



Implementing an  
Assessment Program for  
Residential Learning  
Communities



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BGSU at a Glance


- Located in Bowling Green, Ohio 30 minutes south of Toledo in northwest Ohio
- Approximately 19,000 students; 18:1 student to faculty ratio
- Average ACT for entering freshmen is 23; average high school GPA is 3.42
- Approximately 800 full-time faculty (nearly 80 percent with the highest degree in their field)
- Approximately 5,000 students living on campus and 19 learning and theme communities on campus
- 200+ undergraduate majors, 55 master's degrees, and 17 doctoral programs



## Learning Outcomes

Following this session, participants will:

- Identify the learning community network at BGSU
- Identify the process of developing and implementing an assessment program
- Discuss possibilities on how to adapt a similar program on their campuses

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## Agenda

- Overview of Learning Communities at Bowling Green State University (BGSU)
- Impact of Washington Center Learning Community Institute
- Process of Developing and Implementing an Assessment Program
- How to Adapt this Model to Your Program
- Questions

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# Overview of Learning Communities at BGSU

## What is a learning community?

- An *intentionally* assembled group of undergraduate students
- Mentored by faculty/staff/graduate student interns to promote the study and exploration of a major or a theme
- May or may not be residential in nature
- Foster smooth student matriculation from high school to college
- Participation often results in greater retention, persistence, and academic success for cohort members

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## What types of learning communities exist at BGSU?

1. Residential Academic Learning Communities
2. Theme Communities
3. Pilot Communities

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## Residential Academic Learning Communities (RLC)

- Involves students taking required courses (major-specific, GenEd, or RLC specific topics) within a community taught by faculty, staff, or graduate interns
- Student participation in co-curricular events involving service, community-building, and/or leadership development

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## RLCs At BGSU

- Arts Village
- Business District
- Chapman Learning Community
- Educators in Context and Community (ECCO)
- Forensic Science Learning Community
- Global Village
- Honors Learning Community
- La Comunidad
- La Maison Frances
- Natural and Health Science Learning Community



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## Theme Communities

- Involve a cohort of students from a specific major, area of study, or those from any major who wish to explore a specific theme or issue
- Do not have required courses
- Involve students in discussions, activities, or experiences that promote critical thinking, educational trips, leadership, and community building
- May require residence in a specific hall on campus

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## Theme Communities at BGSU

- Science and Math Education in Action (ACTION)
- Academic Investment in Math and Science (AIMS)
- Air Force ROTC Theme Community
- Army ROTC Theme Community
- Aviation Theme Community
- Batchelder Music Theme Community
- Construction Management Theme Community
- Education and Human Development Community
- SEARCH Community

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## Pilot Communities

- In the early stages of development
- Intend to become a RLC or a theme community in the future
- Timeline - directors often spend 2 years preparing: recruiting faculty, establishing learning outcomes and missions, setting up curricula, experimenting with co-curricular activities, establishing detailed marketing and recruitment plans

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## Pilot Communities at BGSU

- Finding Your Voice in Social Justice (Year 1)
- Health, Wellness, and You (Year 3)
- History Village (Year 1)



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## Numbers and Future Plans

AY 2017-2018

- 4,790 students living on campus
- 24% were in LCs: 894 in RLCs and 244 in theme communities

BGSU's LC network is *intentionally* and *methodically* designed.

- Closely assisting directors with pilots and moving them forward
- Entertaining proposals from other stakeholders on campus for new communities, vetting them, and establishing new pilots

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## Impact of Washington Center Learning Community Institute

- Putting order where there was none and creating a cohesive structure on campus
- Goals of team sent to Washington Center
  - Strengthen LCs
  - Learning outcomes
  - Assessment plan
  - Tell our story

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## Process of Developing and Implementing an Assessment Program

### Strategies to Connect Institutional Plans and Systems

- Canvas Learning Management System Outcomes Assessment
- Bowling Green Perspective (BGP) General Education Learning Outcomes Assessment
- Student Achievement Assessment Committee (SAAC) Reports
- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) VALUE Rubrics

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## VALUE Rubrics

### Intellectual and Practical Skills

- Inquiry and Analysis
- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Written Communication
- Oral Communication
- Reading
- Quantitative Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Teamwork
- Problem Solving

### Personal and Social Responsibility

- Civic Engagement
- Intercultural Knowledge and Competence
- Ethical Reasoning
- Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning
- Global Learning

### Integrative and Applied Learning

- Integrative Learning

<https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>

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# Integrative Learning AAC&U VALUE Rubric

	4 Capstone	3 Milestones	2	1 Benchmark
<b>Connections to Experience</b> <i>Connects relevant experience and academic knowledge</i>	Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as internships and travel abroad) to <b>deepen understanding</b> of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.	Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, civic involvement, work experience), to <b>illuminate</b> concepts/theories/frameworks of fields of study.	Compares life experiences and academic knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and <b>acknowledge perspectives</b> other than own.	Identifies connections between life experiences and those academic tests and ideas <b>perceived as similar and related</b> to own interests.
<b>Reflection and Self-Assessment</b> <i>Demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts (may be evident in self-assessment, reflective, or creative work)</i>	Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences) that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts.	Evaluates changes in own learning over time, recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., works with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).	Articulates strengths and challenges (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).	Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and failure.

Criteria	Ratings					Pts
④ Connections to Experience <i>via learner discussion</i> threshold: 1.0 pts	4.0 pts Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as internships and travel abroad) to <b>deepen understanding</b> of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.	3.0 pts Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, civic involvement, work experience), to <b>illuminate</b> concepts/theories/frameworks of fields of study.	2.0 pts Compares life experiences and academic knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and <b>acknowledge perspectives</b> other than own.	1.0 pts Identifies connections between the experiences and those academic tests and ideas <b>perceived as similar and related</b> to own interests.	0.0 pts Does not identify connections between life experiences and those academic tests and ideas <b>perceived as similar and related</b> to own interests.	--
④ Reflection and Self-Assessment <i>via learner discussion</i> threshold: 1.0 pts	4.0 pts Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences) that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts.	3.0 pts Evaluates changes in own learning over time, recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., works with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).	2.0 pts Articulates strengths and challenges (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).	1.0 pts Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and failure.	0.0 pts Does not describe own performances with general descriptors of success and failure.	--

Total Points: 0.0

# Buy-in From Various Constituents

**Key components:**

- Involve Office of Academic Assessment
- Leveraging relationships
- Provide rationale and framework
- Individualized meetings
- Customization

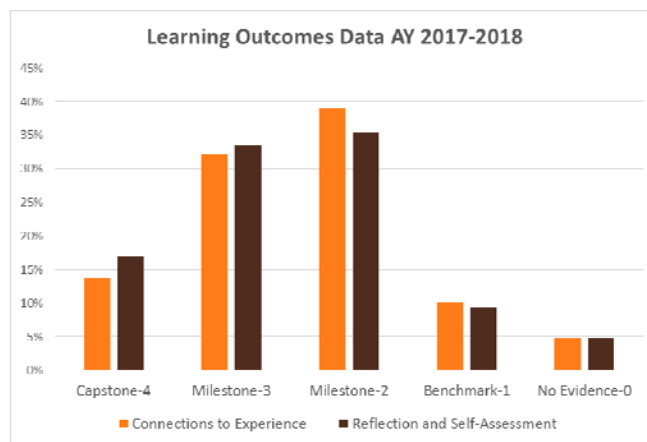
## Challenges and Successes in Developing and Assessment Plan

- Creating a process that works and is manageable
- Direct and indirect data
- Different types of learning communities – some tied to courses and others not

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## Learning Outcomes Data AY 2017-2018



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## Closing the Loop

- Assessment is a *tool to guide the evolution of LC design and the development of academic/co-curricular programming*, not a threat
- Learning Community Dashboards, reflecting with directors, and movement toward action
- Students' assessment plans for the Chapman Learning Community—setting up the assessment structure, beta-testing in AY 2018-2019, and the implications for network-wide assessment

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## How to Adapt This Model to your Program

- Identify a program
- What processes and systems are in place?
- What are the learning outcomes, if any?
- Do any of the VALUE Rubrics align? If so, which ones?
- How can you assess the learning outcomes?
- What will you do with this information?

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Questions



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