Assessment of student learning outcomes has become an important part of higher education and is destined to play a continuing role into the foreseeable future due to increased interest by government, students, and parents in the value of a college degree, and changes to accreditation standards meant to enhance student learning and drive innovation in education. Kapi'olani Community College and its accrediting body, the Association of Community Colleges and Junior Colleges, are not immune to the spread of these concerns.

**Student Learning Outcomes Assessment at Kapi'olani Community College**

To meet the demands of these stakeholders, Kapi'olani Community College began in earnest the assessment of course-level student learning outcomes (called “competencies”) in spring 2011 after adoption of the Faculty Senate Course Level Assessment Plan in November 2010. Course competencies were mapped to program learning outcomes, course assessment plans were developed, and in subsequent semesters, course learning reports began to be submitted. As the College approached its 2012 Accreditation Self Evaluation Report of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, there was some concern that the College might not be able to clearly show that it was operating at the Proficiency level of student learning outcomes implementation.

Indeed, the Association of Community Colleges and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), in addition to its commendations of the College, made nine recommendations for improvement, three of which pertained directly to student learning outcomes and their assessment:

**Recommendation 3:** In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College assess student learning outcomes for every course, instructional program, and student support program and incorporate the findings into course and program improvements.

**Recommendation 4:** In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College utilize student learning outcomes assessment to support institutional planning decisions.
Recommendation 5: In order to fully meet the Standards, the team recommends the College: 1) identify student learning outcomes for all student services programs, 2) assess student attainment of these outcomes, and 3) conduct dialogue to use assessment results to implement program improvements.

In order to address these recommendations, the College redoubled its efforts and was able to make considerable gains in moving student learning outcomes assessment forward on campus. The ACCJC team visiting the College in October 2013, however, determined the College had only partially met the standards represented by these three recommendations (Appendix 1). The College is currently working towards further addressing the recommendations for an accreditation team visit in fall 2014.

Faculty Investment in Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

In response to the ACCJC recommendations, the College's Faculty Senate in spring 2013 conducted a student learning outcomes faculty survey, a student learning outcomes focus group, and a student learning outcomes faculty forum in order to gather faculty input on student learning outcomes and their assessment and on how the College could best support faculty student learning outcomes efforts on campus. Based on this faculty input, it was determined that the main issues were data, time, and uncertainty: Data were not easily accessible (because they were locked up in hundreds of word processed documents rather than in an electronic database); time was being excessively consumed by the documentation process; and uncertainty existed about the whats, hows, and whens of doing assessment. Faculty solutions centered around data sharing, data gathering, and data warehousing (Appendix 2).

To this end, in August 2013 the College’s Faculty Senate charged its Ad Hoc Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee with identifying ways that student learning outcomes assessment functionality could be built into the Kuali Student Curriculum Management software that was to be adopted system-wide as a replacement for Curriculum Central. This approach seemed at the time to be likely to result in the most efficient and cost effective approach, since the curriculum management system would already contain all course competencies, maps to program outcomes, and other pertinent data, and a system-wide approach would bring other efficiencies along with it.

Over the course of the fall 2013 and spring 2014 semesters, the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee interviewed assessment management system users in the field, hosted presentations by assessment office personnel from UH Manoa and other UH community colleges, viewed various assessment management system vendor webinars, sought input from departments through committee representatives, discussed necessary and desired assessment management system features, and compiled a list of student learning outcomes assessment functionality requirements to be incorporated into the Kuali Student Curriculum Management software
In addition, the Committee Chair participated in numerous electronic discussions and face-to-face meetings with the system-level team responsible for the implementation of the Kuali Student Curriculum Management software. However, despite the efforts of the Committee and the Chair, the majority of the community colleges in the system did not see the benefits of incorporating student learning outcomes assessment functionality into the Kuali Student Curriculum Management software, and this functionality was relegated to the lowest level of need (requirements of only one or two campuses), making it unlikely to be incorporated into the first iteration of the software, if at all.

Given this result, and the increasingly urgent need for a tool to facilitate assessment data collection and management, the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee in April 2014 turned its attention towards the consideration of a commercial vendor solution. In May 2014, the Committee submitted, and the Faculty Senate approved, a recommendation that an assessment management system be purchased and that a full-time coordinator be hired to manage it (Appendix 4).

The Assessment Management System Search

In a memo dated August 1, 2014, the Chancellor notified a core group (the outgoing and incoming Faculty Senate Chairs, the Chair and Co-Vice Chairs of the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee, the College’s Accreditation Liaison Officers, and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs) that funds were allocated for the purchase, installation, training, and use of an assessment management system contingent upon these funds being “spent and / or encumbered by September 15, 2014.” (Appendix 5). This group was assigned by the Chancellor to make a recommendation on the selection of an assessment management system. The recommendation would go to the full Chancellor’s Advisory Council (CAC) Accreditation and Assessment Work Group and then the CAC for review before being sent to the Chancellor. This group called a larger meeting of AMS stakeholders to discuss how to implement the Chancellor’s request and it was decided to proceed with the selection and procurement process. If the September deadline for procurement was not met, the selection of an AMS would continue in hopes of the funding of an October 2014 Title III grant proposal.

With input from the assessment management system stakeholder group, the search group developed a list of potential systems, gathered broader campus input on the criteria list by which the systems would be evaluated, provided the vendors with a list of needed functionality / criteria, and scheduled webinar presentations and a general debriefing session to take place across three days of the College’s fall 2014 duty week period in August (Appendix 6). Announcement of the webinar and debriefing schedule was made to the campus community by the Office of the Chancellor via the campus-wide email UH Broadcast announcement system in mid-August (Appendix 7). This announcement included a link to the functionality / criteria list previously compiled by the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee for faculty, administrator, and staff
review prior to the webinar series. The five systems (in order of presentation) were Taskstream, Tk20, TracDat, LiveText, and eLumen. These five systems were chosen due to their prominence in the assessment management system arena. Taken together, they provide assessment management solutions for over 1,500 institutions in the US and abroad.

Each vendor was allotted a 90-minute time slot, which included time for audience questions. The vendor presentations were interactive, with audience members frequently interspersing questions. All the webinars were recorded for later viewing / reviewing. Prior to the webinars, all vendors completed an online survey in which they rated their system's ability to meet the functionality / criteria that had been developed by the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee (Appendix 8). After each webinar, attendees were given the URL of the same survey so that they could rate each system, as well. An average of 20 people attended each webinar presentation (38 unique attendees overall); a total of 17 attendees completed the online survey (Appendix 9).

At the end of the week, after webinars for each system had been presented, the debriefing session was held. Forty-three people were in attendance. The purpose of the debriefing session was to collect the opinions, viewpoints, and feelings of the webinar attendees about each of the systems / vendors. The session was facilitated by the College's ePortfolio Coordinator and by the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee Secretary, both trained C4Ward Concierges. The debriefing session included three main tasks: prioritizing of functionality / criteria (which had been grouped into 10 categories), discussion of strengths and weaknesses of each system, and indication of system preferences.

To determine which functions of an assessment management system were deemed most important by the attendees, the facilitators lead the group through a prioritizing task. The 10 categories of functionality were listed on a poster, and attendees were asked to indicate the five functions most important to them by placing previously-distributed post-it dots next to their choices of important functions. The dots were color-coded to indicate college unit type: instruction, counseling, administration / service area, and instructional support. The result was a list of desired assessment management system functionality weighted by importance (from most to least), with some items deemed equal in priority:

1. Integrates external sources of data (Kuali, Banner, Laulima, etc.)
2. Supports non-instructional assessment
3. User friendliness & Training / tech support (tie)
4. Supports our campus’s assessment processes
5. Shows alignment of outcomes for all relevant levels of the institution
6. Allows communication between system and users (e.g. reminders, etc.)
7. Integrates external standards (WASC, ACCJC, etc.) & Includes both vendor-provided and customizable reporting (tie)
8. Pricing
To discuss perceived strengths and weaknesses of each system, the facilitators asked attendees to talk about what stood out for them, indicate whether it was a strength or a weakness, and note any follow-up questions they had for the vendors. Discussion proceeded system by system in order of webinar presentation, with strengths and weaknesses recorded on separate sheets of poster paper for each system (Appendix 10).

Building on this discussion, and in order to get a clearer sense of whether any system preferences were emerging for the attendees as a group, the facilitators used a multi-poster matrix with the 10 categories of functionality on the horizontal axis and the five systems on the vertical axis. The facilitators again asked attendees to use post-it dots color-coded by college unit to indicate which system was strongest in which categories of functionality. The result was a stunningly clear visual representation of the emergence of two preferred systems: Taskstream and LiveText.

**Deliberations**

The assessment management system search group began its deliberations on the weekend between duty week and the first day of instruction of fall 2014 by individually reviewing the evidence gathered during (and in some cases prior to) the search process:

- The functionality / criteria list compiled by the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee
- The video recordings of the Taskstream and LiveText webinars
- The functionality priority list created by attendees at the debriefing session
- The posters of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Taskstream and LiveText that resulted from attendees’ discussions at the debriefing session
- The online functionality / criteria survey completed by the Taskstream and LiveText representatives
- The online functionality / criteria survey completed by the Taskstream and LiveText webinar attendees

The group met on the first day of instruction to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Taskstream and LiveText systems vis-a-vis the evidence gathered. After considerable discussion of both systems, the group felt that the Taskstream system would provide the best fit for the College, given the College’s original purpose for the system and the functional priorities that had been identified as most important by webinar attendees.

To confirm that the Taskstream system was indeed the best fit for the College, a second Taskstream webinar was scheduled to give the group an opportunity to see the system in further detail, including the Learning Achievement Tools function that would provide collection and storage of artifacts, online rubric scoring, internship data management, and other features. Faculty in the process of implementing LiveText for their Career and
technical Education programs were invited to the webinar. This webinar further solidified for the search group its decision that Taskstream is the best fit for the College’s needs.

Decision

Both Taskstream and LiveText can (or will soon be able to) integrate with Banner and Laulima, allowing importing of data into the assessment management system. Both systems provide for single sign-on functionality, allowing users to sign into the system using their UH credentials. Both systems also provide free online and video training, as well as online, phone, and email support for all users. And both vendors host the system on their own servers, maintain the systems, and provide free updates.

The systems differ in important ways, however, and the assessment management system search group believes Taskstream is the best fit for the College for the following reasons:

- **Original purpose:** The quest for an assessment management system began with the consideration of building assessment functionality into the Kuali Student Curriculum Management system that will be adopted system-wide to manage curriculum. Along with the criteria list developed for such functionality, the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee noted that “The assessment management system should aid users to view course and program assessment plans, chosen assessment methods, and the impact of proposed changes or adjustments. Ideally, assessment data are presented in a way that encourages broad participation and meaningful discussion at the course, program, and institutional levels.” The group believes that the Taskstream platform best serves this original purpose through:
  - The planning power of its Accountability Management System, which provides a robust curriculum planning map / matrix tool
  - The match between the Accountability Management System approach and the College’s current assessment processes
  - The possibilities for faculty (and lecturer) online discussion through an interface built in to each assessment area of its Accountability Management System

- **Functional priorities:** In the webinar debriefing session, faculty identified which functionalities were most important to them. Based on the vendor responses to the online survey, Taskstream best meets 3 of the 5 most important of these functionalities. As can be seen in Table 1 below, Taskstream better integrates external data (LiveText does not support imported data from Curriculum Central nor from Kuali Student Management System), better supports non-instructional assessment (LiveText does not support assessment for library instruction nor for administrative services), and better supports the College’s current assessment
processes (LiveText does not support our Course Assessment Plan [CAP] nor our Learning Assessment Schedule and Report [LASR]).

Table 1. Functional priorities comparison of vendor survey responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Survey item #</th>
<th>Taskstream response</th>
<th>LiveText response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Integrates external sources of data (Kuali, Banner, Laulima, etc.)</td>
<td>1f. System will accept imported data from Banner either automatically or manually.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1g. System will accept imported data from Curriculum Central database or Kuali Student Curriculum Management System or other source of curriculum information either automatically or manually.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree*</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Supports non-instructional assessment</td>
<td>5a. The system is appropriate to assess learning outcomes and service area outcomes for counseling</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5b. The system is appropriate to assess learning outcomes and service area outcomes for student affairs.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5c. The system is appropriate to assess learning outcomes for library instruction.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5d. The system is appropriate to assess learning outcomes for tutoring.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5e. The system is appropriate to assess service area outcomes for administrative services such as human resources and business office.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>User</td>
<td>(User friendliness was not part of the survey)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>survey.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b.</td>
<td>Tech support (phone, online and onsite) availability seems sufficient.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7c.</td>
<td>Will there be sufficient consulting/training time during startup and implementation?</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7d.</td>
<td>The vendor provides sufficient user training materials and support</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Supports our campus’s assessment processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a.</td>
<td>System will support all elements of the course learning report (CLR).</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b.</td>
<td>System will support all elements of the course assessment plan (CAP).</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c.</td>
<td>System will support all elements of the learning assessment scheduling and reporting form (LASR).</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shows alignment of outcomes for all relevant levels of the institution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c.</td>
<td>System supports a catalogue of Gen Ed and Institutional outcomes.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d.</td>
<td>System links and makes an alignment between course learning outcomes/competencies and program-level, Gen Ed and Institutional outcomes.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1e.</td>
<td>System links and aligns program learning outcomes and Gen Ed and Institutional outcomes.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3k.</td>
<td>Supports a rubric-based option to</td>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
assess outcomes/competencies. This function should include the ability to link assignments or exercises with stated learning outcomes/competencies, create, establish expected level of achievement and score rubrics/matrices to assess those assignments/exercises, and allow interested parties (e.g. students) to access results.

* Subject to details of implementation integration

- **Assessment Planning:** Assessment planning is an important part of student learning outcomes assessment at the College, and essential for meeting ACCJC standards. Prior to the introduction of the Learning Assessment Schedule and Report (LASR) in fall 2013, it was difficult if not impossible to get an at-a-glance picture of which courses would be assessing which competencies in which semester, particularly in the College’s largest program, Liberal Arts. Taskstream’s robust planning and reporting tools, including its curriculum planning map / matrix, allow faculty, staff, and administrators to create and access this information. In the LiveText webinar, the presenter makes a point of stating more than once that if assessment planning is a priority, there are better assessment planning systems available than LiveText. LiveText also does not have a curriculum map. A 2013 study by Oakleaf, Belanger, and Graham comparing several AMS systems confirms that LiveText does not support assessment planning (Appendix 11). A large part of the functionality the College is seeking in an assessment management system may be sacrificed by choosing LiveText.

- **Campus assessment culture:** Faculty investment in and understanding of student learning outcomes assessment has increased on campus since course-level assessment began in 2011. However, as evidenced by the responses to the open-ended questions in the 2013 Faculty Senate Survey, much progress needs to be made. The College as a whole has yet to truly engage in assessment as a tool to improve student learning. The Taskstream system is a better match for the College’s current culture surrounding assessment, since it provides a clear, familiar planning tool and supports the assessment processes currently in place, i.e., our Course Assessment Plan (CAP), Course Learning Report (CLR), and Learning Assessment Schedule and Report (LASR), with implementation of the system expected to provide minimal disruption to these established processes.
• **Connecting assessment to needed resources and budget:** The connection between assessment and budget planning is important for the College. Taskstream supports budget and resource request tracking and integration with assessment data, allowing users to see, for example, budget requests across the institution and see how many activities are involved in specific budget requests. LiveText does not include this functionality.

• **Service learning, field placement, and internship data:** The College is nationally recognized as a leader in service learning. In addition, many Career and Technical Education programs include clinical placements, internships, etc. This functionality would help the college manage the data generated from these activities. Both Taskstream and LiveText address the collection, tracking, and archiving of this data.

• **Additional Functionality:**
  
  o **Our nomenclature:** Taskstream allows for the customization of the titles, terms, etc. in workspace templates, which will allow the College to support current assessment maps, processes, forms, etc.
  
  o **Assessment review:** Taskstream has a feedback mechanism built into the system, which allows an assessment committee, assessment director, etc. to provide feedback on the assessment process to faculty and others who are undertaking the assessment, thereby improving the process and providing faculty with professional development. This functionality can also serve to demonstrate to ACCJC the strength of the College’s assessment processes.
  
  o **Customized accreditation-based reports:** Taskstream provides templates for the major accrediting agencies and can custom-build templates for the College at no additional cost. These reports can be web-based or paper-based (pdf).
  
  o **Management of strategic planning:** Taskstream allows for mapping of strategic plan goals, objectives, and initiatives, which provides an at-a-glance view of these alignments and allows for alignments and connections to assessment data and activities across campus.
  
  o **In-class performance-based assessment:** The Taskstream Learning Achievement Tools allow for “live” assessment of student performance in class through its “non-submission” assessment tool, which can be used with an iPad or other tablet.
Multiple evaluators: The Taskstream Learning Achievement Tools allow multiple evaluators to score a student assignment or an assessment submission, and provide functionality to calculate interrater reliability.

Blind evaluation of student work: The Taskstream Learning Achievement Tools allow replacement of student names with random identifiers to facilitate blind evaluation of student work.

Cost

Taskstream was founded in 2000 (by an educator), and today provides services to over 500 client institutions in the US and abroad.

A subscription to Taskstream’s Accountability Management System (AMS) includes unlimited access, unlimited telephone and online technical, implementation, and consulting support to all users. Taskstream offers multiple AMS subscription options for the College:

- Assessment Management System (AMS) annual subscription: $22,000
- Discounted annual price for AMS if purchased with LAT: $19,500
- Discounted price for three-year advanced purchase of AMS: $54,000

A subscription to Taskstream’s Learning Achievement Tools (LAT) includes unlimited phone and online support and training. There are no start-up fees or fees for faculty, evaluators, or administrators. Taskstream offers multiple subscription models for the College:

Per student subscription price varies based on subscription length:

- 1 semester: $25
- 1 year: $42
- 2 year: $69
- 3 year: $91
- 4 year: $105
- 5 year: $119
- 6 year: $129

Institutional purchase
- Bulk purchase of 250 or more one-year accounts: $40 per student account
- Annual LAT site license for up to 500 students: $15,000

Taskstream also offers optional services to enhance system implementation:

- On-site training, per trainer, per day: $2,000
- Optional entry of existing data into AMS (one-time fee): $3,000
A detailed price quote is available in Appendix 12.

**Recommendation**

Based on the evidence available to the assessment management system search group, the group recommends that the College adopt the Taskstream Accountability Management System (AMS) and Learning Achievement Tools (LAT) platforms for assessment data management and collection at the College.

Taskstream’s Accountability Management System (AMS) will allow the College to identify and align student learning outcomes, create curriculum maps, build assessment plans and document results, and plan and track improvements based on findings.

Taskstream’s Learning Achievement Tools (LAT) will allow the College to collect evidence of student learning; use ePortfolios to assess knowledge and skills; score student work with rubrics and forms; manage service learning, clinical placement, and internship data; and analyze performance by outcome or assignment.

Together, these two elements of the Taskstream system would put a powerful assessment tool in the College’s hands that would allow the College to manage assessment data and enhance student learning. Of course, any assessment management system will not do the assessment for us. All areas of the College will need to embrace the spirit of assessment and help to nurture a culture of inquiry if we are to make student learning outcomes assessment a driver of enhanced student learning and a meaningful and useful endeavor on campus.

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