QUALITY FOCUS ESSAY

<u>Introduction</u>

As part of Leeward Community College (Leeward CC)'s continuing efforts to improve student learning and achievement as well as demonstrate a commitment to excellence, the Self-Evaluation Core Team used the self-evaluation process to reflect on the College's successes as well as areas that need improvement. Over the course of two years, the team remained open regarding what the Quality Focus Essay (QFE) topics would be. In fact, particular effort was made to not select topic areas too early in order to allow the self-reflective nature of the institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) to uncover those larger areas of focus for the College.

In fall 2017, the first topic became clear as the campus embraced a single goal to drive campus initiatives. This goal is known as the Wildly Important Goal (WIG) and provides a unifying vision for the many campus initiatives currently underway to increase student retention and persistence.

The second topic developed out of a breakout session at the convocation in spring 2018. These breakout sessions were focused on the areas of improvement that had been identified during the writing of the ISER. One area attracted much attention, and this led to the second QFE topic that focuses on improving student learning by making outcomes assessment more meaningful for faculty and staff.

The WIG and the efforts surrounding assessment will help "provide the institution with multi-year, long-term directions for improvement of student learning and student achievement and demonstrate the institution's commitment to excellence."

<u>Action Projects</u>

1. Increase student retention and persistence by keeping the students the College already has.
2. Improve student learning by making outcomes assessment more meaningful for faculty and staff.

Action Project 1: Increase student retention and persistence by keeping the students the College already has. (Standard I.B.3)

<u>Background</u>

The College operates as part of a community college network in the state of Hawaiʻi. As one of seven community colleges, and one of ten colleges in the University of Hawaiʻi (UH) System, Leeward CC plays a critical role in preparing students for the workforce and for transfer to a four-year college. The University of Hawaiʻi Community Colleges (UHCC) System coordinates the efforts of the community colleges, ensuring alignment and focused movement on key initiatives. The UHCC System has initiated several system wide projects in the past five years including a coordinated effort to accelerate students' progress through

developmental education courses, the implementation of a pathway-driven registration system, and the creation of common exploratory majors to guide students' selection of coursework. The College goals and plans are guided by these system efforts.

The core team's review of student achievement data indicated that retention and persistence are areas that have shown little movement despite the implementation of these system initiatives (See Student Achievement Data chapter for further discussion.). Additionally, faculty and staff had begun to experience "initiative fatigue" with so many initiatives needing attention. In spring 2017, the UHCC System hosted a biannual Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) workshop. At this workshop, the College's vice chancellor for academic affairs (VCAA) met Dr. Tonjua Williams from St. Petersburg College in Florida who discussed St. Petersburg's implementation of *The Four Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals* by Chris McChesney, Sean Covey, and Jim Huling.[5] The VCAA was intrigued with the idea of focusing on one goal – one WIG. After distributing the book to administrators and campus leaders, the College selected its WIG of "Keeping the Students We Have." Specifically, the goal is to increase retention and persistence by ten percent in 2017-2018. As one faculty member commented, "It was like a breath of fresh air." The College would have one goal that drives everything it does.

The VCAA introduced the WIG to campus leaders at a leadership retreat in August 2017. A presentation on retention by Pam Cox Otto enhanced the discussion of the WIG, and the retreat concluded with an introduction of the theme for the year, "The Student Experience." The VCAA communicated the WIG to the campus community at the convocation in fall 2017.

The Counseling and Advising unit created additional goals that aligned with the WIG and created four subcommittees to develop specific strategies to pursue. One of the unit's strategies was to encourage continuing students to register for the spring 2018 semester early. The Counseling and Advising unit recruited faculty and staff to assist with this effort by creating the #IGotClass campaign. Faculty and staff wore stickers with the #IGotClass hashtag and asked their students if they had registered for upcoming classes before winter break. By registering early, students can also get their preferred courses, class times, and instructors. In one month, the campus community encouraged and assisted more than 3,100 students to register for spring 2018 (Q-1, Q-2).

In addition, the College's campus co-leads for the UHCC Student Success Committee convened the WIG Design Team. The WIG Design Team is similar to a strategic planning group; it will lead and guide the College's efforts to implement the WIG and the UHCC System initiatives. The WIG Design Team is comprised of representatives from all areas of the campus. The team first convened in December 2017. By May 2018, the team completed an initial review of institutional data, identified the areas to focus on in the coming year, and created three "keys" or values that the College will use to guide future work on implementing the WIG. The team will work with existing committees and/or convene work teams as this initiative is further deployed.

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[5] McChesney, C., Covey, S., & Huling, J. (2012). *The four disciplines of execution: Achieving your wildly important goals*. New York: Free Press.

Goals and Outcomes
- Increase student retention and persistence by ten percent in 2018-2019.
- Increase the sense of belonging at the College through activities that connect and support students.
- Increase the three-year graduation rate from 16 percent to 22 percent by 2020-2021.

Timeline

2018-2019 Strategies	Responsible Parties
Continue to meet and develop plans for the implementing the WIG at the unit and division levels.	WIG Design Team
Evaluate #IGotClass initiative and plan for new initiatives to support the WIG in the current year.	Counseling and Advising Unit
Develop recommendations for faculty communication and actions at identified times during the semester. Based on the work of Pam Otto-Cox, this program will empower faculty and lecturers with phrases, actions, and intentions to encourage their students to improve retention and success in their classes.	Faculty Communication Committee
Create a workshop series on how the College can improve student retention and persistence by creating more student-centric learning experiences through design thinking strategies. Through participatory workshops, immersive design exercises, and presentations, faculty and lectures will learn about, experience, and practice effective, engaging teaching approaches for new and meaningful curricula.	Olin Summer Institute Team
2019-2020 Strategies	**Responsible Parties**
Evaluate efforts since 2017 and determine future plans for the implementation of the WIG.	WIG Design Team
Work with Student Services to further implement *The Four Disciplines of Execution* principles in the other Student Services' units including Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Student Life, and Job Prep Services.	WIG Design Team and Student Services Unit Heads
Work with Academic Services to implement *The Four Disciplines of Execution* principles in Academic Services' units including the Library, the LRC Content Tutoring, the Writing Center, and the Kākoʻo ʻIke Program.	WIG Design Team and Academic Services Unit Heads

2020-2021 Strategies	Responsible Parties
Work with Administrative Services to implement *The Four Disciplines of Execution* principles in Administrative Services' units including the Business Office, Human Resources, Operations and Maintenance, and Facilities Management.	WIG Design Team and Administrative Services Unit Heads
Evaluate efforts and determine future plans for the implementation of the WIG.	WIG Design Team

Action Project 2: Improve student learning by making assessment more meaningful for faculty. (Standard II.A.3)

Background

A second area in need of improvement is learning outcomes assessment. Since 2010, the College has made use of Tk20, which is a comprehensive online assessment planning, data management, and reporting system. In 2013, the Office of Policy, Planning, and Assessment (OPPA) created the handbook Sustaining Assessment: Three-Year Plan to Maintain and Enhance Assessment of Learning Outcomes at Leeward Community College to provide the campus with assessment terminology and processes and to set forth future plans for assessment at Leeward (Q-3). The College made good progress with implementing Tk20 as the repository for learning outcomes assessment. However, faculty and staff did not find Tk20 intuitive or easy to use. Tk20 has become a deterrent to meaningful dialogue about assessment instead of a supportive tool.

At Leeward CC's convocation in spring 2018, faculty and staff gathered at moderated roundtable discussions to participate in conversations about the College and how it meets and can improve in various Accreditation Standards. An area that generated much discussion is assessment and Tk20. The roundtable facilitator for discussions about Standard II.A.3 noted, "A lot of the discussion centered around how TK20 wasn't very intuitive and how there should be more tutorials or training. Another area of discussion focused on mentoring or specifically, the lack of mentoring that we have at the College. We had several lecturers and tenured faculty in both sessions that mentioned the need for mentoring." Other roundtable attendees echoed the facilitator's comments in written feedback. Based on this feedback, the Self-Evaluation Core Team is setting a goal to further train faculty in assessment and Tk20 to make outcomes assessment more meaningful while at the same time have the College determine the best assessment tool to suit its needs.

To help with Tk20 training and support, the College has the Faculty Senate's Assessment Committee, which is made up of representatives from the five main organizational areas and one nonvoting representative from the administration or OPPA (Q-4). The committee's mission is as follows: "COMMUNICATE -Review and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate on policies and procedures relating to assessment. FACILITATE -Work with

the Administration and Office of Planning, Policy and Assessment to facilitate the assessment process and establish a culture of assessment" (Q-5).

The committee gives between four and seven Tk20/assessment training sessions per semester to provide faculty and staff with assistance in these areas. Additionally, the committee encourages the campus constituents to contact their assessment representative for any assistance.

In November 2017, the assessment specialist and the Faculty Senate Assessment Committee chair began a new Assessment Think Tank for the campus. This group is charged with the task of developing, recommending, and implementing concepts and strategies that will help to establish a culture of assessment that carries the College beyond the fall 2018 accreditation visit. The Assessment Think Tank works in conjunction with the Assessment Committee and serves as a voice for a much broader pool of communal stakeholders. The participants are enthusiastic about fostering wider acceptance of and engagement in the assessment process.

In March 2018, the VCAA hosted a Talk Story on assessment. At this session, participants gave feedback on how to further engage the campus in reflection and dialogue on assessment. Discussion centered on clarifying assessment terminology and having a user-friendly tool to report assessment. The assessment specialist demonstrated a prototype reporting tool he designed to collect assessment results. Participants provided additional feedback on the tool, and these suggestions will be incorporated before the tool is implemented in the fall 2018 semester as a pilot.

Goals and Outcomes
- Provide faculty and staff with training assessment practices by way of learning and collaborative engagement opportunities with colleagues.
- Improve quality of outcomes assessment evidence in the College's database of assessment results.
- Increase faculty and staff satisfaction with the process for reporting assessment results.

Timeline

2018-2019 Strategies	Responsible Parties
Develop more individualized training sessions for faculty and staff.	Assessment Specialist and Faculty Senate Assessment Committee
Create a one-stop website for assessment policies, procedures, and tutorials.	Assessment Specialist and Faculty Senate

	Assessment Committee
Take actionable steps toward "closing the loop" within the assessment process. Align assessment data with the curriculum so assessment results are meaningful and useful. Emphasize operationalizing the data findings for effective pedagogic improvement, programmatic adjustments, and resource allocations.	OPPA and Faculty Senate Assessment Committee
Pilot an alternative assessment collection database with a clear, easy-to-use interface.	Assessment Specialist
Conduct an evaluation session on the continued use of Tk20 versus the home-grown alternative assessment collection database.	Assessment Think Tank
2019-2020 Strategies	**Responsible Parties**
Connect course and program assessment to ARPD with redesigned ARPD template. Train program coordinators and unit heads on how to report assessment results that support program improvements and resource allocations.	Ad Hoc Planning Process Review Committee
Fully implement the alternative assessment collection database or identified assessment software by May 2020.	Assessment Specialist
Implement initiative to create a culture of learning founded on motivational interest and active engagement.	Assessment Specialist and Faculty Senate Assessment Committee
Continue to train faculty and staff on assessment strategies that are engaging and meaningful.	Assessment Specialist
2020-2021 Strategies	**Responsible Parties**
Complete an evaluation of efficacy of implemented changes and identify areas of needed improvement.	OPPA
Develop a long-term plan for program review and assessment that engages the campus community and focuses on long-term goals for continuous improvement.	Ad Hoc Planning Process Review Committee

Evidence for the Quality Focus Essay