

Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report Institutional Template

The institution uses the template below to complete its Quality Initiative Report. The institution may include a report it has prepared for other purposes if it addresses many of the questions below and replaces portions of the narrative in the template. This template may be used both for reports on initiatives that have been completed and for initiatives that will continue and for which this report serves as a milestone of accomplishments thus far. **The report should be no more than 6,000 words.**

Submission Instructions

The report must be submitted by June 1 of Year 9.

Submit the report as a PDF file at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Pathways/Quality Initiatives" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The file name of the report should follow this format: QIReport[InstitutionName] [State].pdf (e.g., QIProposalNoNameUniversityMN.pdf). The file name must include the institution's name (or an identifiable portion thereof) and state.

Date:

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The enclosed Quality Initiative Report represents the work that the institution has undertaken to fulfill the quality improvement requirements of the Open Pathway.



Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

5/10/24

Date

Dr. Mark Reed, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Loyola University Chicago

Name of Institution

Chicago, IL

City and State

Report Categories

Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Provide a one-page executive summary that describes the Quality Initiative, summarizes what was accomplished and explains any changes made to the initiative over the time period.

This Quality Initiative (QI) project was inspired by reflection and feedback on our pre-QI assessment processes. As indicated in our 2019 Mid-Cycle Review, participation in annual assessment was not well-documented by a majority of the academic units and was not often focused on student program learning outcomes. An internal evaluation of our Academic Program Review (APR) process from 2018-2022 also revealed that most APR reports were weakest in their analysis of student learning in their academic areas. This feedback, as well as informal conversations with academic leaders in units was the impetus for the Coordinated Learning and Assessment Supports (CLAS) project.

In the QI CLAS proposal to HLC we shared a project Logic Model that included inputs, activities, and outputs expected at the end of the project and those that were expected from longer term sustained efforts. The end-of-project outcomes are indicated below.

- A. Provost commits to sustained resources for assessment website, workshops, reporting process and to antiracist assessment
- B. Increased percentage of units with designated leaders for assessment
- C. Increased awareness and use of assessment-related resources within all units
- D. A number of new workshops
- E. Evidence that units are reviewing written PLOs
- F. Increased understanding of assessment practices by workshop attendees
- G. Evidence of PLO assessments in all units
- H. Evidence of anti-racist assessment in assessment reports

The project took place as intended with the development of resources (human and material) to support annual outcomes-based assessment of student learning. Capacity-building for assessment work is evident on the part of individual faculty and in the academic units where they work. The only change to the initiative was that the work on antiracist assessment was reassigned within the Provost's Office but outside of the CLAS project. Across this final report, we share evidence showing that all other outcomes (A-G) have been achieved.

Scope and Impact of the Initiative

2. Explain in more detail what was accomplished in the Quality Initiative in relation to its purposes and goals. (If applicable, explain the initiative's hypotheses and findings.)

Using the strategies laid out in its proposal, (1) coordinating existing academic assessment functions to foster collaboration, coherence, and efficiency, (2) taking stock of existing assessment-related resources and collaboratively developing new ones as needed to (3) move toward a sustainable culture of assessment through building expertise, collaboration and connection, the CLAS project has accomplished much. Based on evaluation of Loyola's existing assessment functions and resources, efforts were focused on (A) developing assessment expertise of individuals distributed across the university' academic units, (B) developing professional development and online resources supporting best practices in assessment, and (C) improving communications, accountability, and reporting processes to document annual assessment.

A. Developing a professional community of educators trained in assessment

The foundational activity of CLAS has been the identification, recruitment, and development of groups of university faculty and staff to play specific roles in enhancing assessment of student learning. Three main groups were proposed, and all were formed and developed: CLAS Executive Planning Team, CLAS Advisors, and CLAS Unit Assessment Leaders. In addition, and not part of the original QI proposal, the CLAS project also spurred the creation of a fourth group of assessment faculty fellows working with the Office of the Provost and a fifth group of faculty who supported the Office in its evaluation of annual assessment reports and feedback to units.

CLAS Executive Planning Team. The CLAS Executive Planning Team (EPT) was in place shortly after the acceptance of the QI proposal by HLC in February 2022. In addition to the CLAS PI Dr. Shefner, the EPT included eight educators with assessment expertise. Most of these individuals worked within the Office of the Provost to support teaching and learning and research. Two EPT members were also faculty members actively teaching in LUC degree programs. These Committee members supported Dr. Shefner in the planning and implementation of CLAS activities, including development of workshop content, facilitating workshops, and development of content for the [CLAS website](#).

An additional member of the EPT group from Information Technology and Research Services (ITRS) began in Spring 2023, leading to better mechanisms for designing and collecting annual assessment reports aligned to CLAS content. With help from this new member and a graduate student, in summer 2023 all Loyola Annual Academic Assessment Reports (AAARs) were collected via a Qualtrics survey. EPT members and the CLAS project director designed an online process for collaboratively gathering and sharing feedback with each unit about their 2023 AAAR. Fourteen faculty were trained on a feedback rubric (also in Qualtrics) and met in pairs to validate their scoring; an improvement on the feedback process used in 2022. Additionally, the switch to Qualtrics allowed for efficient analysis of assessment report data and the preparation of a meta-assessment report which will be shared with Deans and other academic leaders.

CLAS Advisors. The CLAS project recruited and onboarded 26 individuals as CLAS Advisors (CA) in spring 2022. These Advisors were chosen strategically as influential formal or informal leaders and assessment champions in their academic units. The Advisors participated in professional development about assessment and provided feedback that shaped the offerings for unit assessment leaders. Eleven of the 26 served as assistant, associate, or vice deans in their schools, two were department chairpersons. In all, 17 of the 39 LUC academic units were represented by these Advisors.

CLAS Unit Assessment Leaders. Before the CLAS project, there was no centralized listing of who was responsible for assessing program learning outcomes within each academic unit. Correspondence about assessment would be routed between the Provost's Office and the Deans' Offices. The CLAS project required all Deans to identify CLAS Unit Assessment Leaders (UAL) for every academic unit. These UALs were then invited to CLAS workshops and provided with resources to support their work within their units. Thirty-nine UALs were assigned to work with the CLAS project. Given the small size of some academic units, 12 CAs also served as their UALs. The formal designation of both the CAs and UALs at Loyola and their training on assessment was an accomplishment for the university. In addition, there is evidence that these CAs and UALs are beginning to take on activities that show their growth as active and informal professional leaders developing a culture of assessment at Loyola—we will discuss this below.

Faculty Assessment Director and Fellows. Due to internal restructuring of the Office of the Provost, the management of the Academic Program Review Process moved from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to the Office of Academic Programs and Planning. Accordingly, resources were allocated to create additional personnel lines for assessment support within the Office of the Provost. These individuals work closely with the Associate

Provost for Assessment, Accreditation, and Regulatory Compliance. In summer 2023, a newly developed position for Faculty Director of Academic Program Review (APR) and Assessment was filled for a renewable annual term. The Director's main duty is to support academics units that are undergoing the Academic Program Review process, which is intrinsically linked to assessment of student learning. The synergies between these activities in the Office of Academic Programs and Planning have strengthened the awareness of and attention to outcomes-based assessment. Additionally, five faculty members were recruited for one-year renewable positions as either APR or Assessment Fellows to provide peer support for faculty in these activities and help with faculty buy-in. The EPT continues to play an advisory role, but starting in Summer 2023 the Assessment Fellows with the Associate Provost developed the workshop content. The Faculty Director and Fellows positions are part of the annual budget for the Office of the Provost and will continue after the conclusion of the HLC QI initiative.

Faculty Assessment Report Reviewers. An unplanned outcome of the CLAS project was the engagement of 14 Loyola faculty who collaboratively analyzed and coded the 2023 annual assessment reports, helping the Office of the Provost in providing feedback to the 35 units submitting these reports. Faculty were recruited through a direct appeal to CLAS participants, all interested faculty were selected. All reviewers participated in a training and norming session.

B. Developing workshops and resources to support assessment

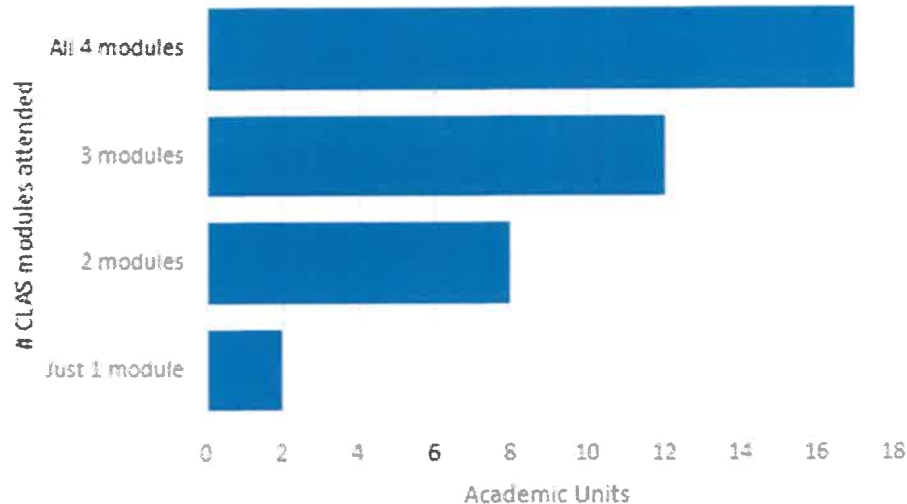
Website. During summer 2023, Loyola launched its website for the CLAS project at: [Coordinated Learning and Assessment Supports | CLAS: Loyola University Chicago \(luc.edu\)](https://www.luc.edu/clas). The site describes CLAS, houses assessment expectations, and shares the timeline for the CLAS project and annual assessment activities at Loyola. Tangible supports are listed (e.g., workshop materials, tools, a resource list, FAQs and a portal to request individualized assessment consulting from the Office of the Provost's Assessment team). To support workshop participants as the CLAS website was built, participants had access to a Teams site with supportive materials. Launching slightly later than the Spring 2023 date proposed, tracking of website use and improvements is ongoing with support of the Provost's Office.

Professional Development Workshops. A key goal was the design and implementation of supports to meet the needs of those carrying out assessment in the Loyola community. Needs were assessed during spring and summer 2022 through a May 2022 CLAS Kickoff event and feedback analysis. Three unique workshops were planned for Fall 2022, Spring 2023, and Fall 2023. Topics included **Module 1:** Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), **Module 2:** Mapping PLOs to Your Curriculum, and Assessment. In planning the fall 2023 workshop, the Assessment Fellows and Associate Provost decided to divide the content into Assessment Strategies (**Module 3**) and Using Data for Improvement (**Module 4**) provided in Spring 2024. Table 1 summarizes attendance at each module, representing 39 academic units. The distribution of attendance across unit representatives is in Figure 2. Most units attended between 2 to 4 modules, with most attending all modules. In 2023-2024, two academic units included in the 2022-2023 CLAS program were no longer required to attend because they offer only a minor. These two units are the only ones that only attended one workshop—the first module. Given that only 37 units were active by 2023-2024, the 17 with full attendance represent 46% of the units. Seventy-eight percent of the units attended three or more of the four modules. Over the full set of CLAS workshops and planning meetings, 89 unique faculty and staff attended. Some units had as many as four representatives active in CLAS.

Table 1: Attendance of CLAS UALS at 4 Modules

Module	Total units with at least one representative attending at least one session
1 PLOs	32
2 Map	23
3 Assess	30
4 Use	28

Figure 1: Distribution of Unit Attendance



Module 1 focused on the importance of having strong Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). The module was piloted by the Executive Planning Team (EPT) with CLAS Advisors in September 2022. CLAS Advisors suggested including time for a hands-on gallery walk, which was implemented in workshops for Unit-level Assessment Leads in November 2022. UAL workshops were offered three times on two campuses. Participants were provided with resources about how to structure a good program learning outcome, how to make them SMART and measurable, and how Bloom’s taxonomy offers ideas about framing cognitive domains.

Module 2 focused on curriculum mapping for use in assessing student learning. The module was piloted by the EPT with CLAS Advisors in February 2023. We added examples from Advisor’s to illustrate the utility of curriculum mapping, as well as examples from their programs when offering the workshop to Unit-level Assessment Leads in March 2023. UAL workshops were offered three times on two campuses. The meeting was process-focused, providing UALS with a suggested template and presentations from CAs about implementing the mapping process with their faculty. Each UAL created a draft curriculum map and prepared to share it with colleagues in their units.

Module 3 covered how to assess program learning outcomes. Assessment Fellows and the Associate Provost offered this module to CLAS Advisors in October 2023. CLAS Advisors suggested that we provide more detailed and granular information—on assessment strategies, making rubrics for PLOs, using portfolios in assessment, and the difference between grading and learning assessment. With the Advisors’ support, CLAS offered the module to Unit-level Assessment Leads in November 2023 three times and on two different campuses. Topics covered were moving from identifying PLOs and mapping curriculum toward developing a plan to assess PLOs, and an assessment plan template was provided to share with faculty in their unit. UALS were offered a variety of adaptable assessment strategies; embedded direct assessments, use of rubrics, and use of portfolios were

discussed in some detail. UALs reported it was challenging to get their colleagues' buy-in; collaborative rather than individual approaches to assessment were discussed.

Module 4 covered using assessment data for program improvement. CLAS offered the fourth module for both CAs and UALs in mixed sessions in March 2024, offered 4 times and on two different campuses. Topics discussed by the UALs and CAs included reflection on the overall findings on assessment progress at Loyola from the 2023 AAAR reports, how to organize and interpret assessment data, and planning for their 2024 AAAR reporting. Transformation of data into usable information was the focus of discussion; Loyola examples and examples drawn from HLC workshops were used. Participants talked about ways that Loyola units were using assessment results to make improvements and were invited to follow-up online drop-in sessions and encouraged to reach out for individualized support.

C. Improving communications, accountability and reporting on assessment

Annual Assessment Reporting. Loyola hired its first Assistant Provost for Assessment, Accreditation and Regulatory Compliance in 2020; now an Associate Provost position. With her leadership and leveraging of the CLAS-developed professional community, important university assessment policies and accountability are more clearly communicated. Messaging from the Provost's Office to promote the intrinsic value of assessing academic program outcomes and its alignment to Ignatian pedagogy was shared across campus in all colleges, schools, and institutes. Resources were provided to make assessment compliance easier to achieve.

Prior to 2022, Loyola's assessment of programs was carried out unevenly by academic units and communication was not consistent. Prior to the start of the CLAS initiative, the new Assistant Provost communicated a clear directive for annual assessment reports to be provided and revised the prior template slightly. Annual Academic Assessment Reports were provided in summer 2022, with some adherence to the template by a higher percentage of academic units.

The consistency and completeness of Loyola's documentation of assessment again improved for 2023; due to changing from a template to a Qualtrics survey for report submission. This allowed for better tracking of participation, frequent email reminders and better post-survey processing and mechanisms for providing feedback. The CLAS proposal aimed to leverage "assessment reports collected from all units" and by fall 2023 this was a reality. In summer 2022, 48 AAAR reports were submitted to the Provost from 27 of 39 specified academic units. In summer 2023, there were 43 AAAR reports submitted to the Provost from 35 of 39 units.

Table 2: Change in Assessment Practices 2022 - 2023

	2022 AAAR Submitted	2022-23 CLAS Workshops Attendance	2023 AAAR Submitted	2023-24 Workshops Attendance
# Annual Reports	48		43	
# Academic Units Submitting Reports	27/39		35/39	
# Academic Units NOT Submitting Reports	12		4	
# Academic Units Attending CLAS Workshops		37/39		37/39 *
# Unique Persons Attending CLAS Workshops		63		60
# Academic Units Submitting Reports Written with Help of a 2022-23 CLAS Workshop Attendee listed as an Author	15/48		26/43	
# 2023 AAAR in units that had at least one faculty attending 2022-23 CLAS workshop	na		42/43	

* In 2023-2024, two academic units included in the 2022-2023 CLAS program were no longer required to attend because they offer only a minor.

3. Evaluate the impact of the initiative, including any changes in processes, policies, technology, curricula, programs, student learning and success that are now in place in consequence of the initiative.

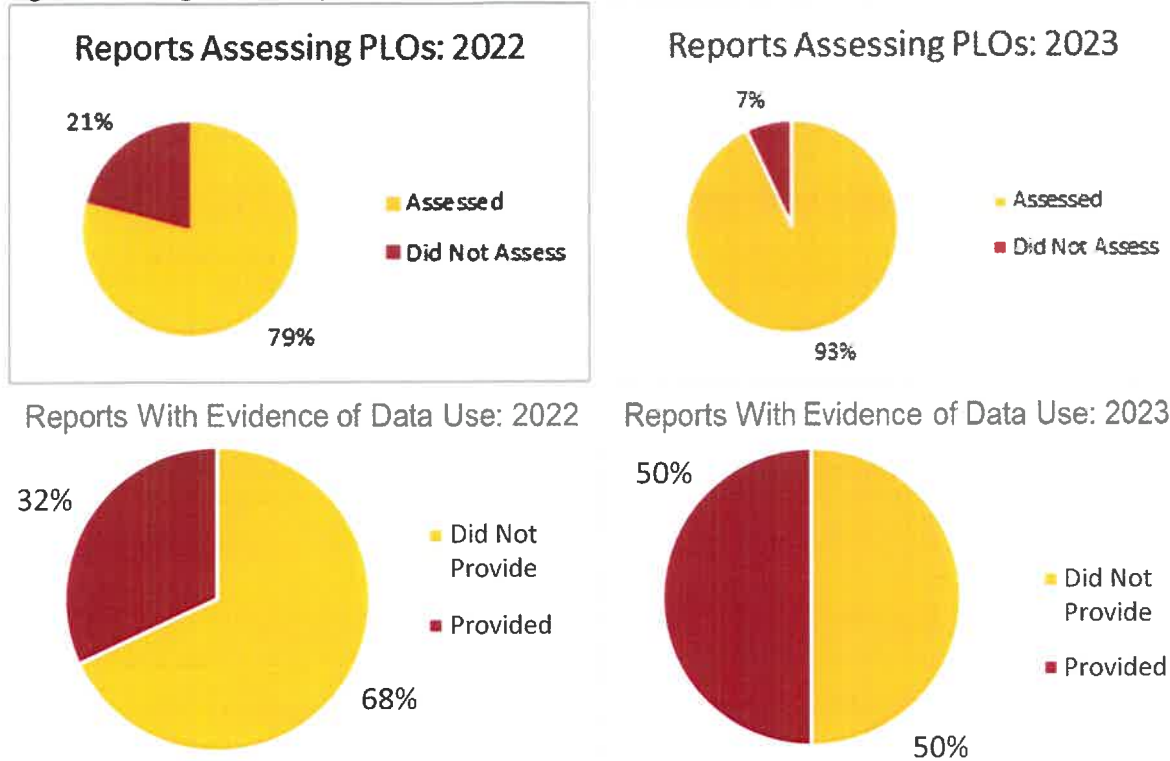
A. Changes in assessment expectations. One of the first tasks undertaken by the CLAS Advisor group was to develop clear expectations for annual assessment. This process began at the May 2022 Kick-off event for the project. We broke an assessment policy document from a peer institution into components, asking participant groups to provide clear feedback (would they keep this section? would they change this section, and how?) on the document. The feedback was synthesized, and a draft of the policy was shared with CLAS Advisors for further feedback before being approved by university leadership and posted on the CLAS website. Engagement of the CLAS Advisors early in the project in a critical task was important for building a relationship with them as leaders.

B. Changes in support for assessment. Support for assessment includes the additional staff in the provost office developing and delivering professional development, as well as the content itself, which in the future will be delivered in a variety of ways. Materials for presentation and hands-on activities have been developed, shared, and archived in a CLAS Teams site accessible to all workshop attendees for four Assessment topics. In addition to the impact this content had on those attending the workshops, much of the workshop content is available on the new CLAS website, developed for the project. Faculty and staff who were unable to attend have access to workshop materials as well as assessment policies and templates and rubrics for assessment reports. The website is housed in the Academic Affairs “Resources” section and was developed through consultation with University Marketing and Communications.

C. Changes in technology. Resources for the reporting process changed in 2023, when the AAAR reports were completed via a Qualtrics Survey. In 2022 a new template was provided for the AAAR and programs were asked to adhere to the template. Reports were delivered over email and stored in a Teams site. Review of these documents was cumbersome. Construction of the Qualtrics survey in 2023 was accomplished through the assistance of our Instructional Technology and Research Support (ITRS) staff. The content of the survey was similar to the 2022 report, with some minor refinements to the questions. A peer reviewer survey was also conducted in Qualtrics to evaluate the 2023 AAAR reports, also supported by ITRS and a graduate student worker in the provost office.

D. Changes in implementation of good practices in assessment of student learning. Between 2016-2022 15-25% of academic units provided some assessment information, either an isolated data file, an annual report, or as part of their Academic Program Review self-study. After re-instituting a clear requirement for reporting, the quality of the Annual Academic Assessment Reports (AAAR) improved from pre-2022 to 2022 to 2023. In summer 2022, (pre CLAS project), 48 reports were submitted by 27 academic units. In 2023, 43 reports were submitted by 35 academic units. The charts below show the growth in report quality as evidenced by the key elements of assessing PLOs and use of specific findings of their assessments.

Figure 2: Change in Quality of Assessment Work, 2022-2023



Using examples from other institutions of higher education, assessment leaders (EPT, Fellows) developed a basic framework for quality assessment reporting that includes PLOs, a curriculum map, a description of assessment methods (including description of student artifacts used and use of rubrics, if relevant), a summary of results/findings, and a description of dissemination and use of findings to improve their programs.

The improvement in assessment focus, quality and use of results is clear when we look at 2023 reports. Results of the peer faculty feedback survey are provided in Table 3. Although changes made in 2023 to the data collection form make comparison to summer 2022 data inexact, in 2022 the few units that reported using assessment findings used them mainly to improve their assessment process, whereas in 2023 we saw the intent shifting to using results to inform changes in the curriculum. The AAAR format will not change significantly over the next several years, which will allow for better analysis of changes in quality over time.

Table 3: AAAR 2023 report items rated “complete” in peer faculty feedback survey.

		Percentage
PLOS	The PLO indicated specifies student behaviors that characterize opportunities available within the program.	77
	The PLO reflects the appropriate rigor for the degree level of the program.	76
	The PLO indicated include expectations for student achievement at a number of cognitive or developmental levels.	63
	PLO is observable and measurable in the context of the curriculum of the program.	57
Map	A curriculum map is included.	93
	The curriculum map indicates that PLOs are addressed developmentally more than once in the experience of a typical student in the program.	74

Assessment Process	The student artifacts are collected or described.	69
	Methods for gathering evidence of student learning Include primary use of direct and embedded assessment.	63
	Contextual information is evident (e.g., who was assessed, when assessment took place).	55
	Quantitative Information on achievement of students on the PLO is evident (e.g., % of students who met criteria for meeting outcome).	45
	The process for evaluating the artifacts is clearly described and any tools (e.g., a rubric with clearly benchmarked levels of achievement) are included in the report.	41
	The number of students assessed and how the artifacts are collected are described.	35
Using Findings	Report references collective input from multiple faculty.	68
	Report references meetings with academic unit stakeholders where data and evidence are shared, and impacts are discussed.	61
	A summary is provided that describes what has been learned from the results and may include strengths of curriculum or learning gaps in curriculum or pedagogy	60
	Feedback is acknowledged and the relationship to the current assessment process is described.	52
	Intentions for specific use of findings is included.	50
	Recommendations for action are clearly tied to the results of the assessment.	44

E. Changes in leadership of assessment activities. As noted in section 2A, the CLAS project engaged faculty from across the university in a variety of types of groups. The members of the Executive Planning Team (EPT), the Faculty Assessment Report Reviewers, the Faculty Director and Fellows, and many of the CLAS Advisors (CA) and Unit Assessment Leaders (UAL) show signs of taking up a leadership role beyond the period of the CLAS project. After the Faculty Assessment Report Reviewers finished reviewing the AAAR 2023 documents, 14 report reviewers were surveyed in spring 2024. Nine responded to questions about their engagement on the review team, offering candid feedback on how to improve the process. All but two reported that the review project impacted their understanding of assessment and all but one said they would maybe or definitely consider rejoining the project for the review of the next 2024 assessment reports

In 2023, the work of CLAS related to assessment leadership was shared at The Assessment Institute Conference in Indianapolis. We framed assessment leadership using Stephen Hundley’s “imperatives” of assessment leadership, (Hundley, 2019. The leadership imperatives for assessment excellence: An overview. *Assessment Update*, 31(1), 3. doi:10.1002/au). Characteristics of Loyola University Chicago’s assessment leaders map to the characteristics as shown below in Table 4.

Table 4: Status of assessment leadership at Loyola Spring 2024

Assessment Imperatives	Status, Spring 2024
Leaders must make assessment a priority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provost commits financial resources to positions devoted to assessment • Increased percentage of units with designated assessment leaders • Provost communicates importance of assessment • Consistency of messaging of aligned assessment work
Leaders must attract and retain talent to support assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4/5 Assessment fellows will return; seek replacement of one fellow • Faculty Director and Associate Provost will continue this work • ~90% of peer faculty feedback providers intend to participate again • Many CAs and UALs expressed interest in supporting ongoing assessment in their units

Leaders must develop capacity for assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide array of assessment resources provided • Positive change in assessment report quality from past years • CAs self-report discussing assessment topics outside of workshops
Leaders must reward, recognize, and promote assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New assessment award funded in 2024. Awardee to be recognized at annual ceremony
Leaders must sustain a culture supportive of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources in a variety of formats: workshops, drop-in sessions, outreach to units, asynchronous resources on website; communication with Deans

4. Explain any tools, data or other information that resulted from the work of the initiative.

Reporting and feedback tools. The process for submitting Annual Academic Assessment Reports (AAARs) has been improved with very clear communications and accountability from the Provost’s Office. The AAAR forms are available in Qualtrics, due each summer. Feedback from the Provost’s Office on every report was provided; some follow-up conversations with units have occurred. Compliance and quality of reporting has been greatly enhanced.

Report archive. All AAARs, pre-CLAS project and since are stored in a Microsoft Teams site, organized by year and by academic unit to allow for ongoing tracking and analysis. Feedback from report reviewers is also stored.

Evaluation and analysis tools. An inventory of assessment report characteristics was established for the 2022 AAAR and will continue to be built for ongoing tracking of report quality over time. Focus group protocols and data, post-session evaluation forms and their analyses are kept by the evaluation team at the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. A meta-assessment report on 2022 and 2023 AAARs will be shared with Deans and other academic leaders.

CLAS resources. As described above, current and future resources generated by the CLAS project are available through the CLAS website.

5. Describe the biggest challenges and opportunities encountered in implementing the initiative.

The CLAS project has illuminated several challenges and opportunities for improving assessment work at Loyola University Chicago. Faculty resistance to devoting time to assessment was the major challenge. Prior to CLAS, this was exacerbated by lack of clear communication and prioritization from leadership regarding the value of assessment.

Primary challenge: faculty resistant to engage in assessment work. Evaluation surveys after the first CLAS workshops foreshadowed the focus group concerns about the challenge of faculty engagement in assessment. After both workshops UALs were asked the same survey question - What is something that you learned today that you think will be challenging to implement? Getting other faculty to engage in assessment work was by far the most prevalent concern reported by respondents – 60% after workshop 1 and 78% after workshop 2.

The resistance to assessment persisted in many units even after the CLAS project began and added stronger support and engagement for many faculty across all units. While the faculty active in CLAS saw value in doing assessment, they had difficulty getting others in their units engaged in the work. During the spring 2024 focus groups, they shared reasons for their colleagues’ reluctance to get involved in assessment, including:

- Faculty thought that doing assessment was not the best use of their time given career goals. It would count as “service,” but it was not clear how different types of service were valued for tenure and promotion as compared to research or teaching activities.
- Faculty did not see a need for doing the type of assessment that the university required and which CLAS supported. They saw it as something required for accreditation but not having practical use. In some cases, they felt that they already understood how their students were achieving without doing extra assessment. Some disagreed with the type of assessment promoted and felt it would not work for their unit. Some said it was trying to quantify what was not quantifiable.
- Reluctant faculty did not get the message from the university that assessment is about continuous improvement. They did not see how the process could be useful to them.

Opportunities for improvement. Communication on the value of assessment was enhanced in a number of ways during the project. Project leaders presented information on the CLAS project and progress made to the Council of Deans each semester. An email sent by the provost to all faculty on 12/07/2023 highlighted the aligned work on “Continuous Improvement Practices” across the university, specifically in annual assessment, assessment of the Core, and ongoing Academic Program Review and pointed out the relationship of this work to our university mission. The addition of an Assessment Award in Spring 2024 is another example where the institution can demonstrate that they value this work.

Assessment of the University Core was ongoing at the same time as the CLAS project and several CLAS participants were part of the Core assessment work, which was helpful as the two initiatives were designed to be well-aligned. This reinforced the value of assessment writ large and as something the institution was invested in, and participant comments during the workshops often referred to the alignment between the two projects. An assessment of courses fulfilling the Engaged Learning Requirement was also completed in 2022, and many assessment leaders and faculty participated in that work as well.

The inherent value of assessment was a topic at each of the assessment workshops. Open-ended “why” questions solicited feedback from participants and allowed for discussion on this amongst the more “bought in” CLAS Advisors, and the more skeptical Unit Assessment Leads. Discussions during workshops often included spontaneous “testimonials” by participants about what they learned and how they used what they learned to improve their programs. Hopefully this sense of utility will build as we gather and share more examples of successes over time.

Commitment to and Engagement in the Quality Initiative

6. Describe the individuals and groups involved at stages throughout the initiative and their perceptions of its worth and impact.

As described in sections 2 and 3, faculty engaged with the initiative as part of several different groups. Critically CLAS Advisors and Unit-level Assessment Leads (UALS) were the main targets of the professional development workshops. Engagement of UALs in CLAS workshops impacted their understanding of the value of assessment and understanding about how to create useful program learning outcomes and curriculum maps. Changes in faculty knowledge and awareness of assessment was measured by post-workshop feedback evaluation forms and by focus groups. At the time of completion of 3 of the 4 CLAS workshops, 44 UALs had attended at least one workshop. In January to March 2024, 19 UALs attended one of five focus groups.

Focus Group findings were that the majority of units represented had not had positive and systematic program level assessment prior to CLAS. They credited the workshops with teaching them lessons about program learning outcomes, curriculum mapping, and a variety of assessment strategies. The workshops also raised additional

questions that they wanted to further explore.

One of the most emphatic ‘lessons learned’ shared during the UAL focus groups was that assessment was not about assessing all PLOs all at once every year. The UALs heard the message that simplifying with fewer PLOs and focusing on 1-2 PLOs per report was a much better strategy. They said they learned how to write better PLOs, but it was still difficult to figure out how to balance some specificity but not being too narrow. UALs noted that since CLAS they were more aware of the value that PLOs had when they could be used to articulate how students developmentally gain competencies across their time at Loyola. They told how they were doing work with CLAS and PLOs, but also working on LOCUS and course catalogue projects where they had more limited PLO word limits. For some UALs, these different projects involving PLOs seemed redundant and not coordinated.

UALs wanted to better understand issues related to PLOs and curriculum mapping. They talked about how it was easier to map PLOs to courses for units with more sequential curricula compared to the flexible sequence majors. Some of the UALs wanted more help with how their specific unit should improve their PLOs and mapping and assessment. There was shared agreement that they wanted more individual faculty help within their unit. The unit leaders also talked about the PLO focus on their majors and how that did not allow them to assess and learn more about how their service courses were meeting the needs of students in other majors. Some of their largest courses may be enrolling non-majors almost exclusively, due to those courses roles as pre-requisites or for fulfilling Core requirements. Several departments were focusing efforts on assessing and redesigning some of these foundational courses even though this did not meet CLAS’ emphasis on majors and PLOs.

Evaluation surveys conducted immediately after workshops on the first two modules affirmed that UALs were learning key ideas but also reflecting on additional questions and challenges. Through an online evaluation survey after the Module 1 workshop, participants were asked these questions with the following responses.

1. To what extent did this workshop help you: - Recognize the foundational nature of program learning outcomes in the continuous improvement of academic programs	Of the 15 responses, --9 said a great deal, 3 said a moderate amount, 3 said somewhat
2. How confident do you feel in your ability to: - Evaluate program learning outcomes for academic units	Of the 15 responses, --7 said extremely, 8 said moderately
3. How confident do you feel in your ability to: - Work with units to develop or make improvements in program learning outcomes	Of the 15 responses, --6 said extremely, 8 said moderately, 1 said somewhat

After Module 1, in open-ended questions they were asked: What is something that you learned today that you think will be easy to implement? Of the 10 responses, 6 mentioned how to review and edit PLOs for specificity and by using the Condition-Audience-Behavior-Achievement framework. Others mentioned curriculum mapping to PLOs, Bloom’s taxonomy, Backwards Design, and their role in CLAS. They were also asked: What is something that you learned today that you think will be easy to implement? Of the 10 responses, 6 mentioned the challenge in bringing other faculty into the work to revise their PLOs and 2 others said the writing of the PLOs. Two responded “nothing.”

Through an online evaluation survey after the Module 2 workshop, participants were asked these questions with the following responses.

1. To what extent did this workshop help you: - Understand the value of curriculum mapping as a tool for understanding how your curriculum could be modified	Of the 13 responses, --9 said a great deal, 3 said a moderate amount, 1 said somewhat
2. How confident do you feel in your ability to: - Successfully create and utilize the Curriculum Map	Of the 13 responses, --6 said extremely, 7 said moderately

3. How confident do you feel in your ability to: - Support my unit in their discussions about the meaning and process of curriculum mapping	Of the 13 responses, --4 said extremely, 7 said moderately, 2 said somewhat
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After Module 2, open-ended questions were asked: What is something that you learned today that you think will be easy to implement? Of the 9 responses, 8 gave examples of things they needed to do to get started like understanding examples and models and how to pull together all the PLOs and syllabi. One participant noted that curriculum mapping is so simple that they did not need a full 2-hour workshop. They were also asked: What is something that you learned today that you think will be challenging to implement? Of the 9 responses, 7 said getting other faculty to engage in the work would be most challenging. The two others mentioned developing more PLOs and mapping programs where students have choices for different paths/courses.

7. Describe the most important points learned by those involved in the initiative.

We have learned that culture change takes time. Although we have improved the visibility of assessment and communicated the value of assessment, the default sensibility from faculty is that assessment is only about compliance. This is understandable, especially as we were straightforward about the impetus for the project being our noted deficiencies in this area.

Synergies with other work and consistency of message from the project and other university leaders seem to be key as we move forward. Indicators of progress have increased as we have taken on the APR process as well as annual assessment. The new cohorts of units that we have worked with since July 2023 are seeing the relationship between robust assessment reporting and a less arduous APR self-study. Part of this may also be dosage as often the leaders of the APR process are the same faculty who have worked with us as participants in CLAS workshops. Other convergent initiatives help greatly, from the university-wide assessment projects mentioned above to our 2022 adoption of CourseLeaf catalog software, which means another office is reaching out to units to populate PLOs.

We also learned the value of bringing faculty together across departmental/school lines. Faculty responded to the experiences of those outside their academic unit and were interested in the solutions presented and how they might apply them to their own contexts. Because of this positive experience, the Assessment and APR Team decided to apply a cohort model to our support for units undergoing APR; where all units who are starting the APR process during a given academic year meet together to learn about the stages of the process. A variety of different approaches to engagement will be required to ensure this initiative is sustainable.

Resource Provision

8. Explain the human, financial, physical and technological resources that supported the initiative.

As noted in Section 2.A., the Office of the Provost made concrete and significant new staff hires with the addition of the Associate Provost for Assessment, Accreditation, and Regulatory Compliance (2020), plus an Assessment and APR Faculty Director and five Faculty Fellows supporting assessment and APR by the 2023-2024 academic year. A program coordinator position was also funded in 2022, providing valuable administrative support for assessment and APR. These positions are included in the operational budget for Academic Programs and Planning.

Other resources came from ITRS for developing and providing technical support for the assessment reporting and feedback instruments and our marketing department for constructing and making ongoing improvements to the CLAS website.

Plans for the Future (or Future Milestones of a Continuing Initiative)

9. Describe plans for ongoing work related to or as a result of the initiative.

We expect the work of this Quality Initiative to be sustained and expanded. Current indications of this are a) the Graduate School facilitated an April 2024 workshop on differentiating PLOs for graduate programs from undergraduate programs, b) a university-wide assessment committee has convened monthly since December 2023 and includes representatives from all offices that do assessment work such as student success, c) our faculty teaching center is supporting faculty to adopt anti-oppressive pedagogical methods, including assessment and d) a new award for leadership in assessment will be awarded this year, and is permanently budgeted for.

Plans for next academic year include

- developing asynchronous, interactive online modules that will reside on the CLAS website, using workshop content; other website updates that indicate progress from a “project” lens to that of sustainable assessment practices
- continuing to use our EPT for technical and planning support
- targeting workshops for new UALS, but decreasing the repetition of workshops while increasing more individualized supports to units that seem to be struggling, or to those who request support
- incorporating some of the assessment modules developed by the CLAS project into the yearlong orientation programming for new faculty and the existing training for new department chairs
- shifting faculty, department chairs and dean’s thinking about assessment from a service activity to a *teaching* activity for purposes of tenure and promotion.

10. Describe any practices or artifacts from the initiative that other institutions might find meaningful or useful and please indicate if you would be willing to share this information.

We are happy to share our workshop materials, templates, meta-assessment reports and any other useful information from this project and will propose a session to present at the 2025 HLC Annual Conference.