



Fall 2017 Mid-Cycle Report

Mid-Cycle Report

Fall 2017

Salt Lake Community College

Salt Lake City, Utah

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SLCC Mission

SLCC is your community college. We engage and support students in educational pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment.

SLCC Core Themes and Objectives



Access and Success

- Provide accessible instructional programs and student services
- Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education
- Support students to become successful and engaged learners



Transfer Education

- Prepare students with a foundation for success in continued studies



Workforce Education

- Prepare students with knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs
- Provide specialized training for business and industry

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Introduction

This report presents Salt Lake Community College's progress in assessing mission fulfillment, particularly student learning outcomes. In the two years since its year one report the college has spent considerable time and effort redesigning its mission fulfillment assessment process. This report details the plan for presenting mission fulfillment and sustainability in the year seven comprehensive report. While the redesign is not yet complete, its basic structures are in place and the college has completed its first implementation. Evaluators will notice some significant changes from the year one approach, but changes which will ultimately lead to better outcomes for the institution and its students.

The report is laid out in three parts as prescribed under the NWCCU guidelines. Part I will provide an overview of the SLCC institutional assessment plan (macro). Part II provides two representative examples of how SLCC operationalized its mission and core themes (micro). Finally, part III will provide a reflection on what needs to be accomplished as we prepare for the year seven report.



Part I: SLCC Institutional Assessment Plan

Salt Lake Community College’s institutional assessment plan aligns with NWCCU expectations of both a macro and micro level assessments. Part I describes the macro mission fulfillment assessment process. But one cannot fully understand how SLCC assesses mission fulfillment without also a detailed understanding of its nationally-recognized student learning outcomes assessment (“SLOA”) model. This outcomes assessment model is referenced below but is later described in detail in appendix A.

Part I is structured with four subsections. Subsection one provides a quick overview of the mission fulfillment assessment process. Subsection two describes the design principles and best practices that undergird the approach. Subsection 3 provides a more detailed review of types of evidence the college evaluates and how that evaluation occurs. Lastly, subsection four concludes with a brief overview of institutional sustainability.

Mission Fulfillment Assessment Model

SLCC formerly used a summative mission fulfillment assessment which combined many metrics into a single number. We compared that number to a target value and indicated a binary state - mission met or not met. Although this quantitative approach was “clearly defined” it provided little actionable information. Because the assessment practice must provide meaningful information used for improvement, the college has moved away from this model. Instead, the college transitioned to a new approach based on the fundamental premise that assessment should inform decisions to improve student outcomes. To achieve this, SLCC needed to expand the number of people involved and the types of data it considered.

Mission fulfillment is evaluated through a formative assessment of student outcomes and institutional performance. College leadership assesses mission fulfillment considering evidence in three areas:

- Performance on core theme objectives,
- Student learning and achievement outcomes,
- Institutional practices to advance mission and core themes.

College leadership reviews artifacts under each area and through the use of rubrics collectively assess mission fulfillment. This process is completed three times: once for each core theme. The college is currently working on the process of synthesizing and reporting the assessment to the SLCC Board of Trustees.

The model then asks the SLCC Board of Trustees to examine the assessment work and based on the totality of evidence makes a qualitative determination of the extent of mission fulfillment. The board will document its rationale and determination in a mission fulfillment report to the community. A thorough description of the areas of evidence is provided in subsection three below. The rubrics which frame the SLCC mission fulfillment assessment process are provided in appendix B.

Design Principles

While the mission fulfillment model is simple enough to fit on a page, it is the result of intensive research and development based upon best practices and leading design principles. This section provides an overview of the four basic design principles supporting the SLCC mission fulfillment assessment model.

SLCC created a mission fulfillment assessment process that is:

(1) Linked to the evaluation of strategic plan implementation

SLCC executes a series of strategic initiatives every year which emerge directly from its strategic plan. While the strategic plan does not specifically reference core themes, this alignment brings the two together.¹ Strategic initiatives not only support college strategy but also aim to improve core theme objectives. Assessing core theme performance becomes part-in-parcel of implementing the strategic plan. Simply put: assessment informs action. Core themes are not something on the side, but the core of the strategic work. Additionally, because college sustainability (NWCCU Standard 5) is a strategic effort, these are also identified with a SLCC strategic goal. Similar to the approach for core theme indicators, the college has a sustainability indicator that is tracked and has a specific target. See the chart below for the alignment of core themes and strategic goals.

	Core Theme Indicators*	Current State 2016/17	Strategic Goal (2023)
Access and Success	Community Access Rate	8.61%	maintain
	Minority Access Ratio	0.84 (minority students/minority population)	1:1 (minority students/minority population)
	Minority Completion Rate	18% (compared with 23% White)	equal with white peers
	Student Completion Rate	23% (VFA 6 yr)	40% (VFA 6 yr)
Transfer	Transfer Conversion Rate	39% (complete Bachelor's in 4 yrs)	60% (complete Bachelor's in 4 yrs)
Workforce	CTE Graduate Employment (wage)	47% (competitive wage)	65% (competitive wage)
	Specialized Training Responsiveness	1.25% (non-credit specialized training enrollments: market penetration rate)	maintain

¹ The college chose to use language that was familiar to the college community to develop its strategic plan. The term “core theme” was not well understood and added unnecessary complexity to the planning process. Instead the college focused on “goal areas.” College faculty and staff often talk about the “transfer goal” or a “completion goal” instead of the transfer “core theme” or the access and success core theme.

*Reference the [SLCC Year One Fall 2015 Report](#) for detailed explanation of indicators.

Sustainability	Measure of Sustainability	Current State	Strategic Goal
	Budget-related Full-time equivalent enrollment	15,084 FTE	18,500 FTE

(2) Participatory and formative

The practice of reflecting on the institution’s performance is a learning experience. College leadership (administration, faculty, staff, and students) conduct the formative assessment of mission fulfillment. For the exercise to be meaningful, the people who participate must be well informed. Institutional Effectiveness (IE) creates mission fulfillment rubrics with embedded evidence and analysis which participants study ([access & success assessment survey](#)). After individual review, participants come together to discuss the information and data. They make collective judgements about core theme outcomes and the efficacy of the strategic initiatives. This process creates a formative atmosphere where participants realign their thinking to college strategy but also provide feedback to influence future strategy development. Recommendations from assessment retreats and subsequent discussions of results lead to course adjustments in institutional initiatives.

A very inclusive, but less rigorous, assessment of mission fulfillment is conducted during our all-college event called SLCC 360. College employees come together each spring to evaluate strategic goal progress, celebrate accomplishments, discuss areas for improvement, and collectively engage in crafting strategies to advance our mission, vision and goals. (*A video of the 2017 SLCC 360 can be accessed on the SLCC strategic planning site following the president’s message*).

(3) Systematic and integrated with other assessment processes at the college

The college engages in macro-level thinking that is both informed by, and informs, micro-level practices directly affecting student learning and achievement. The ongoing student learning outcomes assessment work of faculty is integrated with institutional-level considerations of student success: successful transfer and meaningful employment. Other assessment practices are integrated into the mission fulfillment exercise so these activities can be considered in the broader context of shared purpose. The goal is that constituents at any level, from the classroom to the boardroom, can see the relevance and impact of their work.

(4) Designed to improve student outcomes

Not all outcomes-based assessment processes lead to improvements in student outcomes. The Center of Inquiry at Wabash College, in its [longitudinal study of college assessment practices](#) identified practical steps institutions can take to increase the chances that their assessment

processes will actually benefit student learning. SLCC has taken to scale specific recommended steps: (a) collect useful information about student learning and experience the institution already has, (b) engage a wide range of campus representatives in discussions about the data including faculty, students and staff, and (c) use the conversations to focus on just a few outcomes to improve. The mission fulfillment model applies these principles to optimize our chances of improving student outcomes at the institution.



These four design principles undergird the SLCC mission fulfillment model. The next section will describe how SLCC applies these principles.

Areas of Evidence

SLCC assesses mission fulfillment by analyzing evidence from three key areas: performance on core theme objectives, student learning and achievement, and institutional practices to advance mission and core themes. These areas were chosen to provide not just summative data about the outcomes but also formative information about the institution’s efforts to positively impact the outcomes. We consider our core themes as valid; they clearly encompass our mission and characterize the essential work of the college.²

Area of Evidence #1: Performance on Core Theme Objectives

SLCC has three core themes with six objectives and seven performance indicators. These are the overarching measures of student achievement and learning SLCC seeks to achieve.

Core Theme	Objective	Indicators
 Access & Success	A. Provide accessible instructional programs and student services	1. Community Access Rate
	B. Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education	2. Minority Access Ratio 3. Minority Student Completion Rate
	C. Support students to become successful and engaged learners	4. Student Completion Rate
	D. Prepare students with a foundation for success in continued studies	5. Transfer Degree Conversion Rate

² Two years ago in conjunction with strategic planning, the college engaged in a thorough review of the mission, core themes, objectives, and performance indicators. As reported in the SLCC *Year One Self-Evaluation Report* for NWCCU, some adjustments were made in 2015 - the community engagement core theme was transitioned to a college value and redundancy was eliminated in core theme objectives.

Transfer
Education



Workforce
Education

E. Prepare students with knowledge and skills meeting current industry needs

6. CTE Graduate Employment (% earning competitive wage)

F. Provide specialized training for business and industry

7. Specialized Training Responsiveness (market penetration rate)

SLCC core theme indicators measure the desired institutional and student outcomes. The college's performance on these "big" indicators is a direct mission fulfillment measure. Often, however, these measures are so far removed from institutional practices that the data is of limited use. More context is needed to make the information actionable. For mission fulfillment to be an achievable state, not just a theoretical construct, college personnel must see themselves and their work (inputs) as contributing to identified outcomes. The SLCC mission fulfillment model thus considers more than just the indicator.

Core theme assessments are supported by a set of data and analyses. To inform discussion regarding performance, college leadership reviews core theme assessment reports (e.g., [Access & Success Assessment 2017](#)) that contain indicator, supporting data, and analyses of environmental factors. This provides rich context for interpretation. The college has more than a single data point, but rather quantitative and qualitative information on which to understand institutional performance and to create actionable improvement strategies.

Additional data and information are also regularly produced to inform core theme improvement. For example, the student completion rate indicator is made actionable through supporting metrics such as retention rates and pass rates in gateway courses. These supporting metrics inform operational decisions and practices that ultimately support student completion. SLCC has taken the approach of linking core theme performance indicators with frontline practice of faculty and staff through different avenues:

- building analytics applications for specific processes (ex. [enrollment dashboard](#), [retention report](#));
- providing research and analysis on the impact of specific teaching and support practices (ex. [CTE wage study](#), [writing center](#), [OER](#));
- conducting targeted [research aligned with core themes and college goals](#).

The data science and analytics office (formally institutional research and reporting) works closely with departments to improve the heuristic value of these analytics tools and reports.

Area of Evidence #2: Student Learning and Achievement

Learning is central to SLCC's mission. The college holds itself accountable for student learning outcomes.

SLCC engages in regular and ongoing assessment to validate student achievement of learning outcomes utilizing two integrated and complementary learning assessment processes. The first is a "bottom-up" process led by program faculty in which they directly measure the learning in their courses and programs. The second "top-down" approach assesses student learning through evidence found in student eportfolios. This approach takes a student-facing perspective and allows for a comprehensive assessment of connections and learning happening across a series of courses. Both processes are used by faculty to assess course, program, and college-wide learning outcomes and are further described below.

The departmental ("bottom-up") assessment process focuses on both the program-specific knowledge and skills as well as college-wide student learning outcomes. The assessment of program-specific knowledge and skills is conducted by program faculty. The assessment office assists faculty in developing assessment plans. [Plans and outcome reports](#) for each department and program are available on the [assessment website](#). The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee ("SLOA") of the Faculty Senate conducts internal reviews of departmental assessment reports and offers confidential formative feedback to help faculty follow best assessment practices.

The ePortfolio assessment process ("top-down") is complementary to departmental assessments. Each year a faculty team assesses the eportfolios of a sample of graduating students. The assessment results are used by associate deans and faculty to improve teaching and learning. Some departments conduct separate departmental-level eportfolio assessments to further refine their individual pedagogy and learning outcomes. The college has conducted several assessment cycles and has made significant improvements to the process every year. The findings of these assessments are published in general education assessment reports.

Participants in the assessment of mission fulfillment exercise review the outcomes of both the bottom-up and top-down approach. This includes both [primary](#) and [summary](#) data on student learning outcomes (including the annual [general education assessment report](#)). These reports of student learning provide assessors two types of evidence to evaluate: 1) direct measurements of course, program and college-wide learning outcomes, and 2) information about the efficacy of the student learning outcomes assessment process at SLCC. This qualitative review of learning outcomes is a critical formative piece of the mission fulfillment assessment process.

Refer to appendix A for a more detailed description of SLCC's student learning outcomes assessment model.

Area of Evidence #3: Institutional Practices to Advance Mission and Core Themes

The design principles scaffolding the SLCC approach compel a critical review of the institutional practices (i.e., initiatives, projects, programs) implemented to advance the core themes. The

mission fulfillment assessment model includes a meta-review of college processes to ensure that “what” we are doing properly aligns with and supports “why” we are doing it. Processes are assessed under each core theme (some may be reviewed twice once under each core theme). College leadership considers three basic process areas: (1) [planning and implementation of current initiatives](#); (2) [data/information and research](#); and (3) the quality improvement practices (program/service reviews [2015/16](#), [2016/17](#) and SLOA process). These three general areas provide comprehensive view of the college’s collective work to advance each core theme. Details of the rating scales and criteria used in the evaluation of institutional practices are discussed in appendix B.

The uniqueness of the SLCC approach is that it assesses, in a single rubric, both outcomes and the processes employed to achieve those outcomes. This transforms the exercise from an “accreditation hoop” into formative learning exercise leading to meaningful improvement. The [SLCC Year One 2015 Report](#) (pg. 18) noted: “The self-study and subsequent strategic planning have given rise to an internal conversation regarding the role of business and administrative services (e.g., budgeting, accounting, facilities,…) in accomplishing specific core theme objectives. Clearly these functions are critical to institutional success but their contribution is not directly captured through the core theme objectives.” This conundrum is effectively addressed by evaluating the efficacy of administrative and business processes in our mission fulfillment assessment framework.

Institutional Sustainability

The college engages in many business practices to ensure future institutional sustainability. Both the Utah System of Higher Education and college policy require high standards to ensure that SLCC has, and will have, the resources to carry out its mission with integrity. The executive cabinet and board of trustees constantly monitor internal and external environments and make sustainability decisions accordingly.

Examples of institutional sustainability practices include:

- Cabinet evaluates fiscal resources and their allocation each year in the [Informed Budget Process](#). Leadership carefully monitors the external environment to predict future enrollments and set budget-related enrollment goals. During FY17 the college responded to a declining enrollment trend (the direct result of a strong Utah economy and low unemployment rates) by “right-sizing” the budget. This included the strategic elimination of programs, incentivized early retirements, and across-the-board operating budget reductions.
- The college has directed significant resources to enrollment management, hiring a director to oversee outreach efforts and intake processes to maximize yield rates for new students and retention rates of current students.
- To ensure that the college can maintain access to higher education, the college engaged in a comprehensive master planning process that guides the locations of teaching centers and facility improvements on existing campuses to meet the needs of changing demographics.

- The SLCC Development Office has been very effective in fundraising, raising over three million dollars this past fiscal year (a record setting amount for SLCC). The college is now embarking on a comprehensive campaign with the goal of raising \$60 million by 2023, the college's 75th anniversary.
- SLCC president, Dr. Denece Huftalin has institutionalized an approach that promotes honest reflection, she challenges all employees to stop doing things that are not effective and to be open to change and innovation.

These examples as well as other sustainability practices ensure SLCC will continue to be a vibrant and viable community college into the future.

Part II: Representative Examples of Operationalizing SLCC's Mission

Part II provides two representative examples of how SLCC has operationalized its mission and core themes. The first example is from the access & success core theme. It demonstrates how we use assessment practices to inform significant and meaningful changes to the math curriculum. This project is called “Mathways.” The second example is from the transfer core theme. It details how the college assessed student achievement through the lens of program articulation across all associate of science programs.

Mathways

The Mathways project directly supports the access and success core theme. It ties directly with the objectives of providing accessible instructional programs and supporting students to become successful and engaged learners.

National advocacy groups have suggested that passing math is a significant barrier to degree completion. Amidst all the calls by politicians and the public to “fix math,” the SLCC Math Department wanted to understand the problem before investing resources into *the* solution. The Mathways project developed out of a joint venture between the office of institutional research and reporting and the math department (with significant support from the Science Math and Engineering Dean and Provost) to take an incremental approach (addressing single factors in a controlled way) to understand and address the perceived math issue. Internal SLCC research showed that math is not the only obstacle to degree completion but having students place into and take the appropriate math class for their chosen degree is a significant problem. We learned that there may be no silver bullets but many silver BBs that improve student outcomes in math and ultimately degree completion.

The math department engaged in a series of inquiries to examine student and faculty performance. Examples of student outcome analysis used to improve the mathematics pathway at SLCC include:

- [MATH Accuplacer Threshold Analysis](#)
- [Enforcing Math Pre-Requisite Expiration: A Simulation Study](#)
- [Early Predictors of Course Performance: Math 1010 Pilot Study, Fall Semester 2015](#)
- [Students Repeating Math Courses at SLCC](#)
- [The Mulligan Project: Math 980 and the Path to OL Attainment](#)

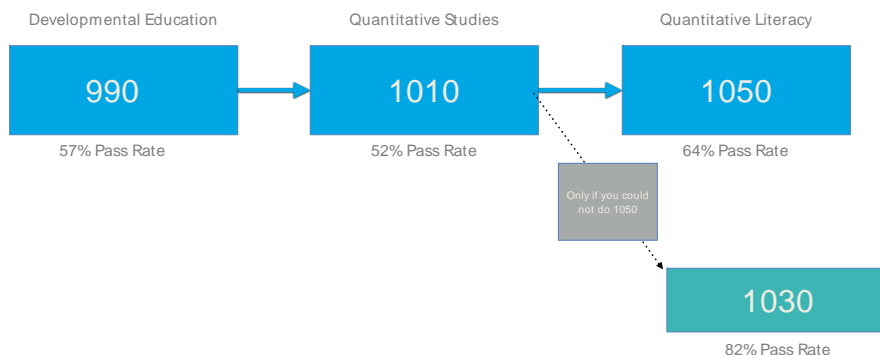
After nearly a year of continuous assessment and evaluation, SLCC used that information to transition to a new math curriculum and course sequence. This became branded as the Mathways project.

The traditional math pathway, or course sequence, was typically three or more courses. At SLCC, most students would place into a developmental level course, Math 990 beginning algebra, or lower. Once a student completed their developmental courses, they took Math 1010 Intermediate Algebra, then Math 1050 College Algebra (traditionally a challenging “gatekeeper” course for STEM students). While there was an option to move from Math 1010 to Math 1030,

Quantitative Reasoning, relatively few students elected to or were advised to take this route. The result was that many students were not making it out of developmental classes or were struggling in courses not even required for their program of study.

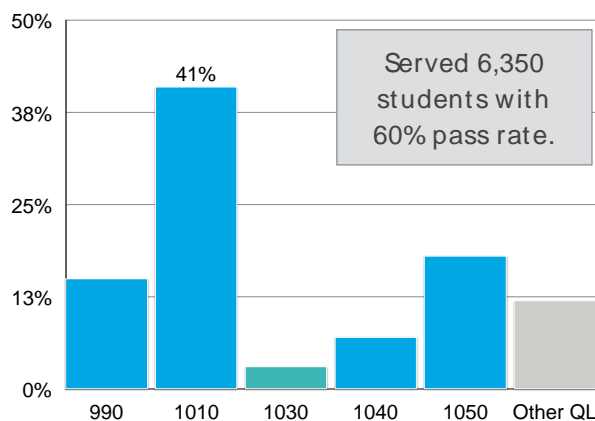
Traditional Math Pathway

A three course sequence with low pass rates



Traditional Math Pathway

Percentage of enrollment in math pathway by math course, Fall 2015

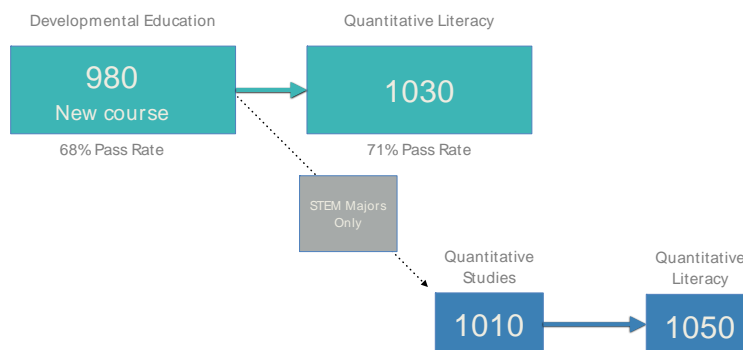


Note: Percentages exclude any enrollment in other developmental math courses. Many students start in Math 950 and need to move into higher level math. Since the pathways project didn't affect Math 950, it is not included in these calculations.

The Mathway model changes the default pathway from a three-course sequence to two-course sequence. Non-STEM students are no longer advised into College Algebra but instead are placed either directly into Math 1030 or into a fast track from developmental education into Math 1030. If a student is college-ready and not in a STEM program, they can immediately take the math course that will fulfill their general education quantitative literacy (“QL”) requirement.

New Mathway

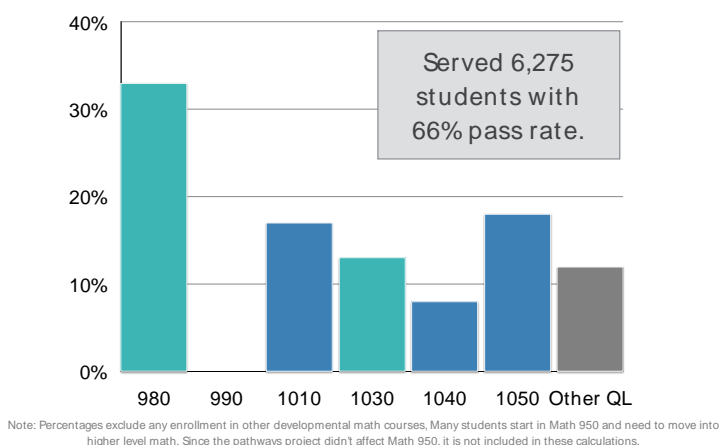
A two course sequence with higher pass rates



These changes are significant. The math department changed placement scores and revised curriculum in its developmental and intermediate algebra courses to enable students to get into the math class aligned with their educational goals. This modification encourages students to be more intentional and decide their major pathway early. Students who are not STEM majors save time and money. They are also more likely to be successful placing into the required class for their intended program of study.

New “Mathway”

Percentage of enrollment in math pathway by math course, Fall 2016

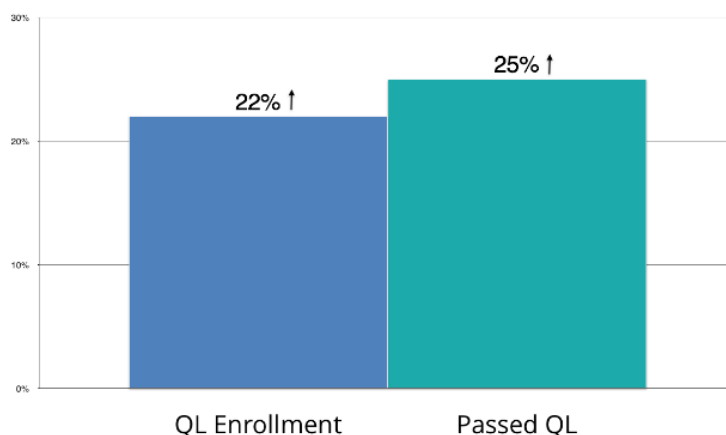


The chart above illustrates the shift of due to Mathways enrollments (i.e., out of developmental classes and into the appropriate QL courses). It should be noted that an expected decline in Math 1030 pass rates did occur. As more students funneled into Math 1030 the pass rate did drop a bit from 82% down to 71% but the overall result was still more students completing the QL requirement and moving on towards program completion (the core theme indicator).

College leadership assessed the Mathways implementation as part of the mission fulfillment exercise. Leadership noted that with only one year into this project, the preliminary results are promising. In Fall 2016 the college saw a 22% increase in the number of students enrolled in QL courses (primarily due to the surge in Math 1030 enrollments). And from Fall 2015 to Fall 2016 the college had a 25% increase in the number of students who earned QL credits. The college will continue to improve Mathways. The math department will reconsider placement scores, improve curriculum, and target supplemental support; and advisors will work with high school counselors and Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) partners to help guide students into the right math class for their intended goals.

Gains in QL Enrollment and Completion

Percentage increase in quantitative literacy (QL) course enrollment and passing, Fall 2015 to Fall 2016



Program Articulation

The institutional effort to improve program articulation supports the transfer education core theme. It ties directly with the objective of preparing students with a foundation for success in continued studies. The college measures this objective through the degree conversion rate (i.e., the percentage of students who “convert” their AA or AS degree into a bachelor’s degree within four years). The rate has historically been around 39%. While this is a respectable number among community colleges, SLCC has a goal of increasing that number to 60%.

When senior leadership began engaging with the indicator data during strategic planning discussions the inquiry turned to the root causes of the lower-than-desired degree conversion rates. Clearly there are many factors which impact whether a student continues their education and is able to complete a bachelor’s degree. The institutional focus, however, was on how learning at SLCC prepares students for transfer.

Students in Utah benefit from system-wide acceptance of all *core* general education courses. For majors courses, SLCC faculty work directly with their counterparts at the universities to align courses and craft articulation agreements. This collaboration is formalized through system-wide faculty meetings called “majors meetings.”

In recent years SLCC advisors, faculty, and students have complained about some courses “not transferring” and many students having to do “the same course” over again after transfer. President Huftalin realized a need to perform an institutional-level assessment of how effectively SLCC’s AA and AS degree programs, including all major courses, articulate with transfer partners. A confounding factor to answering questions about specific program articulation is that most SLCC students graduate with an AS degree in general studies. The rise in the number of general studies majors also indicated that the more specific degree programs were not meeting student learning and articulation needs. To help understand the issues and guide the conversation the college needed to create meaningful and accessible data in addition to the conversion rate indicator.

President Huftalin commissioned a study of program articulation and course prescription within AS programs. The college conducted a comprehensive review that resulted in a seminal report detailing which required courses in SLCC programs articulated and counted towards program completion at the largest transfer partner, the University of Utah.

The [Overprescribed Programs? An Analysis of Program Articulation](#) report laid bare that SLCC students, advisors, and faculty were largely justified in their complaints. The report identified a structural difference in the AS and BS requirements that creates a systemic impairment to designing well-articulated AS programs. This meant that less than a handful of SLCC programs could transfer a student with junior status. This structural difference (the scarcity of 2000 level courses in BS programs, colloquially referred to as “the disappearing sophomore year”) is a real obstacle to the learning which leads to the conversion of the AS into a BS.

The analysis found additional issues affecting students. Even with the structural problem, only five AS programs had fully optimized the AS design to allow SLCC students to complete the maximum number of articulated lower-division credits. Most programs could improve articulation by adding or switching courses to better align with university requirements.

What the college learned through this study and other reports about transfer ([Leaky Pipes: An Analysis of Early Transfer, General Education Report 2016, General Studies Program Review](#)) has led to many significant changes both in individual departments and in the system-wide approach to articulation. The report was first shared with the senior academic leadership at the University of Utah and then with representatives from the Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) office. It showed in plain terms that many university programs required upper division courses in the freshmen and sophomore years. Since SLCC’s governing board has not authorized SLCC to teach these upper-division courses, it is disadvantaging SLCC students’ learning and transferability.

The college has closed the loop on this assessment. Armed with data, SLCC faculty approached their university counterparts and have negotiated new articulation agreements and changes in course numberings that bring the university and SLCC programs into better alignment. The geosciences department has negotiated new course articulations, the sociology and social work programs successfully negotiated a renumbering of courses. SLCC, in a partnership with the University of Utah borne out of the conversations regarding this assessment, was awarded [new grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute](#) to develop fully-articulated degree pathways for science degrees. A critical piece of this grant is the creation of a STEM data team to further assess transfer student learning and course behaviors to continually improve program design. The University of Utah has also begun removing the perverse financial incentives that have caused much of the misalignment.

The effort to improve program articulation is still relatively nascent. The SLCC faculty senate president is working with all the other faculty senate presidents in the state to craft a letter urging better program alignment between the community college and universities. President Huftalin and Provost Sanders are in active conversations with system and university leaders to continually improve articulation. The program articulation assessment example is more than a case of operationalizing the mission, it has catalyzed a paradigm shift in the approach to learning and articulation within the transfer pathways.

Part III: Moving Forward to the Year Seven Evaluation

During a June 2017 president's retreat for senior leadership, the college implemented the access and success core theme assessment rubric. Through the exercise we found aspects needing improvement. Retreat participants provided feedback that the process is valuable but challenging. Some participants said they will need to learn to better synthesize information and adjust their position-based perspective to a more comprehensive view. College leadership also set very high expectations for themselves and SLCC students. Assessment participants found it difficult to differentiate between meeting aspirational strategic goals and meeting baseline expectations of fulfilling our mission. We will need to navigate this dissonance moving forward.

This summer we sent out the access and success assessment rubric (in electronic survey form) to college representatives prior to the assessment meeting and invited them to complete the assessment rubric independently and to provide comments justifying their ratings. After extensive discussion and review at the actual meeting, participants rated institutional performance again. The meeting results were different from the aggregated survey results indicating the setting (and/or group discussion) influenced the assessment results. With repeated use we will improve the administration and reliability of the core theme assessment rubrics.

Due to the depth of analysis and scope of evidence associated with each core theme, assessing a core theme is demanding work and we can't realistically consider all three core themes in one day. Retreat participants need ample time to discuss and process information; we are considering a multiple day retreat for senior leaders. For the mission fulfillment assessment process to become part of the SLCC fabric, we need to institutionalize how college leadership communicates and acts on assessment results.

While the role of the board of trustees is clear, the exact nature of its engagement in the mission fulfillment assessment process is still developing. The board of trustees will engage with the initial results of the access and success core theme between the time of submitting this report and the site visit. We will report out to reviewers at the time of the visit as to the results of this process.

The college has additional work to do to strengthen the connection between classroom learning and institutional-level student outcomes. The five-year academic program reviews is a vital component in bridging this gap by more clearly linking micro and macro data in the consideration of program-level outcomes. The provost is leading an internal review of SLCC's existing academic program review process to better address this need. Another way to bridge micro data with macro outcomes is to provide more opportunities, within the academic year, for cross-departmental conversations focused on student learning. Administration and faculty will look for ways and venues to better communicate and share with all constituent groups what we know about student learning outcomes at SLCC.

Appendix A: SLCC Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Model

SLCC has long had a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning which focuses on assessment as an integral part of good teaching. The SLCC model of student learning assessment is two-pronged, featuring the integration of top-down and grassroots approaches. The two parts of our pedagogical model, course-based Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) and General Education ePortfolios, are both assessment tools and high impact teaching practices. Course-based SLOA provides ongoing feedback to students and faculty about the quality of the teaching/learning process in their classes. It also informs academic departments about program-level student learning outcomes. SLCC encourages students to integrate learning across courses and reflect on their learning experiences in their ePortfolios. Assessing student ePortfolios gives the college a holistic look at the general education learning (including curricular and co-curricular) of our graduating AA and AS students.

The chart below shows the two, complementary, aspects of the SLCC student learning outcomes assessment model and how they provide a comprehensive picture of student learning at the institution.

SLCC Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Model

Course-Based SLOA	Level of Learning Assessed					EPortfolio Assessment
	Course	Program	CWSLO*	General Education		
	✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓		
	Use of Assessment Data					
	Improve pedagogy	Improve curriculum	Program prioritization/ Evaluation	Evaluate core theme achievement		
	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓		
	Assessment Practitioner					
	Instructor		Department	Cross-disciplinary teams		
	✓		✓ ✓	✓		
	Assessment Data Consumer					
Student	Instructor	Department	College	External		
✓	✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓		

* "CWSLO" is SLCC's College-wide Student Learning Outcomes

Course-Based Assessment:

Academic departments coordinate the assessment of student learning at the course and program levels. Faculty collect data during the academic year through testing, signature assignments (with feedback to students), and other assessment methods. At the end of the academic year, department faculty interpret the data they collect and make improvements to pedagogy and

program curriculum based on the data. The graphic design department provides an excellent example of closing the loop in their [2016 report](#) of a capstone portfolio assessment of student work. Industry experts helped review portfolios and provided input on improvements to course sequencing and pedagogy within the graphic design and illustration programs to better prepare students for jobs in visual arts.

[Assessment plans and reports](#) are submitted to the Office of Learning Outcomes Assessment. The plans and reports document our SLOA work, but more importantly, they are used for meta-level evaluation of the assessment work itself. Each year, the Coordinator of Outcomes Assessment and the Faculty Senate SLOA subcommittee, lead groups of faculty and administrators in analyses of department reports to look at assignment design, rigor and relevance of assessment plans, efficacy in closing the loop, and areas for improvement. Confidential findings are supplied to each department. Based on assessment findings, academic departments coordinate with the [faculty development office](#) to provide targeted training for faculty in areas where learning assessment practices need improvement. For example, over the last two years faculty brought existing curriculum materials to hands-on workshops to develop critical thinking (“CT”) rubrics and associated pedagogy to improve CT teaching and testing in their courses.

Not all SLCC students enroll with the intent to transfer to a four-year college; SLCC also has a responsibility for the essential learning outcomes of CTE students who are preparing for the workplace. SLCC has College-Wide Student Learning Outcomes (“CWSLO”) that are expected of all SLCC students and mapped through our curriculum documents: Program curriculum outline (“PCO”), and course curriculum outline (“CCO”) to courses and programs. [CWSLO](#) are a subset of our more comprehensive general education learning outcomes. All faculty use CWSLOs as a framework for linking their course-based assessment results to broader institutional-level student outcomes. However, the [2017 Signature Assignment Quality Review](#) compiled by the Learning Outcomes Assessment Coordinator indicates that an area for improvement is faculty making more explicit for students the connection of course-based learning with overarching CWSLO.

Through a meta-review, conducted 2014/15, of our course-based SLOA process we learned that some departments (particularly those with large numbers of adjunct instructors) would benefit from using a two-year assessment cycle. They want to train instructors in the design of good signature assignments before collecting outcomes data through the use of those assignments. Currently twenty-one of academic programs use a two-year assessment cycle. More details about the two-year cycle and findings from the recent review of signature assignments can be found in the [2017 Signature Assignment Quality Review](#) report.

Eportfolio Assessment:

The following excerpt from *Eportfolios, Assessment, and General Education Transformation* (AAC&U Peer Review, Summer 2016, Vol 18, No 3) written by Dr. David Hubert, Assistant Provost for Learning Advancement at SLCC, aptly describes our portfolio assessment approach.

The basic principles of our portfolio implementation are simple but have had a powerful impact on the institution and on student learning. Electronic ePortfolios are a required component of every general education course. Students maintain one integrative portfolio, and faculty in each general education course ask students to archive at least one signature assignment and reflection from the course. A signature assignment is a realistic application of knowledge – such as a paper, presentation, or a project – that requires students to demonstrate work relevant to two or more of the general education learning outcomes.

... Every May our IRR office pulls a random sample of 100 students who have just graduated with an Associate's degree and who have taken all of their general education courses from SLCC. Our portfolio coordinator organizes teams of faculty who apply modified VALUE rubrics and homegrown rubrics to those student's ePortfolios. The assessment teams look at data that answer two kinds of questions, the first of which might seem a bit rudimentary but is nonetheless critical: Do our graduates get enough experience in doing the kinds of assignments and reflection that would give them a reasonable chance of attaining general education outcomes? ... Our assessment teams also use components of the VALUE rubrics to determine how well our Associate's degree graduates are doing as they move from sophomore to junior status. In particular, they apply pieces of the VALUE rubrics dealing with written communication, quantitative literacy, and critical thinking.

SLCC was a pilot participant and consultant for the Multi-State Collaborative assessment project. We are somewhat emboldened to learn that our own data, based on the assessment of authentic student artifacts in our general education ePortfolios, look quite similar to the Multi-State Collaborative findings.

Results from the annual assessment of general education through ePortfolios are published each summer in the [SLCC General Education Assessment Report](#). This report provides faculty and administrators detailed information about 1) the extent that graduating students are meeting SLCC general education learning outcomes, and 2) whether the general education program is offering students opportunities to progress towards those outcomes. The following example illustrates how ePortfolio assessment data inform improvements. The faculty governance committees noted data in our assessment reports indicating that students were not receiving sufficient exposure to global perspectives and have recently passed a new International and Global Learning requirement in General Education. In addition, evidence from the ePortfolio assessment reports has also resulted in concerted effort between the Libraries, the Faculty Development Office, and the General Education committee to improve how information literacy is represented in signature assignments. We have learned that what faculty ask students to do in the classroom and in assignments has a large bearing on the learning outcomes students achieve. The two components of our student learning outcomes assessment model – formative course-based assessment practices, and the more summative ePortfolio assessment of general education – are linked through our focus on good signature assignments.

Appendix B: Rubrics for Assessment of Mission Fulfillment

Assessors use the mission fulfillment assessment rubrics to consider the evidence to rate criteria on a five-point scale. The scale descriptors are specific to each part of the rubric but the performance level associated with a given score (0 to 4) is consistent across the instrument. What is unique about the SLCC approach is that it is assessing, in a single rubric, both outcomes and the processes we employ to achieve those outcomes.

We “chunked” information by core theme so as to not overwhelm assessors. All of the institutional processes and initiatives evaluated in the rubrics are considered in the context of the core theme with which they most closely align. Strategic planning initiatives, program reviews, research reports, and student learning outcomes reports are indexed to access & success, transfer, or workforce. Aggregated results from the rubrics become, in effect, a dashboard of strengths and area for improvement related to achievement of our core theme objectives.

The core theme rubrics ([access & success](#), [transfer](#), [workforce](#)) used in the assessment of mission fulfillment have a section for each area of evidence: performance on objectives, student learning outcomes, and college processes. Sample sections from the rubrics illustrate how each evidence area is assessed.

Performance on core theme objectives

Objectives	A. Provide accessible instructional programs and student services					
	B. Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education					
	C. Support students to become successful and engaged learners					
		0	1	2	3	4
Performance		performance measures under development	performance unsatisfactory	performance satisfactory	performance good	performance exceeds expectations
	Objective A.					
	Objective B.					
	Objective C.					

Student learning outcomes/achievement

0	1	2	3	4
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Student Learning Outcomes	General Education - Eportfolios	ePortfolio assessment measures under development	assessment indicates transfer graduates attain few or none of gen ed learning outcomes	assessment indicates transfer graduates attain most gen ed learning outcomes	assessment indicates transfer graduates attain all gen ed learning outcomes, some at high level	assessment indicates transfer graduates attain all gen ed learning outcomes at high level

College Processes

		0	1	2	3	4
Processes	Planning & implementation on current initiatives:	no plan/strategy	plan/strategy under discussion	plan/strategy being developed	plan/strategy being implemented	plan/strategy implemented with measureable impact
	• Promise					
	• SEM					
	• Mathways					
	Data & Research	no data to inform or explain	data under development	relevant data available	meaningful information used to inform decisions	data/information systematically used for continuous improvement
	Quality improvement	none	sporadic	conducted not effectively used	used to inform decisions	systematically used for continuous improvement
	Program/service reviews					
	department level					
	institution level					
	SLOA					
	course level					
	program level					
Institution level						

The aggregate results from the initial implementation of the access and success core theme assessment rubric are shown below.

Access & Success Core Theme
Assessment Results

Senior Leadership Retreat - June 2017

Access & Success Core Theme						
Objectives	<p>D. Provide accessible instructional programs and student services</p> <p>E. Provide access to students underrepresented in higher education</p> <p>F. Support students to become successful and engaged learners</p>					
		0	1	2	3	4
Performance		performance measures under development	performance unsatisfactory	performance satisfactory	performance good	performance exceeds expectations
	Objective A.	1.8%	24.7%	54.8%	18.8%	0%
	Objective B.	0	42	32.5	25.4	0
	Objective C.	7.5	45.2	34.2	13.2	0
Processes	Planning & implementation on current initiatives:	no plan/strategy	plan/strategy under discussion	plan/strategy being developed	plan/strategy being implemented	plan/strategy implemented with measureable impact
	• Promise	0	0	7.1	46.4	46.4
	• SEM	3.6	0	25	64.3	7.1
	• Mathways	0	0	21.4	42.9	35.7
	• Starfish	0	0	50	42.9	7.1
	• Auto awards	0	0	0	48.2	51.9
	• STEM Resource Center	0	0	14.3	75	10.7
	• OER	0	0	10.7	17.9	71.4
	• Division Diversity Plans	0	17.9	64.3	14.2	3.6

Data & Research	no data to inform or explain	data under development	relevant data available	meaningful information used to inform decisions	data/information systematically used for continuous improvement
	0	21.7	21.9	53	3.5
Quality improvement	none	sporadic	conducted not effectively used	used to inform decisions	systematically used for continuous improvement
Program/service reviews					
department level	0	9.4	18	59.6	12.9
institution level	1.7	10.7	17.4	54.6	14.1
Student learning outcomes assessment					
course level	0	19.1	28.3	40.2	12.4
program level	0	10.7	34.9	47.5	7
Institution level	0	6.1	44.9	34.8	5.2