Assessment Report

Completed by: Konrad Schlarbaum & Kristy Callihan

Date: November 2, 2017

1. What SLOs did you assess? SLO #4: Students should be able to demonstrate effective group communication.

2. Describe your assessment activities (What did you do?)
   - 2.1: The Assessors, Professor Kristy Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator Konrad Schlarbaum, used an indirect method for assessing our activities. Before any assessment was completed, the Assessors provided students with instruction and deadlines for each assessment activity. As an indirect method, the Assessors instructed students to complete a written self-analysis on the semester-long co-curricular and experiential learning opportunity.
   - 2.2: A Group Communication Class of 23 students participated in the assessment activities.
   - 2.3: Descriptions for each assessment activity:
     - January 19, 2017: Professor Callihan introduced the idea of experiential learning through a semester-long project. Sustainability Coordinator Konrad Schlarbaum offered a “teaser,” or overview, of the Permaculture Garden Project.
     - January 31, 2017: Professor Callihan assigned Group Communication Class to six teams of four students. Each team was instructed to interview one of six Permaculture Garden Project Stakeholders to inform the design of the garden. The Stakeholders were: Culinary Arts, Zookeeping Technology, Office of Sustainability, Facilities and Grounds, and two student groups—one developed a survey and the other questions for focus groups.
     - February 9, 2017: The Sustainability Coordinator gave an introduction to sustainability and permaculture (presentation available upon request). The Coordinator took the Group Communication Class on a field trip to the Office of Sustainability Garden, instructed them to get in their assigned teams, and handed them a worksheet to complete that reinforces the permaculture principles. Lastly, the teams were provided resources to learn more about permaculture. (see Section 6 for resources and worksheet)
February 14, 2017: The Sustainability Coordinator presented and explained the Permaculture Design Questionnaire to the Group Communication Teams. The Sustainability Coordinator instructed the Teams to tailor the questions and language of the questionnaire to their assigned stakeholder. (Permaculture Design Questionnaire available upon request)

February 28, 2017: Deadline for Group Communication Teams to submit their adapted questionnaire.

March 2, 2017: Deadline for Sustainability Coordinator to give Group Communication Teams feedback on their questionnaires.

March 9, 2017: Deadline for Group Communication Teams to submit final questionnaires. (Example Group Communication Team’s Permaculture Design Questionnaire available upon request)

March 9 - April 4, 2017: Group Communication Teams interviewed Permaculture Garden Stakeholders. Teams worked on oral presentations and contributed to an executive report.

April 6, 2017: Group Communication Teams gave oral presentations and provided an executive summary from the Permaculture Garden Project Stakeholder interviews to the Permaculture Design Teams. (executive summary and team presentations available upon request)

April 16, 2017: The Group Communication Class reflected on their co-curricular and experiential learning opportunity in a written self analysis. (questions for the self analysis can be found in Section 3.1)

April 18, 2017: Professor Callihan assigned the Group Communication Class to create practical guidelines for effective group discussion with people of varied interest/expertise with a complex system goal. (Instruction: Each group, identified the Top 10 most important communication guidelines from our text that led to communication effectiveness. Using large post it notes, groups then select two of their guidelines to present to the whole class. Post it notes are organized throughout the room and re-ordered to scaffold the guidelines. This becomes the format for the presentation. Teams are then broken into groups: PPT creation, flyer creation and speakers. The presentation is practiced, PPT is edited, and the flyer is edited to match all. Last, the presentation is videotaped and forwarded with flyer to Sustainability Coordinator.

April 20, 2017: The Sustainability Coordinator explained common communication challenges among permaculture design teams to the Group Communication Class.

April 25, 2017: The Group Communication Class collated practical guidelines for effective group discussion from course textbook. They drafted script for video, assigned speakers, and created flier that accompanied video.

April 27, 2017: The Group Communication Class produced a five-minute video and corresponding flier on the practical guidelines for effective small group discussion. (video and flier available upon request)
3. Describe your assessment results (What did you find? What did you learn?)

- 3.1: The results from the written self analysis on an co-curricular and experiential learning opportunity indicated that 100 percent, or 23 out of 23, of students in the Group Communication Class were able to articulate effective group communication skills. Here are three example responses from Group Communication Class for each of the five questions on the self analysis:

  - **Question 1:** Explain the overall experience of the PPCC Challenge (internal service learning project) for you. (Think back to when you were first introduced to this challenge. What were your thoughts? How about after your team conducted interviews? What were your thoughts on the project? What about when your team completed the executive report and presentation? What were your thoughts?)
    - The permaculture challenge experience was beneficial to learning group communication. It divided us into groups of four and assigned us to a stakeholder from a department here at the college. My group (team JJAM) represented the Culinary Arts department. We had to work together with each other to produce a questionnaire for the chef we interviewed and then interview our stakeholder as a group. Upon completion of this interview, we compiled the information we gathered from the stakeholder and put it into a report and presentation for a design team to plan the garden. My group had no major obstacles in this project and got along very well.
    - I have always been aware of what sustainability is, with limited knowledge of what permaculture was. However, I had no knowledge that the PPCC Campuses had a department of sustainability, nor did I know that we had a garden at the Centennial Campus. Initially my reaction to the project was confusion, I didn’t understand how participating in the “PPCC Challenge” would help me improve my skills in Group Communication. I was very uninterested in the whole idea, and was not very excited about the amount of work that would go in to completing the project. There were very little guidelines, and what felt like almost little to no communication between the class and Konrad, in essence it felt unorganized. After all the effort, and seeing the final results I feel satisfied, and think I gained a real life representation of an organization, with small groups within it, who were all parts working to reach the same goal.
    - I honestly did not really want to do it because I have done a service learning type work before and did not care for the time commitment.

  - **Question 2:** What lessons did you learn? (From participating in this project as it relates to group communication. From serving serve your local college community?)
    - Don’t make assumptions about others. The Zoology department believed that Culinary Arts was inclined towards using chemical pesticides in the garden when
they were not. Furthermore, the Culinary Arts department assumed that the grounds crew would recognize their Golden Currant bush and not cut it back; that too was proven to be untrue. The assumptions made here were major obstacles for this project to move forward. Going forward, communication for this project needs to improve and not be reliant on group communication classes and instructors.

- One lesson that seemed to reoccur throughout the project: plan, expect the unexpected, and roll with it, whatever “it” morphs to be. Snow days are events, and overscheduling oneself, as is misinformation and miscommunication. Tension urges animosity with unspoken truths as the roots. Different stakeholders assumed various misinterpretations of others and with that came the unwillingness to work with one another well.

- I learned that simple miscommunication can add to conflict and potential breakdown of a group. It is difficult to confront conflict but it needs to happen or else the group splits and no longer functions as a cohesive unit. I learned that the college has struggled in the past because the communication was lacking and I learned how important open communication is because projects like this needs more than one person for it to be successful.

- Question 3: Keeping group communication and community service in mind, how does this challenge better prepare you, or not, for your future career?

  - Where many communication classes teach communication in theory by describing concepts, this forced us to implement communication skills and organize communication between groups and departments. This prepared me for my future career by giving me experience in dealing with common communication barriers instead of describing them in class.

  - In terms of group communication and community service, this challenge better prepared me for my future by helping me prepare for general and unique group projects. This project allowed for me to better prepare for unique projects where everything is unpredictable and we may not have access to the full details. It also allows for me to think better on my toes and to always have a solution for something when things do not go as planned. Now that I have experienced project like this, I would like to see other classes offer this experience. I think a project like this gets people in the mindset of broader thinking and the opportunity to experience a major opportunity like this for future references. Also, I think if other classes participated in projects like this, it will give them the ability to apply the content from the class into the project. By completing a project like this at college level, it will not come as a surprise for students when given a similar task like this in their respective careers.

  - The communication process, the hours spent, and the information obtained, not just from the sustainability aspect all collide to form this base of information to be used later. Companies require adept communicators, who know not only how
to work well within a group, but with other groups as well to reach a common goal. I believe we did that, and we did well.

- **Question 4:** Now that you have participated in a class-related, real-world project, would you like to see other classes offer this experience? Why or why not?
  - Most definitely, when I did this I felt like I was actually doing something and making an impact. In other classes it seems like I’m just sitting in a classroom and trying to absorb what the teacher is lecturing about. This style of education creates real-world experience which forces students to learn.
  - I learn through doing, and this experience has helped me significantly. Though I have had a pleasant experience in this class, I can’t say that it would be the same for all other classes. The leadership within the class made it a smooth process, Professor C. was able to efficiently prioritize, organize, and even improvise the project when unexpected road blocks occurred, and showed how a leader of an organization should respond when less than anticipated things happen. She was also very attentive to the requests of all groups and their needs, and was very hands on with the project, and if she made an error, took full responsibility. She was always watching out for her “organization”. Not all teachers at PPCC have the ability to do that. Professor C. was enthusiastic about the project all the way through, and also applied everything we experienced to group communication, which added to the learning experience. I have taken courses where we did do a service project which was lead poorly, and had almost no application to the subject I was learning about. So though I would like to say more classes should do this, I think a system needs to be put in place to make sure students are receiving what they pay for.
  - Any opportunity that the classes and school offer to better the community and the college itself, I believe to be good for the students and staff. The project mixes the material learned in class and applies it to actual situations, and the situations relate to us directly and have some sort of instantaneous pay off which is fantastic. Not only was the project completed for a grade, but towards the end, I would go as far as to say that the groups did it to see the “project” through and come together.

- **Question 5:** What recommendations would you offer to improve for future class-related projects?
  - One thing I would recommend would be a little more class time to work on the project because it isn’t always easy to find time outside of class.
  - Offering more student involvement in class for projects would be beneficial. This project only had the mulch day, which sounded more like a lot of standing around and a bit of manual labor. If there was more time in class for students to physically interact with the garden, I think students would get a lot more out of it. Also, I would like to see the project taken a little further than where we ended. If time had permitted I would have enjoyed interacting with and maybe
influencing the design team. But overall, I much prefer this educational method than to any others. I think I learn best kinesthetically, but this method did more than just appeal to my learning style. It involved the class in something that was useful and necessary; it allowed for me, the student, to actually impact my environment at the college. I just wish I had been able to take a class like this prior to my final semester at PPCC.

- I would say that there needs to be maybe more class time, because it is difficult meeting outside of class with group members. This way you can interact face-to-face more as opposed to just text, or internet when discussing the project. I would also like the information to be more organized for each group. I did not like how we had to weed out so many questions in the packet, for them to be cut down even more. I want to be able to just have the questions set for each group, it takes up less time than deciding between them. Other than that, I do not think the project needs more modification, it went well.

- 3.2 (Explain how the results compare with performance targets. Identify strengths and needed improvements relative to this outcome.)
  - The Assessor’s performance target was 80 percent of the Group Communication Class should be able to articulate effective group communication skills. The written self analysis on an co-curricular and experiential learning opportunity indicated that the Assessors exceeded their target with 100 percent of Group Communication Class achieving the student learning outcome.
  - One strength the Assessors identified was that 100 percent of students completed all assignments of the co-curricular and experiential learning opportunity.
  - The Assessors could find no improvement needed as it relates to completion of assignments. The only peripheral improvement was to include a second instruction explaining and highlighting the flexible nature a project of this magnitude requires. Some students expressed a desire to “have more detailed instruction” as they found brainstorming and product creation difficult as it included too many “unknowns”.

4. Conclusions and next steps
- Summarize your impressions of the results reported in item 3. Based upon your interpretation of the data, what conclusions emerge about student attainment of the learning outcome you assessed?
  - Group Communication Students were committed to the project. They had intrinsic motivation. Students conformed and normed to the challenge and therefore performed at a high level to achieve.
  - This was a real life project that meant more to them.
  - Some students reported that in previous classes there was not a clear connection between course content and the service learning project. As opposed to this project, students reported that there was a stronger connection.
Based on your findings, what are the changes that need to be made in order to improve student learning? What strategies do you plan to implement? How will those changes be implemented?

- Intentionally connecting all learning opportunities to the co-curricular and experiential learning project for Group Communication Students. This strategy should help alleviate confusion over how a particular activity relates to service learning project.
- Directly assessing Group Communication Students on their effectiveness in group communication. Professor Callihan can assess group presentations and their contributions to an executive summary. As the Assessors broaden their assessment of the learning environment, they can better understand what factors contributed to effective group communication.
- Provide instruction explaining and highlighting the flexible nature a project of this magnitude requires. Some students expressed a desire to “have more detailed instruction” as they found brainstorming and product creation difficult as it included too many “unknowns”.
- Provide more opportunities for guided dialog with student groups to request support. This comes about in an effort to model paraphrasing as an feedback loop for effective group communication.

How will you assess the impact of those changes? What data will be collected in the next year to show that those changes have made a difference? (see assessment plan template)

- Conduct a cross-analysis of several assessment data.
- For consistent assessment of each class, Group Communication students will complete the exact same written self analysis on this co-curricular and experiential learning experience.

5. Self-reflection

Was there any aspect of your assessment that was especially illuminating? Effective? Surprising? Worth sharing with others?

- The Assessors identified other rationale for choosing the SLO.
  - Apply course content that is valuable to future employers
  - Illustrate to students that they can serve the college as micro community just the same as the local community

- Group Communication Students reported that they were unsure of the co-curricular and experiential experience at first. However, by the end of the semester, they were able to articulate how the project benefitted their learning, career preparedness, and social and emotional development.

- Group Communication Students compared their previous experience with service learning classes to their current experience in the Group Communication Class. Students describe their current experience as being more organized and having a stronger connection to the course curriculum.

- Professor Callihan was contacted by several Group Communication Students after the semester ended to hear how the Sustainability Garden project was progressing. This
seems to suggest that some students were committed to the Sustainability Garden Project from conceptualization to implementation.

- Group Communication Students seem to want more co-curricular and experiential learning opportunities integrated in their classes.

6. Supporting documentation

6.1: Sustainability and permaculture presentation (available upon request)

6.2: Permaculture resources can be found at: https://permacultureprinciples.com/resources/

6.2: Principles of Permaculture Worksheet (see below)

1. Observe and interact/replicate
   a. Example: Spirals are one way nature packs a lot of space into a small area. We can use that natural pattern in designing a compact garden.
   b. Question: Observe the garden, identify a natural pattern, and describe how it can be integrated into the design.
   c. Answer: _______________________________________________________________
      _______________________________________________________________
      _______________________________________________________________

2. Catch and store energy
   a. Example: A pond catches the flowing energy of water and stores it until it flows out of the pond or evaporates into the atmosphere.
   b. Question: Observe the garden, identify a source of energy, and describe how the energy could be integrated into the design.
   c. Answer: _______________________________________________________________
      _______________________________________________________________
      _______________________________________________________________

3. Obtain a yield
   a. Example: A yield can simply be the vegetables, fruits, or medicines you obtain from the garden.
   b. Question: Can you think of some intangible yields that could be integrated into the design?
   c. Answer: _______________________________________________________________
      _______________________________________________________________
      _______________________________________________________________

4. Apply self-regulation and accept feedback
   a. Example: A creative women taking an abandoned school bus and turning it into her own little home.
   b. Question: What is a potential problem the garden might face and how could it be turned into a solution?
5. Use and value renewable resources and services
   a. Example: Soils are not merely support for plants but are the primary site where wastes are transformed into new life.
   b. Question: Identify a renewable resource or service and explain how it can be integrated into the design.
   c. Answer: ________________________________
                  ______________________________________________________________________
                  ______________________________________________________________________

6. Produce no waste
   a. Example: Fruits and vegetables don’t go into the garbage, they become compost.
   b. Question: What are other source of waste in a garden that could be put to good use?
   c. Answer: ________________________________
                  ______________________________________________________________________
                  ______________________________________________________________________

7. Design from patterns to details
   a. Example: The meander of a river reduces its speed and therefore the erosive power of the moving water.
   b. Question: Identify a pattern in the garden and explain how it functions.
   c. Answer: ________________________________
                  ______________________________________________________________________
                  ______________________________________________________________________

8. Integrate rather than segregate
   a. Example: A chicken can provide pest control, tillage, meat, feathers, eggs, heat etc., to increase the overall yields and create a more integrated system.
   b. Question: What does a garden look like that is segregated?
   c. Answer: ________________________________
                  ______________________________________________________________________
                  ______________________________________________________________________

9. Use small and slow solutions
   a. Example: The snail is both small and slow, it carries its home on its back and can withdraw to defend itself when threatened.
   b. Question: In what ways does this garden currently represent a small and slow solution?
10. Use and value diversity
   a. Example: A meadow abounds with a diversity of connections. The variety of colors and flower shapes creates a diversity of connections with pollinators.
   b. Question: Can you think of some benefits of integrating flowers into a vegetable garden?
   c. Answer: _______________________________________________________________
                 _______________________________________________________________
                 _______________________________________________________________

11. Use edges and value the marginal
   a. Example: The interface between things is where the most interesting events take place. These are often the most valuable, diverse and productive elements in the system. There is a lot of plant and animal interaction where the forest meets the prairie.
   b. Question: How many edges and margins can you identify with the garden?
   c. Answer: _______________________________________________________________
                 _______________________________________________________________
                 _______________________________________________________________

12. Creatively use and respond to change
   a. Example: A hail storm devestates the garden.
   b. Question: What creative solutions do you have to respond to this change?
   c. Answer: _______________________________________________________________
                 _______________________________________________________________
                 _______________________________________________________________

6.4: Permaculture Design Questionnaire (available upon request)
6.5: Group Communication Team’s Adapted Permaculture Design Questionnaire (available upon request)
6.6: Group Communication Team’s Executive Summary (available upon request)
6.7: Group Communication Team’s Oral Presentation Pictures
Photo 1: The audience was comprised of guests, Group Communication Class, Permaculture Design Teams, and Permaculture Garden Project Stakeholders.

Photo 2: A Group Communication Team presenting on the information they gleaned from interviewing the Culinary Arts Department.

6.8: Small Group Communication Best Practices Video (available upon request)
6.9: Small Group Communication Best Practices Flier (available upon request)
6.10: Permaculture Garden Project Picture

Photo 1: The final design of the garden.

**Assessment plan (next cycle)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLO you are planning to assess in Fall 2017: SLO #4: Students should be able to demonstrate effective group communication.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rationale for choosing this SLO</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>o To provide opportunities for students to practice communication and sustainability concepts through a co-curricular, experiential, and service learning project.</td>
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<td>o To encourage students to see themselves as change agents through contributing to a live project on campus.</td>
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<td>o To provide opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills that are valuable to future employers</td>
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<td>o To illustrate to students that they can serve the college as micro community just the same as the local community</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning opportunities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. September 26, 2017: Professor Kristy Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator Konrad Schlarbaum articulate to a Group Communication Class the assignment and expectations of co-curricular and experiential learning opportunity. The Sustainability Coordinator engages students with a class activity where students share their experience with recycling.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. November 14, 2017: The Sustainability Coordinator teaches Group Communication Students how to recycle, how to conduct a waste audit, important considerations for choosing recycling stations, and common mistakes students make when they recycle.
4. November 21, 2017: Professor Callihan leads the Group Communication Class in brainstorming methods for investigating methods for addressing food and liquid contamination in the recycling recepticles (survey, focus group, observation etc.).
5. November 28, 2017: The Group Communication Class interviews the Sustainability Coordinator about resources that could assist them in finding methods to address food and liquid contamination in the recycling recepticles.
7. December 5, 2017: Group Communication Class completes executive report of methods to address food and liquid contamination and performs a dry run of their presentations.
8. December 7, 2017: Group Communication Class presents executive report findings to campus stakeholders. Professor Callihan assigns a five-question self-reflection on the co-curricular and experiential learning opportunity.
9. December 12, 2017: Professor Callihan leads the Group Communication Class in a debrief and reflection of the service learning project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Indirect and Direct</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Tool(s)</td>
<td>Indirect: Group Communication Students will complete a five-question self-reflection on the co-curricular and experiential learning opportunity. Direct: Group Communication Students will participate in all learning opportunities related to the service learning project. Professor Callihan will take attendance before each activity. Direct: Professor Callihan will use a rubric to assess Group Communication Student’s ability to demonstrate effective group communication through an oral presentation and executive summary.</td>
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This SLO is being reassessed. Here are the changes that will be made to the way learning will be assessed:

- Provide instruction explaining and highlighting the flexible nature a project of this magnitude requires. Some students expressed a desire to “have more detailed instruction” as they found brainstorming and product creation difficult as it included too many “unknowns”.
- Provide more opportunities for guided dialog with student groups to request support. This comes about in an effort to model paraphrasing as an feedback loop for effective group communication.
- Intentionally connecting all learning opportunities to the co-curricular and experiential learning project for Group Communication Students. This strategy should help alleviate confusion over how a particular learning opportunity relates to service learning project.
• Directly assess Group Communication Students on their effectiveness in group communication. More specifically, Assessors can assess group presentations and contributions to an executive summary. As Assessors broaden their assessment of the learning environment, they can better understand what factors contributed to effective group communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Method(s)</th>
<th>Indirect: Yes or no, students should be able to demonstrate effective group communication through a written self-reflection of an service learning project. Direct: Professor Callihan will take attendance before all learning opportunities related to the service learning project. Direct: Professor Callihan will utilize a rubric for assessing group performance on effectively communicating through an oral presentation and executive summary.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Group Communication Class</th>
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<tr>
<th>Performance Target</th>
<th>100% of students in the Group Communication Class should be able to demonstrate effective group communication skills. 90% of Group Communication Students should be able to participate in all learning opportunities related to the service learning project. 80% of Group Communication Students will be able to effectively communicate as a group through an oral presentation and executive summary.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Timeframe of assessment tasks</th>
<th>Indicate when the following assessment activities will take place</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment tools will be collected by: Professor Callihan by December 20, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Responses will be analyzed by: Professor Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator by January 31, 2018</td>
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<td>• Results will be interpreted by: Professor Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator by January 31, 2018</td>
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<td>• Recommendations for improvement will be made by: Professor Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator by January 31, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Changes will be implemented and data collected by: Professor Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator by January 31, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assessment results for the AY17/18 will be reported by: Sustainability Coordinator by January 31, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<th>Staff members involved in the assessment tasks</th>
<th>Indicate the position/name of staff persons who will be involved in the following assessment activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collection of assessment tools: Professor Callihan</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Analysis of student responses: Professor Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interpretation of assessment results: Professor Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identification of recommendations for improvement: Professor Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implementation of changes and data collection: Professor Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reporting of the AY17/18 assessment results (see assessment plan template): Professor Callihan and Sustainability Coordinator</td>
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Created by Pikes Peak Community College Committee for Assessment of Student Services