



Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report
Addressing Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5
Of the Fall 2010 Comprehensive Interim Candidacy Evaluation Report

Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
September 15, 2011

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Introduction

As requested, this report summarizes the actions taken by Capilano University in response to the following recommendations from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Fall 2010 Comprehensive Interim Candidacy Evaluation Report to Capilano University:

2. While the University has developed an institution-wide comprehensive plan, the committee found little evidence of formal planning at the core theme level. The committee recommends that the University engage in regular, systematic, and integrated planning for core themes to guide the selection of programs and services and the allocation of resources to achieve the objectives of the core themes (Standard 3.B.1, 3.B.2).
3. While the University has identified objectives for its core themes, not all objectives had associated targets with their indicators of achievement. The committee recommends that the University take immediate action to complete the identification of the targets for the indicators of achievement of core theme objectives. Further, the committee recommends that, with respect to those indicators, the University engage in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data as the basis for evaluating the accomplishments of its core theme objectives (Standards 3.B.3, 4.A.1).
4. While the University has made important progress toward identifying student learning outcomes and methods of assessment, the committee found the assessment of student learning is inconsistent and incomplete. The committee recommends that the University complete the process of identifying indicators of student learning and collect and analyze meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data to document that students who complete courses, programs, and degrees achieve identified learning outcomes (Standard 4.A.3).
5. The committee found few examples of the use of assessment results to inform academic planning and decision-making leading to improvement. The committee recommends that the University complete its assessment efforts and use the results for improvement of accomplishment of core theme objectives and student learning achievement (Standard 4.B.2).

The University's responses to these recommendations will be discussed in two sections - the first addressing core theme planning and indicators of achievement, and the second addressing student learning outcomes assessment and use of assessment data in continuous improvement.

Section One: Core Theme Planning & Indicators of Achievement

While the University has developed an institution-wide comprehensive plan, the committee found little evidence of formal planning at the core theme level. The committee recommends that the University engage in regular, systematic, and integrated planning for core themes to guide the selection of programs and services and the allocation of resources to achieve the objectives of the core themes (Standard 3.B.1, 3.B.2).

While the University has identified objectives for its core themes, not all objectives had associated targets with their indicators of achievement. The committee recommends that the University take immediate action to complete the identification of the targets for the indicators of achievement of core theme objectives. Further, the committee recommends that, with respect to those indicators, the University engage in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data as the basis for evaluating the accomplishments of its core theme objectives (Standards 3.B.3, 4.A.1).

Capilano University chose to move to the new standards for the 2010 interim candidacy visit because the logic of the new model resonated with our value of evidence-based decision making. The approach of being clear on what we are trying to do, planning for how we will do it, gathering evidence on how well we have done it and then planning for how to improve is key to our sense of what the University needs to do to realize our potential as a learning-centred university. We had already been working to develop more systematic assessment of programs and services, as well as more transparent planning and decision making-processes. The idea of segregating our mission into core themes was new to the institution, and at the time our self-evaluation report was submitted, was still a work in progress. The NWCCU recommendations regarding further planning, development and assessment of the four core theme areas are warranted and will help Capilano move forward in shaping the overall culture of assessment here.

When we moved to the new standards we relatively quickly came to institutional agreement that the most appropriate way to partition our mission was by the kinds of programs we offer. This approach is significant, particularly as we solidified our new identity as a University, because it signaled to the internal community that although the types of programs we offer in General Arts & Sciences, Specialized Programs, Preparatory Studies and Community Engagement are different, they are all core parts of the University. The following table illustrates the core themes within our mission:

Capilano University Mission and Core Themes

Mission: We are a teaching-focused university offering a wide range of programs and services that enable students to succeed in their current studies, in their ongoing education, in their chosen careers, in their lifelong pursuit of knowledge, and in their contribution as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community.

General Arts & Sciences

Description: We offer a strong core of Arts and Sciences courses that transfer to other B.C. universities and provide much of the general education for our specialized programs. Our associate degrees emphasize specific concentrations in the context of broad general education. Our liberal studies degree takes a broad cross-disciplinary approach.

Purpose: Serves the regional need for general education by providing the foundation of a broad liberal arts education in a supportive learning environment that encourages high aspirations through close faculty/student interactions.

Specialized Programs

Description: We offer specialized certificate, diploma, and degree programs focused on community needs, regional industries, and aesthetic engagement. These programs tend to be unique and innovative in their content and/or delivery.

Purpose: Work with industry and community to develop and deliver programs that prepare graduates with the up-to-date knowledge, creative and technical skills, comportsment, and professional connections that will enable them to make economic and cultural contributions to the region and beyond.

Preparatory Studies

Description: We provide access to persons who have been out of school for extended periods of time, or who have not yet completed high school, or who require specific academic preparation. We also offer English language support courses and services for students who are not yet able to enter programs of study or who require concurrent support in order to succeed in their studies.

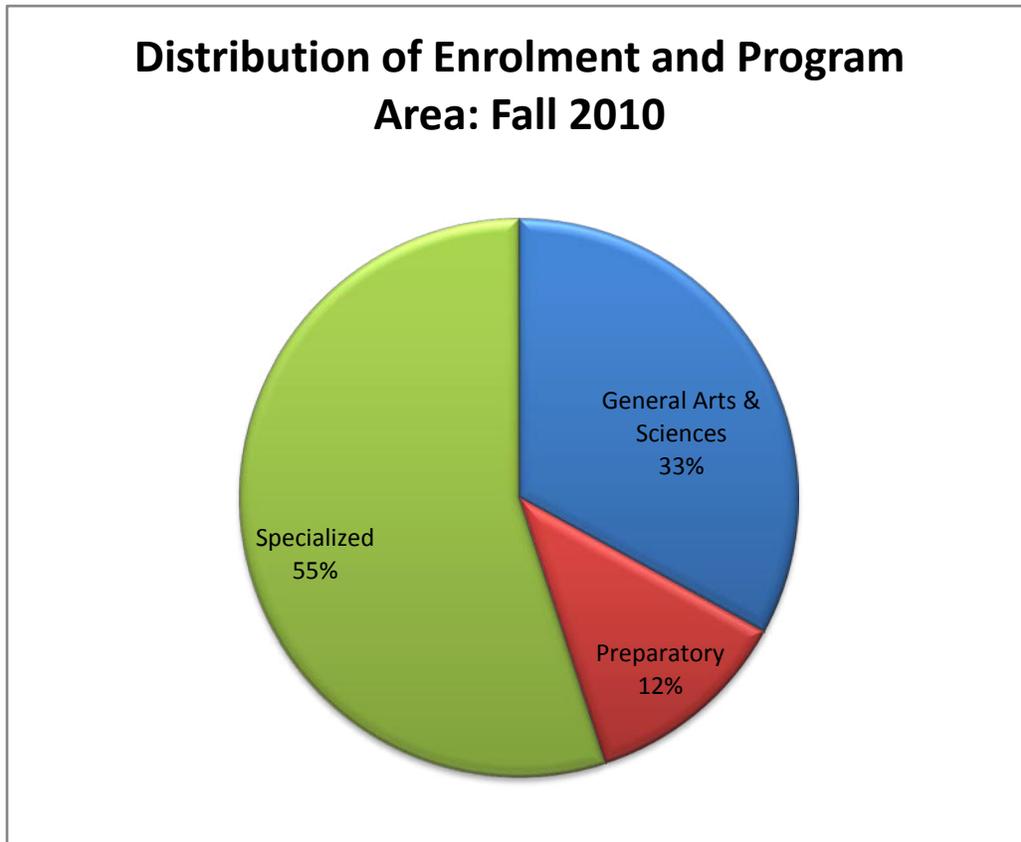
Purpose: Provide programming from community access up to university level that enables adult learners from diverse backgrounds to gain the knowledge, skills, strategies, and confidence to be successful in the next level of studies, or to satisfy personal or employment goals.

Community Engagement

Description: The University is an active participant in our communities, responding to community needs and collaborating in joint initiatives.

Purpose: Enrich our communities with cultural, sport, and educational opportunities by developing partnerships and offering, on a cost-recovery basis, programming that complements the University's other three core themes and helps integrate the University with its communities.

The relative size of core theme program enrolment at Capilano is dynamic, responding to regional industry, student demand, and changing opportunities. The following chart illustrates the current FTE percentage dedicated to each of the first three core theme areas – Preparatory Studies, Specialized Programs, and General Arts and Sciences. The fourth core theme, Community Engagement, is more adequately reflected in Capilano’s Continuing Education offerings. Because enrolments in this area are self-sustaining and not considered part of the provincial base funding formula, they have not historically been included in the total FTE comparison. There were 3,315 registrations in Continuing Education courses in the fall 2010 term and 8,034 in the other three core theme areas combined.



The more challenging task related to core theme planning has been agreeing on the appropriate data and targets we should use to judge our success in each core theme. For many years we have been using a mix of provincially-administered surveys and internally-collected data to evaluate program performance as part of the annual budget process. Our approach to assessing core theme performance has been to use existing sources of data first, adding other data sources as objectives and targets for core themes are refined and gaps in data are identified. The following table describes pre-existing data sources that are useful in assessing performance of programs within core themes:

Source	Description	Administration
DACSO— Diploma, Associate Degree, Certificate Student Outcomes Survey	The annual questionnaire of former students who have been out of their programs for approximately 9 to 20 months is built on a set of core questions based on the major themes of the survey: employment outcomes, further education, ratings of programs, and student satisfaction.	Annually, results available in November.
DEVSO—Developmental Student Outcomes Survey	Annual questionnaire of former upper-level Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language students to evaluate their educational experiences and to report on their transitions to the labour market and further education.	Annually, results available in December.
BGS—Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (two-year out and five-year out)	Annual questionnaire of baccalaureate graduates' education satisfaction levels, education financing and student debt, as well as further education and employment outcomes.	Annually, results of two-year out survey available in May. Results of five-year out survey available August.
NSSE—National Survey of Student Engagement	Assesses student engagement.	Every four years.
Course Evaluations	End-of-term student evaluations of instruction.	Annually, end of fall and spring terms.
Applicant Survey	Survey of applicants to Capilano to better understand students' educational goals, motivations and choices.	Annually, often collaborative with peer institutions.

Source	Description	Administration
Student Services Satisfaction Survey	Survey of first-year students satisfaction with student services and processes.	Every even numbered fall term for major services and processes; every odd numbered fall term for additional services and processes.
Advising Services Point-of-Contact Survey	Student satisfaction with Advising services.	Continuous—completed immediately after consultation with advisor.
Aboriginal Learners Survey	Survey of current Aboriginal students to better understand students' educational goals, motivations and experiences.	Every three years .
International Student Survey	Survey of current International Students' educational goals and experiences.	Annually, spring terms.

The development of indicators of achievement and targets has progressed more quickly for some core themes. Community Engagement has the most work remaining to be done. This is largely due to the fact that much of our community engagement is accomplished through Capilano's Continuing Education department, which features non-credit bearing courses of considerable breadth and variety. Capilano's Continuing Education department serves the community through offerings such as Eldercollege, Summer Adventure Camps for Children, retraining workers from economically impacted industries and new immigrants to Canada, and a host of other community-based learning activities. Thus, crafting outcomes to capture the full range of learning taking place in a myriad of ways is challenging. Further complicating the assessment of learning in the domain of Community Engagement is the potential for including the important but diverse offerings within the academic Faculties (Colleges) that take form in internships, service learning, international field schools, practicums, and other community-based learning contexts.

Since Capilano does not have a Centre for Service Learning, as many colleges and universities have in the United States, finding a centralized source of data regarding student engagement in the local and international communities is challenging. Work has begun, however, within Continuing Education to identify learning outcomes for many of their program offerings, and faculty from Continuing Education have availed themselves of the new services and workshops provided by Capilano's Teaching and Learning Centre with regard to crafting and measuring student learning outcomes.

The following tables summarize the intended outcomes and assessable indicators of achievement for each core theme, as well as targets and actual results where that data is available:

Preparatory Studies				
Strategic Goal	Objective	Assessable Indicator of Achievement	Target	Actual
Student success in ongoing education	Developmental course completion with a grade	ESL/ABE course completion rates	90%	95%
	Successful Developmental course completion (A-C)	Successful ESL course completion rates	97%	60%
		Successful ABE course completion rates	97%	26%*
	Attainment of student learning outcomes	DEVSO survey SLO	70%	74%
Students are prepared for further study	ESL/ABE student success in subsequent academic coursework	ESL subsequent success	70%	62%
		ABE subsequent success	70%	80%
	Students acquire increased confidence	Self-report DEVSO survey response to question on increased self-confidence	100%	94%

* Students may complete self-paced modules over more than one term resulting in deflated successful completion rates in any one term.

General Arts & Sciences				
Strategic Goal	Objective	Assessable Indicator of Achievement	Targets	Actual
Student success in ongoing education	Course completion with a grade A-C	Course completion rates and success (Grade A-C)	80%	77% success
	Program completion rates	Time to completion by program	150%	10% of two-year programs**
	Attainment of program Student Learning Outcomes	Percent meeting program standards	TBD	Data not yet available
Students prepared for further study	Fall to Spring retention	Percent of first-term students enrolled in fall who re-enrol in spring by program	>75% ¹	88% 1-yr. programs; 88% 2-yr. programs; 95% 3-yr. programs; 84% 4-yr. programs
	Fall to fall persistence	Percent of students enrolled in fall who re-enrol in the subsequent fall by program	73% ² 77%	71% 2-yr. programs; 72% 4-yr. programs
	Transfer to other post-secondary institutions	Percent of transfer eligible students transferring to other PSI by program	18% ³ 31% 10%	16% of Diploma; 27% of Associates; 11% of Bachelors
	Student self-reported improvement in specific skill/knowledge areas	Self-report DACSO/BGS survey results	≥ 85%	Diploma, Certificate, Associate degree (DACSO) student assessment of skill development Average %: 76% (+- 1.8%); Bachelor degree student (BGS) assessment of skill development: 88% (± 4.7%)
Students are prepared for success in chosen career	Relevance of education to employment	Self-report DACSO /BGS	≥90%	DACSO: 72% ± 4% BGS: 96% ± 3.1%

¹ Student retention should be above 75%. First year student average retention rates in both Canada and the US are about 75% to 80%. (*Research on Retention and Attrition*, Grayson, J.P. and Grayson, K. Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. Dec. 2003)

² Based on STP data for AY 2009/10. BC average 73% for 2-yr. programs; 77% for 4-yr. programs

³ Based on STJP data for AY 2009/10 BC average of transfer eligible students transferring to other PSI

(STP Post Secondary Mobility Projections released 2011)

** Students typically seek to transfer rather than complete AA degrees

Specialized Programs				
Strategic Goal	Objective	Assessable Indicator of Achievement	Target	Actual
Student success in ongoing studies	Program completion rates	Rate of completion by program	150% of normal time to degree	48% of 1-yr. programs; 45% of 2-yr. programs; 53% of 4-year programs;
	Attainment of program SLO	Percent meeting program standards	TBD	Data not yet available
Students are prepared for success in chosen career	Programs with Industry/Community Internship/Co-op opportunities	Programs with Internship/Co-op opportunities	60%	Data not yet available
	Employed in training-related job	Employed in training related job (DACSO survey; BGS survey)	60%	63% Diploma, Associate Degree, Certificate/ 74% Baccalaureate
	Usefulness of knowledge/skills gained in performance of job	Education useful in performance of job (DACSO survey; BGS survey)	85%	72% Diploma, Associate Degree, Certificate/96% Baccalaureate

Community Engagement				
Strategic Goal	Measures	Assessable Indicator of Achievement	Target	Actual
Community participates in Continuing Education/ Eldercollege opportunities	Enrolment	Headcount	TBD	Fall 2010: 3315
Participants in Continuing Education/Elder College are challenged and engaged	Continuing Education/Eldercollege survey	Self-report student survey	TBD	Data not yet available
Cultural activities for community	Community use	Numbers attending	TBD	Data not yet available

Given the core themes Capilano University has identified, planning at the core theme level requires the application of different criteria to programs in each core theme. For example, student success is defined differently in specialized programs where students are generally preparing to enter a specific career than in preparatory studies where students are generally preparing for further study.

In budget allocation, our planning process is complicated by provincial policies. Although Capilano is a public university, the province provides only about half of our operating expenses. This essentially covers administrative and support services costs, leaving tuition to cover instructional costs. We are not allowed to charge any tuition for developmental programs, but are required to continue offering them. Colleges and universities in B.C. have a long history of differential tuition setting, with the provincial government annually setting a ceiling on tuition increases for existing programs, while new offerings are free to set tuitions at rates that are competitive and more adequately cover the total cost associated with the program. Over time, this provincial policy has created an uneven playing field for programs within the institution. A program that is effective and efficient in terms of student learning may still be cost ineffective because tuition no longer covers the direct instructional costs of the program. A new program with higher tuition that attracts many students may actually generate revenue; if the program is not successful in terms of student learning, its cancellation may actually reduce revenue available for other programs rather than free up resources that can be reallocated. Our challenge is to develop a clear process that makes meaningful use of performance relative to targets for core theme objectives while acknowledging the different financial realities of programs.

A new president assumed her leadership role at Capilano in August 2011. Under Dr. Bulcroft's guidance, a number of organizational changes have occurred with an eye toward improving the processes at Capilano and aligning strategic planning development with budgeting. The president meets with the vice presidents on a regular, ongoing basis to foster "big picture" visioning and strategizing at Capilano. The number of vice presidents was reduced from five to three, keeping Capilano more in alignment with the size of senior leadership teams at the other new universities in B.C. It was also a cost-saving measure that helped balance the budget and create some efficiencies within the organization itself.

One important result of the vice presidential reorganization that occurred in spring 2011, was the creation of a single Vice President Academic and Provost position. Prior to this time, three VP's held responsibility for different Faculties. Under this new organizational structure we have seen much improved coordination across the Faculties, as well as greater interest in interdisciplinary programming and initiatives. The VP Academic and Provost also has responsibility for NWCCU accreditation and Institutional Research, which lends better coordination in long-range planning efforts. All academic deans report to the VP Academic and Provost, and she serves on a number of strategic Senate committees that integrate the planning and budgeting processes of the University.

Summary of progress on core theme planning

At the time of the submission of our last self-evaluation report we had initial descriptions of objectives for all core themes, preliminary indicators of achievement, and some targets. At the time of this report

we now have refined our strategic goals and objectives for the core themes, and indicators of achievement and targets have been defined for most objectives. We also now have a significant amount of data by which to evaluate core theme achievement.

Next steps are to continue refining objectives, collecting data, using baseline data to set remaining targets, and to develop plans for improvement where program performance is not meeting core theme objectives. Special attention will continue to be focused on developing and assessing outcomes in the core theme area Community Engagement.

Section Two: Assessment of Student Learning & Continuous Improvement

While the University has made important progress toward identifying student learning outcomes and methods of assessment, the committee found the assessment of student learning is inconsistent and incomplete. The committee recommends that the University complete the process of identifying indicators of student learning and collect and analyze meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data to document that students who complete courses, programs, and degrees achieve identified learning outcomes (Standard 4.A.3).

The committee found few examples of the use of assessment results to inform academic planning and decision-making leading to improvement. The committee recommends that the University complete its assessment efforts and use the results for improvement of accomplishment of core theme objectives and student learning achievement (Standard 4.B.2).

After receiving the above recommendations from the 2010 interim candidacy visit, the University developed a strategy for more fully implementing our institutional plan for the assessment of student learning outcomes. The strategy has several components: increased training on assessment for faculty; increased support for faculty developing assessment plans; and, a more formalized structure for assessment. Each component is briefly described below:

Training

In response to requests from faculty, a series of workshops on student learning outcomes assessment were developed and delivered over the past year. We began with training for the deans provided by Capilano's Manager of Institutional Research and our new Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre. The deans followed up by delivering workshops and providing more direct assistance to their faculty members in developing assessment plans.

Several workshops were delivered on the value of assessment and on the steps in establishing learning outcomes, developing an assessment plan, assessing the learning, and using the results of assessment to improve programs. These workshops were well-attended, indicating a shift in faculty attitude from “Do we *really* have to do this?” to “*How* do we do this?”

Assessment workshops for faculty were framed within a continuum of progress towards continuous improvement; program faculty members were encouraged to identify where they were on the continuum and to take the next step. (Appendix A)

Last year’s orientation for new faculty included a workshop on student learning outcomes. This year’s orientation, organized and led by the new Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre, expanded the focus on assessment by weaving student learning outcomes assessment throughout the multi-day session, starting with the importance of developing student learning outcomes at the initial stages of course development, and followed by the development of learning activities and assessments directed at those outcomes. The Teaching and Learning Centre will play an important role in crafting professional development opportunities for all faculty (not just those new to the campus), and for the foreseeable future the emphasis in workshops and seminar training will focus on assessment of student learning and continuous program improvement based on the assessment results.

In April 2011, the President launched a campus-wide “Lunch and Learn” series. The kick-off event featured the President and Provost and Vice President, Academic presenting *The Three R’s: Ranking, Reputation and Reality*. About 250 faculty and staff were in attendance for this lively dialogue and opportunity to hear senior leadership’s views on the reasons why institutional rankings and reputation are insufficient indicators of quality. The campus community learned that assessment of student learning is at the core of measuring quality and were better informed as to why NWCCU accreditation is an important catalyst in advancing our assessment efforts, thus making us more publicly accountable and better able to meet the learning targets set by the programs and institution.

Assistance to faculty

After the initial workshops on student learning outcomes assessment, the deans were better prepared to help program faculty develop assessment plans. In addition, a faculty member with expertise in student learning outcomes assessment was released from some of his teaching duties to assist other faculty members with the development of student learning outcomes and assessment plans. Along with the Manager of Institutional Research and the Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre, there are now eight individuals available to assist faculty in developing and implementing assessment plans. Many other faculty who have expertise in learning outcomes assessment have also volunteered to assist their colleagues in assessment plan development. These individuals represent a broad base of disciplinary areas and teaching approaches. Undoubtedly, the peer-to-peer method of supporting the culture of assessment is the one that is best suited for Capilano University, and the culture-shift necessary to ensure that outcomes assessment is permanently embedded in all aspects of learning at Capilano would not be possible without this grassroots approach.

Formalized structure

New committee to oversee assessment efforts

An ad hoc steering committee on assessment that had been developing and supporting expertise on assessment was disbanded in the summer of 2011 to be replaced by a Senate standing committee on Academic Planning and Assessment. One of the roles of this new committee is to review annual assessment reports submitted by program areas. Terms of reference for this committee have been approved by Senate, and the committee will begin meeting this fall. This is an important addition to the Senate committee structure, as it gives prominence to assessment and brings focus to our assessment efforts in a centralized way. The Academic Planning and Assessment committee will play a major role in helping identify programs that are taking the lead in assessment, as well as working with programs that are below the expected norm of outcomes assessment (Appendix B).

Published student learning outcomes

As part of Capilano's website redevelopment project, new templates were developed for the presentation of program information on the website. These program information pages now include student learning outcomes (Appendix C). Student learning outcomes are required to be included in proposals for new programs before being reviewed by the Senate Curriculum committee. With the anticipated implementation of new curriculum management software this fall, student learning outcomes approved by the Senate Curriculum committee as part of the program approval process will automatically be uploaded to the website as part of the program information.

Revised assessment forms

New templates were developed for assessment plans and reports to make it clearer to the faculty what information was being requested (Appendix D). The new assessment plan form includes a section on the alignment of program student learning outcomes with institutional outcomes, and specifically requests information on the tools to assess outcomes, timing of assessment, who is doing the assessment, and criteria for success. The new assessment report form specifically requests information about the number of students completing the program, the number of students assessed, and the number demonstrating satisfactory achievement of the learning outcomes. The new templates have improved the plans and reports being submitted.

New assessment website

A new assessment website has been developed where assessment plans and assessment reports are published, along with links to resources for faculty (Appendix E). This replaces the previous Moodle assessment site that people found difficult to navigate. With the addition of younger faculty, there is a growing use of technology to support teaching and learning. We anticipate that the new website will be a major source of information to faculty and program coordinators as they look for examples and models of best practice in assessment.

Summary of progress in student learning outcomes assessment

Program-level student learning outcomes are now published for 70% of programs. The table below shows the number and percentage of assessment plans that have been submitted, and the number and percentage of assessment reports that have been submitted at each credential level. As described earlier, our focus over this past year has been to support and encourage faculty to take the next step on the continuum from where their program was with respect to student learning outcomes assessment. Most programs now have defined student learning outcomes and 70% have submitted assessment plans. Many of those assessment plans will be implemented in the coming year. Some of the programs included in the count below are new and have not yet had any graduates.

PROGRAM LEVEL	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	NUMBER/% OF ASSESSMENT PLANS SUBMITTED	NUMBER/% OF ASSESSMENT REPORTS SUBMITTED
Baccalaureate	14	4/29%	2/14%
Associate	15	15/100%	0
Diploma	42	28/67%	11/26%
Post-baccalaureate	5	1/20%	0
Certificate	53	42/79%	27/51%
TOTAL	129	90/70%	31%

Nineteen programs have reported improved student learning outcomes as a result of changes made following a previous assessment. Examples of assessment reports demonstrating improvement are included in Appendix F.

Most importantly, the culture is changing at Capilano University. Faculty are increasingly describing, with some excitement, the benefits of discussing with each other how their courses contribute to the overall goals of their program, the advantage of discussing possible curriculum changes from the perspective of what students have or haven't learned, and the value of being clear to students on what they are expected to be able to demonstrate.

Capilano University is at a critical crossroads in its history. The culture shift in outcomes assessment is perfectly aligned with the scholarship of teaching and learning that promises to be our future. A place that has always cared about students and teaching is well-positioned to now take a lead in Canada to exemplify the ways that best practices in student outcomes assessment can shape and advance a new university like Capilano. Clearly, NWCCU is looking at the long-term commitment of Capilano to the assessment of learning. During our period of candidacy, much has taken place that has set an excellent foundation in this regard, and strategic budgeting to foster even greater levels of support for assessment has ensued and will continue to be an important priority for Capilano University.