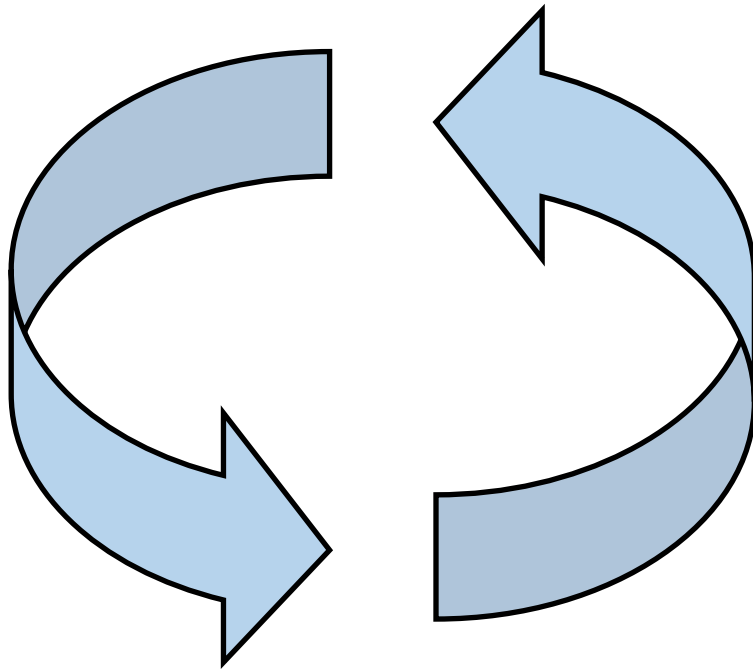


# Assessment Commission

Annual Report, 2020-2021



**DMACC**  
DES MOINES AREA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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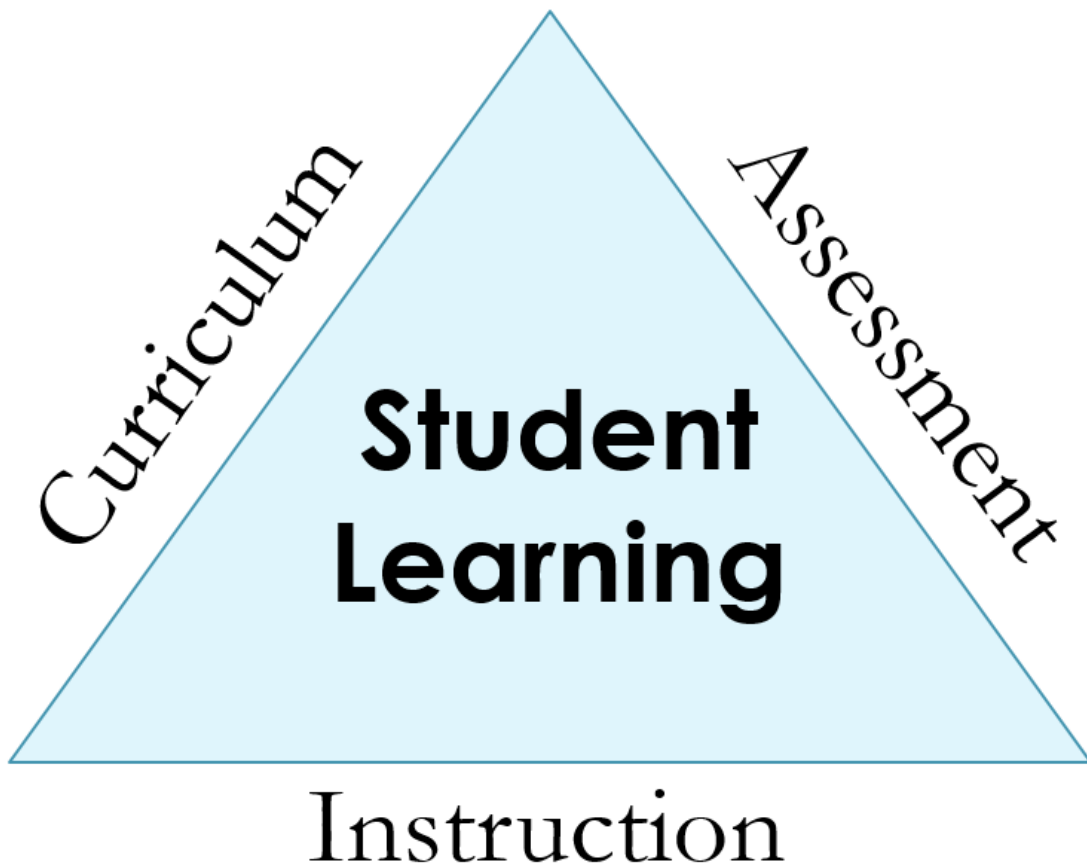
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**For questions about this report or assessment at DMACC, please contact:**

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*Access to program assessment data is available for chairs in the “Assessment” menu item on the Online Teaching and Learning Blackboard Organization*

## The Student Learning Triangle



## **About the DMACC Assessment Commission**

The Assessment Commission serves DMACC students, faculty, staff, and administration through support of college, department, program, and course-level assessments. With the goal of continuous improvement, the Assessment Commission focuses on research-based approaches to pedagogy and standardized practices for administering assessment and reporting results.

### **Guiding Principles**

1. The primary purpose of assessment is to support teaching and learning.
2. Assessment is learner-centered and faculty-driven.
3. Each department and program will engage in district-wide collaboration and communication regarding assessment procedures.
4. Assessment reporting will be meaningful and consistent.
5. The assessment process will respect student and faculty privacy and will not be used for faculty evaluation or comparative judgments of departments or programs.
6. DMACC will support assessment with up-to-date technology.

### **Responsibility**

The Assessment Commission strives to supply institutional resources and structure for authentic, meaningful assessment, including:

- Course, program, and college-level assessment design
- Analysis of evidence-based initiatives and results
- Ongoing development of best practices based on current research
- Alignment of assessment with college curriculum standards and outcomes
- Standardized procedures and deadlines for assessment cycles and reporting
- Use of up-to-date technology to support assessment
- Design of assessment policy, including, but not limited to, communication, faculty participation, reporting, and faculty and student privacy
- Annual DMACC assessment reporting

### **Powers**

The Assessment Commission is empowered to develop assessment policies, regulations, and procedures by a simple majority vote derived from a quorum of members present at regular Commission meetings. A quorum will be defined as a majority of the Commission's current membership. Final approval will be granted by the college's chief academic officer.

## **Assessment Commission Members**

**Beth Baker-Brodersen**, English Group Leader, West Campus, Professor of English  
**Jerry Burns**, Program Chair, General Motors-ASEP, Professor of Automotive Technology  
**Paul Byrd**, District Chair of Social Sciences, Professor of Political Science and History  
**Amy Christian**, Professor of Business Technology  
**Carolyn Farlow**, Director of Institutional Effectiveness  
**Jenny Foster**, Dean of Industry and Technology  
**Miranda Gauthier**, Associate Professor, Biology  
**Kate Halverson**, District Chair of Behavioral Sciences, Professor of Psychology  
**Kari Hensen**, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs for Programs and Services  
**Andrew Neuendorf** (Chair), Director of Assessment, Professor of English and Literature  
**Samantha O'Hara**, Associate Professor, Criminal Justice Instructor  
**Stephanie Oppel**, Director of Work Based Learning  
**Kevin Patterson**, Program Chair of Mortuary Sciences, Professor of Mortuary Sciences  
**Rich Roberts**, District Chair of Science, Professor of Chemistry  
**Lindsay Simpson**, District Chair of Communications, Professor of English  
**Erica Spiller**, Assistant Director, Student Development  
**Stefan Stoianov**, Associate Professor, Physics

## What is Assessment?

Assessment means “evaluating performance.” In education settings, assessment refers to at least two related activities:

- (1) evaluating student performance in the classroom
- (2) an institutional process of collecting, reporting, and responding to evidence of student learning with a focus on continuous improvement

A strong assessment process should be asking the following questions:

- Are we setting relevant, challenging learning goals for our students?
- Are we measuring student progress on those goals by using best practices?
- Are we using assessment results to improve curriculum, instruction, and student learning?

The DMAACC Assessment Commission defines assessment in ten words:

- **Setting Goals**
- **Collecting Evidence**
- **Using Best Practices**
- **Closing the Loop**

Each category will be explored in more detail on **pages 6-13**:

## Setting Goals

**Assessing DMACC’s curriculum is the main goal!** Course and program competencies, along with DMACC’s Collegewide Outcomes, are measurable student learning goals. For assessment, departments focus on key assignments, projects, performance tests, or learning experiences that address competencies and outcomes within a course or program. Discipline faculty must work together to develop assessment tools and see that all students are assessed in a consistent way.

**Participation Goals:** Additionally, DMACC seeks to assess 20% of courses and 50% of disciplines each year. Here are participation totals from 2017 to the present:

Academic Year	COURSES			DISCIPLINES		
	Courses offered at DMACC <sup>1</sup>	Courses participating in assessment	% Courses assessed	Disciplines <sup>2</sup> offered at DMACC	Disciplines participating in assessment	% Disciplines assessed
AY 2017-2018	1065	177	17%	111	71	64%
<sup>3</sup> AY 2018-2019	1152	262	23%	115	75	65%
AY 2019-2020	1165	264	23%	119	81	68%
AY 2020-2021	1138	291	26%	118	82	69%

### KEY: Metrics from DMACC’s Strategic Plan<sup>4</sup>

Goal: Assess 20% of all courses offered at DMACC	0-7%	8-19%	20%
Goal: Assess 50% of all disciplines offered at DMACC	0-19%	20-49%	50%

<sup>1</sup> This includes all credit courses. “Courses” are distinct from “Sections.” Multi-section courses count as one course. No duplicates across semesters are included. The same methods for counting courses are used under “Courses participating in assessment” **Source:** Banner SWACESQ field.

<sup>2</sup> Each three-letter acronym (i.e. ENG) counts as a discipline. No duplicates across semesters are included. The same methods for counting disciplines are used under “Disciplines participating in assessment.” **Source:** Banner SWACESQ field.

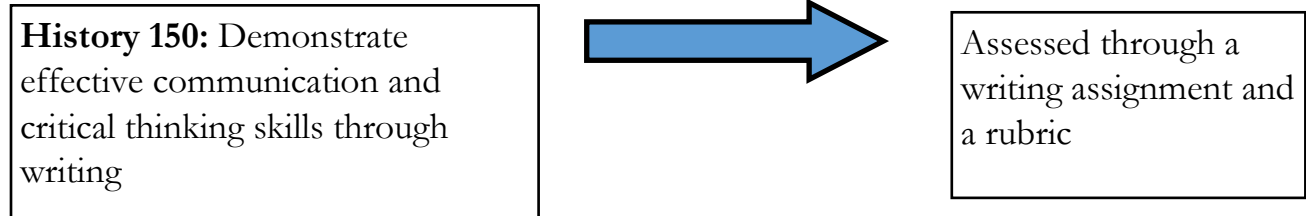
<sup>3</sup> 2018-2019 was the first year of a 5-year cycle of assessment. In January of 2018, all programs were asked to plan how they would assess their disciplines’ courses. The DMACC assessment team communicates this list of courses each semester to chairs, deans, and provosts to keep the process moving.

<sup>4</sup> New metrics from DMACC's revised Strategic Plan will be included in our 2021-2022 report

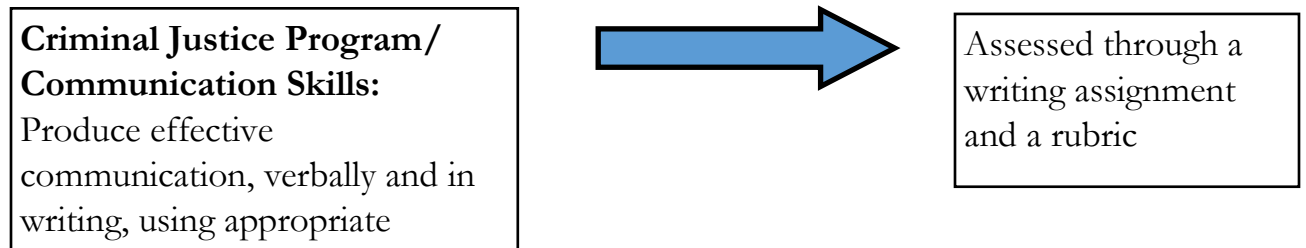
## Alignment of DMACC Curriculum and Assessment

Here is a sample alignment using one **course competency**, one **program competency**, and one **Essential Learning Outcome**. Each is designed to be measured and assessed as a student learning goal. In this example, they happen to use similar assessment tools.

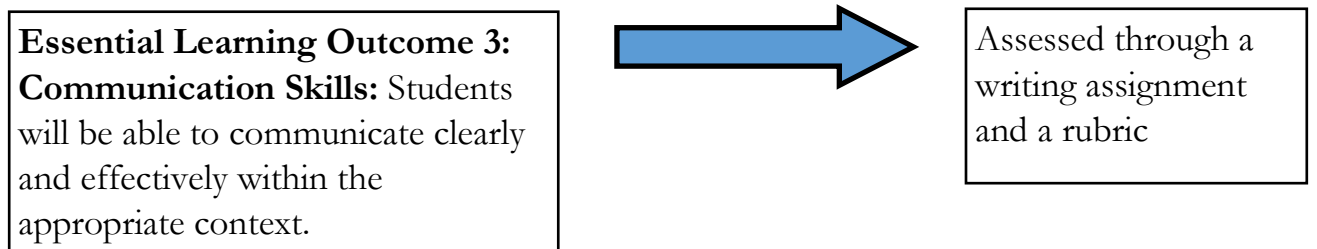
### Course Competency



### Program Competency



### Collegewide Outcome



**NOTICE** the vertical alignment between these goals. In theory, a single assessment in History 150 could address all three goals for a student enrolled in a Criminal Justice

Each program decides how and when their learning goals are assessed. **See the DMACC Catalog** for all course and program competencies. Read about how to access the 5-Year Plan for Assessed Courses (**Appendix D**).



## Collecting Evidence

Beginning Fall 2020, all programs were asked to use Blackboard for assessment. By Spring 2021, competency alignments were added to collect data on learning goals. The adoption of Blackboard's EAC reporting system has helped facilitate the following:

- **394** assessment data reports returned to departments for analysis
- **291** Course assessments completed
- **82** Disciplines participating in assessment
- **63%** of assessed DMACC disciplines reporting specific competency or outcome data
- **978** course and program competencies assessed
- **5** DMACC Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) assessed
- **143** Narrative Reports completed by district and program chairs detailing how assessment results were used

(See **Appendix D** for more information on how EAC reports are returned to programs.)

## How Essential Learning Outcomes are being Assessed

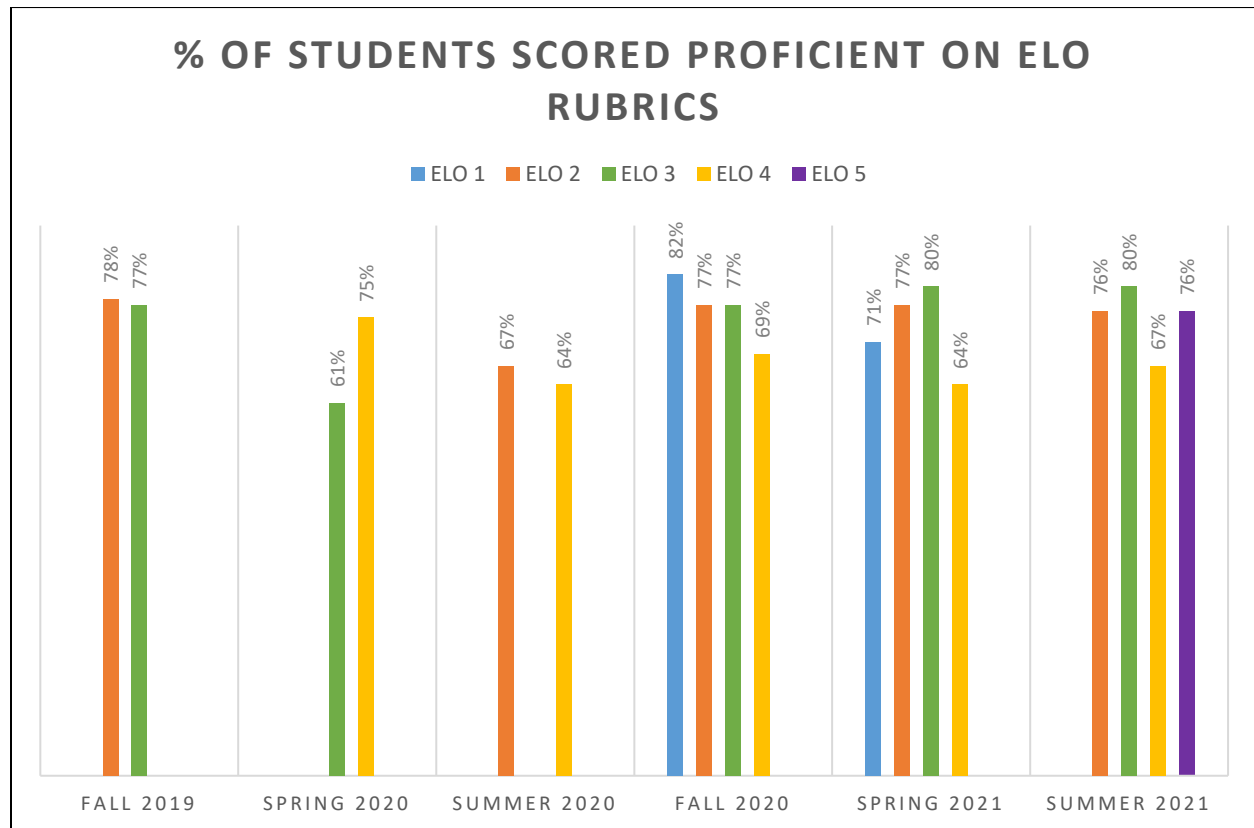
(See **Appendix A** and **Appendix B** for more information on DMACC’s Essential Learning Outcomes and Collegewide Outcomes)

After the adoption of DMACC’s Essential Learning Outcomes and Collegewide Outcomes, the first goal was to establish rubrics and assignments that would allow for the collection of data connected to each outcome. ELO rubrics contain a proficiency column including descriptions of proficient work. These rubrics assess broad skills across general education courses and feature cross-disciplinary collaboration.

### Next Steps

Now that data has been collected from each ELO, the Assessment Commission will begin establishing a process to review longitudinal data related to how student cohorts perform in ELO assessments across their time at the college. Student proficiency on Essential Learning Outcomes will be reported to DMACC’s updated Strategic Plan.

### *Initial Data Collection for Essential Learning Outcomes 1-5.*



## *ELO Assessments and Course Participation*

<b>Outcome 1: Discipline Knowledge</b>	Students demonstrate and apply foundational knowledge through writing assignments and exams
<b>Outcome 2: Critical Thinking</b>	Students analyze information and build arguments with evidence and research through writing assignments.
<b>Outcome 3: Communication Skills</b>	Students develop written and oral communication skills through writing assignments and speeches
<b>Outcome 4: Problem-Solving</b>	Students define, identify, and analyze problems before applying a successful solution.
<b>Outcome 5: Collaboration</b>	Students apply the skills and attitudes necessary for effective interpersonal communication, largely in online discussion forums. This approach was a good first step during the increase in online coursework over the past year-and-a-half. Moving forward we are looking for participants featuring collaborative projects. An effective rubric has been constructed.

The following courses have participated in assessment of ELOs. Additionally, all CTE programs map their courses to the ELO's during their program evaluation process.


<b>Course</b>	<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Course Name</b>
<b>ANT 105</b>	Cultural Anthropology	<b>HUM 116</b>	Encounters in Humanities
<b>BIO 104</b>	Introductory Biology	<b>LIT 101</b>	Introduction to Literature
<b>BUS 138</b>	Small Business Marketing	<b>LIT 105</b>	Children's Literature
<b>COM 703</b>	Communication Skills	<b>LIT 185</b>	Contemporary Literature
<b>CRJ 100</b>	Intro to Criminal Justice	<b>LIT 188</b>	Detective Fiction
<b>CRJ 107</b>	Survey of Criminal Justice Agencies	<b>MAT 064</b>	College Prep Math
<b>CRJ 109</b>	Theories of Interviewing	<b>MAT 110</b>	Math for Liberal Arts
<b>CRJ 120</b>	Introduction to Corrections	<b>MAT 157</b>	Statistics
<b>CRJ 128</b>	Victimology	<b>PHI 101</b>	Introduction to Philosophy
<b>CRJ 200</b>	Criminology	<b>POL 111</b>	American National Government
<b>CRJ 201</b>	Juvenile Delinquency	<b>POL 112</b>	American State and Local Government
<b>CRJ 294</b>	CJ Communication Strategies	<b>POL 121</b>	International Relations
<b>DRA 130</b>	Acting 1	<b>POL 129</b>	Politics of Terrorism
<b>ENG 105</b>	Composition 1	<b>PSY 261</b>	Human Sexuality
<b>GEO 111</b>	Intro to Geography	<b>SDV 108</b>	The College Experience
<b>HIS 113</b>	Western Civilization 2	<b>SOC 110</b>	Introduction to Sociology
<b>HIS 150</b>	U.S. History to 1877	<b>SOC 120</b>	Marriage & Family
<b>HIS 153</b>	U.S. History since 1877	<b>SOC 200</b>	Minority Group Relations
<b>HIS 201</b>	Iowa History	<b>SPC 101</b>	Fundamentals of Oral Communication
<b>HIS 257</b>	African-American History	<b>SPC 122</b>	Interpersonal Communication
<b>HIS 266</b>	The Civil War		

## Alignments in Blackboard Rubrics and Exams

Assessments capture student learning data through the use of Blackboard exams, rubrics, and goal alignments. Individual rubric rows and exam questions are aligned with learning goals. Student scores are associated with performance on learning goals.

### Rubric row with goal alignment

**Organization**  
Weight 25.00%



<b>100.00 %</b> Excellent paragraph structure, including introduction, conclusion, topic sentences, and transitions.	<b>85.00 %</b> Good paragraph structure with room for improvement on introduction, conclusion, topic sentences, and transitions.	<b>75.00 %</b> Paragraphs are generally structured but lack development in introduction, conclusion, topic sentences, and/or transitions.	<b>65.00 %</b> One or more major problems with the introduction, conclusion, topic sentences, and/or transitions.	<b>0.00 %</b> Assignment is missing effective paragraph structure, or entire paragraph elements, including introduction, conclusion, topic sentences, and/or transitions.
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Active Goals	
ID	Goal
ELO_03_00	ELO_03_00: Outcome 3 Communication Skills -Students will be able to communicate clearly and effectively within the appropriate context.

### Test question with goal alignment

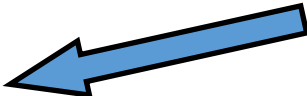
**Question** What is the correct answer to this question?

**Answer**  It's this one!

I'm not sure

Is this a trick question?

4



Active Goals	
ID	Goal
ENG_105_CC_02_00	ENG_105_CC_02_00: Evaluate strategies and approaches for organizing content

## Using Best Practices

Current scholarship guides assessment practices at DMACC, including:

### Embedded Assessment

In her book, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*<sup>5</sup>, Linda Suskie argues that embedded assessments, defined as assignments built into the regular coursework, are more likely to improve teaching and learning than external assessments. She writes that embedded assessments are a better match for local learning goals and are likely to elicit better participation and effort from students. Embedded assessments can provide information on institutional goals and have the advantage of doing “double duty” by also addressing course goals.

### Rubrics

Empirical research on the impact of rubrics is found in articles by S.M. Brookhart<sup>6</sup>, Philip Dawson<sup>7</sup>, and Kiruthika Ragupathi and Adrian Lee<sup>8</sup> and addressed in case studies and reports published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment. The use of standard rubrics further promotes the goal of bringing coherence to assessment. As Brookhart writes, “The prevailing hypothesis about how rubrics help students is that they make explicit both the expectations for student work and...describe what learning looks like.” Used properly, rubrics improve communication and feedback.

### Curriculum Mapping

According to Natasha Veltri and Harold Webb<sup>9</sup>, the purpose of curriculum mapping is to align classroom learning goals with assignments and the learning outcomes established for departmental and institutional assessment. A curriculum map is a communication tool and a shared plan for the direction of a department and college. Curriculum maps provide a sequence of learning experiences for students and bring coherence to the academic mission. All programs at DMACC must create a curriculum map for their 5-year evaluation and are invited to use this map to guide their assessment planning.

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<sup>5</sup> Suskie, L. (2018). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide*. John Wiley & Sons.

<sup>6</sup> Brookhart, S. M. (2018, April). Appropriate criteria: key to effective rubrics. *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 3, p. 22). Frontiers.

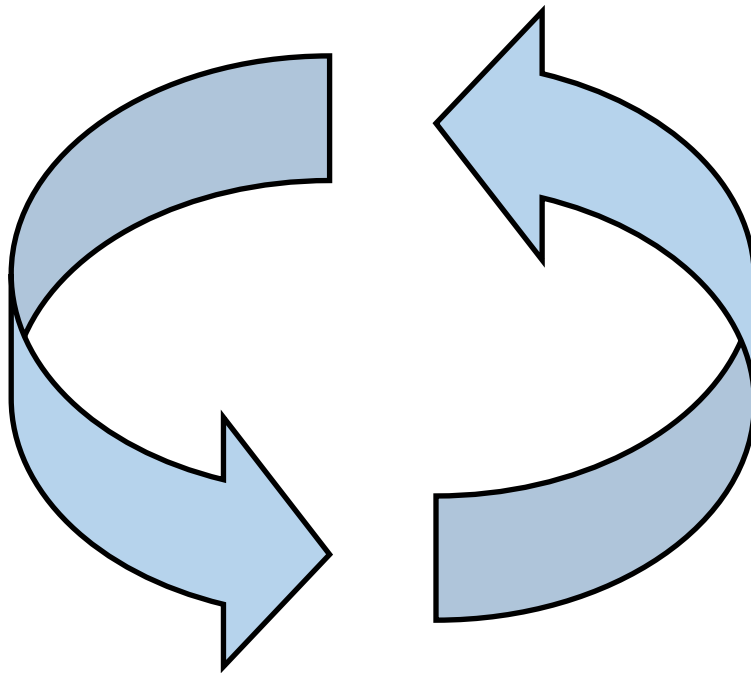
<sup>7</sup> Dawson, P. (2017). Assessment rubrics: towards clearer and more replicable design, research and practice. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 42(3), 347-360.

<sup>8</sup> Ragupathi, K., & Lee, A. (2020). Beyond Fairness and Consistency in Grading: The Role of Rubrics in Higher Education. In *Diversity and Inclusion in Global Higher Education* (pp. 73-95). Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore.

<sup>9</sup> Veltri, N. F., Webb, H. W., Matveev, A. G., & Zapatero, E. G. (2019). Curriculum mapping as a tool for continuous improvement of IS curriculum. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 22(1), 4.

## Closing the Loop

- **Making Improvements:** Faculty chairs submit regular narrative reports explaining how data will be used to make improvements. The narrative form asks a series of questions related to the details of the assessment project, the results, and how the assessment will impact changes to curriculum and instruction. Chairs are asked to discuss assessment results with faculty prior to completing the narrative. The Assessment Commission reviews all narratives and makes them available for administrative review and documentation in 5-year program evaluations.
- **Professional Development:** The Assessment Commission offers regular professional development related to assessment best practices and in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Center and Distance Learning. Assessment related presentations and trainings are offered at during faculty development days, department meetings, new faculty orientation, faculty mentor program sessions, concurrent enrollment development sessions, and DMACC-affiliated conferences, including M.E.S.H. and the Summer Institute. The Assessment Commission also uses Blackboard Community to provide recordings of training sessions as well as resources and materials.



## **Student Affairs Assessment**

*Erica Spiller, Assistant Director, Student Development*

### **Timeline items**

**Summer 2021** – Integration of Orientation Assessment Plan into Collegewide Balanced Scorecard model, including identification of metrics and review cycle

**Summer/Fall 2021** – CAS Assessment of Student Activities and Counseling departments and integration into Collegewide Balanced Scorecard model

Since the initial Student Affairs Assessment planning process began in 2019, the college updated the collegewide strategic plan using a Balanced Scorecard approach (BSC). DMACC has decided that each unit throughout the college will also complete a complementary Balanced Scorecard for their unit. Simultaneously, the college also completed a Technology Audit, which resulted in the purchase of new comprehensive software packages, which will greatly improve operations and opportunities within the Student Services units. As a result of these changes, we have adjusted our Student Affairs Assessment strategy.

We are continuing to use the CAS Self-Assessment Guides (SAGs) to assess and set goals and objectives throughout the Student Services departments. In fact, the SAGs became an ideal tool for helping departments assess the objectives and metrics for their respective Balanced Scorecards. Because the Orientation department was the first to complete their SAG, that department was identified as the test group to create a department-specific BSC. That process is nearly finished, and the next departments that are involved in this process are Student Activities and Counseling.

The scorecards will allow departments and the college to monitor the metrics of a particular department, including the Essential Development Outcomes (EDOs) that are being integrated throughout the Student Services departments as the BSC process continues. The new software packages purchased include CRM Recruit, CRM Advise, and a new self-service portal. Once these new tools are implemented, we will be determining how we can leverage those resources for better tracking and monitoring of our EDOs throughout various functional units.

## Appendix A: History of DMACC Essential Learning Outcomes

*The following history of Essential Learning Outcomes assessment was included in DMACC's recent assurance argument submitted to the Higher Learning Commission:*

DMACC'S Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) were designed to prepare students for 21st challenges and to ensure that all degree programs address foundational discipline knowledge, critical thinking, communication skills, problem-solving, and collaboration. The process to develop DMACC's current ELOs began in 2015 when the former vice president organized a committee to revise what were then called General Education Competencies. The committee, chair by the DMACC Curriculum Commission Chair, consisted of program and district chairs from the CTE and Arts and Sciences areas. The committee was tasked with building outcomes that applied to all programs, not simply general education.

In early 2016, the committee developed a set of essential learning outcomes, but the implementation was placed on hold due to an upcoming site visit and retirement of the vice president. In January of 2018, the committee restarted the process by asking all program and district chairs to map program courses to the outcomes. All full-time faculty were invited to participate during the January 2018 Faculty Development Day. Maps submitted by program and district chairs were used to narrow the list of outcomes. The new ELOs were voted on and approved by the Assessment Commission, sent to deans and provosts for feedback, and then officially announced as the DMACC Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) in Fall of 2018.

In Spring of 2019, the Assessment Commission piloted two ELOs (#2 and #3) in nine courses. Following the pilot, the Assessment Commission expanded assessment of all ELOs to General Education Courses with the highest enrollments. All 5 ELO's have now been measured using Blackboard, and the DMACC Strategic plan contains metrics for ELO assessment.

In Fall of 2019, the Assistant Director of Student Development and the Director of Assessment were tasked with expanding formal assessment to include the many co-curricular activities taking place across DMACC. The Academic Assessment and Student Affairs Assessment teams met to divide co-curricular activities into two groups: academic-based and student services/activities-based. The initiative included a two-pronged approach that combines Essential Development Outcomes (EDOs) within the Student Services department with existing Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) within the Academic department. Together, the outcomes were combined to become DMACC Collegewide Outcomes, approved by the Student Affairs Assessment Advisory Council, the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Enrollment Services & Student Success, and voted on by the Assessment Commission.



## Appendix B: DMACC Collegewide Outcomes

*A link to these outcomes appears on the syllabus template. The full text of the outcomes is also in the DMACC Catalog under Program Requirements and Graduation.*

### Essential Learning Outcomes

**Outcome 1: Discipline Knowledge:** Students will be able to understand and apply discipline knowledge foundational to study within a single course or an entire program.

**Outcome 2: Critical Thinking:** Students will be able to analyze complex information, support arguments with credible evidence, and reach well-reasoned conclusions.

**Outcome 3: Communication Skills:** Students will be able to communicate clearly and effectively within the appropriate context.

**Outcome 4: Problem-Solving:** Students will be able to define, identify, and analyze problems before applying a successful solution.

**Outcome 5: Collaboration:** Students will be able to apply the skills and attitudes necessary for effective teamwork, including interpersonal communication, project management, and leadership.

### Essential Development Outcomes

**Outcome 6: Personal Development:** Students will understand and develop an integrated personal identity, sense of self, and code of ethics and values.

**Outcome 7: Interpersonal Competence:** Students will engage in positive group interactions and relationships as well as demonstrate an understanding of leadership principles.

**Outcome 8: Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement:** Students will demonstrate a commitment to supporting community, global, and social responsibilities that create safe, equitable, and thriving environments.

**Outcome 9: Practical Competence:** Students will understand and perform cognitive and practical skills that will enable healthy, productive, and purposeful lives.

## **Appendix C: Co-Curricular Assessment**

Co-curricular activities are learning and development opportunities delivered outside the formal curriculum that enhance students' academic, personal, and professional growth. Assessment of these activities is aligned to one or more of the DMACC Collegewide Outcomes.

While co-curricular assessment is also covered by Student Affairs (see page 11), the Assessment Commission has started two projects to begin recording student interaction with learning outcomes outside of the classroom in activities and organizations connected to academics.

### **DMACC Diversity Events**

During the 2020-2021 academic year, attendees at Diversity Commission sponsored events were asked to report their levels of engagement with the speaker series and in connection with Diversity Commission goals. One hundred forty-six responses were collected.

Students were also asked to describe what aspects of the events they found beneficial, which topics they wished had been covered, and what aspects of the events could be improved. All survey information was accessed by the Department of Community and Global Engagement.

### **Clubs and Organizations**

The Assessment Commission is also exploring the best methods for collecting data on student engagement with academic-based clubs and organizations. A key Higher Learning Commission recommendation regarding co-curricular assessment is that it should be connected to learning outcomes and that data collected should go beyond basic participation rates.

In Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021, surveys were distributed to select clubs, organizations, and events to collect feedback from students regarding the connection between their engagement in these co-curricular activities and Essential Learning Outcome 1: Discipline Knowledge. Limitations or alterations of co-curricular activities, especially clubs and organizations, during the COVID-19 pandemic has had an effect on this project, and in the Fall of 2021 the Assessment Commission will begin exploring additional options to collect this information, including the use of narrative reports aligned with current practice in course assessments.

## **Appendix D: Online Materials and Communication**

**Faculty:** Visit the Teaching and Learning Blackboard Community and select “**Assessment**” in the course menu for access to the following items:

- The overall five-year plan for assessed courses: this list is updated frequently and contains every course scheduled for assessment through Summer 2023. Program and District Chairs created this list in 2018 and continue to revise it as needed.
- The Faculty Leadership Directory detailing district chairs, program chairs, and group leaders, along with contact information.
- Resources related to using Blackboard for assessment
- A direct link to assessment data accessible by each program’s chair. In order restrict access, course assessment data is distributed first to chairs.
- Information on how to activate and use Blackboard EAC for your own course assessment information.

### **Semester-by-Semester Communication**

Each semester, the Director of Assessment communicates directly with all district and program chairs responsible for coordinating assessment in their disciplines. District and program chairs work with discipline faculty to design and distribute assessments, ensure consistency, and to discuss results and submit narrative reports.

**For questions about this report or assessment at DMACC, please contact:**

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