not yet taken place for the pilot POAR process, there were no POAR reflections available to the evaluators.

Professional-technical programs completed curriculum matrices to identify where in the scope and sequence program outcomes were introduced, assessed, and reinforced. The evaluation team examined 10 curriculum matrices and found that only program-specific classes were mapped. For example, the accounting matrix only mapped accounting classes. Supporting business and economics classes were not mapped.

No rotations have been established to ensure all PLOs are being assessed on a regular cycle.

Although not mentioned as a program assessment process in the ad hoc self-study report, professional-technical programs without external accreditation or certification engage in external program review on a systematic rotation. The evaluation team reviewed external program reviews found on the Institutional Assessment intranet site dating from 2016 to 2022.

The most recent external reviews provide some evidence of program learning assessment, specifically course pass rates, GPAs of completers, and former student survey assessment of meeting PLOs.

Faculty report engaging with the external program review process. External program reviews contain valuable, evidence-based recommendations for program improvement. However, faculty could not describe how the recommendations move into resource allocation.

Professional-technical programs with external accreditation or certification do not engage in the POAR or external program review processes. The evaluation team reviewed self-studies and other documentation related to student learning in professional-technical programs with external accreditation or certification. The programs that fall into this group have a systematic assessment process of student learning and improvement cycle, which informs program planning. The rotation of review is tied to the individual specialized accreditation process, which can range from one to 10 years.

<u>Transfer degree programs</u>
The Shoreline Assessment Handbook lists 13 transfer degrees in a variety of disciplines. Transfer degree programs do not have discrete sets of program outcomes. The college has relied on college-wide general education learning outcomes in lieu of program learning outcomes for all transfer degrees. These general education outcomes are still in place, but not currently assessed.

The college engaged in an assessment process of the General Education outcomes on a college-wide basis between 2016-2020. This process is examined further in 1.C.6 below.

Interviews with faculty and the Shoreline Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) describe a planning process to write "versions" of the new Shoreline Student Learning Outcomes (SSLOs) that may serve as program outcomes for transfer degrees. The college reports through interviews, that once new SSLO versions are in place, a POAR-type process will be developed for transfer programs. An implementation team addressing the new SSLOs has been tasked with developing PLOs for transfer programs, beginning with the Associate of Arts-Direct Transfer Agreement, which is a general studies AA.

Two Associate of Fine Arts degree programs engage in regular assessment of one PLO through a capstone portfolio process. This process has not been part of the college-wide assessment process, but is being integrated into it.

<u>All programs</u>
The evaluation team was impressed by the level of commitment and passion the learning committees and faculty bring to the table. The college is supportive of the efforts through stipends, release time, and service responsibilities. Faculty understand that it is their responsibility to assess the quality of learning within programs. The associate deans are enthusiastic about being the "learning outcomes champions."

Connection to Standards

Standard 1.C.5 has two essential elements: An effective system of assessment of the quality of learning, and clearly identified faculty who are responsible for curricula, student learning, and instructional improvement.

<u>Professional-technical programs</u>

While COARs and POARs provide valuable information about student learning and appear to be effective tools to improve pedagogy and increase collaboration within some programs and departments, there does not appear to be a connection between CLOs and PLOs to provide an overall assessment-picture of a program that can be used to assess the quality of learning in that program. Faculty were unable to describe how or if CLO assessment ties to PLO assessment or the curriculum matrix to give an overall picture of student learning in the program. In addition, there does not appear to be assessment across the entire program through the POARs. POAR assessment appears to be limited to the department, without a connection to supporting classes within the program. For example, the accounting matrix is limited to ACCT courses. BUS courses are listed, but not part of the PLO assessment. It is not required through the standards that both CLOs and PLOs are assessed. Indeed, it is up to the institution to determine how the quality of learning in programs is assessed systematically.

There does not appear to be a unifying factor in the many ways program learning is assessed in professional-technical programs at Shoreline. There is a regular system of professional-technical external program review for some programs. External accreditation and certification are in place for other programs. There is no rotation schedule to ensure all programs are assessing student learning, and that all PLOs within a program are assessed in a timely rotation.

Within professional-technical programs there is some assessment of program learning (passing courses, completing programs, and capstone exams as a proxy for learning) through external evaluations and specialized accreditation and certification.

There is some course-level learning outcome assessment taking place, but it is extremely limited at this point, and the CLO assessment is not tied to PLO assessment. Following the college's assertion that instructors will assess one CLO per year, gathering sufficient assessment information to evaluate the quality of learning in the programs will not be completed in a timely enough manner to effectively impact a cycle of program and student support planning, implementation, and re-assessment.

Lastly, it is unclear how the college plans to combine the many methods of professional-technical program assessment into a unifying process that can be used to improve instruction, and inform program and student support planning at the institutional resource allocation level.

<u>Transfer degree programs</u>

The AA/AS Transfer programs do not have discrete sets of PLOs for the 13 transfer programs, nor a current method of assessment for the quality of learning within those programs.

The COARs that have been completed provide some actionable information on student learning at the course-level for a very limited number of transfer courses, but do not rise to the level of systematic assessment of the quality of learning within programs.

Faculty within the Associate of Fine Arts degrees are assessing the same PLO each year in a process that has been outside of the college-wide assessment system being developed. A plan is in place to bring the Fine Arts group into the POAR process.

Participation by faculty appears to be on a voluntary basis, although the faculty members that the evaluation team interviewed were very willing volunteers. Associate Deans are identified as being the "learning outcomes champions."

Culture of Assessment

The evaluation team was impressed with the level of commitment and enthusiasm the faculty and learning outcomes groups exhibited. Shoreline's participatory and collaborative planning is moving the college into a culture of assessment for the benefit of the students.

Moving forward

The college has made some progress with learning assessment, but assessment is not yet systemized into an integrated process to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. Professional-technical programs have PLOs and an initial to emerging assessment process through POAR reports and external program review. Some PTE programs have external accreditation or certification to systematize assessment within programs.

An important element of program learning assessment is the identification of program learning outcomes. The college is encouraged to develop program learning outcomes for each of its 13 transfer degrees in a timely manner. Outside the scope of this report, but important to keep in mind while writing outcomes is Standard 1.C.1, which requires that student learning outcomes include designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study. The 1.C.1 rubrics in the NWCCU Accreditation Handbook contain more detail on the standards. It is critical that the 13 transfer programs develop PLOs that meet Standard 1.C.1, and embark upon a systematic assessment of the quality of learning in those programs.

The college is encouraged to evaluate the efficacy of the proposed assessment process with an eye toward systemization, information sharing, and collaboration at all levels of the college. The 2020 standards have less of an emphasis on course learning and more emphasis on program learning. There are many assessment processes being developed and partially implemented at Shoreline (CLO, PLO, external accreditation and certification, external PTE program reviews, portfolio assessment), yet they appear disjointed without an overall plan to connect them into a system that can be used to support improved instruction, and inform student support planning.

The evaluation team acknowledges the efforts toward creating a program review process for transfer degrees, and encourages the college to seek best practices in college transfer program assessment. The evaluation team also acknowledges the training that has been completed by faculty in outcomes assessment. It will be important to capitalize on that training to increase assessment activities across the college.

It will be important for the college to increase the scope of assessment activities in order to provide a clear picture of all student learning in a systematic, timely way to better inform planning activities.

The college is encouraged to review the 1.C.5 rubrics in the *NWCCU Accreditation Handbook* to fully implement student learning assessment processes to further develop progress on this standard.

Standard 1.C.6 Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum, institutional learning outcomes and/or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.

Observation

Shoreline has undergone a two-year, collaborative process to update Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), known as Shoreline Student Learning Outcomes (SSLOs). At this time, the SSLOAC has recommended five SSLOs, which have not yet been formally adopted by the college.

The college is currently embarking on a process to write "versions" of each of the five outcomes in order to ensure each degree program is associated with an applicable version of each SSLO. This work is underway, and the faculty and SSLOAC exhibit enthusiasm for this work.

It is unclear from discussions with the committee if these versions will be assessed across all associate-level programs or within the general education portion of the associate level programs. It is also unclear if the SSLOs (or the versions) will also be some or all of the program outcomes for the 13 transfer programs.

Because the SSLOs have not been adopted, and because there is additional work to be done to develop versions of SSLOs and map them to programs, no assessment activity is taking place at this level.

Prior to embarking on the new SSLO development, the college had identified and assessed General Education Learning Outcomes, which are still in effect. The evaluation team reviewed four General Education Outcome Assessment reports provided in the ad hoc report. With some outcomes, students were directly assessed using a common assignment, and others were qualitative based on a prompt. All were scored with a rubric. The reports did not have recommendations around student learning or student support, but some did include questions underscoring the importance of sequencing skills.

The assessment reports did not have high participation from faculty or students, and the outcomes were characterized in the ad hoc report as "never assessed in a comprehensive way." The General Education Learning Outcomes process has been abandoned, and efforts have turned to developing a process similar to POAR reports. The college reports they gained valuable experience through the assessment of the "old" general education outcomes, and is using this experience to develop the new SSLO assessment processes.

SSLOAC confirmed that no assessment of the 2001 General Education Outcomes has taken place since the 2016-2020 process.

Connection to Standards
Standard 1.C.6 requires ILOs and/or core competencies to be established and assessed across all associate-level programs or within the General Education curriculum. Shoreline is working with two sets of ILOs. One set, established in 2001, is intended to be replaced by the recommended SSLOs.

At this time, no assessment of ILOs or core competencies are taking place at the college.

Moving forward
It will be important for Shoreline to determine where assessment of SLLOs will take place (within the general education program, or across all associate-level programs). As discussed in the 1.C.5 section, it will also be important to differentiate between SSLOs and program degree outcomes for the 13 transfer programs.

Once those determinations are made, Shoreline must initiate a system that allows the college to assess SSLOs as part of the regular assessment workflow. The work-product of SSLO assessment should result in actionable information that can be brought forward at all levels of the organization, and used to improve instructional programs and student support services as discussed in 1.C.7.

The college is encouraged to review the 1.C.6 rubrics in the *NWCCU Accreditation Handbook* to fully implement Institutional Learning Outcomes/or Core Competencies to further develop progress on this standard.

Standard 1.C.7 The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

Observation
Narrative and evidence in the ad hoc self-study report, as well as discussion with the various learning outcomes committees, was limited to work underway at the college in establishing and improving assessment processes, rather than using the results of assessment processes to improve student learning and inform academic and learning-support practices.

The pilot COAR report process provides some evidence that results of course-level learning assessment contributes to increased engagement and learning in courses as well as increased collaboration within departments. The reflection process after a time lapse indicates the improvements made to pedagogy have a positive effect on student learning.

The POAR process has not had a reflection process. The SSLO process is not undergoing any assessment activities.

PTE external program review provides recommendations based on limited student achievement data for program improvement. External accreditation and certification cycles provide similar recommendations for program improvement. It is not clear, through interviews with faculty and

learning outcomes committees, or through provided documentation, how the results of these assessments are used to improve student learning and learning support practices.

Connection to Standards
Although the college has developed several assessment processes and has emerging assessment-related activities at the course and program levels, the college has been focused on establishing those processes, and has not yet tied the processes to institutional planning to support academic and learning support activities.

Absent from Shoreline's assessment cycle is a systematic way for recommendations based on student learning assessment to connect to the overall college assessment and resource allocation processes to inform academic and program planning and improve instructional programs.

This standard has two essential elements. The first is using the results of student learning activities to inform and improve student academic programs. In the COAR and POAR reports, there is limited evidence that the assessment activities resulted in increased collaboration within departments and improved pedagogy within courses.

The second essential element is that the results of student learning assessment are used to inform and improve learning support practices. The college did not provide the evaluation team with evidence of assessment activities informing learning support practices.

Moving forward
As the college continues to develop a comprehensive assessment system, it will be important to include an information-sharing process to appropriately inform planning groups at all levels of the results of assessment activities in order to identify gaps in learning and student support activities, and a mechanism to develop resources necessary to close gaps and improve learning outcomes.

The college is encouraged to review the 1.C.7 rubrics in the *NWCCU Accreditation Handbook* to further develop progress on this standard.

In Summary
During the campus visit, the evaluation team verified information provided in the ad hoc self-study and attending documents. Shoreline Community College seems intent on addressing the two recommendations that resulted from findings of non-compliance related to Standards 1.B.1; 1.B.2; 1.C.5, 1.C.6, and 1.C.7 during the 2020 comprehensive visit. Plans are in place for a comprehensive assessment system, but these plans have not yet moved fully to the implementation phase. There are a variety of isolated assessments being performed, and data is collected and used to describe student achievement gaps. Identifying and closing gaps in student learning outcomes and use of data for resource allocation is not yet occurring in a regular and systematic way. When the plans are fully implemented, Shoreline Community College should have a robust and functional assessment system.