INTERIM MONITORING REPORT

Institution	Chief Executive Officer	Date Submitted
Rock Valley College	Dr. Howard Spearman	September 30, 2020

Monitoring Report Introduction

As a result of the College's mid-cycle comprehensive review, it is required to submit a monitoring report addressing assessment of student learning, implementation of strategic plan, and an audit of faculty and adjunct qualifications to teach. Each of these three components of required monitoring are identified and changes made since the site visit are reported below. Evidentiary documentation is hyperlinked within the document, and a full list of all linked documents is provided in Appendix A.

Action 1: Interim Report Regarding Assessment

Core Component(s): 4.B – The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

Area of Focus: Rock Valley College must demonstrate the comprehensive implementation of the RVC assessment program, including deeper faculty involvement and assessment of academic and co-curricular outcomes.

Background

In January of 2019, Rock Valley College submitted the Assurance Argument for its mid-cycle comprehensive review, and subsequently participated in a comprehensive site visit on March 4-5, 2019. As noted in the College's Assurance Argument, the College uses continuous improvement processes to support its efforts to be, "...a progressive, relevant learning institution." One process the College uses to this end is that of assessment which is applied across four interdependent levels of assessment (i.e., classroom-, course-, program-, and institutional-level assessment). While the College has a structure in place to support the assessment for student learning in curricular programs, it acknowledged that it needs continuous improvement to establish a more consistent level of participation across curricular and co-curricular programs and disciplines.

The site visit team noted that the College, "...should build upon the existing program and institutional SLO assessment to ensure substantial faculty participation in collection and analysis of data, and [that] improvement actions are identified, implemented, and assessed." Furthermore, the team noted that the College, "...should develop a plan to assess outcomes for its co-curricular activities," including identifying outcomes, methods of assessment, collection and analysis of results, and improvements to implement. As a result, as part of its Action Letter for the College, the Commission required an interim report on the College's efforts to ensure that RVC was comprehensively implementing its assessment program that included deeper faculty involvement and assessment of co-curricular, as well as academic outcomes.

Changes Made Since Comprehensive Site Visit

While the College continued its assessment efforts, it also identified and implemented strategies for improving faculty involvement in the process and developed a plan to assess co-curricular learning

outcomes. Changes made since the comprehensive site visit in response to these two specific areas identified are detailed below.

Improving Faculty Involvement in Assessment
In response to the notation from the site visit team the College adjusted practices to enhance efforts to increase faculty involvement in assessment. The items below detail these efforts.

- *Hold Assessment Workshops for Academic Chairs and Coordinators*
  As a result of the feedback from the site visit team, the Assessment Committee Co-chairs decided to implement professional development workshops to increase faculty involvement and improve consistency of participation in the assessment process across the College. A series of workshops were held for academic chairs and coordinators (i.e., those responsible for seeing that course and program/discipline assessment is conducted and documented). These workshops would essentially become the Assessment Committee for the 2019-2020 academic year.

  Within the workshops, academic chairs and coordinators (n=25) focused on applying the assessment process to program/discipline assessment as it was the area both the College and the site visit team noted as needing additional attention. Originally, the plan was to have separate workshops for Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) academic chairs and coordinators. The decision was based on the assumption that CTE programs were further along in implementation of the assessment process to improve student learning and would have different approaches and methodology from how LAS disciplines. However, as the workshops progressed, it was noted that there were more similarities than differences in needs and efforts, so for the spring semester, the workshops combined the groups. Table 1 shows the topics and participation in these workshops.

  Table 1: 2019-2020 Assessment Workshops for Academic Chairs and Coordinators

Month	Topic	Chair/Coordinator Attendance	
September	Writing Outcomes	CTE: 5 LAS: 8	52%
October	Master Course Syllabus Review and Assessment Plan	CTE: 2 LAS: 7	36%
November	Assessment Findings	CTE: 2 LAS: 3	20%
December	No meeting	--	--
January	No meeting	--	--
February	Assessment Expectations and Challenges	11	44%
March	Aligning Outcomes to Appropriate Measures	11	44%
April	Assessment Findings and Operational Plans	Meeting cancelled (COVID-19)	

  While participation in the workshops was generally lower than anticipated, many participants were consistent throughout the academic year. Furthermore, participants represented every division on campus, which certainly helped with building more involvement from a systemic, institutional perspective.

In addition to these group workshops, the Assessment Committee Co-chairs continued to hold one-on-one and small group meetings with academic chairs and coordinators. General feedback from the academic chairs and coordinators is that while the workshops were generally helpful, they liked having the one-on-one or small group meetings so they could focus on their specific needs and challenges.

Regardless of whether this information is shared in workshops, one-on-one or small group meetings, or both, the participation in the workshops opened the door for increased assessment documentation across divisions. The workshops also illustrated the importance of having conversations on these seemingly basic topics of assessment on an ongoing basis

- ***Increase Assessment Documentation across Divisions***
  Documentation is key to monitoring and improving assessment activity at the College. While we recognize that many faculty engage in the continuous improvement process of assessment, they often are not following up with documentation of findings and changes to be made. The College views this documentation, not as a point of compliance, but rather as integral to building and sustaining an effective culture of assessment for student learning. With the documentation, faculty can examine assessment data over time and consider what interventions had an impact and which did not so the momentum on improving student learning remains continuously moving forward.

  To support this effort, the College uses Watermark's Taskstream to document and archive assessment across course, program/discipline, and institutional levels. Through the Accountability Management System, Taskstream provides the College with a way to document assessment efforts that include planning and tracking improvements (See Figure 1).

  Figure 1: Functions of Taskstream's Accountability Management System
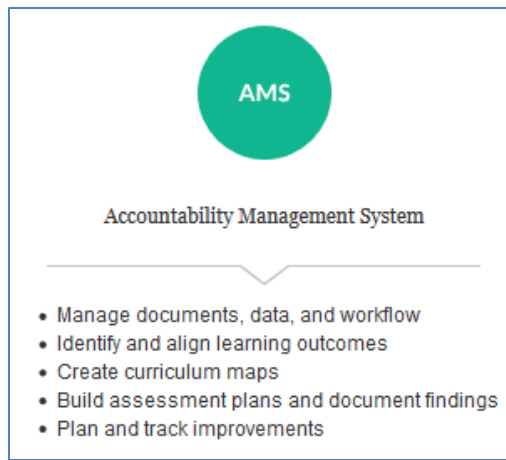
  To further enhance understanding of documentation and encourage faculty participation, the College identified the connection between the different reporting structures in Taskstream to the assessment process (See Figure 1). The previously mentioned workshops, as well as one-on-one and small group meetings, also highlighted this connection and worked with academic chairs and coordinators to better understand how to use Taskstream to document review and

revision of learning outcomes and assessment plans, upload and summarize assessment findings, and move from findings to actions in the operational plan.

Figure 2: Alignment of Taskstream Action and the Assessment Process

The assessment documentation process has been rolled out progressively over the past several years. As of the 2019-2020 academic year, the College had made progress in documentation of course assessment related to learning outcomes, assessment plans, and assessment findings. However, little progress had been made in addressing operational plans for course assessment. Furthermore, very little documentation of program/discipline assessment was happening.

To clarify expectations, goals were established to improve documentation across the assessment process for course and program/discipline assessment. These goals were developed based on the College's progressive roll out of documentation and shared with the leadership of Academic Affairs, including academic chairs and coordinators in the fall. Benchmarks were also identified to help everyone determine if the College as a whole was on track of meeting the goals, as well as note specific areas that may be having challenges to addressing the timeline and expectations.

Table 2: Assessment Documentation Goals

	Learning Outcomes/MCS Review	Assessment Plan	Assessment Findings	Operational Plan
Course Assessment				
2019-2020	100	100	75	50
2020-2021	100	100	90	75
Program/Discipline Assessment				
2019-2020	100	75	25	25
2020-2021	100	100	50	50

Note: Numbers represent the percentage of courses or program/disciplines for which each stage of assessment was completed. Courses were only included if they were scheduled for assessment within a particular year.

Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate the College's efforts to increase assessment documentation within the 2019-2020 academic year.

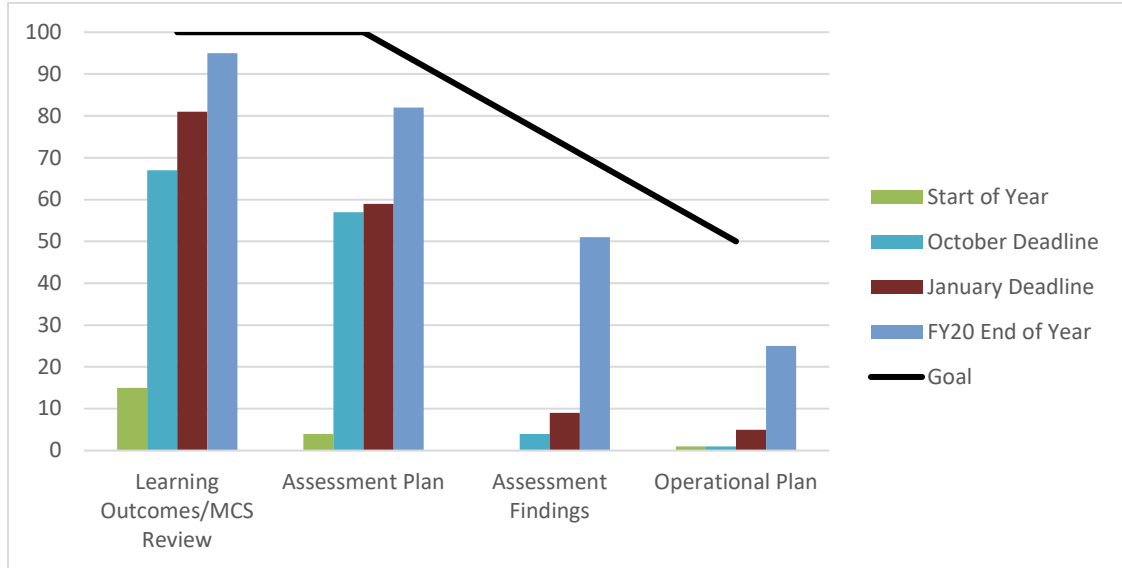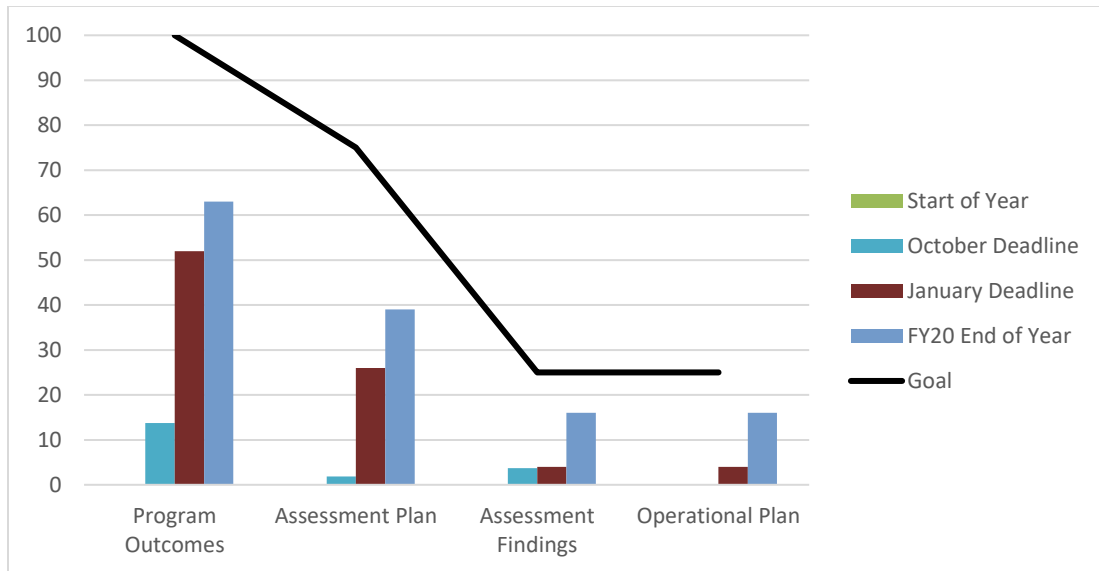Figure 3: FY20 Course Assessment Documentation (Actual to Goal)

Figure 4: FY20 Program/Discipline Assessment Documentation (Actual to Goal)


While these data indicate improvement over time, goals for 2019-2020 were not met. This was due in part to changes in operations in response to COVID-19. Nonetheless, having goals and benchmarks along the way helped to improve the documentation process across the academic year, so the College is better able to evaluate, understand, and continue to improve assessment efforts.

Furthermore, looking at assessment documentation across programs and disciplines year to year in Figures 5 and 6, the percentage of outcomes/MCS reviewed, assessment plans, assessment findings, and operational plans all increased from FY19 to FY20 for both course and program/discipline assessment.

Figure 5: FY20 Course Assessment Documentation

Figure 6: FY19 and FY20 Program/Discipline Assessment Documentation
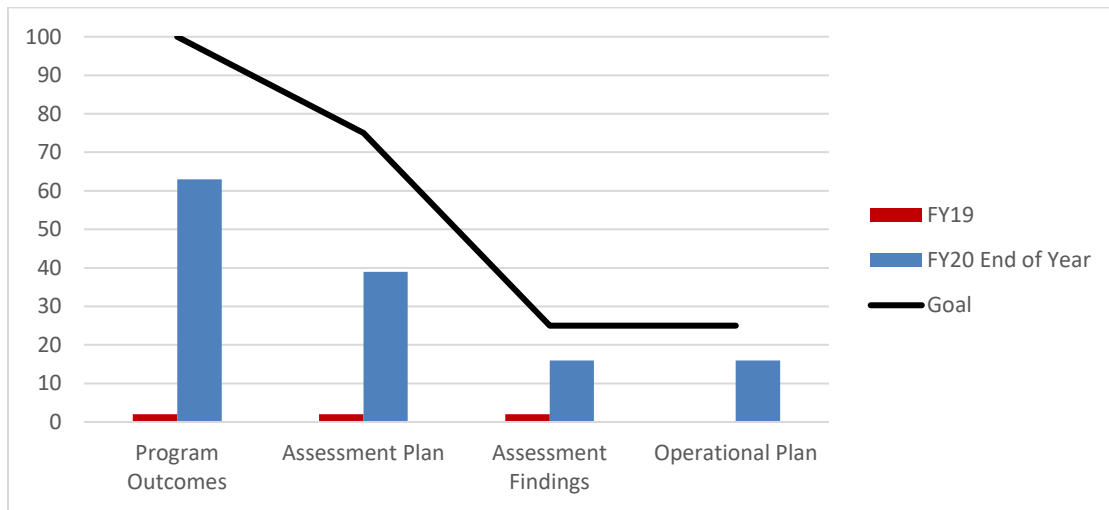
As noted in Table 2 documentation goals have also been identified for the 2020-2021 academic year to continue to expand the involvement in the assessment process and its documentation. Through assessment updates, benchmarks for reaching these goals will be identified and shared with academic leaders, including deans, chairs, and coordinators.

- ***Increase Assessment Updates to Promote Continual Progress***
  Prior to the 2019-2020 academic year, the College reported out to academic deans and chairs about the status of assessment documentation two or three times a year. The focus of this update was on course assessment, since, as previously noted, its consistent and institution-wide implementation had been the priority.

  For the 2019-2020 academic year, updates were shared eight times from the start to the end of the academic year. Based on a recommendation of an academic chair in the February Workshop, these reports began to be distributed to all faculty and adjuncts, in addition to academic deans, chairs, and coordinators. Doing so reinforced the expectation that assessment was the work of all faculty and adjuncts, not just the academic chairs and coordinators. In fact, some academic chairs and coordinators reported faculty and adjunct reaching out to ask what was needed from their classes to inform the process and its documentation while others were more motivated to respond to requests for data, finding, and actions for improvement.

  In the revised [course](#) and [program/discipline](#) assessment updates, progress toward the previously identified goals was benchmarked and status updates were provided. Furthermore, individual academic chairs and coordinators were recognized for making progress, addressing benchmarks, and exceeding expectations.

- ***Expand Outreach for ISLO Assessment Participation***
  At all levels of assessment, the College uses direct measures from coursework to determine the degree to which students are meeting expectations defined by learning outcomes. At the institutional level, faculty and adjuncts are asked to submit artifacts of student learning from their courses to inform understanding of student learning against the four institutional student learning outcomes (ISLO) – communication, analytic reasoning, global awareness and responsibility, and personal responsibility. To participate in the ISLO assessment process, faculty have been asked to provide such artifacts and/or evaluate them against criteria developed from the VALUE rubrics (Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), 2009).

  Prior to the 2019-2020 academic year, the process for identifying participants included identifying faculty that teach courses aligned to each ISLO and requesting artifacts, as well as reaching out to prior evaluators and others that have expressed interest to read and score them. In 2019-2020, the *[Institutional (ISLO) Assessment Participation Form](#)* was distributed to all faculty and adjuncts. As noted in Figure 6, the results of completion of this form led to a noticeable increase in faculty and adjunct participation in this process.

Figure 7: FY19 and FY20 Faculty and Adjunct Participation in ISLO Assessment

FY19
- Faculty/Adjuncts Submitting Work = 10
- Courses Represented = 12
- Disciplines = 11
    - Anthropology
    - Biology
    - Business
    - Dental Hygiene
    - Engineering
    - English
    - Manufacturing Engineering Technology
    - Philosophy
    - Respiratory Care
    - Sociology
    - Student Development

- Evaluation Team Members = 10

FY20
- Faculty/Adjuncts Submitting Work = 41
- Courses Represented = 33
- Disciplines = 22
    - Art
    - Biology
    - Chemistry
    - CIS
    - Mass Communications
    - Engineering
    - Electric Engineering Technology
    - English
    - Nutrition
    - Humanities
    - Literature
    - Marketing
    - Math
    - Music
    - Nursing
    - Philosophy
    - Political Science
    - Psychology
    - Respiratory Care
    - Sociology
    - Speech
    - Student Development

- Evaluation Team Members = 36

Evaluation Team members were sent a post-process survey to capture their perceptions of the ISLO, the related assessment process, and the Participation Form. The intent of this survey was to determine how the ISLO assessment process could be improved to further increase participation of faculty and adjuncts. The survey results suggest that the participation form was a good way to increase involvement and should continue to be used. They also noted that the participation form provided an opportunity to help faculty and adjuncts better understand the connection between the ISLO and classroom assessment. Furthermore, response data indicated that engaging in the evaluation process provided a way to learn what colleagues are doing and learn more about the College's students.

- *Re-instate a Formal Assessment Committee*
  As the 2019-2020 participations rates were examined through the information previously mentioned, the decision was made to reconstruct a formal assessment committee as had been in place prior to this academic year. Having the academic chairs and coordinators meet regularly in lieu of the previous assessment committee did provide an opportunity to build common understanding and application of the process; however, as noted in Table 1, participation was limited and lagged as the year progressed. As such, sustaining that model to address the continuing efforts to build a culture of assessment could be problematic and inconsistent.

  Beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year, a new structure for the formal assessment committee was developed and the Curricular Assessment Committee was formed. Prior members of the pre 2019-2020 assessment committee were asked if they would like to participate in this new committee, but the focus was on developing a committee with academic assessment leaders comprised of academic chairs and coordinators, as well at least one academic dean and vice president. One of the academic chairs or coordinators serves as co-chair of the committee along with the Executive Director of Outcomes Assessment.

As a result, the Curricular Assessment Committee consists of 12 members with 2 faculty members (representing Respiratory Care and Library), 6 academic chairs (representing Business; Life Science; Philosophy; Fitness, Wellness and Sport; Developmental Reading and Writing; and Physical Science), 1 academic dean (Communication and Humanities), 1 academic VP (STEM), the VP of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, and the Executive Director of Outcomes Assessment.

The primary foci of the Curricular Assessment Committee for 2020-2021 will be to finalize and implement a peer review process for course and program/discipline assessment, revise the institutional assessment process based on feedback provided, and continue workshops and 1-1 or small group meetings with faculty, adjuncts, and academic chairs and coordinators.

**Plan to Assess Co-curricular Learning Outcomes**

- *Revised Assessment Model and Resource Development*
  At the time of the 2014 Comprehensive Review, the College had developed a system of collecting co-curricular assessment results and using them to inform changes, particularly in Student Life, the Campus Activities Board (CAB), and student clubs. With changes in personnel, however, this effort lost momentum and by the time of the 2019 Mid-cycle Comprehensive Review had essentially disappeared.

  The College recognized this problem within its mid-cycle review and the site visit team reinforced the need to address the gap in its recommendations. This time, the College wanted to ensure that this process was not only implemented, but that it also could be sustained and institutionalized so that it would no longer be dependent upon the efforts of a few.
  As a starting point, the College determined that co-curricular assessment needed to be a more visible process and that professional development opportunities on this process needed to be intentional and consistent.

  Academic assessment information has been published and shared out in this manner for at least the past 10 years at the College. Now, the College would illustrate how co-curricular assessment complimented academic, curricular assessment. Figure 8 was published and has been shared out in Board of Trustees, College leadership, department, and committee meetings to widen conversations about how a co-curricular assessment process could be developed and influence improvements in student learning outside of as well as inside the classroom.

Figure 8: Model of Levels of Assessment at Rock Valley College
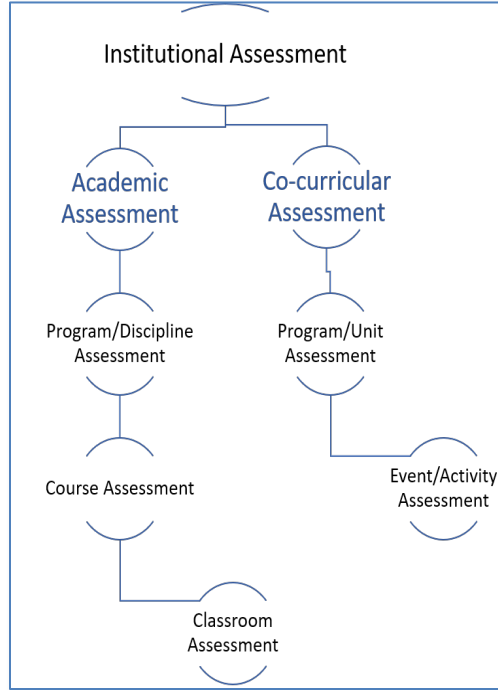
- ***Initiate Development of Co-curricular Assessment Plans***
  During the Fall 2019 all-college development day, information about work to be done on co-curricular learning was shared out. As part of that information, employees were asked to identify co-curricular assessment within their work and help the College develop a framework for institutionalizing co-curricular assessment. The goal of the College was to identify programs and units to initiate co-curricular assessment efforts. Essential in this effort was that each area would identify co-curricular learning within their work, discuss expectations of what students should learn as a result of participation, draft learning outcomes aligned to the ISLO, document a plan for assessing these outcomes by aligning events and activities, and begin data collection. The work of documenting assessment results and developing operational plans would continue for this group in 2020-2021 as the College rolled out workshops and meetings with a new cohort of programs and units to start their assessment efforts.

  Student Support Services, which includes the Library, Tutoring Center, Writing Center, and Testing Center, participated in team workshops aligned to those of the CTE and LAS assessment workshops in Fall 2019. Workspaces were set up for them within the academic assessment platform of Taskstream so that they could document learning outcomes, assessment plans, assessment findings, and operational plans. The Library and Writing Center made the most progress with both identifying learning outcomes and developing assessment plan for their various activities; in addition, the Library was able to collect assessment findings for at least one of their identified activities. Both areas are now looking at how they may need to adjust assessment plans to continue their co-curricular assessment efforts now that most, if not all, will need to be conducted virtually due to COVID-19.

Additional efforts on developing co-curricular assessment were addressed by the following areas: Advising, Association for Latin American Students (ALAS), Athletics, Personal Counseling, Model UN, Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), and Valley Forge (student news). With these areas the groundwork was addressed in one-on-one and small group discussions. In working with these programs and units, the academic and student services leaders recognized that adjustments needed to be made in the documentation of co-curricular assessment efforts in Taskstream. If they were included in the academic assessment workspaces, it would be more difficult to generate reports that would isolate the co-curricular work. As such, a separate space is being created for the centralized documentation of this work within Taskstream. The Executive Director of Outcomes Assessment in consultation with the Co-curricular Assessment Committee will finalize and implement this workspace in the fall of the 2020-2021 academic year.

In the 2019-2020 academic year, the College wanted to engage approximately 10 programs and units in the first co-curricular assessment cohort. Nine areas emerged to engage in initial efforts to address this work. Table 3 illustrates the progress made by these areas prior to the College moving fully virtual in the spring in response to COVID-19. During this transition, many of these areas continue to address their identified learning outcomes in a virtual environment so that their assessment efforts can continue. Through the work of the Co-curricular Assessment Committee, they are amending assessment plans and starting to collect data to inform findings and operational plans in the 2020-2021 academic year. Nonetheless, even with the disruption of COVID-19, the College has demonstrated meaningful, replicable progress in addressing the goals and expectations for implementing assessment of co-curricular learning.

Table 3: 2019-2020 Status of Implementing Co-curricular Assessment

Program/Unit	Learning Outcomes	Assessment Plans	Assessment Findings	Operational Plans
Advising	Yes	Yes	No	No
ALAS	Yes	Yes	In Progress	No
Athletics	Yes	In Progress	No	No
Library	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Model UN	Yes	Yes	No	No
Personal Counseling	Yes	In Progress	No	No
PTK	Yes	Yes	In Progress	No
Valley Forge	Yes	In Progress	No	No
Writing Center	Yes	Yes	In Progress	No

- ***Instate a Formal Assessment Committee***

Beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year, a new formal assessment committee was formed, the Co-curricular Assessment Committee. Those who worked on co-curricular assessment plans were asked if they would like to participate in this new committee. As a result, the Co-curricular Assessment Committee consists of 11 members with 3 faculty members (representing faculty advisers), the Manager of Student Life, the Personal and Success Counselor, the Athletics Director, 2 student service deans (Dean of Students and Dean of Enrollment and Retention), the VP of Student Services, the VP of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, and the Executive Director of Outcomes Assessment. The Dean of Enrollment and Retention is serving as a co-chair of this committee with the Executive Director of Outcomes Assessment.

The primary foci of the Co-curriculum Assessment Committee for 2020-2021 will be to develop a multiyear co-curricular assessment plan, roll out co-curricular assessment to additional programs and units, develop a tool kit to support co-curricular assessment, and identify events and activities that integrate co-curricular learning across programs and units. For example, at its first meeting, the committee identified two activities – the *2nd Annual Friendsgiving: A Time for Resilience* sponsored by the Support Our Students (SOS) club and this year's *Golden Futures 5K* to fund student scholarships – that could support the co-curricular learning of several groups with similar learning outcomes (Athletics; Personal and Success Counseling's wellness initiatives addressing mental health; and student clubs such as SOS, Black Student Alliance (BSA), and Association for Latin American Students (ALAS)).

Conclusions

The steps taken by the College since the comprehensive site visit have resulted in an increase in faculty participation at the institutional, program/discipline, and course assessment levels.   However, given the nature of assessment, continued improvement needs to be made to further grow faculty involvement in using assessment data to inform actions for improving student learning. To this end, the College will do the following:

- Continue developing the Curricular Assessment Committee
- Continue workshops and 1-1 meetings
- Develop professional development materials for Academic Chairs to support them in their role as assessment leaders
- Develop resources to support course and program/discipline assessment and its documentation
- Develop and implement a peer review process for course and program/discipline assessment
- Revise the institutional assessment process based on FY20 participant feedback

In the last year, the College has developed and began implementation of a new co-curricular assessment plan. Moving forward the College will undertake steps, including but not limited to, the following in an effort to further institutionalize co-curricular assessment.

- Continue developing the Co-curricular Assessment Committee
- Expand implementation of co-curricular assessment to an additional cohort of approximately 10 programs and units and plan for future cohorts
- Develop Tool Kit to support co-curricular assessment

To ensure that the College makes progress on the actions identified above, an *FY21 Assessment Committees Operational Plan* has been developed by the Executive Director of Outcomes Assessment and the co-chairs of the committees.   The operational plan addresses the annual foci for each of the assessment committees and provides them with a timeline for addressing the work outlined. In the first meeting of the 2020-2021 academic year, both assessment committees reviewed the operational plan goals for fall and spring semesters, and progress updates will be shared at each meeting.

In addition to the points identified above, RVC is also participating in the HLC Assessment Academy, a multi-year opportunity to further define and support improving assessment processes. The Executive Director of Outcomes Assessment and the Vice President of Institutional Research and Effectiveness participated in the August 2020 Assessment Academy Orientation.   While the focus of the College's

work will be more fully articulated by the College's Assessment Academy Team in October, key element that will be woven into the priority will include continuing to increase faculty involvement across the College's levels of curricular assessment and implementation of the plan to assess co-curricular learning outcomes as we formalize processes and expectations to institutionalize improving student learning through assessment.

Action 2: Interim Report Regarding Comprehensive Strategic Plan

Core Component(s): 5.C – The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

Area of Focus: Rock Valley College must demonstrate its development and implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan.

Background

In January of 2019, Rock Valley College submitted the Assurance Argument for its mid-cycle comprehensive review, and subsequently participated in a comprehensive site visit on March 4-5, 2019. As noted in the College's Assurance Argument, the College was currently engaged in development of a strategic plan. Goals and strategies had been established, but measurable action steps were not yet defined for all strategies.

The site visit team noted that the College needed to "develop, implement, and evaluate" a comprehensive Strategic Plan. As a result, as part of its Action Letter for the College, the Commission required an interim report on the College's efforts to ensure that it had developed and was implementing a comprehensive strategic plan.

Changes Made Since Comprehensive Site Visit

In response to the notation from the site visit team regarding a comprehensive strategic plan, the College has fully developed, implemented, and evaluated the strategic plan that was being developed at the time of the site visit. At the time of the site visit, the College's Strategic Plan had defined goals and strategies, and some work to address them had begun. Since that time, the [Strategic Plan](#) expanded to include action steps with measurable outcomes and deadlines for completion.

Two Strategic Plan Updates have been reported to the Board of Trustees to keep them apprised of progress. These updates were presented to the Committee of the Whole on [May 11, 2020](#) and [September 14, 2020](#). In addition, the entire campus community received an update during the 2019 and 2020 Fall Conferences, all-day professional development events for all employees of the College. The College will continue to monitor and regularly report out to the Board and College community as it continues to implement actions which are to be address by Fall 2022.

The fully developed strategic plan includes two goals, each of which are divided into two strategies. These are the same goals and strategies that were in place at the time of the March 2019 site visit. Underneath these strategies, there are now 41 measurable actions with due dates for completion. The Stakeholders can also now access the [Strategic Plan, strategies, actions, and monitoring](#) through the College's website.

At the close of FY2020, 3 of these actions had been completed, 27 were still in progress, 9 were not started, and 2 will not be implemented due to changing circumstances. The majority of actions that had not been started were related to creation of the College's Advanced Technology Center (ATC). On July 28, 2020 the RVC Board of Trustees approved the purchase of property and an intergovernmental agreement with a regional school district to act as owner's representative for the project. With this important step complete, the College can implement the other actions related to the ATC.

The Strategic Plan provides oversight for other college plans. For example, the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan (2019-2021) is directly tied to the following action and sub-actions included in the College's Strategic Plan:

> **Action 2.A.3.** Reduce gaps in awareness, access, retention, and degree/certificate completion rates.
> > a. Increase credit hour enrollment.
> > b. Increase retention rate.
> > c. Increase completion rate.

In addition, creation of the Advanced Technology Center (Strategy 2.B of the Strategic Plan) is an integral part of the updated Facilities Master Plan, scheduled for completion later this calendar year.

The Strategic Plan guides resource allocation at RVC. For example, in both FY19 ([Purchase Report #734-A](#)) and FY20 ([Purchase Report 749-B](#)), the Board of Trustees approved the purchase of Ad Astra, a course scheduling analytics tool that will help the college control its instructional unit cost (Strategy 1.A) and schedule courses in such a way that facilitates the movement of students though their educational pathways (Strategy 2.A).

On September 25, 2018, the Board of Trustees approved a fund transfer request ([Board Report #7555](#)) that allocated funds to support the Strategic Plan:

- $1 million to Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability (**Action 1.B.3.** Increase funding to cover OPEB liability.)
- $2 million to staffing for recruitment and retention (**Action 2.A.3.** Reduce gaps in awareness, access, retention, and degree/certificate completion rates.)

In addition, on September 24, 2019, the Board of Trustees approved a fund transfer request that transferred $9,250,000 of State Revenue from the College's operating fund ([Board Report #7652](#)) to specific uses. This transfer included the following funds to support the Strategic Plan:

- $3 million to OPEB Liability (**Action 1.B.3.** Increase funding to cover OPEB liability.)
- $4 million to Capital for the Advanced Technology Center (**Action 2.B.9.** Identify funding needs for Advanced Technology Center.)
- $250,000 to Marketing (**Action 2.A.4.** Create and implement marketing campaign and strategies for pathways.)

In FY20, the Board again approved a fund transfer request that supports the Strategic Plan ([Board Report #7684](#)). This request included:

- $1.2 million toward ATC equipment (**Action 2.B.9.** Identify funding needs for Advanced Technology Center.)
- $1 million toward OPEB Liability (**Action 1.B.3.** Increase funding to cover OPEB liability.)

Conclusions

The steps taken by the College since the comprehensive site visit have resulted in a fully developed, implemented, and evaluated strategic plan. This plan integrates other /college plans and guides resources allocation. The College will continue to monitor and evaluate its Strategic Plan, adjusting as needed based on internal and external factors and soon begin to engage constituents in the next strategic planning process.

Action 3: Interim Report Regarding Minimum Qualifications to Teach

Core Component(s): 3.C.2 – All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

Area of Focus: Rock Valley College must demonstrate that it ensures that each individual teaching meets minimum qualifications.

Background

In January of 2019, Rock Valley College submitted the Assurance Argument for its mid-cycle comprehensive review, and subsequently participated in a comprehensive site visit on March 4-5, 2019. As noted in the College's Assurance Argument, the College conducted an audit of faculty and adjunct files. Any incidence where information in the personnel file was inconsistent (e.g., missing transcripts or verification of work experience) with the minimum requirements were addressed by the appropriate dean and academic chair. At that time, if any faculty or adjunct were found to not meet the minimum qualifications, the College process was to require a remediation plan to be approved and monitored by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO).

However, in response to its own random audit, the site visit team noted that the College should conduct a comprehensive audit of the qualifications of all faculty and adjuncts to ensure compliance with its own guidelines for minimum qualification. Furthermore, if any faculty or adjunct did not meet these minimum qualifications, they should be immediately placed on a remediation plan, and they should not be assigned classes to teach until that remediation plan has been approved. As a result, as part of its Action Letter for the College, the Commission required an interim report on the College's efforts to ensure that each instructor meets minimum qualifications.

Changes Made Since Comprehensive Site Visit

A comprehensive audit of all active faculty and adjunct credentials was conducted. In this audit, 132 faculty and 256 adjunct files were reviewed to capture course(s) hired to teach, work experience, credentials, certificates, and degrees. Results of this audit were reviewed against HLC expectations for minimum qualifications to teach, as well as those of the Illinois Community College Board and RVC guidance document. Based on this comprehensive audit, the College has followed internal, state, and HLC compliance expectations.

Nonetheless, through the audit process, it became apparent that transitions over the years in Human Resources and Academic Affairs personnel has led to inconsistencies in how employee information is

collected, verified and filed. As a result of recommendations from the site visit team and this comprehensive audit, changes made since the comprehensive site visit include the following:

- **Improve Efficiency of Adjunct Hiring**
  The adjunct hiring process was reviewed by a team that included academic and student affairs deans and vice presidents, human resource staff, CAO, and CFO. One key component of this process review was the check and documentation of adjuncts against the minimum qualifications to hire. It was determined that while academic chairs typically lead the hiring of adjuncts in their areas, the appropriate dean would be responsible for verifying courses the adjunct would be eligible to teach based on their qualifications, documenting this on the [Adjunct Hiring Form](). This step supports the College's annual efforts to audit adjunct experience and qualifications and reduces the opportunities for scope creep of any individual adjunct.

- **Improve Approval of Dual Credit Instructors**
  The College runs dual credit on campus and in regional high schools. For those courses run on campus, the instructor is an employee of the College. As such, their personnel files, which includes the documentation illustrating that they meet minimum qualifications to teach have been reviewed by the appropriate dean and are housed in human resources. The review of these personnel files is included in College's annual audit process.

  For those courses run at the high school, the instructor is an employee of the respective school district. Instructors employed by the high school have their credentials reviewed by the appropriate dean and chair to ensure that minimum qualifications are met. At the time of the comprehensive site visit, how these credentials moved from the Early College department to Human Resources was not documented and unclear.

  Since the visit, this [process]() has been formalized to ensure consistent process of not only verifying the credentials of the high school instructor to teach a class for dual credit, but also for ensuring this documentation is on file in Human Resources with other personnel so that these files can be included in the College's annual audit process.

- **Document Process for Addressing Faculty or Adjunct Not Meeting Minimum Qualifications**
  As noted previously, any faculty or adjunct that were found to not meet the minimum requirements, were placed on a remediation plan and monitored by the CAO. Since the comprehensive site visit, this [process has been documented]() to ensure consistency in understanding and implementing it.

  As noted in the [process document](), faculty or adjuncts placed on a remediation plan are required to demonstrate consistent progress and complete all required components within a two-year period. The remediation plan will be monitored on a semester basis by the appropriate dean with successful completion affirmed by the respective vice president.

  It should be noted that anyone that has not meet minimum qualifications to teach before, during, or since the time of the mid-cycle comprehensive review has either completed their remediation plan or are no longer have course assignments. Based on this recent comprehensive audit, no faculty or adjuncts are on or need a remediation plan.

- ***Improve Employee Status Management***
  Of particular issue for the College at the time of the mid-cycle comprehensive review was that no working process was in place for maintaining up-to-date information on the active employees in public-facing information (e.g., the College website and intranet). As noted in the College's response to the Institutional Actions Council, 23 faculty and adjuncts were randomly selected with four adjuncts identified as not having appropriate graduate course work. An internal review of these files noted that all four of these adjuncts, as well as others within the random sample, were no longer employed by the College to teach courses at that time.

  As a result, the College noted that the process of moving instructors, particularly adjuncts, between active and inactive status was either not being done consistently or those status changes were not being updated wherever employee directories were displayed.   As a result of the site visit, Academic Affairs and Human Resources has worked together to find efficient and effective ways for ensuring the employee status of adjuncts is kept current. Currently, human resource staff provide an end date at the time of adjunct hire that is one year from their start date. If an adjunct continues beyond that year, their end date will be extended another year. This is repeated until the adjunct either moves to a full-time position or is no longer working at the College.

  Human Resources is monitoring this to determine if the end date should be updated annually or by semester. Ultimately, the processes of academics, human resources, and payroll need to work smoothly to ensure that status updates take place in a timely fashion. If these process can be maintained and managed efficiently, then the College will move to updating the end date each semester to further improve the currency of status information.

  Moreover, Human Resources has noted that it will begin to routinely run reports checking the status of employees, particularly faculty and adjuncts. In doing so, they can better determine the degree to which processes are accurately being implemented and what adjustments may need to be made along the way. Furthermore, to ensure that the information being entered into the system are pushing out to public-facing information, the College will review the employee directory at least twice a year.

- ***Maintain Documentation of Minimum Qualifications to Teach College Credit Courses***
  The College has had in place a document that outlines the minimum qualifications to teach for each course. The information for each course is provided by the academic chairs and their respective faculty. Since the site visit, this document has again been reviewed and updated. The College has added ICCB and HLC guidelines for each course. Information from academic chairs is provided as RVC guidelines. If the RVC guidelines differ from the ICCB OR HLC (i.e., they require more than the minimum qualifications), then the academic chair will provide a justification.

  To maintain currency of this document, academic deans are required to review this document regularly. The document was reviewed in January of 2020. With some reorganizational changes since that time, the deans are currently engaged in reviewing the College's minimum qualifications to teach, working with their chairs and faculty as needed. The current review will be completed and signed off affirming its accuracy by October 15. Moving forward all deans will lead the review the documentation of the minimum qualifications to teach credit course at the beginning of each fall semester and affirm by September 15th.

Conclusions

The steps taken by the College since the comprehensive site visit have resulted in formalizing process such as adjunct hiring and dual credit instructor recognition to ensure that minimum qualifications to teach specific courses has been verified and are consistent with the guidelines set by HLC, the State, and the institution. Furthermore, processes around the recognition of the qualifications of high school instructors to teach dual credit course at their school have been documented and formalized to ensure consistency as such opportunities expand. The documentation and verification of qualifications of these instructors, although not direct employees of the college, will be maintained with other personnel files in Human Resources.

While the College has conducted annual qualification audits, the audit of this past year was the first comprehensive audit of all active faculty and adjuncts as of Fall 2019. Moving forward, the audits will focus on all new faculty, adjuncts, and dual credit instructors, as well as on those that have added additional classes or recognition in another discipline from the time of original hire. These audits continue to be conducted by the ALO in conjunction with the academic vice presidents and deans. To further support the auditing process, the College is working to implement an electronic solution for maintaining the currency of faculty and adjunct information (e.g., Watermark's Digital Measures). With such a platform, reports can easily be run and information checked against documentation in personnel files. Furthermore, it would provide a central repository of faculty accomplishments, high-impact practices, and community engagement.

Finally, Human Resources has already committed to moving from paper to electronic personnel files and has documented and revised processes as noted above. However, since the team is relatively new to the College, the ALO and HLC Steering Committee will continue to work with Human Resources on process improvement and documentation to provide for efficiencies in culling personnel information

Monitoring Report Summary

This monitoring report addresses the changes and progress made since the site visit on the three required components – assessment, strategic plan, and minimum qualifications to teach. In addition, next steps within these areas have been identified and will inform the work of the College. The College's HLC Steering Committee will continue to monitor these efforts and others in an effort to be proactive on continuous improvement, process documentation, and collection of evidentiary data to prepare for further comprehensive reviews.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF EVIDENTIARY DOCUMENTATION WITHIN THIS REPORT

Page	Evidentiary Document
7	Course Assessment Update Report
7	Program/Discipline Assessment Update Report
7	Institutional Student Learning Outcome (ISLO) Assessment Participation Form
8	FY20 ISLO Evaluation Team Follow-up Survey
10	Library "Course" Assessment Reports
10	Writing Center "Course" Assessment Reports
12	2020-2021 Assessment Committee Operational Plan
13	College Strategic Plan
13	May 2020 Strategic Plan Monitoring Report
13	September 2020 Strategic Plan Monitoring Report
13	Strategic Plan, Strategies, Actions and Monitoring on College Website
14	Board of Trustees – Purchase Report #734-A
14	Board of Trustees – Purchase Report #749-B
14	Board of Trustees – Report #7555
14	Board of Trustees – Report #7652
14	Board of Trustees – Report #7684
16	Adjunct Hire Form
16	Dual Credit at the High School Instructor Account Process
16	Minimum Qualifications to Teach Remediation Process
17	RVC Minimum Qualifications to Teach