

Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report

Submitted to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

September 23, 2015

**Table of Contents**

[Introduction to Mid-Cycle Evaluation 1](#_Toc429404884)

[Leadership Changes 1](#_Toc429404885)

[Accreditation 1](#_Toc429404886)

[Part I: Overview of Institutional Assessment Plan 2](#_Toc429404887)

[A. Core Themes and Objectives 2](#_Toc429404888)

[B. Core Theme Indicators 2](#_Toc429404889)

[C. Strategic Plan (Initiatives and Areas of Focus) 4](#_Toc429404890)

[D. Strategic Objectives and Action Plans 4](#_Toc429404891)

[E. Assessment for Strategic Plan 2016-2021 7](#_Toc429404892)

[Part II: Representative Examples of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment 7](#_Toc429404893)

[A. Example 1: Global Awareness Assessment Working Group (GAAWG) 7](#_Toc429404894)

[B. Example 2: Inter-instructor “Norming” in English as a Second Language (ESL) Courses 11](#_Toc429404895)

[Part III: Moving Forward 13](#_Toc429404896)

[A. Assessing Mission Fulfillment 14](#_Toc429404897)

[B. Assessing Student Learning 14](#_Toc429404898)

[Table of Acronyms 18](#_Toc429404899)

[Table of HTML Links 19](#_Toc429404900)

[List of Appendices 20](#_Toc429404901)

# Introduction to Mid-Cycle Evaluation

This report includes Shoreline Community College’s (“Shoreline”) response to the requirements established by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) for a Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation (MCE). Shoreline completed a Year One Self-Evaluation in Fall 2011, a Comprehensive Self-Evaluation in Fall 2012 and a Year One Self-Evaluation in Fall 2013.

## Leadership Changes

Since the Fall 2013 Year One report Shoreline has experienced significant changes in leadership. In April 2014, the Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Cheryl Roberts as the next college president replacing Interim President Daryl Campbell, who held that position beginning July 2013. Prior to July 2013 President Lee Lambert held the position.

The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (VPASA) position has experienced four leadership transitions in the past three years. After one year as VPASA, Dr. James Jansen resigned in September 2013. The previous VPASA, John Backes, assumed acting duties until Dr. Alison Stevens was appointed Interim VPASA in January 2014. Professor Robert Francis replaced Dr. Stevens in Spring 2014 as VPASA. Shoreline anticipates engaging in a national search to replace Vice President Francis by June 2016 as he will retire at the end of the 2015-16 academic year.

As the result of retirements and resignations, there has been a complete change in leadership at the dean level since 2012. The College has worked to bring stability by filling all open positions with permanent appointments.

In December 2013, Dr. Bayta Maring was appointed Director of Institutional Assessment and Data Management (DIADM) and has gathered and documented much of the evidence in this report.

## Accreditation

In April 2014 Shoreline formed the Accreditation Coordinating Committee (ACC) to broaden and deepen the College’s attention to the upcoming MCE. It consists of the VPASA, the Executive Director of Business and Student Support Services (EDBSSS), the Chair of the Faculty Senate, the Chair of Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, the DIADM, the Student Body Association President, and the Classified Union Chief Shop Steward. A subset of the committee (VPASA, EDBSSS, DIADM) was given the responsibility by President Roberts of taking the lead in completing the MCE report.

Authoring four accreditation reports in five years has allowed the Shoreline community to foreground issues related to accreditation. The College has made several adjustments as the result of the six recommendations made in the October 2012 NWCCU evaluation report (see Appendix A).

President Roberts took office with the immediate goal of creating a foundation for mission fulfillment, moving from an ad hoc “initiative” culture (noted as a concern in the Fall 2012 Comprehensive Peer-Evaluation Report) to a more intentional decision-making process, with a focus on Mission, Vision, Core Themes, long-range strategic planning, and resource alignment. Central to that effort has been creating a “preferred future” through the creation of a five-year strategic plan. Shoreline has devoted significant time and resources to creating an inclusive development process with the goal of completing the plan by January 2016.

Until the five-year strategic plan is completed, Shoreline is using a [one-year strategic plan](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/strategic-planning-committee/documents/strategic-plan.pdf) [1][[1]](#footnote-1) incorporating [Areas of Focus](https://www.shoreline.edu/about-shoreline/board/documents/regular-meetings-sept-dec-2014/6-oct-29-2014-tab3-areasoffocus-14-15.pdf) [2], both of which the Board of Trustees have affirmed, to inform the College’s short-term work as well as allocation of resources. To ensure that resources are aligned with the strategic plan, Shoreline continues to use the action plan budget process begun in Spring 2013 (see Recommendation 1 Fall 2012 Comprehensive Peer-Evaluation Report). Now in its fourth year, this annual, iterative process has increased campus understanding of alignment efforts and laid the groundwork for general campus engagement in the creation of its new five-year plan.

# Part I: Overview of Institutional Assessment Plan

Since our Year One Self-Assessment (2013), Shoreline has moved forward with the framework for mission fulfillment depicted in Figure 1.

## A. Core Themes and Objectives

As mentioned in the introduction, Shoreline has undergone major transitions over the past three years and is in the process of developing a five-year strategic plan. As of the submission of this report, the College has developed a draft of the strategic planning goals and objectives (see Appendix B) that corresponds fairly well with our Core Themes. However, the strategic plan will go through several months of additional revisions, incorporating feedback from the entire campus community, as well as conversations with community, civic, and business leaders. As the College refines these goals leading up to a final adoption of the strategic plan in January 2016, it is possible that revisions to Core Theme Objectives, Indicators, and possibly the Core Themes themselves might be warranted. It is anticipated these revisions will be proposed *subsequent* to the adoption of the 2016-21 strategic plan.

## B. Core Theme Indicators

Our Core Theme Indicators are essential to understanding mission fulfillment and are selected specifically to demonstrate long-term progress in key areas (i.e., the Core Theme Objectives).

A recent [review of the Core Theme Indicators](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/CoreThemesReport2015_v4.pdf) [3] by Shoreline’s Executive Team (ET) revealed strengths and areas for improvement related to mission fulfillment. Most notably, areas of strength included the performance of Shoreline students transferring to the University of Washington relative to other transfer students, as well as the employment rate for our professional-technical program graduates relative to that of the state overall. One key aspect of the 2016-21 strategic plan (See Appendix B) will be capitalizing on the College’s strengths in efforts to develop and reinforce the Shoreline identity and brand.

The most striking weakness among the Core Theme Indicators was a consistent decline in completion/transfer-out rates over the past three years. This metric is based on cohorts defined by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), so it is limited to first time in college (FTIC), full-time students; however, this decline may reflect the long-term effect of drastic cuts in student support services. As described in Appendix A, several important strides have already been made in bolstering and restructuring advising, orientation, and tutoring, all of which should improve the completion/transfer-out rate within the next several years. Student success is strongly highlighted in the new strategic plan (see draft goals in Appendix B); over the next five years, the College will engage in Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM), with the Student Success Coordinating Committee ensuring that these initiatives build on each other in a coherent and systematic way to help increase student persistence and retention (see Appendix A for additional details).

Visual depiction of Shoreline's framework for mission fulfillment and assessment. Mission to Core Themes to Core Theme Objectives to Initiatives to Goals to Strategic Objectives to Action Plans.

**Figure 1. Visual depiction of Shoreline’s framework for mission fulfillment and assessment**

The review of Core Theme Indicators also revealed the need to revise certain metrics, particularly in the context of the strategic plan. For example, one draft strategic goal concerns engaging in continuous improvement processes across all our programs and services, which relates directly to *Core Theme 2: Program Excellence.* The effects of “continuous improvement” could potentially be the improvement of students’ perceptions of their academic preparedness. In addition, the continuous improvement model would include data collection and analysis illustrating the impact of specific changes (i.e. improvements), which would be evidence of the College’s progress toward its mission fulfillment. Another example for potential revised indicators are those associated with *Core Theme 4: Access and Diversity*, which focus on enrollment rates of disaggregated groups (e.g., students who are eligible for Pell grants, students from under-represented racial/ethnic minorities); whereas metrics related to progression and retention of these students might be more meaningful.

## C. Strategic Plan (Initiatives and Areas of Focus)

While Core Theme Indicators provide a gauge of our long-term progress towards mission fulfillment, Shoreline also engages in ongoing, in-depth, short-term assessment related to our strategic goals and ongoing decision making. Below are several key examples of this ongoing data analysis and reporting.

### 1. Assessment of enrollment, retention, and completion

A central aspect of the Board-approved [Areas of Focus](https://www.shoreline.edu/about-shoreline/board/documents/regular-meetings-sept-dec-2014/6-oct-29-2014-tab3-areasoffocus-14-15.pdf) [2] and the current [strategic plan](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/strategic-planning-committee/documents/strategic-plan.pdf) [1] is increasing enrollment, retention, and completion for target populations (e.g., international students, veterans). These topics have also been a strong focus of institutional assessment for the past two years.

The Office of Institutional Assessment and Data Management (IADM) provides [quarterly reports](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/institutional_data/Quarterly%20Enrollment%20Comparisons%20-%20Fall.pdf) [4] related to enrollment to the Board of Trustees and makes instantaneously-updated reports related to enrollment and retention available to members of the campus community on the College’s [report server](http://www.shoreline.edu/reports/report-server.aspx) [5] (for access to these reports, please contact Juliet Scarpa, [jscarpa@shoreline.edu](mailto:jscarpa@shoreline.edu)) and on Shoreline’s [intranet site](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/institutional-data.aspx) [6]. These ongoing reports revealed dramatic declines in enrollment of resident students, prompting [further study](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/institutional_data/Domestic%20Enrollment%20--%20BoT.pptx) [7] and a significant change in the strategic plan. An overarching objective for the 2016-21 strategic plan will be to increase enrollment and student success, employing the principles and techniques of Strategic Enrollment Management.

With regard to retention and completion, IADM has provided the Board of Trustees and the Dean Team with an [overview of the](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/institutional_data/SAI_BoT_April2015_FINAL_rev.pdf) College’s performance [8] based on Washington State’s Student Achievement Initiative, which provides both indicators and benchmarks of student progress. The results indicated that with Shoreline’s bold vision of being “world class,” there is room for improvement in the College’s support of students, providing additional evidence for the need to strengthen academic support services as seen in our SEM efforts.

### 2. In-depth assessment supporting decision making

IADM also provides ongoing data to support the goal of increasing enrollment, retention and completion. For example, in Fall 2014 the office underwent an extensive analysis of [course waitlist data](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/institutional_data/WL_Overview_R3.pdf) [9] to better understand student demand for classes and how limitations in offerings may hinder student success. The results were used as a key data point for the Academic Deans and VPASA in prioritizing which faculty positions to renew and establish. For example, Communication Studies, with consistently long waitlists, was given higher priority than a new faculty position in Anthropology, where demand was not as strong.

## D. Strategic Objectives and Action Plans

As described in the introduction (and Appendix A), Shoreline has moved forward in refining and systematizing the abbreviated Strategic Action Plan (aSAP) process. Using the 2014-15 strategic plan as a guide, 52 proposals were submitted in 2014-15, using a new online submission system. Each request was reviewed by two sub-groups within the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (a committee including faculty, student, classified staff, and administrative staff representatives), then moved on to the Dean Team (a body representing leadership in instruction and student services). Finally the requests were reviewed by the Executive Team.

In Spring 2014, the Executive Director of Budget and Capital (EDBC) [presented a proposed budget](http://www.shoreline.edu/about-shoreline/board/documents/regular-meetings-2015/6-may-27-2015-tab4-FY15-16proposed-budget-rev.pdf) [10] within the framework of the strategic plan/areas of focus, providing the Board with an overview of how money is allocated to specific projects based on alignment with that plan. In total, 30 of 52 projects were recommended for at least partial funding, and an additional 5 were moved to the operational budget (i.e., funded with existing budgets).

As indicated in the budget proposal presentation, abbreviated Strategic Action Plans are reviewed according to how well they align with the strategic plan. To that end, all applicants describe how their particular plan would be evaluated, defining success for their plan in the context of the strategic goals and Core Themes. All aSAP projects report back to the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee annually, at which time they provide evaluative evidence of success.

## E. Department-level assessment

Abbreviated Strategic Action Plans (aSAPs) represent specific requests for additional funding related to activities and projects within a department or division. In addition, individual departments, divisions, and services areas within the College engage in continuous improvement and goal-setting that do not necessarily require additional funding but are strongly aligned with the College’s Core Themes.

To support individual departments in making data-informed decisions in their ongoing work, IADM has launched two major initiatives in the past 18 months with the goal of providing data that support individual areas in making decisions, setting goals, and engaging in continuous improvement as part of aSAPs and/or their ongoing operations in service of the Core Themes.

### 1. AccuSQL

Shoreline has prioritized gathering data to understand the effectiveness of service areas, with the first step being gathering reliable data about students’ use of those services in a way that enables linking student participation to specific outcomes. AccuSQL is a tool that uses ID card scanning to track who uses services on campus.

**Table 1. Implementation timeline for AccuSQL**

| Quarter | Area | Quarter | Area |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fall 2014 | Math Learning Center (MLC) | **Spring 2015** | Job Connections Center |
| Fall 2014 | The Writing and Learning Studio (TWLS) | **Summer 2015** | Women’s Center |
| Fall 2014 | Athletic Gym | **Summer 2015** | Multi-Cultural Center |
| Winter 2015 | ESL Lab | **Fall 2015** | Advising and Counseling |
| Winter 2015 | Weight Room | **Winter 2016** | Tutoring Center |
| Spring 2015 | Biology/Chemistry Learning Center |  |  |

At this point in our implementation timeline, the focus has been installing AccuSQL in the service areas listed, training staff to use the system, and problem-solving implementation glitches. The Math Learning Center (MLC) and the Writing and Learning Studio (TWLS) use the system to track center use for students enrolled in supplemental instruction for credit; the Math Learning Center also used AccuSQL data to report on use rates in an aSAP request. In the future, the impact of major changes can be assessed; for example (as described in Appendix A), as of September 2015, the Math Learning Center (MLC) and the Writing and Learning Studio (TWLS) have moved to a new, centralized space in the library. AccuSQL can help understand whether the change allows more students to access those resources. More importantly, the power of AccuSQL lies in the ability to link students’ use of services with measures of success: course success, progression, retention, and completion. These metrics will also be part of IADM’s analysis of the impact of moving the MLC and TWLS to new locations, and represent the next phase in assessing student support services.

### 2. Departmental “Dashboards”

One focus for IADM over the past year has been providing individual instructional departments with data that allow them to engage in self-assessment related to the Core Themes. The goal was to develop a sustainable data tool that can quickly pull key data points for specific departments over discrete time periods. Using SQL Server Reporting Services, IADM developed [Departmental “Dashboards”](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/program-data.aspx), focusing on two key data points: (1) student enrollment and (2) course success, both related to *Core Theme 1: Student Success*. Each of these were, in turn, separated according to several different student variables including gender, race/ethnicity, and resident status, prompting reflection about fulfillment of *Core Theme 4: Access and Diversity.*

In Fall 2014, IADM presented the Dashboard data, as well as suggested reflection questions for program chairs and faculty, to all four academic divisions. The Dean of Humanities required all academic departments within the division to conduct a self-assessment using these tools. The self-assessments indicated that the data dashboards lent insight into changes needed within these areas. See Table 2 for an example of data-informed goal setting in the Music Technology area.

**Table 2. Use of Departmental Dashboard data to inform goal-setting (Music Technology)**

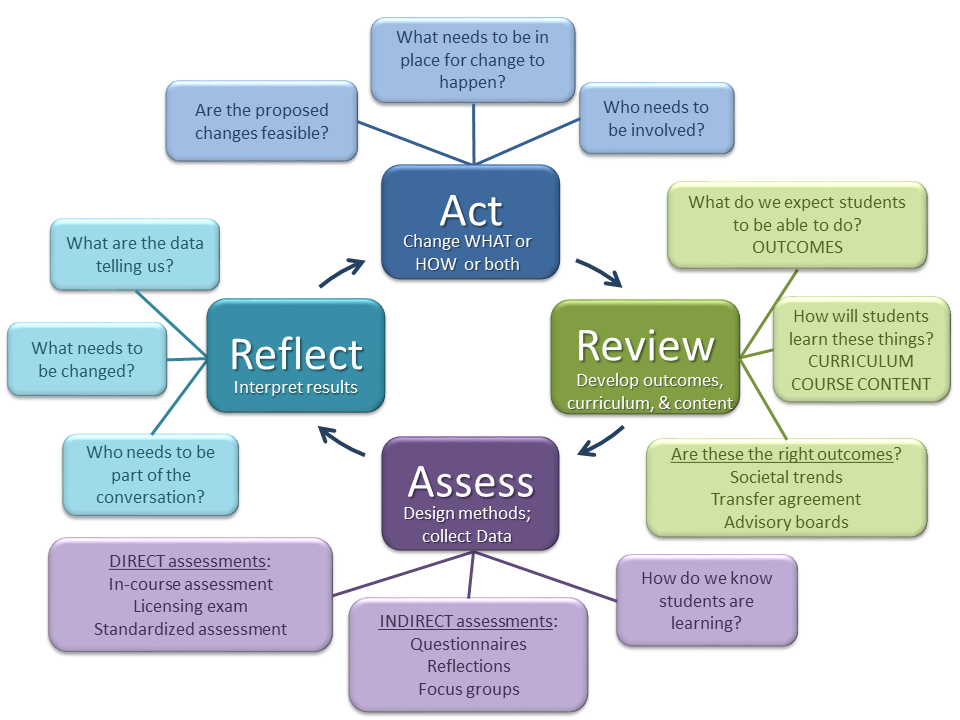
| Reflection Question | Response |
| --- | --- |
| To what extent are students of color and women over- or under-represented in your courses (compared to Shoreline as a whole [data provided])? | *About 66% (on average) of our Music Technology students are Caucasian, and they are predominantly male (83.6%). These average numbers paint a picture of a program that is less than equivalent to the overall college statistics for students of color and women. However, they represent a fairly realistic picture of the national music technology field. Women and students of color are under-represented in our courses and they are under-represented in industry.* |
| What are the implications, if any, of these data for your area? | *The implications are clear: more advocacy is needed to build the groups of women and students of color and include more of them into our academic programs, as well as encouraging industry to accept them as equal-valued contributors to [science, technology, engineering and mathematic] STEM-related industry segments, including music technology, audio engineering, composers, and as music and media artists, producers and managers.* |
| Please describe 3 – 5 goals your program or department should be working towards in the coming year. Please also indicate how you will know you have been successful in moving towards these goals. | *Goal: 2. Build bridges between diverse students populations by designing curriculum that interacts between faculty and course content.*  *Measure of Success: Success will be measured by enhanced student portfolio content that demonstrates a variety of skills learned in different settings and foci.* |

## F. Assessment for Strategic Plan 2016-21

In addition to ongoing assessment, Shoreline’s Strategic Planning Task Force used both [internal data](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/institutional-data.aspx) [12] and selected [external data](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/external-data.aspx) [13] to inform the development of key strategic goals for the next five years. The College has been working with a Strategic Enrollment Management consultant, CLARUS Corporation, who will be making use of the College’s existing data resources, as well collecting new information, to help inform goals related to student enrollment, progression, retention, completion and success.

# Part II: Representative Examples of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Shoreline engages in assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, and general education levels. Figure 2 shows the assessment cycle that provides a framework for our assessment work, allowing us to track work-to- date and identify work needing to be accomplished.



**Figure 2. Visual depiction of the assessment cycle**

## A. Example 1: Global Awareness Assessment Working Group (GAAWG)

One of Shoreline’s Core Themes is *Core Theme 2: Program Excellence*, which describes how the College engages in continuous improvement to fulfill its mission of meeting the educational and workforce needs of its diverse community (see sidebar). One objective under this Core Theme is that “Students perceive the College prepared them adequately,” with indicators derived from an annual graduate survey.

Shoreline’s [General Education Outcomes](http://www.shoreline.edu/about-shoreline/general-education-outcomes/) [14] are strongly related to this objective; they were, “designed to provide our students with the skills, knowledge and awareness they will need to make informed decisions, lead healthy and productive lives, and contribute to the global community as lifelong learners.” If students gain the skills described in the outcomes, it would follow that they “perceive the College has prepared them adequately.”

***Core Theme 2: Program Excellence***

Shoreline Community College strives for continuous improvement in its educational programs to meet the needs of students, employers, colleges and universities, and community partners. The College promotes the excellence of its programs locally, statewide, nationally and internationally.

**Objective 2.1:** Students perceive that the College prepared them adequately.

**Objective 2.2:** Students express satisfaction that the College delivered a quality education.

In 2012, as part of a campus [Internationalization Initiative](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/internationalization/documents/cilt-report.pdf) [15], a group of faculty formed the Global Awareness Assessment Working Group (GAAWG), led by one faculty member serving as “Global Awareness Assessor,” a one-third faculty release-time position. With regular meetings, this group engaged in conversations about how best to assess whether Shoreline students were gaining the skills described in the Global Awareness (GA) General Education Outcome (see sidebar), with the assessor providing two key reports in [2012](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/GlobalAwarenessAssessorReport_2012.pdf) [16] and [2014](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/Global%20Awareness%20Institutional%20Assessment%20Report%202014.pdf) [17], followed by a [supplemental report](http://intranet.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/gaawg_summerinstitutereport_draft.docx) [18] from IADM in Summer 2015.

Below is a summary of GAAWG’s work to date, organized around the four steps in the Assessment Cycle framework as shown in Figure 2 (Review-Assess-Reflect-Act).

### 1. REVIEW

When Shoreline’s General Education Outcomes were revised in 2001, the College moved to integrate these outcomes throughout our curriculum. To that end, in the online Master Course Outline (MCO) system, each course outcome is linked to the General Education Outcomes, enabling analysis of how these outcomes are addressed in the curriculum.

#### Outcomes

In the 2012 Global Awareness Assessor report, one recommendation was to review the Global Awareness outcomes and lend some additional definition to the meaning of those outcomes and how they might be assessed. GAAWG worked collaboratively to develop an in-depth hierarchical rubric for each of the six Global Awareness outcomes [19]. The rubric was designed to apply to student work from existing course assignments related to global awareness.

#### Content/Curriculum

As GAAWG moved forward in gathering student work for assessment purposes, they also investigated how course curricula address this set of outcomes. Summarized from the [2014 Global Awareness Institutional Assessment Report](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/Global%20Awareness%20Institutional%20Assessment%20Report%202014.pdf) [17], the analysis of Master Course Outline data revealed the following:

* **Global Awareness outcomes are well-represented within the curriculum:** Since 2009, 39% of all Shoreline offerings have addressed at least one of the six Global Awareness outcomes. Over the course of an academic year, most students (78-82%) took at least one course that addressed at least one Global Awareness outcome.
* **Representation of Global Awareness varies by division:** In Fall 2014, these outcomes were addressed in 66% of Humanities courses, 56% of Social Science courses, 51% of Health Occupation and Business courses, and 14% of Math and/or Science courses.

Given these results, it follows that there is ample opportunity for examining student work emerging from in-class, embedded assessments.

### 2. ASSESS

#### Embedded Assessment

This method for assessing the Global Awareness outcomes was first addressed in a series of interviews with faculty who were teaching courses with Global Awareness content (see [2012 assessment report](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/GlobalAwarenessAssessorReport_2012.pdf) [16]). In 2014, the assessor conducted a more systematic survey of 50 faculty (25 respondents, 50% response rate, representing 32 courses), asking them to describe specific assignments or techniques used to assess Global Awareness, and provide sample assignments and/or student work.

#### Student Reflections

Another method employed in the assessment of Global Awareness was a standardized reflection piece administered in a selection of courses, with students asked to “Write a half-page reflection explaining how the concepts, topics, or assignments in this course have or have not increased or reinforced your global awareness, with specific reference to [the topic of this class].” The primary question of analysis is whether students’ descriptions of the course’s impact on their global awareness aligned with the intended outcomes for the course. In Spring 2014, faculty were contacted based on a random selection of courses that either did or did not include a Global Awareness outcome. Eight faculty administered the standardized reflection piece during a class period. Data were gathered by the Global Awareness Assessor and forwarded to IADM.

### 3. REFLECT

#### Embedded Assessment

The results from the preliminary analysis revealed challenges in using embedded assessments to gather evidence of student learning in this domain. Because some courses involved content and outcomes much more strongly related to the Global Awareness outcomes than others, the clarity of assessment of Global Awareness varied a great deal. In about two out of three courses sampled, instructors indicated Global Awareness was very important to the course content; less than half described robust assessment of that General Education Outcome.

For example, in Geography 200: Introduction to Human Geography, almost all content was geared toward the Global Awareness outcomes, so there were a variety of possible assignments or exams within the course that could indicate whether students were gaining the relevant skills. In contrast, for Biology 150: Epidemics and Culture, the course content was related to Global Awareness, but in-class assessments addressed the topic implicitly, with no specific in-course assessment addressing the GA Outcomes.

For General Education Outcomes not associated with specific core requirements that are distributed across a wide range of courses from multiple disciplines (i.e., Global Awareness, General Intellectual Ability, and Information Literacy), reviewing student work might not lead to strong evidence of student learning or conclusions informing curricular improvement.

#### Student Reflections

In Summer 2015, six faculty from the Global Awareness Assessment Working Group took part in a pilot Summer Assessment Institute and reviewed a random sample of six student responses from each of the eight participating courses. The group voted on whether each student reflection revealed each of the six Global Awareness outcomes. This process was not necessarily designed to yield conclusions about whether students had gained Global Awareness, but to prompt discussion about the validity of the links between individual course outcomes and General Education Outcomes. As summarized in the [2015 Summer Assessment Institute](http://intranet.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/gaawg_summerinstitutereport_draft.docx) report [18], the exercise revealed that there was only moderate alignment between students’ reflections about what they had gained and the Global Awareness outcomes listed in the MCOs.

### 4. ACT

The work of GAAWG has been particularly strong in understanding more about the definition of this set of outcomes and lending insight into how these outcomes are embedded within Shoreline’s curriculum. The analyses of data have not necessarily led to clear conclusions or recommendations for changes to outcomes or curriculum. Hence, only preliminary steps have been taken in “closing the loop” by taking action based on results. However, there are several very clear recommendations (summarized below) about how to move forward in assessing this and other General Education Outcomes in the future.

#### Assessing General Education Outcomes

The work of the Global Awareness Assessment Working Group has strong implications for how to move forward in assessing the other two General Education Outcomes (Information Literacy and General Intellectual Ability) that are not linked to core requirements. Given the distributed nature of these outcomes both within and beyond the curriculum, a standardized method employed within a sample of courses seems the most useful. Using data from existing assessments of Global Awareness across the curriculum proved to be extremely challenging because of the wide variety in the extent to which course content addressed the outcomes, and in the extent to which the course involves direct assessment of the outcome.

#### General Education Outcomes vs. program outcomes

One question that emerged in conversations about the Global Awareness outcome was whether the General Education Outcomes are truly intended for all students, or only students in general education transfer programs. In moving forward in our comprehensive, ongoing assessment work, there are some overarching questions to answer; for example, we need to articulate how the General Education Outcomes overlap with outcomes for our Associate’s degrees.

#### Revision of General Education Outcomes

At several points during GAAWG work, it became apparent that revisions to the Global Awareness outcomes might be warranted. However, there is no mechanism for making these changes, which have far-reaching implications for both curriculum and infrastructure. For example, if there were edits to the Global Awareness outcome itself, it would affect all courses within the online MCO system connected to that outcome. These types of structural barriers need to be removed in order to fully and meaningfully engage with learning outcomes assessment (see Part III).

#### Administrative support

The challenges involved in revising the outcomes themselves point to a larger lesson learned from GAAWG’s work, which is that a great deal of administrative infrastructure is needed, particularly at the level of general education and program outcomes, to ensure that assessment work moves forward. Most notably, a certain amount of staffing is needed to accomplish the work. The logistical practicalities of implementing an applied research project requires project management, and the final steps in “closing the loop” require a great deal of coordination among various aspects of instruction. These tasks are beyond the scope of work feasible for one faculty member on release time. Moving forward, the Office of Institutional Assessment and Data Management will take a stronger role in facilitating and managing assessment work, ensuring that appropriate resources are allocated to accomplish assessment work. In 2015-16, IADM will hire an additional analyst, funded through an aSAP request.

### 5. Implications for Core Themes

In terms of the high level indicators of Core Theme Objectives 2.1 and 2.2, there is not a clear alignment between the Core Theme Objective and student learning outcomes. The Core Theme Indicators, based on student feedback (e.g., “Please rate how well the College prepared you for your job or current course of study.”) would not necessarily be altered if the College became more effective in increasing students’ Global Awareness, or by increases in other General Education Outcomes. A robust mechanism for ongoing assessment of student learning is a key component to our plan moving forward (see Part III) and is listed explicitly as an objective in our draft strategic plan. As the strategic plan continues to evolve until adoption in January 2016, measures of success for the strategic objectives will be brought into alignment with a revised set of Core Theme Indicators.

## B. Example 2: Inter-instructor “Norming” in English as a Second Language (ESL) Courses

*Core Theme 1: Educational Attainment/Student Success* (see sidebar) is fundamental to Shoreline’s work as a learning organization within higher education, and one Core Theme Objective is “Students display high rates of success in their programs of study.” Our ongoing assessment of student learning ensures that our courses and curriculum are effective in helping students meet the outcomes that define success.

***Core Theme 1: Educational Attainment/Student Success***

Shoreline Community College students will have the opportunity to complete their program and/or graduate with the academic preparation and skills necessary to continue their education, meet the demands of the workplace or improve their quality of life, consistent with the State of Washington’s Community and Technical College system.

**Objective 1.1:** Students successfully achieve their academic goals.

**Objective 1.2:** Students display high rates of success in their programs of study.

This connection is clear in our English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, which support Adult Basic Education for resident students and many different program pathways for our growing population of international students. Shoreline’s ESL faculty members regularly engage in conversations about the reading and writing skills students should be able to demonstrate at different ESL levels; more importantly, they have mechanisms for analyzing and using those data to improve instruction. By doing so, they ensure their courses maximize opportunities for students to succeed (Core Theme Objective 1.1), which will be reflected in our Core Theme Indicators (particularly indicator 1.2.1: Basic Skills Gains).

Below is an in-depth description of the ESL department’s student learning assessment process, using the cycle presented in Figure 2 (Review-Assess-Reflect-Act) as a framework.

### 1. REVIEW

The learning outcomes within the English as a Second Language curriculum are fairly rigid because the courses progress in a single, [incremental path](https://www.shoreline.edu/transitional-programs/esl/documents/esl-levels.pdf) [20] along eight levels preparing students for college-level English. Faculty in the area realized that if student learning outcomes are not adequately addressed and uniformly assessed within any level, there could be profound effects on student success along that pathway. There is a fairly high proportion of part-time faculty within the department (the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty FTE consistently exceeds 2:1) such that consistency of content delivery is a concern. In 2008, the ESL department began the process of developing leveled assessment tools and techniques for both reading and writing, and have continued consistent engagement in understanding these learning outcomes since then.

### 2. ASSESS

#### Reading

Over the last seven years, the ESL faculty have developed reading assessments for levels 4-7. The development of the tool typically follows the same cycle:

* Faculty members seek out five sample readings appropriate for a particular competency level and develop five comprehension-based questions for each reading.
* The sample is screened using standardized tools (i.e., software that assesses reading level of text samples) to ensure it is appropriate.
* All ESL faculty are invited to provide feedback about the readings and quiz questions, suggesting re-wording to ensure it is an appropriate level.
* Instructors pilot the assessment in their courses, correlating students’ performance on in-course assignments with their performance on the reading assessment.
* The assessment tool is shared with all faculty teaching ESL.

Faculty use the standardized reading assessments to determine passing reading levels, and some include it in calculating grades.

#### Writing

All ESL courses at Shoreline require students to pass an in-class writing assignment to receive a passing grade in the course. The content and format of the assignments vary, but the skills demonstrated are closely aligned with individual course outcomes and are defined consistently within level courses. Hence, the assessment of these assignments requires ongoing review to ensure consistency.

### 3. REFLECT

#### Reading

When instructors opt to use the standardized reading assessment in their courses, they use Scantron® sheets and can run their own results immediately. In addition, their results are stored in a cumulative database maintained by one faculty member who, on a quarterly basis, distributes results from a sample of courses over the past several quarters. On the report each faculty member receives, their own course is labeled, but the others are not.

#### Writing

Since 2008, ESL faculty have met regularly (one to three times per year) to engage in “norming” of their writing assessments within a particular level. Faculty bring samples from in-class writing assessments, and the instructors, as a group, read each sample and vote on whether the sample represents a passing grade for the relevant course level. When there are discrepancies, the faculty discuss what aspects of the writing do and do not demonstrate skills for that level. The result is a move toward consensus in assessing student writing in the context of a particular course level. From these discussions, selections of student work are maintained as examples of passing and non-passing work for new faculty to use in learning how to assess student work.

Even when it is not possible to conduct full “norming” sessions, the department holds round-table sessions at the end of each quarter during which faculty bring in particular samples that might be considered “borderline” between passing and non-passing to discuss with other faculty and ensure consistency.

### 4. ACT

At this smaller scale (i.e., the “micro” level of assessment), the data indicate whether a faculty member might need to alter his/her instruction or course content to help students be more successful. With standardized techniques for assessment, one instructor can understand students’ performance in the context of the course outcomes. Informal feedback from instructors indicates that the data are meaningful in that way.

At the course level, the standardized reading assignments seem to function well in providing a gauge of how well students are meeting those performance standards. They might fall short in pointing instructors to specific changes they might make in content or pedagogy to improve student outcomes, but they at least allow faculty to know whether significant changes are needed. The regular process of “norming” writing assessments is an excellent example of an ongoing cycle of improving students’ academic experience as well as the assessment process itself.

From a college perspective, this assessment process serves as a model for expanding to other courses and/or programs. One important lesson learned is that, particularly at the course level of assessment, the process is more important than a product, and it is important to balance faculty’s drive to learn, improve, and support students with the need for accountability. Another lesson learned is that it can be challenging or impossible for part-time to faculty to participate in such “norming” activities without stipends.

### 5. Implications for the Core Themes:

At the higher level, Core Theme Indicator 1.2.1 (basic skills gains) is closely aligned with the skill-based reading and writing outcomes, as gains in ESL would fall under the category of basic skills. However, the Core Theme Indicator, based on Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) data, does not include international students, who represent a substantial portion of our ESL population.

# Part III: Moving Forward

Over the past several years, Shoreline has made significant progress in using data to inform decisions and planning, but a great deal of work needs to be done to ensure that data collected prove useful and that the entire campus community can gauge their own progress and the College’s progress towards mission fulfillment. There are two primary goals for assessment in the next five years.

## A. Assessing Mission Fulfillment

Developing a robust cycle of ongoing assessment of mission fulfillment is a priority for Shoreline’s new President. As the College ventures into long-term strategic planning, it will be essential that strategic goals are assessed with meaningful metrics. In addition, there will be logical consistency between the metrics related to the strategic goals and the Core Theme Indicators. We anticipate that as the strategic plan continues to be refined, a revision to the Core Theme Indicators will follow.

Once metrics have been established, a robust reporting tool (i.e., dashboard) will be developed such that anyone can gauge progress towards strategic goals and mission fulfillment based on these key indicators. An annual reporting schedule with the Board of Trustees and Executive Team will be established to ensure consistent communication and monitoring of the College’s performance.

The strategic plan will also include specific objectives laid out in a five year timeline. Using a logic model framework, the outcomes of individual objectives and/or tactics will be assessed as mid-way evaluation of progress of strategic planning. Appendix C provides a sample logic model demonstrating how a particular activity (already begun at Shoreline) logically leads to immediate and long-term outcomes, ultimately resulting in changes to the Core Theme Indicators. It is anticipated that the major actions proposed in the long-term strategic plan will be mapped onto a logic model, which will help design immediate measures that can be tracked more frequently than impact on Core Theme Indicators.

## B. Assessing Student Learning

Shoreline has a long history of addressing student learning outcomes. The development of the online MCO system laid extremely important ground work in ensuring consistency of course level outcomes, establishing correlated in-course assessment techniques, and mapping curricula to the College’s General Education Outcomes. However, Shoreline has had mixed and inconsistent success in making student learning outcomes assessment part of the ongoing work of the College.

Over the next five years, the Office of Institutional Assessment and Data Management will work alongside 1-2 faculty liaison(s) per year to develop a structured, consistent, and robust mechanism for assessing student learning at the course, program, and college level. The faculty liaisons will become part of the IADM team during their tenure, working collaboratively to coordinate course-, program-, and college-level projects.

The assessment plan is specifically mentioned as a strategic objective in the current draft of the 2016-21 strategic plan (see Appendix B).

The work of the next five years will focus on:

* Encouraging instructors to move beyond establishing outcomes and assessment methods to actually reflecting on assessment data and implementing changes.
* Providing a structure and support for this assessment work to take place.
* Ensuring there is clarity in program and general education level outcomes.
* Removing logistical and structural barriers to ongoing changes to our practices at the program and institutional levels.

Below is an outline of a five year plan for developing this robust assessment mechanism at each level (course, program, general education).

### 1. Course Level

#### Year 1 (2015-16)

**Increase conversation:** The general approach to engaging faculty around this work will be ensuring that conversations about assessment, using the framework described in Figure 2, are ongoing both formally and informally. As a starting point, our September Opening Week included two [concurrent sessions](http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/AssessmentPresentation_Part1_draft3.pptx) [20] and department conversations about assessment. The purpose was to open the conversations about “How do your students demonstrate they are learning?” and to introduce the assessment cycle as a framework for these conversations.

**Close the loop:** In Year 1, IADM will fund three to five course-level projects, with preference for projects involving multiple faculty and those that are close to “closing the loop.” Several departments on campus are engaged in gathering assessment data, such as standardized post-tests in Physics and pre- and post-tests in Chemistry, but few have time or resources to reflect on the data. The College will support this work by organizing meeting time, paying faculty for off-contract time, and documenting the work. Extra support will be provided to the ESL faculty to support additional participation from part-time faculty and to more fully document the full assessment cycle.

**Share the work:** At the course level, the focus of the five-year plan will be less on developing a repository of assessment examples and more on ensuring that examples of assessment projects are shared among faculty. In collaboration with the Professional Learning Officer, in Year 1, the College will hold a pilot of a Shoreline Community College Teaching and Learning Conference. The faculty who receive support in their assessment projects during Year 1 will be the first featured presenters/speakers at this conference. In addition, other faculty will be invited to share work they might plan to present at the state-wide Assessment, Teaching, and Learning Conference.

#### Year 2 (2016-17)

**Pilot projects:** IADM will fund an additional three to five course-level projects, engaging in a full assessment cycle during the year and culminating in a presentation/panel at the Teaching and Learning Conference.

**Assessment templates:** To support faculty in engaging in full-fledged assessment cycles, IADM will work with faculty liaisons and the groups engaged in pilot projects to develop a guide or handbook for engaging in these types of projects. These materials will rely heavily on best practices from other community colleges in the state.

#### Year 3 and beyond (2017–)

**Ongoing support and sharing:** At the course level, all faculty should be knowledgeable about the full cycle of assessment and understand not only how to establish outcomes and assessment methods but actually review data and take action. On a permanent basis, the College will support three to five course-level assessment projects per year, with the expectation that the faculty share the results the Shoreline Teaching and Learning Conference in Spring Quarter.

### 2. Program Level

#### Year 1 (2015-16)

**Support existing work:** Many of our professional-technical programs, particularly those externally accredited or certified, already engage in a great deal of work related to the assessment cycle. In the first two years, the focus will be on sharing the work they have done and ensuring they have support needed to fully put the assessment cycle into practice.

**Define “program”:** With students hoping to fulfill multiple, diverse educational goals, the definition of an academic program at Shoreline can be somewhat ambiguous. For example, within the transfer degree, there are no majors, but students can focus in particular areas such as engineering or psychology. The question is whether there are different, assessable outcomes for those two different focus areas; in other words, are they distinct programs? The Adult Basic Education aspect of our mission is not necessarily associated with a particular degree or certificate, so how are these “programs” defined? Are professional-technical certificates considered programs? An important part of the work of this first year will be coming to consensus about the definition of “program” *in the context of assessment of student learning.* Within that context, all “programs” must have specific outcomes *and* the programs need to engage in a cycle of student learning assessment described in Figure 2.

**Clarify transfer program outcomes:** The work of the Global Awareness Assessment Working Group revealed some confusion about the extent to which the General Education Outcomes are embedded within the required curriculum for the distribution requirements. By the end of Year 1, the transfer program outcomes will be clarified and mapped to the required curriculum.

**Pilot program assessment:** As part of their external program review, three professional-technical programs will go through a pilot assessment cycle, from reviewing their outcomes and curriculum and gathering assessment data in Year 2 to reflecting on results and taking action in Year 3.

#### Years 2 & 3 (2016-18)

**Continued program assessment:** During each of these two years, three professional-technical programs will engage in an external program review, which will involve a cycle of student learning assessment.

**Development of templates:** To support programs in engaging in outcomes assessment as part of program review, IADM will work in collaboration with Workforce Education to develop clear guidelines, templates, and framework for program review that incorporate a student learning outcomes assessment.

#### Year 4 and beyond (2018–)

**Staggered cycles:** Once a structure for a program-level assessment cycle is established, each program will be on a cycle of assessment corresponding to an external review cycle.

### 3. General Education Level

#### Year 1 (2015-16)

**Clarifying outcomes:** In working with the Global Awareness Assessment Working Group, the question arose of the extent to which all programs should be assessing the General Education Outcomes or whether it is more appropriate to assess them in the context of the curriculum requirements for the transfer program. Within the first year of the assessment plan, a campus-wide proposal about how these outcomes should be applied and assessed will be vetted and finalized.

**Developing process and infrastructure:** One barrier the GAAWG group encountered was that there was no established process for changing a General Education Outcome – even just altering the wording. Once an outcome is changed, the online Master Course Outline system is set up in such a way that it would be cumbersome to change them across the curriculum. In the coming year, changes to the MCO system and MCO approval process will be made in collaboration with the Curriculum Committee to ensure that General Education Outcomes can be assessed and altered.

**Direct assessment of Global Awareness:** As a test case for assessing a General Education Outcome that is not linked to a core requirement, IADM and a faculty liaison will work with GAAWG to develop a quiz-like direct assessment of Global Awareness, administer it in a random selection of courses, then connect the result back to students’ course-taking patterns. Results will be discussed in the context of clarifying the scope and assessment of the General Education Outcomes.

#### Year 2 (2016-17)

**Pilot assessment of core General Education Outcomes:** The format andtimeline for assessing the General Education Outcomes related to particular core requirements will be different than the process for the outcomes that are distributed across the curriculum. In Year 2, IADM will begin a full assessment cycle for one of these General Education Outcomes.

**Begin assessment of Information Literacy:** Building on the work completed by the Global Awareness Assessment Working Group, assessment of another outcome, distributed across the curriculum, will begin in Year 2.

#### Year 3 and beyond (2017–)

**Staggered cycles:** It is anticipated that each of the General Education Outcomes will be assessed on cycles across a five-year timeline: one year to review the outcomes and develop an assessment technique, one year to gather data, one year to reflect and propose changes, one year to implement changes as appropriate, and one year to allow for the impact of those changes. Because changing the General Education Outcomes presents logistical and structural challenges, it is possible that the “change” phase of assessment for all the outcomes may occur together, once all have been assessed.

# Table of Acronyms & REFERENCES

| Acronym or Reference | Term |
| --- | --- |
| DIADM | Director of Institutional Assessment and Data Management |
| EDBC | Executive Director, Budget and Capital |
| EDBSSS | Executive Director, Business and Student Support Services |
| ESL | English as a Second Language |
| ET | Executive Team |
| FTIC | First Time in College |
| GA | Global Awareness |
| GAAWG | Global Awareness Assessment Working Group |
| IADM | The Office of Institutional Assessment and Data Management |
| MCE | Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation |
| NWCCU | Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities |
| MCO | Master Course Outline |
| SAO | Washington State Auditor’s Office |
| Shoreline | Shoreline Community College |
| SPBC | Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics |
| VPASA | Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs |

# Table of HTML Links

| # | Description | URL |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [1] | 2014-15 Strategic Plan | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/strategic-planning-committee/documents/strategic-plan.pdf> |
| [2] | 2014-15 Areas of Focus | <https://www.shoreline.edu/about-shoreline/board/documents/regular-meetings-sept-dec-2014/6-oct-29-2014-tab3-areasoffocus-14-15.pdf> |
| [3] | Core Theme Indicators Report, August 2015 | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/CoreThemesReport2015_v4.pdf> |
| [4] | Quarterly Enrollment Report: Fall 2014 | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/institutional_data/Quarterly%20Enrollment%20Comparisons%20-%20Fall.pdf> |
| [5] | Shoreline CC Report Server | <http://www.shoreline.edu/reports/report-server.aspx>  For access, contact jscarpa@shoreline.edu |
| [6] | Institutional Assessment intranet site | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/institutional-data.aspx> |
| [7] | Domestic Enrollment Report | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/institutional_data/Domestic%20Enrollment%20--%20BoT.pptx> |
| [8] | Student Achievement Initiative Report | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/institutional_data/SAI_BoT_April2015_FINAL_rev.pdf> |
| [9] | Analysis of Course Waitlist Data | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/institutional_data/WL_Overview_R3.pdf> |
| [10] | Presentation of 2015-16 proposed budget | <http://www.shoreline.edu/about-shoreline/board/documents/regular-meetings-2015/6-may-27-2015-tab4-FY15-16proposed-budget-rev.pdf> |
| [11] | Departmental Dashboards | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/program-data.aspx> |
| [12] | Institutional Data: Internal Scan for Strategic Plan | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/institutional-data.aspx> |
| [13] | External Data: External Scan for Strategic Plan | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/external-data.aspx> |
| [14] | Shoreline CC General Education Outcomes | <http://www.shoreline.edu/about-shoreline/general-education-outcomes/> |
| [15] | Shoreline CC Internationalization Initiative | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/internationalization/documents/cilt-report.pdf> |
| [16] | 2012 Global Awareness Assessor Report | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/GlobalAwarenessAssessorReport_2012.pdf> |
| [17] | 2014 Global Awareness Institutional Assessment Report | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/Global%20Awareness%20Institutional%20Assessment%20Report%202014.pdf> |
| [18] | 2015 Global Awareness Summer Institute Report | <http://intranet.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/gaawg_summerinstitutereport_draft.docx> |
| [19] | Global Awareness hierarchical rubric | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/GA%20Hierarchical%20Rubric%20Full%20Version.pdf> |
| [20] | ESL, ABE, and GED programs | <https://www.shoreline.edu/transitional-programs/esl/documents/esl-levels.pdf> |
| [21] | Opening Week Presentation: “How do your students demonstrate they are learning?” | <http://intranetnew.shoreline.edu/institutional-assesment/documents/assessment/AssessmentPresentation_Part1_draft3.pptx> |

# List of Appendices

Appendix A: Response to six recommendations from the 2012 NWCCU evaluation report

Appendix B: 2016-21 draft strategic planning goals and objectives

Appendix C: Example logic model for institutional assessment based on current strategic plan

1. Bracketed numbers refer to the Table of HTML Links at the end of this document. The electronic report includes hyperlinks. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)