

LEARNING TO ASSESS

Volume 11, Issue 1, Fall 2023

25th Anniversary of ALT

A Learning Centered Legacy



In the early 1990s, as PVCC was conducting its self-study for accreditation, the college began to measure institutional effectiveness and investigate methods for assessment. Later the college identified the core value of being Learning-Centered, for which key indicators include explicit outcomes and regular assessment across the college. This practice of assessment for “Learning” is meant “to inform all decision making and to guide the development of the College’s programs and services” (Assessment [Chronicle](#)).

To lead the effort, PVCC established its first assessment committee, the Student Academic Achievement Assessment Committee (SAAAC) in 1998. Eventually SAAAC would become Academic Assessment Team (AAT) and Out of Class Assessment Team (OCAT) around 2003 and then in 2018 combined to form the Assessment for Learning Team (ALT) that we have today. Over the past 25 years, many faculty, staff, and administrators have served on ALT and championed the critical work of measuring and improving learning. From the creation of the GEA Rubrics, development of PVCC’s own assessment software the GEA Online Tool, successful HLC reports since 2005, and new Bachelor assessment plans. The state of assessment at PVCC is strong and ALT is positioned well to take on the challenges of assessment work and lead the college into the future of assessment in higher education.



GEA Online Tool

Fall Assessment Labs

Wed., Sep. 6, 2:00-3:00 pm

Tues, Dec. 5, 1:00-3:00 pm

PAR Assessment Sessions

Fridays: 8/14, 8/25, 11/3, 1/12/24

ALT Meetings

9/20, 10/18, 11/15, 2/21, 3/20, 4/17

[Assessment Website](#)

Have ?'s

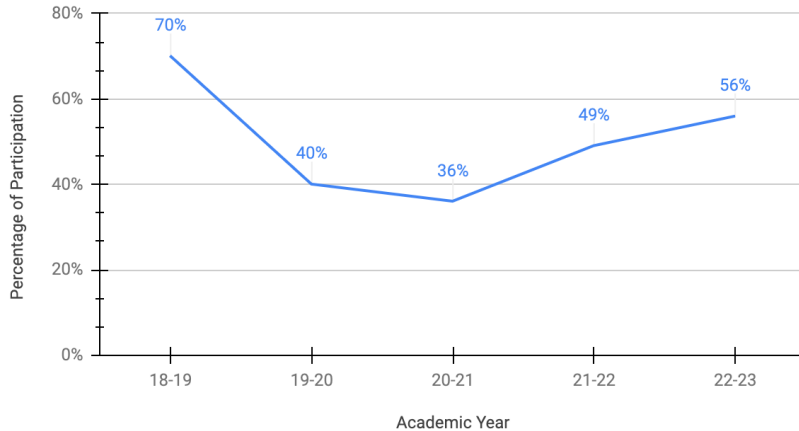
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PVCC’s ALT Work Highlighted at National Level

The Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) publishes *Emerging Dialogues in Assessment*. In April 2023, *Emerging Dialogues* featured the article titled, “Assessment Professional as Change Agents: Enhancing Equity in Our Own Backyard”. The article was authored by assessment scholars/practitioners across the country, who are part of the Equity Team working on the [Grand Challenges in Assessment Project](#), including PVCC’s ALT Co-Chair, Felicia Ramirez. The article “explores ways that assessment professionals can immediately start making equitable changes in assessment practice at the institutional, faculty, and student levels.” A section of the article is dedicated to ALT’s work to develop a charter that accounts for equity at various levels. When PVCC’s committees were developing the charters, ALT took ample time reflecting, analyzing, and thoughtfully developing guidelines and frameworks that were grounded in theoretical and evidence-based practices. According to the article, “Explicitly outlining strategies that support equity in assessment committee charters, like the one at PVCC, may be a great step towards advancing improvement at the institutional level.” [Link](#) to full article. [Link](#) to ALT’s Charter.



Percentage of RFP Participation in GEA per Academic Year



Academic Year	21-22	22-23
Forms submitted in GEA	84	119
Number of Faculty that submitted forms	51	75
Clas Sections Assessed in GEA	180	210
Division with most forms	ENG	SCI

Other Significant Data Points:

- 100% of Academic Divisions participated in Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in both the 2022-2023 and 2021-2022 academic years.
- 56% of Residential Faculty measured PVCC Institutional Student Learning Outcomes using the GEA Rubrics in the GEA Online Tool during 2022-2023.
- 58% of Residential Faculty documented assessments in the GEA Online Tool during 2022-2023.
- All nine of the GEA Rubrics were used to measure student achievement of learning outcomes in both the 2022-2023 and 2021-2022 academic years.
- Adjunct participation in GEA assessment doubled from year 2021-2022 to year 2022-2023.
- GEA Rubrics were applied across modalities including F-to-F, Online, Hybrid, and Live Online.
- This Fall, GEA rubrics will be used for the first time to score achievement of outcomes at the Bachelors level using a new level 3 score on the rubrics.

Meet Your ALT Rep: Counseling, Dr. Jim Rubin

Jim Rubin is currently the longest serving ALT member with over 18 years of service. His contributions have been an important part of the assessment legacy at the college.

Jim states, "I remember when we first started formally assessing student learning. Since the 90's we had department assessment reports. Then, in 2005, Rick Vaughn, Math faculty, chaired our first formal assessments efforts as a college. We had 5 general education learning outcomes at the time (information literacy, written communication, oral communication, problem solving, and technology). We were all still learning how to formalize the process of documenting our efforts. We've come so far. Now most faculty and staff are involved in assessment efforts. We have 9 general education learning outcomes and we continue to improve how we assess learning and apply that to improve student learning!"

Jim has lead assessment efforts in the Counseling Division and been instrumental in the development of student learning outcomes such as the Personal Development & Wellness and First Year Experience outcomes. Thank you, Jim, for your exemplary service!



Congrats to the 22-23 President's Assessment Award (PAAW) Recipients



Top Project: Casey Durandet (SCI) with Wesley Winter (Peer Mentor) and Amanda Wiggins (Peer Mentor), and consult Gary Kellgren (MAT). This fantastic course assessment was a continuation and expansion of previous years assessment work. The project focused on student math preparedness, problem solving, and spending more time completing mathematical steps of problems. By documenting and comparing data from 2018-2023, the team identified a significant post-covid drop in math skills. To improve student learning in problem solving, the team adopted the “Expert Approach to Solving Physics Problems,” obtained from <https://physics.wvu.edu/> and applied the approach to additional review sessions facilitated by the peer mentors in PHY111 and PHY 112. Student math skills improved, and those who “failed math basics” dropped from a high of 14% pre-test to 4% post-test, a clear indication that these extra resources aided in improving student learning. According to Durandet, “The data results provided for both PHY111 and PHY112, showed that the strategies used to help improve student learning, comprehension, and success did indeed work. The results clearly demonstrated the importance and relevance of having a Peer Mentor in physics, as it helped increase the success of these physics students this year by providing them the extra resource to hone their problem-solving skills.” The team also began developing a PVCC Physics YouTube channel in collaboration with the Library, and the next assessment project will focus more on these tools. Bravo!

2nd Place: Julie Robertson (NUR) In this outstanding course assessment for NUR 252, the obstetrics clinical and lab rotation, Professor Robertson used a pre and post self-efficacy instrument to measure students perceived knowledge and confidence in recognizing an obstetrical emergency in an unfolding case scenario of a patient in labor and delivery. The pre-test results showed that over 75% of the pre-licensure nursing students were not confident in any of the four areas on the survey. Robertson got to work, focusing on content taught while using the High-Fidelity Mannequin, placing students in small groups, giving them sufficient time to “look, listen, and feel” in each scenario, providing relevant simulation experiences with monitoring systems, and instructor lead debriefing sessions. She reported, “In the debriefing room, the students worked through a brief virtual simulation, had ample time to ask questions and then to take a post-simulation non-proctored quiz as a group”. On the post-test, 90% of the students felt confident in their ability to recognize an emergent change in the pregnant client. Wonderful example of authentic learning experiences to help students be competent and confident as learners and professionals!



3rd Place: Elizabeth (Bootsie) Martinez (BS) Criminal Justice students don't always have a clear idea of the types of careers available and ideas they do have are sometimes inaccurately based on what they have seen on TV shows. To better prepare AJS 101 students, Professor Martinez implemented a General Education Assessment project to measure the Career Planning dimension of the Personal Development & Wellness Rubric. Students completed a pre-unit worksheet and the results showed that they possessed little knowledge of criminal justice careers. To increase knowledge, Martinez developed an extensive list of criminal justice careers. Students chose a career they were unfamiliar with, researched it, and presented it in teams. Knowing additional information was needed, Professor Martinez then invited working professionals to serve as guest speakers in the form of video recorded interview sessions. She provided lists of available internships for students to explore and invited career services to visit her class. As a result, students assessment scores increased from 0.7 on the pre to 1.5 on the post on a scale of 0 - 2. Fabulous work to better prepare students for the field and helping them make informed career choices!

Top Cocurricular Assessment: Jenny Hall (HON) with John Douglas and Kimberleen Steen

A key part of the Honors experience at PVCC is participation in cocurricular learning opportunities across the college. According to Hall, this intention of this requirement “is frequently lost. Students who are focusing on their classes often look for the event that is the easiest to attend or is one that their friends are going to. They resent the extra work and are eager to get it over with.” To improve students’ connection with cocurricular activities, honors decided to apply the *Integrated Learning* dimension of the Civic Engagement GEA Rubric. The goal was for students to effectively *Synthesize how co-curricular activity collectively impacts learning, personal growth, and educational goals, and explain how course content can be applied to civic engagement activities.* The rubric was shared with students in the instructions. In the first assessment, students did not match expectations provided. To better serve students, honors provided further guidance, embedded college resources in the student advisory SHAC meetings, and published excellent examples from students. When adjusted for variable factors, the results showed pre average 1.55, post average 1.85, for a 19% increase in student achievement. What a great example of interconnectivity and intentionality with cocurricular planning!





Distinguished Project: Michael Noschka (ENG) A General Education Assessment project using, *Supporting Ideas with Evidence* dimension, of the *Written Communication Rubric*. Dr. Noschka implemented a series of interventions including: a full week of library research, two annotated bibliographies of 2-3 sources each, feedback on each entry for both bibliographies, and integration of these research sources into a rough draft of their paper. By the end of the class, 57% of the students showed growth in their writing ability by increasing their skill level in supporting their ideas with evidence and analysis. The growth breakdown showed (24%) improved by a half-letter variation; (14%) a full letter grade; and (19%) expanded their skills by two full letter grades. Fantastic!

Distinguished Project: Raquel Lopez (MATH) Dr. Lopez “wanted the students to learn how to learn math, by writing”, her main goal was “to teach them how to self-direct to apply the tools of learning math including: Writing all steps down with logical flow using correct notation (not inventing false notation) and practicing repetition and self-quizzing.” She designed an assessment using the *Self-Direction* dimension of the *Personal Development & Wellness Rubric* in MAT 150. Students reported that “they need to get more help” and the results suggested they still have a lot to learn regarding their ability to self-direct. Students improved in their survey responses, yet exam scores did not improve and although there was an increase in reported usage of tutoring services, it was not for mathematical content. The work will continue. Dr. Lopez wants to show students that math is a language and is making plans for future assessment. Way to go! We look forward to similar methods to improve students’ math skills.



Distinguished Project: Meggin Kirk (EDU) Professor Kirk reported that, “Students in EDU 222 study the emotional, social, behavioral, cognitive, and academic characteristics of students with special needs. They identify recommended educational practices to best modify and accommodate the needs of students based on their research.” But in a pre-test, she found that students provided only generic recommendations, even after feedback. So, she decided to intervene by implementing a mix and match activity with examples of both generic and specific educational practices. Students then worked with partners to reflect on the results and analyze their thinking. According to Kirk, “After the activity and discussion, 16 of 16 students completed additional response reports using specific recommended educational practices. Most provided depth and breadth in their responses.” She is now looking forward and beginning to identify ways to use case studies and build on methods used at the 100 and 200 level for the new 300 and 400 level courses. Great timely adjustments and critical pausing during a course to ensure student success!

Thank you to all Faculty who submitted projects!

We can’t wait to see how you improve learning this year!



Tips for Designing Your Fall 2023 Assessment Projects

- Ask others teaching the same class as you to collaborate on a common course assessment.
- In your first Division meeting ask faculty to share about last year’s projects and brainstorm possible assessment projects for this year.
- Review the GEA Rubric Packet and identify a key learning outcome that is essential for your class.
- Talk with your students during week 1-2 about what skills they tend to struggle with and then match those to a specific dimension on one of the GEA Rubrics (ie: Critical Reading)
- Provide a list of the course competencies to students in week one and ask them to vote on which of the 1-2 competencies they have a desire to get strongest in or are most excited about learning about. Then design a project centered on those outcomes and continue to involve students throughout the process.