Ad-Hoc Self Evaluation Report

March 1, 2017

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Introduction

In a letter dated July 15, 2015, the NWCCU requested that Flathead Valley Community College submit an Ad-Hoc Self-Evaluation Report with no visit in Spring 2017. The Commission accepted FVCC's Spring 2015 Mid-Cycle Report, which included a response to Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 of the Spring 2013 Year One Report, but did not address Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Spring 2012 Comprehensive Report. This Ad-Hoc Report was requested to meet NWCCU's expectations with regard to Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Spring 2012 Comprehensive Peer Evaluation Report.

Recommendation 1

The evaluation committee recommends that Flathead Valley Community College refine its mission fulfillment and core theme objectives and indicators fostering a holistic approach to the alignment and integration of planning, resources, and assessments for the entire campus, including non-instructional functions of the College (Standards 2.E.1, 2.G, 3.A.1, and 4.A).

Response to Recommendation 1

FVCC has re-structured its institution-level assessment processes, including strategic planning, mission fulfillment, and assessment of core themes and non-instructional departments. The former Continual Improvement Group was restructured to create the Strategic Planning Council in order to better align and integrate planning, resources, and assessments for the entire campus. This group oversees strategic planning, mission and core theme assessment, as well as assessment of all non-instructional departments on campus.

Strategic Planning Council

Purpose: To assist the college in achieving its mission by coordinating the strategic planning process and monitoring progress toward college-wide goals.

Responsibilities:
- Oversee the strategic planning process (collect input on Strategic Plan strategies and indicators)
- Finalize and periodically evaluate the Strategic Plan (send to Executive Staff for approval)
- Update the Assessment Plan (send to Executive Staff for approval)
- Monitor progress toward the completion of college-wide goals and objectives (through non-instructional department reviews and core theme reports)
- Provide Executive Staff recommendations for improvements to meet Strategic Plan and Core Theme objectives

The Strategic Planning Council is co-chaired by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and the Faculty Senate President. Membership consists of the Core Theme committee chairs, Dean of Students, Institutional Research Analyst, and representatives from several campus departments (Student Advising, Marketing, Admissions, Business Office, Bookstore, MIS, etc.). Each of FVCC's four Core Themes is led by a Core Theme Committee, which are sub-committees of the Strategic Planning Council (Figure 1). The Core Theme Committees meet each semester, and the chairs bring feedback on Core Theme goals, objectives, and indicators, as well as associated Strategic Plan strategies and indicators to the Strategic Planning Council for discussion.
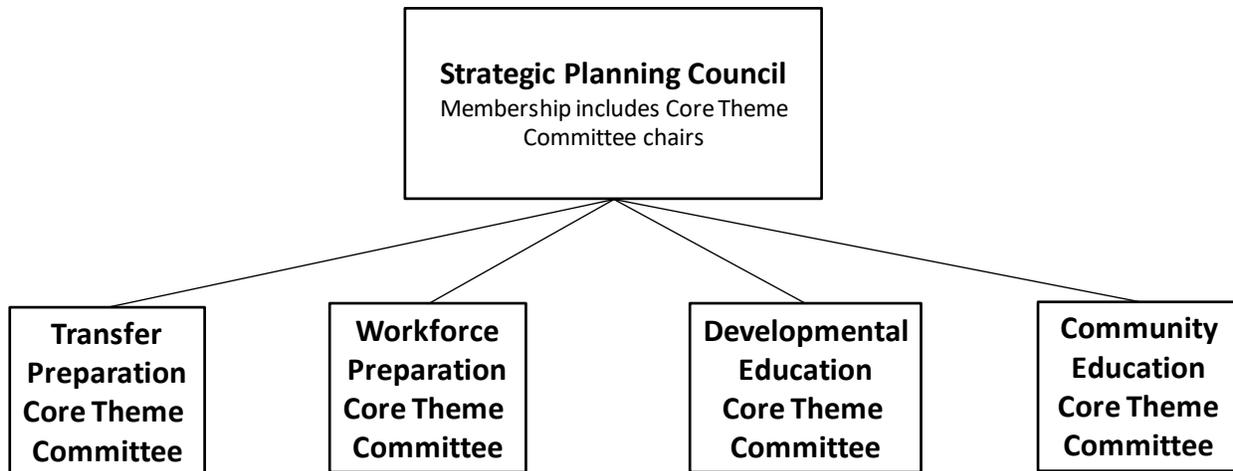
Figure 1. FVCC's Strategic Planning Council structure. Core Theme Committee Chairs bring feedback from the Core Theme Committees to the Strategic Planning Council.

Core Theme Committees

Purpose: To provide oversight and tracking of the objectives and indicators for the Core Theme and associated Strategic Plan strategies. Members help facilitate activities identified in the Strategic Plan, review collected data, and make recommendations to the Strategic Planning Council. Each Core Theme committee chair is responsible for writing the Core Theme reports, which are reviewed by the Strategic Planning Council.

Responsibilities:
- Review Core Theme objectives, indicators, and results
- Facilitate, review, and propose new Strategic Plan strategies
- Compile, review, and summarize results for reports
- Share results with appropriate campus groups and gather suggestions for improvement

Faculty members chair three of the four Core Theme Committees (Transfer Preparation, Workforce Preparation, and Developmental Education), while the Community Education Core Theme Committee is chaired by the Director of Continuing Education. Core Theme Committee membership is selected to include faculty and staff who work most directly with the objectives of that core theme.

Together, the Core Theme Committees and Strategic Planning Council work to identify meaningful Strategic Plan strategies and indicators that are aligned to the Core Themes. These groups also oversee the assessment of FVCC's Mission Statement, Core Themes, and non-instructional departments. This new structure provides consistent and coordinated communication among departments and administration regarding assessment and institutional effectiveness.

Since Spring 2012, the Core Theme Committees have reviewed all Core Theme objectives and indicators, as well as Strategic Plan strategies and indicators. Several revisions have been forwarded and reviewed

by the Strategic Planning Council. Most notably, the use of student satisfaction data was reexamined, which resulted in FVCC moving away from the use of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey. This survey was replaced by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), beginning Spring 2014. Student satisfaction-based indicators were replaced with indicators of student engagement throughout the Core Themes.

FVCC's Board of Trustees reviewed the Strategic Plan in June 2016. All three Strategic Plan goals were re-affirmed, but several changes were made to the objectives within each goal. The Strategic Planning Council has been working with the Core Theme Committees throughout the past year to define meaningful strategies and indicators for these refined objectives.

The Strategic Planning Council develops an annual College-wide assessment report, which includes an overview of institution-level assessment results and recommendations to improve progress on objectives. The report is presented to the Executive Staff in the spring of each year. This group discusses resource allocation as it relates to the institutional performance indicators in an effort to ensure that FVCC's budget continues to align with Core Themes and objectives. The President then presents the report to the Board of Trustees, which provides feedback and direction.

Non-Instructional departments (e.g., Financial Aid, Library, Bookstore) make important contributions to institution-level goals and objectives. Department assessments are coordinated by the Strategic Planning Council on a three-year cycle. Through a self-study, each department identifies goals and objectives that align with FVCC's overall mission and objectives and develops a plan to assess its progress toward meeting its goals and objectives. The self-study includes analysis of survey results from FVCC students and staff regarding their experience with the department and suggestions for improvement. The Strategic Planning Council evaluates the completed self-study and holds a meeting with the director to discuss the review. The council makes recommendations to the department director, submits a review summary to the Executive Staff, and sets dates to follow-up on any action items. Results also are shared within the department and to the appropriate College-wide committees.

Since Spring 2012, FVCC has fully operationalized a revised institution-level assessment process that integrates planning, resources, and assessments for the entire campus. The Strategic Planning Council has reviewed all Core Theme and Strategic Plan objectives and indicators, and reviews updated data on an annual basis. It also has reviewed 12 of the 18 non-instructional departments on campus, and will have reviewed all departments by Spring 2018.

Recommendation 2

The evaluation committee recommends that Flathead Valley Community College fully implement and assess learning outcomes across campus programs, courses, and general education, and have structures in place to monitor progress in a timely manner, and utilize the data for continuous improvement (Standards 2.C.5 and 4.B).

Response to Recommendation 2

FVCC has implemented robust student learning outcomes assessment processes throughout all academic programs, courses, general education, and related instruction requirements.

Program Level Assessment

The program review process is an important opportunity for faculty to actively participate in the growth of their own programs and the growth of the College as a whole. The review process helps to address problems and enhance student learning through specific procedures for examining assessment results and implementing necessary revisions. It also helps us evaluate the role of our programs in supporting FVCC's Mission and Core Theme objectives.

Program level learning outcomes state what students should be able to do upon successful completion of programs. Career and technical programs (AAS Degrees and Certificates) have specific program level learning outcomes listed in the FVCC Academic Catalog. In addition to completion of course requirements as outlined for the specific AAS or Certificate program, career and technical students complete related instruction requirements, which are built into the program listings. The program level learning outcomes for transfer curricula (AA and AS) are identical to the general education learning outcomes, as these are general transfer degrees and do not designate a specific course of study (see the general education assessment section).

Programs are reviewed on a five-year cycle. The Program Review Committee is comprised of at least eight members, including one faculty member from each of the five academic divisions. The Dean of Students, Director of Educational Services, and Director of Institutional Effectiveness serve on the committee as ex-officio members. Faculty Senate appoints the faculty committee members, subject to approval by the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services (Vice President) and the Faculty Senate Board of Directors. Faculty committee members serve three-year terms, and membership is staggered to ensure continuity among returning and new members. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness serves as Program Review Committee chair.

Each spring, the program review schedule is revisited with input from the Vice President and modified, if necessary, so that programs are reviewed in an appropriate timeframe. Division Chairs and instructors of those programs scheduled for review in the upcoming semester are notified in the semester prior to their review.

The Program Review Committee evaluates the completed review forms and holds a meeting with the program director to discuss the review. The committee makes recommendations to the program director, submits a review summary to the Vice President and the Curriculum Committee, and sets dates

to follow-up on any action items. After reviewing the summary of recommendations, the Vice President holds a meeting with the program director, the chair of the Program Review Committee, and other relevant faculty or staff to follow-up on the recommendations of the committee. All action items are recorded by the Program Review Committee Chair, who follows-up with the program director according to the agreed-upon schedule. The summary is finalized after review and approval by the Curriculum Committee.

Proposals for new programs to be considered for adoption at FVCC are first discussed with the Vice President. If the proposed program is deemed viable for consideration, the program is then reviewed by the Program Review Committee. The chair of the Program Review Committee provides a summary with a recommendation to Faculty Senate for discussion. The Program Review Committee chair then forwards the packet and recommendations to the Faculty Senate, who upon support from the faculty, forwards it to the Vice President, who presents it to the Executive Staff. Executive Staff determines whether or not the program is in alignment with College goals and if the College has financial resources to commit to the program. If approved by Executive Staff, the Vice President takes the proposal to Curriculum Committee for review and approval of the curriculum. The Vice President then presents the proposal to the Board of Trustees for approval. All new programs are presented to the Montana Board of Regents for final approval before inclusion in the FVCC academic catalog.

Improvements made through assessment of academic programs have included adjustments to program curricula, program learning outcomes, program requirements, course scheduling, and faculty development, as well as the addition or deletion of programs.

General Education Assessment

General Education assessment at FVCC includes assessment of the General Education core curriculum for the AA and AS degrees, which is organized into eight categories: writing, communications, mathematics, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, natural science, and global issues. Related Instruction components of AAS and CAS programs are embedded within program curricula and include instruction in communication, interactions, and quantitative literacy.

The General Education assessment system aligns with the Transfer Preparation and Workforce Preparation Core Themes, helping to support the Mission of FVCC (Figure 2).
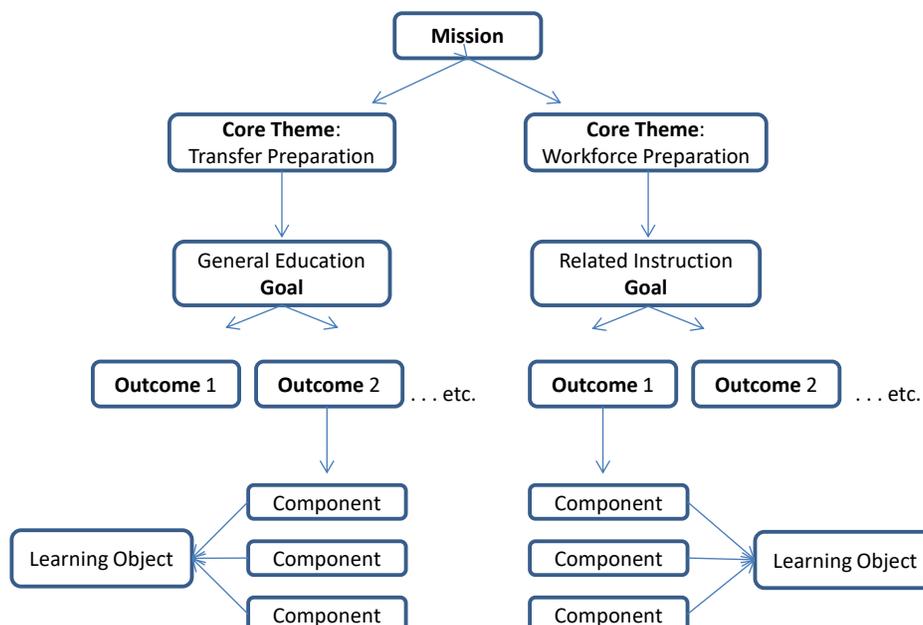
Figure 2. *The structure of General Education/Related Instruction assessment at FVCC, showing the relationship to the College mission statement and Core Themes. Each outcome may have several components.*

The goal of General Education at FVCC is to prepare students for transfer while developing the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners. It is aligned with the Montana University System Core Curriculum (MUS Core), described here http://mus.edu/transfer/MUScore.asp. Students may transfer up to 30 semester credits of General Education to participating Montana institutions. Because of this statewide agreement, the General Education curriculum at FVCC follows the direction of the General Education Council of the Montana University System. This council has outlined the goal of General Education and its importance in undergraduate education after the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Essential Learning Outcomes (http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm).

The goal of Related Instruction at FVCC is to prepare students for a productive life of work by developing skills in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support program specific outcomes. Related Instruction courses are embedded within the AAS and CAS program curricula and are organized into three categories.

FVCC faculty developed a broad outcome statement for each of the eight General Education categories (Table 1) and three Related Instruction categories (Table 2).

Table 1. *General Education categories and outcomes*

General Education Category	Outcome Statement Students should be able to . . .
Writing	demonstrate organization, coherence, and clarity in writing.
Communications	evaluate purpose and audience to create a well-developed, supported, and stylistically fluent response.
Mathematics	use mathematical techniques to problem solve.
Humanities	examine the nature of human experience and/or artistic expression.
Social Sciences	evaluate multiple perspectives to arrive at and articulate their own conclusions.
Natural Sciences	apply scientific concepts and methods of inquiry.
Global Issues	demonstrate awareness of self as members of a multicultural global community.
Fine Arts	examine the role of the arts as a reflection of culture.

Table 2. *Related Instruction categories and outcomes*

Related Instruction Category	Outcome Statement Students should be able to . . .
Communication	express, interpret, or modify ideas to communicate effectively.
Quantitative Literacy	understand and apply quantitative concepts and reasoning using numerical data.
Interactions	collaborate effectively with others in complicated, dynamic, and/or ambiguous situations.

Each course within the General Education or Related Instruction curriculum provides instruction on the General Education/Related Instruction learning outcome for the category under which it is listed. Each

of the outcomes is assessed every semester. Faculty teaching General Education/Related Instruction courses within a category agreed on evaluation criteria and created a common rubric by which student work is evaluated. The evaluation process helps determine whether or not students are meeting the outcome. Courses within one General Education category are assessed for the same outcome using the same criteria.

A General Education Team of five faculty members oversees the assessment of the eight General Education learning outcomes and the three Related Instruction learning outcomes (Table 3).

Table 3. General Education Team member responsibilities

Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Chair
Writing Communications Communication	Mathematics Quantitative Literacy	Humanities Fine Arts	Social Sciences Global Issues	Natural Sciences	Interactions

Faculty members are appointed to the General Education Team by the Faculty Senate, subject to approval by the Vice President and the Faculty Senate Board of Directors. Faculty members serve three-year terms, and membership is staggered to ensure continuity among new and returning members. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness serves as the committee chairperson.

The General Education Team has the following responsibilities:
- Reviews the General Education/Related Instruction outcome statements and components of each outcome
- Compiles and reviews General Education/Related Instruction assessment results
- Shares results of assessment cycles with faculty; provides support as needed
- Reviews the General Education Curriculum and proposes changes to the Curriculum Committee
- Formally reviews each General Education category every three years

Each General Education category is formally reviewed by the General Education Team on a three-year cycle. The General Education Team member for the category being reviewed works with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to compile the assessment results and write a summary report. This report is distributed to instructors of courses within that category, and a copy is sent to the Vice President. Meetings with the appropriate faculty are held during the Fall In-service to discuss the report and recommend actions.

Actions that have resulted from General Education assessment include addition or removal of courses from the General Education or Related Instruction lists, revisions of General Education and Related Instruction learning outcomes, adjusted pre-requisites, improved consistency among sections on the same course, and improved teaching techniques.

Course Level Assessment

Assessment at the course level involves reflecting on how well students are achieving the course learning outcomes. Individual instructors are responsible for assessment in their courses. Each course at FVCC has a course profile on file in Educational Services. Course profiles are developed by faculty and approved first by the appropriate Division Chair and then by the Curriculum Committee. The course profile lists the student learning outcomes, which state what students should be able to do and/or know

after completing the course. Each new instructor receives the approved course learning outcomes for each course on their schedule with their letter of appointment for the upcoming semester. All sections of the same course share common course learning outcomes, provided on the course syllabus, and a current syllabus from each instructor is filed in Educational Services. Course profiles and syllabi are revised as needed and reviewed every five years during program review (see Program Level section).

Course level assessments demonstrate the degree to which students as a whole have achieved the course learning outcomes. This is often accomplished by looking at the results of a few key assignments, generally those completed toward the end of the course. Instructors are encouraged to rely on direct assessments of student learning as much as possible and supplement with indirect assessments, where appropriate. Direct assessment of student performance clearly shows what students have learned and may include written work or presentations assessed using scoring rubrics, exam responses, laboratory reports, analyses of online discussions, standardized tests, and/or licensure/certification exams. Indirect assessments provide signs that students are learning, but exactly what they are learning is less clear. Indirect measures can include student participation, attendance rates, satisfaction surveys, solicited opinions, and/or grades.

Faculty report course level assessment results through the Faculty Portal at the end of each semester. For each learning outcome, the level of overall student achievement is recorded. Text boxes are provided for notes on the method of evaluation and changes that the instructor plans to make to improve student learning in the course.

The Director of Institutional Effectiveness reviews the course level assessment data at the end of each semester. This information is shared with the Director of Educational Services and the Vice President. Course level assessments may be discussed through program review, faculty mentoring, and professional development sessions.

Improvements made to courses as a result of course level assessment include adjusted pre or co-requisites, revision of course learning outcomes, and targeted professional development to improve teaching strategies. Several process-oriented improvements have been made to the course level assessment process. Most recently, the college adopted a curriculum management software, Curriculog©. This allows course learning outcomes to be updated more easily by faculty, and these updates are then recorded in the Faculty Portal, where faculty enter assessment results. This new system for updating course learning outcomes is much more efficient and allows faculty to reflect on what they are currently teaching.

Concluding Statement

Since the last comprehensive evaluation in April 2012, FVCC has revised its institution-level assessment processes to better align strategic planning work with the Core Themes. The Strategic Planning Council facilitates ongoing discussions about appropriate actions to support the college's strategic and core theme objectives. To date, the Strategic Planning Council and its Core Theme Sub-Committees have reviewed all Core Theme objectives and indicators, revised Strategic Plan strategies and indicators, and reviewed 12 of the 18 non-instructional departments on campus. Each department identifies goals and objectives that align with FVCC's overall Mission and objectives, and discusses plans for continual improvement with the Strategic Planning Council on a three-year cycle. Strategic Planning Council recommendations are forwarded to the Executive Staff, and then to the Board of Trustees, which provides feedback and direction. This revised institution-level assessment process integrates planning, resources, and assessments while supporting continuous improvement efforts across campus.

FVCC has robust and faculty-driven student learning outcomes assessment processes throughout all academic courses, programs, General Education, and Related Instruction requirements. Data collected from learning outcome assessment work has been utilized for continuous improvements throughout FVCC courses and programs. The college can point to several specific examples of improvements which have resulted from student learning outcomes assessment (two of which were presented in FVCC's Mid-Cycle Evaluation report in March 2015). More broadly, learning outcomes assessment processes involve every faculty member on campus in the continuous improvement of student learning throughout all courses, programs, General Education, and Related Instruction requirements.

FVCC is confident that the appropriate structures are in place to ensure consistent and meaningful assessment for continuous improvement across campus, and has committed resources to ensure that the efforts are sustained.