

Organizational Redesign of the Learning Evidence Team (LET)

April 12, 2006

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PROPOSAL

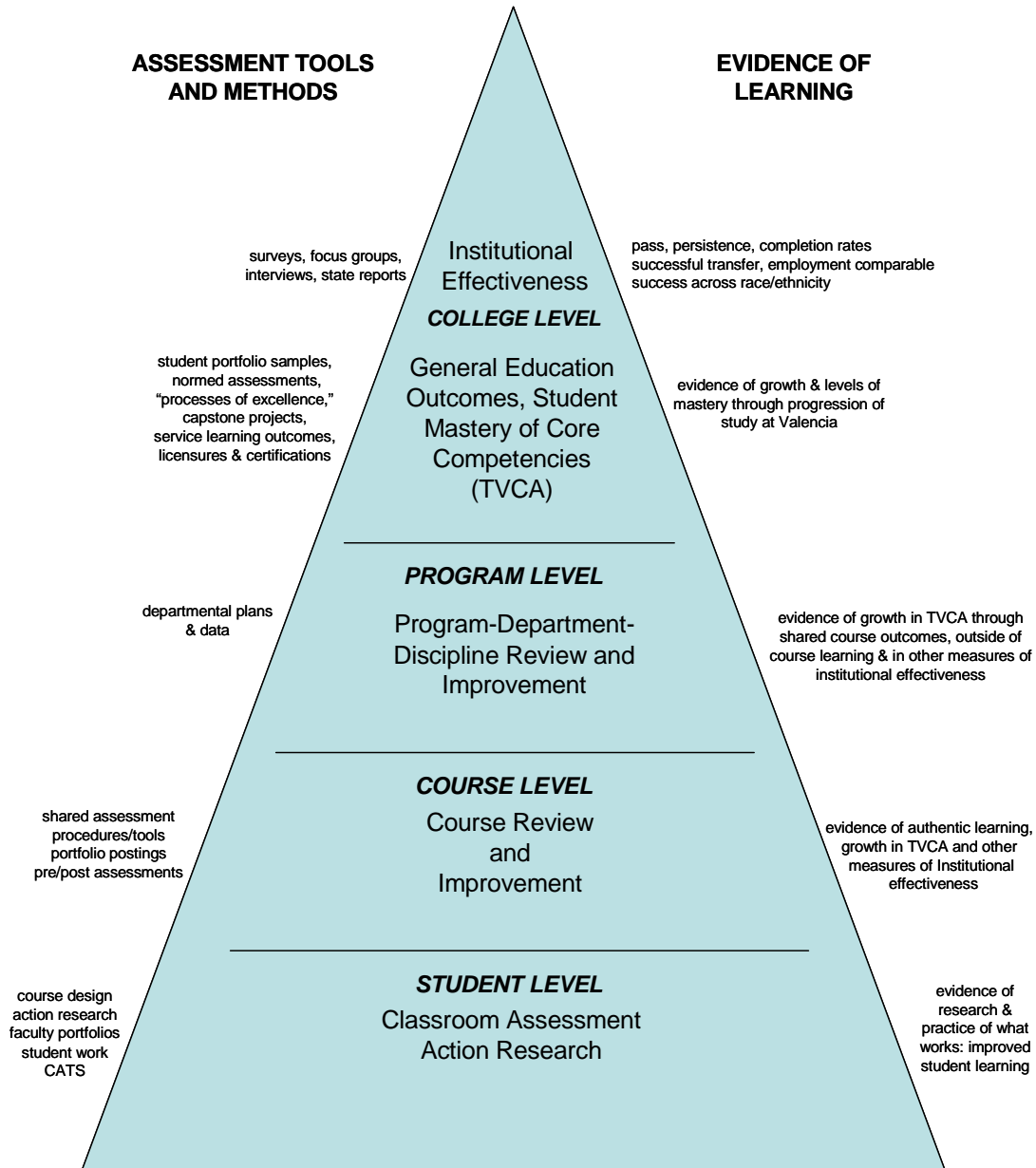
- **Proposal for the Organizational Redesign of the Learning Evidence Team (LET): A Plan for Increased Faculty Engagement in the Assessment of Core Competencies** (pages 7-9). Important Features of this proposal:
 1. **Increase of percentage of faculty members** on Learning Evidence Team to 80%.
 2. **Reduction in size** of Learning Evidence Team from 27 members to 15 members.
 3. **Division of functions** of Learning Evidence Team into two areas: (1) Communication and Coordination and (2) Core Competency Assessment Projects—with a workgroup assigned to each area.
 4. **Coordination of functions** of Learning Evidence Team through the Learning Evidence Associate.
 5. **Continuation of Learning Evidence Team's work** on assessment of core competencies.
 6. **Strategic Plan for completion of one cycle of assessment** for each of the four core competencies by 2010.
- **Diagram of proposed reorganization** of the Learning Evidence Team (page 9).
- Learning Evidence Team's **Strategic Plan to Assess Core Competencies** in a Cycle of Continuous Improvement (with the measurement of each core competency completed at least once before 2010) (page 10)

ADDENDA: WORK OF THE LEARNING EVIDENCE TEAM

- **"Learning Evidence Plan"** (All items listed below available at <http://www.valenciacc.edu/learningevidence>)
 - "Valencia Community College's Learning Evidence Plan"
 - "Concept Map of Assessment"
 - "Glossary of Learning and Assessment"
 - "Programmatic Assessment Inventory" (an inventory of assessments used at the College at the Program level or higher)
- **Course Outlines** (All items listed below available from Atlas: Course Outline Builder)
 - "Course Outline Builder: Step by Step" ([MyAtlas](#): College Services, Faculty Tools, Course Outline Builder)
 - "Process for Creating, Adopting and Revising Course Outlines (Amendment to College Policy 6Hx28:05-04)"
 - "Thesaurus of Verbs Helpful in Writing Learning Outcomes Arranged by Levels from Bloom's Taxonomy Revised"
- **THINK Assessment Pilot Project**
 - "Valencia's THINK Rubric for Analytical Scoring"
 - "Valencia's THINK Rubric for Holistic Scoring"
 - Valencia's "Measuring My Critical Thinking" (student self-assessment survey)
 - "Average Think Survey Scores Correlated with Average GPA and Average Credit Hours"
 - "Assessing for THINK: The Instruction Book"
 - "Calling Thinkers, Tinkers, and Testers" (THINK Workshop flyer)
 - Front page of [Valencia THINKS](http://net2.valenciacc.edu/cp/ValenciaThinks) Web site (<http://net2.valenciacc.edu/cp/ValenciaThinks>)
- May/June Assessment Newsletter
- "Accomplishments of the Learning Evidence Team"

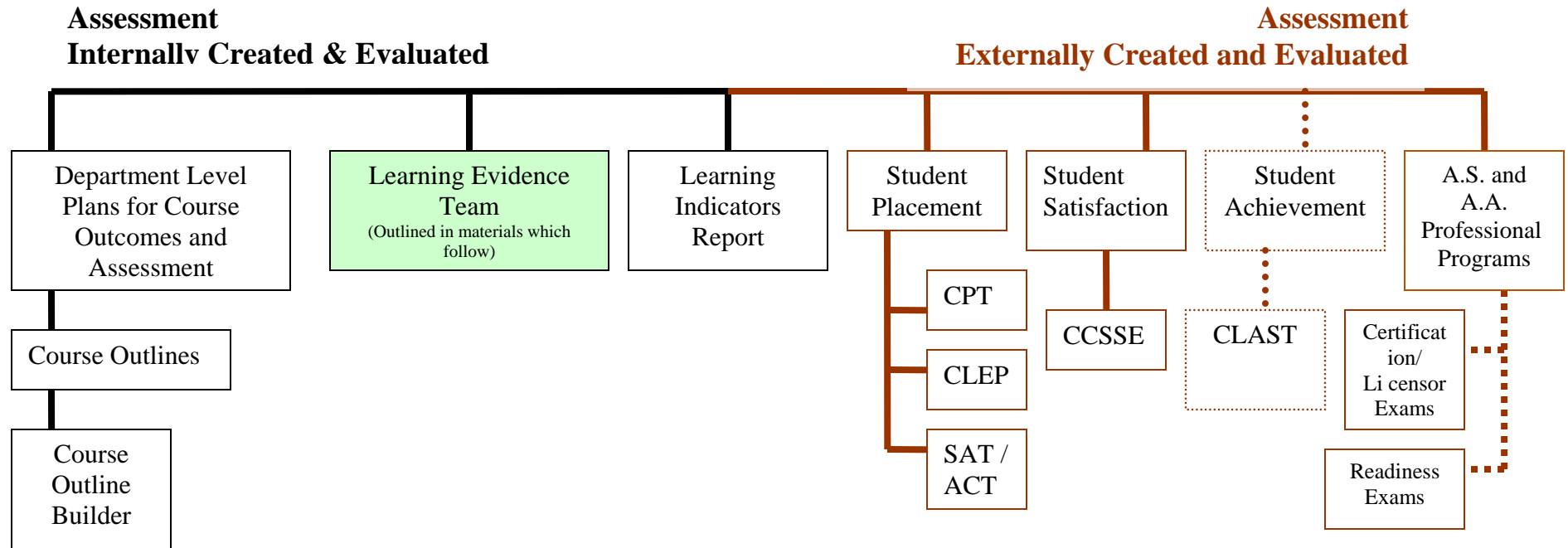
Valencia's Assessment Pyramid

Assessment of Student Outcomes at Valencia



Valencia Community College

Map of Current Areas of Assessment



The Learning Evidence Team (LET) and What We've Learned

The Learning Evidence Team (LET), February 2004-December 2005:

- Established in February 2004 by a former Valencia Chief Learning Officer, the Learning Evidence Team is a large group (27 members), representing major constituencies at the College that are concerned with assessment.
- The charge to the team is:
 - *Provide leadership for the college wide initiative to accomplish Goal 4 of the Strategic Learning Plan and foster a "culture of evidence" that improves learning at Valencia. The Learning Evidence Team (LET) reports to the Chief Learning Officer (CLO) in conjunction with the College Learning Council (CLC).*
 - This charge is defined as including:
 - Foster a "culture of evidence" at the college by answering two key questions: What do we mean by evidence of student learning? And how will we document this evidence?
 - Articulate a philosophy of assessment of student learning that will provide direction for the College in creating a coordinated program of learning centering on our core competencies.
 - Envision a long-term plan for the implementation and documentation of learning outcomes (based on a philosophy of student assessment and on our core competencies) that will bring coordination to the program of learning at the College, that will inform curricular change, and that will improve learning at the College.
- The Learning Evidence Team focuses its activities on Strategic Goals 4.1 (“implement a multi-year strategy to incorporate the core competencies throughout the college curriculum, teaching and assessment”), 4.2 (“develop a plan to identify and align learning outcomes and assessment procedures, beginning with the College’s foundation courses”), 4.3 (“continue to promote and support classroom assessment models through professional development and curriculum design”) and 4.5 (“continue to promote and support classroom assessment models through professional development and curriculum design”).
- To achieve these goals, the Learning Evidence Team begins with a careful process of team-building centered on the study of the literature of assessment, followed by a study of the process of institutional assessment already in place at Valencia, careful examination of the best models of assessment at educational institutions, close collaboration with several nationally recognized consultants on assessment, and attendance at national and regional conferences on assessment.
- Early products of the Learning Evidence Team center on applying the scholarly literature of assessment to the Valencia environment, including: deriving the most important concepts related to assessment (see “Concept Map of Assessment” attached as an addendum); working with TLA to create a “Glossary of Learning and Assessment” (see attached addendum); creating a “Programmatic Assessment Inventory” that lists as many of the current assessments given at Valencia as the team could identify (see attached addendum); and drafting a “Learning Evidence Plan for Transformative Assessment” which was adopted by the College in 2005. (Available at <http://www.valenciac.edu/learningevidence/>).
- The Learning Evidence Team also participates in: (1) the development of the Course Outline Builder under the leadership of Emily Hooker, Learning Evidence Associate (see addenda: “Course Outline Builder: Step by Step,” “Process for Creating, Adopting and Revising Course Outlines,” and “Thesaurus of Verbs Helpful in Writing Learning Outcomes Arranged by Levels from Blooms Taxonomy Revised”); (2) outlining a plan for the cyclical assessment of Valencia’s four core competencies; (3) developing a small-scale THINK Pilot Project that involved developing rubrics for the assessment of the core competency, THINK (see addenda: “Valencia’s THINK Rubric for Analytical Scoring and “Valencia’s THINK Rubric for Holistic Scoring”) and (4) delivering workshops

on the THINK rubrics (see addenda: “Calling Thinkers, Tinkers, and Testers” and “Assessing for THINK: The Instruction Book”). These activities lay a substantial foundation for a coordinated understanding of the relationship of assessment to the core competencies and the use of assessment to promote student learning. This work, especially the development of rubrics, strikes a responsive chord with faculty, who fill these workshops and request more.

- Early on, the Learning Evidence Team decides to carefully document its work on the College Web site at <http://www.valenciacc.edu/learningevidence/> and details its work in the College Bulletin. Since then it has also spotlighted important features of assessment in a newsletter distributed electronically and in print.

Fundamental Lessons Learned About Assessment by the Learning Evidence Team:

- **The most meaningful and lasting form of assessment is formative assessment**, the use of assessment information as a tool to communicate desired changes in teaching and learning at a program or institution (“Glossary” 6). This type of assessment is “consistent, systematic, and interdisciplinary...seeking to consistently improve the quality of education” and acknowledging that assessment is “best directed internally, from within individuals and within the institution” (see “Learning Evidence Plan” 3-4).
- **To be successful, formative assessment** (or any plan of assessment) **must:** (see “Learning Evidence Plan” 4)
 - Deal directly with the concerns of both students and educators.
 - Improve the quality of educational experiences, both curricular and extracurricular.
 - Be integrated into the decision making process at the College.
 - Be supported with adequate budget.
 - Cut through programs, disciplines, and levels to determine broad measures of competence.
 - Be a process for on-going dialog.
 - Be honest, open, courageous, and collegial.
 - Be supported and practiced at all levels.
- **The key principles and purposes of formative assessment** at Valencia are that assessment: (see “Learning Evidence Plan” 5)
 - Reflects our mission, vision, and values.
 - Is based on clear, explicit outcomes that are widely published.
 - Is most effective when it is collaborative within a community that shares responsibility for assessment.
 - Should illuminate student progress toward master of Valencia’s core competencies (TVCA).
 - Exists to promote student learning.
 - Supports renewal of the curriculum and co-curriculum.
 - Empowers meaningful change.
 - Benefits students by increasing learning and satisfaction with the institution.
 - Benefits faculty by increasing learning and effectiveness and, therefore, job satisfaction.

It is especially important to know that:

 - **The clearest picture of assessment is received when multiple measures are used, most often a combination of internally developed and externally developed assessments.**
 - **The most meaningful assessment work is done at the level of the practitioners of assessment.**
- **To lay a strong foundation for assessment takes careful planning and a generous time frame.**
 - Small scale pilots should precede large scale initiatives.
 - There must be adequate time for the feedback loop to be completed so that lessons learned are not lost and the wheel is not constantly reinvented.
 - The “rush to results” must be avoided.
- **One of the most effective ways to close the gap between institutional core competencies and curricular and co-curricular learning outcomes is to develop rubrics** grounded in the scholarship of teaching and learning (see “Think Project Plan” 2; available at www.valenciacc.edu/learningevidence/).

The Learning Evidence Team (LET), January 2006 to April 2006:

- Having completed some of its original charge and having carefully laid the foundation for further work, it became clear that the Learning Evidence Team needed an organizational redesign in order to complete its work more effectively and expeditiously.
- The Learning Evidence Team undertook a systematic study of its structure and held a lengthy discussion about its organizational redesign under the leadership of Kurt Ewen.
- Therefore, the Learning Evidence Team is recommending **a reorganization of its structure, redefinition of its purposes, and realignment of its membership, as described in the proposal which follows.**

Proposal for the Organizational Redesign of the Learning Evidence Team (LET): A Plan for Increased Faculty Engagement in the Assessment of Core Competencies

(A visual display of the information below is provided on page 9)

This proposal comes **after careful study, debate, and dialog** on how to best serve the needs of the College. It is made **after serious reflection**, and is **endorsed and supported by the current members of the Learning Evidence Team**.

The purpose of this proposal is to broaden the work of the team while maintaining a focus on Valencia's core values, THINK, VALUE, COMMUNICATE, and ACT (TVCA), in order to help fulfill Valencia's promise that a Valencia graduate of an AA or AS degree program is a person competent in the exercise of these values.

The Learning Evidence Team also believes **this proposal meets SACS core requirements** for assessment for institutional effectiveness as stated on the SACS Web site:

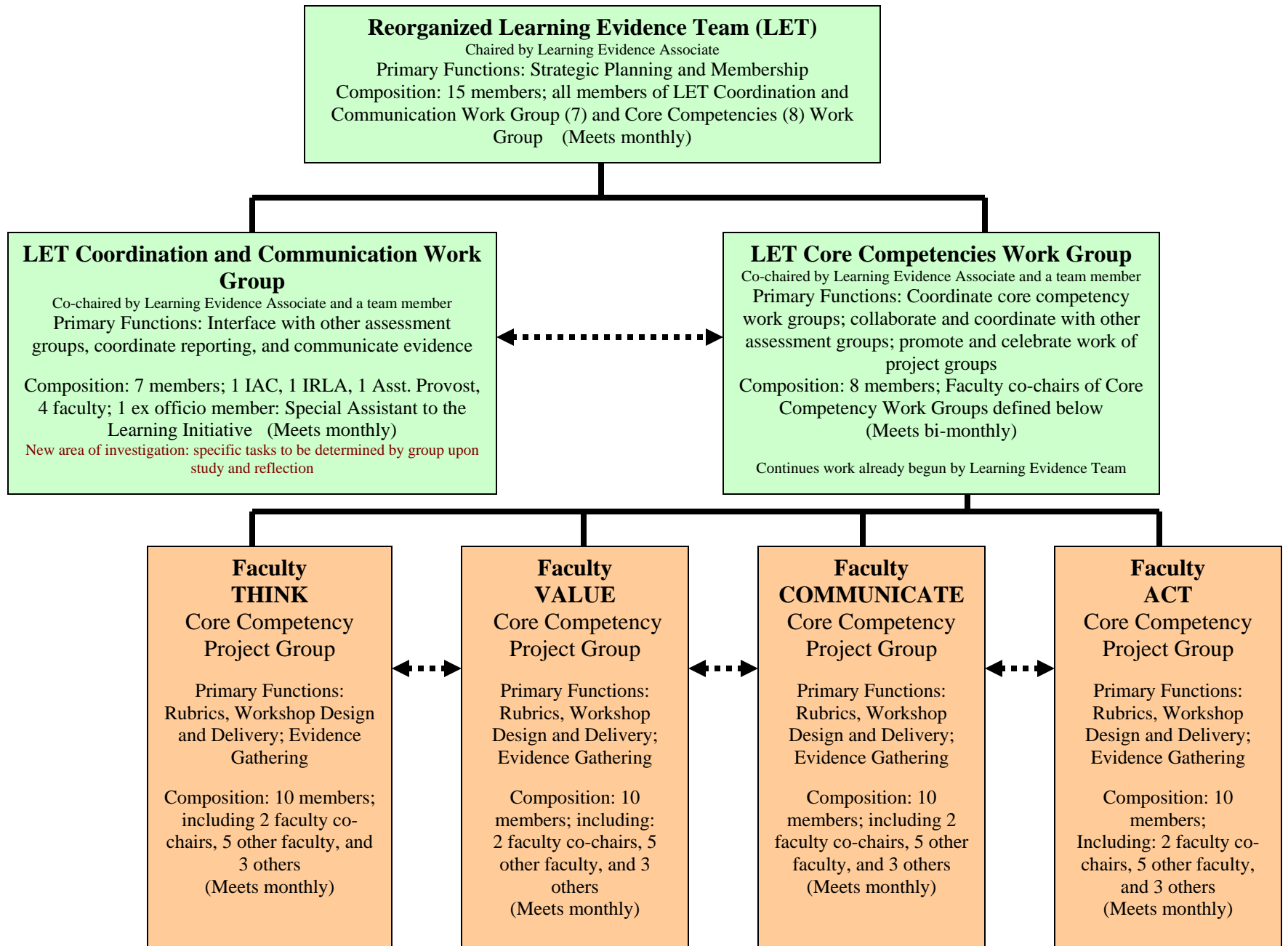
“The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission” (Institutional Effectiveness).

1. Beginning in May, 2006, the **purposes of the Learning Evidence Team** will be as follows:
 - Encourage, promote, and support discussions of assessment and its impact on student learning among faculty, administration, and professional staff.
 - Sponsor, guide, encourage, promote, and/or support the collection and analysis of evidence of student learning, beginning with the mastery of the core competencies.
 - Analyze, publish, and distribute the results of evidence collected about the mastery of core competencies, especially as it affects student learning.
 - Contribute to the development of a culture of evidence at the College that emphasizes results-informed decision-making based on principles of transformative assessment that lead to a cycle of continuous improvement.
 - Contribute to Valencia's data warehouse of assessment techniques and results that can be mined for information on best practices for student learning and that is available in user-friendly form to faculty, administration, professional staff, and community stakeholders.
 - Contribute to the coordinated reporting of assessment results.
 - Promote the celebration and recognition of the results of assessment internally (to the College) and externally (to community stakeholders).

2. **The Learning Evidence Team (LET)** will unite coordination, communication, and assessment of core competencies into a coherent whole. This will permit the work of coordinating and communication assessment of student mastery of core competencies to move forward effectively and expeditiously.
 - It will be a team of 15 members, divided into two work groups: the LET Coordination and Communication Work Group (7 members; described below) and the LET Core Competencies Work Group (8 members; described below).
 - It will be co-chaired by the Learning Evidence Associate and one other team member, the Learning Evidence Team co-chair, preferably one who has been a previous member of the LET or a member of one of its project teams.
 - Since the co-chair of the Learning Evidence Team is expected to devote 6 hours per week per term to the work of the Learning Evidence Team, s/he is also a will receive release time (or a stipend) for this work that is equivalent to her/his compensation for 6 contact hours or its equivalent per week.
 - To serve as the co-chair of the Learning Evidence Team, a faculty member must have the permission of his/her dean and must be recommended by the Faculty Council.

- 3. The LET Coordination and Communication Work Group**, one sub group of the LET, will be assigned the tasks of interfacing with other groups and individuals charged with assessment. The purpose of this interface will be to promote a common understanding of the purposes of assessment, as well as to create a common format for the reporting of assessment results from Valencia's data warehouse. This work group will also be assigned the task of communicating the data and results from the Faculty Core Competencies Project Teams (described below) to the College and other assessment groups in order to increase awareness of the role of assessment in promoting student learning.
- This work group will be composed of 7 members: 4 faculty (1 member of Faculty Council, 1 faculty data expert, and 2 other faculty representatives), 1 IAC representative, 1 IRLA representative, and 1 Executive Council representative. There will be one ex officio member of this group, the Special Assistant to the Learning Initiative.
 - It will be co-chaired by the Learning Evidence Associate and one team member.
 - Each faculty member of this group is expected to devote 6 hours per week per term to the work of the Learning Evidence Team and, as a result, s/he will receive release time (or a stipend) for this work that is equivalent to her/his compensation for 6 contact hours or its equivalent per week.
 - To participate on this work group, a faculty member must have the permission of her/his dean and must be recommended by the Faculty Council.
 - Since this is work in an area new to the College, the LET Coordination and Communication Work Group will have to further define its tasks and decide how it will best operate collegially with other assessment groups, while also promoting the work of the Faculty Core Competencies Project Teams.
- 4. The LET Core Competencies Work Group** will coordinate core competency project groups (one for each core competency; described in detail below), report the analyses of the evidence collected by these groups to the LET Communication and Coordination Work Group, collaborate and coordinate with other assessment groups at the College, and promote the celebration and recognition of the results of each core competency project group (THINK, VALUE, COMMUNICATE, and ACT). This group will continue and expand on the work on infusing the assessment of core competencies into the curriculum that has already begun.
- The LET Core Competencies Work Group will be composed of 8 members: the faculty co-chairs of each core competency project group (2 each for THINK, VALUE, COMMUNICATE, and ACT).
 - It will be co-chaired by the Learning Evidence Associate and one team member.
 - Each faculty member must have his/her dean's permission to participate on this team and must be recommended by the Faculty Council.
 - Each faculty member is expected to devote 6 hours per week per term to the work of the Learning Evidence Team and, as a result, s/he will receive release time (or a stipend) for this work that is equivalent to her/his compensation for 6 contact hours or work hours per week.
- 5. Faculty Core Competency Project Teams** (one for each of the four core competencies) will: (1) create interdisciplinary rubrics that can be used college wide to assess student mastery of one core competency (THINK, VALUE, COMMUNICATE, and ACT); (2) design and deliver workshops about these rubrics and their uses in assessment; (3) design projects to collect, evaluate, and analyze evidence of student mastery of the core competency in question; (4) analyze evidence collected; and (5) communicate their work to the LET Core Competencies Work Group.
- Each work group will be co-chaired by two faculty members, who will—by virtue of their positions—become members of the LET Core Competencies Work Group and receive released time as specified above.
 - Each work group will be composed of 10 members; at least 7 of these will be faculty.
 - Faculty members will be recommended by the Faculty Council.
 - Each faculty volunteer will receive a stipend of \$500 per term for his/her participation as a member of a work team.
 - Project teams will remain together for the duration of the project cycle.
 - Project teams will be interdisciplinary.

- At the end of a project cycle, a new project team will be formed to begin a subsequent project cycle. This team will build on the work of its predecessors.
 - To ensure continuity from cycle to cycle, it is suggested that one of the co-chairs of the project cycle be recruited from a previous project team.
6. **The Learning Evidence Associate** will coordinate the work of the LET Communication and Coordination Work Group and the LET Core Competencies Work Group. Since this position will work directly with faculty, it is suggested that a faculty member fill the position of Learning Evidence Associate.
 7. **The Learning Evidence Associate**, with input from the Learning Evidence Team, will manage the budgets for the Learning Evidence Team, the LET Communication and Coordination Work Group, and the LET Core Competencies Work Group.
 8. **Members of the current Learning Evidence Team** will be invited to join any of the groups planned in this reorganization and, if they choose, can continue their work with the Learning Evidence Team, if they are recommended by the Faculty Council. New members, as well as filling vacancies, will be based on recommendations from the Faculty Council.



LET Strategic Plan to Assess Core Competencies in a Cycle of Continuous Improvement

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
THINK	Organize THINK Team	Design THINK Assessment	Implement THINK Assessment	Collect, Evaluate & Report Evidence of THINK	Revise & Organize Next THINK Team	Design Next THINK Assessment	Implement Next THINK Assessment	Collect, Evaluate & Report Evidence of THINK
COMMUNICATE		Organize COMMUNICATE Team	Design COMMUNICATE Assessment	Implement COMMUNICATE Assessment	Collect, Evaluate & Report Evidence of COMMUNICATE	Revise & Organize Next COMMUNICATE Team	Design Next COMMUNICATE Assessment	Implement Next COMMUNICATE Assessment
VALUE			Organize VALUE Team	Design VALUE Assessment	Implement VALUE Assessment	Collect, Evaluate & Report Evidence of VALUE	Revise & Organize Next VALUE Team	Design Next VALUE Assessment
ACT			Organize ACT Team	Design ACT Assessment	Implement ACT Assessment	Collect, Evaluate & Report Evidence of ACT	Revise & Organize Next ACT Team	Design Next ACT Assessment

ORGANIZE

- Recruit volunteers
- Identify faculty co-chairs
- Build team
- Research literature
- Gather input for rubrics and tools
- Report progress to LET
- Increase awareness of core competency

DESIGN

- Research tools and methods
- Collect examples from current college practices
- Develop rubrics, tools, and methods
- Gather input on rubrics, tools, and methods
- Report progress to LET
- Increase awareness of core competency
- Assess effectiveness of team activities

IMPLEMENT

- Validate rubrics
- Conduct workshops on assessment: rubrics, tools, and methods
- Fine-tune rubrics, tools, and methods
- Report progress to LET
- Increase awareness of core competency
- Assess effectiveness of team activities

COLLECT

- Test processes
- Gather multi-disciplinary evidence of core competency using rubrics, tools, and methods
- Report progress to LET

EVALUATE & REPORT

- Analyze evidence
- Establish/compare baselines
- Produce "user-friendly" report
- Gather input on improving student mastery of core competencies
- Explore ways results can improve student learning at college
- Report progress to LET
- Assess effectiveness of team activities

REVISE & ORGANIZE

- Discuss lessons learned in college wide venues
- Gather input on improvements to rubrics, tools, methods, and reports
- Revise rubrics, tools, methods, and reports
- Recruit volunteers for new team and initiate that team's first phase (See Orgnaize)
- Increase awareness of core competency
- Report progress to LET
- Assess effectiveness of team activities