

**Carl Albert State College**  
**HLC Assessment Academy Entry Context Questions and Responses**  
**Submitted September 2017**

***Please introduce your institution to other Academy Teams. Provide contextual information on your institution including but not limited to institutional type, size and student populations served. (100 – 200 words).***

Carl Albert State College is a public community college located in Poteau, Oklahoma, which is nestled in a river valley surrounded by numerous mountainous ranges in eastern Oklahoma. The rural city of Poteau is the Leflore County seat positioned only twelve miles from the Oklahoma-Arkansas border. CASC was established in 1933 with a branch campus founded in 1979 in Sallisaw, Oklahoma. CASC serves close to 3,000 students from Oklahoma and western Arkansas. Since the Cherokee and Choctaw Nations reside in eastern Oklahoma, the largest minority group of students is Native American at 22% of total enrollment. CASC meets the educational needs of the low-income/first generation population by offering affordable two year associate degrees in art, science, and applied science as well as offering several certificate programs.

***Summarize what your institution has done in the past related to the assessment of student learning and what are current assessment initiatives? (100 – 200 words).***

Assessment practices have become increasingly more data driven in the past five years. CASC invested in WEAVE online assessment software in 2011 seeking to provide more streamlined, efficient data collection and reporting. Past assessment practices tended to collect copious amounts of inefficiently-used data. Assessments such as the ACT CAAP, in-class student surveys of instruction, and capstone courses were part of the “process.”

The CASC Strategic Plan developed following the 2013-2014 academic year incorporates data-driven decision making, relying heavily on WEAVE assessment results. Focus Area 3 concentrates on assessment and technology specifically.

Administrative turnover in 2014 revealed data which had never been released, analyzed, or used effectively. A full-time assessment specialist position was created, and inefficient, non-utilized practices were discarded in favor of more simplified, efficient, and most importantly, useful processes and procedures. Resulting from this, capstone courses and CAAP testing were discarded.

New leadership realigned WEAVE infrastructure, focusing on Student Learning Outcomes and evaluation cycles, particularly to establish a culture of assessment at the faculty and course level. The purchase of SmartEvals software in 2015 moved student surveys of instruction online, allowing for evaluation of every course, every semester.

Current assessment initiatives include the implementation of action plans to emphasize continual progress, enhancing program and general education assessment, and expanding assessment to a campus-wide model rather than one of academic focus.

***Now that your team has a better idea of the structure and purpose of the Academy, what are your institution's primary needs for participation in the Academy? (100 – 200 words).***

CASC will utilize this opportunity through the HLC Assessment Academy to reevaluate and reconstruct an assessment model of student learning that ensures that the design:

- Is highly functional, produces reliable data, includes and assesses all required components from the course level through the program level, and reinforces CASC's mission and vision.
- Places decision making, analysis, and action in the hands of the faculty in all departments.
- Serves as a model to establish assessment of student learning at the institutional level, which thereby encourages the co-curricular departments to actively participate in the process at all stages.
- Creates a culture of student learning that corrects (RRAD) Random Reactive Assessment Disorder.

***What potential barriers does your team see to progress? (100 – 200 words).***

Overcoming CASC's past relationship with intermittent and incongruous assessment will be the biggest barrier for the team. This experience has created a culture of frustration and anxiety with faculty who are trepid concerning change. Many members of faculty devoted tremendous effort to past endeavors that have proven unbeneficial to the role of assessment. Overcoming this resistance will require transparency and communication as we advance from a well-planned vision with solid implementation to a productive model. In addition, successfully incorporating an assessment model at the co-curricular level will hinge upon a secure foundation that must surface through our efforts with this academy. The reevaluation and reconstruction of academic assessment is paramount to the overall scheme of institutional effectiveness.