National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

LaGuardia Community College: Weaving Assessment Into the Institutional Fabric

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LaGuardia Community College

LaGuardia Community College, located in Long Island City, New York, is a nationally recognized associate-degree granting institution. Founded in 1971, the college now has over 50 majors in areas such as business management, accounting, fine arts, nursing, engineering, biology, psychology, environmental science, literature, and liberal arts. Among the college's 325 full-time faculty and 796 part-time faculty, 54% have doctorates.[1] The institution supports 18,623 credit-seeking students, of which 56% are working full time toward a degree while 44% are part-time students, and it also serves over 40,000 non-credit-seeking students. The institution's stated mission is as follows:

> LaGuardia Community College's mission is to educate and graduate one of the most diverse student populations in the country to become critical thinkers and socially responsible citizens who help to shape a rapidly evolving society.

A federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution, LaGuardia Community College serves an overwhelmingly minority and first-generation college student population "from diverse cultures, ages, and educational and economic backgrounds."[2] Its students come from 160 different countries and speak more than 120 different primary languages. LaGuardia's commitment to educational excellence has been acknowledged by Excelencia in Education, the Bellwether Award for Exemplary Instructional Programs, and the Community College Excellence Award from the MetLife Foundation. Because of its reputation as a leader in learning outcomes assessment, particularly through the use of electronic portfolios (ePortfolios), LaGuardia was selected by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) as an *Example of Best Practice*. This report features LaGuardia's commitment to assessment, the collaboration across units at the college, the ePortfolio as the foundation of the assessment efforts, and the institution's robust program review system including assessment.[3]

Institutional Context

A range of factors converged to establish LaGuardia Community College as a leader in student learning outcomes assessment. The creation of a general education curriculum, an accreditation mandate, a Title V grant, and the active role of its academic leaders are especially relevant. In 2001–2002, LaGuardia defined a general education approach for all students—an unusual

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[1] See the 2011 Institutional Profile for information on students, faculty, and the institution at http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/uploadedFiles/Main_Site/Content/IT/IR/docs/2011factbook.pdf

[2] For more information about the students, faculty, or institutional awards, see http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/About/Fast-Facts/

[3] The data gathered for this case study involved phone interviews with the Director of Outcomes Assessment, the Director of Institutional Research, and two faculty members as well as a systematic review of the institutional website and document analysis. Interviews took place over May 2011 and continued through May 2012.

move for community colleges, where liberal arts may not integrate well into professional or vocational curricula. Moving beyond a traditional distribution approach, LaGuardia focused general education on competencies or proficiencies required across all degree programs. (These core competencies include critical literacy, quantitative reasoning, oral communication, research and information literacy, and technical literacy.) Students are required to meet requirements for both general education as well as for their degree programs. At the same time, LaGuardia was also responding to pressure from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (Middle States) to establish a new assessment plan and to document how it used assessment evidence to improve student learning. To support this work, the institution successfully applied for a Title V grant allowing it to plan, pilot, and scale the now nationally recognized ePortfolio system.[4,5] Along with LaGuardia's participation in Integrative Learning: Opportunities to Connect, a project of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), these factors led LaGuardia to very closely examine student learning outcomes and how to assess them.[6]

From the beginning, the college's assessment plan focused on improving student learning on common outcomes that all students at LaGuardia could attain. According to Dean Paul Arcario and Professor James Wilson, assessment at La Guardia was to be transformative:

> … whether or not we're comfortable with it, assessment is about revolution. If we really listen to students and take them seriously, then our teaching and learning methodologies will change … Finely tuned assessment efforts help keep us from being self-satisfied or complacent about the workplace we love … Through assessment we challenge ourselves to rethink our ways of teaching, structuring the curriculum, working together, and even knowing itself. It provides a means for self-correcting action and for the continual expansion of our thinking about the idea and purpose of higher education.[7]

Dean Arcario advances assessment by participating on the campus Assessment Leadership Team, by financially supporting faculty and staff to participate in conferences, by offering a range of assessment-focused campus workshops, and by making assessment a priority for all programs. LaGuardia President Gail O. Mellow, also an advocate of assessment, often asks, "How do you know that students are learning?" She reads all of the Periodic Program Reviews (PPRs) and gives feedback based on her readings. Known as someone who believes in the importance of using evidence to make decisions, she focuses her support on projects that can show how they evaluate their impact on student success. These are among the ways that LaGuardia's academic leadership has shown commitment to assessment activity on campus.

A sustained effort by academic leadership and key faculty leaders has overcome some initial faculty concerns that assessment might be used to target individual faculty members. Over time, assessment has become a motif on campus as growing numbers of faculty assess student learning and focus programmatic decisions and discussions on ways to improve it. The engagement of these faculty and the discussions across campus have shown that assessment efforts are not focused on individual faculty performance—an initial miscon

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[4] LaGuardia launched the ePortfolio with grant funds and sustains it with campus funding. It continues to attract Title V grants and FIPSE Grants to advance its work on campus, across the CUNY system, as well as internationally. See http://www.eportfolio.lagcc.cuny.edu/ about/milestones.htm to learn about the reach of the ePortfolio system with the Making Connections National Resource Center (http:// www.lagcc.cuny.edu/connections/). In addition, LaGuardia's ePortfolio is often mentioned in the Association for Authentic, Experiential, and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEEBL) (http://www.aaeebl.org/) conferences and resource lists.

[5] LaGuardia's ePortfolio has been the focus of several publications, such as Eynon, B. (2009). Making connections: The LaGuardia eportfolio. In D. Cambridge, B. Cambridge, & K. B. Yancey (Eds.), *Electronic portfolios 2.0: Emergent research on implementation and impact* (pp. 59–68). Sterling, VA: Stylus; Arcario, P., Eynon, B., & Lucca, L. (2010). The power of peers: New ways for students to support students. In J. Summerfield & C. Smith (Eds.), *Making teaching and learning matter: Transformative spaces in higher education* (pp. 195–218). New York: Springer; and Enyon, B. (2009) "*It helped me see a new me: ePortfolio, Learning and Change at LaGuardia Community College in Filtered the on-line journal of Academic Commons*", http://www.academiccommons.org/commons/essay/ eportfolio-learning-and-change

[6] See http://www.aacu.org/integrative_learning/index.cfm

[7] Arcario, P., & Wilson, J. (2007). *Putting it together: General education at LaGuardia Community College*. In J. Summerfield, & C. Benedicks (Eds.), Reclaiming the public university: Conversations on general and liberal education. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

ception—but instead on a broader evaluation of program and general institutional goals. The combination of top-down and grass-roots approaches has been effective. The 2012 Final Evaluation Team report from the visiting Middle States team praised LaGuardia for creating a broad culture of assessment on campus.[8] Support from the president and dean has moved the institution forward and assessment now permeates all levels of the institution.

LaGuardia's ePortfolio Initiative

A central feature of the college's outcomes assessment process, LaGuardia's ePortfolio initiative helps ground the college's entire assessment cycle in the authentic work of students and faculty by providing a means for collecting large quantities of student artifacts and organizing them for faculty review in the Periodic Program Review and Benchmark Reading processes, discussed below. The ePortfolio initiative engages large numbers of faculty and students in efforts to advance learning and teaching campus wide. Launched in 2002, this initiative has grown dramatically over the years with more than 50,000 students creating portfolios in the past five years. Working recursively, students use ePortfolio to collect their academic work, to associate it with competencies, and to reflect on their learning from their first-year seminars to their capstone courses. Creating an evolving, digital representation of what they have learned, students can share their ePortfolios with anyone they choose—peers, faculty, family and friends, potential employers, and transfer institutions. As one student from Bangladesh explained to an interviewer:

> If somebody asked me "What did you do in the laboratory? What did you learn in your education? What did you do?" When I go back to my country, somebody can ask me "What did you do in the US?" This is the only thing I can show them, "This is what I have done. These are my grades, these are my projects, assignments..." They can see everything. It's me. This is the best thing that I saw through the ePortfolio....[9]

LaGuardia leaders argue that successful use of ePortfolio for outcomes assessment requires faculty and student buy-in. Ensuring that the ePortfolio directly benefits students is critical in this regard. Professional development seminars help LaGuardia faculty use the ePortfolio as a pedagogical tool to support integrative learning. Reflecting on their learning across disciplines and semesters, students are encouraged to make connections and consider their own growth and change. Creating digital self-portraits, students craft new identities as learners and take greater responsibility for their work. Data gathered in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement shows that, compared to college means, students using the ePortfolio not only demonstrate higher levels of engagement in critical thinking, writing, and other key academic behaviors, they are also more likely to see strong connections between their coursework and their personal goals and values. Over the past five years, outcomes data show a strong correlation between taking ePortfolio-intensive courses and pass rates, next-semester retention, and progress toward graduation.[10]

LaGuardia's work with the ePortfolio has drawn international attention and recognition from the AAC&U, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.[11] Building on its success, LaGuardia has attracted two FIPSE grants for its Making Connections National Resource Center, which leads a community of practice linking 50 campuses nationwide—from Boston

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[8] "Final Evaluation Team Report" March 26–28, p. 28. http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/uploadedFiles/T2/middlestates/PDFs/Final%20Report%20LaGuardia%20wcover_1.pdf

[9] Eynon, B. (2009, January). *It helped me see a new me: ePortfolios, learning, and change at LaGuardia*. Academic Commons http://www.academiccommons.org/issue/January-2009

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] To learn more about ePortfolio, see http://www.eportfolio.lagcc.cuny.edu/. See also Peer Review, Fall 2011–Winter 2012, www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-fa11wi12/MeasuringStudent.cfm; and Winter 2009, http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-wi09/pr-wi09_eportfolios.cfm; The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 18, 2009, http://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/electronic-portfolios-a-path-to-the-future-of-learning/4582; and Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching Gallery of Teaching, http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/gallery_of_tl/ilp.html

University and Virginia Tech to Salt Lake Community College—helping them advance their own ePortfolio practice.[12] Last year, the Lumina Foundation publication *Focus*, highlighted LaGuardia's ePortfolio initiative as an exemplary approach for measuring student learning.[13]

Cross-Campus Efforts

Assessment efforts at LaGuardia are primarily supported by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Center forTeaching and Learning. Additionally, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) plays a supplemental role in the activities of student learning outcomes assessment, managing the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and providing outcomes data to programs, as requested (https://www.laguardia.edu/IR/IR-facts/). For example, in support of a project with the mathematics department to trace the success of students as they moved through a series of courses, OIRA analyzed course pathways and scores on placement tests to find correlations with retention and student success. This information was then used by the department for improving the curriculum. OIRA seeks to provide this type of support for units on campus in ways that can directly impact teaching and learning through the use of quantitative analysis.

Center for Teaching and Learning

LaGuardia's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), founded in 2001 and led by the Assistant Dean for Teaching and Learning, Bret Eynon, plays a critical role in supporting the assessment of learning outcomes across the college and in building a campus culture focused on teaching and learning.[14] The CTL coordinates the ePortfolio initiative by leading faculty seminars on ePortfolio technology and integrative learning; providing workshops on outcomes assessment; training peer mentors to support ePortfolio courses; and managing ePortfolio technology, data, and artifacts. The CTL connects these assessment-focused efforts to a broader array of programs focused on learning, teaching, and scholarship.[15]

Each year the CTL offers an average of 12 to 15 distinct but parallel year-long faculty seminars. And each year, an average of over 200 full-time faculty apply for and take part in one or more of these seminar programs. Beyond its ePortfolio programs, CTL seminars offered in recent years have ranged from "Designed for Learning" (exploring the role of digital technology in supporting inquiry learning) and "Project Quantum Leap" (contextualizing basic skills education in mathematics) to interdisciplinary "Learning Communities," "New Faculty Colloquium," and "Teaching the City," a seminar focused on ways to use experiential learning and the resources of the city to strengthen student learning. The CTL regularly offers seminars focused on one or more of the General Education core competencies such as "Writing in the Disciplines" or "Oral Communication Across the Curriculum." All seminars are led by faculty-staff teams and provide stipends or released time to recognize faculty participation. According to the Dean, data gathered by OIRA suggests a correlation between the seminars and improved student outcomes, including increased course completion, improved course pass rates, and higher rates of next-semester retention. In addition to the ePortfolio and the core competency seminars, two other efforts led by the CTL buttress the outcomes assessment process. Seeking to build a culture of evidence, the CTL offers a Carnegie Seminar on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and publishes *In Transit: The LaGuardia Journal of Learning and Teaching*, both of which encourage faculty to use the tools of scholarship to analyze student learning in their classrooms. In addition, the CTL offers mini-grants of up to $7,500 designed to help programs prepare for and follow up on their Periodic Program Reviews (PPR). As described below, many programs use these grants to "close the loop"—implementing the recommendations emerging from the PPRs—to revise curri-cula, develop department-based faculty development, and reach out to adjunct faculty. The LaGuardia lead-ership see these efforts as "critical to ensuring that the outcomes assessment process effectively guides active educational improvement."[16]

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[12] See http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/connections/ to learn more about LaGuardia's Making Connections center.
[13] See http://www.helios.org/uploads/docs/Focus-Winter_2011.pdf
[14] The CTL was awarded a Hesburgh Certificate of Excellence for the Improvement of Undergraduate Education in 2004.
[15] See http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/ctl/default.aspx
[16] See this site to learn more: https://www.laguardia.edu/assessment/

Outcomes Assessment in the Office of Academic Affairs

While the OIRA and the CTL contribute to outcomes assessment at LaGuardia, the process is coordinated by the Office of Academic Affairs, through the Assessment Director and the Assessment Leadership Team, which consists of the Dean, Assistant Dean, several faculty members, the ePortfolio Director, and a student. The Assessment Director, Prof. Marisa Klages, is given 12 hours of release time for the position but still maintains a teaching role in addition to these administrative duties. The role of the director is to convene the Assessment Leadership Team, conduct assessment workshops, and assist departments with their Periodic Program Review process, or PPRs.[17]

Mandated by the City University of New York, of which LaGuardia is a member institution, the PPR process requires all programs at an institution to be reviewed within a 10-year time frame. LaGuardia programs are reviewed typically every five to seven years. LaGuardia also uses the PPR process to look at other organized but non-degree-granting systems at the college such as basic skills courses, the library, and the ESL program. General education at LaGuardia has identified five core competencies for all students. The PPRs assess the program's achievement both in these core competencies as well as in programmatic competences established by program directors and program faculty. The program under review does a self-study report, responding to the following questions:

1. What competencies/knowledge do we want students in the program to graduate with (includes core and programmatic competencies)?
2. Are students in the program graduating with those competencies and knowledge sets? How do we know?
3. What changes do we need to make to improve student learning in these areas? What steps will we take to strengthen our curriculum and pedagogy to more effectively help students achieve these competencies?

To answer these questions, programs engaged in a PPR work with the Office of Academic Affairs to identify the issues and concerns to be examined, and they collect data with the help of the OIRA (such as graduation rates, retention rates, and enrollment trends). Both core and programmatic competencies are mapped to the curriculum, aligning with current disciplinary or industry standards when applicable. Given the importance of transfer and job placement to the community college, the program must also provide information in the PPR about the transferability of the courses and job placement.

Evaluation of the artifacts of student learning collected through ePortfolio plays a defining role in the PPR process. All programs designate courses—from introductory surveys to capstone courses—in which students submit a major assignment to the ePortfolio assessment area. With help from the CTL, a random sample of artifacts is prepared. A faculty team from both within and outside the program uses a scoring rubric to review these artifacts and assess the core and programmatic competencies. This faculty group offers recommendations to the program. Programs then create an action plan detailing how they will address the recommendations and improve student learning in the designated areas; this plan is built into the program's strategic work plan for the following year.[18]

While the process for assessing student work is well established, LaGuardia continues to consider ways to improve it. For instance, whereas the PPR process allows departments and programs to assess student progress within a program or major, providing a rich source of assessment data for the college, LaGuardia felt it also needed a more comprehensive overview of general education. To augment the findings of the PPR, LaGuardia conducted its first college-wide "Benchmark Assessment Reading" in 2011–2012. This process involved 34 faculty members in 14 programs who read samples, critiqued the rubrics, and revised them.

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[17] http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/assessment/

[18] For more information on PPRs at LaGuardia, see http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/uploadedFiles/T2/assessment/docs/PPR%20Guidelines.pdf

Working in teams based on the core competencies, these faculty members read student artifacts deposited under 25 credits and over 45 credits, blindly scoring samples from both levels to assess student progress on the core competencies. These readings for the first time allowed LaGuardia a comprehensive look at student growth and learning over time. The results showed that while LaGuardia students were not yet graduating with the full level of competencies sought by the college, students across the college were making significant gains in key general education competencies.[19] More broadly, these results showed that it is possible to measure student growth on a large scale, using authentic artifacts instead of standardized tests. In the era of sharp criticism such as that in *Academically Adrift* and widespread skepticism about higher education's ability to demonstrate its impact, LaGuardia's leaders find these results particularly meaningful.

The Assessment Director believes this PPR readings process

> deepened faculty understanding about how and why the college was doing outcomes assessment by asking faculty from across the college to come together and discuss what they valued in their programs. It engaged faculty in an evidence-based discussion of where students should be at graduation and how to ensure that the general education competencies were being taught throughout all programs at the college. This lays critical groundwork for future efforts to strengthen assessment and improve student learning.

She also believes that "The full implications of this study are still unfolding, and will be strengthened by new Benchmark Readings in 2012 and beyond."

Another way that LaGuardia has sought to improve the assessment process has been through revising the rubrics used to assess the ePortfolio artifacts. Rather than rely on the original rubrics created to evaluate students' learning gains, the institution decided to revisit and revise them. This improved the assessment process both fundamentally and technologically because in the ten years since the original rubrics had been created, new systems developed allowing the process to be digitized. Given that the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics[20] have been vetted nationally, the committee used them as a foundation. According to the Assessment Director, although the VALUE Rubrics provided a good structure and measurement strategy, they did not focus on some of the unique skills taught in the community college's curriculum and, to that end, they were modified to better reflect this knowledge and skill level.

Communication Strategies

A major factor in the success of the LaGuardia assessment process has been the way the institution communicates with faculty about assessment. Assessment is regularly discussed at campus-wide faculty meetings and in CTL faculty seminars. While PPRs are not currently published, the possibility of making them more widely available is under discussion. Programs that have received CTL mini-grants are asked to present case studies of successful assessment activities and processes, "showing that assessment is doable and useful to improving student learning and program effectiveness." The Assistant Dean for Teaching and Learning believes "these presentations nurture the grass-roots element of the process, allowing programs to learn from each other and share assessment strategies that work."

LaGuardia is also working to make students more aware of assessment, distributing an assessment brochure at student orientation and including assessment information in the course catalogue.[21] In a 2011 campus-wide survey, 82% of student respondents indicated they knew about the core competencies and what they were. LaGuardia leaders argue that this awareness is prompted in large part by students' work with the ePortfolio, where they actively contribute artifacts and reflections associated with the competencies.

[19] https://lagcc-cuny.digication.com/outcomes_assessment/Benchmark_Reading_2010-2011
[20] See AAC&U Value rubrics here: http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=35232931&CFTOKEN=72425299
[21] See the course catalogue here: http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/academics/catalog/

Using Evidence of Student Learning

LaGuardia's assessment leadership has put significant effort into "closing the loop"—helping departments and programs learn how to use assessment evidence to improve their curriculum and pedagogy. Several recent examples stand out. The physical therapy assistant program began by looking at core competencies of critical literacy and communication and learning from the review of students' portfolios that students were lacking in these areas. The faculty reviewed assignments and the sequence of courses in the major to understand where students could more effectively develop these knowledge sets and skills. The program discovered that two main courses could be redesigned to more fully address these competencies. This analysis of their curriculum was detailed in the department's PPR, and, with the help of a CTL mini-grant, the curriculum change was completed and implemented. The program will reassess these activities and the impact of the change during its next PPR.

During the PPR process in the business program, students were found to be underachieving in oral communication. Using a CTL mini-grant, the business faculty paired with faculty from the communication area to revise introduction to business courses to incorporate activities to improve business-appropriate oral communication skills. The program has been testing this strategy for a year, and pre- and post-study results suggest its effectiveness. The Assessment Director asserts, "Already, other business-related programs are learning from their efforts and building similar oral communications activities in their business-specific courses."

The college's liberal arts, social science, and humanities program prepares students for transfer with a broad-based program in liberal education. During the PPR process, faculty found they had overloaded the capstone course with responsibility for too many different competencies. The PPR team recommended that assessment instead "look at different moments" during the students' course of study. This decision means the program needs to entirely revise its curriculum to create the scaffolding needed for more effective learning and assessment.

LaGuardia's leadership states that "assessing the general education outcomes through disciplinary programs and using the ePortfolio to ground assessment in authentic classroom work energizes the faculty connection to the process." Having focused faculty attention on a weak aspect in their students' outcomes, the "closing the loop" aspect of the PPR process calls upon faculty's disciplinary expertise and stimulates pedagogical innovation. Veterinary technology students did not score as well as needed in quantitative reasoning, for example, so veterinary technology faculty redesigned several key assignments to build and document that competency in students. Whereas previously students only read an article to learn about monitoring glucose levels in felines, the new assignment asked them to read the article, to take a reading of a cat's glucose level, and then to use both sources to write an analytical report. This curriculum redesign created a more robust and discipline-specific quantitative reasoning experience for students and a richer set of documents to be collected and examined through ePortfolio. Addressing general education requirements throughout the program, according to the veterinary technology program director, means that "programs need to decide where they are addressing general education within the curriculum," and using student artifacts collected through the ePortfolio "brings assessment to the forefront of the classroom."

Next Steps

Outcomes assessment at LaGuardia, while in some ways a model, is constantly being reevaluated for improvement by revising current rubrics, digitizing the process, and involving more faculty and students. The rubrics created over the past decade are now being reviewed to see if they still address the desired outcomes. In the last year, for example, the Assessment Leadership Team coordinated the reevaluation of the oral communication rubric—which originally addressed only presentations and speeches. After LaGuardia faculty reported such activities were less appropriate and necessary only for some majors, the rubric was revised and expanded to address dialogic conversations as well. For example, faculty in the physical therapy assistant program used an assignment that asked students to role-play and video a conversation between

clinicians and patients. Using the new oral communication rubric, these recorded conversations can be scored on how clearly the students communicated with the patient and how well they listened. Similarly, changes were made in the quantitative reasoning rubric to accommodate more discipline-specific activities, such as the ways nursing students chart and graph range of motion and medication. The rubrics will continue to be evaluated to ensure they capture the range of activities in the different programs.

Another change has emerged from the adoption of a new, more flexible ePortfolio platform that facilitates online review of artifacts including the involvement of large numbers of faculty in cross-disciplinary benchmark readings. As noted above, this process not only serves an assessment function, but also asks faculty to read across majors and to understand what other programs do. The Assessment Director asserts that "while skeptical voices can always be found, engaging more faculty and generating institution-wide conversation encourages faculty buy-in." The combination of ePortfolio, PPRs, benchmark readings, mini-grants and outreach activities allows a classroom-based institutional story about assessment to emerge. By continuing to revise and update the process in ways that respond to faculty input, LaGuardia is weaving assessment into the fabric of the institution. In the Assessment Director's words, the philosophy for assessment at LaGuardia is one of "appreciative inquiry"—where the questions asked are "What do you do well?" and "What can you do better?" This focus could explain why assessment at LaGuardia has been so successful. More than a means for evaluation it is seen as a means for improvement.

Lessons from LaGuardia Community College

1. Assessment activities may be organized across several campus offices. Having a way for the personnel from those offices to communicate regularly with others through an assessment team builds synergy and commitment.
2. Assess your assessment activities. Do not allow your assessment process to become stagnant. Regularly review your assessment materials. Allow for a broad notion of certain quality indicators so that diverse programs can be represented. Competency in oral communication, for example, may mean something different to liberal arts majors than to healthcare majors.
3. Campus leaders will foster a culture of assessment at their institution by basing their campus decisions on assessment data and by giving educational and financial support to campus assessment activities.
4. Embed assessment into other campus review systems so that assessment activities are done regularly and revisited during the next cycle.
5. Increase faculty interest and involvement in assessment by having learning opportunities in the form of seminars and by allowing units to speak about their assessment experiences during faculty meetings that cross disciplines and programs.

NILOA Examples of Good Assessment Practice

With funding from several foundations, the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment's (NILOA) mission is to examine institutional practice and help institutions productively use assessment data to inform and strengthen undergraduate education as well as to communicate with policy makers, families, and other stakeholders. Documenting what students learn and can do is of growing interest both on campus and with accrediting groups, higher education associations, families, employers, and policy makers. And yet, we know far too little about what actually happens in assessment on campuses around the country. NILOA conducted several short case studies, titled *Examples of Good Assessment Practice,* of two- and four-year institutions in order to document institutional achievements in the assessment of student learning outcomes and highlight promising practices in using assessment data for improvement and decision-making. The data collection process included a thorough examination of the websites and relevant assessment documents (accreditation self-studies, assessment reports, program reviews, etc.) for selected institutions and interviews with key institutional representatives.

About NILOA

- The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) was established in December 2008. It is funded by Lumina Foundation for Education and The Teagle Foundation.
- NILOA is co-located at the University of Illinois and Indiana University.
- The NILOA website went live on February 11, 2009.
  www.learningoutcomesassessment.org
- The NILOA research team has reviewed over 1,000 institution websites for learning outcomes assessment transparency.
- NILOA;s founding director, George Kuh, founded the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE).
- The other co-principal investigator for NILOA, Stanley Ikenberry, was president of the University of Illinois from 1979 to 1995 and of the American Council of Education from 1996 to 2001. He served again as Interim President of the University of Illinois in 2010.

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

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