

## Why the College Should Continue to Invest in the Assessment Committee

Assessment is directly tied to the mission. It is part of who we are, our identity. During the HLC peer review meetings this became clear as many different members of our college community (not necessarily AC members or Special Assignment recipients) made mention of assessment as a strength and how it supports so many areas of our collective work. It is linked to every Criterion in the HLC assurance argument, it was evident to the reviewers in each meeting throughout their visit, and the reviewers made a point of highlighting that in their report.

A major challenge of assessment work across the country, at 4-year universities as well as community colleges, is building a culture of assessment. If you look at the presentation titles for all the major assessment conferences a large percentage of the titles are about “How to build a culture of assessment”. The same is true for publications about assessment. “Building a culture of assessment” is usually a chapter in assessment books published each year and it’s a major topic for journal articles. When the model is one full-time Assessment Administrator (Director, Coordinator, etc.), the culture piece suffers because it is not authentically faculty-driven, and those Directors find it very difficult to build and maintain faculty involvement.

The reason this AC has been successful over the years is because it is faculty-driven and administratively supported. Faculty get credit for this, but the faculty would never be as involved in the process without administrative support. Administrative support = release time/stipend. It means investment, and this has built over time based on need.

Instead of investing in one Coordinator/Director who purchases and administers proprietary tests created by and analyzed by an outside entity without specialized knowledge of our SLOs and student population, often written specifically for 4-year university students, HWC invests in its people in more of a grassroots approach where assessment is designed in-house to fit the SLOs of our institution and our specific population of students. It is ongoing and iterative, and all assessments are designed, administered, analyzed, and communicated by the committee.

### Return on Investment

*See deliverables explicitly described in the Charge and see website:*

<https://www.ccc.edu/colleges/washington/departments/Pages/Assessment.aspx>

- Annual administration of general education assessment based on cycle/schedule.
- Two editions of the Assessment Times per year. We know from surveying the community that folks read it!
- Ten departmental projects, per semester, that are reported on annually in one of the editions of the Assessment Times published each semester, as well as in the annual reports, and in presentations.
- “Free” professional development and assessment support to HWC community: FDW sessions, annual assessment/TLC days, open *weekly* AC meetings, AC representation and support offered to major projects throughout the college (strategic planning committees, online learning, outside partnerships, articulation meetings, grants, etc.)
- Ongoing mentorship via weekly meetings, succession planning, rotating roles.

## Why the Unit Liaison Work is Special, Rare, and Worth More to the College than the Cost of 10 Special Assignments.

The Unit Liaison part of the AC is where the rubber meets the road in assessment work because it is so close to student learning. It is where the loop closes as faculty can implement change in order to support student learning as a direct result of findings.

### “Free” Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is provided for each unit liaison per department each semester. Liaisons meet weekly with the AC in addition to meeting regularly with the Vice Chair of Unit Assessment. Each liaison is supported with release time in order to do the work within their departments, and are supported by the weight of the full AC and data analysts. They report on their projects at AC meetings, but the actual work happens in their departments with faculty colleagues, including adjunct faculty.

As liaisons periodically change, the percentage of faculty per department that are well-versed in assessment increases. This serves as an ongoing professional development process for departments as the AC must continually support new liaisons and other AC members and spend time answering their questions, providing resources, and providing direct feedback.

This is the long game. Sometimes folks interested in serving as a liaison will join the committee without Release Time in order to learn more (Aigerim, Bara, Camelia). Sometimes folks who move on to other projects remain on the committee without release time in order to keep the work going and stay in the loop of the assessment processes (Amy). Sometimes folks step in to fill a need for liaisons going on sabbatical (Jess, Yev, Anthony). Sometimes folks serve in the liaison role and then move on, but they remain knowledgeable about assessment and active in departmental work after they leave the official liaison role (Nick, Ingrid, Bara).

It's difficult to provide professional development to faculty because each faculty member has specific needs at any given time. Hiring an outside speaker to come in and provide a talk or even an intensive workshop is expensive and may not have a lasting impact. The Assessment Liaison program at HWC, *at a fraction of the cost*, provides highly specialized ongoing and meaningful professional development and mentorship. Faculty serving as liaisons receive a full year of ongoing mentorship by the committee, and in turn they serve as mentors and become a support system within their departments.

The Unit level work is *one* highly concentrated way that the AC builds and maintains the culture of assessment at HWC (See Assessment Times for specifics on all liaison projects).

The AC began in 2003 with zero release time. It has grown over time based on need, and it has been accountable. This is not a place to cut. It is a pillar of the HWC community. This work is our legacy to the institution and it should be embedded in our thinking about all innovation and expansion work moving forward.