

## A. T. Still University of Health Sciences, MO

### Project: Transforming Professional Student Learning Outcomes through Assessment of Transferable Skills

#### Version 6.0- Project

**Q: What have been your accomplishments while in the Academy? Consider the range of these accomplishments, from the very specific (e.g., development of a rubric) to the more general (e.g., outcomes-based curriculum approval processes).**

**A: Accomplishments since being in the academy:**

- Developed five Core Professional Attributes (CPAs) : Critical Thinking, Cultural Proficiency, Interprofessional Collaboration, Interpersonal Skills, and Social Responsibility
- Defined each CPA, along with measurable constructs
- Hosted yearly assessment weeks with national speakers to promote assessment and develop assessment tools for the CPAs
- Solicited feedback from faculty, staff, and students during in-person and virtual town halls
- Created rubrics to assess the CPAs during in-person and virtual town halls
- Incorporated the CPAs in the ATSU strategic plan
- Created artwork to promote the CPAs
- Mapped the CPAs to all program goals/outcomes/objectives
- Mapped Critical Thinking course objectives for all courses in all six schools
- Mapped all CPAs to assessments in one of the six schools
- Performed gap analysis on program goals/outcomes/objectives for all CPAs
- Presented CPA overview to students at their orientations
- Surveyed graduates to assess their perception of how well their educational experiences prepared them to use each of the CPAs in their professional life
- Created a promotional video for the CPAs

- Required programs to embed the appropriate CPA as mapped to course goals and student learning objectives in course syllabi
- Increased collaborative discussions regarding assessment between faculty and staff across the University

An example of both raising awareness and implementation of the CPAs occurred in the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (KCOM). The KCOM Associate Dean for Curriculum and the Curriculum Committee often discuss the CPAs and their relationship to the courses during meetings. A member of the HLC Quality Initiative Team is a KCOM faculty member, and the syllabus for his infectious diseases course was distributed to other course directors as a model for embedding the CPAs in the syllabus.

**Looking back, reflect on the evolution of your Academy project. What factors does your Q: team feel most influenced how the project developed and changed?**

**A:** Prior to ATSU's participation in the Assessment Academy, the University Wide Assessment Committee (UWAC) had already established eight overarching professional goals in 2010, known as Transferable Skills. An attempt was made to map the Transferable Skills to academic program and course outcomes. The inability to construct clear and measurable outcomes for the 47 constructs of the Transferable Skills, along with minimal faculty buy-in, created the opportunity for the QI team to redefine, create, and implement measurable institutional outcomes.

After being accepted into the Assessment Academy, the QI Team modified the Transferable Skills, proposing five measurable meta-skills with fewer key constructs. Still closely aligned to the University's mission, the meta-skills were renamed Core Professional Attributes (CPAs): Critical Thinking, Cultural Proficiency, Interpersonal Skills, Interprofessional Collaboration, and Social Responsibility. We found that by simplifying our institutional goals from eight to five, and by crafting measurable key elements, implementation and mapping were more widely accepted within the University.

QI Team members presented the CPAs to the deans, faculty, staff, and faculty senate to solicit feedback. These stakeholders provided quality feedback and modifications. The CPAs were released to the ATSU community in August 2015. Having involved the ATSU community in the process of CPA development from the beginning, the QI Team found that buy-in increased University-wide and saw such involvement had a positive impact on the way in which our culture of assessment grows.

**Factors that most influenced how our QI project developed and changed are:**

- The QI Team met often and bonded together for a common purpose.
- CPAs were organically created. Grassroots stakeholders were contacted early in the process and, with the support of senior leadership, the CPAs became important to the whole community.

- Early buy-in from academic deans was paramount to the success of the project.
- Town halls, both onsite and virtual, were utilized to engage as many stakeholders in the process as possible. The QI Team remained determined in its communications with the community, especially faculty and administration, regardless of campus or discipline.
- The team remained flexible as it sought feedback, with a willingness to make significant changes as needed.
- Developing a crosswalk document facilitated communication and mapping in Tk20, ATSU's assessment software, allowing each program to maintain its individual terminology while providing common nomenclature for University purposes.

**Q: How has institutional capacity for assessing student learning changed over your time in the Academy?**

**A:** Students in our graduate health education programs have been assessed at the programmatic level since the inception of each program using a variety of assessment measures including knowledge and skill-based tests, simulation tests, practical (clinical) exams, and national licensing exams before they graduate from ATSU. What has changed since we entered the Academy is identification of overarching institutional outcomes that will be tracked regardless of discipline.

Our participation in the Academy has fostered a renewed environment of assessment in which administrators, faculty, staff, and students are now aware of professional attributes common to all ATSU graduates. While the QI project has not affected the amount of assessment being done, the project has impacted the efficiency of assessment data collection with a new focus of analysis on institutional outcomes encompassed in the CPAs.

**Q: What evidence do you have that your Academy work is improving student learning?**

**A:** We are confident our student learning outcomes in the various disciplines are addressed well. This belief, established through various forms of direct assessment used throughout the curricula, e.g., skill-based exams, has always been supported by high graduation rates, high pass rates on externally administered licensing examinations, and by exit and alumni surveys.

Since our assessment paradigm has been focussed on discipline-based knowledge and skills, we were concerned about the lack of university-wide learning outcomes. The QI project identified five attributes we could assess across the entire University. Recent results from exit surveys

provide preliminary supporting evidence for student belief in their preparedness to implement the CPAs in their professions.

**Q: What work still needs to be done?**

**A:**

- Work with programs to fill in gaps in outcomes at the course level
- Work with programs to refine assessment measures and outcomes
- Refine course materials and faculty intentionality in addressing the CPAs
- Expand CPA orientation opportunities for students and faculty
- Coordinate workshop topics for faculty in conjunction with the University Teaching and Learning Center
- Identify additional curricular and co-curricular opportunities aligned with CPAs
- Identification of artifacts within each program demonstrating student learning of CPAs
- Administer exit survey annually for longitudinal data collection and analysis
- Develop alumni and employer/residency director surveys for longitudinal data collection and analysis
- Complete mapping of CPAs in curriculum and co-curriculum and continually update and assess mapping process

**Version 6.0- Update**

**Q: Please confirm that this Activity is ready for review.**

**A:** This project is ready for review.

**Version 5.0- Project**

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

***To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects.***

**A:** In our last update the original team leader of our QI Academy project reported review of the project of Mercy College of Health Sciences, but since that report our team has been challenged with personnel issues. First, the original team leader departed the University, and then a car accident resulted in the extended absence of the newly assigned team leader. While we have continued to move forward with our project despite these upsets, the team's focus on making progress caused us to neglect the postings on the Collaboration Network.

Observationally, we have noted it would be to our benefit to review Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science going forward. Rosalind Franklin is a similar university, focused on graduate level health professions education, and has a very similar QI project, "Learning Outcomes for All Graduates". We most likely have shared experiences over the course of the Academy work and review of their experiences should be a good resource opportunity.

### **Version 5.0- Update**

**Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope and design since the last Q: Project Update.**

**A:** During the last six months our original team leader left the University and another team member stepped in to become the team lead. The departure of the original lead temporarily slowed progress and of course, added workload to the other team members. We had planned on completing the gap analysis and identifying measurement tools for the Critical Thinking CPA during this cycle. While we have continued to collect, refine, and map data for both course and program outcomes, gap analysis of the data has not significantly progressed. We expect to finish the Critical Thinking CPA gap analysis for the College of Graduate Health Sciences by the end of 2016.

We continue to search for and identify resources and measurement tools for the Critical Thinking CPA but we have also expanded our project scope. One early change in project scope was to engage the faculty in development of rubrics specific to each of the CPA Key Elements. These rubrics could then be used as assessment resources, especially when faculty add a project or exercise to a course to aid in CPA development. We hypothesized that work on the rubrics would increase investment by the faculty and educational staff members in the concept of the CPAs as a University-wide assessment activity. Rubric development is being accomplished through campus town hall workshops. One workshop has already been done on the Mesa campus, two are scheduled at the beginning of October for the virtual campus and the Kirksville campus. Completed draft rubrics will then be presented to the University-wide Assessment Committee, the Council of Deans and the Faculty Senate for feedback. Then, following any revisions, the team will solicit feedback from the entire university via campus

email. The final rubrics will be published on the Office of Assessment and Accreditation Google site.

- The progress we have made through increasing recognition of CPAs in existing coursework and program outcomes has led to other initiatives that further the opportunities for university-wide engagement in and assessment of the CPAs. As we contemplated ways to increase the culture of assessment at the university level we decided to create short video clips recording university administrators, faculty, staff, students and alumni, discussing incorporation of the CPAs into their courses, initiatives, co-curricular activities and clinical practicums. The videos will be used in various ways: during orientations for new faculty, staff and students;
  - readily available for faculty to use in classes;
  - posted on the website for public viewing;
  - screened as a recruitment tool for admissions; and
  - displayed on streaming campus video monitors.

Video recordings on both campuses are complete and being edited.

Our next change to project scope was to develop university-wide syllabus guidelines. These guidelines require alignment of course objectives with the CPAs and Key Elements in the section on Course Objectives. The new guidelines have been reviewed and approved by the Council of Deans for inclusion in course syllabi, and pilot implementation will begin in the Spring.

Finally, we have created five survey items (one for each CPA) to be added to all graduating student exit surveys across all programs, and to alumni follow-up surveys. The Deans have been reviewed these items and approved their inclusion in Exit Surveys. The Alumni Council will review and discuss the survey and propose an implementation plan on October 10.

**Describe your short term plan for measuring student learning. What specific tasks do you plan to accomplish in the next six months?**

**A:** In a review of our accreditation documents for our accredited programs, we have confirmed there are many successful educational strategies already in place at the program level for measuring student learning in their respective disciplines. The short term plan for measuring university-wide student learning of the CPAs revolves around

1. Identifying and mapping the CPA alignment with course objectives specific to Critical Thinking and its Key Elements
2. Cataloging the assessments of knowledge, skills, and judgement being used to document achievement of the course objectives that are aligned with the CPAs.
3. Collecting the results of the graduating students' exit survey items on the CPAs.

Our tasks during the next six months are:

- Continue to increase faculty and staff involvement in CPA opportunities. This includes training, data entry, and mapping of results into Tk20.
- Complete the videos of administrators, faculty, staff, students and alumni talking about the CPAs. Begin screening the videos during orientations, student recruitment sessions, classes, etc.
- Continue work on the University syllabi project to formally document alignment of course objectives with the CPAs and Key Elements.
- Identify assessments used to measure CPA-aligned course objectives.
- Continue the annual University Assessment Week activities. NOTE: Inclement weather had postponed the keynote speaker presentation and related workshops in February, 2016. Attendance at the rescheduled workshops in April, 2016 significantly increased faculty participation in both campus locations and progress was made on completing the CPA rubrics. We are in the planning phase for the next Assessment Week, tentatively scheduled for early Spring, 2017.
- Complete and disseminate the CPAs Assessment rubrics as a resource for the faculty using town hall presentations and workshops. The town halls are being held in September and very early October to complete the rubrics and we expect to aggregate the work shortly thereafter. Further discussion with the faculty and programs will continue through Fall 2016.

**How well are you positioned to complete your project in the final years of the Academy?**

**Q: What additional tools, resources, and engagement do you need?**

**A:** Just as predicted when we started this project in the Academy, we recognized the breadth of this project is too large to complete within the years of the Academy. We are confident we can complete what we have outlined above and university student learning outcomes efforts will continue after we have finished the Academy. To that end, we forecast that the following will be necessary to continue work on the CPAs:

- Complete mapping of CPA Key Elements to course objectives for remaining four CPAs.
- Seek and share additional assessment tools for each CPA while applying those already identified and disseminate to faculty;
- Identify champions within faculty and administration who actively incorporate the CPAs into their courses, clinical practices, and activities and can lead others to do the same;
- Compile data on CPA assessments and any correlation with reported professional success after graduation;
- Increase opportunities for faculty and staff to engage in reporting outcomes for their own programmatic accreditation.

**What changes do you anticipate as you move into the second half of the Academy term?**

**Q: What have you learned from the first two years of the Academy to mitigate these challenges?**

**A:** We do not anticipate significant changes to the project during this last year. Opportunities continue to grow for outreach to the ATSU community as the team identifies initiatives already underway addressing the CPAs.

#### Learning Experiences:

- We need to continue to offer creative solutions and outreach activities using a variety of methodologies. Offering activities at different times during the day recognizes the culture of different programs as well as the different time zones of our constituencies.
- Continued communication and outreach will continue to be critical to the success of the project.
- Partnering with personnel in each school and with the Teaching and Learning Center allows us to maximize the resources already available within ATSU.

**Q: How have you used what you have learned about student learning to improve your educational strategies (curricular and co-curricular)? What evidence do you have that your work thus far has improved student learning? What more do you need to know?**

**A:** We continue to complete the curricular maps, identifying the CPAs within program goals and course objectives. However, at the university level we have to utilize exit survey data to verify our belief that university-wide student learning outcomes are strengthened by our focus on the CPAs. The video project noted in question 3 identified initiatives and faculty who utilize the CPAs in a variety of ways. We interviewed an alumna who not only acknowledged the CPAs were important to her education, but explained that her involvement in an Interprofessional Collaboration initiative prepared her for her post-graduation interviews and advantaged her employment efforts. While the video interview provides anecdotal evidence that our work on the CPAs improved that student's learning, it is obvious that annually collecting exit data on a university-wide basis is an essential next step.

Clearly we also need to collect post-graduation data as well in order to answer the following questions:

- have our graduates acquired strong CPAs?
- are they are benefitting from their learning outcomes in applying this knowledge in their clinical experiences?

Finally, we also would like to collect data from employers for whom our graduates work:

- do our students exemplify the CPAs?
- do they apply the CPAs in their daily work?

#### Version 5.0- Response

**Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).**

**A:** Sue Pieper [Sue.pieper@nau.edu](mailto:Sue.pieper@nau.edu) 928.523.1502  
Susan Hatfield [SHatfield@hlcommission.org](mailto:SHatfield@hlcommission.org)

**Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?**

**A:** Sue Pieper

- I commend you on making progress over the past six months on your student learning project despite some significant personnel issues. Your continued forward movement is a testament to the strength of your Assessment Academy team.
- Your selection of Rosalind Franklin University, an institution with a mission similar to yours, to follow on the Collaboration Network is good! You will most likely share similar assessment opportunities as well as challenges.
- Your work on creating common rubrics to assess the CPAs is a positive change to your project scope and directly addresses Susan's previous concern regarding the development of common, shared definitions of the CPAs.
- Another positive change is the creation of short video clips recording various ATSU community members discussing how they are incorporating the CPAs into their courses and other student experiences. These personal testimonies are an effective strategy for communicating the value of your shared institutional goals.
- Other positive changes include making connections between curriculum and assessment with university-wide syllabus guidelines and gathering indirect evidence of student learning of the CPAs through items on the graduating student exit survey and alumni follow-up surveys.

Susan Hatfield

As is usually the case, Sue does a great job of identifying the strengths. I agree with her list -- ATSU has made progress during the past six months in spite of significant personnel challenges. It was encouraging to read that faculty engagement is increasing as evidenced by the increased participation the April workshop.

**Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?**

**A:** Sue Pieper

Given that you have approximately one year remaining in the Assessment Academy—and you have worked diligently to lay the groundwork for university-wide assessment of your CPAs—I'm wondering if you could implement a small pilot assessment of one of your CPAs within the next year or so. Collecting, analyzing, and reporting on results for one of your CPAs will help you to sustain the momentum you've built around assessment of student learning of the CPAs at ATSU.

Susan Hatfield

What have you found in your search for Critical Thinking resources and measurement tools?

What is the status of the other CPAs? How is work progressing on them?

The videos are an interesting idea. How and by whom are they being used?

**Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

I hope you will consider a small pilot assessment of one of your CPAs. Why not move forward with the Critical Thinking CPA? What data can you collect now? How can you use your newly developed rubric to assess Critical Thinking?

Susan Hatfield

I agree with Sue -- It's time to pilot test the rubrics and actually begin to implement a plan to collect data. There seems to be some hesitancy to do this-- new projects keep getting added which push back the actual implementation of any direct assessment of learning.

While the other aspects of your project are certainly useful (surveys, university wide syllabus, the videos, etc), these projects seem to be diverting attention away from developing each of the CPAs and preparing tools to be used to assess them.

Do all of the CPAs have rubrics? (It sounds like just critical thinking, but it's hard to tell).

While I commend the institution wide approach to developing the rubrics, even if "approved" you will not know if they really work until you pilot test them. Find some friendly faculty who are willing to use them and provide feedback while the team is developing an implementation plan. From where with the data be collected? Who will actually evaluate the CPAs using the rubrics? Then what happens? It seems to make sense to try to pilot test all of the rubrics this spring.

**Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?**

**A:** Sue Pieper

I enjoyed meeting with your team at the 2016 HLC Annual Conference. Please let me know if you'd like to have another conversation to follow up from my feedback above.

Susan Hatfield

Great idea to have met with Sue at the annual meeting. Keeping in contact with her during this next phase will be very helpful.

Scholar(s):	Susan Hatfield
Primary Mentor(s):	Suzanne Pieper

### Version 4.0- Project

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

**A:** We have been following the “Critical Thinking at Mercy College: From Inference to Evidence Across the Curriculum Project.” This project has many commonalities with our own project. They are a health science institution focusing on one of our Core Professional Attributes – Critical Thinking. They emphasize the need to develop an Institutional Assessment Plan. Mercy College identified specific courses to collect assessment data. This is a useful strategy as it avoids the problem of data overload. This is a strategy that we might consider adopting in our data collection phase.

### Version 4.0- Update

**Q: How have you incorporated the feedback from the Consolidated Response to your previous Project Update?**

**A:** The mentors had the following questions for us:

*Question: How were you able to engage faculty and staff in Assessment Week and Town Hall activities?*

Response: Various strategies were employed to engage faculty and staff. The University-Wide Assessment Committee (UWAC) formed a planning committee for Assessment Week, updates were regularly given to UWAC. UWAC Membership includes:

1. SVPAA or Assoc. AVPAA (ex-officio)
2. VP Student Affairs
3. University Staff Council representative
4. University Faculty Senate representative
5. University Student Association representative
6. Dean’s Council representative

7. VP University Finance/Budget
8. Chief Information Officer
9. Diversity Director
10. Office of Accreditation & Assessment Director
11. VP Advancement
12. VP Planning, Assessment, & Institutional Effectiveness
13. At-large faculty member (AZ or MO)
14. At-large student (AZ or MO)
15. OAA Data manager
16. VP Sponsored programs

For our first Assessment Week, held in April 2015, the theme was: Growing a Culture of Assessment across the University. The keynote speaker was world-renowned assessment specialist Trudy Banta, EdD. The Assessment Week program was varied and engaging including presentations on assessment, workshops, and discussion panels. The second Assessment Week, held Feb 9-11, 2016, was just as exciting. Our keynote speaker for this year was another well-known assessment specialist, Peggy Maki, PhD; unfortunately due to inclement weather, her presentation was postponed to a later date. Building on last year's theme, this year's theme was "*Establishing Frameworks for Assessment*," and the program focused on the CPAs and strategies for assessment. The university Communication and Marketing department designed an eye-catching Assessment Week logo. We began using the logo in all emails on Assessment Week in November 2015. To advertise Assessment Week events, we used direct emails, digital signage, posters, direct contacts, and personal invitations. We asked for agenda items on Assessment Week to be added to meetings of the faculty senate and assemblies and the council of deans, among others. As last year, events were distributed over several days and included a town hall to share our program-level mapping results. Although the keynote was postponed, we held poster receptions and five multi-campus panel discussions to share examples of CPA-related work being done in courses and co-curricular activities.

All Assessment Week activities were livestreamed for the online audience and recorded. The recordings and documents are accessible on a Google site. Developing a culture of assessment takes a number of years before it becomes the norm. We are only in our second year of holding an assessment week. Participation in the week's events has been extremely low. One challenge we face is not having a common calendar to facilitate setting aside dedicated time for university-wide activities such as Assessment Week.

*Question: What strategies will you use to engage students in assessment?*

Response:

Strategies to engage students in assessment include the use of summative assessment of student learning surveys such as the student perception of teaching effectiveness survey (SPTE) and a climate survey, among others. These surveys will provide us with feedback we will use to continuously improve their learning experiences.

One example is the ATSU Still Standing Falls Prevention Outreach Program, a community service learning project, examines the impact of the project on falls prevention in the elderly. Students facilitate discussions and exercises on falls prevention with elderly clients. The project encompasses all five CPAs: critical thinking, interprofessional collaboration, cultural proficiency, interpersonal skills and social responsibility. Pre- and post-tests are administered to the students to determine student perceptions. We will continue to work closely with this program to fully engage students in the assessment of CPAs.

*Question: Now that your CPAs are approved and programs are involved in mapping their courses to the CPAs, have you thought about developing an assessment plan for the University-wide CPAs?*

Response: We are working on developing an assessment plan for the University. While the overall plan has not been formalized, the work we are doing on CPAs will be part of the formal University Assessment Plan. We have also included the development of a continuous improvement plan in our goals and QI project timeline. Assessment data will be collected and used to continually improve programs and student learning at ATSU.

*Question: What other groundwork has gone into the assessment of critical thinking?*

Response: The newly established Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) has held workshops on the assessment of critical thinking. During this year's Assessment Week, we devoted one panel discussion session to the assessment of critical thinking. All panelists on this session presented impressive work they are currently undertaking on the assessment of critical thinking.

**In May 2016, the TLC will sponsor a workshop for faculty, "Learning-Centered Teaching: Coordinating Evidence-Based Teaching With Evidence-based Learning." Evidence-based decision making is one of the key elements for the assessment of critical thinking.**

*Question: Is the plan to pilot test the assessment of critical thinking in the spring, or is the assumption that what programs are already doing relative to critical thinking assessment will be aggregated in some manner?*

Response: There is evidence from accreditation standards and program outcomes that academic programs are conducting critical thinking assessment in their courses. As we enter the assessment data, gaps will be identified. Reports will be generated for each unit to address the gaps. Once gaps have been remedied, assessment data in Tk20 will be aggregated and reports generated as part of the assessment plan. These reports will be used to close the data loop.

*Question: Have you begun to explore the connection of the CPAs to the co-curriculum?*

Response: Yes, we have. The Student Services department recently acquired software called OrgSync, which helps track student involvement and manages campus organizations and programs. OrgSync creates an online community to help departments, programs, and student organizations streamline processes and drive engagement. The platform helps the university connect and engage with the populations students serve. It also improves information sharing, tracks co-curricular involvement, and allows us to generate reports on all data collected for annual reports and accreditation. Student Services is tracking and collecting student involvement data through the new software. Currently, there are 102 student organizations, with the vast majority of these organizations involving service learning and voluntary activities. These activities are now being routinely collected into the OrgSync database. We will be able to extract relevant assessment data from this database.

One program engaging students in CPAs assessment is the Still Standing Falls Prevention Outreach Program. This program incorporates all five CPAs. Students are involved in community outreach to the community. Students teach, lead discussions and facilitate cognitive restructuring to prevent falls in the elderly. At the beginning and end of the program, students complete pre- and post-tests.

*Question: Consider developing an assessment plan, if you don't already have one, for the University-wide CPAs. You'll want to include the CPAs, assessment tools used to assess the CPAs, who is responsible for collecting the data and when and where data collection will take*

*place, who is responsible for data analysis and when data analysis will take place, who will be part of the discussion of data, and finally, when those discussions will take place?*

Response: We are working on developing a university-wide assessment plan for the CPAs. Assessment strategies and assessment data on the CPAs will be collected through our assessment software Tk20. The Office of Assessment and Accreditation has the responsibility of collecting assessment data. Data analysis will begin in Fall 2016 and continue through Spring 2017. Assessment committees of each program as well as the University-wide Assessment Committee will be part of the ongoing data discussion.

**Q: Your team has reached the midpoint in the Academy. Summarize your team's accomplishments thus far.**

**A:** The Quality Initiative (QI) team has made great strides in moving from Transferable Skills to the Core Professional Attributes (CPAs). Involving faculty and staff at the beginning of the process facilitated participation and contributions to the identification and definitions of the CPAs and Key Elements. The team anticipates this continuing involvement will encourage authentic integration of these institutional outcomes into the curriculum. The following paragraphs detail each year's activities thus far.

In the first year, the team solicited feedback from the ATSU community to redefine the eight Transferable Skills to five cross-curricular meta-skills inherent to all ATSU graduates called Core Professional Attributes. The ATSU community worked collaboratively through town halls to identify and define the CPAs. To continue the cross-campus conversation about assessment, the QI team has created and participated in the annual assessment week. Dr. Trudy Banta delivered the inaugural keynote address with the topic "Moving Assessment to the University Level to Strengthen a Culture of Learning." She also met with various faculty and committees while on campus. Other activities included a town hall, poster session, and panel discussions. Events were poorly attended, both online and in person. The QI team did not have high expectations for the first year but determined to find other ways to attract faculty and staff in the second year. In the months following Assessment Week, University departments and programs entered program outcomes into our assessment software, Tk20.

Recognizing the CPAs have expansive definitions, the QI team employed town halls during which the University community identified 3-5 key elements per CPA, capturing the essence of each. By the end of the first year, the QI team shared the Key Elements of the CPAs with the University-wide Assessment Committee for approval. The final language was then disseminated to stakeholders.

The second year of the project has involved more data entry work by individuals at the program and college/school level. Once the information was collected in one location and mapped to the CPAs, the following issues were identified:

- A crosswalk document needed to be created, allowing for differences in discipline terminology. While some programs use the word 'outcome,' other programs use 'competency,' 'goal,' or 'objective' in compliance with discipline-specific accreditation language.
- The deans and program/department heads needed to highlight either obscure language in program outcomes or true gaps between program outcomes and CPAs.
- Mapping all course and program outcomes to each CPA involves many hours of faculty work. Thus, the QI team selected one CPA, Critical Thinking, as a goal for completion

during this year. During subsequent years, the remainder of the CPAs will be mapped. This process could lead to the establishment of a continuing five-year review cycle.

The QI team worked collaboratively with multiple University units in planning and organizing the second annual University Assessment Week. This year's theme was "Establishing Frameworks for Assessment." Keynote speaker Dr. Peggy Maki was unable to attend because of inclement weather; however, the Town Hall, hosted poster session, and panel discussions proceeded as scheduled. Attendance was disappointing. Online as well as on campus participation declined, however those participating were engaged and contributed to good discussions. Events were advertised in a different manner and without the keynote speaker, it is unclear if one or both factors contributed to lower attendance. On the plus side, there is now an opportunity to highlight University assessment once again when the keynote address and workshop are held later this spring.

Training thus far has been in Tk20 and with the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). The Tk20 Unit Administrator trains individuals and small groups in using Tk20, while TLC hosted a session during which the participants watched a video regarding Critical Thinking followed by a discussion.

A major milestone for the QI Project is the incorporation of CPAs into the University strategic plan, 2016-2020. The objective for CPAs in the new strategic plan is: *Ensure core professional attributes (CPAs) are instilled in all ATSU programs.* This strategic plan objective gives the QI project team the support and leverage it needs as it works with the various units.

**Q: Describe the most significant challenges and opportunities encountered in the development and initial implementation of your Academy project.**

**A:** One challenge has been the myriad of terminologies used across campus to describe the desired learning accomplished in their programs, i.e., program outcomes. These differences in terminology are largely driven by variations in the requirements of their respective accrediting bodies. To manage this, we developed a crosswalk to align terminologies so mapping would be more easily accomplished and understood.

Another challenge has been engaging the ATSU community in institutional assessment. While faculty and staff have been willing to participate in one-on-one or program-specific sessions, historically, *university-wide* discussion of and participation in assessment activities, has been a low priority. Each unit takes assessment very seriously at the programmatic and course level; the challenge is recognizing the importance of University-level assessment. Inclusion of the CPAs in the new Strategic Plan will assist in sharpening focus on university-wide assessment.

**Q: To this point, who has been engaged in the Academy process. Are there additional stakeholders who need to be included in the Academy process? How can they be engaged?**

**A:** The QI team is composed of faculty, staff, and administrators including:  
 Dr. Ann Boyle, Associate Vice President-Academic Affairs  
 Ms. Norine Eitel, Assistant to the President, Secretary to the Board, and Accreditation Liaison Officer  
 Dr. Randy Danielsen, Dean, Arizona School of Health Sciences  
 Dr. Lisa Ncube, Director, Office of Assessment and Accreditation

Dr. Melanie Davis, Assistant Director, Office of Assessment and Accreditation  
 Ms. Jane Hawthorne, University Data Manager  
 Dr. Jim Lynskey, Faculty, Arizona School of Health Sciences  
 Dr. Neil Sargentini, Faculty, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine

While we feel the QI team is sufficient for Academy process, we have engaged the entire ATSU community in the QI project. Faculty, staff and students have been invited to participate in various activities surrounding the QI project and have responded in limited numbers. We will explore ways to encourage more participation in the future.

**Q: What are your goals for the next six months? How will this advance your project?**

**A:** Goals for the next six months include:

1. Increase faculty, staff, and administration opportunities for outcomes and assessment strategies training.
2. Map course outcomes to CPAs and Key Elements.
3. Conduct gap analysis of the Critical Thinking CPA.
4. Identify potential measurement tools for Critical Thinking.
5. Conduct pre-assessment of Critical Thinking and plan post-assessment.
6. Develop strategies for assessment data entry on CPAs into Tk20.

**Q: What challenges do you anticipate? How will you address them?**

**A:** Entering, mapping, and analyzing course outcomes across the curricula and adding into a single University assessment software system require a significant amount of work. The Office of Assessment and Accreditation is exploring ways to facilitate this initial mapping process. We also anticipate collecting and tracking measures will be a challenging proposition; we will actively engage assessment and data personnel in each University unit to address specific opportunities regarding these areas.

**Version 4.0- Response**

**Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).**

**A:** Sue Pieper [Sue.pieper@nau.edu](mailto:Sue.pieper@nau.edu) 928.523.1502

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**Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

Both mentors agree that this is a clearly focused project. The assessment of eight university-wide Transferable Skills (Leadership, Wellbeing, Critical Thinking, Cultural Competence, Interprofessional Collaboration, Ethical and Legal Understanding, Positive Interpersonal Communication, and Self-Assessment and Reflective Practice) will provide a common thread throughout the University. The objectives of the project progress logically from defining and refining the Transferable Skills to determining the impact of Transferable Skills on alumni. The emphasis on a common set of moveable skills that all graduates should possess upon graduation is a great start toward building a culture of assessment -- and more importantly, a culture of learning -- across the university.

**A:** Sue Pieper

Your Academy project is clearly focused on assessing five Core Professional Attributes: Critical Thinking, Cultural Competence, Interprofessional Collaboration, Interpersonal Skills, and Social Responsibility.

You are on time and on task with your student learning project goals.

Your plans for an Annual Assessment Week are ambitious and exciting!

Susan Hatfield

The shift from an emphasis on Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes (CPAs) will give the project more focus.

The University continues to take a logical and systematic approach to their work.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- Wonderful work on meeting your goals for the past six months! Activities and communication at the University level, such as your Assessment Week and Town Halls, will advance the progress of your student learning project, and more importantly, will grow a culture of assessment at your institution. You've done a great job of reaching out to faculty and staff at a distance through webinars as well as virtual posters, a resource fair, and discussions.
- Thank you for clarifying your rationale for shifting from Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes. This sounds like a positive change. Not only will you be better able to measure student achievement of these outcomes, but the CPAs also align with your University mission.

Mapping your CPAs to the entire curriculum will provide an excellent tool for better understanding your students' learning experience as they progress through the curriculum as well as for identifying where you might collect evidence of student learning of the CPAs.

Susan Hatfield

SueP has **identified** the many strengths of this project -- I especially appreciated the statement "We have been particularly happy with the successful engagement across the university in Town Halls" -- That's a clear tribute to both the careful planning of the event itself, and also your creation of a climate where people felt free to share their thoughts and ideas. Well done!

ATSU is already starting to create some of the cornerstones of their desired culture -- Assessment Week is a great example of this.

**A:** Sue Pieper

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- I agree with your insights regarding Mercy College's assessment project. It's a great idea to gather existing course evidence of student learning related to outcomes of interest. This strategy is more efficient—and often more effective—than layering on yet another assessment instrument for faculty, staff, and students.
- Your plans for engaging faculty and staff in Assessment Week activities were quite comprehensive and took into account the geographically dispersed environment of your institution, for example livestreaming all Assessment Week activities.
- I'm glad to hear that you're developing an assessment plan and timeline as well as a continuous improvement plan. You will be well positioned as you move into the next half of your time in the Academy. Additionally, your focus on the Critical Thinking CPA as a goal for completion this year is a reasonable approach for your institution.
- Incorporation of the CPAs into the new strategic plan highlights the importance of assessment at your institution and, I concur, provides the project team with the support and leverage they need.
- Your goals for the next six months are appropriate given the progress as well as the challenges of your student learning project described in your update.

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Sue did a great job of identifying the strengths of the project. It appears that while full engagement on the part of faculty has lower than desired, ATSU has made considerable progress in developing the infrastructure for assessment.

**Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?**

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**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

What was your rationale for changing from the eight Transferable Skills to the five Core Professional Attributes? (Did you want to streamline the number of skills? Did you want to focus on more measurable skills? Did the Core Professional Attributes better align with your university mission? Did you want to align better with your current curriculum? Something else?)

Was there any resistance to the change, especially related to any perceived "loss" of the skills that are now included in the broader attributes?

Will you focus only on graduating students' achievement of the Core Professional Attributes, or will you use a more developmental approach? How else will you use assessment results?

How will faculty (and students) be involved in the Annual Assessment Week event?

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- How were you able to engage faculty and staff in Assessment Week and Town Hall activities? Tell me more!
- What strategies will you use to engage students in assessment?
- Now that your CPAs are approved and programs are involved in mapping their courses to the CPAs, have you thought about developing an assessment plan for the University-wide CPAs?

Susan Hatfield

What did you learn from the roll of to the CPAs to the campus? Was anything brought up either in the town halls, but the Keynoter, or in the approval process that identified issues that you will need to address or that might come to the forefront later on? (beyond the "time" issue). Beyond sharing resources for the assessment of critical thinking, what other groundwork has gone into the assessment of critical thinking? Is the plan to pilot test the assessment of critical thinking in the spring, or is the assumption that what programs are already doing relative to critical thinking assessment will be aggregated in some manner?

Have you begun to explore the connection of the CPAs to the cocurriculum?

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- It's surprising, given all of your careful planning and communication, that you didn't have better attendance at your two Assessment Weeks. What have you considered as far as ideas for boosting attendance?
- The Still Standing Falls Prevention Outreach Program sounds like a wonderful integrated approach to teaching, learning, and assessing your CPAs. Can you describe your pre/post test related to this program in more detail?

Susan Hatfield

I too was struck by the lack of participation on the part of faculty after their engagement in the earlier Town Hall sessions.

Is there a systematic approach at this point for assessing critical thinking? It sounds like the plan at this point is to look at Tk20 and see how critical thinking is being assessed in courses and identify gaps. is it clear that every course is using the same definition of critical thinking and is it being assessed in a way that makes it possible to aggregate data across courses or units in order to address the issue of the degree to which students are able to think critically at ATSU?

How aware are students of the CPAs?

**Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?****A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

- The posting indicates that training and workshops for faculty and staff will be held July 2015 – December 2015. Will you at that time have already developed university-level student learning outcomes for the Transferrable Skills? Who will be involved in their development? How will they be communicated to faculty and staff? Will the focus of these workshops be on developing program-level and course-level student learning outcomes for the Transferable Skills? Who will facilitate the workshops? Members of the Academy team and the University-wide Assessment Committee, for example, could play an important role in the development and implementation of the workshops.
- The establishment of an Office of Assessment and Accreditation is a critical step forward in coordinating assessment and institutional research—and in building a culture of assessment across your widely geographically dispersed institution. In your Academy application you state that the primary function of this office will be to “effectively manage data so as to allow for accurate and timely provision of information to administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Trustees to use in planning and decision making.” While access to data is extremely important for quality improvement (and reporting to accreditors), keep in mind that assessment data is only as good as your assessment process. An equally important function for this office should be to provide faculty and staff support for the assessment of student learning process. This might include, for example, assistance with designing student learning outcomes, curriculum mapping, or instrument development for the Transferable Skills project.
- Consider how you can make this project manageable and doable. Your goal is to assess eight Transferable Skills. You might want to develop a plan for assessing two or three skills per year rather than tackling all eight skills at once. Your objective to map the Transferable Skills to the curriculum and co-curriculum will provide you with some useful information regarding where the various Transferable Skills are taught and assessed. It should also give you some ideas about where you might want to start with assessing the Transferrable Skills. If, for example, evidence of student learning of critical thinking is already available in courses and programs across the curriculum, this might be one of the skills you’ll want to assess in the first year.

Additionally, give the structure of the university, communication is going to play a critical role in the success of the initiative. The development of the project web site is a great start, but also personally engaging with faculty on all of the campuses will help facilitate success.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

- As you consider community-wide communication and culture building around assessment, you will want to clearly communicate why you have chosen to focus on the five Core Professional Attributes. These student learning outcomes will provide a foundation for curriculum, learning design, and assessment at the university level, so you will want to articulate to the university community why they are important and how they connect to your university mission and goals.
- Determining the extent to which graduating students have acquired the Core Professional Attributes is a worthy goal, particularly as far as making improvements for future students. Beyond using your assessments to provide summative evidence of students' learning at the culmination of their programs, think also about how assessment results can be used formatively. In other words, how can you use evidence of student learning of the Core Professional Attributes as students progress through their programs in order to improve student learning for current students?
- Consider, whenever possible, involving faculty and students in leading workshops, creating posters, participating in webinars, etc. for the Annual Assessment Week. This is a great way to grow a culture of assessment at your institution.
- It might be worth considering if you want to present your project as a Culture of Assessment, or a Culture Promoting Student Learning.
- Regardless of which you chose, being patient will be key -- it takes a long time to shift a culture, and different faculty and staff will engage at different times and at different levels. Don't let yourself get discouraged in the early going.....

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- Your plans and goals for the next six months look reasonable and doable, and you are already working on addressing some of the anticipated challenges, including designing a crosswalk document for relating discipline student learning outcome language to HLC vernacular to help faculty and staff understand the terminology used in curriculum mapping. Good work!
- Consider developing an assessment plan, if you don't already have one, for the University-wide CPAs. You'll want to include the CPAs, assessment tools used to assess the CPAs, who is responsible for collecting the data and when and where data collection will take place, who is responsible for data analysis and when data analysis will take place, who will be part of the discussion of data, and finally, when those discussions will take place

Susan Hatfield

Sue's second suggestion is where I was starting to head in my question in the previous section. Starting to think that through in the next six months might be very helpful. I'm not sure if the Academy Team is directly related in the in the Tk20 training (in which case I'm guessing you'll have your hands full!) but if not, having the team begin to determine how the CPAs are going to be assessed -- and the plan for using the CPA data -- would be helpful. This will likely take more than six months, but getting a jump on it might be useful and provide a framework for how you move forward in the six months that follow.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

I think you've pointed out an important overall challenge to assessment at your institution in your update: "engaging the ATSU community in institutional assessment." This is a challenge for most, if not all, institutions. Folks do tend to be most engaged in their courses and programs. Helping the campus community make the connections between course (and outside-of-course), program, and institutional student learning of the CPAs will be critical to the

success of your project. You are on the right path with your goal to increase faculty, staff, and administration professional development activities related to assessment.

Susan Hatfield

It might be helpful to shift the focus of your conversations from Assessment to Learning. The term Assessment can create problems for faculty -- focusing on learning places the emphasis on something more universal, and something that most faculty care deeply about.

Additionally, it strikes me that critical thinking is already something that most professions have already included in their accreditation standards -- usually in the form of problem solving or decision making. Is it possible to see how programs are already addressing the issue and develop some overall approach to assessing critical thinking that would meet both the needs of ATSU and individual program's professional accreditation? This is sort of like the approach you are currently engaged in, but it's not clear that what is currently being assessed as critical thinking is the product of a shared definition of the skill.

This will probably be addressed in the institution wide approach to assessing the CPAs which will be developed soon. Aligning each program's professional accreditation standards with the CPAs will take some time but may yield a potentially effective and efficient path for engaging faculty and moving forward the Academy initiative.

**What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

For ideas about how other institutions are building an assessment culture in a geographically dispersed environment, you might want to check out Academy institutions in the Collaboration Portal that have a significant number of online courses and programs. You might also look at those institutions that have multiple campuses. Additionally, for ideas about how to plan for assessing the Transferable Skills, you might check out institutions with student learning projects focused on institution-wide student learning outcomes.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

Were you able to find any resources about building a culture of assessment in a geographically dispersed environment? If not, please let me know, and I'll look for some resources for you.

Susan Hatfield

We hope to see you at the Academy events at the Annual Meeting!

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

As you requested, I'll look for any resources regarding building a culture of assessment in a geographically dispersed environment. However, it looks like you are well on your way to meeting this challenge!

Susan Hatfield

You might want to check out National American University as a starting point -- they were in the Academy a few years ago and you can access their postings in the Network.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

I like the following book for helping folks understand the connections between course, program, and institutional assessment:

- Walvoord, B. E., & Anderson V. J. (2010). *Effective grading: A tool for learning and assessment in college*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

I'm attending the HLC Annual Conference in April. Please let me know if any of your team members are attending and you would like to get together face-to-face.

Susan Hatfield

Taking advantage of meeting with Sue at the annual meeting would be great! There will also be programming specifically for Academy Teams which you might find helpful.

Scholar(s):	Susan Hatfield
Primary Mentor(s):	Suzanne Pieper

### Version 3.0- Project

**Q: Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope or design since February 2015.**

**A:** The QI project has had no significant changes in scope or design beyond those already submitted in February 2015. Please note: recognizing the previously reported change, the title of the project now reflects the new thrust: *Transforming Professional Student Learning Outcomes through Assessment of Core Professional Attributes*

**Q: What were your goals for the past six months—since February 2015? Did you achieve them? Why or why not?**

**A:**

- I. Communicate with the ATSU community at large through various channels, including:
  - a. Deans' Council
  - b. University Faculty Senate and Assemblies
- II. Inculcate a culture of assessment at ATSU

- a. Hold an Assessment Week.
- b. Hold Town Halls to present and discuss the Core Professional Attributes to the larger University community.

Previous goals, listed above, were all achieved.

I. a. & b.: Several presentations were made to and input sought from the Dean's Council, University Senate and Assemblies, and the University-wide Assessment Committee (UWAC). CPAs were ratified and approved by the UWAC and by the Dean's Council.

II. a.: We held a very successful Assessment Week April 14 – 18, 2015: Growing a Culture of Assessment. Listed below are the main highlights.

- Monday, April 13: Town Hall Panel with Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Associate Vice President discussing the Core Professional Attributes.
- Tuesday, April 14 Four Webinars: *Assessment Basics*, *Assessing Diversity & Cultural Proficiency*, *Writing Items to Assess Higher Order Thinking*, *Authentic Assessment of Clinical Skills*
- Wednesday, April 15: Keynote Address by Trudy Banta, Ed.D.: *Moving Assessment to the University Level to Strengthen a Culture of Learning*
  - Open Discussion: Dr. Banta
  - 2015 Assessment Week Poster Showcase: Poster presentations by faculty and staff and also available virtually on a Google site
- Thursday, April 16: Virtual Resource Fair with discussions regarding HLC, Tk20.
- Panel Discussion by faculty and administrators regarding assessment activities within their schools.

II. b.: We also held four Town Halls to present and discuss the Core Professional Attributes to the larger University community from April to July, 2015. We have been particularly happy with the successful engagement across the university in Town Halls that resulted in completing the CPA document, and with our dissemination of the ongoing work in progress throughout the year.

**Q: How did you incorporate the feedback that you received on your previous posting in February 2015?**

**A: Reviewer Sue Pieper's Comments**

*Your Academy project is clearly focused on assessing five Core Professional Attributes: Critical Thinking, Cultural Competence, Interprofessional Collaboration, Interpersonal Skills, and Social Responsibility. You are on time and on task with your student learning project goals. Your plans for an Annual Assessment Week are ambitious and exciting!*

*Were you able to find any resources about building a culture of assessment in a geographically dispersed environment? If not, please let me know, and I'll look for some resources for you.*

We do not have any resources regarding building a culture of assessment in a geographically dispersed environment and would appreciate any resources that you are able to share with us.

Reviewer Susan Hatfield's Comments

*The shift from an emphasis on Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes (CPAs) will give the project more focus.*

- i. *What was your rationale for changing from the eight Transferable Skills to the five Core Professional Attributes? (Did you want to streamline the number of skills?)*
- ii. *Did you want to focus on more measurable skills? Did the Core Professional Attributes better align with your university mission?*
- iii. *Did you want to align better with your current curriculum? Something else?)*

We changed from Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes because we determined the term Transferable Skills implied skills that needed measurement after graduation and it would be much more difficult to assess. We also determined the initial endeavor was too ambitious, requiring assessment on 47 different items, some of which were not measurable. By refining the components of four of the Transferable Skills, we subsumed them into one CPA, Social Responsibility, which aligns well with our University Mission:

“A.T. Still University of Health Sciences serves as a learning-centered university dedicated to preparing highly competent professionals through innovative academic programs with a commitment to continue its osteopathic heritage and focus on whole person healthcare, scholarship, community health, interprofessional education, diversity, and underserved populations.” (<http://www.atsu.edu/about-atsu#Mission-Vision-Values>).

We are now in the process of mapping the student learning outcomes including CPAs to the curriculum.

- iv. *Was there any resistance to the change, especially related to any perceived "loss" of the skills that are now included in the broader attributes?*

We have been careful to explain that some of the previous work on the Transferable Skills is preserved in the shift to Core Professional Attributes. In addition, we have been deliberate in our efforts to involve and engage faculty and staff in the change process and related assessment activities. Through the hosted Town Halls, we have been very pleasantly surprised at the level of acceptance of the new direction and engagement in the process.

- v. *Will you focus only on graduating students' achievement of the Core Professional Attributes, or will you use a more developmental approach? How else will you use assessment results?*

We are using a more developmental approach. We are mapping CPAs to the entire curriculum, starting with Critical Thinking. Assessment data of CPAs will be used to determine gaps in the curriculum which will allow us to take corrective measures.

- vi. *How will faculty (and students) be involved in the Annual Assessment Week event?*

Faculty and staff were actively involved in the assessment through both face-to-face participation and online webinar presentations. Faculty and staff were also involved through webinar presentations, poster presentations and panel discussions in the various sessions (see Assessment Week highlights, above). While the focus of Assessment Week was faculty and staff, as we move forward with the integration of CPAs into the curriculum, we are actively seeking student input.

- vii. *The University continues to take a logical and systematic approach to their work. We hope to see you at the Academy events at the Annual Meeting!*

Thank you! We are looking forward to HLC 2016, see you there!

-

### Reviewers Comments

*As you consider community-wide communication and culture building around assessment, you will want to clearly communicate why you have chosen to focus on the five Core Professional Attributes. These student learning outcomes will provide a foundation for curriculum, learning design, and assessment at the university level, so you will want to articulate to the university community why they are important and how they connect to your university mission and goals. Determining the extent to which graduating students have acquired the Core Professional Attributes is a worthy goal, particularly as far as making improvements for future students.*

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We have acted on your suggestions of presenting our project as a "Culture of Assessment" or a "Culture Promoting Student Learning." Our theme for Assessment Week was "Growing a Culture of Assessment." We wanted to acknowledge the robust culture of assessment that already exists within individual programs. However, as a university, we needed to grow this culture to the next level.

**Q: What are your plans and goals for the next six months—up until January 2016? What challenges do you anticipate**

**A: Goals for September 2015 to February 2016**

- I. Share CPAs/Key Elements document with the academic units
- II. Ongoing training and support for data input into Tk20
- III. The Teaching and Learning Center to offer programming that coordinates with the 5 CPAs
- IV. Share resources for assessment of Critical Thinking
- V. Complete crosswalk document for clarifying varying discipline language (required by discipline accrediting organizations) for program outcomes in HLC vernacular
- VI. Complete update for all program outcomes into Tk20 and map against the CPAs

Anticipated Challenges

We anticipate challenges in providing training as we do not have a common calendar at ATSU. Timing of these workshops is an ongoing challenge. Because various accredited disciplines require specific language, developing an understanding of the terminology used in curriculum mapping will initially pose some changes, hence the development of the crosswalk document. Another challenge will be staffing and time available to various programs to complete the curriculum mapping.

### Version 3.0- Update

**Q: Please confirm that this Activity is ready for review.**

**A:** This project is ready for review.

### Version 3.0- Response

**Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).**

**A:** Sue Pieper [Sue.pieper@nau.edu](mailto:Sue.pieper@nau.edu) 928.523.1502

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**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

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Was there any resistance to the change, especially related to any perceived "loss" of the skills that are now included in the broader attributes?

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**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- How were you able to engage faculty and staff in Assessment Week and Town Hall activities? Tell me more!
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- Regardless of which you chose, being patient will be key -- it takes a long time to shift a culture, and different faculty and staff will engage at different times and at different levels. Don't let yourself get discouraged in the early going.....

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- Your plans and goals for the next six months look reasonable and doable, and you are already working on addressing some of the anticipated challenges, including designing a crosswalk document for relating discipline student learning outcome language to HLC vernacular to help faculty and staff understand the terminology used in curriculum mapping. Good work!
- Consider developing an assessment plan, if you don't already have one, for the University-wide CPAs. You'll want to include the CPAs, assessment tools used to assess the CPAs, who is responsible for collecting the data and when and where data collection will take place, who is responsible for data analysis and when data analysis will take place, who will be part of the discussion of data, and finally, when those discussions will take place

Susan Hatfield

Sue's second suggestion is where I was starting to head in my question in the previous section. Starting to think that through in the next six months might be very helpful. I'm not sure if the Academy Team is directly related in the in the Tk20 training (in which case I'm guessing you'll have your hands full!) but if not, having the team begin to determine how the CPAs are going to be assessed -- and the plan for using the CPA data -- would be helpful. This will likely take more than six months, but getting a jump on it might be useful and provide a framework for how you move forward in the six months that follow.

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Susan Hatfield

It might be helpful to shift the focus of your conversations from Assessment to Learning. The term Assessment can create problems for faculty -- focusing on learning places the emphasis on something more universal, and something that most faculty care deeply about.

Additionally, it strikes me that critical thinking is already something that most professions have already included in their accreditation standards -- usually in the form of problem solving or decision making. Is it possible to see how programs are already addressing the issue and develop some overall approach to assessing critical thinking that would meet both the needs of ATSU and individual program's professional accreditation? This is sort of like the approach you are currently engaged in, but it's not clear that what is currently being assessed as critical thinking is the product of a shared definition of the skill.

This will probably be addressed in the institution wide approach to assessing the CPAs which will be developed soon. Aligning each program's professional accreditation standards with the CPAs will take some time but may yield a potentially effective and efficient path for engaging faculty and moving forward the Academy initiative.

**Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

For ideas about how other institutions are building an assessment culture in a geographically dispersed environment, you might want to check out Academy institutions in the Collaboration Portal that have a significant number of online courses and programs. You might also look at those institutions that have multiple campuses. Additionally, for ideas about how to plan for assessing the Transferable Skills, you might check out institutions with student learning projects focused on institution-wide student learning outcomes.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

Were you able to find any resources about building a culture of assessment in a geographically dispersed environment? If not, please let me know, and I'll look for some resources for you.

Susan Hatfield

We hope to see you at the Academy events at the Annual Meeting!

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

As you requested, I'll look for any resources regarding building a culture of assessment in a geographically dispersed environment. However, it looks like you are well on your way to meeting this challenge!

Susan Hatfield

You might want to check out National American University as a starting point -- they were in the Academy a few years ago and you can access their postings in the Network.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

I like the following book for helping folks understand the connections between course, program, and institutional assessment:

- Walvoord, B. E., & Anderson V. J. (2010). *Effective grading: A tool for learning and assessment in college*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

I'm attending the HLC Annual Conference in April. Please let me know if any of your team members are attending and you would like to get together face-to-face.

Susan Hatfield

Taking advantage of meeting with Sue at the annual meeting would be great! There will also be programming specifically for Academy Teams which you might find helpful.

Scholar(s):	Susan Hatfield
Primary Mentor(s):	Suzanne Pieper

**Version 2.0- Project**

**Q: Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope or design since August 2014.**

**A:** *Change from Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes (CPAs)*

Core Professional Attributes: a set of cross-curricular meta-skills which enable the individual in his/her role as a healthcare professional to effectively select, adapt, adjust, and apply his/her discipline knowledge and skills to different professional and social situations.

The shift from Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes is illustrated below and the alignment reflects what has been preserved, what has been modified, and what has been eliminated.

<b>Transferable Skills</b>	<b>Core Professional Attributes</b>
Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking
Cultural Competence	Cultural Competence
Interprofessional Collaboration	Interprofessional Collaboration
Positive Interpersonal Communication	Interpersonal Skills
<i>*Ethical and Legal Understanding</i>	Social Responsibility
<i>Leadership</i>	
<i>Wellbeing</i>	
<i>Self-Assessment and Reflective Practice</i>	

\*The Transferable Skills in *italics* have been eliminated or subsumed in the Core Professional Attributes.

Definitions and Key Constructs for the 5 CPAs

-  
*Critical Thinking:* The ability to find, appraise and apply evidence in conjunction with best practice, in the process of health care decision making.

- Key constructs:
  - Finding evidence/searching the literature
  - Critical appraisal
  - Decision making
  - Assessment and reflection
  - Spirit of inquiry

*Cultural Competence:* Acceptance and respect for cultural differences, as evidenced by knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that enable effective interactions in cross-cultural situations.

- Key constructs:
  - Cultural awareness
  - Cultural knowledge
  - Cultural skill
  - Cultural encounter
  - Cultural desire

*Interprofessional Collaboration:* The ability to work effectively with others on an interprofessional team to improve health outcomes and deliver the highest quality of care

- Key constructs:
  - Values/ethics for interprofessional practice/ whole person healthcare
  - Scope of practice and roles/responsibility
  - Collaboration and consultancy
  - Teambuilding

*Interpersonal Skills:* The ability to interact successfully with others in the process of delivering the best practices for healthcare delivery.

- Key constructs:
  - Verbal clarity of expression
  - Active listening and questioning/paraphrasing/mirroring
  - Non-verbal attending
  - Problem-solving/decision making
  - Social awareness/good manners
  - Time management
  - Written/digital communication
  - Responsibility and accountability

*Social Responsibility:* The ability to recognize the moral responsibility to take an active role in initiatives and activities that positively impact the health and overall wellbeing of the individuals and the communities we serve.

- Key constructs:
  - Social determinants of health
  - Health disparities among the underserved

- Service learning and community involvement
- Health and wellness advocacy
- Professional code of ethics/values/vision

**Q: What were your goals for the past six months—since August 2014? Did you achieve them? Why or why not?**

**A:** The original objectives of the QI project were to:

**Define**

- Define and refine the transferable skills

**Map**

- •Map the transferable skills to the curriculum and co-curriculum

**Develop**

- •Develop performance measures to assess the transferable skills

**Track**

- •Determine impact of transferable skills in alumni

The goal for the period July to December 2014 was to Define and refine transferable skills. We have defined and refined the Transferable Skills, moving from eight Transferable Skills to five Core Professional Attributes (CPAs).

The new objectives of the QI project are to:

**Define**

- Define and refine the Core Professional Attributes

**Map**

- Map the Core Professional Attributes to the curriculum and co-curriculum

**Develop**

- Develop performance measures to assess the Core Professional Attributes

**Track**

- Determine the extent to which graduating students from ATSU have acquired the Core Professional Attributes

At the January 12, 2015 University-wide Assessment Committee monthly meeting, we presented the newly defined CPAs which were endorsed.

**Q: How did you incorporate the feedback that you received on your previous posting in August 2014?**

**A: *Reviewer's Comment:*** *What is the general feeling toward assessment on your campus now? I'm assuming that since you have programs that are individually accredited, that assessment as a practice would be wide-spread.*

Assessment is widespread and ongoing, but it is very decentralized with variable efforts among the units. We seek to build a more robust university-wide approach to assessment, hence the need to inculcate a university-wide culture.

***Reviewer's Comment:*** *Is your sense that faculty are more in a compliance mode in regard to assessment, or have they developed a commitment to assessment because they have found it helpful in understanding learning and improving their programs?*

**Response:** While academic units perform assessments to inform internal decision-making regarding student learning, university-wide assessment has historically been more of an accreditation-driven compliance issue. Commitment to assessment as a key modality in improving student learning outcomes is gaining momentum, especially at the university level.

***Reviewer's Comment:*** *For ideas about how other institutions are building an assessment culture in a geographically dispersed environment, you might want to check out Academy institutions in the Collaboration Portal that have a significant number of online courses and programs. You might also look at those institutions that have multiple campuses. Additionally, for ideas about how to plan for assessing the Transferable Skills, you might check out institutions with student learning projects focused on institution-wide student learning outcomes.*

**Response:** The Transferable Skills already had assessments and assessment tools associated with them (Appendix 1) which we will be incorporating into the new CPAs as we move to establish institution-wide student learning outcomes. We have also been looking at ideas including bringing speakers to campus, establishing an assessment week and increasing communication, as means to ensure buy-in.

**Q: What are your plans and goals for the next six months—up until July/August 2015? What challenges do you anticipate?**

**A:**

1. Communicate with the ATSU community at large through various channels, including:

- Deans' Council
  - University Faculty Senate and Assemblies
2. Inculcate a culture of assessment at ATSU

- Town Halls
- Annual Assessment Week, outlined below

**Theme:** Growing a Culture of Assessment across the University

**Keynote topic:** Climbing the mountain from classroom assessment to programmatic assessment to university assessment

**Goals:**

- Culture of Assessment at ATSU
- Showcase what is done well
- Expanding assessment knowledge and skills
  - Clarifying university assessment
- Assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs)
- Curriculum mapping in Tk20
- Structure and function of UWAC
- Structure and function of OAA

**Proposed activities:**

- State of University Assessment address by leadership
- Workshops on different assessment topics
- Poster sessions highlighting current assessment activities
- Keynote address by noted assessment authority
- Assessment Resource Fair

**Anticipated Challenges**

One major challenge is getting individuals to participate. Having event topics valuable to faculty and making them available at times when they can attend are two important factors. Use of technology such as Livestreaming and Webinars should go some way in alleviating this problem. It will take time to develop a "Culture of Assessment." We anticipate that not everyone will be on board, at least initially. We will have to make continuous and concerted efforts in obtaining buy-in from as broad a spectrum of constituents as we can reasonably expect, through conducting workshops, Lunch and Learns, Brown Bags, etc. Time and money are always challenges that we will monitor carefully, so they do not adversely affect the outcomes of the project.

### Version 2.0- Update

**Q: Please confirm that this Activity is ready for review.**

**A:** This project is ready for review.

### Version 2.0- Response

**Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).**

**A:** Sue Pieper [Sue.pieper@nau.edu](mailto:Sue.pieper@nau.edu) 928.523.1502

Susan Hatfield HLC Senior Scholar/ Academy Projects [SHatfield@HLCommission.org](mailto:SHatfield@HLCommission.org)

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**Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

Both mentors agree that this is a clearly focused project. The assessment of eight university-wide Transferable Skills (Leadership, Wellbeing, Critical Thinking, Cultural Competence, Interprofessional Collaboration, Ethical and Legal Understanding, Positive Interpersonal Communication, and Self-Assessment and Reflective Practice) will provide a common thread throughout the University. The objectives of the project progress logically from defining and refining the Transferable Skills to determining the impact of Transferable Skills on alumni. The emphasis on a common set of moveable skills that all graduates should possess upon graduation is a great start toward building a culture of assessment -- and more importantly, a culture of learning -- across the university.

**A:** Sue Pieper

Your Academy project is clearly focused on assessing five Core Professional Attributes: Critical Thinking, Cultural Competence, Interprofessional Collaboration, Interpersonal Skills, and Social Responsibility.

You are on time and on task with your student learning project goals.

Your plans for an Annual Assessment Week are ambitious and exciting!

Susan Hatfield

The shift from an emphasis on Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes (CPAs) will give the project more focus.

The University continues to take a logical and systematic approach to their work.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- Wonderful work on meeting your goals for the past six months! Activities and communication at the University level, such as your Assessment Week and Town Halls, will advance the progress of your student learning project, and more importantly, will grow a culture of assessment at your institution. You've done a great job of reaching out to faculty and staff at a distance through webinars as well as virtual posters, a resource fair, and discussions.
- Thank you for clarifying your rationale for shifting from Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes. This sounds like a positive change. Not only will you be better able to measure student achievement of these outcomes, but the CPAs also align with your University mission.

Mapping your CPAs to the entire curriculum will provide an excellent tool for better understanding your students' learning experience as they progress through the curriculum as well as for identifying where you might collect evidence of student learning of the CPAs.

Susan Hatfield

SueP has **identified** the many strengths of this project -- I especially appreciated the statement "We have been particularly happy with the successful engagement across the university in Town Halls" -- That's a clear tribute to both the careful planning of the event itself, and also your creation of a climate where people felt free share their thoughts and ideas. Well done!

ATSU is already starting to create some of the cornerstones of their desired culture -- Assessment Week is a great example of this.

**A:** Sue Pieper

- Thank you for a very thoughtful and thorough update on your student learning project over the past six months!
- I agree with your insights regarding Mercy College’s assessment project. It’s a great idea to gather existing course evidence of student learning related to outcomes of interest. This strategy is more efficient—and often more effective—than layering on yet another assessment instrument for faculty, staff, and students.
- Your plans for engaging faculty and staff in Assessment Week activities were quite comprehensive and took into account the geographically dispersed environment of your institution, for example livestreaming all Assessment Week activities.
- I’m glad to hear that you’re developing an assessment plan and timeline as well as a continuous improvement plan. You will be well positioned as you move into the next half of your time in the Academy. Additionally, your focus on the Critical Thinking CPA as a goal for completion this year is a reasonable approach for your institution.
- Incorporation of the CPAs into the new strategic plan highlights the importance of assessment at your institution and, I concur, provides the project team with the support and leverage they need.
- Your goals for the next six months are appropriate given the progress as well as the challenges of your student learning project described in your update.

Susan Hatfield

Sue did a great job of identifying the strengths of the project. It appears that while full engagement on the part of faculty has lower than desired, ATSU has made considerable progress in developing the infrastructure for assessment.

**Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

The first objective of your project is to define and refine the Transferrable Skills. The designing of measurable student learning outcomes related to each of the Transferable Skills is foundational to assessing and improving student learning. What is your strategy for developing measurable student learning outcomes for the Transferable Skills at the university, program, and course level?

The posting indicates that biggest challenge will be to “inculcate a culture of assessment across the entire university—across two states and the virtual campus.” What is your plan for promoting and supporting the learning and assessment of Transferrable Skills in courses, programs, and colleges across such a geographically dispersed institution?

You’ve included a timeline of student learning project activity for the next three years. How will you make assessment of Transferable Skills manageable and doable?

Susan Hatfield

What is the general feeling toward assessment on your campus now? I'm assuming that since you have programs that are individually accredited, that assessment as a practice would be wide-spread. Is your sense that faculty are more in a compliance mode in regard to assessment, or have they developed a commitment to assessment because they have found it helpful in understanding learning and improving their programs?

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**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

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vernacular to help faculty and staff understand the terminology used in curriculum mapping. Good work!

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Additionally, it strikes me that critical thinking is already something that most professions have already included in their accreditation standards -- usually in the form of problem solving or decision making. Is it possible to see how programs are already addressing the issue and develop some overall approach to assessing critical thinking that would meet both the needs of ATSU and individual program's professional accreditation? This is sort of like the approach you are currently engaged in, but it's not clear that what is currently being assessed as critical thinking is the product of a shared definition of the skill.

This will probably be addressed in the institution wide approach to assessing the CPAs which will be developed soon. Aligning each program's professional accreditation standards with the CPAs will take some time but may yield a potentially effective and efficient path for engaging faculty and moving forward the Academy initiative.

**Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

For ideas about how other institutions are building an assessment culture in a geographically dispersed environment, you might want to check out Academy institutions in the Collaboration

Portal that have a significant number of online courses and programs. You might also look at those institutions that have multiple campuses. Additionally, for ideas about how to plan for assessing the Transferable Skills, you might check out institutions with student learning projects focused on institution-wide student learning outcomes.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

Were you able to find any resources about building a culture of assessment in a geographically dispersed environment? If not, please let me know, and I'll look for some resources for you.

Susan Hatfield

We hope to see you at the Academy events at the Annual Meeting!

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

As you requested, I'll look for any resources regarding building a culture of assessment in a geographically dispersed environment. However, it looks like you are well on your way to meeting this challenge!

Susan Hatfield

You might want to check out National American University as a starting point -- they were in the Academy a few years ago and you can access their postings in the Network.

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I'm attending the HLC Annual Conference in April. Please let me know if any of your team members are attending and you would like to get together face-to-face.

Susan Hatfield

Taking advantage of meeting with Sue at the annual meeting would be great! There will also be programming specifically for Academy Teams which you might find helpful.

Scholar(s):	Susan Hatfield
Primary Mentor(s):	Suzanne Pieper

**Version 1.0- Project**

**Q: Describe the project you developed at the Roundtable. Focus particularly on the general strategies you developed. (500 words)**

**A:** A.T. Still University (ATSU) is a graduate professional institution focusing on medical, dental, and health science professions. The main goal of this Quality Improvement project is to transform student learning outcomes to develop outstanding Professionals by utilizing an effective assessment process. Each of the professional constructs and, therefore, the overarching professional goals are addressed and developed through the acquisition of the Transferable Skills. The QI project will help accomplish the University’s mission, vision, and values by transforming professional outcomes of students through the assessment of these Transferable Skills. The mission, philosophy, functions, and goals of ATSU require a systematic assessment of student learning outcomes and a review of all programs/curricula to ensure quality and relevance of instruction, as well as the effective and efficient use of resources. This systematic process must be a cooperative effort, utilizing the knowledge and expertise of faculty, administrators, students, alumni, employers, and advisory committee members.

**Timeline**

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment Academy Roundtable	June 2014
Update TS* in Tk20**	August-September 2014
University –wide discussion of QI project	September 2014
Campus-wide presentation of TS	October 2014
Training and workshops for faculty and staff	January 2015 –June 2015
Mapping of TS by individual programs	July 2015 – December 2015
Tk20 assessment reports	December 2015
Continuous updates of TS	January 2016 – August 2017

**Q: How will your project contribute to making assessment an activity that leads to the improvement of student learning?"**

**A:** ATSU has developed a set of eight Transferable Skills all graduates of its various health sciences programs should possess upon graduation. The objectives of the QI project are to:

- Define and refine the transferable skills

- Map the transferable skills to the curriculum and co-curriculum
- Develop performance measures to assess the transferable skills
- Determine impact of transferable skills in alumni

**Q: What are the desired outcomes of this project? How will you know that you have achieved each of these outcomes?**

**A:** We would like to see these professional skills more effectively articulated in the ATSU curricula and the impact of these Transferable Skills on student learning outcomes assessed and measured.

We will know we have achieved these outcomes when Transferable Skills are mapped in Tk20 for every program with clearly defined assessment measures, rubrics and results.

**Q: What serious challenges do you expect to encounter? How will you deal with them?**

**A:** While there is a robust assessment culture at the program and sometimes at the school or college level, ATSU does not have a fully realized university-wide assessment culture. Our biggest challenge will be to inculcate a culture of assessment across the entire university, across two states and the virtual campus.

**Q: Describe the specific steps you will be taking in Year 1 to develop and implement the early stages of your project.**

**A: Year 1**

1. Revisit Transferable Skills with faculty, staff, students, alumni, community & other stakeholders.
2. Complete curriculum mapping exercise, especially in clinical rotations, and online programs.
3. Develop a culture of university assessment (e.g., strategies for buy-in, active drivers of process).

**Results:** Clear definition of priorities for deciding among potential Student Learning Projects.

**PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION (Design & Process)**

When	What	Responsibility	How/Details	Resources
7/1	Announcement of OAA	SVPA	Email	
8/12	QI Team with AVPA	QI Team	Every 6 weeks	

	Revisit TS at QI Team Meeting			
8/31	Create QI website	Director OAA	Internal Google Site	
9/14	Present QI to UWAC, Sept Meeting	SVPAA		
12/31/14	Finalize TS	QI Team		
1/5/15 to 6/30/15	Transferable Skills workshops with faculty, staff, students, alumni, community & other stakeholders.	QI Team		Facilitators Refreshments
1/5/15 - ongoing	Develop assessment culture within ATSU	QI team, UWAC, schools, colleges, departments		Facilitators Refreshments
12/31/15	Complete curriculum mapping exercise especially clinical rotations, online programs	OAA	Assessment instruments and curriculum mapping	Tk20

### Version 1.0- Update

**Q: Please confirm that this Activity is ready for review.**

**A:** This project is ready for review.

### Version 1.0- Response

**Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).**

**A:** Sue Pieper [Sue.pieper@nau.edu](mailto:Sue.pieper@nau.edu) 928.523.1502

Susan Hatfield HLC Senior Scholar/ Academy Projects [SHatfield@HLCommission.org](mailto:SHatfield@HLCommission.org)

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Susan Hatfield [SHatfield@hlcommission.org](mailto:SHatfield@hlcommission.org)

**Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

Both mentors agree that this is a clearly focused project. The assessment of eight university-wide Transferable Skills (Leadership, Wellbeing, Critical Thinking, Cultural Competence, Interprofessional Collaboration, Ethical and Legal Understanding, Positive Interpersonal Communication, and Self-Assessment and Reflective Practice) will provide a common thread throughout the University. The objectives of the project progress logically from defining and refining the Transferable Skills to determining the impact of Transferable Skills on alumni. The emphasis on a common set of moveable skills that all graduates should possess upon graduation is a great start toward building a culture of assessment -- and more importantly, a culture of learning -- across the university.

**A:** Sue Pieper

Your Academy project is clearly focused on assessing five Core Professional Attributes: Critical Thinking, Cultural Competence, Interprofessional Collaboration, Interpersonal Skills, and Social Responsibility.

You are on time and on task with your student learning project goals.

Your plans for an Annual Assessment Week are ambitious and exciting!

Susan Hatfield

The shift from an emphasis on Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes (CPAs) will give the project more focus.

The University continues to take a logical and systematic approach to their work.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- Wonderful work on meeting your goals for the past six months! Activities and communication at the University level, such as your Assessment Week and Town Halls, will advance the progress of your student learning project, and more importantly, will grow a culture of assessment at your institution. You've done a great job of reaching out to faculty and staff at a distance through webinars as well as virtual posters, a resource fair, and discussions.
- Thank you for clarifying your rationale for shifting from Transferable Skills to Core Professional Attributes. This sounds like a positive change. Not only will you be better able to measure student achievement of these outcomes, but the CPAs also align with your University mission.

Mapping your CPAs to the entire curriculum will provide an excellent tool for better understanding your students' learning experience as they progress through the curriculum as well as for identifying where you might collect evidence of student learning of the CPAs.

Susan Hatfield

SueP has **identified** the many strengths of this project -- I especially appreciated the statement "We have been particularly happy with the successful engagement across the university in Town Halls" -- That's a clear tribute to both the careful planning of the event itself, and also your creation of a climate where people felt free share their thoughts and ideas. Well done!

ATSU is already starting to create some of the cornerstones of their desired culture -- Assessment Week is a great example of this.

**A:** Sue Pieper

- Thank you for a very thoughtful and thorough update on your student learning project over the past six months!
- I agree with your insights regarding Mercy College's assessment project. It's a great idea to gather existing course evidence of student learning related to outcomes of interest. This strategy is more efficient—and often more effective—than layering on yet another assessment instrument for faculty, staff, and students.
- Your plans for engaging faculty and staff in Assessment Week activities were quite comprehensive and took into account the geographically dispersed environment of your institution, for example livestreaming all Assessment Week activities.
- I'm glad to hear that you're developing an assessment plan and timeline as well as a continuous improvement plan. You will be well positioned as you move into the next half of your time in the Academy. Additionally, your focus on the Critical Thinking CPA as a goal for completion this year is a reasonable approach for your institution.
- Incorporation of the CPAs into the new strategic plan highlights the importance of assessment at your institution and, I concur, provides the project team with the support

and leverage they need.

- Your goals for the next six months are appropriate given the progress as well as the challenges of your student learning project described in your update.

Susan Hatfield

Sue did a great job of identifying the strengths of the project. It appears that while full engagement on the part of faculty has lower than desired, ATSU has made considerable progress in developing the infrastructure for assessment.

**Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

The first objective of your project is to define and refine the Transferrable Skills. The designing of measurable student learning outcomes related to each of the Transferable Skills is foundational to assessing and improving student learning. What is your strategy for developing measurable student learning outcomes for the Transferable Skills at the university, program, and course level?

The posting indicates that biggest challenge will be to “inculcate a culture of assessment across the entire university—across two states and the virtual campus.” What is your plan for promoting and supporting the learning and assessment of Transferrable Skills in courses, programs, and colleges across such a geographically dispersed institution?

You’ve included a timeline of student learning project activity for the next three years. How will you make assessment of Transferable Skills manageable and doable?

Susan Hatfield

What is the general feeling toward assessment on your campus now? I'm assuming that since you have programs that are individually accredited, that assessment as a practice would be wide-spread. Is your sense that faculty are more in a compliance mode in regard to assessment, or have they developed a commitment to assessment because they have found it helpful in understanding learning and improving their programs?

**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

What was your rationale for changing from the eight Transferable Skills to the five Core Professional Attributes? (Did you want to streamline the number of skills? Did you want to

focus on more measurable skills? Did the Core Professional Attributes better align with your university mission? Did you want to align better with your current curriculum? Something else?)

Was there any resistance to the change, especially related to any perceived "loss" of the skills that are now included in the broader attributes?

Will you focus only on graduating students' achievement of the Core Professional Attributes, or will you use a more developmental approach? How else will you use assessment results?

How will faculty (and students) be involved in the Annual Assessment Week event?

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- How were you able to engage faculty and staff in Assessment Week and Town Hall activities? Tell me more!
- What strategies will you use to engage students in assessment?
- Now that your CPAs are approved and programs are involved in mapping their courses to the CPAs, have you thought about developing an assessment plan for the University-wide CPAs?

Susan Hatfield

What did you learn from the roll of to the CPAs to the campus? Was anything brought up either in the town halls, but the Keynote, or in the approval process that identified issues that you will need to address or that might come to the forefront later on? (beyond the "time" issue). Beyond sharing resources for the assessment of critical thinking, what other groundwork has gone into the assessment of critical thinking? Is the plan to pilot test the assessment of critical thinking in the spring, or is the assumption that what programs are already doing relative to critical thinking assessment will be aggregated in some manner?

Have you begun to explore the connection of the CPAs to the cocurriculum?

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- It's surprising, given all of your careful planning and communication, that you didn't have better attendance at your two Assessment Weeks. What have you considered as far as ideas for boosting attendance?
- The Still Standing Falls Prevention Outreach Program sounds like a wonderful integrated approach to teaching, learning, and assessing your CPAs. Can you describe your pre/post test related to this program in more detail?

Susan Hatfield

I too was struck by the lack of participation on the part of faculty after their engagement in the earlier Town Hall sessions.

Is there a systematic approach at this point for assessing critical thinking? It sounds like the plan at this point is to look at Tk20 and see how critical thinking is being assessed in courses and identify gaps. Is it clear that every course is using the same definition of critical thinking and is it being assessed in a way that makes it possible to aggregate data across courses or units in order to address the issue of the degree to which students are able to think critically at ATSU?

How aware are students of the CPAs?

**Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?**

**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

- The posting indicates that training and workshops for faculty and staff will be held July 2015 – December 2015. Will you at that time have already developed university-level student learning outcomes for the Transferrable Skills? Who will be involved in their development? How will they be communicated to faculty and staff? Will the focus of these workshops be on developing program-level and course-level student learning outcomes for the Transferable Skills? Who will facilitate the workshops? Members of the Academy team and the University-wide Assessment Committee, for example, could play an important role in the development and implementation of the workshops.
- The establishment of an Office of Assessment and Accreditation is a critical step forward in coordinating assessment and institutional research—and in building a culture of assessment across your widely geographically dispersed institution. In your Academy application you state that the primary function of this office will be to “effectively manage data so as to allow for accurate and timely provision of information to administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Trustees to use in planning and decision making.” While access to data is extremely important for quality improvement (and reporting to accreditors), keep in mind that assessment data is only as good as your assessment process. An equally important function for this office should be to provide faculty and staff support for the assessment of student learning process. This might include, for example, assistance with designing student learning outcomes, curriculum mapping, or instrument development for the Transferable Skills project.
- Consider how you can make this project manageable and doable. Your goal is to assess eight Transferable Skills. You might want to develop a plan for assessing two or three skills per year rather than tackling all eight skills at once. Your objective to map the Transferable Skills to the curriculum and co-curriculum will provide you with some useful information regarding where the various Transferable Skills are taught and assessed. It should also give you some ideas about where you might want to start with assessing the Transferrable Skills. If, for example, evidence of student learning of critical thinking is already available in courses and programs across the curriculum, this might be one of the skills you’ll want to assess in the first year.

Additionally, give the structure of the university, communication is going to play a critical role in the success of the initiative. The development of the project web site is a great start, but also personally engaging with faculty on all of the campuses will help facilitate success.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper and Susan Hatfield

- As you consider community-wide communication and culture building around assessment, you will want to clearly communicate why you have chosen to focus on the five Core Professional Attributes. These student learning outcomes will provide a foundation for curriculum, learning design, and assessment at the university level, so you will want to articulate to the university community why they are important and how they connect to your university mission and goals.
- Determining the extent to which graduating students have acquired the Core Professional Attributes is a worthy goal, particularly as far as making improvements for future students. Beyond using your assessments to provide summative evidence of students' learning at the culmination of their programs, think also about how assessment results can be used formatively. In other words, how can you use evidence of student learning of the Core Professional Attributes as students progress through their programs in order to improve student learning for current students?
- Consider, whenever possible, involving faculty and students in leading workshops, creating posters, participating in webinars, etc. for the Annual Assessment Week. This is a great way to grow a culture of assessment at your institution.
- It might be worth considering if you want to present your project as a Culture of Assessment, or a Culture Promoting Student Learning.
- Regardless of which you chose, being patient will be key -- it takes a long time to shift a culture, and different faculty and staff will engage at different times and at different levels. Don't let yourself get discouraged in the early going.....

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

- Your plans and goals for the next six months look reasonable and doable, and you are already working on addressing some of the anticipated challenges, including designing a crosswalk document for relating discipline student learning outcome language to HLC vernacular to help faculty and staff understand the terminology used in curriculum mapping. Good work!
- Consider developing an assessment plan, if you don't already have one, for the University-wide CPAs. You'll want to include the CPAs, assessment tools used to assess the CPAs, who is responsible for collecting the data and when and where data collection will take place, who is responsible for data analysis and when data analysis will take place, who will be part of the discussion of data, and finally, when those discussions will take place

Susan Hatfield

Sue's second suggestion is where I was starting to head in my question in the previous section. Starting to think that through in the next six months might be very helpful. I'm not sure if the Academy Team is directly related in the in the Tk20 training (in which case I'm guessing you'll have your hands full!) but if not, having the team begin to determine how the CPAs are going to be assessed -- and the plan for using the CPA data -- would be helpful. This will likely take more than six months, but getting a jump on it might be useful and provide a framework for how you move forward in the six months that follow.

**A:** Suzanne Pieper

I think you've pointed out an important overall challenge to assessment at your institution in your update: "engaging the ATSU community in institutional assessment." This is a challenge for most, if not all, institutions. Folks do tend to be most engaged in their courses and programs. Helping the campus community make the connections between course (and outside-of-course), program, and institutional student learning of the CPAs will be critical to the success of your project. You are on the right path with your goal to increase faculty, staff, and administration professional development activities related to assessment.

Susan Hatfield

It might be helpful to shift the focus of your conversations from Assessment to Learning. The term Assessment can create problems for faculty -- focusing on learning places the emphasis on something more universal, and something that most faculty care deeply about.

Additionally, it strikes me that critical thinking is already something that most professions have already included in their accreditation standards -- usually in the form of problem solving or decision making. Is it possible to see how programs are already addressing the issue and develop some overall approach to assessing critical thinking that would meet both the needs of ATSU and individual program's professional accreditation? This is sort of like the approach you are currently engaged in, but it's not clear that what is currently being assessed as critical thinking is the product of a shared definition of the skill.

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Susan Hatfield

Taking advantage of meeting with Sue at the annual meeting would be great! There will also be programming specifically for Academy Teams which you might find helpful.

Scholar(s):	Susan Hatfield
Primary Mentor(s):	Suzanne Pieper

### Context

**Q: Describe your plan for creating shared responsibility for assessing and improving student learning. (100 - 200 words)**

**A:** A list of Transferable Skills was developed through extensive consultation and participation of all academic and administrative units across all university colleges and schools. The Board of Trustees contributed to assessment efforts by developing a set of institutional effectiveness metrics. The ATSU QI team is composed of the Associate Vice President for Academic Innovations, the Director of the Office of Assessment and Accreditation and Staff, one Dean, and two faculty members. To facilitate the project on campus, the QI team will work with the University-wide Assessment Committee (UWAC). The UWAC has representation from all academic units. It is anticipated that non-academic units will become part of this committee, as well.

The QI team will work with faculty, staff and students in

- Mapping the Transferable Skills from the course level through the program to the University's mission and vision (mapping will be done in the University's assessment database, Tk20);
- Assessing Transferable Skills with measurable outcomes and goals, and
- Transforming student learning outcomes to have meaningful professional impact by utilizing effective assessment processes.

**Q: What is the broader impact of your Academy work on the institution, faculty and staff, students, or other stakeholders? How will this work influence the culture of your organization, build institutional capacity, advance teaching and learning...etc.? (100 - 200 words)**

**A:** By participating in the Academy, ATSU will develop a more robust assessment culture and accomplish the following objectives:

- Develop an assessment program that is faculty-driven and strongly supported by senior administration.
- Use assessment results to foster improvement and transparency.
- Identify and support best assessment practices across the University to foster innovation and to develop a model program. Develop an assessment program characterized by multiple measures and diverse methodologies to assure reliable results. Build a technology-based University-wide Assessment Plan that incorporates existing procedures and instruments at the school and college levels.
- Develop sufficiency in assessment activities to reflect the ATSU experience, yet limit the reporting burden on students, alumni, and employees.
- Provide assessment results to the ATSU community and stakeholders, consistent with best assessment practices and respect for individual privacy.

We believe our work in the Academy will contribute to the improvement of student learning at ATSU by developing an evidenced-based approach to mapping the Transferable Skills to program assessment environments based on the understanding that students' learning is linked to assessment. The work at the Academy will contribute to the improvement of student learning through enhanced assessment activities, demonstrating a balance between formative and summative assessments.

Improved assessment outcomes will have a direct impact on student learning, feedback, and the clarification of programmatic goals and standards, thereby facilitating quality improvement through more responsive, evidence-informed change. Participation in the Academy will provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between continuous quality improvement and programmatic changes by engaging faculty, staff, and students.

**Q: Optional: What else is important to know about your work on assessing and improving student learning? (100 - 200 words)**

**A:** N/A

## Impact Report

**What do you see as the next logical steps for continuing the work that you have begun in Q: the Academy?**

**A:**

- Complete mapping CPAs to course objectives.
- Conduct course gap analysis.
- Map measurement threshold and performance for each course.
- Complete co-curricular mapping.
- Complete CPA videos.
- Conduct alumni surveys.
- Conduct employer surveys.
- Conduct Assessment Day & workshops.
- Publish work.

**What steps will you take to keep faculty and staff engaged in ongoing assessment of Q: student learning?**

**A:**

- Involve more instructional faculty in the incorporation and mapping of CPAs by creating more town halls, etc..
- Orient faculty to CPA maps, note gaps, and programmatic measurements.
- Create curriculum map and workshop “action plans” with programs re: course performance to program performance.
- Take a bi-campus approach to promoting CPA awareness/co-curricular mapping by partnering with Student Affairs leadership.
- Involve additional faculty and staff members and students in the creation of future CPA videos.

- Work with Alumni Services and Research, Grants and Information Systems to facilitate alumni surveys and employer surveys to gather results for discussion with faculty/staff.
- Work with programs and Alumni Services to identify residencies and employers to conduct employer surveys, and then collect and discuss results with programs.
- UWAC-A and OAA will work together to engage faculty in assessment workshops.
- Publish examples of faculty/staff/students concerning CPAs and assessment.

### Response to Impact Report

**Q: Please describe your general impression of the institution's progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.**

**A:** A. T. Still University's accomplishments while in the Academy are truly amazing. They have moved from 47 Transferable Skills (which they found to be both unworkable and uninspiring) to the development of five Core Professional attributes which are both measurable and engaging. ATSU has built a foundation for assessing student learning across the university by creating and nurturing a unified vision, mission, and student learning expectations "worth working toward," as Tom Angelo would say. This accomplishment is especially significant, given their geographically dispersed campus and multiple schools and colleges that make up ATSU. The outstanding strength of the project is the inclusion of stakeholders from across the entire university—faculty, staff, administration, students, and the community—in their assessment efforts. Furthermore, it appears that students understand the CPAs and recognize their value in both framing their education and also to their future endeavors in the health care field.

**Q: Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?**

**A:** The ATSU team is leaving the Academy still on the "upswing" as far as momentum. They have a strong Academy Team that works together well and they a solid sense of not only of the progress that they have made, but also what needs to happen next.

ATSU have done a remarkable job of developing the infrastructure for a very effective assessment plan. Next step is to pilot test the rubrics that have been developed and move toward direct assessment --producing actionable data. That should be the goal for the upcoming semester.

**Q: In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?**

**A:** ATSU appears to be well prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy. The recommendation of both the mentor and the scholar is for ATSU to take the next step and go beyond indirect assessment of student learning of your Core Professional Skills (as mentioned above).

Direct assessment of students' products or performances produced as part of their curricular or co-curricular experiences is the critical next phase of ATSU's project.

Taking this next step will enable ATSU to answer questions regarding their learning of these skills. Additionally, ATSU will be able to provide the campus with some actionable results, thus solidifying the culture of assessment they've built and nurtured so carefully over the past few years.

**Q: Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.**

**A:** Sue Pieper:

I have enjoyed working with your team over your three years in the Academy. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can be of any further assistance.

Susan Hatfield

ATSU has all the pieces in place for an effective campus-wide assessment initiative. As they begin to get results from their direct assessments, I hope they will be willing to share their work through the Annual Meeting!

Scholar(s):	Susan Hatfield
Primary Mentor(s):	Suzanne Pieper