

# Saint Paul College-A Community & Technical College, MN

## Project: Saint Paul College Project

### Version 2.0- Project

**Q: Of the projects your team has been following on the Collaboration Network, what have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?**

**A:** The Assessment Project Team has spent most of its time understanding and refining the scope of Saint Paul College's project. The Team has not spent a significant amount of time on the Collaboration Network identifying schools to follow that could serve as useful models for our project. At a recent meeting, the Team did spend time orienting itself to the Collaboration Network and completed an activity to start these types of conversations. During this activity, Team members identified several institutions and lessons learned that may be able to help and inform the approaches Saint Paul College uses for its project. Team members focused in on college-wide outcome rubrics, faculty (and staff) engagement in assessment of student learning, and tying resources to assessment efforts.

For example, Labette Community College in Kansas developed a matrix for college-level writing assessment and trained all program and discipline faculty how to consistently use it to assess students' work. As part of their project, writing across the curriculum was implemented and tied to the student's experiences. Faculty gained appreciation for writing through this project. The Team is very interested in exploring the Collaboration Network more to learn more about how other institutions are developing and implementing rubrics that may help inform Saint Paul College's work as we look toward streamlining, consolidating, and systematically assessing college-wide outcomes locally.

After a cursory review of the Collaboration Network, the Team found several institutions that could inform components of Saint Paul College's program-level outcome portion of its project specifically in how to systematically collect and track student learning outcome data. Alpena Community College identified third party testing options to assess occupational and technical programs. Saint Paul College has some of these in place already (Certiport, NOCTI, licensure exams, etc.) in some program areas. Bemidji State University invested in TaskStream, an online cloud-based assessment and accreditation platform, to help streamline the assessment process. The Assessment Project Team also noted that Bemidji State University had an Academic Assessment Committee that was composed of faculty who are paid assessment coordinators. Saint Paul College's team will continue to discuss how to positively incentivize (not necessarily monetarily) faculty and staff to engage in assessment work at the College.

Faculty and staff engagement in assessment projects were important components discussed by Bemidji State University, University of Jamestown, Lake Superior State University, and New River Community and Technical College. These institutions demonstrated that throughout projects there were varying levels of faculty training and faculty engagement. The Team was surprised and relieved to realize that

many projects move forward slowly and that progress required institutional buy-in and collaboration across departments.

The Team's initial review provided several concepts and ideas that led to good preliminary discussions related to faculty and staff engagement. The Assessment Team will continue to use the Collaboration Network as it moves forward with its project.

### Version 2.0- Update

**In 4-6 sentences, how has your project developed and changed since the Roundtable? Identify and Q: explain any specific changes to your project scope or design.**

**A:** Saint Paul College's project has developed and changed in a few ways since the Roundtable. The primary way it has changed is related to the white paper that was identified at the Roundtable to be the primary method to review, modify, and share the streamlined College's current college-wide outcomes. Working with our mentor, a small group decided that our current college-wide outcomes and rubrics provide a valuable foundation and needed to be reviewed more extensively before a white paper could provide faculty with a recommended streamlined set of college-wide outcomes. The small sub-group decided to shift these conversations to the larger Assessment Team who could help find ways to engage the larger faculty in the review and streamlining of our college-wide outcomes.

**Q: How did you incorporate the feedback that you received on your previous posting?**

**A:** The Assessment Team has reviewed and incorporated feedback in several ways. The first was to ensure that we are involving and engaging faculty, staff, and administrators in this work. Since the Assessment Roundtable, the Assessment Team has expanded its membership to include three representatives from Student Affairs (Vice President, Director of Academic Support, and Dean of Student Success) and has added the College's four Academic Deans, who were not originally part of the Team. The Team also has spent a lot of time discussing how to role this project out to the campus community, and particularly to the faculty as a whole. The Team has begun to set up some of the foundational work including reviewing college-wide outcomes and collecting/drafting program-level outcomes that exist. The larger question the Team has yet to determine is how will the project be rolled out to the campus community? As our mentor shared, we only have one chance to roll this out and do it right. We are very aware of this and want to be very intentional in how we introduce this project, engaged the campus community, and ensure that we give faculty and staff the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in the work the Team will be asking them to complete.

Another aspect that the Team is working to incorporate from our mentor's feedback, is to develop ways to accomplish the various aspects of the project simultaneously. College-wide outcomes, program-level outcomes, professional development, and evaluation and assessment. Currently, the Team is actively working on college-wide outcomes, program-level outcomes, and professional development.

Determining who can lead each of these areas will help move forward several components all at once. In addition, professional development of Assessment Team members is important to the success of this project. Several team members will be attending the Higher Learning Commission conference this spring. Additional opportunities for Team member professional development are included each meeting on the Team's agenda. Participation in these activities are identified and discussed with the Cabinet sponsors. The General Education Assessment Conference, sponsored by the HLC, is an opportunity the Team is reviewing for members working with the college-wide outcome component of the project.

**Q: Did you have any challenges regarding your project? How did you address them?**

**A:** Faculty engagement in the Assessment Academy Project continues to be a challenge. The Team has several faculty who are committed to the work of this team but the project leaders need to continue to fill additional membership slots that remain vacant. The project leaders are currently working with the Faculty Union President to identify faculty who are willing to serve on this group.

In addition, the leadership of the team has shifted slightly from the time at the Assessment Roundtable. The project leaders of this project are now in new roles at the College. Due to increased workload in their new positions, project leaders have asked the team to identify two additional individuals to help move this work forward more consistently. At the last meeting, members were asked to consider taking on a leadership role in this Team and we are hopeful two additional members will be identified to be project leaders for the Assessment Team in the next few weeks. The previous project leaders will continue to be involved and shift to serve as Cabinet sponsors for this project to provide continuity and support for the Team.