Annual Assessment Report for 2020-2021 Academic Year

Prepared by the
Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness

Introduction

The Annual Assessment Report updates the Lehman College community on the state of assessment for the 2020-2021 academic year. First, Lehman College made significant progress in strengthening and building its institutional improvement infrastructure. Although Lehman College had approved Nuventive's *Improve* (Essential version) to replace *Taskstream™* as its Assessment Management System (AMS), that product did not make it through the CUNY procurement process. In response to this, the College approved Watermark Insights' *Planning & Self-Study* as its new AMS. Second, progress was also made on assessment of student learning and performance outcomes by academic units and administrative support units. Third, the College also made progress on assessment of general education outcomes. Finally, we launched the *Institutional Effectiveness* (IE) website as a repository for our IE efforts, which includes institutional and programmatic accreditations, academic program reviews, curriculum development, strategic plan, and CUNY performance management process. This report provides highlights of progress on these endeavors and makes recommendations of areas for continuous improvements. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was noticeable during this period as some units delayed aspects of their assessment activities. In general, it is commendable that most units continued their assessment activities during this period.

The Six-Step Assessment Process

Central to our assessment efforts is the use of a uniform 6-step assessment process (illustrated below) for both General Education, Academic, and Administrative and Educational Support (AES) units to better organize our institutional assessment and improvement initiatives. This process, first implemented in 2019, is outlined in the College's **Institutional Effectiveness Plan** (IEP) that was shared with MSCHE in a *Supplemental Information Report (SIR)*. The IEP details the College's assessment activities, processes, and responsibilities.
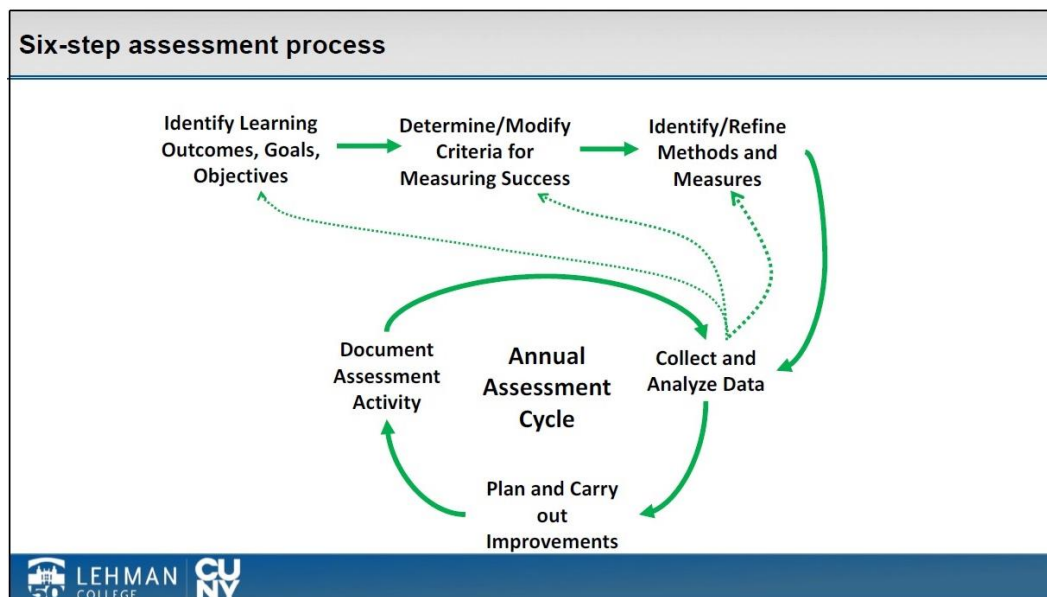
The six steps, followed in academic and AES assessment are:

Step 1: Develop student learning outcomes or performance outcomes that align with Lehman College's mission, its institutional learning goals, and, where applicable, accreditation requirements;

Step 2: Determine or modify criteria for measuring success;

Step 3: Develop and implement methods of assessment involving direct and indirect measures;

Step 4: Collect and analyze data;

Step 5: Plan and carry out improvement initiatives, and;

Step 6: Document assessment and improvement activities.

Steps 4-6 Lay out the annual assessment cycle that is part of the multi-year six-step process.

Assessment Summary for AY 2020-2021

Of the eighty-nine (89) units which participated in assessment activities during the year, twenty-nine (29) were academic units, while fifty-three (53) were administrative and educational support (AES) units. Ninety-five percent of academic and AES units submitted assessment plans. The School of Education, with its three academic units, is not included in this table because it performs separate assessments linked to its school accreditation and its accredited programs.

School or Administrative	Total Units	Plans	Reports	Reports as % of Plans
AES	53	53	50	94%
Academic:	29	28	27	96%
A&H	9	9	8	89%
HS2N	6	6	6	100%
NSS	14	13	13	100%
Gen. Ed.	7	2	2	100%
Total	89	83	79	95%

Notes: For purposes of General Education, "total units" refers to the number of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). "Plans" refer to the number of ILOs that were assessed during the 2020-2021 academic year. The School of Education performs assessment for its School accreditation and its accredited programs and is not listed above.

Academic Assessment

Step 1: Learning Goals and Outcomes

Across Lehman College's listed above, there are 155 learning goals. Of these, approximately 55% (85 goals) were assessed during the 2020-2021 academic year. The 85 goals assessed were linked to one or more of the College's 7 ILOs.

Lehman College's ILOs are:
1. Critical thinking
2. Competence within a discipline
3. Quantitative Reasoning, Information Literacy, or Research
4. Communication Skills
5. Multicultural, Global/Ethical Awareness
6. Working as part of a team; and
7. Leadership

Learning Goals by Department Mapped to Institutional Learning Outcomes

Department or School	Learning Goals(s)*	Mapped to ILOs
Africana Studies	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Art	4	1, 2, 4, 5
English	3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
History	4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Journalism/Media Studies	2	1, 2, 3, 4
Lang. & Lit.	11	1, 2, 4, 5
Latin American & LatinX	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Music, Multimedia, Theatre, Dance	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Philosophy	3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Health Sciences	10	1, 2, 3, 4
Nursing	12	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**
Recreation	4	1, 2, 3, 4***
Social Work	12	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7****
Speech-Language-Hearing-Sciences	3	1, 2, 3, 4
Exercise Science	4	1, 2, 3, 4***
Accounting	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5*****
Anthropology	4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Biological Sciences	3	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Business	6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5*****
Chemistry	3	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Computer Science	8	1, 2, 3, 4, 6******
Earth, Environmental, Geospatial Sciences	6	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Economics	6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Mathematics	7	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Physics & Astronomy	6	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Political Science	6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Psychology	3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Sociology	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Total	**155**	

*Departmental goals reflect the maximum goals for any departmental program.

**Did not map to ILOs; data is based on Natural Sciences, Nursing's goals, and assessment plans.

***Did not map to ILOs; data is based on Health Sciences mapping.

****Did not map to ILOs; data is based on articulated competencies for the program.

*****Did not map to ILOs; data is based on Economics mapping and program learning goals.

******Did not map to ILOs; data is based on Mathematics mapping.

Step 2: Criteria for Measuring Success

Determining criteria for measuring success is a critical assessment element. Criteria provide benchmarks by which units can determine the level of student performance or unit effectiveness. This assists the units to set clear and measurable objectives. During AY 2020-21, 81% of assessment plans contained specific measurable targets. This represents an increase from the 57% recorded for the prior academic year. The breakdown was as follows:

- Measurable targets: 81%
- Development of a baseline for future targets: 7%
- No specified measurements of success/no specification of baseline development: 12%

Among programs with specific measurable targets, the expectations varied widely. The number of students expected to meet a given level of performance continued to vary from 50% to 80% of students depending on the target and the program.

Step 3: Methods and Measures

Academic assessment initiatives predominantly relied on direct measures of student learning. 75% of academic assessment plans used direct measures exclusively. 7% of academic assessment plans utilized indirect measures, exclusively while 14% of academic assessment plans used both direct and indirect measures. In total, 81% of all measures utilized were direct measures. Programs using direct measures included Biological Sciences, English, Health Sciences, History, Mathematics, and Sociology. Programs using indirect measures included Exercise Science and Psychology.

Direct Measures	
Tests/Exams/Quizzes, including pre- and post-tests and certification/standardizes tests	50% of direct measures
Paper/Written Assignment	32% of direct measures
Performance/Presentations/Speeches	7% of direct measures
Discussion Board Contributions	4% of direct measures
Lab Reports	4% of direct measures
Experiments	4% of direct measures

Indirect Measures	
Surveys	83% of indirect measures
Curriculum Map Review	17% of indirect measures

*-Note: Rounding errors may lead to totals different from 100%.

Step 4: Data Collection and Analysis

During 2020-2021 academic year, assessment plans and reports were submitted via Dropbox. Academic assessment plans were centered around departments to maximize the benefits of assessment relative to the assessment workload. The COVID-19 pandemic had a diminishing impact on academic activity. 96% of units submitting assessment plans and 89% of all academic units provided assessment reports. COVID-19 resulted in the disruption of one unit's assessment plan.

Step 5: Improvement Activities

The overall purpose of assessment is continuous improvement. The assessment reports were examined for information related to improvement activities. 79% of assessment reports provided one or more initiatives for improvement. In terms of assessment linked to measurable targets, 52% met or exceeded their target. 43% were close but fell short of their targets. 5% did not meet their targets. Explanations for issues leading to missed targets included assignment design, a need to enhance student research skills, and students' knowledge of probabilities, statistics, and data presentation.

Improvement Examples:

Initiatives for improvement from a select sample of academic units are illustrated below:

- Implement positive elements from the Student Success Course Redesign Initiative (SSCRI) that produced a lower DWIF rate and assess future implementation of those practices (Art)
- Increased training of students in probability, statistics, and data presentation to strengthen students' ability to accurately interpret research studies (Biological Sciences)
- Change the independent lecture-lab sections into a unified lecture (through a common syllabus)-coordinated lab sessions and change the grading to give heavier weight to completed homework assignments (Computer Science)
- Increased discussion on statistical methods and a demonstration in *Excel* (EEGS).
- Repeat the grammar workshops that had improved student grammar, an issue that arose in prior assessment findings, and expand the range of workshops to include creative and professional writing with a theme on 'social action. (English)
- Develop a plan for improving students' self-perceived information literacy (Health Sciences)
- Provide increased training on research/sourcing at the beginning of independent projects; encourage group projects; and, explore developing an Internship alternative to the existing capstone project (Journalism and Media Studies).
- Continue to reinforce lab practices for students (Physics and Astronomy)
- Increase sharing of materials among faculty, create a central repository of readings for the Department, review and update departmental learning outcomes (Psychology)
- Introduce additional high-stakes assignments (SLHS)
- MSW Advanced Social Work Practice Curriculum Committee will discuss Competency 7 (apply critical thinking to interpret information from underserved clients from a strengths-based, trauma-informed perspective and develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals) (Social Work)
- Continue the numeracy brown bag lunches, discuss whether an introductory course is warranted, plan to deploy select assignments throughout the curriculum (Sociology)

Step 6: Documentation of Assessment and Improvement Activities

Lehman College adopted the 6-step assessment process in Spring 2019. The 2019-2020 assessment cycle was the first semester the process was used. Documentation on items from prior assessment reports was limited. Only 39% of assessment reports documented some form of assessment of one or more items from the most recent or earlier assessments. Examples of follow up from the prior year's assessment findings included Social Work's repeat assessment of competencies, Chemistry's re-examining the gap between in-person and virtual lab performance, and Mathematics conducting a repeat assessment.

The introduction of Watermark Insights' *Planning & Self-Study* as the new AMS should dramatically increase closing-the-loop activities, as it will document the status of unit progress on those items, which will increase follow-through.

General Education Assessment

Lehman College maintains a multi-year General Education assessment plan. The 2020-2021 academic year focused on:

- Multicultural, Global/Ethical Awareness
- Critical thinking

During 2020-2021 academic year, Lehman College's Academic Assessment Fellow (a faculty member,) working with the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness, conducted a survey of faculty to determine the extent to which Lehman's General Education/Pathways courses were able to incorporate both global and multicultural content.

Among other things, faculty were asked a series of questions about the perceived benefits of including a global perspective (on a scale of 1 to 10, with the latter being the highest perceived value). The questions primarily pertained to the impact that the more global content has had on other learning objectives that Lehman College values. These include skills such as writing and oral communication, as well as student engagement with the material. The responses are illustrated below:
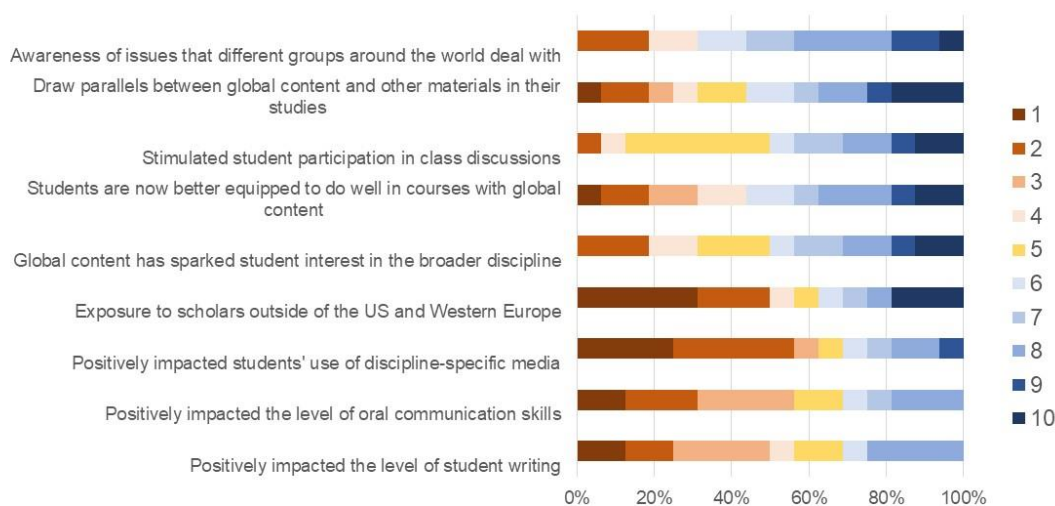
Faculty were asked a series of questions about the challenges that they perceived with incorporating a global focus in courses. More than half of the instructors noted the lack of time in the semester as the prime challenge, while roughly a quarter to a third of instructors pointed to the focus of the course or of their discipline.

Challenges when incorporating a global perspective - Non global courses (n=15)
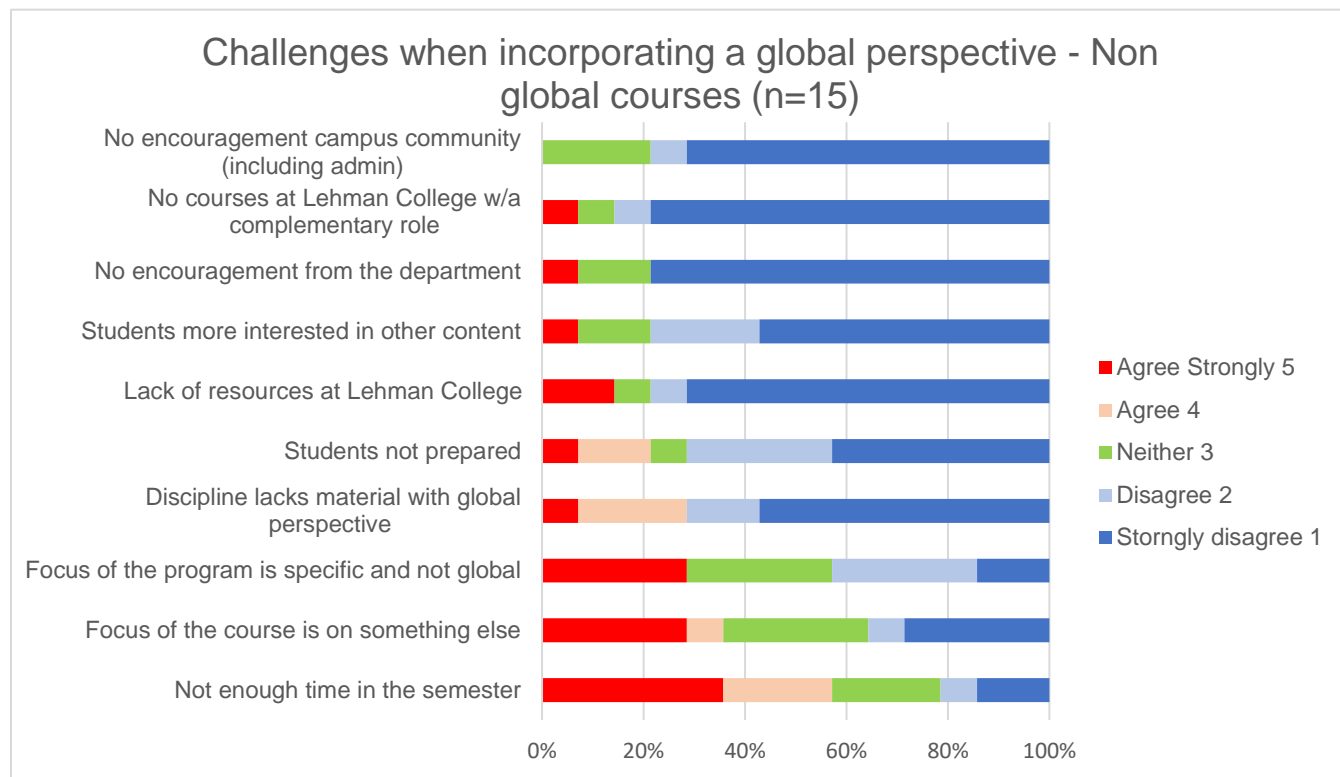
Recommendations were:

- In addition to creating platforms where instructors can share their best practices with the campus, Lehman College can also encourage faculty to share their experience with their own wider academic discipline. Given that the national climate is ripe for discussion about multiculturalism, Lehman College faculty can contribute to the wider literature on teaching and learning diversity. This would help promote the teacher-scholar model that the 2025 Strategic Plan seeks to instill.

- To achieve this, Lehman College could share ideas about course-level assessment with faculty in order to help them present their experience with colleagues from their discipline on a national and international stage.

In terms of critical thinking, faculty pointed to a need for professional development. They also sought changes that would broaden assessment related to critical thinking. Recommendations included:

- Combine critical thinking efforts with professional and course development workshops offered for instructors teaching in Pathways.

- Find material incentives for Adjunct Faculty to encourage their participation and make the process less onerous.

- Encourage the Academic Assessment Council to provide timely feedback to assessment efforts and continue to enhance the visibility of assessment efforts in order to foster a wider culture of cooperation.

Finally, seven Student Success Course Redesign Initiative (SSCRI) courses also mapped to specific GE outcomes that were the focus of assessment (rows denoted in yellow). The below map lists those courses.

Characteristics of a Lehman Graduate	Institutional Learning Outcomes	Required Core			Flexible Core					College Option		Writing Intensive
		English Comp	Quant & Math Reasoning	Life & Physical Sciences	Creative Expression	Individual & Society	Scientific World	US Experience in its Diversity	World Cultures & Global Issues	Foreign Language	LEH 351-355	
Educated	Critical Thinking Skills		MAT 132	BIO 173	ARH 141 ENG 223 ENG 229 ENG 234	PHI 171		JRN 211				
	Competence within at least one discipline											
	Skills in quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and research											
Empowered	Outstanding communication skills in diverse media											
	Ability to work collaboratively as part of a team											
	Potential for leadership											
Engaged	Multicultural, global and ethical awareness of diverse peoples and communities				ARH 141 ENG 223 ENG 229 ENG 234	PHI 171						

Student Success Course Redesign Initiative

- During AY 2020-21, Lehman College examined the impact of its course redesign initiative. This initiative was developed by the Office of the Provost to address issues to courses with high DWIF rates so as to allow Lehman College to enhance student success, increase its graduation rate, and advance its 90x30 goal. Faculty members had submitted proposals to redesign their courses based on innovative or best practices in pedagogy. The accepted courses were redesigned and the impact on DWIF rates was measured. At present, most of the courses continued to have lower DWIF rates than prior to the redesign.

Redesigned Course(s)	Pre-Redesign DWIF Rate	DWIF Rate (Fall 2020)
ARH 141	24%	9%
BIO 173	32%	22%
CMP 167/168	36%	37%
ENG 223	15%	8%
ENG 229	16%	13%
ENG 234	19%	23%
JRN 211	16%	19%
MAT 132	32%	18%
PHI 171	22%	18%

Some faculty indicated that the shift to a fully online schedule and addition of credit and no-credit grading may have had some impact on the results. DWIF rates will continue to be monitored once all classes return to their in-person format.

AES Assessment

Completion of AES assessment activity was impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic than had been the case during the prior academic year. Various services carried out by the College's AES units are typically in-person. Therefore, there were difficulties completing assessment plans that required units to move away from assessing services that were normally delivered in-person.

Step 1: Goals and Outcomes

Across Lehman College's AES units, there were 88 goals based on explicit and/or implicit documentation of goals on webpages and/or documented in assessment plans. However, only one-third of the unit webpages listed goals. Those webpages accounted for 54 of the 88 goals or 61%. These numbers are likely to improve with the implementation of both the *Lehman 2025* and the new AMS, which presents a fresh opportunity for units to rethink their overall goals. A total of 98% of submitted assessment plans articulated one or more goals.

Step 2: Criteria for Measuring Success

Determining criteria for measuring success is a critical assessment element. Criteria provide benchmarks by which units can determine the level of student performance or unit effectiveness. This step helps the units to set clear and measurable objectives. Approximately 80% of AES assessment plans contained either general descriptions of performance, creation of baselines or specific measurable targets. The breakdown was as follows:
- Measurable targets: 40%
- General description: 27%
- Creation of baselines: 13%

Step 3: Methods and Measures

AES assessment initiatives relied on a wide range of measures, including direct and indirect measures of student learning where applicable. 59% of measures were direct measures. A breakdown of measures from assessment plans with measures is below.

Direct Measures	
Financial data	36% of direct measures
Appointments/Utilization/Attendance	27% of direct measures
Review of activities	22% of direct measures
Number of events	7% of direct measures
Student learning (direct)	7% of direct measures
Completed inspections	2% of direct measures

Indirect Measures	
Surveys	46% of indirect measures
Student success metrics	41% of indirect measures
Student learning (indirect)	10% of indirect measures
Satisfaction of accreditation criteria	2% of indirect measures

*-Note: Rounding errors may lead to totals different from 100%.

Direct student learning measures were comprised of exams, including pre- and post-tests (50%), a mock interview (25%), and a portfolio (25%). One quarter of the direct assignment measures involved the use of a rubric.

Step 4: Data Collection and Analysis

Lehman College ended its use of *Taskstream*™ as its AMS, and underwent an institutional search for a new AMS that would better integrate annual assessment, program review, and strategic planning. All AES assessment plans and reports were submitted electronically. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a continuing disruption of in-person services on which AES assessment has traditionally focused on. As a result, 83% of AES units completed their assessment plans and submitted assessment reports. An additional 11% of AES units submitted reports explaining that the COVID-19 pandemic precluded their ability to complete their annual assessment projects.

Step 5: Improvement Activities

The overall purpose of assessment is continuous improvement. The assessment reports were examined for information related to improvement activities. 63% of assessment reports provided one or more initiatives for improvement. The other reports committed to maintaining current processes or repeating the assessment. Of the reports in which assessment was linked to targets, 55% met or exceeded their targets, 39% partially met their targets, and 6% missed their targets.

Improvement activities proposed by units that did not meet their measurable targets include:

- Modify advising hours, publicize online forms for answering "quick questions" during peak hours (Academic Advising)
- Further study student profiles to develop means for better predicting student success (Admissions & Recruitment)
- Increase the number of "How To" YouTube videos and establish a Food Bank Advisory Board (Campus Life)
- Better align career workshops to the career readiness curriculum; increase communication with students to increase student attendance at career workshops (Career Services)
- Offer in-class presentations to expand outreach to students and consider the development of a calling/screening campaign to better target students (Counseling)
- Launch a two-semester pilot career development program for students (CUNY Edge)
- Update FAQs, Research Guides, and instructional videos (Library)
- Increase the number of orientation sessions (Student Disability Services)
- Expand the use of the TAPAP system to enable more students to recapture TAP funds (Student Success Initiatives)
- Provide training for peer mentors (Urban Male Leadership Program)

Step 6: Documentation of Assessment and Improvement Activities

Lehman College adopted the 6-step assessment process in Spring 2019. Most AES unit assessment dealt with new outcomes. Some closing-the-loop activities likely occurred, but were not documented on assessment documents. As with academic unit assessment, implementation of the AMS should allow for a dramatic increase in the documentation of follow-up on action items from prior assessment findings. The Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness will make closing the loop a high priority during 2021-2022 academic year.
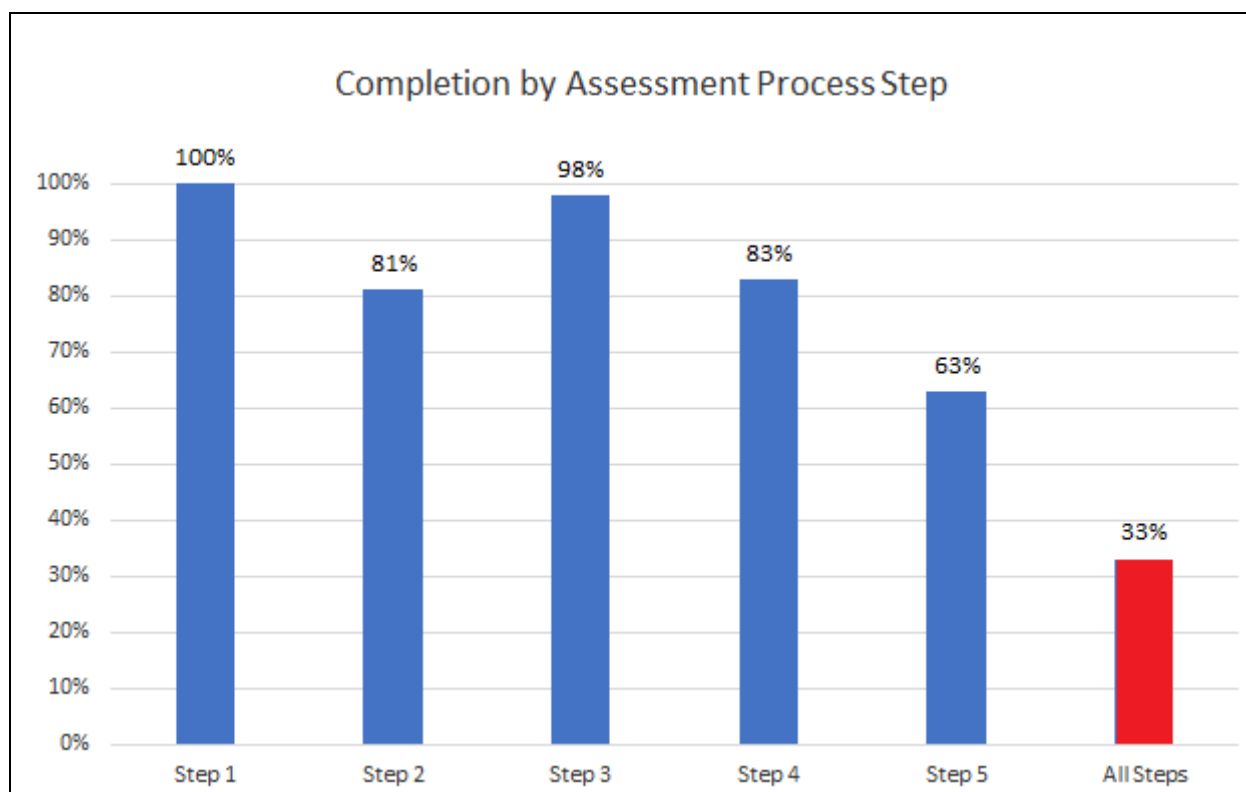
Professional Development

During the academic year, the Assessment Committee and Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness engaged in outreach to departmental assessment liaisons/coordinators to gain insight into their assessment-related needs and to implement professional development activities. The Assessment Committee identifies and addresses professional development assessment opportunities, and distributes information on best practices; advises on development of broader assessment policies to promote student achievement and improvement in curricular, pedagogical, administrative, and support services; and, periodically reports assessment outcomes and changes to the Provost and Lehman College Senate.

Lehman College also appointed a Faculty Assessment Fellow who was embedded within the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness and worked with faculty in all stages of

their assessment work. A Faculty Assessment Fellow will again be appointed in 2021-2022 academic year.

During 2020-2021 academic year, Lehman College's Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness (OAEE) held 6 workshops for faculty and staff:
- Developing an Effective Assessment Plan Using The 6-Step Assessment Process
- Writing Assessment Goals and Measurable Outcomes
- Developing Measures and Metrics for Assessing Student Performance
- Introduction to the AAC&U Value Rubrics
- Writing Student Learning Outcomes
- Can Institutional Surveys Be Used as Evidence?

All workshop information, including presentation slides are posted on Lehman College's **Institutional Effectiveness website**, which went live during summer 2021.

Recommendations for the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness

Based on the above assessment activity, the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness (OAEE) recommends the following:

Assessment Issue	Recommendation
Enhance documentation of assessment activity, expand reporting and sharing of assessment activities to promote institutional, program, and unit improvement.	• Complete implementation of the Watermark *Planning & Self-Study* Assessment Management System. • Develop an "Assessment Artifacts" or "Showcase" section on the Assessment Section of the Institutional Effectiveness website.
Increase the number of measurable targets utilized in assessment plans	• Hold one workshop on developing measurable targets. • Develop written guidance for the website related developing specific targets to address the wide range of student learning targets. • Collaborate with the Office of Institutional Research in obtaining disaggregated student data that could inform programs in developing measurable targets
Increase closing-the-loop activities	• Implement Planning & Self-Study which provides a platform for easy tracking of action plans and other closing-the-loop activities. • Develop a workshop on closing-the-loop and documenting such activities. • Develop written guidance for the website on closing-the-loop.

	- Add assessment artifacts involving closing-the-loop to the website as examples for academic programs and AES units.

Conclusion

The assessment activities combined with an increased sharing of assessment activity reports will deepen Lehman College's culture of assessment, strengthen the organization and documentation of assessment activities, expand assessment awareness and expertise. The College's scaling out of assessment infrastructure and activities will enhance its overall capacity for continuous improvement and increase its ability to fulfill its mission and achieve *Lehman 2025* and 90x30 goals.