Report on LFCC General Education Competency Assessment in 2018-19
Lord Fairfax Community College
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This document describes Lord Fairfax Community College's (LFCC) assessment of general education competencies in 2018-19. Two competencies were assessed, critical thinking and civic engagement.

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Competency: Critical Thinking

Definition: Critical Thinking is the ability to use information, ideas and arguments from relevant perspectives to make sense of complex issues and solve problems. Degree graduates will locate, evaluate, interpret, and combine information to reach well-reasoned conclusions or solutions.

Outcomes:

1. Locate – Analyze and integrate information from separate sources to solve a real-world problem.
2. Evaluate - Evaluate how strongly correlational-type data support a hypothesis.
3. Interpret - Provide alternative explanations for observations and/or for spurious relationships.
4. Combine - Identify suitable solutions for a real-world problem using relevant information.

Assessment methods:

The Critical Assessment Test (CAT) developed and maintained by Tennessee Technological University was used to assess critical thinking. This is part of the LFCC's SACSCOC Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) about information literacy. The CAT has been administered biennially since 2011. Faculty on the QEP team mapped the four outcomes for this competency to specific questions on the CAT.

The CAT was administered online by LFCC faculty in spring 2019 with valid test results for 82 students in two second year courses. Students were identified to take the CAT who were degree-seeking and had taken at least 30 hours of coursework at LFCC. These students provide a mix of transfer and career and technical education majors and include associate degree-seeking students from both campuses.

A Graduating Student Survey is conducted annually of current graduates and this provides an indirect measure of this competency. The survey asks students "Compared to when you started at LFCC…, rate your ability to locate, evaluate, interpret, and combine information to reach well-reasoned conclusions or solutions," using a five-point Likert scale. While based on self-assessment, the data from this survey are used to help triangulate the results of the CAT. It is required for the entire population of degree-seeking, graduating students.

Goals:

LFCC's goals for critical thinking are to: (1) meet or exceed the national CAT average; (2) meet or exceed the overall score from the college's previous administration of the CAT in 2017; and meet or exceed the results from the previous year's Graduating Student Survey.   Since this is the first time that this question appears on the survey, the results are used to set a baseline for future assessment cycles.

Results:

Critical Thinking Test

CAT results are available for 82 students in spring 2019, with an average total score of 13.84. This is slightly above the national norm of 13.48.   This figure is below the average total score of 14.50 for LFCC in spring 2017. While LFCC did not meet this part of its goal for critical thinking, it should be noted that the 2017 administration involved in-person faculty training and scoring, while the spring 2019 was done totally online with a new system offered by Tennessee Tech.   A copy of the LFCC 2019 CAT Report is attached.

Questions were mapped to four subscales based on the four outcomes of this competency. All questions are scored equally with one point per correct answer. Spring 2019 averages for LFCC are 8.52 for evaluate and interpret info, 9.15 for problem solving, 4.20 for creative thinking, and 7.26 for effective communication.

A breakout of LFCC's CAT results by program is attached. The data suggest that AAS Nursing and AS Science students had higher average scores, while non-curricular placed students in career exploration and unknown plans scored lower.

Survey

There were 387 respondents to the spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey. Of these, 43% rated that their ability to locate, evaluate, interpret, and combine information to reach well-reasoned conclusions or solutions is much stronger compared to when they started at LFCC. Approximately 44% rated their knowledge and values stronger and 13% saw no change.   There were no ratings of weaker or much weaker.

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Competency: Civic Engagement

Definition: Civic Engagement is the ability to contribute to the civic life and well-being of local, national, and global communities as both a social responsibility and a life-long learning process. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. For students, this could include community-based learning through service-learning activities, community-based research, or service within the community. Degree graduates will demonstrate the knowledge and civic values necessary to become informed and contributing participants in a democratic society.

Outcomes:

1. Civic Identity: Reflect on personal social/civic identity and how that identity differs from others in their communities.
2. Civic Discourse: Deliberate on issues and problems to advance or achieve a civic aim.
3. Civic Responsibility: Consider and respond to civic, social, environmental, or economic challenges at local, national, or global levels.
4. Multiple Perspectives: Acquire knowledge and apply that knowledge when taking into account multiple viewpoints on a civic issue.

Assessment methods:

LFCC participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) administered by Tuft University's Institute for Democracy and Higher Education. NSLVE helps the college learn about its student registration and voting rates and the climate for political learning and engagement.

A second measure involves participation in civic engagement activities. In the 2019 spring semester, LFCC students participated in Shenandoah University's General Education Town Hall project. Faculty across the disciplines volunteer their courses for participation and students spend a semester researching a selected social issue, such as racial inequality, gun control, immigration, war and conflict, LGBTQ+ issues, health care, and human trafficking. Full-time faculty member Dr. Naomi Simpson's public speaking class and full-time faculty member Dr. Margaret Ross's ethics class participated.

The Town Hall project included five assignments, which are mapped to both civic engagement and critical thinking competency outcomes.

Assignment	General Education Competency and/or Outcome Supported (Note: *Not all of these were actually assessed in this project.*)
Annotated bibliography that shows research on a narrower topic within the student's chosen topic	• Critical Thinking Competency, Outcome 1: Analyze and integrate information from separate sources to solve a real-world problem
Exploratory Essay that uses and expands the research from the previous assignment and explores at least two sides of the issue	• Critical Thinking Competency, Outcome 1: Analyze and integrate information from separate sources to solve a real-world problem
Worksheet with detailed questions about the student's research and ideas for solutions to the problems posed by the topic	• Civic Engagement Competency, Outcome 2: Deliberate on issues and problems to advance or achieve a civic aim
The Town Hall event—an evening of discussion with other students who worked on the same topic and with community consultants who work in those fields—held at Shenandoah University	• Civic Engagement Competency, Outcome 1: Reflect on personal social/civic identity and how that identity differs from others in their communities • Civic Engagement Competency, Outcome 3: Consider and respond to civic, social, environmental, or economic challenges at local, national, or global levels

Assignment	General Education Competency and/or Outcome Supported (Note: *Not all of these were actually assessed in this project.*)
A Capstone Project showing the results of the student's research and experience at the Town Hall event	• Critical Thinking Competency, Outcome 4: identify suitable solutions for a real-world problem using relevant information • Written Communication Competency • Civic Engagement Competency, Outcome 1: Reflect on personal social/civic identity and how that identity differs from others in their communities

Indirect measures are provided by two, annual student surveys. Starting in fall 2018, the LFCC Current Student Survey asked students (1) "Have you participated in the last year in any kind of civic or political activity (i.e. donation, campaigning, protest, rally, writing, etc.)?" and (2) "If you are eligible to vote in the current general elections, did you/will you vote?"

The Graduating Student Survey is a requirement of graduation and is administered in the fall and spring semester to all degree-seeking students. The survey asks students "Compared to when you started at LFCC, rate… How well is LFCC helping you to become an informed and contributing participant in a democratic society?" using a five-point Likert scale.

Goals:

LFCC's goals for civic engagement are to: (1) meet or exceed voting rates at peer institutions; (2) meet or exceed the voting rate baseline in future years; (3) meet or exceed results in civic engagement activities; and (4) meet or exceed the previous year's results for the two surveys. Since this is the first time that these data are being collected, the results are used to set a baseline for future assessment.

Results:

Voting Data
NSLVE reported the 2018 voting rate for LFCC as 46.5%, compared to 22.9% in 2014, a 23.7% increase. This rate of 46.5% is higher than the voting rate of 39.1% for all institutions. LFCC's rate is also higher than the voting rate of 37.4% for associates-level, degree-granting institutions.

LFCC's student registration rate for 2018 is 76.0%, up from 65.6% in 2014. The voting rate of registered students is 61.2%, up from 34.8% in 2014.

A copy of the NSLVE report is attached.

Survey Data

There were 2,007 respondents to the fall 2018 Current Student Survey. Approximately 18% of students reported that they participated in civic/political activity. This varies by location, including dual enrollment (23%), Middletown (19%), Fauquier (20%), online (13%), Luray-Page County Center (14%), and Vint Hill Center (35%).

Approximately 81% of respondents to the Current Student Survey reported that they would/did vote if eligible. This varies by location, including dual enrollment (51%), Middletown (83%), Fauquier (81%), online (85%), Luray-Page County Center (86%), and Vint Hill Center (90%). It is noted that many high school students in dual enrollment are under age 18 and are not eligible to vote.

There were 387 respondents to the spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey. Of these, 34% rated that their knowledge and civic values necessary to become informed and contributing participants in a democratic society are much stronger compared to when they started at LFCC. Another 41% rated their knowledge and values stronger and 25% saw no change.   There were no ratings of weaker or much weaker.

Participation in Civic Engagement

A standard rubric was used to grade the capstone project. Overall performance on the rubric was as follows:

Learning Outcomes Graduating students will…	General Education Competency	Assessment Measure	Target Criteria	Number of Students	Results	% Meeting Expectations
Create a capstone project for the Town Hall project that displays critical thinking, information literacy, written communication skills, and the ability to consider a civic issue from multiple perspectives.	Civic Engagement	Capstone project (speech or term paper) graded with a standard rubric	75% of students will earn 9/12 or higher	40	12/12: 12 11/12: 11 10/12: 4 9/12: 6 8/12: 2 7/12: 3 6/12: 1 5/12: 1	82.5%

More detailed data was available for the ethics students:

Learning Outcomes	General Education Competency and/or Outcome	Assessment Measure	Target Criteria	Number of Students	Results	% Meeting Expectations
Multiple Perspectives Acquire knowledge and apply that knowledge when taking into account multiple viewpoints on a civic issue.	**Civic Engagement Competency, Outcome 1:** Reflect on personal social/civic identity and how that identity differs from others in their communities	Term paper graded with a standard rubric	80% of students will earn 2/3 or higher	24	3/3: 11 2/3: 9 1/3: 4	83%
Critical Thinking Explore a civic issue through a comprehensive examination of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion	**Critical Thinking Competency, Outcome 4:** identify suitable solutions for a real-world problem using relevant information	Term paper graded with a standard rubric	80% of students will earn 2/3 or higher	24	3/3: 14 2/3: 9 1/3: 1	96%

Learning Outcomes	General Education Competency and/or Outcome	Assessment Measure	Target Criteria	Number of Students	Results	% Meeting Expectations
Information Literacy Explore a civic issue and identify, locate, and effectively and responsibly use and share information for the problem at hand	(Does not support a specific general education competency, but does support LFCC's current QEP.)	Term paper graded with a standard rubric	80% of students will earn 2/3 or higher	24	3/3: 13 2/3: 9 1/3: 2	92%
Written Communication Develop and express ideas in writing.	**Written Communication Competency**	Term paper graded with a standard rubric	80% of students will earn 2/3 or higher	24	3/3: 9 2/3: 14 1/3: 1	96%