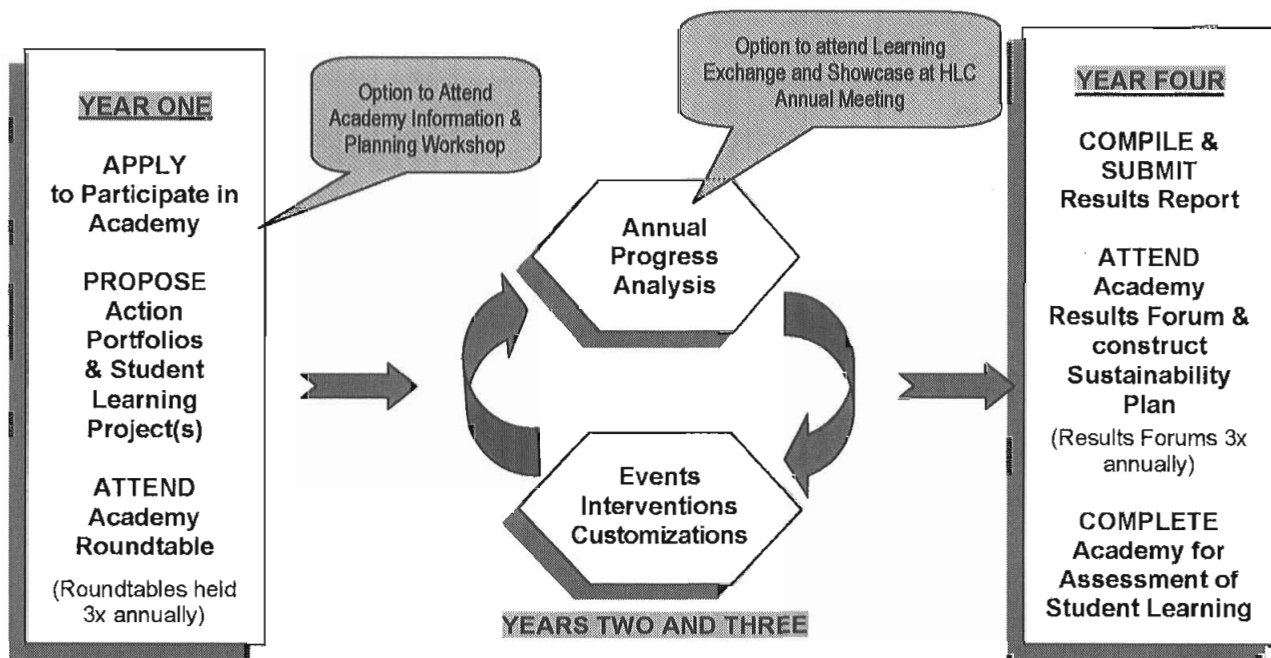


ACADEMY FOR ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

The Academy for Assessment of Student Learning offers The Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) member institutions a four-year sequence of events and interactions that are focused on student learning, targeted at accelerating and advancing efforts to assess and improve student learning, and designed to build institution-wide commitment to assessment of student learning. When planned comprehensively and carefully by the institution, participation in the Academy (1) can produce evidence for Criteria and Core Components in upcoming accreditation evaluations; (2) can serve in place of mandated progress reports, monitoring reports and focused visits on assessment of student learning (PEAQ); and (3) can serve in place of one or more action projects (AQIP).



- Year 1: Apply, Propose Action Portfolio with Student Learning Projects, Attend Academy Roundtable**
An institution joins the Academy, proposes one or two potential **Student Learning Projects** related to assessing and improving student learning, and sends a team to the multi-day **Academy Roundtable**. At the Roundtable, institutions critique and improve their own and other institutions' Student Learning Projects in consultation with Academy mentors and HLC staff.
- Years 2 & 3: Complete Annual Progress Analyses, Participate in Optional Learning Exchange & Showcase, Conduct Optional Events & Interventions**
Institutions implement their Student Learning Projects and receive mentoring, critique, and validation through **Annual Progress Analyses** and participation in the **Academy's Electronic Network**, which serves as a gathering place for resources and meetings throughout the four year Academy experience. Institutions may customize the Academy with optional **Events and Intervention Strategies** (e.g., on-campus consultation, on-campus conversation day facilitation, visit to good practice site, open space facilitation, etc.). Institutions may choose to participate in the annual **Student Learning Exchange and Showcase**.
- Year 4: Complete Results Report, Participate in Results Forum, Prepare Sustainability Plan, Complete Academy**
Each institution writes a brief **Results Report** and sends a team to the two-day **Academy Results Forum** to showcase accomplishments, compare and share good practices and to define post-Academy strategies to sustain their efforts. Each institution receives a **Results Response** from its reviewers. In addition, HLC intends to compile a compendium of case studies for **Publication** that showcase accomplishments and inventory good practices.

Academy Features and Benefits for Institutions

Academy Features	Academy Benefits
Action-focused, four-year sequence of events, interactions, and analyses focused on student learning results	Achieved results on key Student Learning Projects that impact student learning
Team and institutional-based forums for networking, feedback, experimentation, and evaluation of good practice strategies	Increased institutional commitment to and ability for assessing and improving learning
Analysis, critique, and feedback on key Student Learning Projects	Compilation & dissemination of good practices and innovative strategies in assessing & improving student learning
Forums for documenting and disseminating good practice in assessing and improving student learning	Support for ongoing institutional effort, experimentation, and good practice development in assessment of student learning
Web-based library of Student Learning Projects, progress analyses, and outcomes	Collaborative relationship with the Commission in building institutional commitment to and ability for assessing and improving student learning
Web-based peer review and feedback to support follow-through on Student Learning Projects	Development of institutional culture for assessing and improving student learning
Forums for comparing measures, strategies, and outcomes and showcasing learning and results	Opportunity to compare stated student learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and project results
Multiple, innovative interventions, activities, and events that customizes the Academy to individual institutions	Proactive replacement for Commission-mandated follow-up on assessment
Documentation of results and accomplishments as evidence for accreditation evaluations	Documented evidence for accreditation evaluations and follow-up

Outcomes of the Academy

- ◆ Establish institutional commitment to understanding, confirming and improving student learning;
- ◆ Achieve intended results as defined by an institution's Student Learning Projects and Action Portfolios;
- ◆ Develop institutional culture around assessing and improving student learning;
- ◆ Improve institutional capacity to engage multiple stakeholders in efforts to assess and improve student learning;
- ◆ Develop institutional leaders and mentors;
- ◆ Test and document effective practices in assessing, confirming and improving student learning;
- ◆ Interact with diverse institutions striving to assess, confirm, and improve student learning and teaching; building a collaborative network for ongoing comparison of efforts and results; and
- ◆ Assessment of student learning evidence for accreditation evaluations and follow-up.

Application, Selection, Pricing

Pricing Structure: June 2007 - September 2008*	
YEAR ONE: Includes Participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Academy Roundtable (multi-day event; five-person team included in pricing, additional team members may be added at additional cost) ◆ Learning Exchange and Showcase at HLC Annual Meeting ◆ Academy's Electronic Network with mentor and consulting services ◆ Optional: Other events, programs, and customizations (<i>additional fee</i>) 	\$7,500
YEAR TWO: Includes Participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bi-annual Progress Analyses (Peer & Mentor Feedback and Consultation on Student Learning Projects) ◆ Learning Exchange and Showcase at HLC Annual Meeting ◆ Academy's Electronic Network with mentor and consulting services ◆ Optional: Other events, programs, and customizations (<i>additional fee</i>) 	\$4,250
YEAR THREE: Includes Participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bi-annual Progress Analyses (Peer & Mentor Feedback and Consultation on Student Learning Projects) ◆ Learning Exchange and Showcase at HLC Annual Meeting ◆ Academy's Electronic Network with mentor and consulting services ◆ Optional: Other events, programs, and customizations (<i>additional fee</i>) 	\$4,250
YEAR FOUR: Includes Participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Results Forum (two-day event; five-person team included in pricing, additional team members may be added for additional cost) ◆ Results Report & Sustainability Plan (includes publications and certificates of accomplishment) ◆ Learning Exchange and Showcase at HLC Annual Meeting ◆ Academy's Electronic Network with mentor and consulting services ◆ Optional: Other events, programs, and customizations (<i>additional fee</i>) 	\$4,250

*Pricing does not include institutional expenses, including travel, lodging, and related costs.

**Dates and pricing subject to change

Three cohorts of 16 institutions will be accepted into the Academy each year. The selection process is explained in the Academy Application

Application Timelines:

2007-08 application period opens May 15th, 2007

2008-09 application period opens May 15th, 2008

2009-10 application period opens May 15th, 2009

Academy for Assessment of Student Learning Connections to Accreditation

SUMMARY

The Academy for Assessment of Student Learning offers HLC member institutions a four-year sequence of events and interactions that are focused on student learning, targeted at accelerating and advancing efforts to assess and improve student learning, and designed to build institution-wide commitment to assessment of student learning. The Academy is targeted to the majority of institutions, NOT the 10% that are adept in assessing and improving student learning, NOT the 10% that are adamantly opposed to doing so, and NOT solely those institutions with assessment monitoring.

CONNECTIONS TO ACCREDITATION

The primary role of the Academy is to catalyze and support institutional efforts to assess and improve student learning. However, institutions may find several ways to connect their work in the Academy to aspects of their institutional accreditation:

1. Institutions may plan their work in the Academy both to advance their efforts to assess and improve student learning, as well as to generate evidence for the Criteria in a PEAQ Self-Study or for the Criteria and AQIP Categories and Principles in an AQIP Systems Portfolio.
2. Institutions may request that participation in the Academy take the place of required Commission follow-up (focused visits, monitoring reports, and progress reports) on assessing and improving student learning.
3. Institutions may choose to have the Academy Student Learning Project serve in place of its AQIP Action Project on Helping Students Learn or another Action Project.
4. The institution may choose to capitalize on an upcoming evaluation (PEAQ Comprehensive or Focused Visit, AQIP Appraisal or Quality Checkup Visit) while in the Academy, using the team's expertise to consult and evaluate on progress made on the institution's Academy work.
5. The institution may choose to use the Academy as a means to customize a PEAQ Comprehensive Visit or an AQIP Quality Checkup Visit.

AGREEMENTS RELATED TO ACCREDITATION

Regarding institutions that have been accepted into the Academy and have follow-up:

- The Higher Learning Commission agrees to honor successful participation in the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning as fulfillment of an assessment-related progress report, monitoring report, or focused visit. (If an institution has required follow-up on another topic unrelated to assessment of student learning, the institution is still responsible for completing the follow-up on that topic.)
- If an institution quits, does not participate, or fails to give evidence of progress on Action Portfolios, any currently mandated follow-up will be reinstated to occur within a year of departure from the Academy.

Regarding institutions that have Comprehensive Visits while participating in the Academy:

- If an institution has a Comprehensive Visit while enrolled in the Academy, teams, readers, and reviewers will consult on the institution's efforts to assess and improve student learning, but will refrain from recommending follow-up monitoring. Instead, that team's consultations will be integrated as appropriate into the institution's Academy work. However, if the institution quits or fails to participate in the Academy after the Comprehensive Visit, the Commission may require follow-up on Assessment of Student Learning based on the team consultations and the quality of the institution's work in the Academy.

Regarding AQIP institutions that are participating in the Academy:

- The Higher Learning Commission agrees to honor Action Portfolio work in the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning as comparable to one or more AQIP action projects as determined by AQIP (for more information action projects requirements see the AQIP document "Understandings and Expectations of Participating Organizations").

Characteristics of Good Student Learning Projects

The following is a list of characteristics that should help you identify and design high quality Student Learning Projects.

Student Learning Focused. A Student Learning Project that meets the characteristics below is likely to be multi-faceted. One or more facets of the project must focus directly on what students are learning. In other words, a project should include gathering data/information on what students are learning, analyzing that information in relationship to intended learning, and confirming or taking action to improve that learning based on the analysis.

Significant. A significant Student Learning Project should have a noticeable and worthwhile impact on your institution and multiple stakeholders. Significant Student Learning Projects should be important and relevant to stakeholders to the extent that a successful project creates an enduring, positive change on your institution's culture.

Tackle a Real Problem, Meaningful & Useful. A good Student Learning Project should be concerned with a problem that few people deeply understand the root cause of and the optimal solution is neither apparent nor predetermined. A project should not simply reinforce a specific plan of action that administration has already decided upon, rather it should challenge you to chose a project with outcomes that wouldn't happen normally and results that illuminate how and what students are learning.

Feasible, Realistic. A Student Learning Project should be challenging enough to require serious institutional effort, yet, achievable within the constraints of time and resources. Guard against constructing projects that are so grandiose that they leave the your team feeling overwhelmed and paralyzed or projects so vague that it would be difficult to determine success or failure.

Measurable (produces data/information, qualitative & quantitative). A Student Learning Project must be detailed to a level that is clear what will be measured (qualitatively and/or quantitatively or both), how it will be measured, when it will be measured, and by whom. This specificity allows you to know if and to what extent the outcome of your Student Learning Project is achieved. As Student Learning Projects are likely to be multi-faceted, the design for measuring learning, impact, and/or results is also likely to be multi-faceted.

Urgency. A Student Learning Project must be time-bound by a clearly articulated timeframe in which the project is defined, actions are taken, and data are collected, analyzed, and acted upon. Further, the importance of the project should convey a sense of urgency because the issue at hand needs to be addressed with immediacy.

Endorsed. A Student Learning Project should be supported by key, influential people who can ensure the resources and leadership needed to make it happen. The project should be selected and constructed in a way that ensures your team has the appropriate authority to undertake and implement the needed actions. The team will not be motivated to seek innovative strategies if it believes that its suggestions may or may not be implemented.

Familiarity. A Student Learning Project should address a situation or issue that is familiar to most members of your team in a way that they understand the context, history, and recent efforts that surround the situation/issue. Alternatively, a few team members with little or no experience with the situation or issue may help bring a fresh perspective.



Letter of Agreement of participation in the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

Institution: <XXX>

Current Accreditation Process: ACCREDITATION

Next Comprehensive Visit Scheduled: COMPREHENSIVE VISIT

Current Follow-up on Assessment Pending: FOLLOW-UP

Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

This document is an agreement that <XXX> elects to participate fully in the activities and functions of the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning, a program of The Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Participating in the Assessment Academy offers HLC member institutions a four-year sequence of events and interactions that are focused on student learning, targeted at accelerating and advancing efforts to assess and improve student learning, and designed to build institution-wide commitment to assessment of student learning.

In joining the Academy, the institution agrees to the following expectations of all participants.

Agreement between the Higher Learning Commission and <XXX>

I. To support the efforts and operations of the Academy, <XXX> agrees to participate in the following Academy activities and make the following institutional commitments:

- **Roundtable** - Multi-day event at which teams from institutions propose Action Portfolios and critique and improve their own and other institutions' portfolios in consultation with Academy mentors and Commission staff. Action Portfolios are projects, strategies, initiatives, or processes that lead to demonstrating results of assessing and improving student learning.

Institutional Commitment - Attend Roundtable event, construct Action Portfolios, and post portfolios to the electronic Academy Network within 2 months of the Roundtable.

<XXX> commits to including work in its Action Portfolio that addresses the issues that led to the follow-up monitoring, Progress Report due 12/01/06; on assessment of student learning.

- Action Portfolio Update - Annual update that shares learning and demonstrates progress and results of Action Portfolio projects and initiatives. Each institution receives feedback from other Academy members as well as from Academy facilitators and reviewers.

Institutional Commitment - Institutions will post, at least annually, a 2-4 page Action Portfolio Update and will provide one-page observations and commentary on the Action Portfolio Updates of 2-3 other Academy institutions.

- Academy Network - An electronic gathering place for resources and dialogue. Institutions will post Action Portfolio Updates, receive and supply feedback to other institutions, communicate with facilitators/mentors, and generally engage in dialogue about assessing and improving student learning.

Institutional Commitment - Institutions will supply feedback and/or engage in dialogue about assessing and improving student learning at least quarterly. Participation in Academy Network may also include conference phone calls with facilitators/mentors, other institutions, and HLC staff.

- Cohort Publication(s) - The Academy will offer multiple opportunities to capture aggregate and individual institutional learning and accomplishments. During the Academy, institutional efforts and accomplishments will be published in a compendium of case studies that showcase good practices for assessing and improving student learning.

Institutional Commitment - Institutions agree to share learning and accomplishments with the broader higher education community. In year four of the Academy, institutions will write a brief (no more than ten pages) case study documenting their results and accomplishments.

- Academy Results Forum - Multi-day event at which teams from institutions evaluate the impact of their Action Portfolio, showcase accomplishments, share good practices, and design strategies to sustain their efforts to assess and improve student learning.

Institutional Commitment - Attend Academy Results Forum, share learning and results from Action Portfolio evaluation, and write a 3-5 page sustainability plan.

II. To respond to <XXX>'s needs and requirements, The Higher Learning Commission will:

- collaborate with <XXX> to help it accomplish its Action Portfolio goals;
- respond promptly and courteously to requests for assistance or information in areas of Academy participation; and,
- share information on assessment of student learning by identifying, evaluating, validating, and sharing best and innovative practices that are discovered by all Academy participants.

The Higher Learning Commission agrees to:

- maintain Academy participation so long as <XXX> continues to take part in Academy activities and is able to provide the Commission with credible evidence of doing so;
- honor Action Portfolio work in the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning as comparable to one or more AQIP action projects (for more information, see the AQIP document “Understandings and Expectations of Participating Organizations”);
- honor successful participation in the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning to fulfill the Progress Report due 12/01/06; on assessment of student learning.

III. In accordance with the understandings and expectations between The Higher Learning Commission and <XXX> the following will apply;

- If <XXX> quits, does not participate as defined in Section I., or fails to give evidence of progress on Action Portfolios, any currently mandated follow-up will be reinstated to occur within a year of departure from the Academy.
- If <XXX> has a Comprehensive Visit while enrolled in the Academy, teams, readers, and reviewers will consult on the institution’s efforts to assess and improve student learning, but will refrain from recommending follow-up monitoring. Instead, that team’s consultations will be integrated as appropriate into the institution’s Academy work. However, if <XXX> quits or fails to participate (as defined in Section I) in the Academy after the Comprehensive Visit, the Commission may require follow-up on Assessment of Student Learning based on the team consultations and the quality of the institution’s work in the Academy.

Signature of Institution CEO

Date:

Printed name of Institution CEO

Please return to:

Steven Crow, Executive Director
The Higher Learning Commission
30 N. LaSalle St., Chicago IL 60602

Signature of HLC Executive Director

Fax: 312-263-7462
Email: scrow@hlcommission.org

Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

Glossary of Terms & Definitions

Academy Roundtable - Two and a half day event at which institutions propose **Action Portfolios** and critique and improve their own and other institutions' portfolios in consultation with **Academy Facilitators** and Commission staff. Each institution will construct their Student Learning Project on a series of **storyboards** that will guide them through the process and allow facilitators and other institutions to quickly comprehend the purpose, scope, and sequence of their project.

Storyboards - A series of nine panels with prompting questions that create a visual display of the actions and elements of the Student Learning Project. The storyboards are intended to help structure, guide, and fine-tune the "think through" process of constructing meaningful and detailed Students Learning Projects. The storyboards will help illuminate flaws and weaknesses of the project.

Academy Facilitators - Trained individuals with expertise in assessing student learning at the course, program, and institutional level; hired by the Higher Learning Commission to facilitate team thinking.

Action Portfolios - Are projects, strategies, initiatives, or processes that lead to demonstrating results of assessing and improving student learning. Action Portfolios will be posted to the **Academy (Electronic) Network** within 2 months. Action Portfolios consist of several elements such as:

- **Student Learning Project** - the assessment project & its supporting processes.
- **Communication Plan** - strategies for engaging other stakeholders (faculty, administrators, students...etc) on campus.
- **Timeline** - timeframe for defining, acting, and evaluating Student Learning Project.
- **Formative Evaluation Plan** - strategy for judging the worth of the Student Learning Project while the project activities are still forming or happening so that changes/improvements could be made. The Formative Evaluation Plan focuses on the *process* of accomplishing the Student Learning Project.
- **Support Network & Resource Plan** - strategy for identifying the human resources, technology, tools, models...etc that will be required to successfully accomplish the Student Learning Project

Student Learning Project - Assessment projects must confirm and/or improve student learning. Projects should have a 3 - 4 year scope which includes at least one cycle of improvement (using data to initiate a change). Projects should be written at a level of detail that clearly articulates what will be measured, who will be measured, how it will be measured, when it will be measured, and by whom. See Characteristics of Good Student Learning Projects for more detail.

Academy Network - An electronic gathering place for resources and dialogue. Institutions will post Student Learning Project and **Action Portfolio Updates**, receive and supply feedback to other institutions, communicate with facilitators/mentors, and generally engage in dialogue (at least quarterly) about assessing and improving student learning. Participation in Academy Network may also include conference phone calls with facilitators/mentors, other institutions, and HLC staff.

Action Portfolio Update - Annual update that shares learning and demonstrates progress and results of Action Portfolio projects and initiatives. Each institution receives feedback from other Academy members as well as from Academy facilitators and reviewers. Institutions will post, at least annually, a 2-4 page Action Portfolio Update and will provide one-page observations and commentary on the Action Portfolio Updates of 2-3 other Academy institutions.

Learning Exchange & Showcase at Annual Meeting (*optional*) - This is an opportunity for Academy institutions to showcase their Action Portfolios to institutions within and outside of the Academy, receive feedback, and engage in a dialogue about assessing and improving student learning. Academy members may participate in a poster session, panel discussions, presentations, or lead a roundtable discussion. Exemplary projects may be published in the Annual Meeting's Collection of Papers.

Customized Events (*optional*) - Institutions may customize their Academy experience with events such as: On-campus consultation services, on-campus conversation day facilitation, hosting and/or visiting other institutions to share good practices, ...etc. Specific programs & services are being investigated and developed based on feedback from institutions in the 2006 - 2007 cohorts.

Cohort Publication(s) - The Academy will offer multiple opportunities to capture aggregate and individual institutional learning and accomplishments. During the Academy, institutional efforts and accomplishments will be published in a compendium of case studies that showcase good practices for assessing and improving student learning. In year four of the Academy, institutions will write a brief (no more than ten pages) case study documenting their results and accomplishments.

Academy Results Forum - Multi-day event at which teams from institutions evaluate the impact of their Action Portfolio, showcase accomplishments, share good practices, and design strategies to sustain their efforts to assess and improve student learning. Institution will write a brief Sustainability Plan (3-5 pages) that clearly demonstrates how they will attempt to carry on and improve upon the work they accomplished in the Academy.

Academy for Assessment of Student Learning Benefits and Services

Electronic Network - This is an electronic gathering place for feedback, shared learning, e-publications, and dialogue for institutions participating in the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning. Institutions post and update Student Learning Project(s) accomplishments, products generated, and good (and poor) practices learned along the way. Institutions receive feedback from mentors and provide/receive feedback to/from other institutions. ***Starting November 2007, mentor feedback will include a 30 minute phone call with the mentor to debrief feedback.*** Free - included in Academy Pricing.

Learning Exchange and Showcase at HLC's Annual Meeting *(Sunday, April 13th, 2008)*
This is an opportunity for Academy institutions to showcase their Action Portfolios to institutions within and outside of the Academy, receive feedback, and engage in a dialogue about assessing and improving student learning. Academy members may participate in a poster session, panel discussions, presentations, or lead a roundtable discussion. Publications will showcase the work of the Academy institutions. Exemplary projects may be published in the Annual Meeting's Collection of Papers. Free - included in Academy Pricing.

PHONE CONFERENCES *(more details in forthcoming email and on HLC website)*

Academy Institution Led Phone Conferences on Assessment Topics - HLC will coordinate phone conferences led by Academy institutions on specific assessment topics. Topic and format determined by institution initiating phone conference. Free - included in Academy Pricing.

Phone Conferences on Assessment Hot Topics - These 45 minute, expert lead phone conferences with a limited number of institutions will be on a variety of topics such as General Education, Co-curricular Learning, Standardized Tests and Surveys, Program Review, Multi-Cultural/Diversity Learning Outcomes,...etc. The format for these phone conferences will be a mix of presentation, interactive discussion, and question and answer. Free - included in Academy Pricing.

Phone Consultation - This is a phone call coordinated through HLC with an assessment mentor. It may involve mentor pre-work, discussion with an institution's assessment committee or other organizational units, comments/suggestions on specific assessment instruments or operational structures. The format and discussion is determined by the institution's request. Pricing structure currently being developed.

ON-CAMPUS VISITS

We are in the process of developing several standardized services that will take place on an institution's campus. These include:

Assessment Inventory - Through a series of predetermined interviews and focus groups, an assessment mentor will conduct an inventory and report on current assessment practices and activities. The purpose of this inventory might be on documenting evidence of student learning for a Self-Study or Quality Check-up visit.

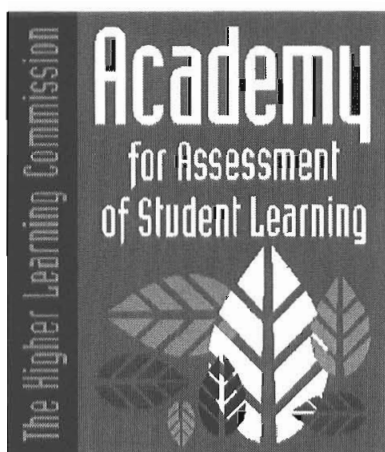
Campus Conversation - Mentors facilitate a campus-wide or large scale conversation on learning and assessment. The purpose of this event is to move a campus mindset from assessment for compliance to assessment as a commitment to students and their learning.

Project Storyboarding - Using a series of ten oversized panels mentors facilitate the "think through" process for institutions (or organizational units) developing projects for assessing student learning. The storyboarding process is currently used at Academy Roundtable events.

Access to Tools and Services Developed with OASIS Partners - We are currently identifying partner organizations and higher education consultants to provide our institutions with access to a wider array of products and services. For example, the Global Perspectives Inventory, developed by Larry Braskamp et al.

Inclusions in HLC Sponsored Publications - In years three or four, we intend to capture and highlight Academy institution's efforts to assess and improve student learning in a compendium of case studies.

Discounts on other Program and Services offered through HLC's Office of Assessment Support Initiatives and Services (OASIS).



If you have any questions regarding the services and programs discussed above, please contact:

Jonathan Keiser, The Higher Learning Commission
 Phone: (312) 263-0456 x128
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