



PVCC Applications

A. Strategic Issues

Assessment at Paradise Valley Community College is an essential component of its ongoing transformation to be a more **Learning-Centered College**. As such, the assessment of learning is integral to the College's strategic issues. Strategic issues are compelling questions that PVCC uses to focus its planning, budgeting, and institutional effectiveness systems. Each issue represents an opportunity for PVCC to continuously improve its ability to accomplish its mission.

Strategic Issue #1 asks the College to consider "What should PVCC do to become a more learning-centered college?" Efforts to become more learning-centered encompass not only student learning, but organizational and employee learning as well.

The regular use of assessment results by individuals, departments, divisions, and the College is the single most significant indicator of being learning-centered. Without assessment, it is not possible to be learning-centered.

B. Twelve Indicators

In 1998, PVCC drafted a document to help chart its course towards becoming a more learning-centered college. Each of the twelve indicators helps the College benchmark its progress as it reconceptualizes and continuously improves the College's systems, structures, programs and services. Many of the indicators are directly related to assessing student learning outcomes.

PVCC's Twelve Indicators of a Learning-Centered College

1. *Learning outcomes* have been identified and made explicit.
2. *Learning outcomes* serve as the centerpiece for program and curriculum development.
3. *Learning outcomes* are measured for the purpose of intervention, remediation and continuous improvement.
4. Learning opportunities are accessible to learners.
5. Learning opportunities are offered in a variety of formats and methodologies.
6. Learners are encouraged to develop relationships and connections with faculty, staff and peers.

7. Research about learning and learners is routinely considered and systematically incorporated into the college's learning processes, programs and services.
8. Learning is foundational to the development, delivery and *assessment* of student, academic and administrative support services.
9. The college's systems (policies, procedures, structures and technologies) are designed and evaluated in terms of their support of learning.
10. Learning serves as the focus of the college's strategic planning, budgeting and institutional effectiveness processes.
11. The college's employees demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning.
12. An employee and organizational learning initiative supports, coordinates and helps integrate employee and organizational learning.

In short, assessment of learning is an essential component of the College's mission and strategic issues. Assessment therefore impacts everyone at the college in some way and provides relevant and useful information that ultimately enriches learning for faculty, staff, and students.

C. Underlying Assumptions

In 2001, many of the College's efforts towards assessment focused on building context and learning about assessment as a best practice focused on learning. To help the college community better understand the purposes of assessment, the Student Academic Achievement Assessment Committee (SAAAC) drafted some philosophical foundations about assessment at PVCC.

Assessment at PVCC is dedicated to be:

- The cornerstone of a commitment to become a more learning centered college;
- Focused exclusively on the continuous improvement of learning;
- Developed by teams;
- Viewed as an essential element of the College's instructional program;
- Derived from District and College goals and measures;
- Focused on the core learning outcome of critical thinking;
- Tailored to the specifics of each course, discipline, or division;
- Considered to be in a state of continuous refinement and improvement;
- Conformed to the Higher Learning Commission accreditation requirements;
- Communicated in simple and clear ways;
- Implemented and sustained over time throughout the College.

In addition, the SAAAC confirmed that academic assessment (within the Learning Division) must be faculty driven. The Faculty own academic assessment. They identify the outcomes, specify the means of assessment, and decide what to do with the results.

The Strategic Issues, Twelve Indicators, and Underlying Assumptions collectively establish a firm foundation for all assessment activities at Paradise Valley Community College. These activities integrally support the College mission, establish accountability for external stakeholders, and are intrinsically beneficial to the College's employees and daily operations.