



# *Institutional Assessment Plan*

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## Vision Statement

Institutional Effectiveness at Columbia-Greene Community College is accomplished through the comprehensive, ongoing, and active assessment of all College operations.

## Introduction

The Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP) describes the mechanisms used to assess the College's academic programs, course offerings, student support services, and administrative operations with a strong emphasis on student success.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education's *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation* clearly define academic and institutional assessment:

- Educational Effectiveness Assessment (Standard 5): "Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education."
- Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement (Standard 6): "The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges."

The College's assessment stems from its Strategic Plan based on the College Goals. All academic and non-academic assessment outcomes are aligned with the Strategic Plan.

## Assessment Committees

The following assessment committees are involved in the coordination of institutional assessment.

### Institutional Assessment Planning Group

The Institutional Assessment Planning Group (IAPG) is responsible for overseeing the process and continuous improvement of assessment at the College. IAPG membership consists of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the chair(s) of the Strategic Planning Committee, the chair(s) of the Academic Assessment Committee, the chair(s) of the Non-Academic Assessment Committee, the Assistant Dean of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, the Middle States Accreditation Liaison Officer, and two at-large members.

IAPG reports directly to the President and is charged to:

- Update the Institutional Assessment Plan and oversee its implementation
- Promote and encourage meaningful, authentic, and sustainable assessment
- Collaborate with the Strategic Planning Committee and inform development of the Institutional Effectiveness Report Card
- Collaborate with the Academic and Non-Academic Assessment Committees to promote meaningful assessment practices
- Communicate regularly with the College President
- Facilitate the assessment of projects that drive institutional renewal

IAPG meets monthly to facilitate and ensure open communication between the various assessment committees on campus in an effort to continuously improve institutional effectiveness.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) operates in conjunction with IAPG and monitors the use of the Strategic Plan with a focus on determining its effect on institutional assessment, resource allocation, and decision-making.

The College President appoints all members of the SPC, which currently includes the Assistant Dean of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students, the Vice President for Administration, the Director of Computer Information Systems, the Director of Building and Grounds, and a faculty representative.

The SPC reports directly to the President and is charged to:

- Create a plan for the upcoming years in conjunction with the President
- Develop strategic plan objectives and benchmarking for the Institutional Effectiveness Report Card, in conjunction with IAPG
- Assign responsibility for the plan's objectives and accountability
- Monitor the use of the strategic plan through review of assessment results and reporting of data in the Institutional Effectiveness Report Card, in conjunction with IAPG
- To assure that assessment is used in resource allocation, in conjunction with President's Staff
- Recommend new planning initiatives and activities as necessary
- Report strategic planning progress to the President

### **Academic Assessment Committee**

The Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) oversees academic assessment activities and reports to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Membership consists of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Assistant Dean of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, the Academic Assessment Coordinator, four faculty members, and one staff member (3-year appointments). The committee coordinates with the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness and IAPG, reports to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and is charged with:

- Monitoring course assessment, including the schedule and plans, as well as review, and use of the results
- Serving as a resource for the Assessment of the Major
- Seeking out opportunities for professional development training and assessment activities to promote teaching and learning
- Promoting and integrating academic assessment culture at CGCC

## Non-Academic Assessment Committee

The Non-Academic Assessment Committee (NAC) works with the Assistant Dean of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness for advisement regarding internal and external data sources and for assistance with communicating this information to all non-academic units. NAC is charged to:

- Provide information, training, and guidance to non-academic units regarding assessment processes.
- Seek out opportunities for professional development training and assessment activities
- Promote use of assessment data as a mechanism to support the College planning, assessment, and budget cycle
- Oversee progress of unit level assessment as per the schedules developed for the offices of the president and vice presidents
- Collect and disseminate information concerning assessment activities to the College intranet
- Collect and disseminate assessment plan information to IAPG

## Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness is a systematic and continuous process that measures how well the College is achieving its mission.

It is accomplished by integrating the functions of institutional research, assessment, and strategic planning to help promote data-driven decision-making.

Institutional effectiveness also plays a critical role in improving the College's academic programs, student support services, and overall financial health.

## Mission and Strategic Planning

The institutional effectiveness process begins with the College's mission statement:

*Columbia-Greene Community College welcomes a geographically and culturally diverse student population, is dedicated to developing and administering high quality post-secondary educational programs that are accessible to the residents of the service area, is responsive to the changing needs of the community, maintains a caring environment that is dedicated to personal attention, and recognizes its responsibilities for providing transfer, vocational, technical, remedial, and lifelong learning for all.*

The College mission is further defined by six institutional goals:

1. Quality Education,
2. Accessibility,
3. Excellent Facilities,
4. Student Centered,
5. Service to the Community, and
6. Sound Management.

These goals, as described in the College's five-year Strategic Plan, also contain measurable objectives and performance standards, which facilitates institutional effectiveness and promotes sustainable, periodic assessment practices.

The Strategic Plan guides the development of initiatives to further the goals of the College and to support the connection between allocation of resources and institutional assessment. IAPG provides input into the development of objectives for each of the goals in the Strategic Plan, which reflects careful consideration of assessment results and identifies measures of assessment that will be used to determine goal achievement.

At the end of each academic year, the Institutional Assessment Planning Group and the Strategic Planning Committee collectively plan the development of the Institutional Effectiveness Report Card.

### **Institutional Effectiveness Report Card**

The cornerstone of the assessment cycle, the Institutional Effectiveness Report Card utilizes both direct and indirect measures by leveraging data and information from a variety of sources, including academic and administrative assessments, surveys, institutional research, and peer benchmarking.

The first Report Card was shared with the College community in 2012, and it continues to serve as an invaluable source of information that helps with planning efforts on campus.

Institutional objectives are assessed on a cycle, and their selection for inclusion in the Institutional Effectiveness Report Card is determined in advance by College priorities and other factors. The Report Card is shared with the College's executive staff, presented at the annual All-College Meeting, shared with the Board of Trustees, and disseminated to the entire campus community through the College Intranet.

### **Assessment of Institutional Resources**

Heads of departments complete a budget request form each academic year. Budget directors are encouraged to cite assessment results when requesting items or proposing projects that impact the mission and vision of the College. Such items or projects must also be aligned with the Strategic Plan.

Budget directors are given the option to present their requests at a hearing before the College President and Vice Presidents. After all budget requests have been heard, the President and Vice Presidents use the Strategic Planning priorities as well as submitted assessment results to make resource allocation decisions. The President delivers the final College budget to the Board of Trustees and county sponsors for approval.

### **Academic Assessment**

The College assesses student learning at three levels: (1) the institutional level through general education assessment and institutional outcomes assessment, (2) the academic program level, and (3) the course level.

#### **Institution-Level Assessment**

The college is currently updating its process, including the revision of Institutional Learning Outcomes to better align with the MSCHE general education criteria.

## Program-Level Assessment

The College follows the State University of New York's (SUNY) program review process, also known as assessment of the major. All academic programs are reviewed on a five-year cycle.

All assessments of the major include a review of program outcomes as they align with both course and institutional learning outcomes, as well as program retention, graduation rates, performance after transfer, data from support services (Library, Academic Support Center, Advising Team), Student Opinion Survey (SOS) results, and the input of external reviewers. The Assessment of the Major process is a collaboration of the division, the Academic Assessment Committee, and the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness.

The Academic Assessment Committee reviews all program and related course learning outcomes and makes recommendations for revision as needed. The Committee collaborates with program leaders to review and revise curriculum maps linking institutional, program, and course learning outcomes. Committee recommendations to alter required courses, program learning outcomes, or course learning outcomes are reflected in the report and are often integrated for the following academic year.

## Course-Level Assessment

Course assessment is conducted every semester, and for every course. Course assessment goes beyond the submission of data to include action plans for continual improvement of student learning. The sharing of best practices and assessment results with colleagues both on and off campus is encouraged. In addition, course assessment results are shared with adjuncts, used for scheduling and budgeting, and implemented into the Assessment of the Major process.

Course assessment plans, sample grading rubrics, assessment webinars, AAC committee minutes, and other assessment resources are posted on the College's Blackboard assessment course site, which is available to all faculty.

### Plan

A course assessment plan is required of every course taught at C-GCC. The plan includes:

- Learning outcomes
- The method by which each outcome is assessed
- The procedure for determining the standards by which a student exceeds, meets, approaches, or does not meet each outcome
- Alignments to program learning outcomes for all required courses, and potential alignments to program learning outcomes for all elective courses within various programs.

Instructions for completing a Course Assessment Plan, a blank template, as well as all completed plans can be obtained on the Academic Assessment Blackboard site.

*The college is currently implementing new assessment software and will be updating its process after implementation is complete.*

## Report

Faculty are expected to assess every course, every semester. Assessment results are documented on an assessment reporting form and consist of the number and percent of students who exceed, meet, approach, or do not meet each outcome for the course and section described. The form also asks how past actions have proven effective, and what further action should be considered based on the semester's report.

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## Preparation for Course Assessment

- All new Course Assessment Plans must be approved by the Academic Assessment Committee
- Existing plans should be checked every semester to ensure that they are current and meet course needs
- Revisions/updates of assessment plans should be done in collaboration with the Division Chair and other faculty teaching the same course, and be mindful of longevity of data accuracy
- Revised/created plans should be submitted to the Assessment Coordinator
- Syllabi should be checked to ensure inclusion of the outcomes as stated on the course assessment plan

## Practice

- When preparing exams and assignments, assessment plans should be consulted to ensure face validity (the exam/assignment is a good measure of the outcome)
- Student performance should be assessed relative to each learning outcome
- Assessment reports are submitted for every course, every semester
- Reports are submitted directly to the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

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## Submission Deadlines:

- For the fall semester, assessment reports are due by the January All-College Meeting
- For the spring semester, assessment reports are due by Commencement
- For the summer semester, assessment reports are due by the August All-College Meeting

## Analysis of Results

*The college is in the process of revising its process for the analysis of results.*

## **Non-Academic Assessment**

Non-academic assessment is an ongoing process that begins each new year with the Action and Assessment (AAA) Plan. The AAA Plan forms the basis for assessing the effectiveness of all College programs and services. The process is described in steps below:

1. The Assistant Dean of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness presents the Institutional Effectiveness Report Card and the College President outlines strategic priorities to the campus community at the All-College Meeting.
2. Department heads review progress on action plans and align their unit goals with strategic goals and priorities. Assessment plans for the cycle are formed.
3. The department head and their supervisor determine which activity(s), opportunity(s), program(s), or service(s) to assess. Ideally, all units assess at least one activity, program, or service related to the strategic priorities set by the College President each year.
4. The department head submits a AAA plan and a timeline for completion to their supervisor and NAC for approval (based on the type of assessment, when/how data would be collected, etc.)
5. The unit performs their assessment, compiles and interprets the results, develops an action plan, and submits it to their supervisor for review and feedback.
6. Their supervisor reviews the results and has a discussion with the unit about using the results in planning, resource allocation, budget requests, etc.

### **Assessment Cycle**

At the close of each annual and five-year comprehensive assessment cycle, IAPG coordinates the evaluation of all institutional assessment. IAPG and the SPC make recommendations to the President regarding the assessment process. This information is shared with academic departments and non-academic units through AAC and NAC, respectively. IAPG reviews and updates the Institutional Assessment Plan annually.

## Institutional Effectiveness Flowchart

The flowchart below illustrates the process of institutional effectiveness at Columbia-Greene Community College.

