Flathead Valley Community College

Assessment Plan

2019 - 2023

Introduction

The purpose of assessment in higher education is to improve student learning and achievement. This document presents a working model of the assessment plan at Flathead Valley Community College. The plan helps to guide the college in the continuous cycle of assessment, to gather and use evidence in an effort to understand and improve our effectiveness in achieving our objectives, to monitor and improve the environment for student learning, and to increase overall student success.

Regardless of the level at which assessment occurs (institution, program, course), the overall process is the same (Figure 1). The assessment cycle is a reflective process of planning, implementation, evaluation, and revision. Results at one stage guide activity in the following stage. For example, student learning outcome statements guide the design of course activities, and data is collected on student learning. The evaluation of this data then informs course revision.
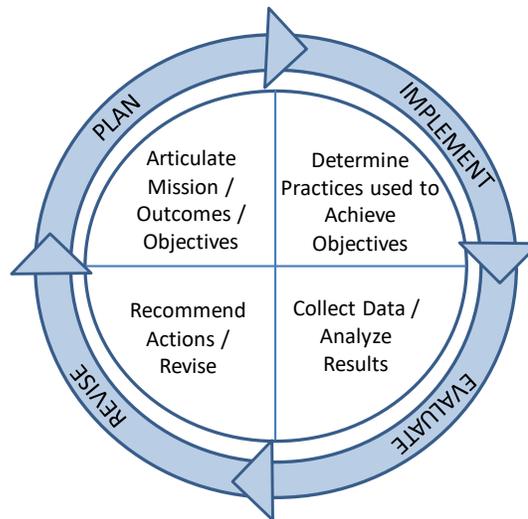

Figure 1. *The overall cycle of assessment includes four stages: Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, and Revision.*

Organization of Assessment

Assessment is a process of continuous improvement. The results of assessment activities have an impact on the extent to which the college is fulfilling its mission. Assessment planning requires a clear understanding of who will use the findings to make decisions. Appendix A lists the entities who contribute to the assessment process.

Mission and Core Themes

Mission fulfillment is the highest level at which FVCC evaluates what we do. FVCC's mission statement broadly defines the purpose of the college. It articulates <u>what</u> we do as a college, while the core themes describe <u>how</u> we accomplish the mission.

Mission Statement: FVCC promotes excellence in *lifelong learning* focused on *student success* and *community needs*.

FVCC offers programming in each of four *lifelong learning* components: Transfer Preparation, Workforce Preparation, Developmental Education, and Community Education. Each of these four lifelong learning areas is designated as one of four core themes. Figure 3 shows the mission statement and core themes.
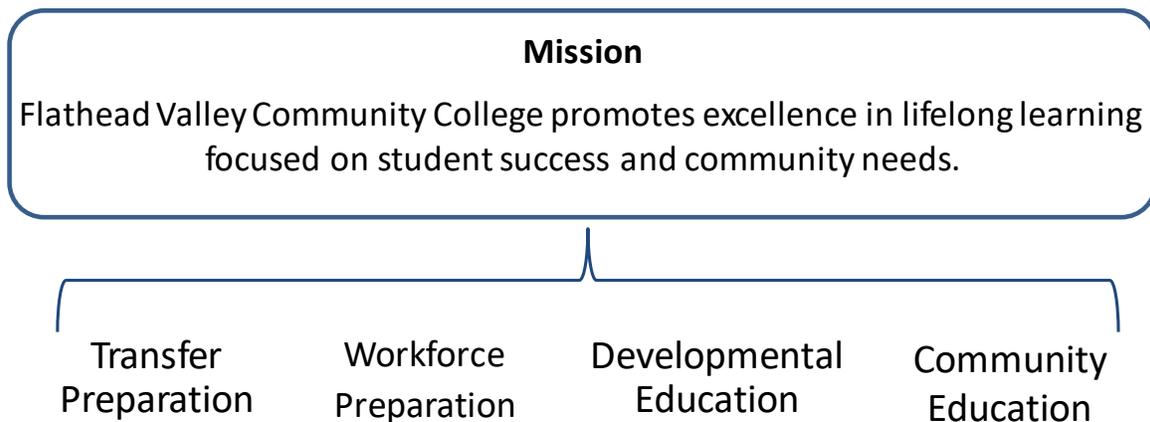
Mission

Flathead Valley Community College promotes excellence in lifelong learning focused on student success and community needs.

Transfer Preparation | Workforce Preparation | Developmental Education | Community Education

Figure 3. *The mission of FVCC spans four core themes: Transfer Preparation, Workforce Preparation, Developmental Education, and Community Education. The institution level indicators for each core theme are listed in Appendix B.*

Each core theme has a set of objectives that provide a clear picture of what the college intends to achieve, while the core theme indicators measure achievement of those intentions. Taken together, the mission statement describes <u>what</u> we do, our core themes describe <u>how</u> we do it, and the core theme indicators serve as a tool to measure <u>how well</u> we do it.

The objectives and indicators of each core theme are listed in Appendix B.

Institution Level Assessment

The overall purpose of institutional assessment is to determine the degree to which the college is fulfilling its mission. The accreditation standards of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities guide the approach for FVCC's self-evaluation process.

FVCC's mission is to promote excellence in lifelong learning focused on student success and community needs. We track indicators that show the degree to which the college is fulfilling its mission. Each core theme is assigned a committee, which is responsible for evaluating the level of accomplishment of the core theme objectives on an annual basis. The institution level indicators for each core theme are listed in Appendix B.

The NWCCU accreditation process allows for re-evaluation and modification of the college's mission, core themes, and objectives on a continuous seven-year cycle. Every seven years, FVCC formally evaluates whether or not its performance indicators continue to reflect the mission of the college and its

core themes. This cycle allows the campus community to reaffirm that the indicators are relevant and provides opportunities to discontinue irrelevant indicators and add new indicators that better reflect FVCC's changing priorities.

The institutional assessment results are reviewed by a Strategic Planning Council consisting of the core theme committee chairs, Director of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs, Director of Institutional Research, Faculty Senate President, and representatives from campus departments. After reviewing the assessment results, the Strategic Planning Council discusses FVCC's mission, core themes, and strategic plan, and makes recommendations to improve progress. The Strategic Planning Council also reviews and approves FVCC's Institutional Assessment Plan, taking into account input from all campus constituencies.

The Strategic Planning Council develops a 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 for input. The President then presents the report to the Board of Trustees.

Degree Level Assessment

FVCC awards the following degrees: Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), and Associate of Applied Science (AAS). The AA and AS degrees are general transfer associate degrees and do not officially include a major or minor course of study. The AAS degree is an occupational degree and is the only degree FVCC awards in a specified area of emphasis. In addition, FVCC offers the Certificate of Applied Science (CAS). The CAS requires a minimum of 30 semester credit hours and is assessed similarly to the AAS degree.

In accordance with the NWCCU standards, transfer associate degree programs include general education core requirements that integrate basic knowledge and methodology in the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. The degree level learning outcomes for AA and AS degrees are identical to the general education learning outcomes, as these degrees are general transfer degrees and do not specify a particular course of study. Therefore, degree level assessment for AA and AS degrees consists of general education assessment, which is detailed in the general education assessment section of this document.

AAS degrees and CAS programs include a core of related instruction requirements in the areas of communication, computation, and human relations that align with and support specific program outcomes. The degree level learning outcomes for AAS degrees and CAS programs consist of the program learning outcomes and the related instruction learning outcomes for those degrees. Therefore, degree level assessment for AAS degrees and CAS programs is performed through both program review and related instruction assessment, which is detailed in the general education assessment section of this document.

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 issues and enhance student learning by making recommendations for improvement. It also helps us evaluate the role of our programs in supporting FVCC's mission and objectives.

Program level learning outcomes state what students should be able to do upon successful completion of academic 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).

Academic programs are reviewed on a five-year cycle by a Program Review Committee comprised of at least eight members, including one faculty member from each of the five academic divisions. The Dean of Student Affairs, Director of Academic Affairs, and the Coordinator of Academic Affairs serve on the committee as ex-officio members. Faculty Senate appoints the faculty committee members, subject to approval by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. Faculty committee members serve three-year terms, and membership is staggered to ensure continuity among returning and new members. The Director of Academic Affairs serves as Program Review Committee chair.

Each spring, the program review schedule for the upcoming academic year is revisited 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 academic year are notified the semester prior to their review. Program review forms are available at G:\EducationalServices\Employees\PROGRAM 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 of Academic and Student Affairs and the Curriculum Committee, and sets dates to follow-up on any action items. After reviewing the summary of recommendations, the Director of Academic Affairs holds a meeting with the program director, the Vice President, and other relevant faculty or staff to follow-up on the recommendations of the committee.

Proposals for new programs to be considered for adoption at FVCC are first discussed with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, who takes the proposal to Executive Staff. If the proposed program is deemed viable for consideration, the Vice President shares the proposal with academic Division Chairs, and the program developer assembles and advisory committee to get feedback on the proposed curriculum. The proposal 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 Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, 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, NWCCU, and the Department of Education for final approval before inclusion in the FVCC academic catalog. Forms for new program proposals is available at G:\EducationalServices\Employees\PROGRAM REVIEW\Templates.

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 4).
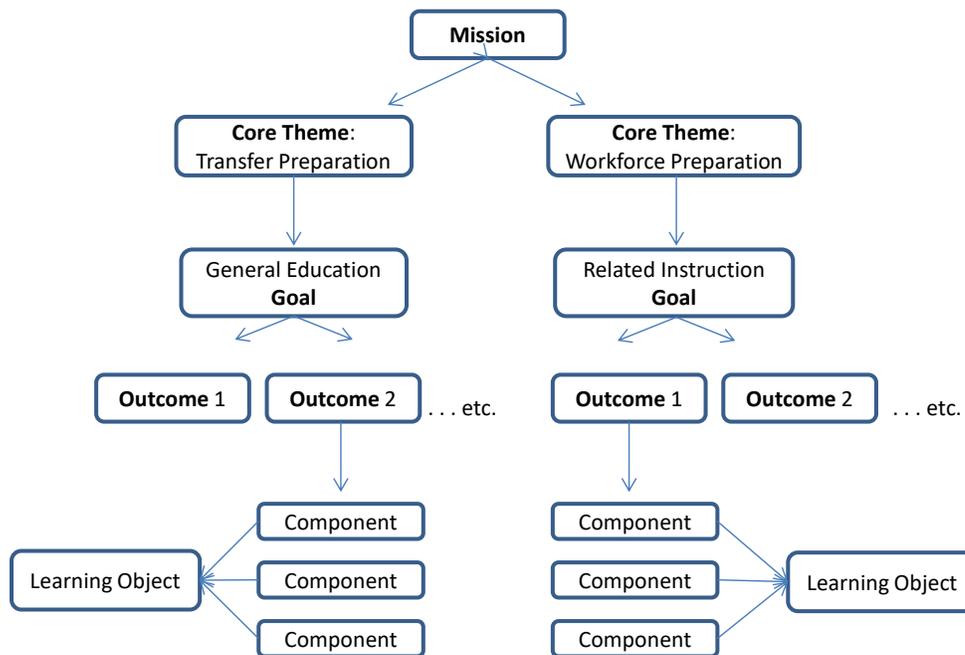

Figure 4. *The structure of general education/related instruction assessment at FVCC, showing the relationship to the college mission statement and core themes; Each outcome may have several components.*

The goal of general education at FVCC is to prepare students for transfer while developing the breadth and depth of intellect necessary to become more effective learners. FVCC's general education curriculum 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; communication, quantitative literacy, and interactions.

FVCC faculty developed a broad outcome statement for each of the eight general education categories (Table 2) and three related instruction categories (Table 3).

Table 2. *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 a conclusion.
Natural Sciences	apply scientific concepts and methods of inquiry.
Global Issues	demonstrate awareness of self as a member of a multicultural global community.
Fine Arts	examine the role of the arts as a reflection of culture.

Table 3. *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 4).

Table 4. *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 of Academic and Student Affairs. Faculty members serve three-year terms, and membership is staggered to ensure continuity among new and returning members. The Director of Academic Affairs 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 compiles the assessment results and writes a summary report. This report is distributed to instructors of courses within that category. Meetings with the appropriate faculty are held during inservices to discuss the report and recommend actions.

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 Academic Affairs (G:\ Academic Affairs\Employees\Course Profiles). 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. 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 Academic Affairs. Course profiles and syllabi are revised as needed and formally 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 direct their focus. Written work or presentations are 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 Academic Affairs reviews the course level assessment data at the end of each semester. This information is shared with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. Course level assessments may be discussed through program review, faculty mentoring, and professional development sessions.

Non-Instructional Department Assessment

Non-Instructional departments (e.g., Financial Aid, Library, Bookstore) make important contributions to student learning. 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.

Each spring, the non-instructional department review schedule is revisited and modified, if necessary, so that departments are reviewed in an appropriate timeframe. Directors of those departments scheduled for review in the upcoming academic year are notified in the semester prior to their reviews.

The Strategic Planning Council evaluates the completed self-study and holds a meeting with the department director to discuss the review. The council makes recommendations to the 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.

Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities of Assessment Entities

Entity	Consists of	Role
Students	• Students	• Participate actively in courses/programs • Complete surveys
Faculty	• Instructors, full-time and adjunct	• Integrate student learning outcomes into curriculum • Participate in professional development • Consult with Director, Academic Affairs on student learning outcomes
Program Coordinators/ Program Directors	• Full-time instructors	• Complete program review • Ensure compliance with appropriate external standards • Identify budgetary needs
Division Chairs	• Full-time instructors	• Serve on Curriculum Committee • Follow-up with faculty on program review recommendations • Make budget requests based on assessment results
Staff	• Support Staff	• Support students and instructors to improve student learning
Program Review Committee	• Faculty member from each Division • Coordinator of Academic Affairs • Dean of Student Affairs Director of Academic Affairs, Chair	• Coordinates program review • Makes recommendations to Program Directors, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and Curriculum Committee
Directors of Non-Instructional Departments	• Professional staff / Administration	• Develop and implement assessment plans that align with college mission and objectives • Report assessment results to Strategic Planning Council
Director of Academic Affairs	• Administrator	• Chairs General Education Team • Chairs Program Review • Co-Chairs Strategic Planning Council • Updates Assessment Plan and Strategic Plan • Coordinates with faculty to implement assessment cycles
Director of Institutional Research	• Professional Staff	• Provides data to college audiences
Curriculum Committee	• Division Chairs • Faculty Senate President • Faculty Senate President Vice President • VP Academic and Student Affairs • Dean of Students	• Approves academic curriculum
President's Advisory Council	• Representative from across campus	• Disseminates information and gathers feedback
General Education Team	• Faculty member from each general education category • Director of Academic Affairs	• Coordinates with faculty to implement general education assessment • Compiles/reviews general education assessment results • Reviews general education curriculum and proposes modifications
Budget Committee	• Representative from each area of the college, including the student body	• Prioritizes and makes budgetary recommendations based on assessment results and Strategic Plan

Director of Student Services	• Administrator	• Oversees the assessment of student support services • Chairs Student Success Committee
Dean of Student Affairs	• Administrator	• Oversees the assessment of student support services • Serves on Student Success Committee
Core Theme Committee Chairs	• Faculty members • Department representatives	• Evaluate achievement of the core theme objectives • Create/modify core theme plans, based on assessment results • Recommend improvements and action plans
Strategic Planning Council	• Director of Academic Affairs, co-chair • Faculty Senate President, co-chair • Core Theme Committee Chairs • Dean of Student Affairs • Director of Student Services • Director of Institutional Research • Broad campus representatives	• Develops Strategic Plan • Determines level of progress on college-wide objectives and mission • Recommends specific actions to improve progress on objectives • Develops college-wide assessment reports
Executive Staff	• Executive Director, Human Resources • Executive Director, Communications and Marketing • Executive Director, Institutional Advancement • VP of Administration and Finance • Executive Director, Management Information Systems • Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs	• Approves Strategic Plan • Reports to President on assessment related issues • Prioritizes and makes budgetary recommendations based on assessment results
Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs	• Administrator	• Oversees student learning/curriculum development • Leads assessment of student learning throughout the College • Prioritizes allocation of funds for assessment
Vice President of Administration and Finance	• Administrator	• Approves allocation of funds • Chairs President's Advisory Council
President	• Administrator	• Advocates for assessment of student learning outcomes throughout the college • Motivates / implements assessment plan throughout the college • Links the community, Board of Trustees, and faculty to implement policies • Prioritizes the resources necessary to fulfill the college's mission
Board of Trustees	• Seven members elected by the citizens of Flathead County	• Provides direction for Strategic Planning • Ensures FVCC policies and practices are aligned with community needs and student success

Appendix B: Core Theme Objectives and Indicators

Core Theme 1: Transfer Preparation

Objective 1: Students are offered relevant curriculum applicable to post-FVCC educational goals.

	Indicators
1	Length of time FVCC transfer students spend to complete their bachelor's degree
2	Percent of FVCC transfer courses that are offered at MUS 4-year institutions
3	Percentage of FVCC transfer courses with CCN'd learning outcomes on file with OCHE

Objective 2: Students receive high-quality instruction that prepares them for success at the baccalaureate level.

	Indicators
1	FVCC student persistence at Montana University System transfer institutions
2	Percent of students demonstrating adequate performance on General Education learning outcomes
3	Transfer students report being academically challenged

Objective 3: Students are provided the support necessary to maximize their educational time investment.

	Indicators
1	Percent of first-time, full-time degree seeking students who either transfer or complete their programs in 150% of the expected time-to-degree
2	Transfer students report that they are provided with the support they need to succeed at FVCC

Objective 4: Students are provided opportunities that bridge educational institutions.

	Indicators
1	Capture rates of local high school graduates
2	Percent of former FVCC Running Start students who enrolled in postsecondary institutions after high school
3	Percent of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science graduates who transfer to other institutions within a year of graduation
4	Percent of transfer students who successfully transfer without earning an AA or AS degree from FVCC

Core Theme 2: Workforce Preparation

Objective 1: Students are offered specific career and technical pathways and programs aligned for timely completion.

	Indicators
1	Career and technical student course level success rate
2	Student graduation rates at FVCC
3	Number of credits at graduation
4	Capture rates of local high school graduates

Objective 2: Students are offered workforce training aligned with community needs.

	Indicators
1	Percent of graduates seeking jobs who obtain local jobs
2	Enrollments and cancellation rates for non-credit business workshops, computer classes, and customized training contracts

Objective 3: Students have the skills necessary to be successful in their chosen occupations or careers.

	Indicators
1	Students learned job or work related skills as a result of their college experience
2	Percent of graduates seeking jobs who obtain jobs in their field
3	Students successfully complete an internship or clinical experience

Core Theme 3: Developmental Education

Objective 1: Students progress in developmental courses and transition to higher-level education courses.

	Indicators
1	Percent of first-time degree or certificate-seeking students completing the developmental education course sequence
2	Students who complete the developmental education course sequence register for the appropriate college-level courses

Objective 2: Students receive high-quality instruction that prepares them for success at the College level.

	Indicators
1	Developmental-level course grade outcomes
2	Students are successful in 100-level courses after completing developmental coursework
3	Experience at FVCC contributes to students writing and math skills

Objective 3: Students are provided the support necessary to maximize their educational time investments.

	Indicators
1	Course completion rates
2	Student satisfaction with tutoring services and skills labs (Foundational Math Center, the Math & Science Tutoring Center, and the Writing Lab)
3	Skills labs are utilized

Core Theme 4: Community Education

Objective 1: Community education provides programs and events to meet the educational, personal enrichment, and cultural interests of the community.

	Indicators
1	Number of Continuing Education courses offered
2	Waitlists for Continuing Education courses
3	Sustainability and growth of community programs
4	Number of new students enrolling in Continuing Education courses

Objective 2: Community education students receive high-quality instruction.

	Indicators
1	Instructors are prepared to deliver a quality classroom experience for students
2	Continuing education students return and take more classes