Merritt
College

Follow-Up Report

Submitted By
Merritt College
12500 Campus Drive, Oakland, CA 94619

Submitted To
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Date Submitted
October 2017

The mission of Merritt College is to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve by helping   students to attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society and a global economy.

Merritt College Follow-Up Report
Certification Page

To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,
                        Western Association of Schools and Colleges

From: Dr. Marie-Elaine Burns
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I certify there was broad participation by the campus community and believe this Follow-Up Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of this institution.

Signatures:

Marie-Elaine Burns   8-28-17

Marie-Elaine Burns, Ed.D., President, Merritt College   Date

                                                9/12/17

Julina Bonilla, President, Peralta Board of Trustees   Date

                                                 09-14-17

Jowel C. Laguerre, Ph.D., Chancellor, Peralta Community College District   Date

                                                 8/20/17

Jeffrey Lamb, Ph.D., Vice President of Instruction, Merritt College   Date
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Carlos McLean   8/28/17

Carlos McLean, Interim Vice President of Student Services, Merritt College   Date

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Mario Rivas, Ph.D., President, Merritt College Academic Senate   Date

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COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION 6

Introduction to Merritt College's Response to the Commission's Recommendations:

Merritt College Overview

Graced by a beautiful new science and health building completed in 2015, Merritt College offers its students cutting-edge technology and state-of-the-art equipment to take them boldly into the future. But along with the futuristic progress, the College has retained its 62-year-old reputation as the heart of a thriving, diverse community where students of all ages and backgrounds can get a quality education at a very affordable price.

The college opened in 1954 at its original location on Grove Street in north Oakland (now Martin Luther King Jr. Way). In 1971, the campus moved to its current location in the beautiful Oakland hills surrounded by open space in one of the most dramatic natural settings in northern California. It is in this welcoming environment on 125 acres of land that more than 6,000 students each year have the opportunity to reach their educational goals.

In this rich urban setting, Merritt College offers nearly 100 programs of study which can lead to associate degrees and certificates, and transfer to a four-year college or university or preparation for in-demand careers in the workforce. Our dedicated faculty and staff are committed to helping students achieve academic and professional success. In addition to traditional curricula, the College's many highlighted programs include Landscape Horticulture, Administration of Justice, and Child Development, as well as the Allied Health Programs (Nutrition and Dietetics, Nursing, Radiologic Science, Medical Assisting, and EMT) and Biosciences (Genomics, Histotechnology, and Microscopy), all located in the new 110,000 square-foot Barbara Lee Science and Allied Health Center.

Merritt's Student Services programs are designed to guide and support students and direct them to the resources needed. The campus has a newly renovated Library and Learning Center, providing expanded learning support services. Programs with positive learning experiences geared toward both Latino students (Puente) and African-American students (Sankofa), and a First-Year Experience Program have been created for many first-generation college students to ease into college life in a supportive environment. The College's Counseling, Veterans, Financial Aid, Assessment, and Admissions and Records offices provide exceptional service with the students' welfare as their number one priority.

The diversity at Merritt College is marked each year by numerous events open to the entire campus and community–from Women's and Black History Months to Hispanic and Native American celebrations. The events are filled with rich culture, lively entertainment, and always delicious food to share. Merritt also has more than 20 active student clubs on campus embracing a multitude of interests. The College also has award-winning sports for men and women, including basketball, soccer, track and field, and cross-country.

Over time, Merritt College has strived to prove its slogan, "We Change Lives," as tens of thousands of its graduates have gone on to be successful and make a difference in the community and beyond.

Statement of Report Preparation

Merritt College submitted a required Accreditation Follow-Up Report to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) in October 2016. [**SRP.1**] An ACCJC External Evaluation Team conducted a follow-up site visit on November 9, 2016, and released its findings in the External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report dated November 29, 2016. [**SRP.2**] In a February 3, 2017, ACCJC Action Letter, the College President was notified that "the Commission took action to **remove Probation and issue Warning**, grant a good cause extension, and require the College to submit a Follow-Up Report in 12 months." [**SRP.3**]

The ACCJC Action Letter continued:

> *"The Commission finds that the College is in the process of addressing College Recommendation 6, but has not yet achieved compliance with Standards I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.c, II.A.2.e, and II.A.2.f. ...In order to meet the Standards, the Team recommends the College accelerate the identification and documentation of student learning outcomes for all courses, programs, certificates and degrees, and to assess student attainment of those outcomes to ensure that all of its instructional courses and programs are of high quality and to make improvements."*

Upon receipt of the Commission Action Letter, the College President immediately informed all College constituencies of the outcome of the Team visit and the removal of **Probation** to **Warning**, with a good cause extension. [**SRP.4**] In addition, the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) provided planning updates to the Accreditation Follow-Up Report (AFR) Steering Committee to begin to detail next steps. [**SRP.5**] The taskforce assigned to complete the Follow-Up Report consisted of the AFR Team; a Faculty Liaison, Project Manager, Evidence Coordinator, and Accreditation Website Manager.

AFR/SLOAC Partnership/ Initial Planning

An important aspect of the initial planning processes was to ensure that the response team had a shared understanding of the proposed work to be done and were mutually aligned in their efforts. During the preparatory meetings, the ALO mobilized the AFR Team and the Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee (SLOAC) chair with goals of merging and strengthening alliances between the two groups. In March 2017, the AFR Team and the SLOAC chair held an initial meeting to collaborate, to strategize, and to create a systematic approach by which to incrementally shift the College's assessment culture from "compliance to intentionality," with goals of correcting the deficiencies. Preliminary steps included, gathering information on assessment work to date, setting measurable, realistic goals, benchmarks, mutually agreed upon meeting times, and assigning specific job tasks. [**SRP.6**]

To ensure a timely trajectory for completion of the assessment work, the Project Manager developed a 12-month timeline to map the work for the AFR Team. The timeline included the months following the October 2016 site visit through the receipt of the Commission's Action Letter in February 2017, culminating in the completion of the Follow-Up Report in October 2017. More specifically, the timeline was comprised of three action periods: 1) AFR/SLOAC Partnership/Initial Planning, 2) AFR Initial Draft and Distribution, and 3) Finalizing the AFR. [**SRP.7**] Through Spring 2017, the work of the AFR Team and the SLOAC continued with weekly meetings and progress updates. Two AFR team members were assigned to liaise between the SLOAC meetings to further ensure transparency and clear communication between the committees. This partnership has allowed for enhanced collaboration among these two groups that has provided for greater alignment with outcomes assessment work and accreditation standards.

Additionally, bi-monthly meetings with the AFR were scheduled to apprise the College President of ongoing updates. The AFR meeting agendas and notes from Spring 2017 reflect meeting dates and topics addressed. [**SRP.8**]

AFR Preliminary Draft Distribution

During the months of June and July 2017, the AFR initial draft was placed on a Moodle site with an invitation to the entire campus community to preview, note inconsistencies, and submit feedback. [**SRP.9**] The AFR Team continued to meet regularly throughout the summer to refine the report. [**SRP.10**]

AFR Finalization and Approval

At College Flex Day on August 18, 2017, a final opportunity was presented for all College constituents to preview the draft and submit feedback. [**SRP.11**] Additionally, a special College Council meeting was convened to vet and approve the AFR draft on August 23, 2017. [**SRP.12**] The final AFR Report was presented to the Peralta Board of Trustees for approval on September 12, 2017. [**SRP.13**]

Evidence for Statement of Report Preparation

Document Number	Document	Link
SRP.1	Merritt College Accreditation Follow-Up Report, October 1, 2016	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.1-Merritt-College-Accreditation-Follow-Up-Report-October-1-2016.pdf
SRP.2	External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report, November 29, 2016	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.2-External-Evaluation-Team-Follow-Up-Report-November-29-2016.pdf
SRP.3	ACCJC Action Letter, February 3, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.3-ACCJC-Action-Letter-February-3-2017.pdf
SRP.4	Presidential Announcement of ACCJC Action, February 7, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.4-Presidential-Announcement-of-ACCJC-Action-February-7-2017.pdf
SRP.5	Accreditation Planning Update, February 21, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.5-Accreditation-Planning-Update-February-21-2017.pdf
SRP.6	SLOAC Meeting Notes and AFR Team Meeting Agendas, March 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.6-SLOAC-Meeting-Notes-and-AFR-Team-Meeting-Agendas-March-2017.pdf
SRP.7	AFR Timeline 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.7-AFR-Timeline-2017.pdf
SRP.8	AFR Team Meeting Agendas and Notes, Spring 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.8-AFR-Team-Meeting-Agendas-and-Notes-Spring-2017.pdf
SRP.9	AFR Preliminary Draft Distribution, June 27, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.9-AFR-Preliminary-Draft-Distribution-June-27-2017.pdf
SRP.10	AFR Team Meeting Agendas and Notes, Summer 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.10-AFR-Team-Meeting-Agendas-and-Notes-Summer-2017.pdf

SRP.11	College Flex Day Program, August 18, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/SRP.11-College-Flex-Day-Program-August-18-2017.pdf
SRP.12	College Council Meeting Minutes, August 23, 2017 (Draft)	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/09/SRP.12-College-Council-Meeting-Minutes-August-23-2017-Draft.pdf
SRP.13	Peralta Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, September 12, 2017 (Item 7.6)	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/09/SRP.13-Peralta-Board-of-Trustees-Meeting-Minutes-September-12-2017-Item-7.6.pdf

List of Key Individuals Involved in Report Preparation

Accreditation Liaison Officer

Jeffrey Lamb, Ph.D., Vice President of Instruction

Accreditation Follow-Up Report Team

Mia Kelly, Ed.D, **RN**; Faculty, A.D. Nursing; Tenure Track Faculty Facilitator; Academic Senate Representative

Nghiem Thai, Librarian; Department Chair, Library; Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors; Curriculum and Instructional Council Chair

Maril M. Bull, Staff Assistant, Landscape Horticulture; College Educational Master Planning Committee; Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee; Classified Senate Public Information Officer

Dinh Truong, Project Manager, Accreditation Follow-Up Report, Basic Skills Initiative, and Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee (SLOAC)

Heather Casale, Faculty; Program Director, Nutrition and Dietetics; Academic Senate Secretary; SLOAC Chair and Division II Assessment Coordinator

Susan Andrien, Faculty, English Department; Division I Assessment Coordinator

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Ann Elliott, Faculty, English Department; Academic Senate Representative; Division I Assessment Coordinator; Interim Division I Dean

Laura Forlin, Faculty; Department Chair, Landscape Horticulture; Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors; Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment Coordinator

Samantha Kessler, Research and Planning Officer; College Educational Master Planning Committee; Professional Development Committee; Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee

Marty Zielke, Counselor; Department Chair, Counseling; Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors; Academic Senate Treasurer; Student Services Assessment Coordinator

College Recommendation 6

Official Recommendation (from ACCJC letter to Merritt College President, 2/3/2017):

In order to meet the Standards, the Team recommends the College accelerate the identification and documentation of student learning outcomes for all courses, programs, certificates and degrees, and to assess student attainment of those outcomes to ensure that all of its instructional courses and programs are of high quality and to make improvements. (I.B.I, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f)

Related Concerns and Deficiencies Cited (from External Evaluation Report, 11/ 29/16):

The 2016 ACCJC External Evaluation Team acknowledged that following the recommendations identified by the visiting team in the 2015 External Evaluation Report, the College had undertaken a series of corrective actions that led to significant improvements. These improvements included, but were not limited to: assigning four division coordinators to lead outcomes achievement efforts, engaging in institution-wide meetings, and conducting activities to promote and sustain participation in outcomes and assessment practices.

The 2016 External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report commended the College for the substantial work towards completing outcomes assessment, acknowledging that "*the college has made significant progress in identifying 100% of its SLOs, PLOs, SAOs and ILOs…the team found evidence that reported increases across all areas in the number of assessments completed.*" (External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report, 11/29/16, p.7)

Additionally, they found that *"the College has developed and formalized procedures that integrate outcomes assessment into other college areas: planning and budgeting, the Educational Master Plan, and is integrated with data in planning and decision-making."* (External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report, 11/29/16, p. 8)

They determined that, "*there is evidence to support the college's efforts to accelerate the identification and documentation of learning outcomes across the institution …the timeline to complete the work is comprehensive and specific…the college is committed to making progress for meeting proficiency and sustainability towards continuous and ongoing assessment cycles.*" (External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report, 11/29/16, p. 8)

While the External Evaluation Team found evidence that reported increases across all areas in the number of assessments completed reflected significant gains, the College had not yet achieved 100% in the assessment of Instructional Programs and Institutional Learning Outcomes. Thus, the Team ultimately concluded that while the College had accelerated the work to identify, document, and assess learning outcomes in all areas of the College, it does not yet meet the Standards. (External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report, 11/29/16, pp.7-8)

Response

Introduction

The 2016 ACCJC External Evaluation Team acknowledged the "significant progress" made to correct the assessment deficiencies identified in the 2015 External Evaluation Report; however, more time was needed to demonstrate full compliance and sustainability in all areas of assessment.

Subsequently, in response to the 2016 External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report, the College intensified efforts to engage the entire campus in strategies to further a culture of assessment and to achieve compliance with the ACCJC Standards. Using the *Learning Assessment Report and Acceleration Plan* as a guideline for responding to College Recommendation 6, Merritt College's Accreditation Follow-Up Report (AFR) Team and Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee (SLOAC) constructed more focused approaches to achieving proficiency in all outcomes assessments, thus promoting a culture of assessment. The *Learning Assessment Report and Acceleration Plan* was originally developed in June 2016 to ensure that outcome assessments were completed at an accelerated

rate across the campus and to outline activities and timelines for the completion of those outcome assessments. It is important to note that the *Learning Assessment Report and Acceleration Plan* is a living document that outlines an expected performance plan. The Plan will be reevaluated in Fall 2017 by SLOAC. The ultimate goal is to implement a process and to engage in assessment activities that reflect sustainability and continuous improvement. [**CR6.1**]

Intensifying College-Wide Discussions--Call to Action

The 2016 External Evaluation Team acknowledged the College's commitment to discussions about outcomes assessment: *"…The College provided considerable evidence to support the current college-wide dialogue on assessment. The Team reviewed documentation that substantially indicates evidence of department and division-level dialogue, college-wide dialogue and communication."* (External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report, 11/29/16, p. 8)

As a general practice, the College maintains an ongoing, collegial, and self-reflective discourse about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional practices. This dialogue among all constituent groups has been robust, well-structured, and broad-based, occurring in various and diverse venues such as:

- College Flex Days and Planning Summits [**CR6.2**]
- President's Message [**CR6.3**]
- Participatory governance committee meetings [**CR6.4**]
- Departmental meetings and communications (e.g., Communication, Counseling, Library, Nursing, and Nutrition and Dietetics) [**CR6.5**]

As noted above, the College's response to the Recommendations in the 2016 External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report was comprehensive and methodical. Merritt's subsequent 2017 Accreditation Follow-Up Report updates the College's goals and the current state of assessment, corrective measures and strategies implemented to satisfy the Recommendation to achieve compliance. This Follow-Up Report is structured into seven

main sections as follows: 1) Corrective Actions, 2) Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, 3) Service Area Outcomes Assessment, 4) Program Learning Outcomes Assessment, 5) Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment, 6) Plans for Sustainability and, 7) Conclusion.

1) Corrective Actions

After the ACCJC External Evaluation Team visit in November 2016, Merritt College continued its efforts to institutionalize outcomes assessment, addressing the two Corrective Actions identified in its response to College Recommendation 6 in the 2016 Accreditation Follow-Up Report:

- Corrective Action 1: Accelerating Learning Outcomes, Identification and Assessment
- Corrective Action 2: Using Assessment Results on a Systematic and Cyclical Basis to Improve Institutional Effectiveness

The 2016 External Evaluation Team concluded that the College had fully addressed College Recommendations 3 and 4 with regard to systematic integrated planning and resource allocation linked to outcomes assessment and program reviews, thereby successfully implementing Corrective Action 2. As a result, the College has focused primarily on Corrective Action 1 during Spring 2017.

Key actions taken by the campus community to improve assessment under the collaborative leadership of the Administration and SLOAC include the following:

- Regular SLOAC meetings to plan and to evaluate assessment efforts [**CR6.6**]
- Institutional support by Assessment Coordinators and Specialists [**CR6.7**]
- One-on-one assistance to document assessments in Taskstream [**CR6.8**]
- Implementation of updated APU template linking assessment results to resource allocations [**CR6.9**]
- Assessment as a standing item on participatory governance committee meeting agendas [**CR6.10**]

- Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) Innovation and Effectiveness Plan Focus Area B to establish a culture of outcomes assessment [**CR6.11**]
- Inaugural Assessment Fair (April 17-21, 2017) with poster session highlighting best practices and examples of assessment-driven resource allocations [**CR6.12**]

2) Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

For Spring 2017, the College set a tangible goal of having all courses offered that semester assessed within the three-year cycle. This meant that at least one SLO from each course being taught was to have been assessed either in the previous two academic years or during the current semester. As a reflection of the College's resolve to achieve this benchmark, the Administration maintained funding for faculty release time to enable the considerable work of the Assessment Coordinators, who met frequently with individual administrators, department chairs, faculty, and staff to provide training, assistance, and advice. [**CR6.13**] Special emphasis for faculty was placed on how to make meaning of assessment data and how to use it to identify strengths and weaknesses of courses, facilitate student learning, and foster critical thinking. For public viewing on the College's website, SLOAC also maintained and collected assessment data and shared results from assessment plans. [**CR6.14**] Additional measures to support outcomes assessments include:

- VPI meetings with all department chairs with assessment rates below 50%. [**CR6.15**]
- VPI meetings with approximately 25 faculty from 12 disciplines during the month of May 2017 to discuss and complete assessment work, with AC available for one-on-one guidance [**CR6.16**]

As the consequence of this concerted effort, 100% of all courses were assessed by June 2017. The chart below (Figure 1) highlights the improvement in SLO assessment rates from 2015 to the present. This data clearly demonstrates the results of the College's intentions to engage in outcomes assessment.

Merritt College SLO Assessment Rates - Three-Year Trend						
	2015		**2016**		**2017**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Courses Assessed	211	48	313	71	427	100

(Figure 1)

3) Service Area Outcomes Assessment

Merritt College currently consists of twenty-six (26) administrative, non-instructional, and student services units, that participate in comprehensive Program Review and Annual Program Updates (APUs).

Administrative, Non-Instructional, and Student Services Units	
Administrative (7)	Business Office, Division I Office, Division II Office, Office of Instruction, Office of Special Programs and Grants, Office of Student Services, President's Office
Non-Instructional (3)	Learning Center, Library, Merritt@Fruitvale
Student Services (16)	Admissions, Assessment, CalWORKs, Centro Latino, Counseling, Disability Services, EOPS/CARE, Financial Aid, First-Year Experience, Health Center, Orientation, Puente, Sankofa, Student Life, Transfer Center, Veterans Services,

Each of these units is required to identify Service Area Outcomes (SAOs), defined in the Administrative Procedures for Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment as "what students are expected to achieve and are able to demonstrate in terms of knowledge, skills, and values upon completion of receiving a service, attending a workshop, or participating in a program." [**CR6.17**] SAOs are aligned to Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and assessed on a rolling, three-year cycle along with SLOs, PLOs, and ILOs. As appropriate, assessment

results and improvement plans are then incorporated into Program Reviews and Annual Program Updates.

As noted above, the College has maintained the SLOAC structure consisting of four assessment coordinators, one of whom is dedicated to student services. The Student Services Assessment Coordinator continued to provide support to the different programs and units, guiding them in the identification of SAOs, development of assessment methods and tools, and the integration of findings into planning and budgeting. As a result of this focused approach, all sixteen (16) student services programs completed assessment of one or more SAOs by the Spring 2017 semester. Three new programs (CAYFES, Career Institute and Job Center, and Welcome Center) were established this academic year, and efforts are already underway to establish SAOs and appropriate measures for future assessment [**CR6.18**].

Student Services has taken the lead in increasing awareness and understanding of assessment. The Dean of Special Programs and Grants collaborated with the Counseling Department and the Student Services Assessment Coordinator to develop appropriate training for staff regarding the assessment process. Programs then conducted online surveys via Survey Monkey to assess customer service. The resultant data were shared at the Poster Session during Assessment Week and the Spring Planning Summit. On May 11, 2017, the Dean convened an "Assessment Closeout" meeting to allow faculty and staff the opportunity to share their insights about improving student services based on the assessment results. [**CR6.19**].

Merritt achieved the benchmark of 100% SAO assessment by June 2016, as established in the *Learning Assessment Report and Acceleration Plan* and continues to assess its SAOs on an ongoing basis. All administrative and non-instructional units have participated in assessment during the current three-year cycle.

In the 2017-2018 academic year, SLOAC shall seek to improve the SAO assessment process by formalizing it in parallel with SLO assessment, including the establishment of an SAO assessment calendar.

Merritt College SAO Assessment Rates - Three-Year Trend						
	2015		2016		2017	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Units Assessed	16	73	25	100	25	100

(Figure 2)

4) Program Learning Outcomes Assessment

Progress has been made in the area of Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) identification. Past approaches contributing to this progress have included: Educating College constituents about the purpose, importance and sequencing of PLOs, conducting joint division work sessions, division dean follow-up activities, and offering individual assistance at coordinator sessions. As a result of these strategies, by June 2016, all 44 state-approved programs at the College had identified PLOs. The College also moved from a nine percent assessment completion rate for PLOs in June 2015 to a 59 percent assessment completion rate in June 2016, with assessment completed for 26 of the 44 state-approved programs. [**CR6.20**]

In alignment with the *Learning Assessment Report and Acceleration Plan*, the completion rate has improved, with the goal of reaching full compliance of assessment of all PLOs by Fall 2017. By the end of Spring 2017, with all course-level SLO assessment work completed, the groundwork was laid for outcomes assessment on the program level. The primary goal and next steps were to continue to build upon existing assessment work, allowing for the completion of PLO assessments.

As a priority, a coordinated effort and structured plan for completing PLO assessment was initiated. The plan was constructed and facilitated by the SLOAC coordinators and implemented for the duration of Summer 2017. [**CR6.21**] First, Assessment Coordinators (AC) were subdivided into teams to work with each College division, and second, ACs were assigned to work with individual department chairs to confirm alignment of course level assessments with PLO as established through our regular curriculum development process. In order to assess PLOs, when appropriate, faculty used the results of course-level assessments in aggregate that linked to the program level. The results of these assessments were loaded into Taskstream. Resources provided by the ACs during each phase of the process included templates for mapping (if not already completed), examples of PLO work, and evaluation of appropriateness of current PLOs. To support the efforts of faculty, ACs facilitated program-wide dialogue regarding course and program-level assessment. [**CR6.22**]

After Summer 2017, PLO assessment work was completed. A subsequent analysis of remaining programs with unclear SLO/PLO alignment were identified. The 2017 Fall Flex Day included a session on PLO assessment and a final opportunity for all department constituents to validate and confirm the Summer 2017 work. The strategy was to develop a follow-up plan to continue program-level assessment and updates. [**CR6.23**] These measures and interventions have contributed to the College's ability to complete the benchmark of 100% of PLO assessments by Fall 2017. [**CR6.24**] Figure 5 reflects 3 year trend data.

Merritt College PLO Assessment Rates - Three-Year Trend					
	2015		**2016**		**2017**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Programs Assessed	4	9%	26	59%	44	100%

(Figure 3)

5) Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment

Merritt College has six Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs): 1) Communication; 2) Critical Thinking; 3) Quantitative Reasoning; 4) Cultural Awareness; 5) Civic Engagement and Ethics; and 6) Information and Computer Literacy. These six ILOs are listed on Merritt College's Learning Outcomes and Assessment webpage. [**CR6.25**] All other outcomes (course, program and service area) are mapped to one or more of the institutional outcomes. As part of the College Educational Master Plan, the standards for the various skills that all students will acquire at Merritt are set by these ILOs. The College is currently assessing one ILO per semester so that each outcome is assessed within a three-year cycle. The schedule for ILO assessment is as follows:

Semester	ILO Assessed
Fall 2015	**Communication** Communicate with clarity and precision using oral, nonverbal, and/or written language, expressing an awareness of audience, situation, and purpose.
Spring 2016	**Quantitative Reasoning** Apply college-level mathematical reasoning to analyze and explain real world issues and to interpret and construct graphs, charts, and tables.
Fall 2016	**Civic Engagement and Ethics** Internalize and exhibit ethical values and behaviors that address self-respect and respect for others with integrity and honesty that will enable success and participation in the larger society. **Cultural Awareness** Through knowledge of history and cultural diversity, recognize and value perspectives and contributions that persons of diverse backgrounds bring to multicultural settings and respond constructively to issues that arise out of human diversity on both the local and the global level.

Spring 2017	**Information and Computer Literacy** Use appropriate technology to identify, locate, evaluate and present information for personal, educational and workplace goals.
Fall 2017	**Critical Thinking** Think critically using appropriate methods of reasoning to evaluate ideas and identify and investigate problems and to develop creative and practical solutions to issues that arise in workplaces, institutions, and local and global communities.

The College completed two ILO assessments in Fall 2016: Cultural Awareness *and* Civic Engagement and Ethics. The ILO cycle continued during the Spring 2017 semester with the assessment of the Information and Computer Literacy outcome. The assessment of ILOs continues on a three-year cycle. The College will meet the three-year cycle goal of assessing one of the six ILOs each semester by the end of Fall 2017, as identified in the *Learning Assessment Report and Acceleration Plan*.

A series of ILO luncheons occurred in Spring 2017. Faculty with an identified ILO in their courses were invited to attend a series of informational sessions to discuss ILOs. Topics for discussion included: overview of the assessment process, clarity on mapping and integration into existing evaluation criteria, provision of release forms to display student work, and instructions for using a common rubric to score assignments. In May 2017, the faculty returned to share best practices, to discuss results, and to suggest campus-wide changes to improve student learning of the ILOs. [**CR6.26**]

Merritt College **ILO Assessment Rates - Three-Year Trend**						
	2015		**2016**		**2017**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
ILOs Assessed	0	0	2	33	5	83

(Figure 4)

Plans for Sustainability

The College was able to fully address and correct the deficiencies expressed in the 2016 External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report. Now that the College has reached 100% of all outcomes assessments, the focus shall shift to sustaining assessment efforts. With this understanding, it was determined that it is more prudent to set a realistic course towards a culture of sustainable outcomes assessment that is less geared towards reaching a particular benchmark, i.e., 100% assessment, towards one that focuses more on meaningful conversations about teaching, learning, and student achievement. This approach has been characterized as moving from a culture of mere compliance to one of intentionality.

Therefore, with sustainability as a focus, long term plans for assessment work will include:
- Continuing robust College-wide dialogue around assessment
- SLOAC monitoring, periodic check-ins with individual faculty and the College
- Administration to assist in facilitating and ensuring faculty accountability
- Evaluating SLOAC support structures (assessment coordinators, specialist, etc.) to provide adequate support to the College
- Integrating ILO assessment and results into institutional planning
- In collaboration with program chairs, ensuring that PLO assessments are aligned with course-level SLO and ILO assessments
- Aligning PLO assessments with Program Reviews for more systematic and regular completion cycles
- Conducting an annual review and modification of the Acceleration Plan
- Incorporating Accreditation Standards into regular committee responsibilities

Conclusion

Merritt College now meets the ACCJC Standards cited in College Recommendation 6 and has fully addressed the concerns of the 2016 External Evaluation Team. Over the past year, the College has launched a robust action plan of corrective actions to systematically address the deficiencies identified in the 2016 External Evaluation Team Follow-Up Report. Through a series of activities that included workshops, faculty education, individual support, monitoring, administrative support and intervention, the College united in efforts to "*accelerate the identification and documentation of student learning outcomes for all courses programs, certificates, and degrees...*" Most importantly, through fostering a culture of continuous improvement, the College has fully committed to embracing a culture of assessment that is sustainable. The goals and shared mindsets have shifted towards a greater understanding of the practical use of assessment and the linkages between evidence, course assessments, outcomes, and resource allocations.

Evidence for Response to College Recommendation 6

Document Number	Document	Link
CR6.1	*Learning Assessment Report and Acceleration Plan*, June 2016	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.1-Learning-Assessment-Report-and-Acceleration-Plan-June-2016.pdf
CR6.2	College Flex Days Program and Summit Presentation, Spring 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.2-College-Flex-Days-Program-and-Summit-Presentation-Spring-2017.pdf
CR6.3	President's Message, March 1, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.3-Presidents-Message-March-1-2017.pdf
CR6.4	College Council Meeting Minutes, March 22, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.4-College-Council-Meeting-Minutes-March-22-2017.pdf
CR6.5	Departmental Meetings and Communications on Assessment	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.5-Departmental-Meetings-and-Communications-on-Assessment.pdf
CR6.6	SLOAC Meeting Agendas and Minutes, Spring 201	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.6-SLOAC-Meeting-Agendas-and-Minutes-Spring-2017.pdf
CR6.7	Institutional Support by Assessment Coordinators and Specialist	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.7-Institutional-Support-by-Assessment-Coordinators-and-Specialists.pdf

CR6.8	One-on-One Taskstream Assistance	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.8-One-on-One-Taskstream-Assistance.pdf
CR6.9	2016-2017 Annual Program Updates	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.9-2016-2017-Annual-Program-Updates.pdf
CR6.10	Assessment as Meeting Agenda Standing Item	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.10-Assessment-as-Meeting-Agenda-Standing-Item.pdf
CR6.11	IEPI Partnership Resource Team Summary Report, December 9, 2016	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.11-IEPI-Partnership-Resource-Team-Summary-Report-December-9-2016.pdf
CR6.12	Assessment Fair, April 17-21, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.12-Assessment-Fair-April-17-21-2017.pdf
CR6.13	Assessment Coordinators Activities	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.13-Assessment-Coordinators-Activities.pdf
CR6.14	Assessment Data and Results on SLOAC Website	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.14-Assessment-Data-and-Results-on-SLOAC-Website.pdf
CR6.15	SLOAC Meeting Notes, March 28, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.15-SLOAC-Meeting-Notes-March-28-2017.pdf

CR6.16	SLOAC Meeting Notes, April 25 and May 9, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.16-SLOAC-Meeting-Notes-April-25-and-May-9-2017.pdf
CR6.17	*Administrative Procedure--Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment*	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.17-Administrative-Procedure-Student-Learning-Outcomes-and-Assessment.pdf
CR6.18	Student Services Assessment Coordinator Report, Spring 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.18-Student-Services-Assessment-Coordinator-Report-Spring-2017.pdf
CR6.19	Office of Special Programs and Grants Assessment Activities, 2016-2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.19-Office-of-Special-Programs-and-Grants-Assessment-Activities-2016-2017.pdf
CR6.20	*Learning Assessment Report and Acceleration Plan*, June 2016, pp. 9-10	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.20-Learning-Assessment-Report-and-Acceleration-Plan-June-2016-pp.-9-10.pdf
CR6.21	SLOAC Meeting Notes, June 5, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.21-SLOAC-Meeting-Notes-June-5-2017.pdf
CR6.22	PLO Assessment Work, Summer 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/09/CR6.22-PLO-Assessment-Work-Summer-2017.pdf
CR6.23	Flex Day SLOAC Presentation, August 18, 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.23-Flex-Day-SLOAC-Presentation-August-18-2017.pdf

CR6.24	PLO Assessment Taskstream Report, 2014-2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/09/CR6.24-PLO-Assessment-Taskstream-Report-2014-2017.pdf
CR6.25	ILOs on SLOAC Website	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.25-ILOs-on-SLOAC-Website.pdf
CR6.26	ILO Assessment Activities, Spring 2017	http://www.merritt.edu/wp/accreditation/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/08/CR6.26-ILO-Assessment-Activities-Spring-2017.pdf

Lists of Acronyms

ACCJC	Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
AFR	Accreditation Follow-Up Report
ALO	Accreditation Liaison Officer
APU	Annual Program Update
AC	Assessment Coordinator
CAYFES	Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support
EOPS/CARE	Extended Opportunity Programs and Services/ Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education
IEPI	Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative
ILO	Institutional Learning Outcome
PLO	Program Learning Outcome
SAO	Service Area Outcome
SLO	Student Learning Outcome
SLOAC	Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee
VPI	Vice President of Instruction