

3.3.1.1

Institutional Effectiveness in Educational programs (to include student learning outcomes)

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in Educational programs (to include student learning outcomes)

Compliance	X Partial Compliance	Non-Compliance	Not Applicable
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“The core of this [“Learning Assured” – strategic goal] is achieving clarity together on the expected learning outcomes for every learning experience. This is not meant to be a confining, prescriptive management tool, but a shared commitment among professionals to reach agreement on the essential core of learning we expect from our students and to use assessment of what is actually learned as our first criterion for every decision we can – curricular, instructional, learning support, and administrative.”

*Dr. Sanford Shugart
President, Valencia College
Essay – “Goal Two: Learning Assured,” 2010*

Narrative:

Institutional effectiveness for Valencia College’s educational programs is managed through an on-going process including college-wide events such as Assessment Day, which shows high rates of participation with over 90% of those who lead our programs and certificates attending. Regarding the development of outcomes and assessments linked to improvement for educational programs, the college is in partial compliance.

- Our rationale is that a process exists for reporting and acting on results within the disciplines / programs. All of our programs have student learning outcomes, which have been reviewed, strengthened, and approved by a committee of faculty and professional staff members.

- Almost all of our programs have assessment plans in place. Most of these plans have been implemented for two years or more, leading to the development of improvement plans in May 2012.
- Analysis and planning takes place at the college-level through events such as the Annual Cycle of Assessment that culminates on [Assessment Day](#), the [Program Viability Process](#) (PDF) for A.S. degrees and technical certificates, and within meetings of faculty and professional staff who gather within the [Learning Assessment Committee](#) (LAC.)
- However, the process is not yet uniform as was noted in a recent SACS recommendation following a substantive change visit in February 2013. As is shown in the narrative, while we have a process in place with partial data (shown here and in the narrative for 3.5.1) we do not have data and results spanning three years.

Our Plan Going Forward

- We will be (1) **acting on the next stage of our assessment work** across the college in “The Big Meeting” (described below) in June to include continued review of goals, review of progress, analysis of data, and action plans, which will allow us to have follow-up findings for the November visit of the off-site team. For educational programs we will use Assessment Day, in May, to continue data analysis, decision-making, and planning for next steps. In both cases we will be (2) **working toward more consistent documentation of the plans** – with data analysis and related improvement plans.
- We are working toward (3) **using multiple sources of data more consistently**, aiming for triangulation whenever possible once we have addressed reliability issues (for example we are gathering CCSSE survey data this year, requiring student IDs which means we will be able to analyze and report data specific to degree programs and campuses; our current dataset does not allow us to refine the data and ask pointed questions.) Our faculty and staff currently conduct online surveys (Qualtrics), request and develop focus groups, and then use their own sources of information (such as performance assessments with rubrics.) Increasing the reliability of our large datasets will strengthen our ability to use multiple sources of data.

- Faculty members will (4) **begin their curriculum mapping** and this progress will be available for the visiting team in November. We will also have decisions made at the state-level regarding the redefinition of General Education, (5) **responding to any changes to our General Education outcomes by the legislature**. This means we can articulate our plan to align the assessment work and strengthen it going forward across both academic affairs and student affairs.

The narrative that follows elaborates on both our strengths and the areas we aim to strengthen, our plan moving forward is to continue to gather at Assessment Day (May 2 and 3, 2013) while continuing the assessment cycle.

I History

During Valencia's last reaffirmation process (2003), the SACS Visiting Committee recommended that the College provide evidence that it has developed and implemented guidelines to evaluate its educational effectiveness as it relates to the quality of student learning outcomes. On January 6, 2005, notification was received from the Commission on Colleges indicating that "the Commission reviewed the institution's First Monitoring Report following reaffirmation of accreditation. No additional report was requested." ([See Letter from Dr. James T. Rogers, Executive Director, Commission on Colleges, January 6, 2005](#)).

A complete multi-year archive (2003-present) was designed to comply with SACS *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1.

The **Division Action Plan** multi-year data base from 2003-2004 to 2008-2009 is accessible at <http://www.valenciacollege.edu/divisionplans/>

Five years ago, in the 2008-2009 academic year, this shift in responsibility for the assessment of program learning to the faculty within General Education disciplines and the

Career and Technical Programs occurred college-wide under the direction of the [Learning Assessment Committee](#) established by the [College Learning Council](#). The Learning Assessment Committee is led by a tenured faculty member and a representative from Student Affairs to ensure that the assessment of learning will eventually include all curricular and co-curricular areas. This shift in responsibility included the articulation and approval of program learning outcomes by faculty members for all programs of study at the College. These outcomes were published in the College Catalog as a promise to students ([A.S. Degrees](#), and [B.S. Degrees](#)). Starting in the 2009-2010 academic year, the College began developing and implementing college-wide assessment plans. These plans are developed in the summer, approved by faculty and deans in summer and early fall, implemented in the spring with a review of student artifacts by faculty in early May.

Eleven college-wide assessment plans were implemented in May 2010. Student artifacts were collected and reviewed by faculty, who then developed formal and informal plans for improvement, as is shown in their plans from this first cycle:

- [Architecture](#)
- [English Composition](#)
- [Humanities](#)
- [Information Technology](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [New Student Orientation \(Student Affairs\)](#)
- [Office Systems Technology](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Political Science](#)
- [Accounting](#)
- [Speech](#)

In May 2011, 17 college-wide assessment plans were implemented. Student artifacts were collected then reviewed by faculty, who also developed formal and informal plans for

improvement, as shown in their plans – adding to or improving those from the prior cycle and making a total of over 25 available:

- [Building Construction](#)
- [Business Administration](#)
- [Computer Programing](#)
- [Dance](#)
- [English Composition](#)
- [Film Production](#)
- [Graphic Technology](#)
- [History](#)
- [Information Technology](#)
- [Internship Office](#)
- [Math](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Paralegal Studies](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Speech](#)
- [Theater Technology](#)
- [Theater](#)
- [Political Science](#)

In May 2012, 56 college-wide assessment plans were implemented and improvement plans were developed. The work done by faculty and deans during the 2011-2012 academic year was connected to the Institutional Effectiveness component of the Faculty Compensation Plan approved by Valencia's District Board of Trustees. The language of the plan was as follows:

By May 13, 2012, all academic programs will have implemented an assessment plan that has been approved by the Learning Assessment Committee (LAC). Approval of each assessment plan will be based on principles of good assessment practice determined by the Assessment Plan

Template developed by the LAC and approved by the College Learning Council.

In order for the faculty, collectively, to be eligible to receive the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) component that is in addition to their normal salaries in Fall 2012, 90% of all of the academic programs must have faculty approved improvement plans. These improvement plans will be based on the learning assessment data compiled from each academic program's assessment plan.

The faculty successfully completed the plan approved by the Board of Trustees and, in so doing, established common reporting documents and an annual cycle of assessment that is able to sustain the work college-wide. A full list of all program-level assessment and improvement plans can be found at the [Valencia Institutional Assessment \(VIA\) website](#). The assessment plans aim to positively impact student outcomes overtime (regardless of modality¹; evenly over all campus locations.)

All [career and technical academic programs](#) areas are reviewed on an annual basis as well as on a five-year program review cycle. On an annual basis the [Office for Workforce Development](#) convenes a meeting of Campus Presidents, Academic Deans, Program Coordinators, program faculty, Career Program Advisors, and key college-wide administrators to consider the future viability all programs based on employment projections, student demand, student skill attainment, learning outcomes, degree graduates / certificate completions, placement / licensure rates, etc. The results of these considerations serve as the basis for action plans for the year ahead. Program leaders report their [Program Assessment and Data Observations](#) (all from 2010-2011 listed.) All academic programs are reviewed by Academic Deans, Program Coordinators, program faculty, and workforce advisory committee members on a [five year program review cycle](#). The process of creating and proposing next steps based on assessment has been integrated into our Viability templates and that review process (shown in the [example](#) from Computer Engineering

¹ Our Distance Education offerings allow our adult learners to study while still fulfilling their other commitments; the faculty involvement program assessment regardless of modality helps to ensure conversation considers all students and changes aim to reach all classes, regardless of mode of delivery.

Technology.) The reviews encompass courses that are online (Please see Appendix 1 at the end of this narrative for more details regarding the ways faculty members are supported in order to better teach and assess students online.)

[The current outcomes alignment workbooks](#) for A.S. degrees and technical certificates asks faculty to articulate their outcomes. This workbook provides an example of the kind of template will be using to structure the curricular mapping process that will unfold in the 2013-2014 academic year. Faculty members document the alignment of their program outcomes with: (a) their courses (curriculum mapping) as well as to (b) the general education outcomes that support their program outcomes. On a third tab in this Excel workbook they note when concepts related to our General Education outcomes are introduced, reinforced, or assessed in each course within the program of study (assessment mapping.) Created in 2009-2010 and updated in [2012-2013](#), the workbooks initially provided a way for colleagues to exchange feedback on draft outcomes language to then be revised.

The annual “[Program Performance Summaries](#)” (also [here](#)) are another way that faculty currently use data to improve the A.S. degree programs and the technical certificates. Created by teams of faculty members for each of these programs in Oct 2012, they provide examples of annual review and reflection on program–related data. In the recent update of the workbooks faculty were able to submit course and program changes to the College Curriculum Committee, if any emerging during the completion of the workbook. They are also encouraged to do this after Assessment Day when programs may change keeping in mind catalog deadlines. In this way the on-going analysis and review of programs is more closely linked within the assessment cycle and the calendar of activities that includes the development of new courses and changes to the catalog.

Additional Documentation – Program Viability

[Report Example 1](#) Computer Engineering Technology

[Report Example 2](#) Electronics Engineering Technology

Program Viability Handbook [2009](#) (the most recent version was sent by hardcopy to reviewers.)

II The Process and Impact

As we look at the methods being used across the college some are using...

- an embedded assignment 22/64.....34%
- a project 12/64.....19%
- an exam 11/64.....17%
- a presentation 5/64.....8%
- a portfolio 5/64.....8%

Several other program assessment leaders report using artifacts, case studies, and simulations as shown in an analysis of 64 plans submitted in 2012 (see PLOA [patterns handout](#).) These reports regarding methods used are also not mutually exclusive. More detailed descriptions and examples can be found in our 20 page report, which contains 80 pages of example assessment plans and improvement plans, titled Program Learning Outcomes – the [Progress and the Promise](#). [All plans can be found online](#) for 2010-2011, beyond the examples provided in this narrative and in 3.5.1 on General Education, which were chosen because they provide interesting examples of assessment approaches and findings as well as the templates and methodology used to structure the assessment work at the college.

The process of developing and implementing the plans has been an educative one, grounded in a commitment to structuring our work with proven practices. For example our reporting templates drew from Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe’s work on assessment in *Understanding by Design*, 2005. When faculty members in the sciences were interested in multiple choice question development, we brought in an expert for who facilitated a

workshop attended by over 40 faculty members (See [MCQ Item Writing Handout](#) from consultant Stephen Downing.) When faculty members in General Education wanted to remain as objective as possible in evaluating students papers they decided on a sampling plan (See the methodology for [random sampling](#) used in the English Program Assessment.)

Faculty Development has been at the heart of this work. A summer program called Destinations allowed many faculty and professional staff to develop their outcomes and assessment plans with the guidance of experts and in conversation with colleagues from across the college. Working in partnership with Valencia's Institutional Assessment office, a selection of [workshops](#) have been developed to support faculty who are engaged in program assessment. Faculty can gather with others experienced in assessment and focus on completing specific activities. For example a group can gather for practice applying a rubric to enable consistent evaluation of student work. In this way faculty also receive professional development credit on their transcripts for work they are already doing.

Wendi Dew and Celine Kavalec-Miller and others in Faculty Development have worked in faculty development to make [outcomes-based practice](#) a priority as one of the seven *Essential Competencies* of a Valencia educator. These competencies structure the work of tenure candidates in the Teaching and Learning Academy, which requires that all faculty members complete [an action research project](#). Often this work will focus on assessment, and from this work leaders often emerge in the Program Learning Outcomes Assessment planning process. Faculty Development models effective practices for program assessment in their scholarly approach to [assessment planning](#), with a clear mission statement, articulated values and working theories, as well as outcomes for both faculty learning and an assessment model drawn from Thomas Guskey's work on the evaluation of professional development (2000.)

The following documents provide examples showing the work over time, which is grounded in an interest in developing expertise and aiming to draw on sound methods for evaluation. We have a standardized template for the plans which was developed by a committee (see the [example plan](#) for Civil Surveying 2011.) The draft plans was reviewed by college committees in a process clearly communicated and revised with feedback from

faculty and professional staff shown in the [Assessment Plan Process Flow Chart](#) (PDF.) A new template was developed for the improvement plans. The [example](#) Improvement Plan from Civil Surveying 2012 shows that the form is concise, to minimize paperwork but still structure the process. A “Start of Cycle” form allowed programs and disciplines to provide updates (the Civil Surveying start of cycle [example](#) from Aug 2012 is also online.) The process of creating and proposing next steps based on assessment has been integrated into our Viability templates and review process and is shown in the [example](#) from Computer Engineering Technology. In addition to the report on learning outcomes assessment – The Process and the Promise – and the examples included in this narrative, we have a table that provides examples spanning from assessment planning to improvement planning drawn from the [General Education Disciplines](#) (also included in 3.5.1.)

We Aim to Use Multiple Sources of Data

Our faculty and staff (individually and in committees) currently conduct online surveys (using the Qualtrics online tool), request and develop focus groups, and then use their own sources of information (such as performance assessments with rubrics.) Our plan going forward includes steps to increase the reliability of our large dataset

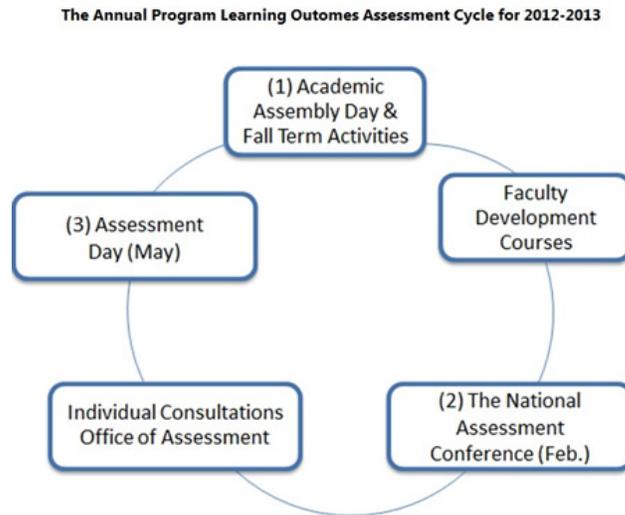
- The minutes from a meeting regarding our alternative delivery documents an [example of a survey developed to better understand student needs when they study with us online](#) in 2010 that resulted in changes to services accessible through the Atlas Web portal. This report based on qualitative [survey research is drawn from a student survey on their perceptions of the Student Assessment of Instruction](#) (course evaluation) led to discussion and recommendations by the Faculty Council on ways to use the tools and it had an impact on the Institutional Assessment office in terms of how we communicate with students about the survey.
- Two sample conversation guides (interview protocol) for [focus groups](#) – one conducted with (1) Student Affairs (the Leadership Academy for students) and another with (2) Academic Affairs (the REACH program for underserved students) are online. Developed in collaboration the Valencia Institutional Assessment office,

the resulting reports are also online. The one for REACH was used to revise the project and change how faculty communicated with students (less towards a more constructive message asking them to take the lead more often.) The focus group for the Leadership Academy helped in a follow-up conversation with student volunteers and brought more information back about student opinions into Student Affairs discussions.

- Increasing the reliability of our large datasets will strengthen our ability to use multiple sources of data. For example we are gathering CCSSE survey data this year, requiring student IDs which means we will be able to analyze and report data specific to degree programs and campuses; our current dataset does not allow us to refine the data and ask pointed questions. In our educational programs we are also establishing our Student Assessment of Instruction through a new technology implemented in the summer of 2012, while faculty members are considering changing the questions.

III Going Forward

We are looking forward to our next Assessment Day which is part of the cycle below:



The faculty members are working with administrators, such as the Director of Institutional Assessment, to implement a program mapping project over the 2013-2014 academic year. This new college-wide plan that will require each academic program to assess all program-level student learning outcomes in every program on a five-year cycle that is consistent with the [college-wide cycle of program review](#).

It is clear that our assessment cycle will be stronger complemented with multiple sources of data. Looking at [CSSE measures from 2011](#) (our most recent administration) we score slightly higher than the cohort of community colleges on all benchmarks, as was elaborated on in their [detailed report](#). While we note this difference, we understand the limitations that come from using a single source of data and distanced from actual student performance. We look forward to our next round of [CCSSE Survey Results](#) (summary in PDF) with more effective use of the data given we are in our third cycle of program outcomes assessment.

We also intend to explore the information available in our [Student Assessment of Instruction](#) (PDF) (SAI - our course evaluation) which was implemented through a recently adopted online technology in the summer of 2012 alongside a communications plan to reach both students and faculty. From our first full term results this past fall (2012) we could begin to see patterns emerge (shown in Table 1).

Table 1: Programs that Engage At-Risk Students Score Slightly Higher Related to the Faculty Use of Assessment Select Items from the 2012 Administration of the Student Assessment of Instruction N=42,000 38% response rate with the average score out of 5 possible based on analysis of courses with over 25 students enrolled		
	1. The professor provided effective assessment opportunities	2. The professors feedback on my work was helpful
Developmental Courses	4.53	4.50
General Education	4.36	4.17
Degree Programs	4.52	4.35
	3. The course improved my ability to communicate in the subject matter	4. The professor encouraged students to exchange and consider the ideas of others
Developmental Courses	4.45	4.54
General Education	4.33	4.40
Degree Programs	4.50	4.50

There is an ongoing conversation regarding the best use of the SAI results and [correspondence](#) from one of our deans shows an example of how the desire to increase the response rate is felt across the college while we are also measuring progress regarding implementation over time (sharing response rates.) The aim is to gather more reliable data with higher response rates to make this possible – with a 36% response rate we are not there yet.

Faculty, chairs, and deans look at datasets to understand patterns in student performance that span courses and programs for example, using Grade Distribution Reports ([May 2012](#), [Jan. 2012](#)) while they also discuss data regarding student performance – especially those at-risk or underserved (for example using the [Strategic Indicators Report - SIRS](#).) We want to be able to draw on multiple sources of reliable data gathered over time that have been identified as relevant and meaningful by faculty members, professional staff members, and administrators – developed through the committees and meetings already in motion (The Learning Assessment Committee [LAC](#) and the annual [Big Meeting](#) and [Assessment Day](#).) We believe we are in partial compliance and we are looking forward to the next stages in the assessment process for our education programs.

III Definitions from Valencia College and the SACS Principles of Accreditation – 2012

- [Valencia's Learning Assessment Glossary](http://valenciacollege.edu/instassess/documents/lacGlossary.pdf)

<http://valenciacollege.edu/instassess/documents/lacGlossary.pdf>

Terms from the SACS Principles of Accreditation – 2012

Assessment and Outcomes: Methods for assessing the extent to which students achieve these outcomes are appropriate to the nature of the discipline, and consistent over time to enable the institution to evaluate cohorts of students who complete courses or a program. Shared widely within and across programs, the results of this assessment can affirm the institution's success at achieving its mission and can be used to inform decisions about curricular and programmatic revisions. At appropriate intervals, program and learning outcomes and assessment methods are evaluated and revised (p. 49.)

Educational Programs: An educational program is a coherent set of courses leading to a credential (degree, diploma, or certificate) awarded by the institution (p. 112.)

General Education: Courses in general education introduce students to the basic content and methodology of the principal areas of knowledge – humanities and the fine arts, the social and behavioral sciences, and the natural sciences and mathematics (pp. 113.)

Institutional Effectiveness: Institutional effectiveness focuses on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning (p. 49.)

Program and Learning Outcomes: Program and learning outcomes specify the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes students are expected to attain in courses or in a program (p. 49.)

Supporting Documents:

(These PDFs are accessible through the embedded links in the narrative above; each "Supporting Documents" folder has a Table of Contents TOC which matches this list and should help you to explore the folders in a more organized way.)

- [Example 1a - 2011-2012 PLOAPT Civil Surveying](#)
- [Example 1b - Improvement Plan Civil Surveying](#)
- [Example 1c - Civil Surveying start of Cycle Plan Aug 2012](#)
- [Example 1d – Assessment Plan Flow Chart](#)
- [Example 2 - CET Prog Rv - 2011-12 - FINAL viability templates](#)
- [Example 3 - Example of Principles 2 - LAC Rubric Dev 2012 \(not used\)](#)
- [Example 4 - MCQ ItemWriting Downing101212 outline](#)
- [Example 5 - Random Sample of ENC1101 Students Methodology](#)
- [Example 6 - PLOA patterns 9-20-2012](#)
- [Example 7 - Assessment Plan Process Flow Chart \(not used\)](#)
- [Example 8 - Correspondence from a Dean 5-9-2012](#)
- [Data 1 - Report PLOA - Progress Promise Final](#)
- [Data 2 - Student Assessment of Instruction - SAI - 2012 Course Scores Aggregated](#)
- [Data 3 - Examples of Outcomes and Impact from Gen Ed](#)
- [CCSSE 1 - Valencia CCSSE Benchmarks Scores and SACS Alignment Table](#)
- [CCSSE 2 - Valencia Executive Summary Report 2011](#)
- [CCSSE 3 - Valencia Comparison Group Freq 2011](#)
- [CCSSE 4 - Sample Handout re Advising Used in Faculty - Staff Discussions \(not used\)](#)
- [CCSSE 5 - Valencia Group Freq CCFSSSE and CCSSE 2011\(not used\)](#)
- [CCSSE 6 - Valencia Group Freq CCFSSSE and CCSSE 2007\(not used\)](#)
- [Narrative - Resource - Valencia Learning Assessment Glossary](#)
- [Narrative - SACS Evaluation Resource 1 - Principles of Accreditation - Handbook - Aug 2011](#)

- [Narrative - SACS Evaluation Resource 2 - Resource Manual for the Principles – 2012](#)
- [Narrative - SACS Evaluation Resource 3- Rubric for Evaluators - Analyzing for Compliance - Sept 2010](#)
- [Narrative - SACS Evaluation Resource 4 - Evaluator Training Modules - IE - Excerpts pp 17-23](#)
- [SACS - Distance and Correspondence Education Policy Final - June 2012](#)
- [SACS - Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees - Feb 2012](#)

These will not show on the folder TOC – they were added to this text after the TOC was posted into the online folder:

- Example Report 1 Program Review [Computer Engineering Technology](#)
- Example Report 2 Program Review [Electronics Engineering Technology](#)
- Program Viability Handbook [2009](#) (the most recent version was sent by hardcopy to reviewers.)
- [Performance Summaries](#)
- [Program Assessment and Data Observations](#) (Example from Accounting Technology)
- Grade Distribution Reports Run [May 2012](#)
- Grade Distribution Reports Run [Jan. 2012](#)
- [A.A. Degrees](#)
- [Alternative Delivery Standards Plan](#)
- [Alternative Delivery Steering Committee \(distance education\)](#)
- [B.S. Degrees](#)
- [Career and Technical Academic Programs](#)
- [College Learning Council](#)
- [College Planning Council](#)
- [College-wide Cycle of Program Review](#)
- [Division Action Plan](#)
- [Five Year Program Review Cycle](#)

- [Institutional Assessment website](#)
- [Learning Assessment Committee](#)
- [Letter from Dr. James T. Rogers, Executive Director, Commission on Colleges, January 6, 2005](#)
- [Office for Workforce Development](#)
- [Programs and Certificates Fifty Percent Online](#)
- [Strategic Indicators Report](#)
- [Strategic Plan for 2008-2015](#)
- [Valencia's Exemplar Online Courses](#)

Links Included in the Narrative (already embedded above)

- <http://valenciacollege.edu/instassess/loa/>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/instassess/lac/>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/instassess/LOA/ExamplesOfAlignmentWorkbooks.cfm>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/instassess/loa/documents/ProgramLearningOutomes-ProgressandPromise2-3-2013FINALPAPER-.pdf>
- http://valenciacollege.edu/instassess/LOA/assessment_plans.cfm
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/programs/curriculumDevelopment/PLO.cfm>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/coursesResources/OutcomesBasedPractice.cfm>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/programs/tla/actionResearch/>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/about/>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/programs/curriculumDevelopment/PLO.cfm>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/coursesResources/OutcomesBasedPractice.cfm>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/programs/tla/actionResearch/>
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- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/coursesResources/OutcomesBasedPractice.cfm>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/programs/tla/actionResearch/>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/about/>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/curriculumcommittee/documents/StudentProgression20120228.pdf>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/instassess/lac/>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/strategicplan/BIG/2010-11.cfm>
- <http://valenciacollege.edu/instassess/loa/>

Valencia College seeks to meet the needs of all students in both the online and face-to-face settings, and this commitment is addressed in the section of the narrative that follows.

Serving Students through Distance Education at Valencia College

Within the [four strategic goals](#) that guide planning and progress at Valencia College, our focus on access and the quality of education is especially clear for our students studying at a distance. Specific to **Building Pathways**, we engage our students, for example, by providing [career services](#) online and by developing the Atlas online portal in ways that better serve students with online programs like [LifeMap](#) (a personal online itinerary to help students succeed in their college experience). Specific to **Learning Assured**, our online library resources are enhanced by the ability to connect with others easily online; our faculty learn to teach in the online environment through nationally recognized programs like [Quality Matters](#); and we emphasize that all students – online and on campus – understand and take responsibility for acting ethically in the online environment.

I. The Growth of Alternative Delivery at Valencia College

The College has been recently reorganized and the responsibility for quality in the online environment has shifted to the newly established Campus Presidents and their Deans of Academic Support. Currently, the College has engaged an external consultant to review our online and hybrid offerings. Recommendations from the consultant will serve as the starting point for the development of a college-wide strategic plan to guide the future growth and quality of online learning. Currently very few of our students study completely online; of [those that take online classes](#) with us, the majority of these students are located in the counties where we have campuses (Orange and Osceola) or in adjoining counties.

In spring of 2012, as a result of faculty, professional staff, and administrators' review of the Strategic Plan for our college at the annual Big Meeting, "Online Success" (*Close achievement gaps in course completion among students in different instructional modalities*) was added as a priority within the plan (objective 2.6). The addition of this goal was based on broad-based, college-wide discussions related to the increase in enrollment of

on-line classes since 2005-2006 and the disparity in course success between face-to-face and online sections.

The [Alternative Delivery Steering Committee](#) (ADSC) is a standing committee reporting to the College Learning Council. An [Alternative Delivery Standards Plan](#) was created in a joint effort by representatives from the Faculty Council, Information Technology, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Administration, and the Office of Faculty Development. Due to large growth in distance education, the faculty and staff at the college created an Alternative Delivery Standards Committee, which was established in 2005. The charge of this group was to oversee the development of a college-wide vision and mission statement for alternative delivery and for the development of draft policies and procedures for alternative delivery.

They have been working collaboratively to build our capacity for serving our online students. The [minutes](#) from an ADSC meeting in 2010 regarding our “alternative delivery” reference a survey developed to better understand student needs when they study with us online. This is an example of the use of data to better serve the students across all areas of the college that resulted in changes to services accessible through the Atlas Web portal. Valencia's [Strategic Indicator Reports](#) provide the ADSC and others at the college an overview of key areas of importance to Valencia— such as student demographics and student progression related to students studying online. The individual reports incorporate State of Florida accountability measures as well as Valencia-generated data to present student success indicators. Online students were 18.2% of all credit FTE in 2010-2011 (rising about one percent each year since 2007). In this annual report, we also track college-wide success and withdrawal in the top ten highest enrolled online courses. At Valencia College class sections taught via alternative delivery methods are equivalent to on-campus sections of the same course in terms of outcomes.

The [Learning Technology Services](#) (LTS) department works with various partners across the College to develop customized training content in a variety of formats for a wide range of projects. LTS supports the technology integration and usage goals of our community of learners by using best practices in instructional design and alternative delivery methods (the narrative for 3.4.12, focused on technology, provides more details

related to their services at the college). The mission of the Center for Teaching / Learning Innovation is a hub for collaboration and intellectual inquiry that serves as a catalyst for the expansion of campus-based communities of practice and the advancement of teaching, learning, scholarship, and technology. The [Faculty and Instructional Development](#) campus teams on each campus support all faculty members as they use technology for teaching and learning and help them to connect with Instructional Designers from [Learning Technology Services](#).

II. Faculty Development – Teaching in an Online Environment

Valencia College is a learning-centered institution with a commitment to quality education and high standards in all classes and through all modes of delivery. In order to fulfill this commitment, operational systems have been created to guide the development of faculty in the creation, delivery, and assessment of distant learning courses and the use of technology for teaching and learning in general. Consistent course delivery and policy/procedures are designed to increase faculty and student success in the alternative delivery environment. In order to ensure the quality of Valencia's distance learning courses the College engages in a variety of practices including (1) Quality Matters (a peer review program), (2) A "Boot Camp" for Online Instruction, and (3) The Digital Professor Certification (4) in partnership with academic deans through course observations and evaluations.

- **Quality Matters: A Peer Review Process for Quality Assurance Online**

Valencia uses [Quality Matters \(QM\)](#) as a peer review process for courses taught in the online and hybrid formats. Through this process, faculty members evaluate course design in terms of learning objectives, assessments, resources, learner engagement, course technology, learner support, and accessibility. Faculty members who have completed the Quality Matters training provide feedback on hybrid and online courses according to a set of standards ([QM Rubric](#)) for course design. For faculty members whose courses are reviewed, their courses may be recognized as one of [Valencia's Exemplar Online Courses](#). These courses and related resources may then be available for adoption and use by other Valencia faculty members. There is a good fit between this program and Valencia's commitment to

teaching and learning. The program is collegial and collaborative, not evaluative or judgmental; based upon a model of continuous improvement; and centered on the student experience. While it has been designed to provide specific, detailed and constructive feedback, it has also been designed to provide feedback on course design, not course delivery. Between 2006-2012, 274 Valencia faculty members completed the Quality Matters training.

- **The Boot Camp for Online Instruction**

Faculty who are new to online teaching are encouraged to participate in the [Boot Camp for Online Instruction](#). The Boot Camp is a three-day intensive course that addresses the pedagogy and technology essentials for teaching online using Valencia's learning management system, Blackboard. The course consists of 10 hours focused on pedagogy and 10 hours related to technology development, delivered in both face-to-face and online formats. Participants master the essential tools of Blackboard and use those tools to produce and implement interactive content in their online courses. Participants also develop a framework of online best practice strategies for engaging, instructing, supporting, and communicating in the online environment. In addition to gaining essential skills to teach in online and hybrid courses, participants produce one orientation/welcome module and at least one content module for their courses. Between 2008-2012, 253 Valencia faculty members completed the Boot Camp for Online Instruction.

- **The Digital Professor Certification**

As faculty members become more comfortable teaching online, they are encouraged to complete Valencia's [Digital Professor Certification](#). To successfully complete the Digital Professor Certification, the faculty member must complete the following [certification requirements](#): 16 hours of required pedagogy courses, at least 2 hours of optional pedagogy courses, and at least 2 hours of optional technology courses. Between 2007-2012, 148 Valencia faculty members completed the Digital Professor Certification. Faculty from [the library continue to reach out to students on campus and online](#), while meeting General Education outcomes and assessing and improving their offerings over time, and, as faculty, also participate in these programs, increasing the outreach to students online and on campus.

- **The Partnership with Academic Deans**

Academic Deans observe faculty members who teach online using the [Online Classroom Observation](#) process. The Online Classroom Observation process is a collaborative process aiming to encourage conversation with deans built around the following design principles: (1) the ultimate purpose of a classroom observation is to ensure student learning, (2) the end process must have clarity of expectations and purpose, and (3) the purpose of the process is not punitive, but designed to encourage improvement.

The observation process has been developed to align with existing college policies – created, vetted, and adopted following our shared governance process. Online observations are designed to be similar in scope and process to traditional classroom observations, providing the flexibility to accommodate differences in disciplines and teaching methods. As part of the annual faculty evaluation process, Academic Deans also review grade distribution reports at the section level that distinguish courses by the mode of delivery:

- [Grade Distribution Report – Fall 2012](#)
- [Grade Distribution Report – Spring 2012](#)

III. The Student Experience

We know that outside of the college, students are developing more needs related to technology along with higher expectations. Students’ responses on the [CCSSE survey \(2004-2011\)](#) over time (at the most positive end – “very much + quite a bit”) have been increasing related to their use of computing and information technology in general education from 2004-2011 (from 39.8% to 43.5%). Their use of e-mail to communicate with instructors has risen (54.8% to 70% responding “Very often + Often”) and there has also been a rise in terms of their perception of overall support from the College (71.5% to 76.7%) from 2004-2011 (of those responding “Very much + Quite a bit”). The changes we make related to our accessibility online impact all students, regardless of location – allowing for a blended experience of Valencia that is customized for our students. While several of the tools – like LifeMap – are unique to the college and provided for all students, these are some of the examples of ways in which we are meeting needs of our online learners.

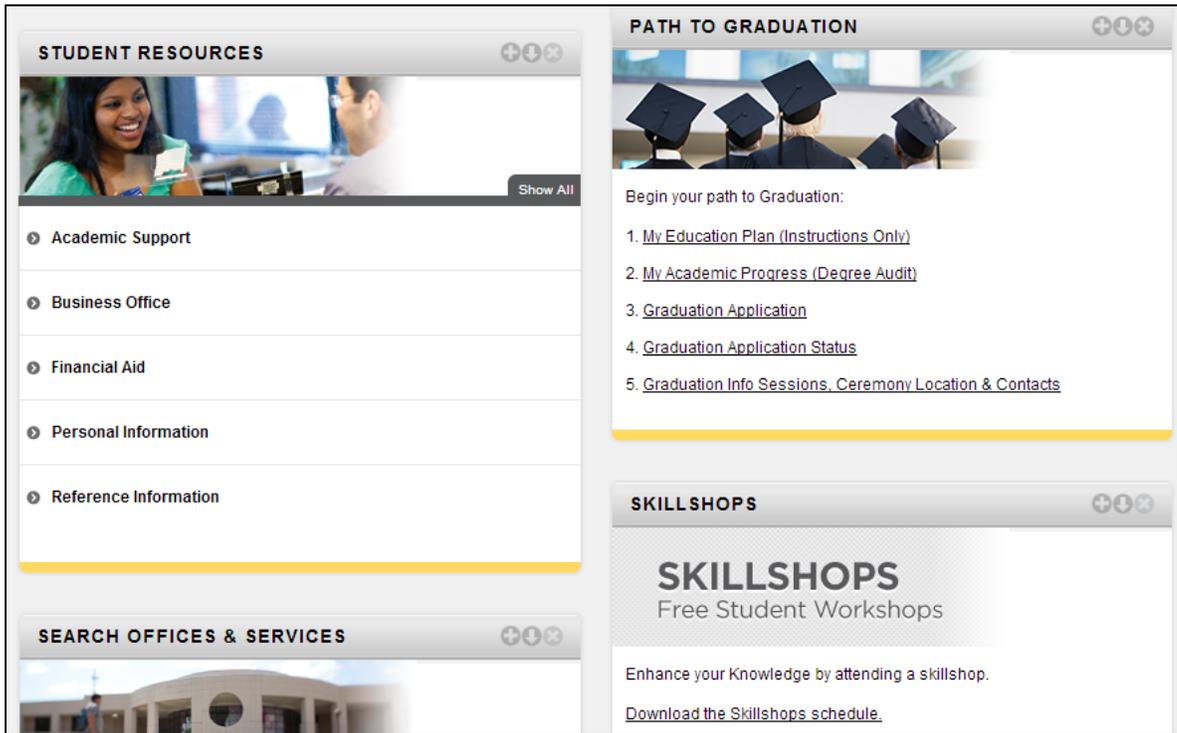
- **Our Developmental Advising Model: LifeMap**

LifeMap is the developmental advising model that promotes social and academic integration, education and career planning, and acquisition of study and life skills. Organized into a five stage model of student progression, the focus is on student planning and goal setting, creating a normative expectation that students have life, career, and academic goals, while setting up a system of engagement to establish and document those goals for each student. A program evaluation plan related to this work is available from [2012-2013](#). “My Portfolio,” an online electronic portfolio within LifeMap, is one of the features in the program that allows students studying on campus and at a distance to organize their goals and showcase their work in a way that can then be shared with others online. These tools are more fully described in narrative 2.10 related to Student Support Services.

- **Students Access the Services They Need Online: Atlas**

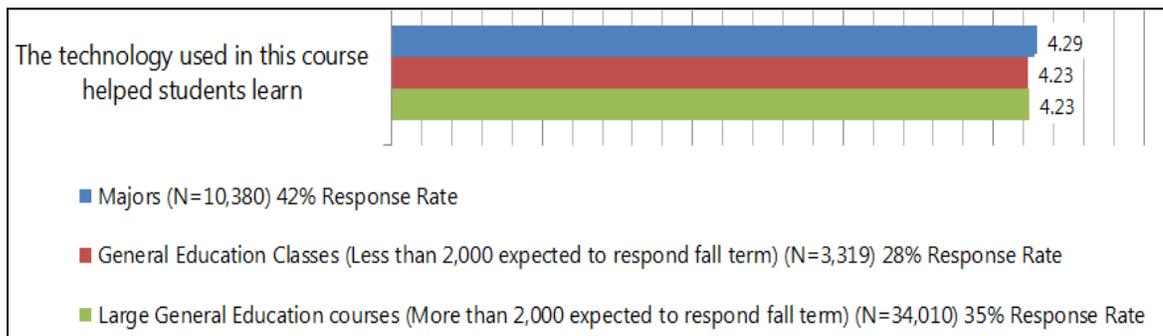
The Atlas portal was designed to support our learning-centered focus and to create "connection and direction" for students, faculty, and staff. This is one of the ways in which we ensure equal access and delivery of service to students who are studying through distance education. In Atlas, students can get information about their educational plans, academic progress, services to support their goals, and receive just in time prompts through a series of automated communications (e-mails) that lets them know where they are in various educational processes (e.g. application to enrollment, degree audits, graduation processing). The most recent program evaluation plan related to Atlas is available from [2012-2013](#).

A Snapshot of Atlas through the Eyes of a Student



While our students participate in their courses through BlackBoard, new technologies are being tested and developed to improve online access to administrative services – such as a [Mobile App](#) providing quick access to the college Website. Training and support of administrative staff is also key as we are continually learning ways to use technology to better serve students; this is documented, for example, in the [Atlas Online Portal Guide for Administrative Staff and Faculty](#). Last year 62% of our students studying across all modalities said it is important for them to have an online forum to communicate with other students (asked in a national EDUCAUSE survey focused on [Students and Technology](#)), so we are responsive through Facebook and other forms of social media. Students are now able to chat with [advisors](#) online, and on our West campus, we will beginning a pilot of [SmarThinking](#) this summer to better meets the needs of our students studying online. As we expand these options, we work to ensure equivalent experiences and quality instruction for our students studying online and on our campuses.

This past summer was the first that we administered our course evaluations completely online. This past fall (2012) the Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI) - using [CoursEval](#) software – had the highest response rate ever with 37% responding (112,437 / 42,222). Across all modalities of class (face-to-face, hybrid, and online) response rates were high related to student experiences using technology in their courses (using a 5-point scale) as shown in the table below. This is regardless of whether or not the course was in the major or if it was within our General Education offerings; we look forward to tracking their responses over time as we gather more course evaluation feedback using our newly implemented online tool.



IV. Educating Students Regarding their Responsibilities Online

All Valencia students access college records and registration, fee payment, and online course systems and tools through a unique username and password which is set and controlled by the student. When setting up their usernames at Valencia, students provide personally identifiable information to create their own secret passwords. Students are required to follow institutional policy for resetting their passwords on a regular basis with an appropriate level of password complexity. Students are only able to access their accounts and their information when logging onto Valencia systems, and it is the responsibility of students to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of their passwords.

Academic integrity online is promoted through instruction, often in collaboration with faculty members, as faculty members teach students ways to prevent academic

dishonesty; for example, through instruction on the use of citations and the use of software to help them detect and correct these problems. Faculty development opportunities are provided to support this work. The Online Student Experience course offered to students addresses issues related to plagiarism, netiquette, security, copyright, academic research, and related institutional policies and procedures. The College also conducts awareness campaigns for students to ensure the security of their usernames and passwords.

Over time, required syllabus elements have developed that consistently promote awareness and expectations related to academic integrity and ethical responsibility alongside a regularly reviewed Student Code of Conduct, which is updated as required. Academic integrity, essential to the purpose of higher education, functions as the basic contract defining the expected relationships among students, faculty, and staff college-wide. As we agree to function honestly and openly in all contexts related to teaching, learning, and academic process, we aim to model and share effective practices through our campus culture, regardless of modality.

V. The Student Experience of the Library when Online

In the EDUCAUSE survey mentioned prior, when asked:

- 46.7% (271) of our students reported “Excellent + Good” when asked about support to access resources online.
- 61.5% (448) of our students reported “Extremely + Very important” regarding the library website access.
- 47.9% (212) of our students reported that they want their instructors to use E-texts more.

All students, including those predominantly engaged in distance learning, have access to all library resources including online databases, e-book collections, and online library tutorials (the survey findings are further explored in narrative 2.9). Students, faculty, and staff can also use and check out materials from any Valencia library location. Additionally, through a statewide reciprocal agreement, students also have access to library materials, via interlibrary loan, from all Florida state universities and colleges. [Online tutorials](#) are also available through the library website and cover topics such as evaluating websites, information literacy, plagiarism, citing sources, and using mobile devices. In

conjunction with faculty, college librarians create online library guides to assist students with particular courses or projects. These [Libguides](#) are available on the library website. The [library website](#) also provides various library instruction tutorials, advertises new resources, and a links to the “[Ask-A-Librarian](#)” service.

Distance education (online) students are also provided with library information and resources within their individual courses and through the library website’s [Online Library Resources](#). Through permanent, recurring funding from the Florida Legislature, registered users of the Florida College System enjoy online access to a shared collection of 203 electronic databases from the statewide college library information portal, [LINCCWeb](#). LINCCWeb Information (for full functionality of this site please go to www.linccweb.org).

The objective of library instruction across all modalities is the teaching and learning of [information literacy](#), which Valencia defines as the ability to “locate, evaluate, and effectively use information from diverse sources.” Their [Program Learning Outcomes Assessment plan](#) documents the ways they are acting on their assessment from 2011-2012 across multiple courses in General Education, and what they plan to do next in their assessment. Valencia’s work over the past ten years has been guided by the articulation and actualization of six Big Ideas. One of these Big Ideas is that *anyone can learn anything under the right conditions*. As an institution we are continually striving to create the right conditions for leaning in all instructional modalities.