

Year One Self-Evaluation

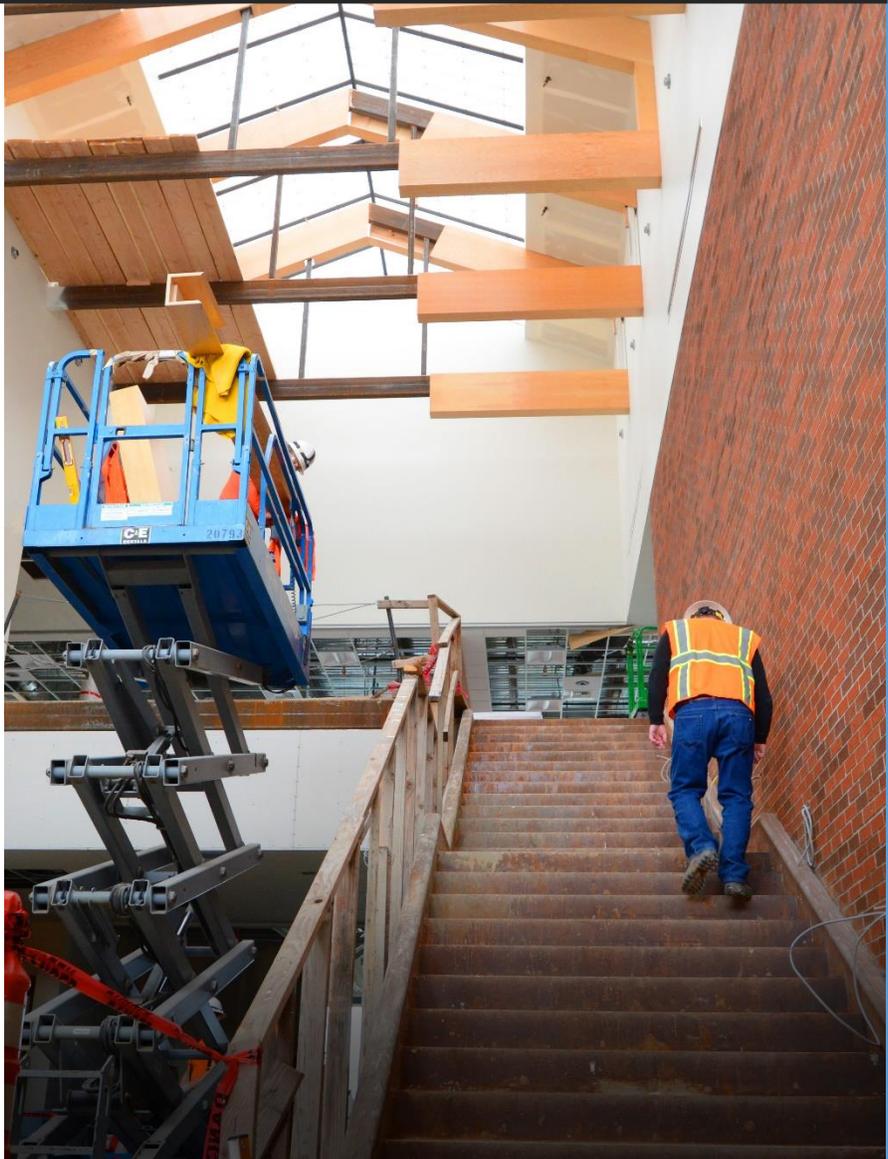


Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Institutional Overview | 1 |
| Preface | 2 |
| Significant Changes | 2 |
| Responses to Committee Requests | 2 |
| Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations | 6 |
| A. Executive Summary: Eligibility Requirements #2 and #3 | 6 |
| B. Standard 1.A: Mission | 6 |
| C. Standard 1.B: Core Themes | 7 |
| Conclusion | 9 |

Institutional Overview

Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) was established in 1966 as a two-year public college. LBCC's 104-acre Albany Campus is located just ten miles east of Corvallis, home to Oregon State University (OSU). LBCC has satellite campuses in Corvallis (the Benton Center) and in Lebanon and Sweet Home (the East Linn Centers). The LBCC Horse Center houses the Equine Management Program just 1.5 miles north of the Albany Campus. The Advanced Transportation Technology Center opened in Lebanon in 2013 and is less than three miles from the Lebanon Center. Just completed and opened in the summer of 2017 is the Healthcare Occupations Center, which is across the street from the Lebanon Center. Students can access academic support in the learning centers at each campus and in the library on the Albany Campus. The Albany Campus has the LBCC Campus Store, a small theater, a student-run coffee house, and a gym and recreation area.

LBCC is a comprehensive community college where students attend for many reasons: to earn an associate's degree and enter the workforce, to earn a transfer degree and move on to a four-year college, to obtain employment training or improve existing employment skills, or to enrich their lives through continuing education. Over 18,000 students took at least one class last year, with over 4,000 students attending full-time. About 30% of Linn and Benton County high school students come directly to LBCC after graduation, a number that has remained consistent for the last decade. Over 2,500 students were dual-enrolled with OSU through the Degree Partnership Program last year as well.

LBCC offers a wide-variety of classes and services throughout all its locations. LBCC employed 476 faculty last year. The faculty-to-student ratio is 1:19. Special educational services for the community include:

- Business and Employer Services, which serve the needs of the business and industrial community;
- Family Resources and Education Department, where classes, workshops, and one-on-one consultations serve families and support the nonprofit agencies who work with families in the local communities; and
- Cooperative Work Experience, Service Learning Program, and Apprenticeship Program, in which students receive practical experience in jobs related to their fields of study.

This strong connection to—and support from—the local communities has become a foundational part of the college's accreditation work and is reflected in the core themes, objectives, and metrics discussed in this report.

Supported by tuition, local property taxes, and state revenue, the college is directed by seven elected LBCC Board of Education members. LBCC is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) and received its initial accreditation in 1972. The State of Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) approves programs and courses.

Preface

Significant Changes

LBCC submitted its year seven self-study in September of 2016. Since that time, the college has continued to make improvements in order to increase student completion and overall success.

LBCC is currently in its last year of the AACC Pathways Project. This model is an integrated, institution-wide approach to student success based on intentionally designed and structured educational experiences that guide each student from their point of entry to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market. Central to the model are clear, coherent program maps—which include specific course sequences, progress milestones, and program-learning outcomes—that are aligned to what will be expected of students upon program completion. Students are assisted in exploring academic and career options, choosing a program of study, and developing a plan based on the program maps. These plans simplify student decision-making and enable colleges to provide predictable schedules, frequent feedback, and targeted support to help students stay on track and complete their programs more efficiently. They also facilitate efforts by faculty to ensure students are building appropriate skills across their programs.

There have been some college leadership changes since 2016. Linda Modrell has replaced Ron Mason on the LBCC Board of Education. There has been no change in the college's executive team.

The Healthcare Occupations Center opened in August of 2016 and houses nine of the college's healthcare education programs. LBCC is also currently upgrading a variety of buildings on its Albany Campus.

Responses to Committee Requests

1. *LBCC has taken steps to define and assess learning outcomes at the course level successfully. What has not occurred is the development of an effective and appropriate means for identifying and measuring program-level and certificate-level outcomes and to then tie the results to core theme objectives and verification of mission fulfillment. It is strongly recommended that the institution defines and articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes at the program- and core theme-level that represent an acceptable threshold of mission fulfillment. The evaluation committee recommends that this work is identified as a major priority given the recurring nature of these concerns (Eligibility Requirement 12; Standards 1.A.2, 2.C.1, 3.B.3 and 4.A.2).*

Since 2013, LBCC has developed and initiated a new assessment paradigm that is meaningful, measurable, sustainable, and useful to faculty members as they facilitate student learning. These revised efforts support LBCC in meeting continuous improvement, retention, and completion goals. In addition to measuring student learning, this paradigm shift tightens the alignment of student learning outcomes, program outcomes, and institutional outcomes. This report will include an update on the college's progress during the 2016-17 academic year and its plan for addressing accreditation recommendations and moving the assessment work forward during the 2017-18 academic year.

LBCC faculty continue to measure student learning outcomes, reflect on this work, and report data to the institution on ways to improve student attainment of course learning outcomes. The faculty-led Mentoring and Assessment Coordinating (MAC) Team continues to facilitate course-level student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment; the college saw a 60% reporting rate for both fall of 2016 and winter of 2017. The MAC Team has analyzed faculty reporting trends and the data collection process and is working diligently to

improve this response rate. For example, one strategy that will be implemented during the 2017-18 academic year includes institution-wide scheduled time for programs to focus on outcomes. To accomplish this, LBCC has altered its academic calendar to build in dedicated time for this work. In essence, closing the loop on outcomes assessment is helping the college to further improve teaching and learning.

Currently, all LBCC programs have program outcomes and publish them in the catalog. As with course SLOs, program outcomes need to be meaningful and measurable so they are useful in evaluating program goals and making program improvements. The MAC Team approach is to evaluate all program learning outcomes and identify problem areas, leaving the measurable outcomes in place and making revisions as needed. The process involves aligning all SLOs to one or more program or general education outcomes.

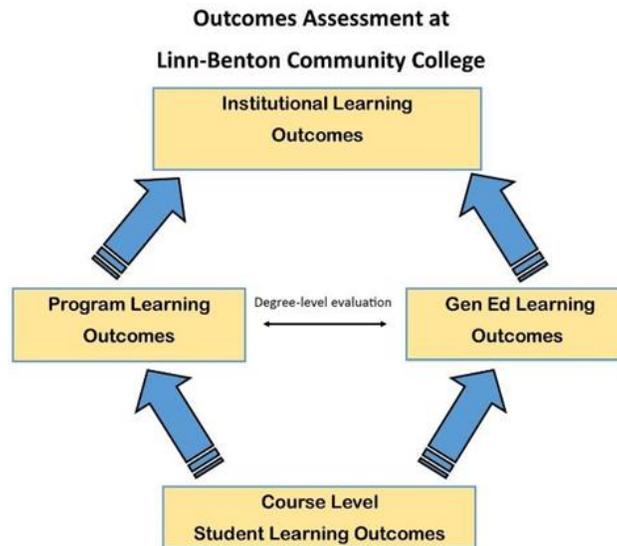


Figure 1: Outcomes Assessment levels at LBCC

During the winter of 2017, the MAC Team reviewed all program outcomes and designated them by one of three categories: satisfactory, needs some work, and needs major overhaul. The MAC Team, which now includes the newly hired coordinator of the Learning Innovations Center, will be working with the departments to make revisions starting fall term 2017. Departments with well-defined program outcomes will begin the alignment and program assessment process immediately.

LBCC views the program-level and general education outcomes as being “nested” at the degree level. The college came to this conclusion after much discussion regarding previous assessment efforts and reviewing higher education models of assessment. The process revealed confusion regarding the purpose and definition of program-level outcomes. For example, the relationship of particular courses to general education outcomes was not clear, especially among faculty, and this resulted in less clarity for students. In planning the next steps, the MAC Team noted that there is a difference between the desired program and general education outcomes and will address them separately but concurrently at the degree level.

LBCC has a unique relationship with OSU that has resulted in the development of Associate of Science (AS) degrees. LBCC’s AS programs align with OSU requirements, and students can enter OSU with junior-level standing after completing the AS degree. LBCC lists the courses that meet general education, “Perspective,” or related instruction requirements in the catalog, thus meeting the general education outcomes. LBCC’s degree-level assessment plan involves ensuring alignment of the course SLOs to one or more outcomes in the general education categories. The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and certificate programs are included in the evaluation and alignment of related instruction, general education, and program outcomes.

LBCC will engage in parallel processes. The revision of program outcomes will take place concurrently with the alignment of course SLOs. The MAC Team has devised a matrix system to align course SLOs to program and general education outcomes. The beta test of this effort took place on August 31st, 2017. It will be refined over fall term and implemented college-wide by the end of spring term 2018.

The purpose of aligning course SLOs to degree-level outcomes is to determine whether students have achieved the identified skills and abilities. If the student meets the course SLOs—aligned to program or general education outcomes—LBCC can be confident they have met the degree-level outcomes.

The MAC Team envisions a process where faculty will report and reflect on all SLOs each term and report annually on the results and any future plans. In addition, with the annual SLO evaluation, LBCC will assess its program and general education results and continue to support a culture of continuous improvement.

LBCC expects that program and general education outcomes assessment revisions will be completed during the 2017-18 academic year. The college will then begin reporting concomitant with the continued course SLO efforts and aligning degree-level outcomes with the newly adopted institutional learning outcomes. Our goal is to align our program and general education outcomes with our institutional learning outcomes.

On May 23rd, 2017, the Academic Affairs Council adopted the following institutional learning outcomes that are adapted from the American Association of Colleges and Universities Essential Learning Outcomes.

LBCC engages students at all levels of learning through: “knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world that is focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring, in coursework that includes study in the sciences, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts.”

The American Association of Colleges and Universities states and LBCC concurs that “beginning in school and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for [the] twenty-first-century.” Students who complete a program of study at LBCC will have achieved the college’s institutional outcomes, which are listed below.

Intellectual and Practical Skills:

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

Personal and Social Responsibility:

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Integrative and Applied Learning:

- Application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities
- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies within our programs

2. *LBCC has developed core themes that are assessable and verifiable. The evaluation committee recommends that current indicators be reviewed and revised to ensure that they are meaningful and provide the necessary framework and elements for effectively evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes (Standards 1.B.2 and 4.A.1).*

The current mission statement was adopted five years ago. This report details how the college changed its core theme metrics to ensure that they are meaningful and measureable, providing a framework for effectively evaluating the accomplishments of LBCC’s core theme objectives.

3. While there are some examples of short-term planning activities at LBCC, the evaluation committee recommends that institutional planning reflect a systematic, integrated, and comprehensive approach that defines, supports, and guides mission fulfillment efforts and reflects all aspects of college operations to include, at a minimum, student services, academic programs, library, financial forecasting, master facilities goals, emergency preparedness, and technology (Standards 2.G.1, 2.G.8, 3.A).

A more defined and “nested” relationship between all of the college’s myriad planning efforts has been developed. Considered together, these various documents create an integrated plan that is both aspirational enough to be durable and detailed enough for LBCC to take action and measure progress.

The entire [2017-2022 Strategic Plan](#) further describes the various aspects within the figures below.

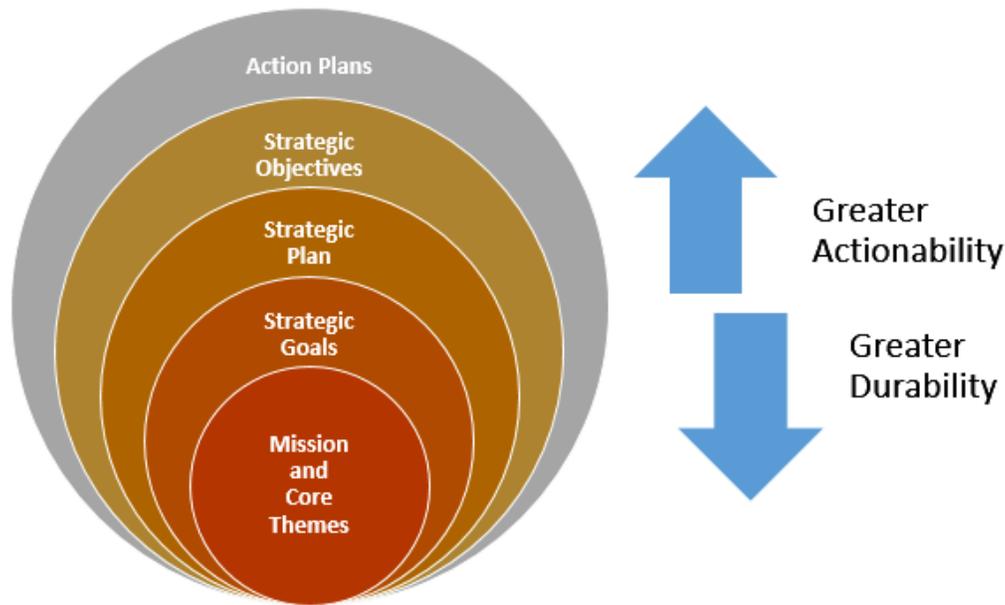


Figure 2: Plan and Action Integration Visual A



Figure 3: Plan and Action Integration Visual B

Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

A. Executive Summary: Eligibility Requirements #2 and #3

Authority

The institution is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the appropriate governmental organization, agency, or governing board as required by the jurisdiction in which it operates.

The college's authority to operate originates in Oregon State Statute (ORS 341.009) and [LBCC Board Policy 2010](#).

Mission and Core Themes

The institution's mission and core themes are clearly defined, adopted by its governing board consistent with its legal authorization, and are appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education. The institution's purpose is to serve the educational interests of its students, and its principal programs lead to recognized degrees. The institution devotes all, or substantially all, of its resources to support its educational mission and core themes.

The current mission statement was crafted with the intention of helping to explicitly draw a clear line from mission to core themes. The statement 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” and is promoted both publicly across the campus as well as through Board Policy 1005.

Embodied within the text of the mission statement are the three core themes: Educational Attainment, Cultural Richness, and Economic Vitality. Mission fulfillment then becomes a process of continual improvement around the core themes. This has led to, over the years of the previous accreditation cycle, the reshaping of organizational structures around assessing and improving on these themes, culminating in the annual review by the Mission Effectiveness and Resource Investment Team (MERIT).

B. Standard 1.A: Mission

The current mission statement was adopted five years ago, and its clear language is meant to be transparent and accessible, driving opportunities for measurement and assessment. It should be noted, however, that the concepts underlying the core themes changed very little; the recrafting of the mission statement was meant to heighten the relationship between the two entities. This is a contrast from its predecessor, which—while evocative and moving—addressed less measurable topics.

The institution did, however, make significant changes in how it defined mission fulfillment of the core themes. MERIT worked for several years to define measurable success metrics for the core themes as a basis for documenting mission fulfillment. During its year seven visit, the site team noted in conversations with MERIT that the college had overcomplicated its evaluation plans, including too many goals—many of which were not measurable—within a confusing hierarchy. This review inspired a MERIT subcommittee to clarify, reduce, and refine the core theme objectives and metrics. In order to achieve this end, MERIT has adopted two strategies. The first, indicators do not fully enter the report card until they can be measured. However, to ensure that potential measurements are not lost, they are stored in the “Metrics in

Development” section at the bottom of each report card. The second, the redesigned report cards also outline yearly goals in addition to overall metric success, in order to create a clearer hierarchy.

Mission fulfillment is now measured through a section of streamlined objectives, each assigned to an Innovation Council, which each report to MERIT. These councils (the Progression Council; the Workforce and Economic Vitality Council; the Values, Inclusion, and Cultural Engagement Council; and the Learning and Innovation Council) are tasked with the actual work of developing, implementing, and evaluating interventions designed to support each objective. The college has also allocated a specific budget for financing and supporting these initiatives without having to wait for an upcoming budget cycle. Throughout the year, representatives of each council present updates to MERIT, culminating with the annual review process MERIT undertakes to help define and re-affirm the council goals for the upcoming year. It is during this period that MERIT performs a holistic assessment of the objectives and their metrics to assess progress and determine whether the college is meeting mission fulfillment.

[The report cards can be viewed here.](#)

C. Standard 1.B: Core Themes

Core Theme #1: Educational Attainment

Educational attainment encompasses the pathway to long-term student success and community enrichment, ensuring that students have the opportunity to enter and the support and environmental structure to persist within educational programs of quality, rigor, and strength that prepare them for what comes next is a critical aspect of both the campus mission and the broader academic culture.

- Objective 1: Students onboard successfully into the college.
- Objective 2: Students experience high-quality courses.
- Objective 3: The entering student body represents target populations.
- Objective 4: Students maintain or increase their starting credit load.
- Objective 5: Students complete math and writing requirements.
- Objective 6: Students are retained from term to term.
- Objective 7: Students graduate or transfer to a university.

Graduation and university transfer, while the obvious capstone metrics for this theme, are both too much of a lagging indicator to be useful for yearly planning and improvement. As such, MERIT purposefully focused on finding many leading indicators as well, in order to give the councils relevant feedback as often as possible.

Core Theme #2: Economic Vitality

Economic vitality encompasses the larger benefits to both the students and the region, providing an increase in student skill and capacity that is responsive to the needs of regional employers and regional universities while providing opportunities to LBCC graduates. Strengthening connections are an important part of the college direction insofar as members of the region should be able to see the return on investment that results from having LBCC as an active part of the community.

- Objective 8: Programs respond to the needs of their external partners.
- Objective 9: Students receive an affordable education.
- Objective 10: Graduates meet the program learning outcomes.

- Objective 11: Graduates achieve success after college.

Previously, in the minds of many, economic vitality was viewed as the responsibility of the college's career/technical programs. This was not the original intention and deeply affected the approach MERIT took during the revision process, leading to objectives that are explicitly geared towards both career/technical and transfer programs.

Core Theme #3: Cultural Richness

Cultural richness encompasses the holistic college experience that produces culturally literate individuals capable of interacting, collaborating, and problem solving in an ever-evolving community and diverse workforce, providing opportunities to explore differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment.

- Objective 12: The community is provided robust events and programs.
- Objective 13: Students and employees boost intercultural competency.
- Objective 14: The community is provide non-degree-based programming.

The objectives associated with this theme are crafted around articulating critical—albeit less obvious— aspects of the college's mission. Ensuring the college community is prepared for changing student demographics and improving its ability to interact with each other is a necessary part of the overall experience. Similarly, as the college is part of a larger community, it has a role to play in offering culturally rewarding programming outside of the traditional academic and vocational needs. This component is as much a part of the requirements of the college as the quality and effectiveness of an educational program are.

Conclusion

The cover of this self-evaluation report shows a moment in the construction of the new Healthcare Occupations Building, which opened in August of 2017. The building took reflection, planning, discussion, and finally construction. LBCC approached the first year in another seven-year cycle in much the same way. After reaffirming that the mission statement and core themes do represent the college's commitment to both students and the larger community, MERIT got to work.

LBCC is now in the construction phase of the seven-year cycle. Year one laid the foundation for the work of the next seven years. The new objectives and metrics are the walls and roof, giving the college the support it needs to serve the community. LBCC will continue to struggle as it makes the shift to continuous improvement and accountability, but it is committed to this goal. Starting a new accreditation cycle is an exciting opportunity, and LBCC is up to the challenge.