

# Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report



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## Part I: Overview of Institutional Assessment Plan

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At the start of this accreditation cycle, Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) finished a multi-year effort to restructure its governance model around assessing mission fulfillment and supporting innovation in a systematic way. This necessitated changes not only to the work of tracking and evaluating the related data, but also to the physical groups who shepherd that work.

The new evaluation structure starts with the institutional mission, which reads:

*To engage in an education that enables all of us to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from the cultural richness and economic vitality of our communities.*

From there, the institution gets its three core themes: Educational Attainment, Economic Vitality, and Cultural Richness. Each theme is composed of objectives (currently anywhere from three to seven) that are in turn made up of metrics: tangible, measurable indicators of mission fulfillment. The institution evaluates each metric on a yearly basis for the entirety of the seven-year accreditation cycle while also setting discreet targets for each of the seven years. This review analyzes the confidence and value of the metric to ensure appropriate measurement and validity. This has led to changes within metrics while objectives have remained consistent. As an example of how this work has driven change within measurement and improved validity, consider the metric “A target percent of students receive appropriate first term schedules.” Initially, the data collection involved looking at schedule changes for students after the New Student Center scheduling process. However, preliminary data analysis showed this number included many students who chose to drop a course later in the term. This was not in line with the actual intention of the objective’s goal to assess schedule fidelity at the start of term. Therefore, the data collection changed to limit schedule changes of interest to be those that occurred through only the first week of the term. Every objective has all of its metrics and other relevant information collected on a report card for easy tracking and analysis (see *MERIT Report Card 3.13: Graduates Achieve Success After College* in the appendix for an example). The current version of the report cards for all of the core theme objectives are found on the [MERIT webpage](#).

Each report card belongs to one of four innovation councils: Progression Council; WEVC (Workforce and Economic Vitality Council); LInC (Learning Innovation Council); and VICE (Values, Inclusion, and Cultural Engagement Council). These councils, made up of members from the faculty, staff, and student body, are responsible for ensuring that the institution is making measurable progress on their assigned report cards—and especially on whichever one MERIT (Mission, Effectiveness, Resources, and Improvement Team) highlighted as their main target for the academic year (see below). In order to do this, each council has a pool of funds it can use to finance new strategic initiatives designed to improve its report card metrics.

Before approaching a council for funding, an initiative requestor—who can be any faculty or staff member—must first complete a proposal, which includes a general narrative, a target report card metric, an itemized budget, a timeline, and an evaluation plan. The evaluation plan must include multiple metrics with baseline and target values. After completing a proposal draft, the requestor must have the evaluation plan approved by LBCC’s Office of Data and Decision Support, who ensure the plan

is measurable and useful for determining the success of the initiative, before taking the proposal to whichever of the four councils owns the target metric. At this point, the council members discuss the initiative proposal and decide via majority vote whether they want to allocate part of the council's funding pool towards the work. If they vote no, they often give the requestor feedback on what would make a more powerful proposal; otherwise, if they approve the initiative, the council sends the proposal to the institution's Budget Team for final approval.

Strategic initiatives are generally funded for either one or two academic years, and during that time, the council receives regular updates from the requester about the progress, especially around the metrics from the initiative's evaluation plan. At the end of the funding period, the council determines whether the initiative was successful enough to become part of the institution's standard operating procedures. If not, the initiative is either terminated—if the council and the requester feel it has served its purpose—or it can be modified and resubmitted for additional funding by going through the strategic initiative funding process again. If, however, the council votes to nominate the initiative for continual funding, it moves to MERIT.

MERIT is the lead council of the Innovation Sphere, one of the two halves of the institution's governance structure (see figure 1). After a lower council nominates a completed initiative, MERIT members review the original proposal and accumulated data and determine if the success of the initiative itself and the overall needs of the institution justify operationalizing it. If so, it moves to the Budget Team (via College Council) for permanent inclusion in the institutional budget; if not, it goes back to the referring council with any improvement feedback from MERIT.

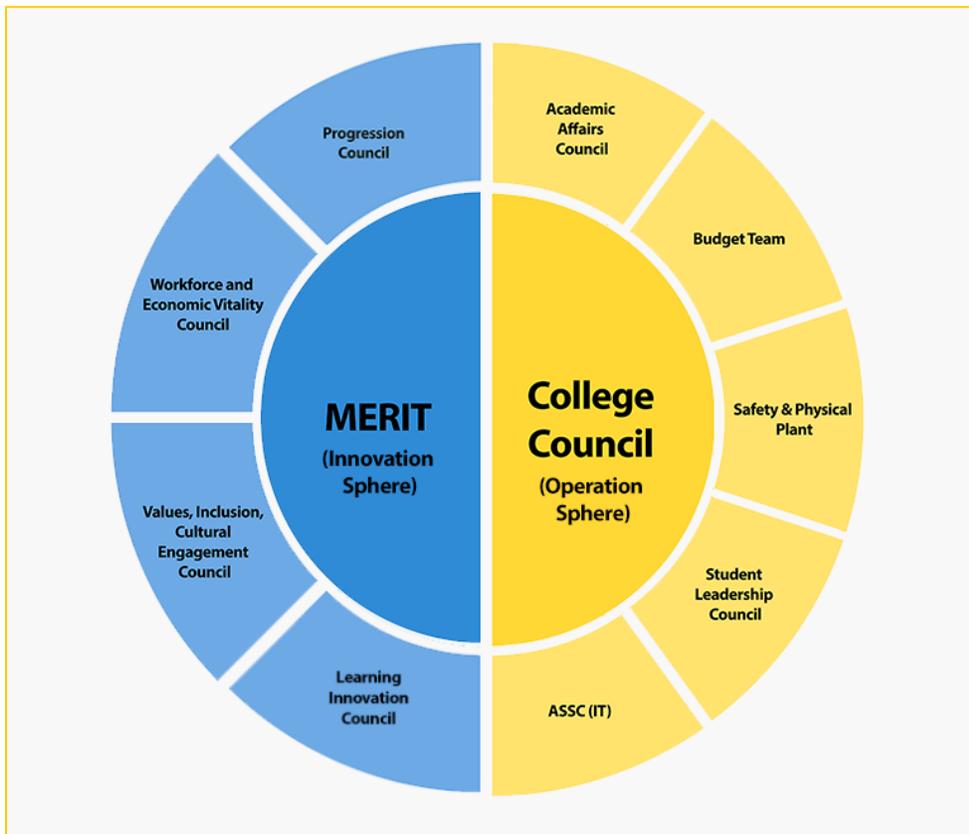


Figure 1: Overview of the institutional governance structure.

More broadly, MERIT oversees all the work of the other innovation councils. Each council gives MERIT quarterly updates on their work toward meeting the metric targets, progress of its current initiatives, and asks for guidance as needed, while MERIT designates which metric will be each council's main focus for the academic year. MERIT, with its membership comprised of faculty and staff from all four lower councils, also maintains the report cards as a whole. While the 14 objectives will stay the same for the entirety of this seven-year cycle, the metrics underneath them can and do change—often as better data become available. An objective in the first few years might have a more process-oriented metric, such as tracking the rate of faculty reporting outcomes assessment information, but then transition to something more student output-focused by the seventh year, such as the demographic profile of students who successfully complete the institutional outcomes. While the lower councils can suggest changes to the report card metrics as well, MERIT is the ultimate authority. It ensures the metrics remain relevant and measurable.

MERIT members are also ambassadors of the institution's core themes, report cards, and the accreditation process; they often present at college-wide events and to the LBCC Board of Education. Each fall term at a Board Meeting, the LBCC Board of Education receives a yearly briefing on the mission success and assessment and reviews the report card metrics and progress. This also gives the Board the opportunity to provide input.

These opportunities for review, recommendations, and improvement culminate in a living document approach throughout the cycle to help maintain validity and reliability of indicators and goals, and to drive action toward improvement and overall success. This system—with streamlined and relevant metrics, assigned to specific groups who have funds to incentivize innovative action, and with one central oversight body—has reduced the sense of accountability overload on campus. Faculty and staff now have a clearer picture of what LBCC values, and where and how each of them can make a difference.

## Part II: Examples

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Many of the MERIT report cards use assessments of student learning outcomes as underlying metrics for determining mission fulfillment. In particular, LBCC has been systematically collecting course-level student learning outcomes assessment data for multiple years now, giving faculty a robust source of information to use when evaluating curricular changes. The following two examples highlight LBCC faculty members who have done just that.

### Child and Family Studies

The Child and Family Studies (CFS) program made the following changes based on course learning outcomes results, student feedback, and instructor performance observations. CFS is a career technical program that graduates students as job-ready head teachers in an early childhood education setting.

Faculty member Marcia Walsh was the primary steward of this work. In 2015, she began working at LBCC as a full-time faculty member and acted as program chair. During her first term, she followed the previous instructor's curriculum and observed many of the students struggling to implement their planned activities and other assignments into the practicum classrooms. Two of the ten students did not pass their fall term practicum class due to their inability to read the children's cues. A third student made it to the other practicum courses but struggled through all three terms. She found out at the end of the year that although all of these students were majoring in the one-year CFS certificate program, they did not have the child development knowledge or experience to be successful in practicum.

Reviewing the previous instructor's grading system, she discovered it was possible for students to pass practicum without passing the performance component. In light of this, she decided to implement a summative evaluation that included performance, coursework, and professionalism. Together with her mentor, they created a system where students receive an ungraded evaluation halfway through each term, followed by a graded evaluation at the end of the term. The syllabus clearly states that if students do not receive a seven or higher on each competency in the graded evaluation, they cannot move on to the next level of practicum.

Students review the competencies on the first day of class and choose two to three to focus on for the first half of the term. They meet with the instructor midway through the term to review their progress and, if things are going well, to choose two additional competencies. This way, accountability stays with the students for what they are learning within the practicum experience. It also allows the practicum instructor to intervene earlier in the term if a student is not performing satisfactorily.

This update of the practicum then led to an update of the Child and Family Studies program as a whole. The assessment of the course learning outcomes from the capstone course indicated the students' lack of mastery regarding positive guidance and constructive discipline, leading the faculty members to take the affiliated course offline and replace it with a face-to-face course. The faculty members also updated the program learning outcomes, ensuring they were both measurable and aligned to the course learning outcomes. Students now need a "C" or better in two of the curriculum classes to begin the first practicum course, and the program now requires two credits of cooperative work experience (CWE).

Most importantly, the program now intentionally uses the early curriculum classes as a basis for student success in practicum.

See *Child and Family Studies Program Review Excerpt: Increase Quality of Practicum/Field Experience* in the appendix for additional information.

## Chemistry 121

Faculty member Dr. Ommidala Pattawong made the following changes to her office hours and course assignments in order to decrease the high number of students failing to meet the outcomes and receiving D, F, and W grades in College Chemistry I (CH 121).

When she began at LBCC in the fall of 2018, the following were her two main challenges:

1. Hardly any students were visiting her during office hours, and
2. Several of her students appeared to have test anxiety; they completed in-class assignments and homework but then performed poorly on exams.

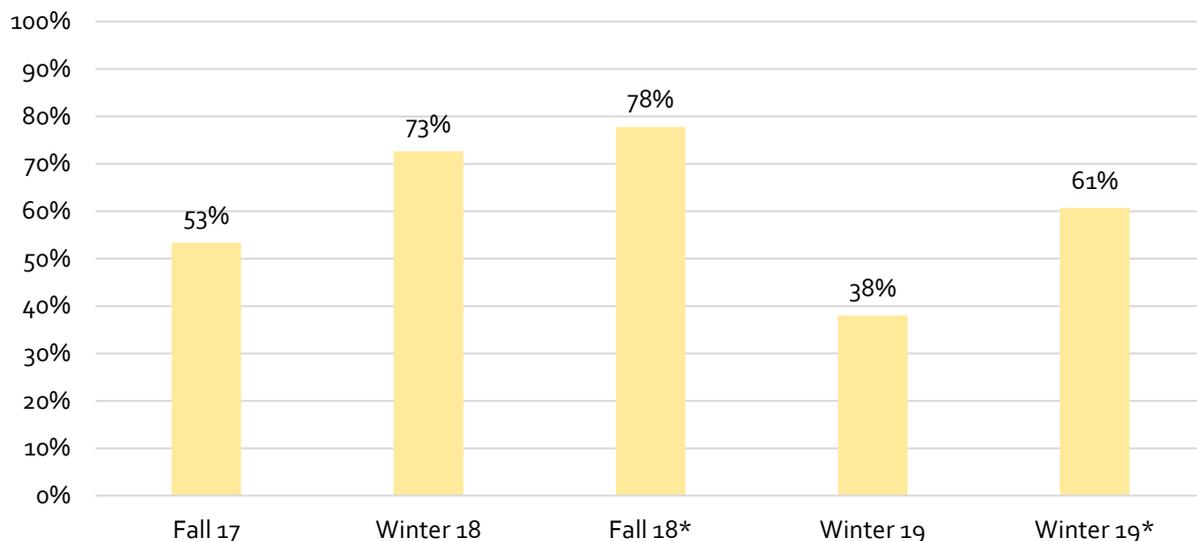
In response, she attempted the following four best educational practices for active learning in STEM:

1. Using in-class activities as collaborative work spaces to promote a sense of community and belonging;
2. Implementing weekly study sessions to provide students with access to the instructor in a new way, to promote the instructor-student relationship, and to make students feel empowered to ask questions;
3. Strengthening student learning by using small weekly assessments to reduce test anxiety and to increase student confidence in the subject; and
4. Stimulating curiosity through guided thinking/teaching to motivate student learning.

She found that these practices had a profound effect on student learning and success. The percentages of student who met the outcomes increased significantly by 5-10% in the fall of 2018 and the winter of 2019 compared to those sections that did not offer weekly study sessions (see figure 2). The number of students who passed the course in the fall of 2018 also increased significantly (see figure 3).

### Percentage Passing Outcome 1

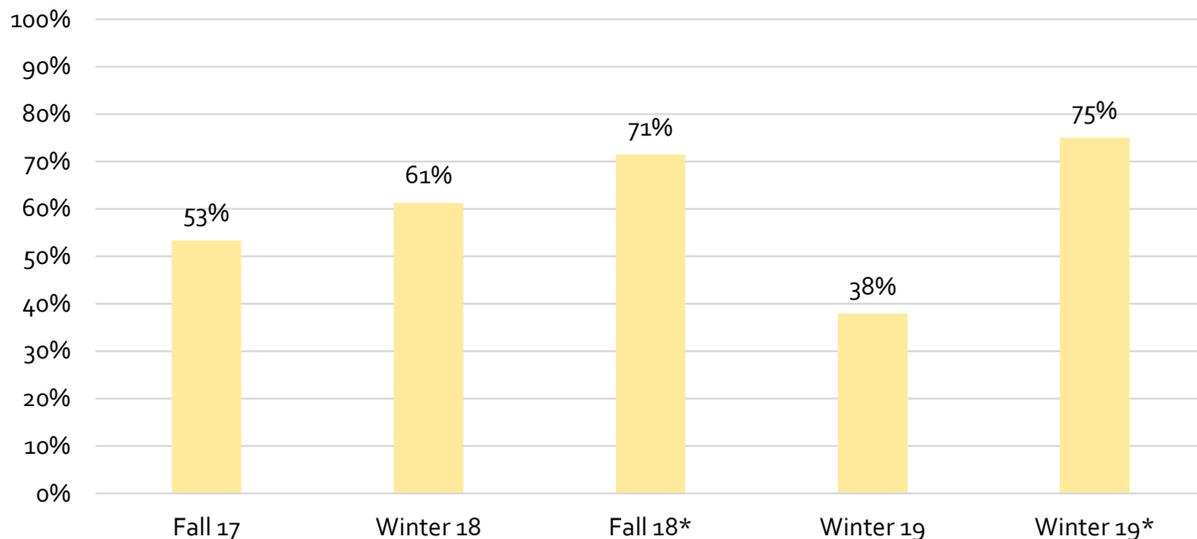
Differentiate the historical developments leading to the development of the atomic theory and the Periodic Table.



\* indicates course sections with the new best practices

### Percentage Passing Outcome 2

Solve scientific problems with quantitative methods using dimensional analysis and/or algebra regarding unit conversions, stoichiometry, gas laws, and thermochemistry.



\* indicates course sections with the new best practices

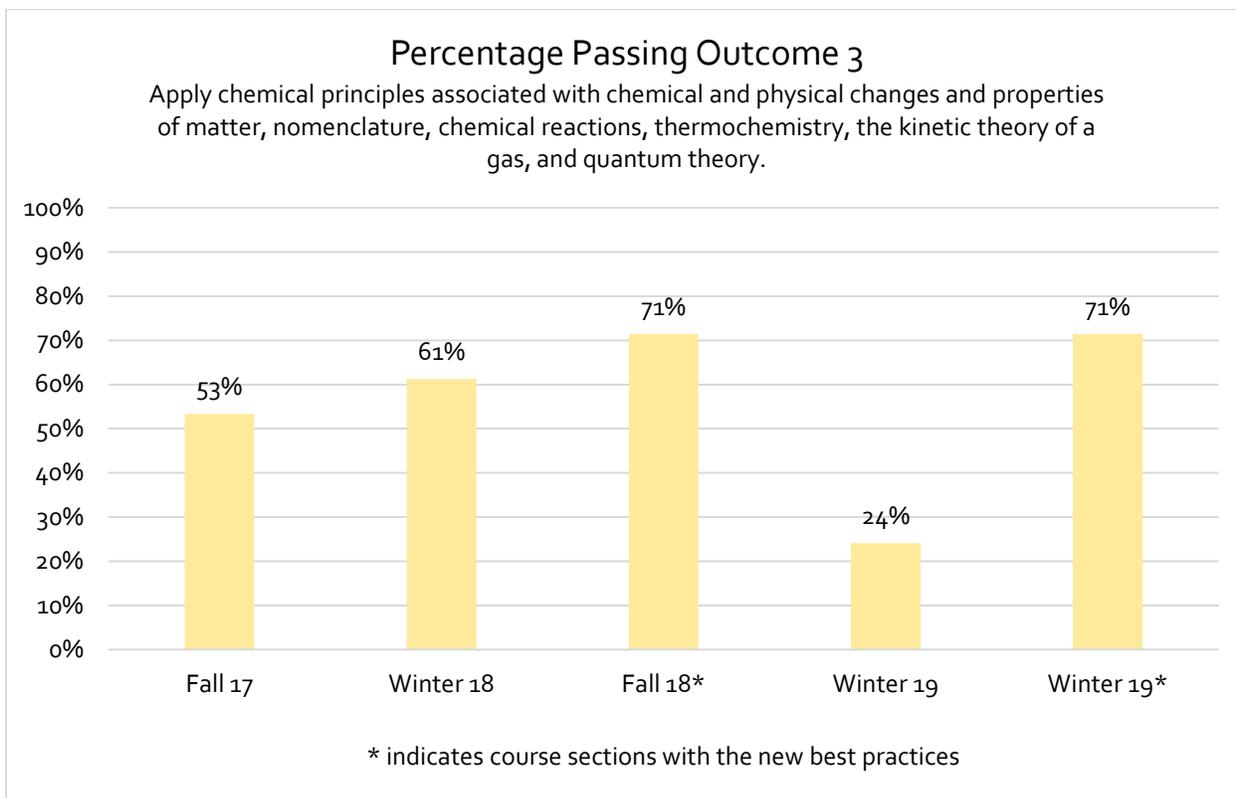


Figure 2: Percentage of students passing the three course outcomes for CH 121.

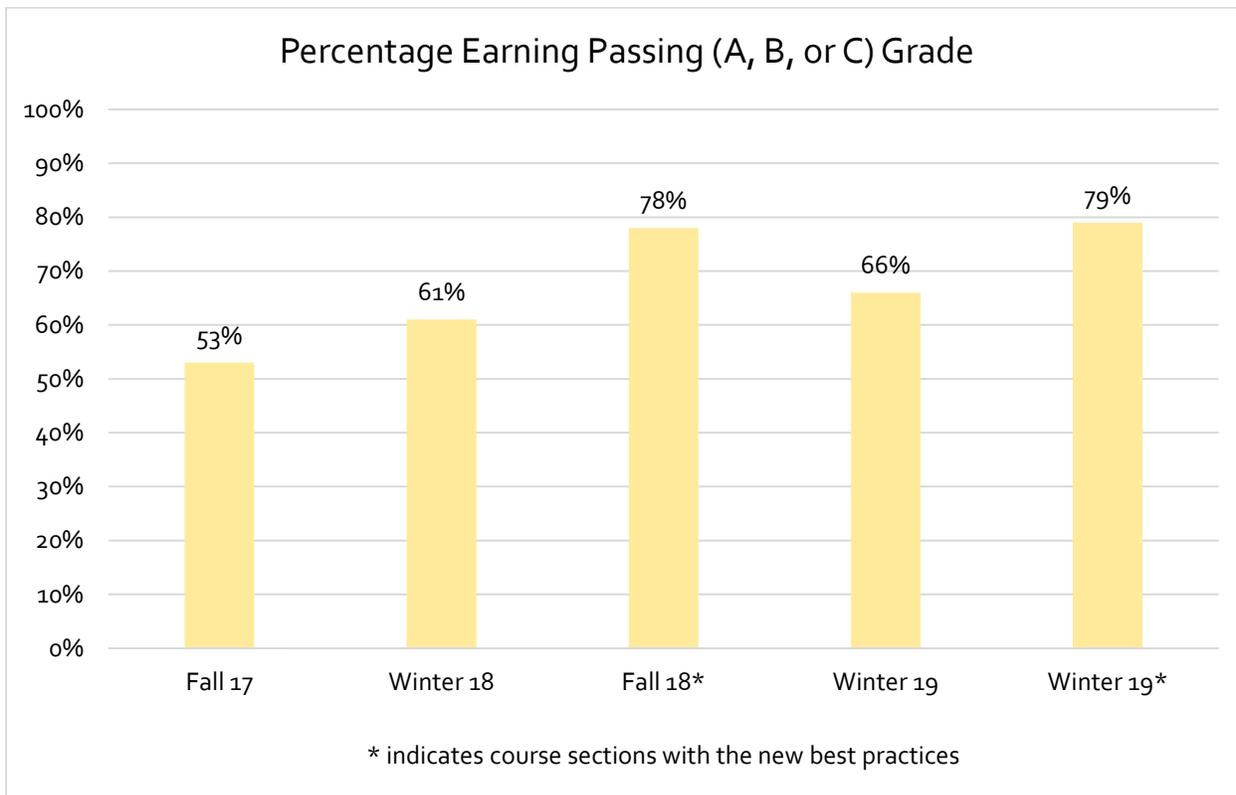
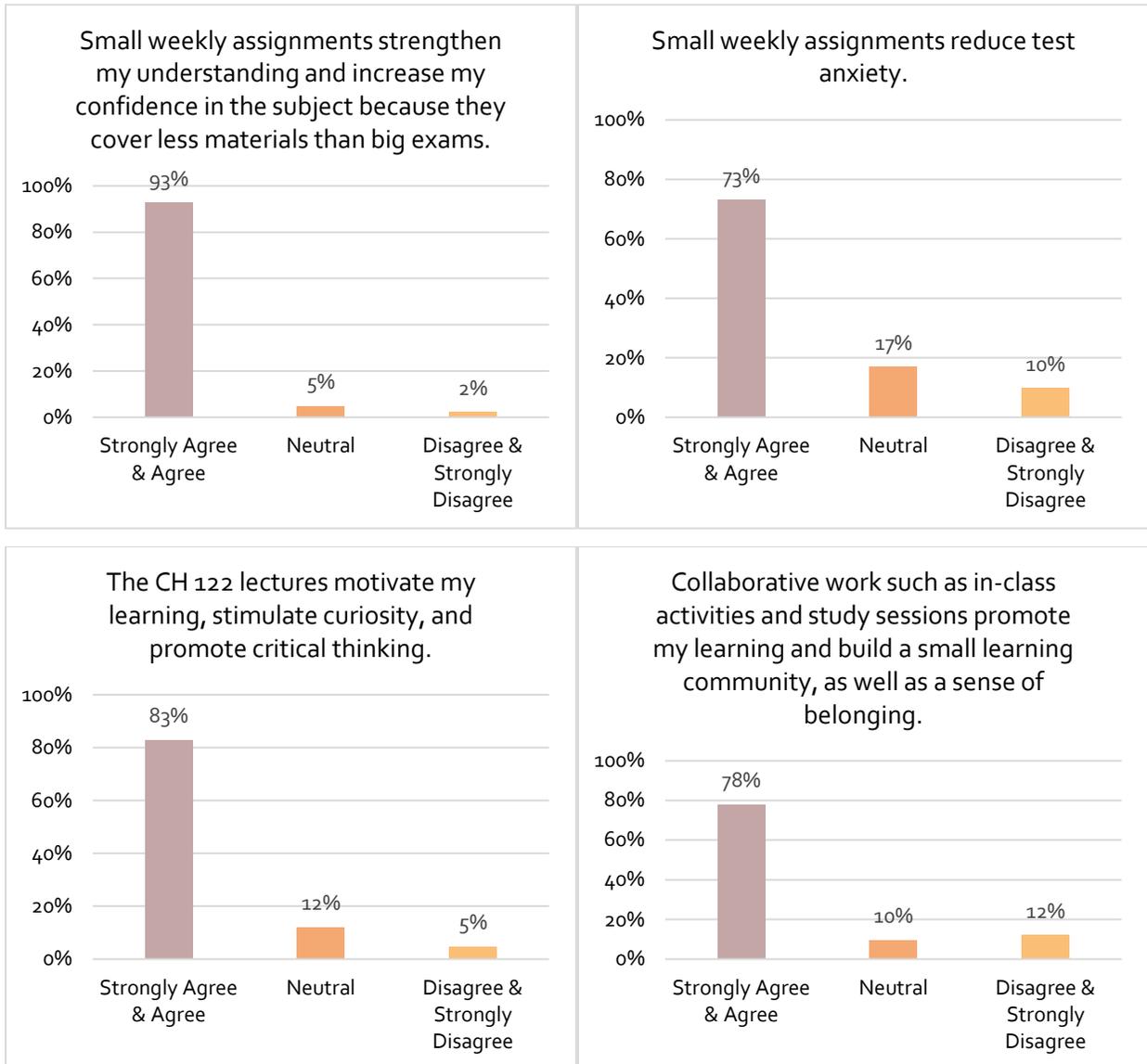


Figure 3: Percentage of students earning an A, B, or C grade in CH 121.

She then employed the same practices for College Chemistry II (CH 122) and started to survey students on their perceptions of the new practices (see figure 4). Throughout the term, roughly 50% of students attended study sessions and asked for help during and/or after the lecture. Students who attended study sessions reported that they were very useful and made them feel more comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns. In addition, students strongly agreed that the small weekly assessments were less stressful and that they felt more confident because the weekly assessments covered less material than the big exams.



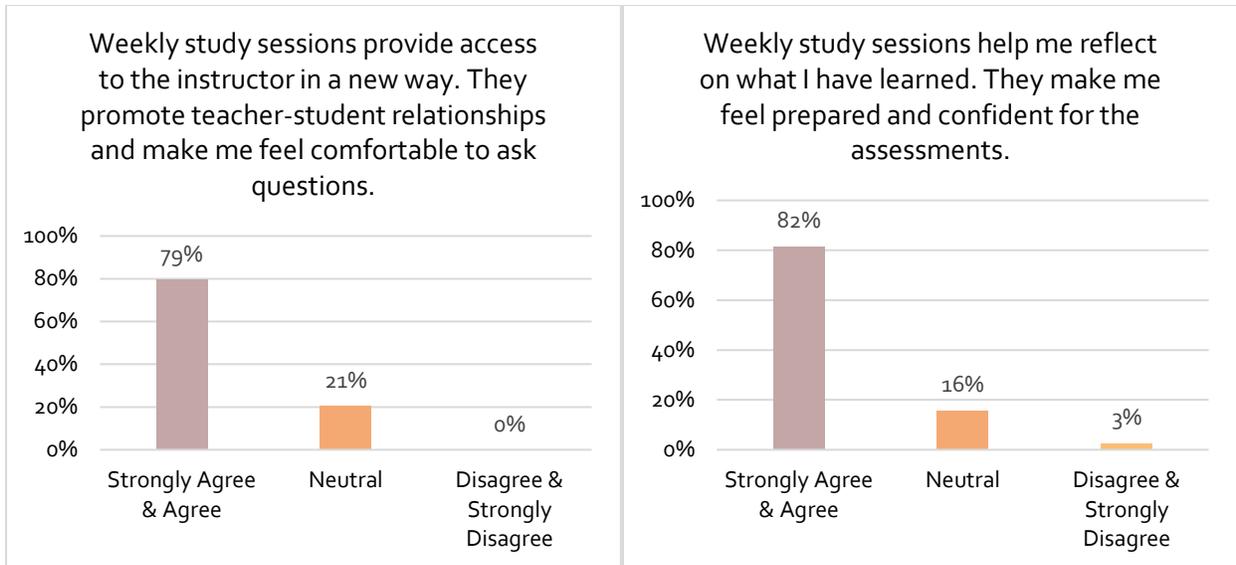


Figure 4: Results from student survey conducted in CH 122 in the winter of 2019.

These changes have yielded success in raising both course pass rates and student learning outcome achievement. Working with LInC (Learning Innovation Council) during the next academic year, Dr. Pattawong will test these innovations and improvements in other STEM courses, and potentially in other curriculum. This expands a successful practice of review and application of assessment practices in the classroom to its study and feasibility across the institution.

Making use of the Rubric for Evaluating Outcomes Assessment has helped highlight areas of strength for the institution. Much of the work over the last decade has resulted in highly developed marks with assessment planning through validity. As detailed above in the examples, this has led to demonstrable changes for the betterment of the student educational experience. However, as has been previously noted during the Year One study, work remains in moving these findings to more actionable data that exist beyond a single course.

## Part III: Moving Forward

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Although LBCC has made great progress in these first three years of the current accreditation cycle—receiving no recommendations from the first year’s report—there is still much more work to be done. MERIT already has two significant changes planned for the upcoming academic year.

First, the institution will shift from reporting course-level student outcomes assessment data at the aggregate level (e.g. 20 out of 25 students completed outcome one in WR 121) to reporting said data at the individual student level (e.g. John Smith did not meet outcome one in WR 121, Jane Doe met outcome one in WR 121, etc.). While the aggregate data created a smaller workload for faculty as the institution was experimenting with different collection methods—easing the initial burden—MERIT feels its usefulness as an improvement tool has passed. Using language from the *Rubric for Evaluating Outcomes Assessment Plan and Progress*, aggregate data would never allow LBCC to move beyond the “valid results” criterion. Higher-level criteria, such as “reliable results” and “planning and budgeting,” require more granular data.

Knowing the individual results will allow faculty to not only better maintain the outcomes’ validity but also to disaggregate their course-level outcomes’ pass rates and adjust curriculum where appropriate to maintain equity as well as to track effective competency scaffolding, especially in sequenced courses (e.g. BI 101, 102, and 103). At a higher level, this data will allow LBCC to better assess program-level student learning outcomes by evaluating the alignment of course-level outcomes to program-level outcomes. Without data at the student level, it is impossible to tell which students have met the right combination of course outcomes to earn a program outcome. MERIT has spent the 2018-19 academic year laying the foundation for this shift and plans to first pilot the new process with selected departments in the fall of 2019 and then require it institution-wide starting in the spring of 2020.

Second, MERIT is considering eliminating VICE as a distinct Innovation Sphere council and dividing its work between the three remaining councils as well as with the councils in the Operations Sphere. After multiple discussions over the past year, many members of MERIT feel that keeping the institution’s equity work in a separate silo is not creating the urgency that such work requires. As Jayakumar and Museus explain it in “Mapping the Intersection of Campus Cultures and Equitable Outcomes among Racially Diverse Student Populations,” currently, LBCC operates with a diversity-oriented campus culture, whereas the institution would like to move to an equity-oriented campus culture, “where diversity efforts are not compartmentalized and not compromised in the face of competing interests” (*Creating Campus Cultures*, 2012). By making this work part of all the councils, MERIT hopes to make it an integral and unavoidable part of all innovation work.

With these two improvements, as well as the usual report card review that MERIT conducts every summer, LBCC is continuing on its journey of continual reflection and improvement, a journey that does not—and should not—have an end.

# Appendix

## MERIT Report Card 3.13: Graduates Achieve Success After College

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**WEVC**      **Objective Thirteen**

**ECONOMIC VITALITY**

**A target percent of career and technical education (CTE) graduates are employed.**

Employed in this context means working at least 30 hours a week in any field for at least one quarter by six months after graduation.

	Year One	*Year Two*	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	Year Six	Year Seven
<b>Met</b> Target	—	56%	67%				
Actual	53%	64%					

**A target percent of transfer graduates are enrolled at a four-year institution.**

Enrolled in this context means registering for credit in any major for at least one term or semester by six months after graduation.

	Year One	*Year Two*	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	Year Six	Year Seven
<b>Unmet</b> Target	—	58%	58%				
Actual	55%	48%					

**Metrics in Development:**

- ◆ Tracking graduates' wages before and after graduation.
- ◆ Tracking graduates' subsequent baccalaureate degree completion.

View 20-year trend data (where available) at: [bit.ly/LBCCMERITTrends](https://www.linnbenton.edu/faculty-and-staff/administrative-information/governance-structure/merit).

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Current versions of the report cards for all of the core theme objectives can be viewed at: <https://www.linnbenton.edu/faculty-and-staff/administrative-information/governance-structure/merit>.

## Child and Family Studies Program Review Excerpt: Increase Quality of Practicum/Field Experience

### Practicum Changes (Years at a Glance)

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved list of CWE child development sites</li> <li>• Practicum for 2-year AAS degree students only</li> <li>• Pre-req: must have C or better in HDFS 248 &amp; ED 152 to register for ED 101</li> <li>• Recruited community practicum sites</li> <li>• Created infant/toddler notebook for practicum students in toddler classrooms</li> <li>• Developed Practicum Manual</li> <li>• Developed Mentor Teacher Manual w/ orientation</li> <li>• Created Practicum System for each term: 'Behavior Goals' and 'What to Talk to Mentor Teacher about by Week'</li> <li>• Implemented Practicum themes by term:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Building Relationships (fall)</li> <li>○ Environment &amp; Curriculum (winter)</li> <li>○ Classroom Management &amp; Culturally Sensitive Care (spring)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in both community sites and at PCDC for practicum</li> <li>• Aligned ED 131, ED 222 &amp; HDFS 261 with practicum experience; students can 'apply' what they're learning in class to the practicum classroom</li> <li>• Implemented additional 'teaching days' to winter and spring term (3 practice days, 4th day is graded)</li> <li>• Implemented Professionalism Points into practicum grading</li> <li>• Implemented assignments to prepare students for ½ day teaching experience               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ increased circle time presentations to 1 every term</li> <li>○ added transition assignments to winter and spring term</li> <li>○ added environment changes to winter and spring terms</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Created chart with 'What To Do When' and 'Behavioral Skills to Practice' (aligned with course competencies &amp; information in text)</li> <li>• Created Mentor Teacher 'talking points' (reflective questions that align with student's skills practice chart)</li> <li>• Created Mentor Teacher handbook &amp; implemented Mentor Teacher orientations</li> <li>• Put Mentor Teacher resources on Instructor Website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased practicum seminar to 2 hours (fall &amp; winter)</li> <li>• Added 2nd field experience to spring term</li> <li>• Periwinkle CDC Practicum Collaboration Notebook</li> <li>• Implemented required CWE course for first year students &amp; one-year-certificate students</li> <li>• Increased role-plays and active learning experiences into Practicum seminar (esp. behavior scenarios)</li> <li>• Established 'collaborative curriculum planning' into practicum seminar</li> <li>• Established students bringing in their learning experiences to practice before they go 'live' with the children</li> <li>• Implemented culturally sensitive care and text into spring term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented in-class coaching by CFS Instructor fall and winter terms</li> <li>• Implemented videotaping &amp; reflection into spring term; students review and complete assignment, then meet with CSF Instructor</li> <li>• Implemented curriculum framework &amp; OER text: Integrated Nature of Learning</li> </ul>

## Brief History of Practicum Changes

- Expanded practicum into community-based sites (2016-17):
  - Increased quality of mentoring by reducing number of practicum students per class.
  - Moved practicum student hours to only morning slots for ED 101 & ED 102 (more time with children).
  - Alternated days students are in class so no overlapping of students (too many adults in the classroom).
  - Implemented a 15-minute reflective meeting between the MT and student. PCDC teachers unable to have 15-minute reflective meetings for more than two students/term.
  - Addressed mediocre quality of PCDC/KidCO Center on campus.
- Practicum Content Changes
  - Created midterm and final evaluation systems per term based on competencies. Ideally, teachers make suggestions for students of what to work on for the rest of the term. During the final evaluation conference meeting, ideally they make suggestions for what to work on for the following term.
  - Mid-terms evaluation is also important because if students don't get a C or better, they cannot progress to the next level of practicum. This allows the instructor to individually support students if they are falling behind and create a plan for success.
  - Students review competencies and set intentions for which competencies they want to practice. Students meet with instructor mid-term to review mid-term evaluation and competencies skills learning. Instructor coaches or observes students before mid-term to offer specific feedback on what they are doing well and what they need to focus on for the second half of the term. Final consists of students evaluating their own growth over the term and setting intentions for what skills to work on for next term.
  - Create lesson plans and curriculum based on focus child observations.
  - Transition assignments in preparation for half-day teaching. During winter term, students can use the classroom's transition strategy, but spring term they need to create their own.
  - Environmental Changes (environment as 3rd teacher). Students create environmental change based on focus child.
  - Increased cultural sensitivity materials: Roots and Wings text incorporated into ED 103 (spring term) and added two diversity learning experiences.
  - Additional teaching days for winter and spring terms.
- Practicum Changes Were Based On:
  - Portland Community College shared their practicum process by term and CFS Program Chair met with practicum instructor at Solano Community College in California. These two resources were used to create a comprehensive, integrated practicum experience.
  - Changes were based on student learning outcomes in practicum courses and curriculum courses.
  - Additionally, recommendations from CFS Advisory Committee and recent CFS graduates influenced many of the decisions.
  - The program chair's years of providing teacher training, coaching, and consulting in early childhood education programs also influenced changes.