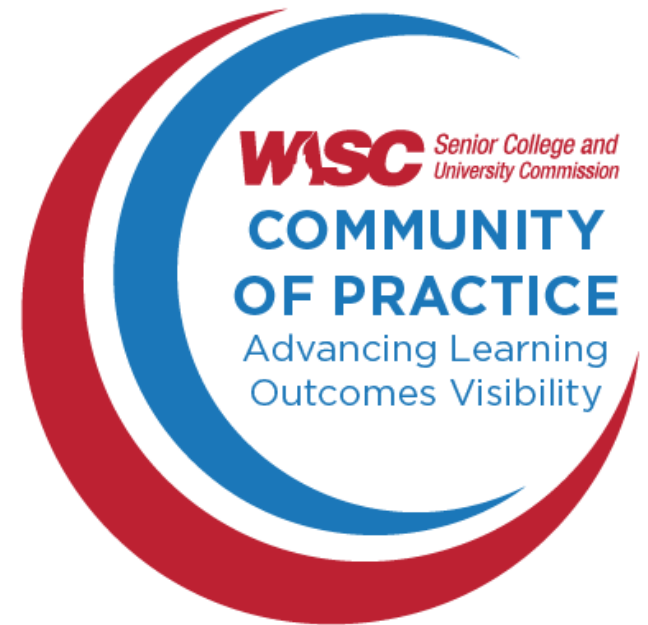


# AAC&U

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**WSCUC's  
Community of  
Practice for  
Advancing Visibility  
of Learning  
Outcomes  
Assessment**



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# Background

- Visibility of student learning
- Assuring higher education's stakeholders: institutions in the region are delivering on their promises to students regarding learning outcomes

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# Background

- With funding from Lumina Foundation, WSCUC's Community of Practice (CoP) is designed to increase leadership and capacity in learning outcomes assessment and its visibility.

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## The Initiative

- Community of Practice: support, guide, and mentor projects surrounding student learning assessment and demonstrating visibility of that learning.
- Support institutions as they implement projects, and *develop a collection of good practices, resources, and guides* to share, both regionally and nationally.

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## Intended Outcomes

- **Outcome 1: Learning Outcomes Capacity-Building:**

To further develop WSCUC's regional capacity and national leadership in providing evidence of student learning as one crucial component of student achievement.

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## Intended Outcomes

- **Outcome 2: Improved Learning Outcomes Visibility:**

To support WSCUC institutions in making good evidence of student learning more visible and accessible to a general public and various stakeholders.

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## Intended Outcomes

- **Outcome 3: Quality Assurance / Accreditation Resource Development, Curation, and Dissemination:**

To develop a curated collection of accreditation process resources around aligning and assessing student learning outcomes per the Standards or Accreditation, the visibility of evidence, and using evidence for improvement.



## Progress

- Over 40 institutions submitted proposals
- 21 projects selected in March 2017
- Online CoP (Community of Practice) established
- Two convenings held to date
  - Keynote speakers: Natasha Jankowski; Linda Suskie
- Expert consultants mentoring institutional groups

# Progress

- “Phase II” now underway
  - Concentration on outcome of developing and curating guides, good practices, examples
  - Potential collaborations and white papers of internal assessment improvements among thematic institutions
- Academic Resource Conference in April: Third Convening
  - Keynote will focus on data-visualization for academics

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# Project Themes

- Visibility of Student Outcomes, Assessing Graduate Outcomes
- Assessment of Core Competencies/General Education
- Institutional Learning Outcomes: Assessment, Processes
- Co-curricular Assessment, Students in Assessment

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## Project Themes

- Faculty Development and Engagement with Assessment, Visibility of Core Competencies
- Visibility of Student Achievement (primarily through public website)
- Assessment of Core Competencies, Faculty Engagement—morphing to Assessment in Arts

# Visibility of Student Achievement

- CFR 1.2
- Student Achievement working group:
- A [commissioned] report recommended that “institutional student achievement webpages reflect both graduation and retention data points, student learning outcomes data, and provide information in a user-friendly manner.”
- WSCUC convened a Student Achievement Working Group in 2016 to develop more direction and clarity about how institutions can effectively communicate student achievement.

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# Visibility of Student Achievement

The Student Achievement group will continue to work alongside the Community of Practice to produce and enhance recommendations, examples, and guidance to institutions.

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# Best Practices in Arts Assessment

- Arts Thresholds concepts
- Menu of best practices for assessing core competencies
- Multiple exemplars from different institutions
- Expanding notion of arts assessment (focus on critique and advancement review)
- Communication and archiving of assessment data

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## “How do I write the learning outcome that’s about blowing their minds?”

- Students completing the program can develop a marketing plan for their film project that attends to its production and distribution processes....
- Students completing the program can wind a warp, dress a loom, weave basic structures, and explain material properties and choices....



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## CoP Theme: Promoting Faculty Development & Engagement with Assessment

- “Bringing Assessment to the Law School Environment: How to Persuade the Reluctant Professor”
- “Resistance to assessment is a persistent challenge at many campuses...”

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# Threshold Concepts & Decoding the Disciplines

- TCs: Transformative, Troublesome, Irreversible
- Liminality: “there is no simple passage in learning from ‘easy’ to ‘difficult’; mastery of a threshold concept often involves messy journeys back, forth and across conceptual terrain.” --Glynis Cousin (2006)

## Threshold Concepts & Decoding the Disciplines

- Goal: increase learning by narrowing gaps between expert and novice thinking
- Process: Identify and address “bottlenecks”
  - Identify a bottleneck to learning
  - Uncover the mental tasks needed to overcome the bottleneck
  - Model these tasks
  - Give students practice and feedback
  - Assess student mastery

([Decodingthedisciplines.org](http://Decodingthedisciplines.org))

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## Project Process: “Decoding” Interviews

Goal: to identify/clarify LOs in studio courses

1. Identify/articulate “bottlenecks” to learning
2. Identify/“decode” what an “expert” **does** at that point
3. Identify steps a novice **needs to do** at that point
4. Begin to capture/articulate that learning (outcome)
5. Reflect on how to teach that effectively
6. Reflect on how to assess that effectively

# FINDINGS: KEY LEARNING AREAS, BOTTLENECKS, THRESHOLDS

## Learning Stages: **Risk Taking**

“How do you teach someone to rebel?”

1. Students begin to recognize they have choices
2. ...begin asking to try new/different approaches
3. ...Stop asking--Just do
  - Generating many, disparate versions/responses

LO: Students initiate exploration of a project by generating multiple and divergent approaches.

# FINDINGS: KEY LEARNING AREAS, BOTTLENECKS, THRESHOLDS

## Learning Stages: **Critique & Reviews**

1. Students begin...to decide what to listen to/value
  - especially from peers
2. ...to understand why others see work differently
  - Stop correcting others' views/interpretations
3. ...to articulate principles and to categorize rather than to just provide observations
  - Key to replicating later

LO: Students can reiterate feedback as aesthetic concepts and relate to their intentions and purposes.

## FINDINGS: KEY LEARNING AREAS, BOTTLENECKS, THRESHOLDS

Learning Stages: **Ambiguity/Uncertainty**

“Feeling ambiguity is the most powerful human emotion”

1. Students transform from aesthetic activist to being comfortable with ambiguity
  - Grappling with critical and messy contradictions
2. Fluidity: Students begin to be comfortable moving back and forth between disparate ideas

## FINDINGS: KEY LEARNING AREAS, BOTTLENECKS, THRESHOLDS

### Learning Stages: **Craftsmanship**

“Goal is to push beyond the technical craft or preciousness of the object they’re making...”

1. Students begin...to let go of attachment to thing
2. ...let go of “good” to try something totally new
  - material/technique

LO: Students can articulate how their process has evolved through a given project.



# FINDINGS: KEY LEARNING AREAS, BOTTLENECKS, THRESHOLDS

## Learning Stages: **Historical Grounding**

“Inhabiting the discipline”

- Goal: Students begin to see (and articulate) their work and ideas **in conversation with** precedents in the discipline
- Contrast to LOs: “knowledge of disciplinary history...”

# Thank you!

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- See the Community of Practice webpage for updates:

<https://www.wscuc.org/content/wscuc-%E2%80%98s-community-practice-advancing-learning-outcomes-visibility>