



2020 Ad Hoc Report on 2019 Recommendations

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to
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About Wenatchee Valley College

Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) was founded in Wenatchee in 1939 as a private college, with funds to hire the first teaching faculty guaranteed by community members. After a period of affiliation with the public K-12 school system, WVC became a public community college in 1967 with the passage of the Community College Act by the Washington State Legislature. At this time, Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties were designated as WVC's service district. This area covers over 10,000 square miles and currently has a population of more than 158,000. Though the area is primarily rural with widely scattered communities, the greater Wenatchee area has grown to a population of over 50,000.

As a state-supported community college, one of 34 in the Washington state community and technical college system, WVC's mission is grounded in state statute (RCW 28.B 50). This legislation establishes community colleges as open-access institutions with a purpose of providing pre-transfer preparation, workforce education, basic skills instruction, and lifelong learning opportunities. WVC's mission echoes this purpose, with a focus on serving the residents of its service district as the only institution of higher education with a full-time presence in this vast area. The college's mission statement was most recently revised during the 2007-08 academic year and formally adopted by the Board of Trustees in February 2008:

Wenatchee Valley College enriches North Central Washington by serving educational and cultural needs of communities and residents throughout the service area. The college provides high-quality transfer, liberal arts, professional/technical, basic skills and continuing education for students of diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds.

Under this mission statement, WVC has four core themes: Educational Achievement, Support for Learning, Responsiveness to Local Needs and Diversity and Cultural Enrichment. Each core theme has a core theme council composed of college faculty and staff that work to plan and seeks to improve the college with regard to each core theme. All four core themes and associated councils are focused on student success and achievement.

WVC's main campus is on a 52-acre site in central Wenatchee. It includes nine buildings with classrooms, teaching labs, and offices; a library/media center with interactive television classrooms; a gymnasium; a student center with dining area and bookstore; a facilities and operations center; and athletic fields for baseball, softball, and soccer. The college is in the process of building a new three-story classroom building, replacing a multipurpose/classroom building built in the early 1950s.. In addition, the college has been approved to build a new career and technical building and hopes to enter the planning phase in 2021.

In 1972, a satellite campus was established in Omak, 100 miles to the north of Wenatchee, to better serve the residents of Okanogan County. In 1975, WVC purchased its first permanent building to begin the campus in Omak. Over time, the WVC at Omak programs and services and buildings have grown to include additional classrooms, laboratories, offices, and a library.

In 2019-20, WVC served almost 6,000 students. Of those, 5,099 individuals enrolled in credit or basic skills programs, representing 2,986 FTEs (annualized full-time equivalent students). About 89 percent of enrollment is at the Wenatchee campus and 11 percent is at Omak. WVC is a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution with 48 percent of its students of Latinx origin. In addition, 2.6 percent of WVC's students are Native American. The majority of Native American students are enrolled at WVC at Omak, which is adjacent to the reservation lands of the Colville Confederated Tribes.

Introduction

In spring 2019, Wenatchee Valley College concluded its latest accreditation cycle by completing the [Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report](#) in February. The Year Seven Evaluation Visit in April resulted in the evaluation team giving WVC four commendations and three recommendations in its [evaluation report](#). The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) commissioners reviewed the report, discussed their findings with the evaluation chair, WVC's President and Accreditation Liaison Officer in June. This resulted in the commission [reaffirming WVC accreditation](#) by NWCCU and upholding the commendations and recommendations and asking that WVC act on the recommendations and be prepared to discuss progress made with an Ad Hoc Report and site visit in fall 2020.

The purpose of this report is to address the recommendations of the commission in preparation for the site visit in October 2020. The three recommendations deal with three areas of concern brought forward by the evaluation team and the commission. Those areas are, in short:

1. WVC's Omak Campus security.
2. WVC assessment of program learning outcomes.
3. WVC's use of assessment results in improving student learning and achievement.

The commission found that WVC was substantially in compliance with Recommendation 1. On Recommendations 2 and 3, the commission found that WVC was out of compliance and needed to take immediate action..

What follows in this document is a short description of steps WVC has taken to address evaluator concerns and commission recommendations in these three areas. It should be noted that in all three areas WVC was aware of problems and had started to act on them, even prior to the evaluation visit. For example, WVC had undertaken a timeline for reviewing security issues at both the Omak and Wenatchee campuses. Part of that process had resulted in a new emergency management plan, tabletop exercises in dealing with emergency situations and fostering working relationships with local emergency agencies in both Omak and Wenatchee. For Recommendation 2 and 3, WVC had reorganized the college's Assessment Committee and had made it a permanent standing committee that reports to the Instruction Council.

Since the evaluation visit and commission's actions, WVC has sought to address the three recommendations. Those actions are detailed in the remainder of this report. Progress has been made on all three recommendations over the last year. The evaluation and recommendations have offered the college an opportunity to improve in making the college a safer environment for its students and in making progress in assessing how its students learn and meet educational outcomes. Further, WVC has used this as an opportunity to plan and restructure a variety of its practices. The college looks forward to using the results of assessment done in the last year to target areas for planning and improvement.

Finally, it should be noted that much of this progress has been made during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pandemic response resulted in the closure of campus and moving all instruction to alternate online/distance platforms in the final week of winter quarter and throughout spring break and spring quarter. That the college continued to address the commission's concerns in the midst of the pandemic response is something to note and celebrate. We are proud of what WVC has achieved in the last year and to share it here with you.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The evaluation committee recommends that Wenatchee Valley College assess the Omak campus to ensure that it is safe, secure, and sufficient in both quantity and quality, ensuring healthful learning and working environments that support the institution's mission, programs, and services. The evaluation committee further recommends that the institution make provisions for the security of property at the Omak campus. (2010 Standards: 2.D.2; 2.G.1)

Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) was aware of [security concerns](#) prior to the 2019 Year Seven Evaluation visit. These concerns came from discussions with Omak campus faculty, staff, and students. Primarily, there were concerns about the WVC at Omak campus being a place where non-college individuals would make use of the grounds as a place of shelter and restroom access. This was especially true for overnight and early morning hours. In addition, areas surrounding the campus posed security and risk issues for those coming to the Omak campus. Further, the presence of WVC security on the Omak campus was focused on times when faculty, staff and students were not normally on campus at night or on weekends. Additional issues existed that had to do with areas of campus going unsupervised, with unlocked doors and without ways to assure the security of college property. Some areas had locks, but there was no control on who had keys or access. Some areas, like faculty offices and the library, went with an open door when no faculty or staff were available to provide supervision.

Shortly after the evaluation visit, WVC undertook a full security evaluation of the Omak campus. This evaluation was completed prior to NWCCU formally issuing Recommendation 1 in July 2019. The security evaluation identified areas where the college could improve security of the Omak campus and its property.

As a result, the WVC at Omak campus now has 40 hours of physical security. These hours have increased from 19 hours a week. The hours were expanded to increase physical presence to discourage loitering and potential drug activity on campus. Omak now has foot patrols supported by 24/7 security cameras. Both campuses' have card access entry and lockdown systems in place.

There are two different access tools used by WVC. Card Access (electronic), and hard key. WVC has committed to card access for all exterior doors for both campuses. Keys are issued based upon job description and need to access the area in the event of an emergency.

Physical and electronic security is essential in providing security, access, and protection to WVC students, personnel, equipment, buildings, and resources. Colleges are popular targets of theft from both internal and external threats. Access to college buildings is a privilege, not a right, and implies user responsibilities and accountability. An essential element of security is maintaining adequate access control so that college facilities may only be accessed by those that are authorized. Issuance of access devices should be careful, systematic, and audited, as inadequately controlled access devices result in poor security

Since that time WVC has taken the following steps aimed at addressing the evaluation and Recommendation 1:

[WVC updated a set of policies and procedures on physical \(security office foot patrols\) and electronic access \(card access and key access\) on both the Omak and Wenatchee campuses.](#) This was done to control and monitor access to areas of the campus outside of typical instruction times and normal business hours for all stakeholders of the college. Key access undergoes an annual review by the safety and security manager and supervisors of college staff and faculty. Campus access outside of normally scheduled hours of operation is approved and coordinated with supervisors and college security. Available key access is to be limited to only those who need access to a given area of campus, with unused/unauthorized keys to be returned to the college. In addition, the policy emphasized that staff and faculty were responsible for locking offices and class areas when not in use. This allowed for security to focus efforts at times when faculty, staff and students were actually on campus. Once campus hours are concluded, security does a walkthrough of all buildings to ensure buildings are empty and locked.

[WVC's security vendor hours and scope of operation were shifted to provide greater coverage just prior to normal college hours of operation.](#) On the Omak campus, there is a shift to on demand/call center coverage at late evening hours in favor of providing a visible presence on campus during instruction hours. In addition, security is now employed to conduct a full campus sweep in the hour prior to the start of instruction. Additional 911 security for a physical presence is done with a roving vehicle patrol during the 4 hours per night when foot patrols are not on the Wenatchee campus. This has resulted in increased fiscal allocation on security (Monthly [before](#) and [after](#))..

Access points to the Omak campus have been reduced. The evaluation of the campus pointed out that there were too many ways to enter and exit the Omak campus securely. This has provided greater traffic control for the college and allowed easier monitoring of who is on campus.

The number of security cameras on the Omak campus was changed to provide a wider vision of the college. New, highly-visible cameras were also added.. Omak foot patrols are supported by the 24/7 security cameras.

One area of concern expressed by evaluators focused on library security and the availability to protect college and student property in the Omak campus library. [Over the last year, library staff have discussed a number of ways to address this issue:](#)

- Researching updates to library security equipment, such as security gate systems and hand-held magnetic tracking systems.
- Expanding of computer lab areas to make them adjacent to the library, allowing lab personnel to cover and supervise the library at times when the library in the past had gone without supervision or the supervision of student workers.
- Hiring additional part-time hourly staff to cover gaps in library supervision.

- Studying student usage of the library, with the goal to find gaps in usage where the library could be closed so library staff can perform their other college functions.

Since mid-April, due to COVID-19, library access has been limited due to the college mostly being closed to students and the community. In addition, a major portion of library staff time has been spent in providing access to students to media and computer support through the library's loan system. Much of the progress in consideration of the items mentioned above has taken a back seat to student needs of the moment. It is hoped in the coming year further progress can be made in addressing this issue for the library.

WVC includes local law enforcement in both Wenatchee and Omak when discussing safety and security for the campus. These issues vary from crime trends, current issues, trespassers, misdemeanor crimes, drug crimes, and working with law enforcement on extra patrols when needed. Our relationship with law enforcement is positive and we are working to consistently communicate what is happening on the campus and continue partnering on safety messaging. The aim has been to coordinate with law enforcement on areas off campus that present security concerns to the campuses and to coordinate issues that might arise on campus.

WVC has increased the training of staff and faculty around security concerns. This training includes a variety of seminars offered by student services, administrative services and security. Different topics have been presented at times throughout the year. Similarly, the [2019 Fall President's Day](#) in September 2019 focused on college security, bringing in a national expert from the Safe Schools Campaign to speak about on-campus shootings and security threats. In spring [2019 WVC hosted a full-functional active shooter drill](#) involving over [10 different agencies](#) in and around the Wenatchee Valley.

It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted security priorities for the college. The changes remain in place, but the current emphasis in security is to provide a healthy and safe learning environment that complies with state and county health guidelines. Positive working relationships, similar to the college's relationships with local law enforcement, have been formed between local health districts and the college's security and facilities teams.

Recommendations 2 and 3

Recommendation 2:

The evaluation committee recommends that Wenatchee Valley College document through an effective, regular and comprehensive system of assessment, that students achieve identified learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes. (2.C.5; 4.A.3)

Recommendation 3:

The evaluation committee recommends that the college use the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements. (4.B.2)

Assessment prior to evaluation

Wenatchee Valley College entered its [2019 Year Seven Comprehensive Self-Study](#) aware that more work was necessary to demonstrate student learning in order to fulfill the Educational Achievement core theme ([Self-Study, p. 39](#)). While structures have been put in place to provide regular programmatic review through area plans (which asked for gaps in success, gains over the past year and goals for the future), little evidence existed that these plans included direct or indirect measurement of student learning and the use of the results of such measures for program improvement. Similarly, while the college had identified four Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and had invested in annual institutional review of one of these SLOs ([example](#)) each year, the cycle had been initiated too late in the seven-year cycle for the college to be able to look at these results and establish institutional accountability around graduates' demonstration of their fulfillment. Finally, assessment at the course level was not aligned to program level outcomes to allow the college to strengthen its programs.

WVC documented these concerns and initial changes in its Year Seven Comprehensive Self-Study. Furthermore, WVC initiated several institutional changes in fall 2018.

WVC recognized a disconnect between planning processes and assessment. To address this, the college [simplified its area plan](#) process. In addition to gains, gaps, and goals, the college asked programs to identify one assessable question the program would like to know the answer to and begin measuring. In the first year, program participation in this linkage was somewhat spotty, but increased in 2019-20.

The college also made a concerted effort to distinguish more clearly the differences between SLOs, course learning outcomes (CLOs), and program learning outcomes (PLOs). Previously, faculty had largely relied upon their CLO assessment as evidence of student learning. Faculty engagement in academic assessment in 2018-19 was largely educational. Faculty desired a better understanding of the relationship between student learning outcomes at the institutional level and

their value in the classroom. In addition, some faculty were unaccustomed to thinking about their disciplinary area as programs. To address these, the college engaged in an information campaign that sought to reinforce the fundamental value of SLO assessment for accountability and CLO assessment for program improvement. The college asked every program to create 5 to 8 PLOs that would describe what a graduate of that program would be expected to know, think, or do in the content area. The college goal for 2018-19 was for every program to establish program learning outcomes, and the college largely achieved this goal.

In the course of developing and examining PLOs, faculty began to question the relationship between CLOs, PLOs, and SLOs. Because college SLOs are relatively general, faculty found that they could align many, but not all, CLOs to SLOs. Similarly, faculty found that the specificity of many PLOs could be aligned to CLOs or to SLOs. These alignment questions led to a construct at the college in which faculty are asked to align all CLOs to either an SLO or a PLO. Measurement of these outcomes, in turn, provides evidence for identification of gains, gaps, and goals in area planning (Figure 2 of the Culture of Inquiry Compilation Report).

As a foundational year in developing a culture of inquiry at the college, 2018-19 created linkages between planning and assessment, alignment between course, program, and student learning outcomes, and a better understanding of the purpose of assessment for accountability or improvement.

Response to Recommendations

In 2019-20, the college worked to solidify its assessment progress by making the Assessment Committee a standing committee with permanent faculty representation and oversight of the college's assessment portfolio.

In addition, the college recognized the need for focused expertise and support for assessment. While the foundational activity among faculty increased a knowledge of assessment, the Educational Achievement Core Theme Council was engaged in discussions about how to better document student learning in fulfillment of the core theme. The council recommended that the college invest in faculty release positions, known as assessment coordinators, who could provide expertise in consultation to programs to translate knowledge into assessment activity. In spring 2019, the Core Theme Council Leadership Team accepted a proposal to fund four of these positions as a pilot. In 2019-20, four faculty were provided one course release each per quarter and given responsibility to support a defined set of instructional and non-instructional programs to advance the college's culture of inquiry. These coordinators were selected on the basis of interest, expertise, and representation to ensure that they could effectively support the programs they were assigned. The coordinators worked in consultation with the assessment committee who reviewed and advised progress.

[The college also invested in focused assessment work during its 2019 launch week \(Event Schedule, p. 2, 5\)](#) Dr. Gianina Baker, assistant director of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) reviewed the college's year seven self-study and provided

additional insight and consultation regarding the usefulness of assessment for improving student learning. Faculty feedback regarding launch week activities was positive, and the engagement in assessment noticeably improved.

The work done by the Assessment Committee and assessment coordinators in 2019-20 advanced foundational work into real progress towards assessing programs, documenting student learning, and using the results of assessment in program improvement as [illustrated in their year-end report](#).

Assessment coordinators revised the area planning process to prioritize assessment and improvement. Instead of requesting new area plans annually, the coordinators recommended that area plans be three-year cycles. Year one establishes the area plan (including gains, gaps, and goals). Year two focuses on analysis of results. Year three focuses on providing evidence of improvement. The coordinators also established a roadmap for assessment to better illustrate the linkage between assessment and planning. Finally, the coordinators took on the significant challenge of building program level assessment with faculty colleagues. The revisions from the assessment coordinators will be implemented in 2020-21.

Core Theme: Educational Achievement

Progress toward Educational Achievement has been made due to the coaching and support from assessment coordinators for faculty and staff on how to participate in a culture of inquiry. As documented appendix C of the year-end report provided by the assessment coordinators, several programs have been able to document progress toward measuring, analyzing, and using assessment results for improvement. Notably, the vignettes demonstrating assessment culture are distributed widely across transfer, professional-technical, and non-instructional areas. All instructional programs now have PLOs. Assessment vignettes documenting assessment progress have been received from sixteen instructional programs: Agriculture, Allied Health, Automotive, Biology, Communications, Cooperative Work Experience, English, Geography, History, Humanities, Machining, Math, Medical Assistant, MLT, Philosophy, and RadTech. Faculty and staff are being encouraged to collect data, document their continuous cycle of improvement, and share their experiences through vignettes.

Core Theme: Support for Learning

To advance Support for Learning (S4L), non-instructional programs now have PLOs in CAMP, Counseling Services, Library Services, Running Start, the Student Recreation Center, and TRIO/SSS. Assessment vignettes documenting assessment progress has been received from five non-instructional programs: CAMP, Counseling Services, Library Services, Running Start, and the Student Recreation Center.

Further, Student Support Services Leadership Council (SSL), has been submitting their annual area plans, with a similar look at gains, gaps and goals. Their assessment approaches have been a little different than those of instruction, looking to build better systems of support and assessing

their effectiveness for students. In the 2019-20 academic year, these areas made ample use of the prior year's participation in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement to inform and assess their work and plans.

Core Theme: Responsiveness to Local Needs

Responsiveness to Local Needs is being assessed through the development and/or improvement of PLOs in workforce instruction and programs to ensure that student learning meets the local workforce needs. Further, Washington State has instituted stronger reporting requirements for Perkins Funding. These [requirements](#) ask workforce programs to assess their impact on student learning and student achievement [for at risk populations](#).

Core Theme: Diversity and Cultural Enrichment

WVC is assessing programs to advance Diversity and Cultural Enrichment. Allied Health, English, and math departments are evaluating whether or not there are diversity gaps in student learning and success in order to develop a plan to narrow the learning gaps (if identified) and improve equity in learning within those programs.

The success of the Assessment Coordinators in 2019-20 coincided with a very difficult budget time for the college. Nonetheless, the success of the model could not be ignored, and the college created a dedicated "assessment" budget line to support the continuation of the assessment coordinators positions into the foreseeable future and continue institutional progress toward establishing a culture of inquiry and continuous improvement.

The college is capitalizing on the momentum gained in 2019-20. The Assessment Committee and coordinators generated [their own area plan](#) with goals for the current academic year. The coordinators will provide the 2020 Launch Week keynote, celebrating the college's successes over the past year. In 2019-20, dedicated time for department and program assessment will be provided in each of the three quarterly Dean's Days ([see academic calendar](#)).

Conclusion

In the year since WVC received the three recommendations from NWCCU, the college has taken important positive steps to address them. WVC listened to staff, faculty and students on the Omak campus to ascertain and assess the security issues on and around the campus. It addressed access to buildings and rooms by changing key access policy and practice, so that only those who should be on campus at any given time will have access to buildings, rooms, and other facilities. Further, steps were taken to control access points on the campus, to better regulate traffic and points where individuals come onto campus. Security coverage has been changed to offer a greater presence immediately prior to class beginning in the morning through times that students and faculty are usually on campus during instruction hours. At other times, security has been given tools for greater online and remote reporting for coverage later in the day and on weekends. WVC is working to address the protection of college property, especially for the library, by looking at potential physical technology to monitor property, rearranging lab and library space, and adjustments in personnel.

Seeking to meet the need to better assess student learning outcomes at WVC, the college has taken a careful look at its assessment processes and discussed changes to develop a culture of evidence around student success. This has led to the reformatting the college's assessment committee to be a full standing committee, with members coming primarily from faculty. Further, funds were sought to provide four assessment coordinators stipends to help programs work on developing program outcomes and assessing those outcomes. These four assessment coordinators provided lacking structure and leadership around assessment. They further have sought to strengthen planning at the college so that it makes better use of assessment data. By changing the annual instructional and non-instructional annual planning process, the college can make use of results can be made using learning assessment outcomes.

Much of this was done under the stresses and strains of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has made security slightly easier, as access to all WVC's facilities and campuses has been highly limited. However, it has offered time for security to be adapted to future needs. For instruction, it has offered the opportunity to adjust not only to a remote learning environment, but to adapt processes that integrate program learning outcomes assessment into regular practice.

While these steps have been positive and help to address the recommendations, WVC looks to continue to improve in providing a safe place for all to learn and achieve educational goals. Building a positive, equitable environment that is based on a culture of evidence and improvement helps the college to fulfill its mission, core themes and strategic plans.