

MONITORING REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT  
LEARNING OUTCOMES

To

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

From

PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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## Executive Summary

This is the “monitoring report on the topic of assessment” requested by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) following its 2010 accreditation site visit to Pima Community College (PCC). Specifically, this document provides an in-depth description of the steps PCC took to address the issues the HLC highlighted in its site visit report, including: (1) faculty buy-in and participation in student learning outcomes (SLOs) and assessment, (2) changes and improvements in curricula and courses made based on faculty review of the data associated with SLOs and institutional outcomes, and (3) assessment of general education (institutional) outcomes.

Highlights for each of the three key areas include:

1. *Faculty buy-in and participation in SLOs and assessment.*

Faculty buy-in and participation in SLOs and assessment have increased as a result of the following: Improved training, outreach and education in SLOs and in the use of TracDat to report SLO progress; implementation of mandatory and voluntary assessment activities; and revised responsibilities and tasks of SLO leaders. Additionally, use of a new SLO Faculty Interface for grade reporting reveals that almost 100 percent of PCC faculty are engaged in the SLO process.

2. *Changes and improvements in curricula and courses made based on faculty review of the data associated with SLOs and institutional outcomes.*

The College developed and implemented a targeted, multi-step plan to improve the process of SLO assessment and documentation and to streamline institutional processes related to use of SLO assessment data. Along with this plan, the College has embedded SLOs into the curriculum development and program review processes to ensure faculty and administrative review of outcomes-related data informs curricula and program improvement and development. These and other actions have increased the number of disciplines making changes to curriculum and/or pedagogy. Specifically, all disciplines achieved progress towards completing the cycle of assessment; nearly one third successfully carried out an initial assessment and made a change to curricula or a course as a result.

3. *Assessment of general education (institutional) outcomes.*

Improvements related to assessment of general education outcomes are shown through the College’s reestablishment of the General Education Committee, use of the ETS

Proficiency Profile Test, and implementation of the mandatory SLO Interface for grade reporting.

This monitoring report demonstrates the significant progress the College has made with assessment as well as the College's commitment to ensuring that assessment and utilization of SLOs remains an area of focus and improvement in the future.

## I. Introduction

Following a comprehensive review and site visit in 2010, the HLC granted Pima Community College (PCC) full reaccreditation for a 10-year period. As a condition of this reaccreditation, the evaluation team requested the College submit a monitoring report addressing the topic of “Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes” by Jan. 15, 2013. This monitoring report responds to that request and demonstrates the progress the College has made since the HLC’s visit related to the areas outlined in both the “Assurance Section” and “Advise ment Section” of the HLC’s 2010 “Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit.” The criteria for the monitoring report are outlined in Section V. “Statement of Affiliation Status,” under Subsection C. “Conditions of Affiliation” in the “Assurance Section” of the comprehensive [site visit report](#). In this subsection, the HLC requests that the monitoring report address progress related to the following items, which are described in Core Component 3a.:

1. Faculty involvement and investment in SLOs and assessment,
2. Changes and improvements in curricula and courses made based on faculty review of the data associated with SLOs and the five institutional outcomes, and
3. Assessment of general education outcomes as designated by the College’s five institutional outcomes.

In addition, in the site visit report “Advancement Section,” Section II, the HLC offered specific advice to the College to help it achieve the goals outlined above while creating a “comprehensive program of assessment.” This advice included:

- Ensuring information about program goals, expected outcomes and assessment cycles is publicly available via the College catalog and website
- Creating more opportunities for faculty to share assessment results and how those results were used to change curricula
- Publishing more assessment-based resources on the College’s assessment Web page to give faculty more examples and tools for assessing SLOs
- Reestablishing the General Education Committee as an independent entity (as opposed to being a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee)
- Ensuring more widespread, college-wide involvement in the program review process

Immediately upon receiving the site visit report, the College began working to address the requirements listed in the “Assurance Section” and to implement the advice offered in the “Advancement Section” of the report. In October 2010, the Board of Governors voted to modify the [Board Policy related to General Education](#) to reflect a greater emphasis on SLOs, and on Nov. 10, 2010, the chair of the Board of Governors issued a [statement on SLOs](#) containing the following directive:

*The PCC Board of Governors is responsible for protecting the interests of the public, and for ensuring that our highest priority must be the accreditation the College receives from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.*

*I am sure my fellow Board members would agree with me that everyone must do their part to make certain that Student Learning Outcomes are fully implemented.*

*As Board chair, I expect the Administration to bring to the Board the policy changes needed to ensure active participation by all regular and adjunct faculty in the Student Learning Outcomes process.*

Throughout the ensuing two years, and under the Board of Governors' advisement and support, the administrators, faculty and staff of the College have worked to ensure that "Student Learning Outcomes are fully implemented" by reviewing and evaluating the assessment processes that have been in place and implementing changes at all levels.

The organization of the content of this monitoring report reflects the Core Component 3a items the HLC highlighted in its site visit report. Specifically:

- Sections I and II contain the "Introduction" and "Background" sections, which provide an overview of significant points addressed within the monitoring report along with relevant contextual details and background information about the College's history with assessment.
- Section III, "SLO Acculturation at PCC Following the 2010 HLC Visit," outlines the steps the College took in the wake of the HLC's visit to address issues identified in the HLC's site visit report.
- Section IV addresses the College's progress related to the HLC's recommendations:
  - Section IV. A. addresses HLC Recommendation 1: "Address lack of faculty buy-in and participation in SLOs and assessment."
  - Section IV. B. addresses HLC Recommendation 2: "Identify changes and improvements in curricula and courses that have been made based on faculty review of the data associated with SLOs and institutional outcomes."
  - Section IV. C. addresses HLC Recommendation 3: "Implement measures and document that students are meeting general education goals (institutional)."
- Section V addresses the HLC's advice as provided in the "Advancement Section" of the 2010 site visit report.
- Section VI provides concluding notes.

The monitoring report references supplementary materials throughout to provide evidence of progress. The supplementary materials are accessible via hyperlinks.

While PCC is proud of the progress and improvements outlined in this monitoring report, the College also is aware that developing a sound, effective assessment process is an ongoing effort that requires constant focus along with a willingness to make macro- and micro-level modifications when necessary. With this renewed emphasis on means rather than ends in mind, the College has made improvements in hopes of having an assessment process that not only fulfills accreditation requirements, but also serves as a model of an effectively functioning system of assessment and improvement.

## II. Background

PCC’s mission statement remains a straightforward affirmation of its core purpose to “Develop our community through learning.” Recognizing that the concept of learning connotes more than merely earning credits or a degree, the College has engaged in a comprehensive and continuous process of meeting the goals of student learning and effective teaching in all programs and disciplines since its inception more than four decades ago. In doing so, the College has recognized the importance of assessing outcomes in determining course, discipline, curriculum and program effectiveness, determining the effectiveness of its general education offerings, and facilitating meaningful, ongoing discussions on outcomes among administrators and faculty. While efforts in establishing a strong system of assessment have been ongoing and have resulted in a great deal of progress, these efforts have not been without challenges. As this brief history shows, the College has worked to address its challenges while continuously pushing forward toward a vision of a fully streamlined system of SLOs assessment and a college-wide culture of assessment and evidence-based decision making.

The College has made strong strides in strengthening its assessment processes throughout the past two decades in response to shifts in the educational climate related to learner-centered instruction, an emphasis on greater institutional accountability, and—reflective of these shifts—evolving standards of accreditation. The College devoted great effort toward establishing an assessment system to adapt to the changing climate, and a bulk of its efforts in the early 1990s concerned implementing a system and developing a formal institutional assessment plan. The plan was completed in 1997, and while it outlined a solid system, the College experienced challenges in implementation. To address these challenges, the College embarked on strengthening and formalizing its processes throughout the early 2000s by developing assessment outcomes more consistently across programs and disciplines, ensuring greater accessibility of assessment data among stakeholders, and improving the use of assessment data in program review. A shift to SLO-driven assessment gained momentum in 2006, when the College developed an expanded infrastructure for SLO-based assessment and devoted great efforts and resources toward educating administrators and faculty. A key part of this shift was the appointment of five SLO faculty facilitators and a diverse selection of faculty discipline leaders. The main goals of the facilitators have included guiding and overseeing the College’s SLO activities, facilitating ongoing faculty development events, and monitoring and assisting discipline leaders. Regarding the latter goal, each facilitator is responsible for overseeing a group of discipline leaders, whose primary responsibilities are to lead assessment activities at the discipline level. Because the College focuses assessments at the discipline level (see Sections II and IV.B.), discipline leaders play a crucial role in the SLO assessment process. The College’s discipline-based approach to SLOs and the discipline leader role are described in detail in the [College’s Self-Study](#) (p. 72) and in Section IV (below).



The College's commitment to establishing and strengthening its assessment processes also is shown by the manner in which it has integrated ongoing improvement related to assessment into its college-wide strategic planning processes and by the emphasis on SLOs and on assessment improvement in College Plans, including the [2004-2006 College Plan](#), the [2006-2008 College Plan](#), the [2008-2011 College Plan](#) and the current [2011-2013 College Plan](#). In the 2008-2011 College Plan, SLOs were elevated to "initiative" status, making it a primary focus for development, improvement and support.

In the area of measuring general education outcomes, the College has made progress over the past decade by delineating institutional SLOs (Learn, Communicate, Innovate, Participate and Aspire) that further break down into specific, measurable outcomes that embody the principles of general education. The College also has mapped discipline- and program-specific outcomes to these five institutional outcomes to facilitate assessment across multiple levels and from varying vantage points for student learning. Because general education at the College is spread across courses and disciplines and not defined as a distinct category or program, the College has approached the measuring of general education outcomes in various ways. In the 2002-2003 academic year, for example, the College utilized the Academic Profile (ETS) as its outcomes assessment instrument for general education. The College also has used indirect measures to assess general education outcomes, including a Graduate Exit Survey in 2006-2007 and the [Organizational Climate Survey in 2008](#). In addition, because course and program SLOs are mapped to institutional outcomes, assessment of general education outcomes occurs concurrently with any course or program assessment.

In regards to general education governance at PCC, general education fell under the direction of the General Education Standing Committee beginning in 1988. The charge of the Committee was: "To coordinate the development of general education offerings district-wide making recommendations to the Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor." As indicated in the charge, the committee's primary role concerned programs and curricula and not outcomes assessment. In the 2008-2009 academic year, the committee determined that it no longer needed to function as an autonomous committee to fulfill its charge, and it subsequently became a subcommittee of the College Curriculum Council.

A more comprehensive history of the College's background related to assessment and general education can be found in its [2010 Self-Study Report](#). As this brief overview confirms, the College has achieved substantial progress developing and implementing an effective assessment process. At the same time, and as recognized in the HLC review team's 2010 site visit report, the College has experienced challenges streamlining the process and embedding it fully into institutional processes. In addition, the College has struggled to maintain a consistent system for measuring and documenting how effectively students achieve general education curriculum objectives. Addressing these challenges was a primary focus prior to the HLC

review team's 2010 visit and became elevated to a crucial priority after the HLC submitted its comprehensive site visit report to the College.

### III. SLO Acculturation at PCC Following the 2010 HLC Visit

After receiving the HLC's comprehensive [site visit report](#) in October 2010, the College took immediate steps to address the concerns raised in the report. The broader goal behind these efforts was to improve the SLO assessment process and to expand the influence and impact of the process on the development and delivery of academic, student and instructional services.

The first step taken was modification of the [College Board Policy on general education \(BP-3117\)](#) to specify alignment between the policy and the five institutional SLOs. This modification, which occurred in October 2010, reads in part:

General education is also designed to develop the following thinking skills: comparing; interpreting; observing; summarizing; classifying; suggesting and testing hypotheses; imagining and creating; criticizing and evaluating; designing projects and investigations; identifying assumptions; applying principles in new situations; gathering and organizing data; and coding for certain patterns of thinking, reasoning, problem solving, and decision making. These skills are aligned with the College Student Learning Outcomes: Learn, Communicate, Innovate, Participate and Aspire.

This modification solidifies the alignment between the College's general education policy and its institutional SLOs. Shortly thereafter, in November 2010, the chair of the PCC District Board of Governors [released a statement](#) establishing the expectation that every faculty member, full- or part-time, will actively participate in the SLO process and that the administration will enact policies to ensure this involvement occurs. These immediate actions related to College Board Policy and support enforced the need for issues to be addressed college-wide and demonstrated the seriousness with which the College viewed the need to improve and strengthen its assessment processes. This focus also influenced the development of the [2011-2013 College Plan](#), which occurred during the 2010-2011 academic year and, thus, gave the College a prime opportunity to directly integrate HLC recommendations into the plan. The final version, adopted in June 2011, contains various SLO- and general-education-specific initiatives. These initiatives are detailed later in this monitoring report.

The College recognized the value of having SLO leadership consist of members from diverse disciplines, and recruitment for new SLO facilitators was launched in December 2010. The composition of the SLO faculty facilitator group took precedence and administration worked to ensure faculty representation across campuses and disciplines in order to capture varying student learning experiences. Soon thereafter, the [SLO Task Force](#), which is co-chaired by the assistant vice chancellor for Academic Services and vice provost and the executive director of Planning and Institutional Research and includes the SLO facilitators, was developed to streamline assessment and reporting processes and to ensure all disciplines meet the required

deadlines. In addition, the membership of the College Curriculum Council was amended to include at least one SLO facilitator. Finally, to ensure active and continuous assessment activity at the discipline level (the foundational level for assessment at the College), SLO discipline leader duties were revised to reflect a focus on consistent SLO-based improvement, and recruitment efforts were undertaken to increase the number of disciplines represented. Specifics about these changes are discussed in later sections of this monitoring report.

These initial efforts, taken in the months immediately following the HLC's 2010 site visit, demonstrate the College's commitment to facilitating a college-wide culture of SLO-based assessment and decision-making. These initial actions also served as the foundation upon which the College has developed a stronger, more streamlined and more functional framework for assessment. This framework, along with subsequent efforts, actions and improvements undertaken by the College, are detailed in this monitoring report.

## **IV. Responses to Recommendations**

### **A. HLC Recommendation 1: Address lack of faculty buy-in and participation in SLOs and assessment**

One of the most pressing areas of concern the HLC highlighted in its 2010 comprehensive [site visit report](#) relates to levels of “faculty buy-in and participation” in the area of SLOs and assessment. The HLC team recognized the College’s comprehensive process for writing SLOs for all programs and disciplines, as well as the five institutional outcomes, but noted that while some programs and disciplines have worked diligently to implement SLOs, there did not appear to be adequate buy-in and participation from faculty in assessing the outcomes.

The College acted immediately to address this issue. As noted above in Sections I and III, the Board of Governors [issued a statement](#) in support of SLOs and called for administration to put policies in place to ensure full involvement by all regular and adjunct faculty; in addition, the [2011-2013 College Plan](#) was written to include a comprehensive strategy for addressing the gaps in SLOs (p. 37). These initial actions and measures set the tone for the improvements that followed as the College set about increasing faculty involvement and engagement in the SLO process.

#### **1. Integrated Faculty Interface for SLO Reporting**

Recognizing both the need to increase faculty engagement with SLOs and the need to facilitate a college-wide culture of assessment, the College developed a SLO Faculty Interface that requires faculty to self-report on attention given to SLOs in their courses. The interface requires SLO reporting to be part of the final grade submission process for all faculty (full-time and adjunct) and for every section offered each term. It was implemented in Fall 2011 for approximately 90 percent of PCC course sections and implemented in Spring 2012, Summer 2012, and Fall 2012 for all course sections.

This Faculty Interface is included in the College’s [2011-2013 College Plan](#) as part of a set of comprehensive goals aimed at energizing faculty participation in SLOs. Specifically, Strategy 2.6.1 provides the vice chancellor for Human Resources the responsibility of implementing “the Board of Governor-approved policy changes needed to ensure active participation by all full-time and adjunct faculty in the student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment process.” Strategy 2.6.9 tasks the campus presidents and vice presidents of instruction with developing “processes to ensure that active participation is mandatory for all full-time and adjunct faculty in the SLO assessment process.”

Following the provost and executive vice chancellor's request for the interface in early 2011, the proposed interface was investigated in detail during Summer 2011 and outlined in a [report submitted to the provost](#) on Aug. 2, 2011. Following the provost's approval on that same date, the assistant vice chancellor for academic services and vice provost led work with the Development Services group in Information Technology to design the interface. SLO facilitators and volunteer faculty tested the interface in October 2011. SLO facilitators and the vice provost then visited each campus president's cabinet and department chair meetings to educate them about this process and obtain additional feedback. Department chairs, then, were charged with communicating the process to full-time and adjunct faculty in their departments. The vice provost and SLO facilitators communicated this change via the Faculty Senate as well. All of these efforts were undertaken to raise faculty awareness and solicit input to further augment faculty engagement and work in SLOs college-wide.

The governing design principle for the SLO Faculty Interface was to create an interactive mechanism that would engage all faculty in SLOs, and the final tested and approved version achieves that objective by enabling all faculty to self-report by answering "yes" or "no" on each of the following five institutional SLOs: *Learn, Communicate, Innovate, Participate* and *Aspire*. If the answer to whether an SLO was addressed is "yes," the faculty report, using a drop-down box, on which specific learning outcome related to the selected SLO was addressed. For *learn*, as an example, the corresponding learning outcomes are: *comprehend, apply technology, be self-aware, apply numeric literacy, think critically* and *appreciate historical perspective*:

Personal Information | Student Services & Financial Aid | Faculty Services | Employee | Finance | New WebTailor Administration

Search  Go

### Student Learning Outcomes

Please submit SLO for Spring 2011 FRE - French 102 - Elementary French II 22885

SLO	Yes	No
1. Learn	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. Communicate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. Innovate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. Participate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5. Aspire	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Cancel Submit and Continue

RELEASE: 8X

These items allow faculty to capture more details on the specific skill(s) related to SLOs in their courses. If the answer to whether an SLO was addressed is "no," faculty then use the drop-down box to report how they are improving the course to address the outcome goal in the

future. The options are: *change course materials*, *adjust assignments*, *add new activity*, *change pedagogy* or *other*. For *other*, a text box appears allowing faculty to elaborate on their actions.

<b>1. Learn</b>	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text"/>
<b>2. Communicate</b>	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text"/>
<b>3. Innovate</b>	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text"/>
<b>4. Participate</b>	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text"/>
<b>5. Aspire</b>	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text"/>

In April 2012, the College [reported data from Fall 2011](#) to the Faculty Senate and to discipline leaders and requested guidance on how to use the information in a manner that facilitates continuous improvement. The interface platform has sparked ongoing conversations among faculty members and administrators concerning how best to use this information among disciplines to boost engagement and involvement in SLOs. Most importantly, though, is that use of the SLO Faculty Interface has resulted in an increased awareness and discussion of institutional outcomes. In addition, results from this interface show that faculty are now engaged in the SLO process. Specifically, in Spring 2012, faculty response to the yes-or-no question of whether an institutional SLO was addressed in class show that over 98 percent of faculty are addressing each SLO in their courses. [Results from Summer 2012](#) show that 100 percent of faculty are addressing each institutional SLO in their courses. Results are further discussed in Section IV.C.3.

Thus far, the SLO Faculty Interface process is fulfilling the objective of increasing the involvement of all faculty in the SLO process and facilitating a college-wide culture of assessment. Faculty awareness of the SLO process, institutional outcomes and the importance of assessment has increased, as have discussions about the SLO process college-wide. The SLO Task Force has created a schedule for releasing the SLO Faculty Interface results to faculty twice per year.

## 2. Increased Faculty Accountability

One of the directives outlined in the [2010 statement on SLOs](#) delivered by the chair of the Board of Governors was for the administration to “bring to the Board the policy changes needed to ensure active participation by all full-time and adjunct faculty in the Student Learning Outcomes process.” The administration responded in several ways, one of which (as has been noted in previous sections) was to write Action Items into the [2011-2013 College Plan](#). Specifically, Action Item 2.6.1 states: “Implement the Board-approved policy changes needed to ensure active participation by all full-time and adjunct faculty in the student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment process.” Action Item 2.6.9 states: “Develop processes to ensure that active participation is mandatory for all full-time and adjunct faculty in the SLO assessment process.”

These Action Items were responses to the HLC's concerns related to the lack of "buy-in and participation" among faculty at the College, and the following subsections describe how they are being implemented by the College.

### *Faculty Personnel Policy Statement*

The College's [Faculty Personnel Policy Statement \(FPPS\)](#) outlines the expectations and responsibilities of faculty. Recent changes made to the FPPS reflect the College's efforts to increase faculty buy-in and participation in the SLO process. Prior to the 2011-2012 academic year, the FPPS did not incorporate formal requirements for faculty participation in the SLO process. The revised FPPS, effective the 2011-2012 academic year, formalizes the requirement for faculty to integrate the assessing of SLOs into their job duties. Language added to the policy achieves the following:

- Specifies that the developing, analyzing, and assessing of SLOs is a job duty,
- Identifies participation in the SLO process as an area of focus in the Faculty Success Program,
- Specifies demonstration of "substantive participation in the student learning outcomes process" as a requirement for step advancement, and
- Provides a definition of SLOs.

#### [\[Detailed overview of the FPPS revisions.\]](#)

Prior to these revisions, faculty involvement in the SLO process was implied; the more specific language now included in the FPPS makes the expectation for SLO engagement and involvement explicit both to current and incoming faculty.

### *Collegial Conference and Administrator Support of the SLO Process*

All full-time faculty participate in a Collegial Conference with their administrative supervisors as a part of their yearly evaluation. In an effort to ensure that faculty are held accountable for their SLO responsibilities as outlined in the revised Faculty Personnel Policy Statement, the [SLO Task Force developed guidelines](#) in March 2012 for administrators to use during Collegial Conferences. The guidelines provide questions to facilitate the discussion with faculty regarding not only participation in SLOs, but also with continuous improvement by specifically addressing how faculty are implementing SLOs to improve teaching, classroom management and curriculum and address Program Review needs and modifications.



## *Adjunct Faculty Contracts*

To further reinforce faculty participation in SLOs, beginning with the 2011-2012 academic year, adjunct faculty contracts were revised to include, as part of the Terms and Conditions, a statement requiring participation in the SLO process. This change corresponds to Action Item 2.6.2 of the [2011-2013 College Plan](#) which states: “Revise Adjunct Faculty contract to include responsibility for SLOs.” The [adjunct faculty contract](#) now includes the following statement:

*PCCCD Adjunct Faculty are required to attend orientation and workshop meetings as announced and shall engage in designated activities relating to the Student Learning Outcomes process.*

Adjunct faculty members cannot accept a contract without accepting these Terms and Conditions, which are linked to the SLO process.

Combined, these changed policies and approaches related to faculty job responsibilities and to administrative support for SLOs formalize the expectation that faculty integrate SLOs into their job duties and increase accountability among faculty. The changes also facilitate increased discussion and dialogue regarding SLOs between faculty and administrators, a dynamic that will spread awareness of SLOs college-wide and allow a greater audience and stronger support for SLO-related challenges, achievements, and successes.

### **3. Enhanced Role of Discipline Leaders in SLOs**

Following the HLC’s recommendations related to increasing faculty involvement in the SLO process and engaging in a process of continuous improvement and recognizing that PCC tracks SLOs primarily at the discipline level (see Sections II and IV.B.1.), the College realized a need to improve the functioning and accountability of the College’s SLO discipline leaders.

In order to refine the role of the discipline leaders, the assistant vice chancellor for Academic Services and vice provost, guided by feedback from the SLO facilitators, revised and formalized the job description for SLO “discipline leader” for the 2011-2012 academic year to ensure greater engagement and accountability. Changes reflect the College’s commitment to fulfilling the HLC’s recommendations specifically related to ensuring full-time and adjunct faculty participation in SLOs, facilitating college-wide communication about SLOs, and completing full SLO-based assessment cycles to facilitate continuous improvement. This commitment is documented in the [2011-2013 College Plan](#): The emphasis on consistent reporting and on continuous improvement is addressed in Item 2.6.5, “Develop reports that present discipline-level information on measures and assessment results, and submit regular

reports to discipline leaders during Fall 2011,” and in Item 2.6.6, “Collect assessment data for all disciplines in the 2011-2012 academic year.”

Specific changes are stated on a formal “2011-2012 Discipline Leader (DL) Job Description” in which requirements are outlined under “Duties and Responsibilities.” Changes between the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 discipline leader job description reflect a greater emphasis on the following:

- A. More communication and discussion: The [previous requirement](#) for the discipline leader to have “at least four separate documented faculty discussions about SLOs” during one academic year has been modified. The [new requirement](#) is for the discipline leader to “facilitate monthly meetings with faculty from your disciplines.” In addition, discipline leaders are now asked to “keep documentation of discussions” and to communicate with SLO facilitators “on a monthly basis.”
- B. More college-wide involvement among both full-time faculty and adjunct faculty: A requirement to “dialogue with Department Chairs on all campuses that chair your discipline(s) to facilitate adjunct faculty involvement and participation” and a requirement to “support adjunct faculty participation in the Student Learning Outcomes process” have been added to the [2011-2012 Discipline Leader Job Description](#).
- C. Continuous improvement: A requirement to “complete one full cycle of your discipline’s assessment plan” has been added to the [2011-2012 Discipline Leader Job Description](#).

Elements still emphasized include submitting yearly SLO action plans in the fall of each year and documenting all activities and action plans in TracDat.

The College’s recognition of the strategic role of discipline leaders, support for the SLO process, and commitment to building an all-inclusive SLO process is also reflected in a 30 percent increase in discipline leaders from the Fall 2008 term to the Fall 2012 term (Table 1). The decrease in Fall 2010 was due to a transition between discipline leader positions, as a typical discipline leader term is three years. Recognizing that such decreases impede the SLO assessment process, the College plans to avoid such drops in the future by ensuring no lapses occur in leadership for various programs and disciplines.

**Table 1: SLO Faculty Discipline Leaders at PCC: 2008 - 2012**

Fall 08	Spring 09	Fall 09	Spring 10	Fall 10	Spring 11	Fall 11	Spring 12	Fall 12
49	57	56	54	44	62	61	64	65

Combined, the changes outlined above related to discipline leader roles and responsibilities, the College Plan, and an increase in College SLO discipline leaders demonstrate the College's understanding of the vital role discipline leaders play in the SLO process and the College's commitment to facilitating and promoting adjunct and full-time faculty involvement in the SLO process. The improvements demonstrate how the College now provides a more structured and streamlined approach for discipline leaders to carry out the following goals: (1) encourage involvement and communication on all levels from full-time and adjunct faculty on the SLO process, (2) engage in consistent and reliable reporting, and (3) facilitate a college-wide culture of SLO-based assessment and decision-making.

#### 4. Improved TracDat Implementation

Another area in which the College improved following the HLC's 2010 comprehensive site visit relates to data documentation, reporting and planning. [In its report](#), the HLC noted that the College has invested in TracDat but that a review of TracDat reports showed that few disciplines had completed assessment cycles: "A review of the TracDat four-column assessment reports confirm that several disciplines have not completed all steps of the process" (p. 20). This finding reinforced to the College the need to ensure faculty are aware of both the importance of using TracDat as a data reporting system and the importance of ensuring TracDat information is updated to reflect each discipline's assessment activities. As noted in the [College's 2010 Self-Study](#), TracDat software was implemented in August 2008 (p. 73); however, the College recognized that, in the two years following implementation, not enough was being done to ensure TracDat is used consistently and routinely for assessment data reportage. To address these issues following the HLC's 2010 visit, the College provided additional faculty TracDat training and engaged in ongoing discussions on the use of TracDat as a means of reporting SLO progress among the individual disciplines within the College.

In January 2011, Planning and Institutional Research (PIR), in conjunction with the SLO Task Force, began to make TracDat more useful for collecting SLO information from the SLO facilitators and discipline leaders. This action corresponds with several action items in the [2011-2013 College Plan](#) related to Strategy 2. 6, "Demonstrate a complete and functioning system for assessing student learning outcomes." [A timeline was created](#) for implementation and improvement. Also, modifications were made to the TracDat interface to enhance the use of the tool in assessment; more specifically, the "Course Assessment Plan" module in TracDat was added, and field names within the software package were changed to enhance usability for faculty entering information into the system and to ensure accuracy. PIR, the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, and the SLO facilitators also created resources to aid in the use of TracDat, including a [manual that explains the role of TracDat](#) in capturing SLO progress and the processes involved in the use of the software.

PIR, recognizing information gaps in TracDat, analyzed all TracDat data entered prior to March 2012. This analysis led to a workshop in which the SLO facilitators and members of PIR worked with the discipline leaders to: (1) acquire missing information from previous semesters, (2) facilitate entry of more accurate and complete information in Spring 2012, and (3) fill in gaps in knowledge and/ or understanding of the TracDat system. The workshop was offered three times to accommodate discipline leaders' schedules during April 2012, and missing information in TracDat was collected and corrected. In addition, those discipline leaders who were having difficulties working with TracDat received one-on-one assistance to ensure greater participation and accuracy of the data entered into the system.

The College will continue to offer several TracDat workshops each semester. In Fall 2012, for example, the College offered two TracDat-specific training sessions for new discipline leaders and two TracDat-specific training sessions for all other discipline leaders interested in receiving more guidance and support.

A final change that will enable more consistent reporting in TracDat is the recent availability of off-campus access to TracDat. Prior to Fall 2012, TracDat was accessible only on College sites. Discipline leaders, in response to a SLO facilitator survey conducted in Spring 2012, expressed overwhelming support of off-campus access, which became possible October 2012. Collectively, the changes and improvements noted above have resulted in increased use of TracDat as well as an increased understanding of the importance of using TracDat consistently and accurately to document assessment activities.

## **5. Improved SLO Outreach and Education**

Another area in which the College focused great efforts in the wake of the HLC visit relates to outreach and education. As noted in Section II (above) and in the [2010 Self-Study](#), the College long has recognized the importance of supporting and facilitating professional development opportunities and providing resources to ensure widespread education about the SLO process. (p. 71). The HLC's comprehensive [site visit report](#), however, revealed a need for greater education and outreach to occur to ensure widespread faculty involvement and engagement. Education and outreach events that occurred in the wake of the 2010 comprehensive site visit are outlined in the table below.

**Table 2: SLO Education and Outreach Events at PCC: 2011 - 2012**

Event(s)	Description	Outcomes	Date(s)
SLO Days	SLO Days consists of interactive workshops, training sessions, and breakout sessions. During breakout sessions, full-time and part-time faculty discuss assessments, collaborate, share ideas and strategies, determine ways to improve student learning, and solidify assessment plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote SLO awareness and engagement</li> <li>Facilitate a culture of assessment</li> <li>Encourage SLO-focused collaboration and idea sharing</li> <li>Educate faculty on SLO policies and approaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fall 2011</li> <li>Spring 2012</li> <li>Fall 2012</li> <li>(ongoing on a once-per-semester cycle)</li> </ul>
Department Chair Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLO facilitator- and/or vice provost-led trainings occurring at Department Chair meetings to educate Department Chairs on (1) use of the SLO Faculty Interface for Grade Reporting, (2) compulsory participation of faculty (full-time and adjunct) in the SLO process, (3) the importance of the chair role as a link between Discipline leaders and adjuncts, and (4) strategies for facilitating the SLO process.</li> <li>SLO Facilitator-led presentations occurring during Adjunct Faculty Orientations (various campuses) providing general information on the SLO process and key highlights for the academic year.</li> <li>Roundtable and Q &amp; A organized by SLO facilitators and offered during the Fall 2012 district-wide Department Chair Meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate SLO-based dialogue between faculty and administrators</li> <li>Spread knowledge of SLO process</li> <li>Facilitate use of SLO data in decision-making and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fall 2011</li> <li>Fall 2012</li> <li>(ongoing and as needed)</li> </ul>
Administrator Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLO Facilitator- and/or vice provost-led trainings occurring at Presidents' Cabinets to educate administrators on (1) use of the SLO Faculty Interface for Grade Reporting, and (2) strategies for facilitating the SLO process.</li> <li>Vice provost presentation at Chancellor's Cabinet Meeting in Spring 2012 focusing on the SLO Faculty Interface for Grade Reporting and the SLO process.</li> <li>Training being developed by SLO facilitators to offer to all administrators to (1) ensure all administrators are educated on the SLO process and their role, (2) ensure all administrators have a unified understanding of the SLO process, (3) educate administrators on strategies for supporting SLO efforts, and (4) provide information about avenues, forums, and resources for facilitating the SLO process college-wide.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote SLO awareness and engagement</li> <li>Facilitate a culture of assessment</li> <li>Encourage SLO-focused collaboration and idea sharing</li> <li>Facilitate SLO-based dialogue between faculty and administrators</li> <li>Spread knowledge of SLO process</li> <li>Facilitate use of SLO data in decision-making and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fall 2011</li> <li>Spring 2012</li> <li>Fall 2012</li> <li>(ongoing and as needed)</li> </ul>

SLO Discipline Leader Training	Discipline leader training consisting of various workshops aimed at faculty at all levels of assessment knowledge. Sessions provide guidance on assessment cycles, assessment strategies and TracDat use (data entry and report generation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all discipline leaders are educated on SLO process</li> <li>• Provide guidance and support for discipline leaders</li> <li>• Facilitate a culture of assessment</li> <li>• Encourage SLO-focused collaboration and idea sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall 2011</li> <li>• Spring 2012</li> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (ongoing and as needed)</li> </ul>
SLO Training for New Faculty	SLO Facilitator-led SLO training for new faculty occurring before the start of each academic year at the "Faculty Learning Academy" (an in-depth new faculty orientation session).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate new faculty on SLO policies and approaches</li> <li>• Promote SLO awareness and engagement</li> <li>• Emphasize the significance of the SLO process at the College</li> <li>• Facilitate a culture of assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 2011</li> <li>• August 2012</li> <li>• (ongoing)</li> </ul>
SLO Training for Adjunct Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLO Facilitator-led presentations occurring during Adjunct Faculty Orientations (various campuses) providing an overview of the SLO process, highlights and news for the academic year, and information on contacts and resources.</li> <li>• SLO Days sessions providing a dynamic series of presentations and workshops that adjuncts are encouraged to attend (see above "SLO Days" category).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure knowledge of and involvement in the SLO process is extended to all faculty</li> <li>• Promote SLO awareness and engagement</li> <li>• Facilitate a culture of assessment</li> <li>• Educate faculty on SLO policies and approaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall 2011</li> <li>• Spring 2012</li> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (ongoing)</li> </ul>
SLO Facilitator Meetings	Weekly meetings among SLO facilitators at the District Offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the SLO process is running efficiently</li> <li>• Develop strategies for improving the SLO process</li> <li>• Promote continuous education and involvement in the SLO process across the College</li> <li>• Plan, create, distribute, and collect SLO documentation</li> <li>• Coordinate outreach strategies across the College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall 2011</li> <li>• Spring 2012</li> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (continuous and ongoing)</li> </ul>
SLO Task Force Meetings	Monthly meetings of SLO Task Force (SLO facilitators and administrators) at the District Office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate communication between SLO leaders and Administration</li> <li>• Ensure support from Administration</li> <li>• Develop district-wide SLO planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall 2011</li> <li>• Spring 2012</li> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (continuous and ongoing)</li> </ul>
Chancellor's Cabinet	Reports on SLO progress and planning presented at Chancellor's Cabinet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure education about SLO processes, planning, and procedures is widespread</li> <li>• Ensure transparency with processes and progress</li> <li>• Facilitate communication between SLO leaders and Chancellor's Cabinet</li> <li>• Solicit feedback for progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring 2012</li> <li>• Summer 2012</li> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (ongoing)</li> </ul>
Governance	Updates on SLO progress and planning presented at Board of Governors meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure transparency Facilitate communication between SLO leaders, Administration, and Board of Governors</li> <li>• Solicit feedback from College leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring 2012</li> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (ongoing)</li> </ul>

In addition to providing more extensive and streamlined education and outreach events and opportunities, the College developed and enhanced resources, as outlined in the table below.

**Table 3: SLO Resources at PCC: 2011 - 2012**

Resource	Description	Outcomes	Date(s)
Updated Assessment Plan	A continuously revised assessment plan discipline leaders are required to fill out annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure SLO assessment plans reflect SLO goals</li> <li>• Facilitate a smooth-running assessment process</li> <li>• Document SLO efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall 2011</li> <li>• Spring 2012</li> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (ongoing)</li> </ul>
Updated MyPima Groups	An online resource for file sharing, discussions, and communication among each SLO group, including the SLO Task Force, facilitators, and discipline leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate information sharing</li> <li>• Enhance the availability of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall 2011</li> <li>• Spring 2012</li> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (ongoing)</li> </ul>
Intranet SLO information	An online resource available via the employee intranet providing general information on SLO assessment as well as specific information on SLO planning and implementation that relates directly to PCC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide and encourage SLO professional development activities</li> <li>• Enhance awareness of SLOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall 2011</li> <li>• Spring 2012</li> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (ongoing)</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Updated Discipline Leader Handbook</a>	A resource guide supporting the discipline leader role and SLO efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure consistent function in the DL role</li> <li>• Provide basic foundation for SLOs and resources for further learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall 2012</li> <li>• (ongoing as needed)</li> </ul>

More details about these activities and resources are described in the [April 2012 SLO Facilitator Report](#), which the SLO facilitators completed at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year.

As the above tables reveal, outreach and education have been focused on reaching not just faculty, but also administrators and staff. The College recognizes that for faculty buy-in and participation to increase, it is crucial that administrators who support and guide faculty development understand their role in SLO assessment and that staff are familiar with the purposes and processes of SLO assessment as well. Further, the College recognizes that creating and maintaining effective SLO assessment requires an informed institution in which all members are engaged with the process and recognize their roles within it.

## B. HLC Recommendation 2: Identify changes and improvements in curricula and courses that have been made based on faculty review of the data associated with SLOs and institutional outcomes

During its accreditation visit to the College in 2010, the HLC team found that the College had not yet demonstrated that data gathered from the assessment of SLOs was being used to make improvements in a majority of curricula and courses and for its institutional outcomes. While the College took the criticism very seriously and began taking immediate action to address this issue, consistent and comprehensive demonstration of continuous improvement remains a challenge. However, the College has made significant progress toward improving its institutional processes and streamlining its assessment procedures to ensure the goal of continuous improvement based on SLOs is achieved. In the following section, the process will be presented, along with details of the progress the College has made toward continuous improvement since the HLC visit. Other changes and activities designed to better embed SLOs into the College also will be shared.

### 1. PCC's Process for Developing, Implementing and Tracking SLOs

Understanding the progress made toward achieving continuous improvement based on SLOs requires knowledge of how implementation and measurement of SLOs occurs at the College: SLOs are developed, implemented and tracked at the *discipline* level. This discipline-level SLO process informs curricula and course changes and vice versa, but the measurement most typically occurs at the discipline level.

As noted in Section IV.A.3, discipline leaders are responsible for managing assessment processes for their [respective disciplines](#), and in Fall 2012 there were 65 discipline leaders in this role. Each discipline leader, in close coordination with the SLO facilitators and the SLO Task Force described in Section III, is responsible for leading the SLO assessment activities for that discipline. Each fall, discipline leaders work with faculty who teach courses within their disciplines to ensure that stated SLOs are accurate and up-to-date and to implement the following assessment process:

- **PLAN:** A discipline leader works with faculty within that discipline to choose a SLO to assess and to develop a general assessment plan (timeline, assessment instrument(s), course(s) and students to assess).
- **ASSESS:** Discipline faculty conduct assessment.
- **ANALYZE:** Discipline faculty analyze the results.
- **IMPROVE:** Discipline faculty determine and implement an intervention strategy (change).



- **REASSESS/REPORT:** Discipline faculty conduct reassessment, then report their results to Discipline Leaders. Results are discussed during SLO Days, presented at College Discipline Area Committee (CDAC) meetings (see description in next paragraph) and are utilized to inform curricula and program changes.
- **RESTART:** Discipline Leaders lead discipline faculty in beginning the assessment process anew.

As noted in Section IV.A.5, SLO Days provides an opportunity for faculty to gather at the beginning of each semester to share ideas, analyze data, and engage in assessment planning. However, such dialogues are not limited to SLO Days events, as analysis and planning occur continuously among faculty and administrators. More specifically, faculty members in each discipline meet regularly throughout the academic year with their CDAC, comprised of faculty and an assigned administrator that makes discipline-specific decisions related to curriculum development, textbooks, program review and assessment. Such meetings provide a forum for ongoing discussions regarding SLOs and for the use of SLO data in decision-making and planning. Each CDAC determines a meeting schedule that fulfills its needs, and many rely heavily on email to supplement face-to-face discussions. CDACs are essential component to the SLO process, as they lend consistency to planning and implementation and link assessment data to curricular- and program-related improvement.

## 2. Progress Made Toward Continuous Improvement Since HLC Visit

While the general strategies and processes outlined above were in place at the time of the HLC visit in 2010, the comprehensive site visit report emphasized to the College the importance of completing and documenting full assessment cycles. To ensure, then, that all disciplines are making progress towards implementing continuous improvement and tracking their assessment activities, the College embarked on a multi-step plan tailored to various discipline groups. The first step of this plan was to analyze the status of each discipline with regards to the assessment process through a review of TracDat information. Based on this review, the 78 disciplines were grouped into five categories (Table 4).

**Table 4: Five Categories of SLO Discipline Groups**

Group	Description	Initial Number of Disciplines in this Category
Five	Disciplines that have successfully completed the full cycle of assessment by defining outcomes, performing an assessment, making a change to curricula or a course, and reassessing.	6
Four	Disciplines that have successfully carried out an assessment and made a change to curricula or a course as a result but have not yet reassessed.	19
Three	Disciplines that have completed an assessment, but have not yet made a change to curricula or a course as a result.	35
Two	Disciplines that have established outcomes, but have not yet assessed them.	14
One	Disciplines that have not yet developed any outcomes.	4

The next step was to engage the disciplines in activities designed to help them progress from their current group to, at a minimum, the next highest group. For example, for those in Group 3 (disciplines that have completed an assessment, but have not yet made a change to curricula or a course as a result), the goal was to move them to at least Group 4 (disciplines that have successfully carried out an assessment and made a change to curricula or a course as a result but have not yet reassessed).

To achieve the desired group progress, six group-specific workshops were held to provide additional, focused hands-on assistance for discipline leaders with their SLOs (these workshops were held in addition to the regular SLO Days). The workshops stressed the assessment process and the subject matter varied depending on the current group status of the discipline. The workshops had two main goals: (1) address and issues regarding SLOs in general including methodological concerns, “continuous improvement,” and any other questions concerning the SLO assessment process, and; (2) provide each discipline leader the support and resources needed to move his or her discipline up at least one group and provide appropriate evidence of such movement. In addition to the group sessions, individual consultations occurred with discipline leaders needing more assistance.

**Table 5: Assistance Goals, Training Plans, and Targeted Outcomes for the Five Categories of SLO Discipline Groups**

Group	Assistance Goal	Training and Targeted Outcomes
Five	Focus these disciplines on beginning the cycle again.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same training as that outlined for Group 4 (see below), with an emphasis on beginning the cycle over as part of the continuous improvement process.</li> </ul>
Four	Move the disciplines in this group to Group 5 by having them conduct a reassessment based on the improvement(s) made to curricula or a course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training focusing on continuous improvement and the SLO outcome process, including refreshers on outcome design, assessment and the need for reassessment. Disciplines that are excelling at SLO activities were identified and involved in the training sessions for other disciplines.</li> <li>• All disciplines in this group were expected to submit a plan for reassessing no later than the Fall 2012 SLO Days (mid-September). This was also reflected in TracDat. It was strongly recommended that the disciplines reassess in Fall 2012, and they were required to submit a justification if they chose to reassess in Spring 2013 instead.</li> </ul>
Three	Move the disciplines in this group to, at a minimum, Group 4 by having them review their completed assessment, make a change to curricula or a course as a result and develop a plan for reassessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands-on training helping these disciplines finalize a plan that identified the disciplines' specific outcome and assessment results that will be used to make a change.</li> <li>• Training was provided on how to use quantitative data to identify needed course or program changes.</li> <li>• All disciplines in this group were expected to submit a report no later than the Fall 2012 SLO Days (mid-September) on the change that they will make and the timeline for reassessing. This was also reflected in TracDat. It was strongly recommended that the disciplines make the change and reassess in the Fall, and they were required to submit a justification if they chose to do either or both in Spring 2013 instead.</li> </ul>
Two	Move the disciplines in this group to, at a minimum, Group 3 by having them assess their outcome(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands-on assistance training to help these disciplines design and implement an assessment.</li> <li>• Following this training, all disciplines in this group were expected to submit a short report describing the assessment to be carried out and their plan for completing it during Fall 2012. This was also reflected in TracDat.</li> </ul>
One	Move the disciplines in this group to, at a minimum, Group 2 by having them develop their outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands-on assistance training aimed at helping these disciplines create outcomes and implement an assessment.</li> <li>• Following this training, all disciplines in this group were expected to submit a short report during Fall 2012 presenting their outcomes. This was also reflected in TracDat.</li> </ul>

Following the activities outlined, the College was able to make significant progress toward continuous improvement. The full impact of the hands-on training on the groups is outlined in the table on the next page.

**Table 6: Impact of Hands-On Training on Discipline Groups**

Group	Description	Initial Number of Disciplines in this Category	Current Number of Disciplines in this Category
Five	Disciplines that have successfully completed the full cycle of assessment by defining outcomes, performing an assessment, making a change to curricula or a course, and reassessing.	6	26
	The initial six disciplines in this group initiated new assessment cycles while continuing the process of continuous improvement.		
Four	Disciplines that have successfully carried out an assessment and made a change to curricula or a course as a result but have not yet reassessed.	19	16
	Of the initial nineteen disciplines in this group, seven were able to complete their reassessment and move to Group 5 by Fall 2012. The remaining twelve initial disciplines have plans in place to complete their reassessment in Spring 2013.		
Three	Disciplines that have completed an assessment, but have not yet made a change to curricula or a course as a result.	35	22
	Twelve of the initial disciplines in this group were able to identify and implement a change based on their original assessment and perform a reassessment in Fall 2012, moving them into Group 5. Four of the initial disciplines initiated a change in curricula or courses and plan to reassess in Spring 2013, moving them into Group 4. The remaining disciplines had justifiable reasons for waiting until Spring 2013 to implement course or curricular changes and remained in Group 3. Those reasons and their plan for implementing a change and reassessing in Spring 2013 were captured in TracDat.		
Two	Disciplines that have established outcomes, but have not yet assessed them.	14	13
	Two of the initial disciplines in this group were able to create and conduct an assessment during Fall 2012 moving them into Group 3. One was able to complete their assessment and reassess during Fall 2012 moving them all the way up into Group 5. Of the eleven in this group that did not move, the majority had new discipline leaders assigned who are acclimating to the process. Four have plans in place to conduct assessments in Spring 2013.		
One	Disciplines that have not yet developed any outcomes.	4	1*
	<p>Of the four initial disciplines in this group, one was able to create outcomes and conduct an assessment, moving them into Group 3. Two of the initial disciplines were able to create outcomes, moving them to Group 2. They also developed plans for assessing these outcomes in Spring 2013.</p> <p>*The final remaining discipline in Group 1 is scheduled to be combined with another discipline that already has established outcomes in TracDat.</p>		

The above data was primarily derived from analyzing the information recorded in TracDat provided by the SLO discipline leaders. While TracDat is the main reporting tool for outcomes assessment, some of the disciplines have not completed entry of all their information into the system. Additional information was collected from planning documents and meetings with individual discipline leaders. The College will continue to work with individual disciplines through focused training, workshops, and consultations based on their progress and current placement in the above five groups to ensure that each discipline's goals are met and continuous progress with assessment is achieved.

Examples of disciplines that have demonstrated continuous improvement are included in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Examples of Disciplines Demonstrating Continuous Improvement with Assessment at PCC**

Discipline	Description of Assessment Activity and Continuous Improvement
<b>Culinary Arts</b>	The Culinary Arts program assessed the SLO "Demonstrate consistent knife skills and vegetable cuts" in twelve of its Culinary laboratory courses. Once baseline data was collected, the program implemented a new program-wide knife skills rubric used in instruction to ensure that the faculty and students are more focused on the uniformity and speed of their cutting skills. With the help of the new rubric, corrections are made right away and student knife skills improve remarkably. The changes made in the program have helped the students develop confidence that they are entering the field at an acceptable level for entry-level kitchen positions requiring the ability to demonstrate a number of knife cuts in a quick and safe manner.
<b>Dental Assisting Education</b>	The Dental Assisting Education program assessed the SLO "Use proper methods of personal protective equipment to insure dental assistant and patient safety." Students who did not perform at an "acceptable" level during a related performance evaluation were provided with remediation whereby they were able to review the processes for using protective equipment. All students who previously failed the assessment passed after remediation. The addition of remediation for students who do not pass the first evaluation has increased student's success rates in achieving "acceptable" performance relating to the Dental Assisting Education SLO.
<b>Clinical Trial Coordinator</b>	Pima's Clinical Research Coordinator (CRC) faculty implemented a SLO to assess students' understanding of The Informed Consent process. Students are assessed early in the semester and then reassessed at the end of the semester when the SLO is embedded into their final. The SLO assessment led faculty to adjust teaching methods to accommodate the varied learning capabilities of students. According to CRC faculty, "The changes made have been to dissect a topic rather than to teach it as an overall component. The introductions of additional teaching tools such as movie clips and role playing have helped tremendously."
<b>Radiologic Technology</b>	The Radiologic Technology Program used the results of SLOs to drive changes in testing formats and the acquisition of new imaging software. Individual tutoring and remedial testing are now in place for reinforcement of correct positioning skills in the lab and clinical environments. Installation of the new imaging equipment in the lab has provided students with training on state-of-the-art equipment. Assessment of outcomes is conducted in the program's capstone course (RAD 185) via the ARRT Certification Exam by examining scores on each of five content areas and comparing

	those scores to scores achieved by succeeding classes. The program reports that one of the reasons the process is successful is because outcomes are shared regularly at the Faculty/Clinical Instructor/Advisory Meetings and feedback is given by the members for strengthening and managing goals.
<b>Art</b>	The College's Art faculty assessed the SLO "the art completer will demonstrate observational, descriptive, analytical, and creative problem solving and interpretive skills in 2-D, 3-D and digital formats" at the programmatic level. Thirteen courses were assessed for a total of 29 sections using a capstone assignment that allowed students to demonstrate observational, descriptive, analytical, and creative problem solving in relation to their own work and the work of other artists. The results of the assessment indicated that, while the majority of students were meeting the expectation of the SLO, students in traditional mode courses were performing at a higher level than those in online classes. In response to this finding, the instructional methods used for online courses were revised to include more discussion elements and opportunities for students to engage in question and answer sessions. Additional instructional materials were also developed to enable the presentation of information in multiple formats online including images and video. When students were reassessed, a modest improvement in online student success was seen in relation to this SLO. An additional reassessment is scheduled for the current academic year to gauge the continuing success of these adjustments.
<b>Fashion Design and Clothing</b>	The faculty in Fashion Design and Clothing assessed the SLO "develop patterns for successful garments by flat pattern hand drafting, draping method, or computer aided pattern drafting methods" by using a skill test graded by a rubric. Part of the evaluation focused on the mathematic skills needed to complete the task and, in a baseline assessment, faculty discovered that their students were experiencing difficulty in measurement and the use of fractions. The faculty responded to this difficulty by adding an extra-large ruler to the whiteboard in the classroom in addition to providing students with a "cheat sheet" that helps them convert fractions to decimals on a calculator. These adjustments to the instructional method have had a twofold effect. One faculty member reported that "Students who have had extreme difficulty in reading a ruler have reported to faculty that they've learned more "math" in our pattern drafting classes than they learned in high school. The students feel much more confident in their abilities to identify the decimal equivalents and translate back to fractions and identify the corresponding mark on the ruler." The adjustment consequently also has helped students with their patternmaking skills in addition to the mathematic skills.
<b>Social Services</b>	The Social Services faculty has been working with the SLO "describe the values and ethics of the Social Work/Social Services/Human Services profession" by assessing their students via questions on a survey and attempting to make improvements to students' performance by implementing additional instructional materials to the courses where the SLO is applicable. At first, the students did not meet the desired criteria for success, so the Social Services faculty added wall posters to their classrooms which displayed the NASW Code of Ethics. Faculty also provided students with the Web address to the NASW Code of Ethics as well. While reassessment has been planned, faculty report that the changes made have made a large difference in the department's understanding of the SLO process and their need to do more in terms of uniformly instructing students on the importance of values and ethics in the profession.

These examples are also posted on the College intranet so they can serve as models for disciplines seeking guidance on attaining continuous improvement (see screenshot on next page).

## PCC Employee Intranet

> [Home](#) > [Academic Services](#) > Student Learning Outcomes

### Student Learning Outcomes

Pima Community College's Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) are:

**Learn, Communicate, Innovate, Participate, Aspire**

Each of these College-Wide Student Learning Outcomes is described in the [SLO Quick](#)

A successful Student Learning Outcome assessment process answers five essential qu

- What do we want our students to learn?
- How do we know they have learned it?
- How do we capture that information?
- How do we use that information to affect decision-making?
- How do we report and share that information?

At Pima Community College, the assessment of student learning is an ongoing, cyclici collected. The collected information is used to guide discussions about improving stud Student Learning Outcome information into all aspects of College decision-making pr

Learn more from our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) web page or the planning docum

- [SLO Quick Guide 7-8-07](#) [PDF]
- [SLO Committee Annual Report 2008](#) [PDF]
- [SLO Recommendations with Status for 2007-2008](#) [PDF]
- [SLO Committee Annual Report 2009](#) [PDF]
- [SLO Week 2009 Report](#) [PDF]
- [SLO Quickguide for Faculty](#) [PDF]
- [Sample Program SLOs](#) [PDF]
- [SLO Committee Annual Report 2010](#) [PDF]
- [All-Faculty Day 2010 Feedback on SLO](#) [PDF]
- [Data Set from Faculty Feedback](#) [Excel]
- [Successful Student Learning Outcomes: Closing the Loop](#) [PDF] **NEW**

### 3. Current and Future Activities Designed to Embed SLOs into PCC Processes

Although significant progress has been made toward continuous improvement, the College acknowledges there still is much to do. It is important to note that none of the activities or training sessions outlined in the previous section are one-time events. This method of working with the disciplines based on their point within the assessment cycle is now embedded within the SLO process for the College. As part of this, the focus of the SLO Days each fall moving forward will be identifying where each discipline is with regards to assessment and holding them accountable for continually moving to the next step in the process. This established cycle of review ensures that every SLO is assessed on a regular basis, with a clear path of accountability and emphasis on how the data will be used. This accountability is further enforced by the addition in November 2012 of a [research project manager with a focus on assessment](#). The research project manager is part of the Planning and Institutional Research Department and is responsible for overseeing assessment activities college-wide.



Other activities designed to embed SLOs into PCC processes are outlined below.

### *Course Review*

As noted in Section IV.A.4, a key change made to the TracDat software in Fall 2011 allows users to distinguish between assessments targeting courses and disciplines. As a result, faculty can enter data related directly to courses separately from data related to disciplines, and course results can be tracked separately from discipline results. In addition to allowing this distinction in terms of data collecting and reporting, this distinction emphasizes the difference between assessing outcomes at course and discipline levels. This also facilitates the use of the data in the curriculum review and revision process.

### *Curriculum Review*

Following the HLC team site visit, the College recognized the need to more closely integrate the SLO process with the process for curriculum development and modification. While conclusions drawn from the results of SLO assessment in the past led to modifications in course curriculum, there was little formal recognition of the influence these processes have on one another.

In Fall 2012, the [Curriculum Procedures Manual](#) was revised to recognize and reinforce the impact of SLOs on the process for curriculum development and modification. The manual now recognizes the influence of SLOs as an instigator of actions initiated to develop or modify College curriculum (pp. 1, 7, 24). The manual also requires SLOs to be taken into account as criteria during the evaluation of course proposals (pp. 12, 31).

Additionally in Fall 2012, the [forms required to initiate the curriculum process](#) have been revised to state that the action is a result of SLO process, and for the inclusion of information related to the impact the curriculum proposals may have on course or program level outcomes. While it is too early to have meaningful data to report here, data from the forms will enable the College to track the impact of SLOs on the curriculum development process.

These changes in the curriculum process will help formalize the connections between SLOs and current and future curriculum development at the College.

### *Program Review*

Steps also have been taken to reinforce the use of SLO assessments in College program and discipline areas as a whole by making modifications to the College's program review process. Instructional program reviews are conducted on a fixed cycle with occupational

programs undergoing program review every three to four years, and transfer programs every five years. The key element of each program review is an action plan based on an analysis of program data, an identification of the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and, in the case of occupational programs, external advisory committee input. The action plan identifies activities that will promote the educational quality, vitality and efficiency of the program.

For several years prior to the accreditation site visit, the College encouraged program review participants to use the process as an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of SLOs and learning resources and review and realign assessment tools for reporting SLOs. As noted in the [2010 Self-Study](#), several variables are taken into account during the process of program review, including SLO data (p. 122). As the HLC noted in its 2010 comprehensive visit report, however, the College needed to strengthen its focus on SLOs in the program review process and document specific changes made to programs based on SLO data. Beginning in the academic year 2011-2012, the integration of SLOs and the [program review process](#) was reinforced in several meaningful ways.

1. Every program review participant must now complete a [data analysis worksheet](#) verifying whether SLOs have been identified for the program area, that at least two assessments of SLOs have been administered to students, and that the assessments and outcomes have been communicated to discipline faculty.
2. The first item of each [action plan](#) submitted as required by program review is "Continue to Improve and Expand SLOs." Subsequently, the first activity required is to document activities demonstrating changes in the discipline area that will improve the curriculum, course delivery or the entire program.
3. Each discipline that undergoes program review must submit a current SLO assessment plan to be kept on file in the Program Services Office. They also must submit a review of the analysis of SLO assessment outcomes and documentation summarizing improvements the program has implemented as a result of SLO assessments including changes to curriculum and teaching modalities.

Combined, the measures outlined above demonstrate the progress the College has made in strengthening its processes and facilitating a system in which assessment runs efficiently and in which data is used to inform changes at the class, course, discipline, program, and institutional levels. While it is too early to have meaningful data to report here, data collected from the program review forms will enable the College to track the impact of SLOs on the program review process.

### **C. HLC Recommendation 3: Implement measures and document that students are meeting general education goals**

As the HLC noted in its [2010 comprehensive visit report](#), the direct and indirect measures PCC has used to “capture the results of the College’s institutional [general education] outcomes” are “insufficient” (p. 20). Outlined below are the steps the College has taken to address the deficiencies to assessing general education outcomes and measuring and documenting student success in regards to general education goals

#### **1. ETS Proficiency Profile Test**

The College employed the ETS Academic Profile to assess general education in the 2002-2003 academic year. As the HLC noted in its [2010 comprehensive site visit report](#), however, “The Academic Profile Test, meant to measure performance in general education, was administered in FY2002-03 but no similar measure has since been conducted” (p. 20). Subsequently, the College examined different ways of directly measuring student performance and chose to adopt the ETS Proficiency Profile Test, which replaced the ETS Academic Profile, for the purpose of standardized testing of general education across the district. PCC chose this test because it allows the College to assess both nationally recognized general education requirements and PCC’s institutional SLOs.

The College elected to use the 40-minute (compared to the two-hour) version of the test to mitigate impact on normal classroom activities. Testing began with a pilot in Spring 2012 implemented by the Planning and Institutional Research Department (PIR). To make the pilot as useful as possible, PIR created a random sample to test 100 multi-disciplinary course sections at or above the 200-level across all PCC campuses. In April 2012, PIR received the test results from the Spring 2012 pilot cohort. [Table 8]

**Table 8: ETS Proficiency Profile Test Results, Spring 2012**

**Summary of Scaled Scores**

	Possible Range	Mean Score	95% Confidence Limits for Mean	Standard Deviation	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
Total Score	400-500	438.94	438-440	18.83	425	435	450
<b>Skills Sub scores</b>							
Critical Thinking	100-130	110.83	110-112	6.07	106	110	115
Reading	100-130	116.49	116-117	6.78	112	116	121
Writing	100-130	112.79	112-114	4.81	109	113	115
Mathematics	100-130	112.09	111-113	6.05	108	111	116
<b>Context-Based Sub scores</b>							
Humanities	100-130	114.01	113-115	6.34	109	113	118
Social Sciences	100-130	112.60	112-113	6.06	109	112	116
Natural Sciences	100-130	114.29	114-115	5.69	111	114	118

Note 1: 1,121 students were tested, and 1,027 students are included in the statistics above. 94 students are excluded because they completed less than 75 percent of the test.

Note 2: The confidence limits are based on the assumption that the questions contributing to each scaled score are a sample from a much larger set of possible questions that could have been used to measure those same skills. If the group of students taking the test is a sample from some larger population of students eligible to be tested, the confidence limits include both sampling of students and sampling of questions as factors that could cause the mean score to vary. The confidence limits indicate the precision of the mean score of the students actually tested, as an estimate of the "true population mean" - the mean score that would result if all the students in the population could somehow be tested with all possible questions. These confidence limits were computed by a procedure that has a 95 percent probability of producing upper and lower limits that will surround the true population mean. The population size used in the calculation of the confidence limits for the mean scores in this report is 1027.

The analysis of test scores provided by ETS show that PCC scored around the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in both the Skills and Context-based areas of the test compared to other schools in PCC's cohort of two-year colleges. These Spring 2012 scores will be used as a baseline and compared to subsequent scores to provide longitudinal data on student performance in General Education areas. The College also will use these results to create goals and strategies for improving the general education proficiency of its student body.

The College has scheduled and budgeted for the test to be administered every three years. This cycle allows time to review the results and identify and implement changes to ensure the process is as useful as possible in terms of achieving its purpose of measuring and documenting general education outcomes.

## **2. Modifications to the General Education Committee**

To further address deficiencies related to assessing General Education outcomes, the College heeded the advice the HLC provided in the "Advancement Section" of its [2010 comprehensive site visit report](#) and has restructured the General Education Committee to ensure effective processing and oversight of general education matters related to curricula, programs and outcomes. First and foremost, the [General Education Committee](#) has regained its full

committee status and is no longer a subcommittee of the College Curriculum Council (p.14). While a primary responsibility of the General Education Committee still includes recommending curricula-related general education models for transfer and occupational degrees and evaluating general education proposals for the College Curriculum Council, the Committee has gained additional responsibilities related to SLO assessment.

A key feature of the restructured General Education Committee is its membership, which was reformulated during the 2011-2012 academic year to ensure a diverse, broad-based assortment of full-time faculty, occupational faculty, transfer-based faculty, educational support faculty, select members of the College Curriculum Council and at least one SLO facilitator. In addition to requiring at least one SLO facilitator to be among the members of the General Education Committee, the College also now requires at least one separate SLO facilitator to serve on the College Curriculum Council.

A primary responsibility of the General Education Committee is reviewing and monitoring institutional SLOs. This responsibility was formally added in part as a response to the HLC advisement (as documented in the “Advancement Section” of the 2010 “Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit”) to “task” the Committee with reviewing and documenting institutional learning outcomes. It also is a result of the College’s recognition of the need to ensure institutional SLOs are consistently reviewed for relevancy, accuracy and alignment with general education goals so they can be used as a basis for curricula and program improvements related to general education.

### **3. SLO Faculty Interface and Institutional Outcomes**

In addition to supporting faculty engagement and participation in the SLO process, the SLO Faculty Interface (see Section IV.A.1.) captures course-level information on the institutional (general education) SLOs by providing faculty with a platform to recount the institutional outcomes they addressed. As noted in the [2010 Self-Study](#), general education outcomes are the institutional outcomes (p. 73); therefore, the Interface provides a snapshot of faculty engagement with general education SLOs at the College. Results from Spring 2012 and Summer 2012 indicate nearly 100 percent of faculty are implementing these institutional outcomes in their courses. [Table 9]

Use of the Interface shows how the College is ensuring that all faculty are well-versed in the College’s General Education outcomes. In this way, the College is able to maintain a bird’s eye view of faculty awareness of the College’s General Education outcomes. In addition, the self-reporting process helps the individual faculty member make and track pedagogical classroom changes and monitor such changes over time.

**Table 9: SLO Faculty Interface Results, Spring and Summer 2012**

Student Learning Outcome	Spring 2012 Was SLO Implemented in Class? Yes	Summer 2012 Was SLO Implemented in Class? Yes
Aspire	98.50%	100%
Communicate	98.40%	100%
Innovate	98.50%	100%
Learn	99.90%	100%
Participate	98.30%	100%

The College is confident that the strategies outlined above related to the ETS Proficiency Profile Test, reestablishment of a General Education Committee, and the SLO Faculty Interface demonstrate the College's commitment to assessing general education outcomes and measuring and documenting student success in regards to general education goals. It is important to note these measures are a result of extensive research and planning done with an eye toward the future and with the goal of using these methods to make improvements at an institutional level. The College views the changes outlined above as part of a larger framework now embedded into College procedures.

## **V. Acknowledgement of and Response to Advice Provided by the Higher Learning Commission**

To help the College achieve the goals the HLC outlined in its [2010 site visit report](#) related to creating a comprehensive program of assessment, the HLC team provided, in Section II of the “Advancement Section” of the report, targeted advice. This advice helped the College identify ways to further embed SLOs into College processes. The suggestions are presented below, followed by a brief summary of the College’s related activity.

- a. Publish the program goals and expected outcomes in the College catalog to inform the College’s internal and external communities.

PCC Activity: Activities are underway to incorporate program goals and expected outcomes into the 2013-14 catalogue. To ensure the goals and outcomes are accurate, a review and update of outcomes will occur following the SLO Days each fall.

- b. Include on the College website examples of how program faculty, both occupational and transfer, have addressed the full cycle of assessment.

PCC Activity: After taking this recommendation under advisement, the College opted to post examples of programs (both occupational and transfer) that have addressed the full cycle of assessment on the SLO portion of the College intranet. See Section IV.B.2 above for more information and to view the examples currently posted on the site. An update of examples will take place annually in preparation for SLO Days.

- c. During the College’s “All College Day” in the fall, campuses’ periodic meetings and forums, “All Faculty Day” in the spring, College Discipline Area Committees (CDACs) and department chair meetings, Adjunct Faculty orientations, and Faculty Senate provide a forum for faculty to present their assessment results including how they were used to implement curriculum changes.

PCC Activity: These opportunities exist and happen with regularity. For example, during SLO Days, forums for sharing assessment best practices are held. These forums are videotaped and made available for those who cannot attend in person (See Section IV.A.5.). SLO presentations are also made regularly at College Discipline Area Committee (CDAC) meetings, Department Chair meetings and Faculty Senate. SLOs are also a key part of Adjunct Faculty orientations. Opportunities will continue to be made available and faculty and programs will be encouraged to share their assessment results and how they were used to implement curriculum changes.

- d. Faculty need to know that there are multiple ways to assess students to determine if their learning outcomes have been met. The team recommends the following: include links on the assessment web page to the primary assessment websites which provide numerous examples of how to assess program outcomes with a variety of tools. Identify some of these tools on the website.

PCC Activity: The College took this recommendation under advisement and decided the most appropriate location for this type of information is on the SLO portion of the College intranet. The College included links to primary assessment websites, which provide many examples of how to assess program outcomes with a variety of tools (see screenshot below).



- e. The team understands that the College's institutional outcomes currently are the responsibility of the Student Learning Outcomes Committee (SLO Task Force). However, it might focus more attention on the institutional (i.e., basically the general education outcomes), to re-establish the General Education Committee as a single entity rather than a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee. The College could task them with reviewing



and monitoring the College's institutional outcomes to ensure these are being addressed and that the outcomes accurately reflect the College's general education goals.

PCC Activity: Effective with Fall 2012, the General Education Committee was re-established as a stand-alone committee tasked with reviewing and monitoring the College's institutional outcomes and ensuring they are being addressed and accurately reflect the College's general education goals (see Section IV.C.2.).

- f. Revisit administrative staffing for program review to ensure there is widespread involvement in the process of program review.

PCC Activity: As described in Section IV.B.3.c., the program review process has been refined to better incorporate SLOs. While staffing is not directly addressed, the refined process ensures widespread, consistent involvement in program review.

## **VI. Conclusion**

PCC is grateful to the Higher Learning Commission for specifying pressing areas in need of attention and improvement at the College and for stressing the importance of devoting attention, resources and efforts toward improving the College's system of assessment. This monitoring report provides a thorough description of the measures the College implemented in the two years following the 2010 HLC site visit to (1) improve faculty buy-in and participation in SLOs and assessment, (2) ensure assessment data is used to guide changes and improvements in curricula and courses, and (3) strengthen the system of assessment for general education (institutional) outcomes. While much has been accomplished, work remains to strengthen the system of assessment, particularly in ensuring institutional processes are aligned with assessment processes for effective planning and decision-making. The College, including faculty, administrators and staff, is fully committed to the SLO model and is dedicated to ensuring SLO assessment and continuous improvement remain as primary focal points moving forward.