

# Draft Quality Assurance Framework

*Data and analysis can be generated and summarized at both institutional and program levels—aligned with institutional context, mission, and setting (e.g. internal reports and/or external reporting via program review, system-level reports, accreditation self-studies, etc.).*

## Degree Competencies (Defined by Faculty—Endorsed by Employers; Aligned with Programs)

- **Institutional Learning Outcomes**--knowledge, intellectual skills, and applications aligned to **DQP/LEAP learning outcomes** (or similar frameworks such as Wisconsin's shared learning goals) and defined at associate and baccalaureate levels.
  - Degree-level outcomes articulated for each campus and/or system AND degree of alignment of programs, requirements and assignments with key outcomes.
  - Alignment data might include: numbers of programs that have mapped key competencies to program requirements and courses; programs using signature assignments to provide evidence of students' achievement; presence of capstone or other projects showing students' cumulative gains and proficiency levels.
  - Evidence of degree of qualified faculty engagement with design, alignment, and assessment of intended learning outcomes.

## Educational Practices That Foster Competencies and Student Engagement Levels

- **High-Impact Practices**—frequency of student participation in practices that challenge graduates to grapple with complex challenges (e.g., writing-intensive courses, research, internships, service learning, work-based learning, collaborative initiatives, capstone projects..)
  - System or institution reports on percentage of students engaged in selected HIPs; percentage of students engaged in 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or more HIPs; percentage of first-generation and/or minority students in key HIPs. (Note: NSSE data shows first-generation students average 1.24 HIPS.)
- **Student/Faculty Interaction and Student Time-on-Task**—results of National Survey of Student Engagement, Community College Survey of Student Engagement surveys—measuring student engagement in activities and behaviors (e.g. positive engagement with faculty and peers) that correlate with deep learning and student success.

## Achievement/Performance Metrics

- **Student Achievement Levels as Evidenced in Student Work**—evidence of students' achievement of key learning outcomes as demonstrated in student work and measured by faculty (e.g. using nationally validated **VALUE Rubrics** to discern evidence of students' achievement of graduation level of proficiency. *(Note: VALUE rubrics cover a range of DQP/LEAP outcome areas and already are being used on more than 1700 U.S. campuses (2-year and 4-year).*
  - *Institutions and/or systems report on % of students who meet degree competency requirements and general education competencies.*

## Equity

- **Student Practice and Achievement reported with disaggregated data** to reveal potential gaps in participation in “high impact practices” and/or achievement levels on key outcomes.

*This framework is designed to accompany other reporting of completion data and other outcomes measures (e.g. employment rates).*

## **Toward a New Quality Assurance Framework: Better Metrics and Policies on Completion and Learning**

**Abstract:** This shorter policy report published by AAC&U as part of the Quality Collaboratives initiative will identify several key challenges facing institutions and public systems of higher education particularly in an era of increasing public skepticism about the quality of undergraduate education and increased calls for accountability and metrics. The publication will begin with a foreword by AAC&U President Carol Geary Schneider about why higher education institutions themselves must take the lead in generating new and better data not only tracking retention and completion rates, but also in accounting for the mapping of learning outcomes to curricular pathways, student participation rates in high-impact practices, and data on student achievement levels on multiple outcomes based on students' own work. The report itself will include an analysis of the current mis-alignment between system-wide policies and new patterns of enrollment and new frameworks for learning outcomes (e.g. LEAP, DQP, etc.). It will detail assumptions underlying current practices and will provide a set of questions and potential data sources that might populate new quality assurance reporting mechanisms.

**Important Principles to Highlight:**

- 1) It is essential to balance the current focus on completion metrics with attention to students' learning experiences, patterns of enrollment, and actual achievement of key learning outcomes. This framework acknowledges that states and campuses must address questions of economic return on investment and completion, but stresses that the anticipated economic and democratic benefits will only be fulfilled if educators and systems place equal emphasis on learning and inequities in participation and success.
- 2) This report and set of recommendations focuses on students' experiences and their learning outcomes as measured by authentic forms of assessment, but retention and completion rates are also important metrics of interest to institutions, systems, and states.
- 3) Different entities have different responsibilities for collecting data and establishing metrics. Institutions and departments themselves must take the lead in defining outcomes aligned with national frameworks and establishing appropriate student experiences and assessment approaches to track. This responsibility, however, should be accompanied by greater transparency about outcomes data. The publication may recommend specific questions and/or principles to guide campus-level; system-level; accreditation-level, and state-level policies and program-review or accountability reporting.
- 4) Institutional and system-wide policies and accountability systems should be very careful to avoid unintended consequences (e.g. creating a disincentive to enroll and serve less prepared or otherwise underserved students) in terms of student recruitment and expectations about the rigor of the curriculum.
- 5) Any framework for assessment, accountability and transfer should reflect the changing nature of the world of work and citizenship for which college must prepare this generation of students.

### **Questions for QC participants:**

**Are you comfortable with the principles and the overall framework and its component elements?**

**Should we include an appendix with "Talking Points for Conversations with Legislators"?**

**Who should be responsible for determining data sources of different elements in the framework?**

**What recommendations should we make about accreditation and its role in holding institutions accountable for collecting and using assessment data aligned with DQP and/or LEAP?**