

ADDENDUM to the 2021 Mid-Cycle Evaluation Report Addressing Spring 2018 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report

**Prepared for the Northwest Commission on
Colleges and Universities**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	5
II. CONCEPTUAL MODEL – STUDENT LEARNING, COURSE LEARNING, PROGRAM LEARNING, GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING, AND DEGREE OUTCOMES	5
III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT	6
IV. PROGRAM REVIEW & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	9
English Program	11
Math Program.....	11
Diesel Power Technology Program	12
Marine Maintenance Technology Program	12
Automotive Technology Program	13
Early Childhood Education Program.....	13
Conclusion.....	14

I. INTRODUCTION

The Commission requested the College address Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 2 of the Peer Evaluation Report in this addendum to the Mid-Cycle Report.

RECOMMENDATION 1: “The Commission recommends that the College: Fully implement student learning outcomes assessment across all courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered (2.C.1).” (2020 Standard 1.C.1)

RECOMMENDATION 2: “Systematically use the results of the assessment of student learning achievement for improvement of instructional and student support programs (4.A.3; 4.B.2).” (2020 Standards 1.C.5, 1.C.7)

Since the Comprehensive Year Seven Evaluation visit in 2018, Skagit Valley College has developed and implemented an equity-minded, comprehensive “system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs” (Standard 1.C.5), and faculty use “the results of its assessment efforts to inform planning and to continuously improve student learning outcomes” (Standard 1.C.7). This addendum: outlines the conceptual model for Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) (see Section II); describes how learning outcomes have been reviewed, updated, and assessed (see Section III); and explains how they fit into a comprehensive Program Review process to guide improvement of learning and achievement for the College’s diverse student populations (see Section IV).

II. CONCEPTUAL MODEL – STUDENT LEARNING, COURSE LEARNING, PROGRAM LEARNING, GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING, AND DEGREE OUTCOMES

Student Learning Outcomes. The College conceptualizes SLOs as measurable (assessable) statements about what is essential that students know or be able to do at the end of a course, program, or degree. They are student-centered statements that focus on the evidence of learning (products, artifacts, or performances) that students should be able to produce. Faculty understand that equitable student success requires intentional learning outcomes assessment, and, accordingly, the College strives to develop learning outcomes that are easily understood, concise, meaningful, and assessable.

The College has established learning outcomes at the course, program, and general education levels. Below are descriptions of each:

- 1. Course Learning Outcomes.** CLOs are the most important skills, knowledge, and abilities the students will develop by the end of a specific course. In other words, a student who enrolls in a course can expect to be taught content related to the CLOs and be able to use this information and these skills effectively by the end of the class. The College’s CLOs can be found at https://www.mysvc.skagit.edu/cat_search_adv.asp.
- 2. Program Learning Outcomes.** PLOs are the overarching skills, knowledge, and abilities that are emphasized and reinforced throughout several courses in a specific program. They are measurable statements that define the skills, knowledge, and abilities students can expect to develop by the conclusion of their degree or certificate program.

The College defines an instructional program as “a systematic, contextualized, often sequential grouping of courses leading to a certificate or degree.” In general, **Workforce Programs** correspond to the certificates and degrees offered by the respective instructional departments to provide students, upon completion, with career placement, career advancement, or further educational opportunities. **Transfer Programs**

encompass the statewide transfer agreements and degrees, the purpose of which is to graduate students who have met the requirements of the first two years of a four-year baccalaureate degree and who are subsequently prepared to pursue the final two (or more) years of study specific to major(s) in the bachelor's degree. The Transfer PLOs are divided among the three content distribution areas for all transfer degrees: Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Natural Sciences.

- 3. General Education Learning Outcomes.** GELOs are the overarching skills, knowledge, and abilities that are emphasized in all degree programs. GELOs define the skills, knowledge, and abilities students can expect to develop by the time they graduate. All degree-seeking students at the College are expected to attain GELOs. The General Education Program meets the definition of an instructional program and is therefore included in the Program Review process.

Degree Learning Outcomes. College faculty determine whether students have met the specific learning outcomes for a degree when students have fulfilled 1) the CLOs for the courses required for the degree, 2) the specific PLOs that are embedded within each degree program, and 3) the GELOs that all degree-seeking students must satisfy. Stated as a simple formula, Degree Learning Outcomes = CLOs + PLOs + GELOs.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

Background and Approach. In 2016, the College identified the need to review and update its General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs), Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). The College began this process by redefining GELOs, which were not being comprehensively assessed, due in part to the large number of outcomes (totaling 11 general outcomes broken into 59 specific outcomes). The District General Education Committee was tasked to redefine the GELOs and to incorporate feedback from across the College in 2017. In Spring 2018, the College adopted a set of five meaningful and assessable GELOs (see **Appendix 1 Ad Hoc Report Addressing Spring 2018 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report**) and developed an assessment plan. The faculty also defined and adopted PLOs for transfer degrees in 2017 and began to revise PLOs and CLOs across all workforce degrees in conjunction with a revised comprehensive Program Review process introduced in 2018.

In response to Recommendation #1 from the NWCCU in 2018, the College formed the Outcome and Assessment Workgroup composed of faculty, staff, and administrators to expedite the work to improve, develop, and systematically assess student learning outcomes at the program and general education levels. The revision of student learning outcomes was rooted in a commitment to close opportunity gaps and create a systematic approach to improving student outcomes. The process engaged faculty in the rigorous work of implementing meaningful assessment to address opportunity gaps, meet industry needs, and guide students to successful transfer and/or sustainable wages through pathways design.

Members of the Outcomes and Assessment Workgroup were chosen based on expertise, training, and/or experience in learning outcomes establishment, assessment, or backward planning. The faculty members who served on the workgroup had educational backgrounds in education and/or experience in learning outcome redesign at other institutions. The Instructional Deans and the Vice President for Instruction were also included in the workgroup to provide support, ensure coherence, and sustain progress. The Outcome and Assessment Workgroup created a workplan for the implementation of outcome redesign; designed an educational Canvas page for outcome writing and submission; trained faculty in writing PLOs; provided feedback on every rewritten PLO; trained faculty in outcome assessment; and provided Canvas workshops for outcome assessment.

The group was mindful about establishing District-wide collaboration and trust. As a result, during meetings with faculty, the group facilitated the process of program-level assessment, provided training and support, coordinated District-wide data efforts, and provided transparency through open and honest communication. The group did not determine program outcomes or specific ways of assessing those outcomes, such as tests, essays, and projects.

In addition, the Outcome and Assessment Workgroup infused all trainings with a focus on equity and completion. The workgroup did so by challenging historical norms and power dynamics, questioning outdated practices, informing faculty of strategies that lead to equity (i.e., assessable outcomes, outcome alignment, etc.), and asserting that all faculty are responsible for closing opportunity gaps.

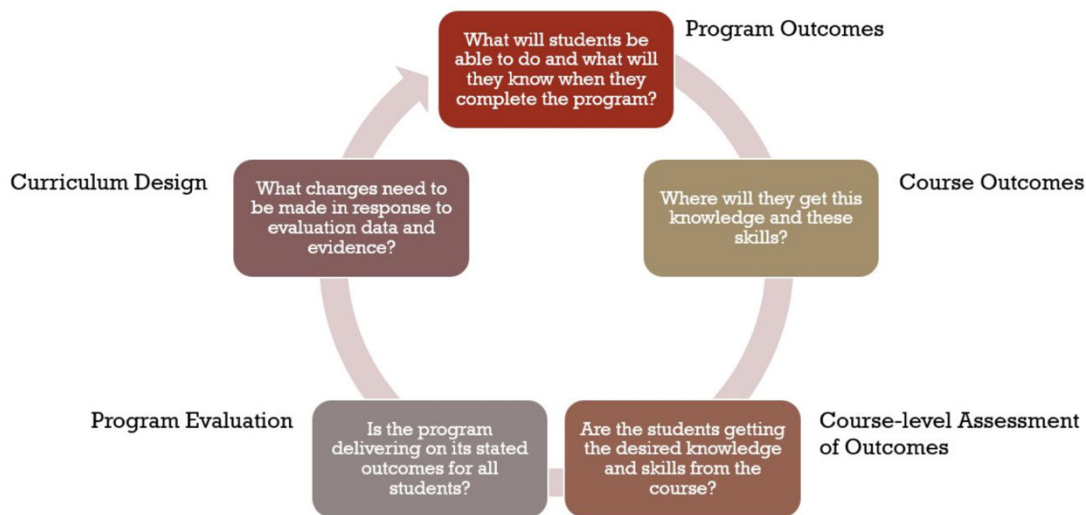
In Spring 2020, the Outcome Assessment Workgroup was institutionalized into the Assessment Committee, making it part of the College's formal governance structure. The Assessment Committee is charged to oversee and help coordinate the College's assessment of course, program, and general education learning outcomes, including the use of assessment results in planning and improvement. The Assessment Committee also reviews and makes recommendations on academic standards, policies, and practices as they relate to learning outcomes assessment. Specifically, the Assessment Committee:

1. Reviews and makes recommendations on academic standards, policies, and practices as they relate to the assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, and general education levels.
2. Assists with the training and coordination of student learning outcomes assessment and supports the role of assessment in the program review process.
3. Collaborates with the Instruction and General Education Committees to ensure meaningful assessment of student learning outcomes and to plan for improvement.

The Assessment Committee is one of three faculty-led committees dedicated to maintaining the integrity and rigor of the College's curriculum. The other two committees include the General Education Committee, which oversees the GELOs and degree/certificate requirements, and the Instruction Committee, which is responsible for program and course-level learning outcomes. The functions of these latter two committees will be discussed further in Section IV.

Learning Outcome Assessment Process. PLOs and GELOs are mapped to a specific course or cluster of courses within a degree program; embedded in course syllabi; and, assessed at the course level each time a course is taught. Additionally, PLOs and GELOs are formally assessed and recorded in Canvas using a standardized Outcome Assessment Rubric (OAR). OARs are developed for each of the PLOs and GELOs by program faculty with the support and assistance of the Outcomes and Assessment Workgroup (and now by the Assessment Committee). OARs are uploaded to Canvas and scored by faculty who are assigned to teach courses mapped to the respective outcomes. The uniform OAR allows for data to be collapsed, aggregated, or disaggregated as needed, and compared across programs, faculty, classes, and modality (see **Appendix 1** for the **Outcome Assessment Rubric**).

Faculty trainings have focused on developing an understanding of the relationship between course and program outcomes, and how to use the results of assessment to further improve achievement of student learning outcomes, including ways to redesign and adjust curriculum (as modeled below).



The establishment, review, and assessment of program outcomes is embedded within the College’s comprehensive Program Review process that has been developed in response to Recommendation #2. Currently, all programs have collected data on the achievement of at least one-third of their student learning outcomes and have used that data to inform planning and improvement.

The Program Review process rests on a four-year cycle that includes three years of program data collection—including the results of outcomes assessment—followed by a fourth year of data analysis and planning as follows:

Year 1: Spring 2019-Spring 2020

- Data collection and assessment of Communicate and Quantify General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) completed;
- One-third of each program’s PLOs formally assessed.

Year 2: Summer 2020-Spring 2021

- Results of learning outcomes assessment from Year 1 are reviewed in Annual Program Effectiveness Reports and used to inform planning and to identify goals and strategies for improvement;
- Data collection and assessment of Integrate GELO occurs;
- Second-third of each program’s PLOs to be formally assessed.

Year 3: Summer 2021-Spring 2022

- Results of learning outcomes assessment from Year 2 are reviewed in Annual Program Effectiveness Reports and used to inform planning and to identify goals and strategies for improvement;
- Data collection and assessment of Engage and Think GELOs occurs;
- Final one-third of each program’s PLOs to be formally assessed, completing the three-year PLO assessment cycle.

Year 4: Summer 2022-Spring 2023

- Results of learning outcomes assessment from Year 3 are reviewed in Annual Program Effectiveness Reports and used to inform planning;
- Comprehensive Program Review to be conducted, resulting in long-term program plan. The Comprehensive Program Review includes four sections:
 - ◇ Program appraisal based on three-year collection of annual program data;
 - ◇ Program curriculum, including department planning guides and degree maps;
 - ◇ Program resources and achievements;
 - ◇ Program planning to improve and realize equitable student access and success.

In Fall 2020, faculty reviewed the data collected during the first year of the assessment cycle. This data is provided along with other student success indicators on the Annual Program Effectiveness Reports. Particular attention was paid to the improvement of course and program outcomes, as well as identifying strategies to improve the curriculum and student learning. Examples are provided in the next section.

IV. PROGRAM REVIEW & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Background and Approach. The College has worked collaboratively and intentionally to ground its mission and culture in a deep commitment to equity. This commitment is reflected in the College's Core Themes of "Equity in Access," "Equity in Achievement," and "Equity in Community." Further, the College has committed to lead with racial equity. With this commitment to equity, the College has engaged in a holistic approach to evaluate how its policies, practices, and pedagogy affect student learning and completion. Faculty, staff, and administrators collaborated to create generative spaces for inquiry and learning, such as the Inclusive Pedagogy Faculty Learning Group, the Inclusive Excellence Administrative Retreat, and the Student Services Inclusive Excellence Learning Group. These groups focused heavily on increasing institutional capacity to reduce student inequities by developing shared knowledge, skills, and abilities across the College. Within this broad context, the College has also continued to define and implement a Program Review process to address inequities in student learning and to improve the quality of its instructional programs.

Since the introduction of a District-wide operational planning process in 2013, faculty have drawn from program data to develop strategies to improve student achievement. Learning outcomes assessment was practiced at the General Education level using the ETS® Proficiency Profile, which was administered to students annually. Aside from informing large institutional changes to instruction, the faculty did not find the results of the ETS® Proficiency Profile particularly helpful to identify improvements. Program learning assessment also varied by program and faculty expertise. As a result of this experience, the Program Review process has evolved significantly over the past several years to ensure that the process is meaningful, more systematic, comprehensive in nature, and attentive to measuring equity gaps across all programs. In addition, a systematic approach to student learning outcomes assessment has been implemented to inform planning and identify strategies for improvement.

Program Review Process. At the beginning of each fall quarter, programs are provided with an Annual Program Effectiveness Report. The Report includes data in four areas: access, achievement, student experience, and SLOs. Faculty are prompted to use an equity-minded approach to analyze the annual data, interpret trends, and identify equity gaps. The list below illustrates examples of the questions considered. For a full list of the data prompts, see

Appendix 1 for the Annual Program Effectiveness Report Template.

- **Access.** Who accesses the program? Information includes the number of students and FTEs, as well as their gender, race, age, and attendance status.
- **Achievement.** Who succeeds in the program? Data includes pre-college to college-level transition rates, key “milestone” course pass rates, and degree/certificate/transfer success rates.
- **Student Experience.** How do students experience the program? This includes survey data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory on issues such as quality of instruction, inclusivity, equity, and diversity.
- **Student Learning.** What are students learning in the program? Information includes data from PLOs assessment are reported here. Programs will assess approximately one-third of their learning outcomes during each of the first three years of the review cycle.

The Review of the Annual Program Effectiveness Report serves as the basis for program planning, requiring faculty to develop goals and identify strategies to increase student learning and success. Improvements include: making revisions to curriculum and/or pedagogy; resequencing degree pathways; engaging in faculty professional development; collaborating across disciplines to contextualize content; and/or making other program improvements to increase outcomes and to close equity gaps. During the fourth year of the cycle, faculty are asked to complete a comprehensive report and develop a long-term program plan to improve the quality of their programs (see **Appendix 1** for the **Program Review Template**).

Fall 2020 provided the first opportunity for faculty to review the results of the new assessment system described in Section II above. To ensure the Program Review process was meaningful and consistent, Department Chairs and Liaisons met numerous times with Instructional Leadership to review the data, set goals, and identify strategies for improvement.

In recognition of the central role faculty play in assessment and improvement of student learning, the College’s two key curriculum committees—Instruction Committee and the General Education Committee—each review and provide feedback to assist in the prioritization of key instructional strategies. More specifically, the Instruction Committee is charged with “ensuring that the curriculum is current, relevant and data-informed, and results in expected student learning outcomes at the course and program levels, including collaboration with the Assessment Committee in the mapping of courses to program level outcomes, assessment, and planning for improvement.” Similarly, the General Education Committee “is responsible to evaluate and maintain the rigor of degree requirements as they relate to the general education learning outcomes, including collaboration with the Assessment Committee in the mapping of courses to the general education outcomes, assessment, and planning for improvement.”

Consistent with their respective charges, strategies for improvement that either require institutional resources or involve collaboration across multiple college units are reviewed and prioritized. For example, based on the assessment cycle this year, program faculty in the English and Math departments reviewed the Communicate and Quantify outcomes in their Annual Effectiveness Reports and submitted plans to the General Education Committee for review and feedback. These plans are prioritized and rolled into the larger Instructional Plan that feed into the College’s 2021-2023 Operational Plan.

The Results of Program Review: Some Representative Examples

In order for strategies and activities to be prioritized on the College’s Operational Plan, they must meet at least one of four criteria: They must require either 1) new institutional resources; 2) updates to or investments in facilities or infrastructure; 3) collaboration across multiple college units; or 4) a general “need to know.” While some strategies for improvement meet one or more

of these criteria and are included in the Operational Plan, most strategies identified through the Program Review process are prioritized and implemented at the program level. As described above, these strategies are identified annually during the fall Program Review process and included on each program's Annual Effectiveness reports. Each program's goals and strategies for improvement are available upon request. In addition, several representative examples of this process have been selected from both Transfer and Workforce programs to highlight how faculty have used the results of assessment and program review "to inform planning and to continuously improve student learning" (Standard 1.C.7).

English Program

In 2016, only 43 percent of the College's students achieved satisfactory English 101 learning outcomes within one year of enrollment. Data analyses revealed that the majority of these students were enrolled in Workforce program pathways and/or were placed into developmental English before taking the required college-level English course. These students also tended to be low-income and/or students of color. A review of the data demonstrated that majorities of these students either did not make it into the college-level English course or did not satisfactorily achieve the learning outcomes for the course.

Based on the findings from the Program Review in 2018, the faculty:

- Eliminated stand-alone developmental English courses;
- Changed degree requirements in workforce programs so that all students must complete English 101;
- Rewrote English 101 course outcomes;
- Implemented and expanded I-BEST English 101 courses with contextualized content.

In addition, full-time and associate faculty received extensive training in: a) backward design and planning; b) equity-minded curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment; and c) learning outcomes creation, assessment, and revision.

As a result of these changes and improvements, the overall percentage of students who successfully complete English 101 learning outcomes within one year of enrollment has increased from approximately 43 percent in 2016 to 59 percent in 2020. Faculty have (and continue to) update their pedagogy, curriculum, and assessments to be more equity minded and student centered. More than 70 percent of students are enrolling in English 101 in their first year, and of those just over 75 percent are successful in meeting or exceeding course-learning outcomes. Equity gaps do remain in the overall achievement of English 101 learning outcomes within one year of enrollment. However, of students who actually attempt the course, racial and income equity gaps have been eliminated. In addition, gender equity gaps (males have lower success rates compared to females) have been attenuated.

Math Program

In 2018, 77 percent of students failed to achieve college or program-level Math learning outcomes within one year of enrollment. The vast majority of these students placed below college-level Math when enrolling at the College. Data analyses showed that students of color and low-income students are more likely to place below college-level Math. These students are also less likely to eventually enroll and achieve college-level Math learning outcomes. A more recent review of the Quantify General Education Learning Outcome indicated that Workforce students and students of color are less likely to achieve the outcome.

Based on the findings from the Program Review in 2019, the Math faculty:

- Eliminated stand-alone developmental Math courses for students who place 1.5 levels below college/program level Math;
- Enrolled students into accelerated Basic Education for Adults (BEaA) Math courses, especially for those students who placed farther below college-level Math;
- Designed co-requisite Math courses to provide students with only the knowledge and skills to be successful in specific college-level math courses (e.g., Statistics, pre-Calculus, Liberal Arts Math);
- Redesigned WMath (Workforce program Math) to be taught in an Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model and better integrate into other college-level Math pathways.

In addition, Math faculty completed a year-long equity-minded practitioner training program, including research on systemic racism, equity-based program and course design, and research showing most successful Math achievement models. Faculty also received extensive training on learning outcome creation, assessment, and revision.

Diesel Power Technology Program

During the 2018-2019 academic year, data from summative assessments revealed that a significant number of students did not satisfactorily achieve a program learning outcome intended to measure understanding of electrical competencies. Concurrently, the program's advisory committee advocated for a review program curriculum associated with electrical competencies given the rapid pace of technological change within the field.

Based on these findings from the Program Review in 2018, the Diesel Power Technology faculty used data from formative and summative assessments to identify specific (electrical) content and pedagogical areas within the curriculum that required revision to increase student comprehension. Additional guidance was provided by the program advisory committee to further align electrical content with industry needs.

More specifically, faculty:

- Developed additional electrical content and revised course-level outcomes for Diesel Applied Electrical (DSL 201);
- Offered the revised DSL 201 course in the 2020-21 academic year;
- Adopted a plan to provide new program level outcome assessment data for electrical competencies in Winter 2021.

Marine Maintenance Technology Program

Completion data from 2018-2019 prompted a review of the program's curriculum in effort to increase retention in second year courses and further align program outcomes with industry needs.

Based on these findings from the Program Review in 2019, the Marine Maintenance Technology faculty developed a new certificate track (Marine Mechanical Technician) and new degree structure in the 2019-2020 academic year in collaboration with the program's advisory committee. The degree structure allows students to complete each program certificate (Marine Electrical and Marine Maintenance) independently or consecutively as part of the associate's degree program. The certificates include new courses that expand on content required by industry and include associated course level outcomes to assess understanding and mastery.

The new program options were implemented in Fall 2020.

The Marine Maintenance Technology Program will review retention and completion data from 2020-2021 to measure the effectiveness of program revisions and will measure student achievement of revised competencies through course level outcome assessment data.

Automotive Technology Program

Data from the 2019-2020 Automotive Technology effectiveness report indicated that a significant number of students (50 percent) did not complete a degree in the 2018-2019 academic year. Analyses of the report revealed the chief barrier to degree completion for a majority of students was completion of college-level Math and English.

The Automotive Technology faculty were already collaborating with Math and English faculty to revise program educational pathways to better support learning outcomes, and the changes to course sequencing improved completion rates for English and Math. For example, 53 percent of students who enrolled in college-level English in the 2018-2019 academic year successfully completed the course, while 83 percent of students enrolled in college-level English in the 2019-2020 academic year successfully completed the course. Math completion rates similarly improved. In 2019-2020, 59 percent of students that enrolled in college-level math completed the course, while the completion rate increased to 80 percent in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Based on the findings from the Program Review in 2020, the Automotive Technology faculty developed a plan to increase student support by utilizing Math and English assessment data to scaffold quarterly faculty-student advising appointments during the first year of the program in order to improve Math and English completion rates. The meetings are intended to reinforce the interdisciplinary nature of Math and English, emphasize its application to the automotive field (i.e., support I-BEST instruction), and better understand student needs while they complete general education course requirements.

The Automotive Technology program will implement the new advising model during the 2021-2022 academic year and will include the collection of qualitative (student and faculty feedback) and quantitative (retention and completion) data to assess the model's effect on Math and English completion in the first year of the Automotive Technology program.

Early Childhood Education Program

During the 2019-2020 academic year, approximately 37 percent of Early Childhood Education students were assessed to have met or exceeded the standard for a program level outcome related to the effective use of teaching strategies. Given the importance of pedagogical application in the Early Childhood Education program, the data revealed a need to further investigate additional opportunities for teaching practice to occur within the program in order to improve outcome achievement.

Based on these findings from the Program Review in 2020, the Early Childhood Education faculty:

- Used data from outcome assessments to inform an analysis of program curriculum to identify appropriate courses for additional laboratory and co-operative learning experiences;
- Revised course-level outcomes for all courses that had been identified in the program analysis to allow for the measurement of teaching practice;
- Plan to add new or additional laboratory and cooperative experiences in six program courses in the 2021-2022 academic year;
- Revised course level outcomes and associated assessments of teaching practice across the program's curriculum.

Conclusion

The Program Review process at Skagit Valley College is meaningful, comprehensive, and attentive to measuring equity gaps in access, success, and student learning. In addition, the systematic approach to student learning outcomes assessment has been implemented to inform planning and identify strategies for improvement. These efforts provided a strong foundation to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and helped further cement assessment practices into the College culture. The shared understanding about the importance of well-defined learning outcomes, quality course design, and assessment of student learning were key to moving instruction rapidly to an online environment while maintaining both quality learning environments and a sharp focus on achieving equitable outcomes. As a result, the College is well-positioned to continue making improvements in equitable student learning and success well into the future.

Appendix 1 Ad Hoc Report Addressing Spring 2018 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report:
<https://www.skagit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Ad-Hoc-Report.pdf>