

3. How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is intended as an assessment “menu” for the Living Learning Communities (LLCs). Each LLC will review the goal map above and locate goals which are related to their own strategic plan and goals. All LLCs will map to the additional student satisfaction measures. The “Toolkit Components” available in the following pages then provide a guide for each LLC to create their own customized assessment plan. With the support of the LLC Assessment Team, each LLC will implement a focus group with 8-12 members of their student population and a survey, which will be administered by the Center for Academic Enrichment.

When designing focus group questions LLCs will refer to the toolkit components. For example, if an LLC maps to goals 1 and 2, they would then select focus group components from those two sections in the toolkit. They can then also customize these focus groups by including additional questions relevant to their own programs. Each LLC is also asked to collect additional information on overall satisfaction from the questions provided in the toolkit components. Assistance will be provided by the LLC Assessment Team in designing additional questions to meet each LLCs needs, implementing focus groups, and data analysis.

The toolkit also outlines survey questions for each goal and additional satisfaction questions. A comprehensive LLC Survey will be administered by the Center for Academic Enrichment. Similar to the focus group components, students will only be asked questions which pertain to the goals pre-determined by their LLC staff.

4. LLC Assessment Team

The LLC Assessment Team includes membership from the Office of Undergraduate Education, Student Life, Institutional Research and Planning, and each Living Learning Community. The purpose of this team is to provide support for assessment within the LLCs and foster a culture of continuous improvement, curiosity, and collaboration within and among the Living Learning Communities. This team will meet regularly in the fall semester to participate in trainings and collaborate on development. This team will also be heavily involved in the implementation of the assessment plans including designing and implementing focus groups, analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, discussing and implementing results for continuous improvement, producing reports for each LLC, and disseminating information gathered to key stakeholders.

Toolkit Components

5. Suggested Methods of Assessment for Each Goal

Goal 1: Promote Interactions Between Faculty and Students

Outcome: Students in (LLC Name) will engage with faculty both inside and outside the classroom.

Focus Group Questions:

Describe your interactions with faculty in your (LLC NAME) classes.

- What, if anything, was beneficial about these interactions inside the classroom?
- In what ways did you interact with faculty outside of the classroom, if at all?
 - How frequently did this occur?
- How do you think (LLC NAME) student-faculty interactions might be improved or strengthened?

In your experience, what, if anything, makes an (LLC NAME) class different from other classes at Georgia Tech?

- If I were to observe a typical (LLC Name) class period, what might I see students and faculty doing?
- How, if at all, have your (LLC Name) class instructors engaged you in learning the material?
- What could improve your (LLC Name) classes?

Survey Questions:

1. Please rate the average extent of your in-class interactions with your (LLC Name) instructors over the course of the semester (such as answering questions during class, engaging in class discussions, asking questions after class, etc.):
 - Frequently
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Never → (if “Never” is selected, next question is skipped)
2. Please rate your perceived value of your in-class interactions with your (LLC Name) instructors (if you experienced these interactions):
 - Valuable
 - Somewhat valuable
 - Neutral
 - Not at all valuable
 - I have not experienced in-class interactions
3. Please provide any related comments:
4. Please rate the average extent of your interactions (in-person or electronic) with your (LLC Name) instructors outside the classroom (but pertaining directly to the class you were taking) over the course of the semester (such as visits to ask questions during office hours or asking questions via email):
 - Frequently
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Never → (if “Never” is selected, next question is skipped)
5. Please rate your perceived value of outside-the-classroom interactions with your (LLC Name) instructors pertaining to your (LLC Name) classes:
 - Valuable
 - Somewhat valuable
 - Neutral
 - Not very valuable
 - Not at all valuable
6. Please rate the frequency of your interactions (in-person or electronic) with your (LLC Name) instructors—that did not pertain directly to your (LLC Name) class (for example, attending

an (LLC Name) sponsored event that included (LLC Name) instructors, chatting with your (LLC Name) instructors on or off campus, requesting letters of recommendation or discussing graduate or professional school or career options):

- Frequently
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Never → (if “Never” is selected, next question is skipped)
7. Please rate your perceived value of these outside-the-classroom interactions with your (LLC Name) instructors that did not pertain directly to your (LLC Name) classes:
- Valuable
 - Somewhat valuable
 - Neutral
 - Not very valuable
 - Not at all valuable
8. Please provide any related comments:

Goal 2: Foster Collaboration Among Students

Outcome: Students in (LLC Name) will be able to work collaboratively with other students inside and outside of the classroom.

Focus Group Questions

Describe your interactions with your peers in (LLC NAME).

- What, if anything, was beneficial about these interactions?
- In what ways did (LLC Name) encourage you to collaborate with your peers in (LLC Name), if at all?
 - How frequently did this occur?
 - What kinds of projects or activities did you participate in that encouraged collaboration, if any?
- How do you think (LLC NAME) student interactions might be improved or strengthened?

Survey Questions

1. Being a part of (LLC Name) has provided me opportunities to collaborate with my peers.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

2. (LLC Name) staff have encouraged me to take part in activities with my peers.
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

Goal 3: Improve Student GPA And Retention

Intended Measures:

- Graduation and Retention data for each LLC
- Average GPA of students for each LLC
- Graduation designations for students in each LLC (honors, high honors, research option, cop-op designation)
- Enrollment history for each LLC and demographic information

Goal 4: Enhance Campus and Civic Engagement

Outcome: (LLC Name) Students will engage in social, educational, and service activities on and off campus.

Focus Group Questions

In what ways has (LLC NAME) encouraged you to take part in events or activities on campus, if at all?

- How frequently did this occur, if at all?
- In what ways did (LLC Name) encourage you to take part in events or activities off campus, if at all?
- How has participating in (LLC Name) influenced your college experience, if at all?
- How do you think (LLC NAME) might strengthen students' engagement on and off campus in the future?

Survey Questions

1. Being a part of (LLC Name) has provided me opportunities to participate in campus events or activities.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
2. (LLC Name) staff have encouraged me to take part in campus events or activities.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

Additional Metrics Gathered:

- Counts of student participation in additional on-campus activities: Greek Life, Athletics, Co-Op, Internship, Undergraduate Research, GT1000, etc.
- Counts of student participation in LLC sponsored events

Goal 5: Ease Both the Social and Academic Transition to College

Outcome: (LLC Name) will provide support for the academic and social transition to college.

Focus Group Questions

How has your experience with (LCC Name) prepared you during your transition to college, if at all?

- How has your experience in (LLC Name) prepared you academically for your coming semesters at Georgia Tech, if at all?
- Tell us about your experience in (LLC Name) outside of the classroom.
- What other support or resources could be provided through (LLC Name) that would help the transition to college both academically and socially, if any?

Survey Questions

1. Being a part of (LLC Name) has helped me with my social transition to college.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
2. Being a part of (LLC Name) has helped me with my academic transition to college.
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

Goal 6: Student Satisfaction

Outcome: (LLC Name) will deliver high quality living, learning, and community experiences to its students.

Focus Group Questions

When you think about (LLC Name), what three words come to mind?

Instructions: Participants are provided a pen and paper to silently write down their responses for 1-2 minutes. Focus group moderator then goes around the room, participants introduce themselves, major, etc. then read aloud the three words they wrote down. Assistant moderator picks up responses after everyone has spoken.

Tell me about your experience in (LLC Name).

- What made you choose to be a part of (LLC Name)?
- What, if anything, has being a part of (LLC Name) meant to you?
- What was the most important aspect of your experience in (LLC Name)?
- What could have improved your experience with (LLC Name)?
- What would you say to a prospective student debating joining (LLC Name)?

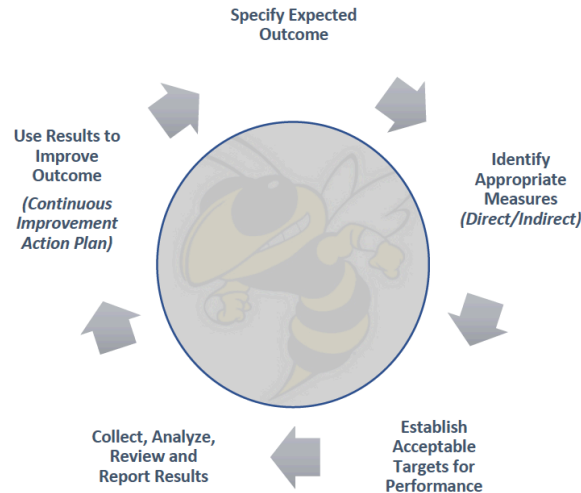
Survey Questions

1. Please rate your satisfaction with your overall (LLC Name) experience.
 - Extremely Satisfied
 - Somewhat Satisfied
 - Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

- Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - Extremely Dissatisfied
2. Please rate the overall quality of your (LLC Name) courses:
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Neutral
 - Poor
 - Terrible
 3. Please rate the overall quality of your (LLC Name) course instructors:
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Neutral
 - Poor
 - Terrible
 4. Please rate your overall satisfaction with your interactions with (LLC Name) staff:
 - Extremely Satisfied
 - Somewhat Satisfied
 - Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
 - Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - Extremely Dissatisfied
 5. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the events sponsored by (LLC Name):
 - Extremely Satisfied
 - Somewhat Satisfied
 - Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
 - Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - Extremely Dissatisfied
 6. Please rate the overall sense of community in (LLC Name):
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Neutral
 - Poor
 - Terrible

Additional Guides and Documentation

6. Cycle of Assessment



Components in Detail

1. Goal (s)

Identify Operational and/or Learning goals that require an assessment component. A goal is an end result written in broad terms.

Operational

Improve customer service, intended impact on student development, results of program, quality of service, etc.

Learning

What knowledge or skill will be acquired, attitudes/perceptions affected, criteria met?

Learning Outcomes are statements of what is expected students, faculty, staff, or others will be able to do as a result of participating in a learning activity which could be a class, project, educational program, etc.

2. Measurable Outcome(s).

Identify measurable outcomes for each goal.

Outcomes should be specific, identifiable and clearly and succinctly stated.

What specific observable effects or changes do you anticipate will be seen as a result of the program activities described in the goal? Begin with the end in mind. What would you like your findings to show?

S.M.A.R.T. Outcomes

S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Attainable
R	Results Oriented
T	Time-Bound

3. Evaluation Strategy

Describe specific assessment/data collection methods used and timetable for implementation to evaluate the degree to which outcomes are being achieved such as a survey, focus group, interviews, observation, document review, etc.

Direct methods (work samples, journal, portfolios, observations of behavior, internal review, evaluations of performance, etc.) require program participants to display their knowledge or skills. Indirect methods (surveys, focus groups, exit interviews, tracking, etc.) ask program participants to reflect on their learning rather than to demonstrate.

4. Method of Disseminating and Using Information for Improvement

Identify methods of disseminating and using information for improvement. How do you plan to report out? Describe the manner in which data is to be utilized—e.g. monthly/quarterly meetings, annual retreat, etc.

5. Summary of Results

Write a summary of the results. What did you learn? Include date of assessment, description of important results, interpretation and decisions made based on the data. If no changes justify continuation of current practice.

6. What Did You Learn?

Describe the results based on what you learned from the assessment.

7. Actions Taken

Describe changes in operational focus, resource allocation, rules/procedures, etc. that were made because of the data/results obtained. If no actions taken justify continued practice.

Document decisions made as a result of assessment. How, if at all, did you use the information to modify a program, discontinue a service, change a process/policy, etc.

7. Writing Outcomes Statements

- It is important when developing outcomes statements to have curiosity for the subject matter, pick outcomes that demonstrate the wide variety of efforts your unit is working on, and develop outcomes that answer a question that you have genuine interest in.
- Learning outcome=the knowledge and skills students acquire as the result of an activity (Kern, 2017)
 - Made up of two parts:
 - Base: “Students who successfully complete X will be able to....”
 - Stem: list of knowledge and skills
- Must have observable verb: describe, explain, list, present, write, formulate, create, analyze, arrange, critique, synthesize, predict, develop, utilize, demonstrate (Kern, 2017; Suskie, 2009)
 - **X** Non-observable verbs: know, learn, value, understand, comprehend, reflect, become aware of, appreciate

Instead of...

Know → summarize

Reflect on issues → discuss one’s reflections

Think critically → question assumptions

Understand principles → apply principles

Comprehend methods → explain methods

- Must be single barreled (single actioned):
 - **X** read **and** write
- **ABCD Method for Writing Learning Outcomes (Heinich, Molenda, Russel, & Smaldino, 1996)**
 - A=Audience (Students participating in a particular experience)
 - B=Behavior (description of what students are expected to be able to do as a result of participating)
 - C=Context (where is this opportunity provided...could also be “curriculum” or “condition”)
 - D=Degree (threshold on a test or assignment, time period, etc.)
 - End result: “As a result of participating in [context], [audience] will be able to [behavior] to [degree].” (Henley, 2015)
- **Questions to guide development (Banta & Palomba, 2015)**
 - What are you wanting students to learn?
 - How would you know if you saw it? What would the student be able to do?
 - How will you assist students in learning this?
 - How could you measure this?
 - What improvements or changes might you make based on this assessment?

- **Best Practices (Kern, 2017; Suskie, 2009)**
 - #1 Specify a skill or body of knowledge the student is unlikely to acquire prior to your intervention and that is related to the intervention
 - #2 If you list it in an outcome, you need to assess it
 - #3 Identify the evidence you are going to collect
 - #4 Write outcomes that are neither too vague or too specific
 - #5 Make a collective effort in developing your outcomes and reflecting on the results
 - #6 Picture your students at graduation. What do you want the average (not ideal) student to have learned?

References

Banta, T., Palomba, C., & Ebrary, Inc. (2015). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education* (Second ed., Jossey-Bass higher and adult education series).

Henley, B. "Tenet Two: Commit to Student Learning as a Primary Focus." *Leading Assessment for Student Success: Ten Tenants that Change Culture and Practice in Student Affairs*.

Ed. Rosie Phillips Bingham, Ed. Daniel A. Bureau, Ed. Amber Garrison Duncan. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2015. 22-37. Print.

Heinich, R., Molenda, M., Russell, J. D., & Smaldino, S. E. (1996). *Instructional media and technologies for learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill

Kern, J. A., (2017, October). Best practices in writing student learning outcomes. Presented at the annual meeting of the IUPUI Assessment Institute, Indianapolis, IN.

Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide* (2nd ed., Jossey-Bass higher and adult education series). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

8. Focus Group Guide

Roles:

- Moderator:
 - Goes over introduction
 - Guides discussion by asking core questions, probing for more information
 - Pulls in participants who may not be speaking as much
 - “Participant A, what are your thoughts on that...”
 - “Participant B, what was your experience with this...”
 - Asks for clarification from participants
 - “Tell me more about that...”
 - “Can you explain that further...”
 - “Would you give an example...”
 - Probes participants for different view points
 - “How did others feel about this?”
 - “Did anyone else have a different experience?”
 - Wraps up conversation and thanks participants
 - Monitors own verbal and non-verbal reactions
 - Head-nodding
 - Avoid “that’s good” or “excellent”
- Assistant Moderator
 - In charge of turning on and off the recorder
 - Stands by door to assist late participants so they can join in and describes to them any information they missed
 - Assists with participant needs to minimize distractions
 - Takes notes on:
 - Important quotes/ideas
 - Themes in conversation
 - Body language of participants
 - Perceived areas of consensus and disagreement
 - Does NOT take part in conversations with the group
- Participants
 - Carefully recruited
 - Plan for no shows
 - 8-12 participants is ideal
 - Diverse participants
 - Multiple groups is ideal

Running the Group:

- **Set-Up:**
 - May want to ask participants to arrive 15 minutes early to get seated and get their food
 - Provide comfortable seating (circle usually works best)
 - Test and set up spot for audio recorders
 - Introduce moderators
 - Before starting, ask participants to please silence cell phones

- **Introduction:**
 - Script: “Thank you all for coming. My name is [NAME]. On behalf of Georgia Tech and [LLC Name], we appreciate your investment of time to talk about your...thoughts, opinions, perceptions, experiences, etc.”
 - Discuss voluntary nature of the group
 - May leave at any time
 - No consequences for non-participation
 - We ask that information remain confidential, though we cannot enforce that
 - Will be recorded and transcribed
 - Any names will be removed from transcripts
 - Explain purpose of the focus group
 - Gain insight on A,B,C, and D
 - Make improvements to X
 - Provide expectations for participants
 - Will last about X minutes
 - There is a note taker who will be writing in the back and can assist with anything needed by participants
 - May ask for feedback on analysis from participants in the future
 - Participants can feel free to speak up when questions are asked and do not need to be called on
 - There are no wrong answers—we are interested in both positive and negative comments. We are interested in what you have to say and want to learn from you.
 - Please do not talk over others
 - Speak loudly so you can be heard on the recorder
 - The moderator would like to hear from everyone in the group and therefore may:
 - Ask follow-up questions
 - Ask questions from a particular person
- **Core Questions:**
 - Moderator will lead the focus group using a pre-determined set of guiding questions and follow-up probes.
- **Wrap-Up:**
 - Thank participants for coming
 - Remind them you may contact them for their input on analysis
 - Moderator and Assistant Moderator meet after to de-brief (may add to notes from Assistant Moderator)

After the Group:

- Download and Appropriate storage of focus group audio recording
- Transcription of Audio with de-identification of participants
- Analysis of Transcripts
- Member checking with participants (asking for participant feedback on your analysis)
- May repeat focus groups for multiple groups
- Modify and strengthen results as needed based on new information gained from second round of focus groups

9. Assessment Glossary

Assessment – The systematic process of determining educational objectives, gathering, using, and analyzing information about student learning outcomes to make decisions about programs, individual student progress, or accountability.

Benchmark – A criterion-referenced objective performance datum that is used for comparative purposes. A program can use its own data as a baseline benchmark against which to compare future performance. It can also use data from another program as a benchmark. In the latter case, the other program often is chosen because it is exemplary, and its data are used as a target to strive for, rather than as a baseline.

Cohort – A group whose progress is followed by means of measurements at different points in time.

Direct assessment – Direct measures of student learning require student to display their knowledge and skills as they respond to the instrument itself. Objective tests, essays, presentations, and classroom assignments all meet this criterion.

Educational Goals – The knowledge, skills, abilities, capacities, attitudes or dispositions students are expected to acquire as a result of completing your academic program. Goals are sometimes treated as synonymous with outcomes, though outcomes are the behavioral results of the goals, and are stated in precise operational terms.

Formative assessment – The assessment of student achievement at different stages of a course or at different stages of a student's academic career. The focus of formative assessment is on the documentation of student development over time. It can also be used to engage students in a process of reflection on their education.

Indirect – Indirect methods ask students to reflect on their learning rather than to demonstrate it.

Learning outcomes – Statements describing specific student behaviors that evidence the acquisition of desired goals in knowledge, skills, abilities, capacities, attitudes or dispositions. Learning outcomes can be usefully thought of as behavioral criteria for determining whether students are achieving the educational goals of a program, and, ultimately, whether overall program goals are being successfully met. Outcomes are sometimes treated as synonymous with objectives, though objectives are usually more general statements of what students are expected to achieve in an academic program.

Longitudinal – Data collected on the same individuals over time for use in a longitudinal study. A study that investigates development, learning, or other types of change in individuals over time.

Median – the middle number in a given sequence of numbers, taken as the average of the two middle numbers when the sequence has an even number of numbers: 4 is the median of 1, 3, 4, 8, and 9.

Mean – Simple or arithmetic average of a range of values or quantities, computed by dividing the total of all values by the number of values.

Mode – that one value of a range of values that has the highest frequency as determined statistically.

Objectives – Refers to the specific knowledge, skills, or attitudes that students are expected to achieve through their college experience; expected or intended student outcomes.

Outcomes – Refers to the specific knowledge, skills, or developmental attributes that students actually develop through their college experience; assessment results.

Program assessment – Assessment to determine the extent to which students in a departmental program can demonstrate the learning outcomes for the program.

Reliability – An assessment tool’s consistency of results over time and with different samples of students.

Rubric – A set of criteria specifying the characteristics of a learning outcome and the levels of achievement in each characteristic.

Self-efficacy – Students’ judgment of their own capabilities for a specific learning outcome.

Summative assessment – The assessment of student achievement at the end point of their education or at the end of a course. The focus of summative assessment is on the documentation of student achievement by the end of a course or program. It does not reveal the pathway of development to achieve that endpoint.

Triangulation – The collection of data via multiple methods in order to determine if the results show a consistent outcome.

Validity – The degree to which an assessment measures (a) what is intended, as opposed to (b) what is not intended, or (c) what is unsystematic or unstable.

10. Reporting Timeline

Assessment Activities	Dates
Meeting with LLC Directors to Review Assessment Plan, Instruments, and Goal Mapping	Completed by September 30, 2018
Focus Group Training	February 11, 2019 11-12 in Clough 469
Qualitative Data Analysis Training	TBD
Focus Group Implementation	March 4-8, 2019
Survey Implementation	March 4-8, 2019
Focus Group and Survey Data Analysis	Completed by April 1, 2019
Draft Report	Completed by May 10, 2019
Final Report	Completed by June 1, 2019

Georgia Tech Living Learning Communities Assessment Toolkit

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