2018

AQIP Quality Highlights Report

Prepared for the site visit team conducting the HLC
comprehensive quality review

BLACKHAWK
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

History / Background

The State of Wisconsin established a Board of Vocational and Adult Education in 1911, six years before the use of federal funds for the promotion of vocational, technical and adult education. As a result of this law, the cities of Beloit and Janesville took the steps necessary to establish vocational schools in their communities. These two schools have developed to form the nucleus of the present technical college system district which is Blackhawk Technical College (BTC).

In 1965, the State of Wisconsin enacted a law designed to broaden the vocational, technical and adult education opportunities for youth and adults through the inclusion of the entire state into districts by July 1, 1970. The Beloit and Janesville schools, along with the major portions of Rock and Green Counties, were organized into a single system on July 1, 1968. Blackhawk Technical Institute, so named following this reorganizational process, became a reality. In August 1987, along with the other 15 state technical institutes, Blackhawk Technical Institute became BTC. BTC has grown to include two campuses and three additional locations to deliver on the mission of "We help you build your future with flexible education in a supportive environment."

BTC has participated in the Academic Quality Improvement Pathway of the Higher Learning Commission since December of 2005. BTC have successfully completed 15 action projects and system portfolios in 2009 and 2013.

BTC has adopted process-driven as one of the institution's core values. Having a transparent, consistent, repeatable process aligned with the institution's strategic plan focusing on efficiency, accountability, and excellence. This value is largely based on the institution's adoption of and commitment to continuous quality improvement. Plan, do check, act cycles are built within much of the institution's core culture and not only the focus of several process improvement plans but also the heart of the institution's continuous process improvement (CPI) effort overseen by the Blackhawk Improvement Group (BIG). The BIG has taken input from the larger college community and launched 8 CPI teams and brought 5 to completion with the balance still in implementation. The BIG was formed in a time of extreme institutional change.

BTC has been experiencing significant change since the closure of the GM plant within our district in 2008. Dr. Tracy Pierner, the second president since the GM closure, is now leading the institution into becoming a more process and data-driven institution. Significant additional staff changes have also come as a result of the changing nature of the district in the post-GM reality for BTC. Changes in almost every leadership position have occurred over the past two and a half years. New Vice President of Academic Affairs, Directors of Student Services, Advising, Recruitment, IT (x2), Workforce Development, Facilities, Marketing and Communications, Controller, Teaching & Learning, Registrar, Institutional Research, and all three Academic Deans are new to BTC.

The results of these changes are manifest in many areas of the institution with a great emphasis on the breadth of roles and a slimming of the institutional leadership structure focused on smoothing communications and allowing quicker change within the institution. These traits have been critical in the recent turn around at BTC. Many semesters of enrollment decline have turned into two straight Fall semesters of enrollment growth, the launch of 12 new programs, the partnership to bring Rock University High School on campus, summer youth camps all while not losing focus on the commitment to excellence in the classroom. BTC's average course success rates (A's, B's, and C's compared to D's, F's,

and W's) continue to be in the 80%-87% range. BTC's nursing and physical therapy assistant programs have earned the highest pass rates of any programs within the state of Wisconsin.

Although the reviewers of BTC's 2013 system portfolio found no accreditation or strategic issues the institution invested in increasing the utilization and in the creation of a culture of data, assessment, and enhanced communications between the institution and its stakeholders.

Over the coming years, the pace of business will continue to move quickly as the institution continues to execute its three-year strategic plan, continue refinement of the shared leadership model, right-size our facilities, launch flexible learning alternatives, and continue our pursuit of long-term financial sustainability. Our vision is to deliver innovative education to enrich our communities, and BTC will continue to focus on our mission to help our students build their future with flexible education in a supportive environment.

Institutional Response to System Appraisal Feedback

The system portfolio appraisers did commendable work and their feedback highlighted areas BTC had previously identified as opportunities for improvement, as evidenced by our strategic plan initiatives, such as the use of data and benchmarks, developing standards and procedures around continuous improvement, improving faculty evaluations, and assessment. Although there is general agreement with all of the appraiser's feedback, there is a need to highlight that the College did not do an outstanding job of articulating several portions of the systems portfolio, especially in the area of assessment. As mentioned previously, the significant turnover and change in leadership occurring during the time of writing the systems portfolio, left BTC with no remaining personnel familiar with writing a system portfolio. In addition, BTC had difficulty answering both the systems portfolio questions and the related Criterion with one coherent and seamless evidentiary answer. Open or standard pathways will provide a clearer narrative from BTC.

BTC also found some of the appraiser's concerns to be stylistic, focused on where evidence was located and seemed at odds with the directions overwhelmingly received by college personnel at the HLC conference. At every session attended, in regards to the preparation and writing of our system portfolio, BTC's representatives were instructed to write about the process and to move all evidence out of the portfolio and into the linked evidence file. Again, moving to the new pathways model will assist with this issue.

This aside, BTC is committed to enhancing the culture of data. BTC has developed and extensively uses benchmarks from both outside the institution or from internal past performance to measure most if not all aspects of institutional performance from large strategic planning goals all the way to using outside data to examine how large our programs should be to adequately fulfill labor market demand. In an effort to enhance a culture of data-informed decisions BTC has and continues to, invest heavily in data and reporting tools and are currently rolling out dashboards around a wide variety of key data points. Additionally, BTC uses data and performance metrics at all levels of planning. Measurement of strategic goals links into the budgeting process which relies on data to inform and prioritize the decision-making process. Labor Market Gap analyses are completed annually when considering new programs. Data-informed decisions are becoming the norm as we make more and more data available to the institution. BTC also utilizes continuous improvement at many levels of the institution. Our shared leadership model is largely based on continuous improvement. The manner in which these improvements are adopted into a process is another area upon which BTC is focusing. Standard operating procedures and process mapping are strategic initiatives focusing on creating pathways, utilizing the shared leadership model

through the Group for Procedure and Strategy, to track, standardize, and implement processes and procedures at BTC.

Another are of concern raised was faculty evaluations. These concerns are warranted, but as an institution, we have begun the process of creating inclusive, standard end of course evaluations in addition to the personal evaluation individual instructors have used up to this point. Additionally, work has been started regarding developing a faculty observation review process and schedule to include student, peer, and supervisory observations culminating in professional development and report outs.

While some of the strategic challenges identified in the appraisal appear to be details relating to using the assurance system, the issue of assessment was one we feel the portfolio questions combined with academic leadership turnover didn't lend themselves to clearly outlining our assessment practices. In an attempt to better communicate BTC's programmatic assessment practices we have produced a more complete narrative around those practices.

Program Outcome Assessment at BTC

BTC has a long history of assessment of program outcomes. Between 1998 and 2000 BTC faculty developed outcomes with a focus on three areas: Readiness (entry level), Learning, and Exit assessment. The original focus was on student readiness and a major initiative was to study and adjust placement scores in general education and basic skills courses. In 2005, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) deployed the Quality Review Process Data System (QRP), which required each program be reviewed over a period of 3-5 years, including program outcome assessments. However, in 2009, WTCS initiated the Technical Skills Attainment (TSA) project to formalize the program level outcome assessment process and create a shared reporting process that included: similar programs amongst WTCS colleges have common program outcomes and assessment criteria, and each program has an assessment plan that objectively measures student educational attainments.

With the advent of the TSA process, BTC transitioned from the QRP to TSA. Once the new process was fully implemented, the College recognized the professional development needs of the faculty and began implementing necessary training. Faculty professional development days in the last four years have focused on outcome assessments. And BTC has established three days focused on this topic each year (January, May, and August). Assessments of previous activities were used to develop upcoming activities and learning as such:

- August 2014: faculty were introduced to backward design, created assessment plans, and shared D, W, and F rates at the course level.
    - Assessment of activity: deepen the faculty understanding of assessment practices, working on establishing assessment design tools and use of Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS). Faculty were invited to attend the WTCS Assessment Conference and participate in on campus research.
- January 2015: canceled due to severe weather conditions
- May 2015: faculty were introduced to the cycle of assessment and program outcomes and course competencies were linked to program and course level assessments.
    - Assessment of activity: need to revise formal program outcome mapping and more focus on reinforcing the backward-design process for program/course design.
- August 2015: faculty were trained on assessing documentation and each discipline formalized its program outcome and course competency mapping in WIDS

- o Assessment of activity: course level assessment design requires additional attention and focus on implementing backward-design and summative vs. formative assessments.
- January and May 2016: faculty worked on the program outcome assessments, which were finalized and distributed to advisory committees for their feedback.
  - o Assessment of activity: introduction of the "mini" Develop a Curriculum (DACUM) process and a need to validate outcomes routinely through advisory committees.
- August 2016: faculty created two-year cycle for program outcome assessments, program outcome assessment results analysis used to set appropriate targets and documentation of analysis results to ensure continuous improvement.
  - o Assessment of activity: additional faculty need to attend training for best practices in assessment (including the WTCS Assessment Conference). Professional development established to engage faculty in implementing high impact teaching practices connected to assessment and improved student learning.
- January and May 2017: faculty continued to optimize the program outcome assessments and to refine the assessment rubrics used to document results. Additionally, the results of the College-Wide Core Abilities are documented.
  - o Assessment of activity: training needs to be more targeted because many faculty are at a level of proficiency allowing optimization of techniques and skills
- August 2017 onward: continued focus on improvements of program outcome assessments and focus on Core Abilities assessments.

Developing & Evaluating Program Outcomes

The process for assessment of learning at BTC begins with the end in mind. Each program at BTC establishes a set of program outcomes defining the level of learning expected of each student at the end of the program. The WTCS requires that the program outcomes are developed to meet local industry needs for all programs offered at BTC.

A. Program outcome creation in the WTCS

State-aligned curriculum

Some career technical education (CTE) programs within the WTCS are considered "Aligned State Program with aligned course level curriculum" and link external standards as well as predetermined course and program level formative and summative assessment tools. For such programs (primarily in allied health) the course competencies, semester configurations, textbooks, pre- and co-requisites are shared. This alignment includes connections between the established program outcomes and external standards. On the other end of the spectrum, there are programs that are unaligned and only program outcomes and assessment criteria are established at the state level. Other programs my fall in various places along the continuum of statewide alignment.

To ensure statewide and systematic evaluations of student learning at the program level, WTCS requires each program participate in developing and adopting a Technical Skills Attainment (TSA) plan. The intent of TSAs is to provide a set of statewide uniform learning outcomes at the program level and are designed based on the explicit employer and workforce needs. The adopted TSAs include statewide program outcomes and assessment criteria.

DACUM and industry validation

To develop a TSA, faculty and administrators from all WTCS colleges with same program meet with industry representatives in a DACUM. The establishment of a TSA plan ensures that students demonstrate industry-validated technical skills throughout and upon completion of the program of study.   And it is incumbent on the individual college to outline how it will assess the attainment of program outcomes to ensure graduates have the technical skills needed by employers. Programs at BTC have approved TSAs that identify the program outcomes and assessment criteria, which are used to evaluate the learning of BTC students and to optimize instruction to meet these established standards.

Informing students of program outcomes

WTCS expects the methods used to inform students about the program outcomes to be clearly identified as part of the approval process. Therefore, at BTC we ensure that students are informed about these program outcomes in the catalog, on the website, and in the student's academic plan.

B.   Program outcome creation at BTC

WTCS colleges may have specific industry needs that may only be met with the creation of unique programs. At BTC these include programs such as Manufacturing Information Technology Specialist (MITS), Medical Administrative Coder, and Laboratory Food Science Technician. For these programs, industry-validated TSAs are developed locally including program outcomes and assessment criteria, then approved by the WTCS.

For reasons pertaining to a district (such as specific employer requirements, or local policies), colleges may create program outcomes in addition to the outcomes of the TSA. While these outcomes are established with the approval of the advisory committee, the outcome assessment results are solely used locally to optimize student learning.

C.   Evaluating program outcomes

Evaluation of WTCS-established TSAs

Every 5 to 8 years TSAs are reevaluated by a statewide group of faculty and administrators representing all WTCS colleges and industry representatives. The intent is to ensure that the student learning attainments and the expectations of employers are in harmony to maintain an effective workforce. The frequency of reevaluation is driven by factors such as the nature of the field, the technological changes, or the changes in laws and regulations. Changes to the program outcomes in the TSA or the TSA plan require the review and consent of the local advisory committee prior to submission.

Program outcomes evaluation at BTC

The bi-annual advisory committee meetings are used to review program outcomes and assessment results. However, the evaluation and possible update of program outcomes or criteria are not systematic. Hence, moving forward, for the program outcomes developed locally at BTC, the

evaluation cycle will coincide with the three-year program review cycle to ensure a systemic review of program outcomes.

Developing & Evaluating Program Outcome Assessment Rubrics

A. Developing program outcome assessments

The approved and adopted TSAs establish statewide program outcomes and assessment criteria and are used to develop the program outcome assessment plans and rubrics. These are vetted by the local advisory committee for the program and submitted to WTCS for approval.

The Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) supports faculty in the development of program outcome assessment plans and rubrics, as well as assessment techniques and tools based on research of best practice.

In order to ensure ongoing support to BTC faculty throughout the academic year, development opportunities are offered to apply and enhance assessment knowledge and skills. There are specific professional development opportunities provided at designated professional development days in August and January each year, as well as during assessment day in May. BTC also supports faculty in their attendance at WTCS sponsored assessment conferences and/or statewide program meetings.

B. Evaluating program outcome assessments

The bi-annual advisory committee meetings are used to review program outcomes and assessment results. Additionally, program outcome assessment plans are updated annually during assessment day in May where faculty gather with academic leadership to discuss and analyze assessment results and prepare for program-specific improvement interventions.

Assessing Program Outcomes at BTC

Once the program outcomes and program outcomes assessment rubrics are created, evaluated, and approved, each program at BTC develops a program assessment plan. Plans utilize WIDS for easier organization and tracking of assessment activity. BTC faculty work collaboratively with CITL staff to build program learning using the "Backward Design" approach to design course curriculum and assessment. This approach determines what students need to know and be able to do by the end of the program for each individual or group of program outcomes. From this, faculty design acceptable evidence and assessment tools to gather evidence to demonstrate the development and mastery of the knowledge and skills within a course or set of courses that connect to program outcomes and assessment criteria.

Through curriculum mapping, BTC faculty identify program level assessment activities that address the program outcome assessment criteria, which are used to inform course level competencies (outcomes). The latter are scaffolded throughout the courses in the programs to allow students multiple opportunities to be introduced to and practice concepts before summative assessment take place. Multiple documented assessment activities are used to validate learning at the course and program levels.

At BTC, the cycle of program outcome assessments may vary between Associate Degrees (2-year) and Technical Diplomas (1 or 2 years). For example, in the AAS Culinary Arts program, program outcomes

are assessed summatively in one course taught in the fourth semester. Thus, assessments at the course level are formative assessments for individual program outcomes that allow the tracking of student learning as students' progress through the program. In the 1-year Welding Technical Diploma, specific program outcomes correlate to specific courses (individual or groups of courses) where a welding technique or process is introduced, practiced and assessed. Hence, in Welding individual program outcomes are formative and assessed through the program as opposed to an assessment in a culminating course.

Assessment Techniques - Introduction, Practice, and Mastering Expectations

Both summative and formative assessment techniques are employed at BTC to collect the evidence needed to assess student learning. Based on the type of assessment used, faculty identify the threshold needed to meet the target outcome or competency at each step of the assessment process. Students are expected to successfully meet the outcome criteria when it is assessed given the: introduce, practice, and assess (IPA) model. Based on the knowledge of the industry, faculty establish the criterion for class-wide success as a percentage of students in a section, but can vary dependent on assessment technique.

Assessment Cycle

Depending on whether it is a formative or summative assessment, data are collected either throughout a course or at the end of the course. Multiple formative assessments taken throughout the term may lead to a summative assessment at the end of the term. Faculty identify the timing of the assessment based on the tools identified in the assessment rubric.

Faculty gather the information collected from individual students, collate the data across the entire student roster of a section and compare the class outcome to the established threshold. Key findings are identified and comparisons across previous assessments may also be used. Assessment days, described later, provide the opportunity to examine results and strategize improvement plans.

Course level summative assessments may serve as program level formative assessments throughout the program to assist faculty in determining appropriate attainment of knowledge and applied skills. As program outcome assessment results are gathered, analyzed and marked for improvement, faculty revisit the mapped program outcomes and make adjustment accordingly.

Using the information generated by the program outcome assessment analysis, faculty and administrators identify specific interventions to improve student learning and performance.

Examples - Assessment Leading to Change

A few examples of how BTC's ongoing assessment process has led to improvement and change include items that have impacted budgetary decisions and areas within and outside the program and discipline area where assessment results occurred.

Impact on budget
- Manufacturing Information Technology Specialist: hired a success coach to improve success across program courses

- Nursing: equipped and staffed a skills lab to prepare practice modules for students to practice skills check-offs
- Physical Therapy Assistant: implemented a require "pre-program" preparation course in Kinesiology taught in collaboration with pre-college science faculty
- Diesel Technician: purchased equipment and simulators to improve student success

Impact on programs/disciplines (courses, professional development, new directions, etc.)
- Accounting: implemented cut scores for Math and Communication in beginning level Accounting course to improve retention and student readiness for more advanced courses
- Agriculture Business: moved Math and Communication courses to the first semester to improve student success with a capstone project in second-year courses
- Automotive Technician: moved to flexible lab model to increase student retention and ability to target student needs through small group and 1:1 support in the lab

Impact outside of the discipline (student services, scheduling, facilities, etc.)
- IT Network technician: implemented an integrated student success course to support retention that was collaboratively taught with academic advising staff
- All IT programs: developed a common first semester for all students with intrusive career exploration and advising support
- Electric Power Distribution: added POs based on industry feedback of new geolocation tools to enhance student success on the job

Lesson Learned - Assessment Process Improvements

This accreditation self-study allowed BTC to identify deficiencies and improvement opportunities in our program outcome assessment process. Faculty have been assessing competencies and outcomes since 2000, but the systematic nature of the assessment loop closure and a solid linking to the planning cycle were highlighted to be areas of growth. The institution has identified that the establishment of policies and procedures is required to ensure a generalized understanding of the processes associated with program outcome assessments. Although the faculty understand assessment and demonstrate varying skill levels with their practices, it is critical to tie completion to the working conditions and planning to the yearly college activities.

Moreover, it is apparent that the static nature of WIDS as a repository of information does not provide the ability to move the planning to the next level of integration of program review with program outcome assessment into budgeting and other college-wide planning activities. For this, BTC will be evaluating electronic tools that provide interactive assessment and program review options, which will augment what WIDS provides. Faculty are already well versed in the use of WIDS and the current LMS (Blackboard) and incorporating such additional tools in a synergistic manner will allow assessment results to be captured, collated, and linked. Such a set of tools should greatly decrease the amount of time that faculty use to collect assessment results data, which allows for a richer analysis of results and a deeper recognition of needed change or interventions. These tools will also aid the college to further shape professional development to the learning needs of faculty, in order to provide a more holistic approach to improving the learning environment for all our students.

The proposed plan outlines how the College will improve from the current state of compliance to a state of commitment to an improved student learning with program outcome assessment within a two-year time.

- January-May 2019:
  - Faculty will be presented with an assessment manual that compiles past learning with new information to help solidify their knowledge of outcome establishment, assessment, result analysis and interventions that improve student learning
  - Using learning from the Fall 2018 program outcome assessments, faculty whose program outcome assessments were identified as needing improvement will work with CITL staff on creating new or revised program outcome assessment plans, identifying evaluation criteria, and establishing assessment rubrics to deepen their understanding. This activity will also include new faculty
  - Two additional division specific meetings will be added to the calendar to allow targeted professional development based on discipline needs and focus on outcome assessment. These meetings will take place in March and April 2019
  - Faculty will continue to assess the currently-established college-wide core abilities using the established rubrics
  - Faculty teaching in General Education will create program outcomes specific to their area
  - Finalize the change in college-wide core abilities establishment after broad-based discussions at division meetings and input from other college stakeholders, including advisory committees
  - Request funding for outcome assessment electronic tool for the fiscal year 2019-2020
- May-August 2019:
  - A group of faculty and CITL staff will establish criteria and rubrics for college-wide core abilities assessment
  - Purchase of outcome Assessment electronic tool and implementation in early July
  - Purchase of outcome Assessment electronic tool and implementation in early July
- August 2019-January 2020:
  - August 2019: Presentation of new college-wide core abilities and the associated assessment criteria and rubrics
  - Faculty will assess the new and/or revised program outcome assessment that they developed in the previous semester
  - With the assistance of CITL staff, faculty will create a new program outcome assessment plan and associated assessment criteria and rubrics
  - Faculty will be introduced to and trained on how to implement the newly established criteria and rubrics of the college-wide core-abilities assessment
  - January-May 2020:
  - Presentation and activities with an outside expert speaker on outcome assessments (yet to be identified)
  - Showcase of outcome assessment electronic tool including examples from early adopters
  - Faculty will assess the new or revised outcome assessment plan that was established along with the assessment and criteria in the Fall 2019 semester
  - With the assistance of CITL staff, the faculty will develop plans ensuring the assessment all program outcomes in their programs is occurring
  - Faculty will assess students using the new college-wide core abilities, using the assessment criteria and rubrics established in the Fall 2019 semester
  - Two college-wide development days will be dedicated to training faculty on the outcome assessment electronic tool (February through May 2020)

- May-August 2020:
  - o Summer curriculum and assessment camps and activities by CITL staff to support faculty growth and proficiency
- August 2020-January 2021:
  - o August 2020: Review and update processes for alignment of outcome assessments to courses
  - o Faculty will continue to assess all program outcome assessment plans
  - o Faculty will continue to assess college-wide core abilities
  - o In November and December 2020: Two professional development days will be offered by CITL staff to faculty to re-assess and re-align the first program outcome assessment that they developed in Spring 2019
- January-May 2021:
  - o A college-wide assessment of assessments at BTC

CA=Core Abilities • PO=Program Outcomes • POA=Program Outcome Assessment
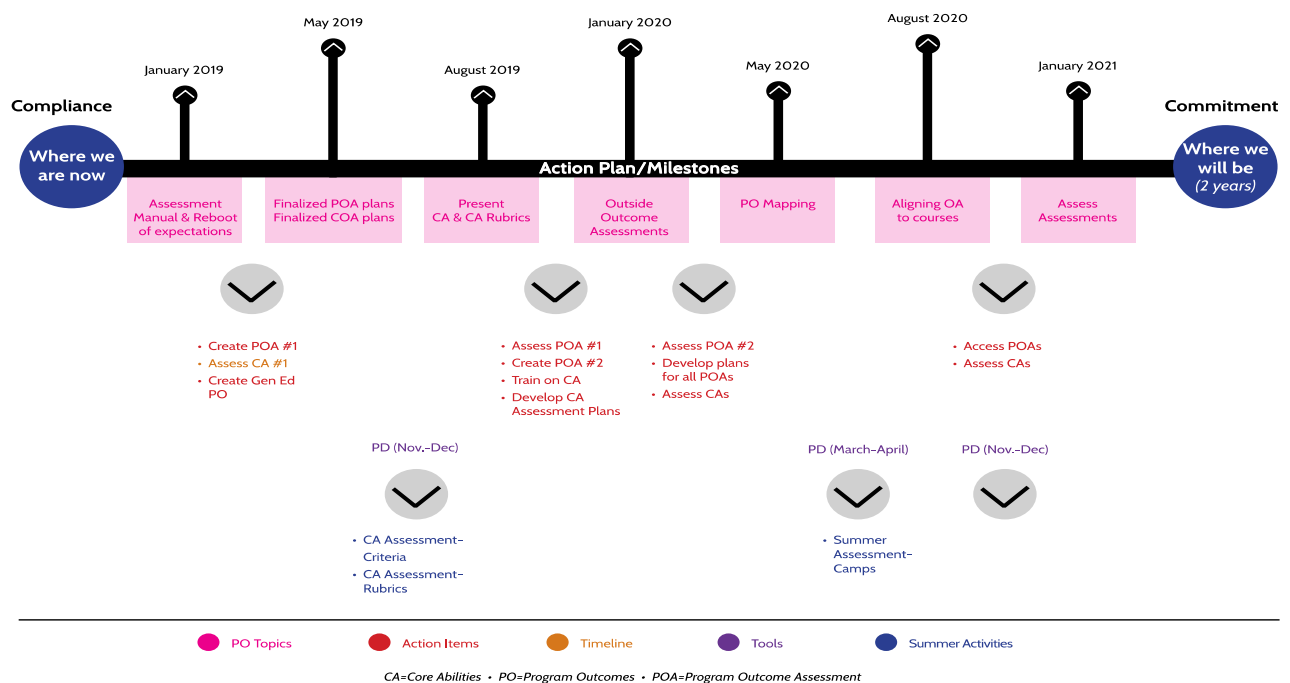
Core Ability Assessment at BTC

In addition to assessing the learning of students through program outcome assessments, assessing core abilities (CA) is also directly related to student employability, growth, and professional success. These core abilities transcend individual disciplines and address the readiness and propensity for success of the workforce that a college is producing. BTC has a long history of embracing and implementing core abilities and general education outcomes, dating back to the mid-1990s. However, BTC has a more imperfect track record of assessing these core abilities; especially prior to 2011. There is evidence that some programs assessed these core abilities; but institutionally, assessments were occasional and not systematic.

The 2006 AQIP Project (AP) 1 aimed at revising the core abilities and was followed by AP 4 in 2010 that focused on assessing these core abilities and faculty worked on developing assessment criteria between 2010 and 2014. Accordingly, in 2011 and 2012 employer summits were held and the feedback of the industry partners regarding soft skills and core abilities was sought out. These efforts led to:

- o Creation of the Career and Professional Development unit
- o Development of a Career Professional Development certificate
- o Inclusion of a mandatory Student Success course
- o Inclusion of specific area courses in programs
- o Incorporating core abilities into the culture of BTC (AP 7 from 2011)
- o Operationalizing core abilities into the performance evaluations of faculty and staff (AP 12 from 2014)

With this foundational work completed, the College, only recently, turned to assessment of core abilities. In 2015-2016, BTC faculty were surveyed and identified the top three core abilities that may be quantitatively measured within their courses and programs. This exercise included the development of college-wide core ability assessment rubrics for each of these three core abilities, which were submitted for a broad-based review and feedback. In May 2016, these finalized assessment rubrics were shared with faculty and a professional development session focused on the tools to implement the college-wide core ability assessment rubrics at the course and program levels. Two subsequent sessions took place in August 2016 and January 2017 to assist faculty with the implementation of college-wide core abilities assessment and data analysis from individual program results. Finally, in May 2017 and 2018, the first set of college-wide core abilities data analyses took place.

January/February 2016	1. Faculty Survey on most commonly assessed Core Abilities within Program/Gen Ed courses ☐ Data gathered from faculty responses; top 3 Core Abilities identified
April 2016	2. Curriculum and Assessment Committee develops College-Wide Core Ability Rubrics ☐ Core Ability assessment criteria analyzed and revised ☐ College wide rubrics developed for 3 of 7 Core Abilities ☐ Academic division review and feedback gathered
May 2016	3. Faculty Professional Development – College Wide Core Ability Assessment Project (program/course level) ☐ Outcome Assessment Plan (OAP) project and WIDS tool review ☐ FT faculty orientation to new college wide core ability assessment rubrics ☐ Faculty development of program/course level OAP plan(s)
August 2016/January 2017	4. Faculty Professional Development – College Wide Core Ability Assessment Project (program/course level con't.) ☐ Faculty review of purpose and plan for OAP development and analysis ☐ One on one Program/Gen Ed support for Core Ability OAP development *NOTE: Ongoing support given throughout semesters during division meetings, program meetings, Quality Review Processes and Specific Program Accreditation cycles)*
May 2017	5. Faculty Professional Development – College Wide Core Ability Assessment Data Analysis (program/course levels) ☐ FT faculty move from planning to data collection and analysis of College Wide Core Ability rubrics with initial improvement objectives identified ☐ After multiple collection points for data (3 semesters minimum), faculty identify patterns or specific learning objectives for targeted improvements at the program/course levels ☐ Core Ability OAP's updated and revised as needed to accommodate program/course changes
August2017/ January 2018	6. Faculty Professional Development – College Wide Core Ability Assessment Data Analysis (program/course levels) continued
May-August 2018	7. Curriculum and Assessment Committee – College Wide Core Ability Assessment Data Collection and Analysis ☐ Collect combined results from all BTC programs ☐ Curriculum and Assessment Committee along with Academic Affairs leadership meet to analyze college level results and make recommendations for improvement moving forward ☐ Curriculum and Assessment Committee make recommendations based on patterns from results for faculty professional development, student services staff development and college wide initiatives for continuous improvement.

Developing and Evaluating Core Abilities at BTC

A. Development of core abilities assessment criteria

In 2016, of the seven established college core abilities, the BTC Curriculum and Assessment Committee surveyed faculty and determined the three most commonly assessed Core Abilities that were deemed crucial to success both during school and after graduation. These three college-wide core abilities identified as assessment targets are: Professional Work Behaviors, Work Effectively in Teams, Solve Problems Efficiently.

B. Evaluation of core abilities

For each of these core abilities, a rubric for assessment was developed to be used by representatives on the Curriculum and Assessment Committee with academic leadership based on the assessment criteria for each Core Ability previously identified. The goal of the assessment rubric for each program was to reach an overall score of "3-Acceptable" on core abilities assessment rubrics when student reach the final 25% of their course of studies (i.e. fourth semester of a two-year Associate Degree program).

C. Examples of how core abilities assessments led to changes

In the short time of implementing a systematic, cohesive assessment strategy for core abilities, there have already been improvement strategies across several fronts. The analysis in 2017 led some faculty to make changes to their course competencies and learning objectives, supplement their instruction and/or add in formative assessment activities, where the data showed gaps in student progress towards reaching the Acceptable levels. Also, co-curricular activities were embedded in some programs to strengthen the mentoring and student support by faculty and others at the college from student services.

Impact on Budget - In Spring 2018, 12 programs identified that time management was the primary criterion within this Core Ability that was an area of concern. Many of these areas offer their education in a flexible delivery/open lab format. To help address these gaps, Academic Affairs teamed up with Student Service which was already purchasing a scheduling and time management system (SARS). The tool is being deployed in various labs across the college, including the Student Success Center, in particular in the tutoring and support labs. During the January 2019 Faculty Professional Development time, the tool will be presented to the faculty, who will be exposed to the capabilities and how it supports their goal of improving student attendance and time management.

Impact on programs/disciplines (courses, professional development, new directions, etc.) - In Spring 2018, Microbiology and Medical Lab Technology faculty identified the primary area of core ability gap to be in the appropriate lab attire. This involved a change in the curriculum to include lab safety early on in the semester.

Impact outside of the discipline (student services, scheduling, facilities, etc.) - Starting in Fall 2017, With the implementation of the flexible lab models (e.g. welding, electro-mechanical, IT programs), time management and attendance surfaced as the major core ability gaps for the programs that have adopted flexible delivery options. To improve student success and increase attendance,

Student Services has created a "success coach" position to work with students in a one-on-one format. The coach helps students create weekly attendance plans (attendance times and length of time in lab) and checks with students regularly to ensure that they are on track with their education.

Core Ability Assessment Process - Improvements

The feedback from the faculty surveys that were used to identify the top 3 core abilities, combined with the realization that many aspects of the seven core abilities were difficult to assess, led to the decision to reevaluate the current core abilities. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the College instituted two critical steps. First, reexamine our current core abilities. Second, continue with the assessment of the top 3 that were identified by faculty. During the latter part of Spring and Summer 2018, a committee comprised of faculty and administration reduced the seven core abilities to four. In Spring 2019 semester, the feedback of faculty, staff and employers will be sought on these proposed core abilities. These proposed core abilities were designed to allow for quantitative assessments leading to improvements in the soft and employability skills attainment of BTC students. The proposed core abilities are: Effective communication, Cultural Competence, Critical Thinking, Technology Competence

The institution has identified, with the help of this self-study, that clear descriptions of the assessment process and procedures are required to ensure a generalized understanding of the processes associated with outcome assessments, in general, and core abilities assessments in particular. Similar to our findings with program outcome assessment, it is clear that WIDS is not the most appropriate tool to collect and collate assessment data. Therefore, BTC will be evaluating electronic tools that provide interactive assessment and program review options, which will augment what WIDS provides. The availability of such information on a college-wide scale will allow us to be strategic in identifying gaps that will require remedies, such as faculty development, policy change, extra-curricular student activities, support services, curriculum improvements.

The proposed plan outlines how BTC will commit to the continuous improvement in core abilities attainment.

- January-May 2019:
  o Faculty will be presented with an assessment manual that compiles past learning with new information to help solidify their knowledge of outcome establishment, assessment, result analysis and interventions that improve student learning
  o Two additional division specific meetings will be added to the calendar to allow targeted professional development based on discipline needs and focus on outcome assessment. These meetings will take place in March and April 2019
  o Faculty will continue to assess the currently-established college-wide core abilities using the three established rubrics
  o Finalize the change in college-wide core abilities establishment after broad-based discussions at division meetings and input from other college stakeholders, including advisory committees
  o Request funding for outcome assessment electronic tool for the fiscal year 2019-2020
- May-August 2019:
  o A group of faculty and CITL staff will modify or establish criteria and rubrics for the updated college-wide core abilities assessment
  o Purchase of outcome assessment electronic tool and implementation in early July
- August 2019-January 2020:

- Presentation (August 2019) of new college-wide core abilities and the associated assessment criteria and rubrics
  - Faculty will be introduced to and trained on how to implement and integrate the newly established assessment criteria and rubrics of the college-wide core abilities rubrics
- January-May 2020:
  - Presentation and activities with an outside expert speaker on outcome assessments (yet to be identified)
  - Showcase of outcome assessment electronic tool including examples from early adopters
  - Faculty will assess students using the new college-wide core abilities, using the assessment criteria and rubrics established in the Fall 2019 semester
  - Two college-wide development days will be dedicated to training faculty on the outcome assessment electronic tool
- August 2020-January 2021:
  - Faculty will continue to assess all college-wide core abilities
  - Initial college-wide evaluation of the new assessment criteria and rubrics
- January-May 2021:
  - Faculty will continue to assess all college-wide core abilities

Feedback Report Conclusions

BTC values the findings of the portfolio appraisers as an endorsement of already ongoing efforts to create the best possible institution of learning for our student, stakeholders, and employees. Efforts to create a culture of data-informed decisions utilizing benchmarks and dashboards mirrors appraiser feedback. The move to develop better standard operating procedures and a pathway to new procedures to be vetted and made widely known and available through shared leadership will help with the alignment of feedback from our continuous quality improvement processes. BTC's expanded faculty evaluation efforts through both end-of-course evaluations and faculty observation plans will allow for both the strong faculty from BTC to shine as well as allowing professional development to be more targeted. Finally, a stronger culture of assessment being developed will allow for BTC to ensure we are able to deliver on the mission and vision of the institution to help our students build their future with flexible education in a supportive environment while delivering an innovative education to enrich our communities.

BTC remains committed to continuous quality improvement while seeking to move to Standard Pathways. This allows the institution time to complete current strategic initiatives, continue to move forward with expanding data access and utilization and fully scale assessment projects. The College currently has several reviewers for national program accreditors as well as the Higher Learning Commission. Continuous Quality Improvement has become part of our culture, our strategic development, our operations, and decision making processes.

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