

ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES

2010 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education: Effective Program Processes

Award Information and Application

Increasingly national education officials, accreditors, and faculty leaders associate “quality” education with student learning outcomes and continuous quality improvement processes. Academic leaders and accrediting bodies discourage the view that education is a simple matter of a static body of knowledge passed from faculty to students. Instead, they value education practiced as commitment to a set of collectively-practiced ongoing activities: making *institutional choices* about the most important goals for student learning and defining the learning in terms of desired outcomes, developing a shared faculty commitment to *actions* such as high impact, active learning strategies and faculty development activities designed to increase student achievement of the desired outcomes, making informed *judgments* about student achievement, and ensuring continuous *improvements* in the educational program. Despite the commitment of academic leaders and accreditors to these processes, too few institutions have succeeded in applying a systematic process of educational improvement to an essential component of a liberal education, the general education program. In addition, recent national higher education accountability discussions suggest the commitment to student learning in general education can benefit from models of effective, innovative general education programs.

The Association for General and Liberal Studies is committed to the centrality of quality general education programs in the liberal education of students. The organization invites institutions to apply for the 2010 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education: Effective Program Processes. The awards promote institutional commitment to continuous quality improvement processes, recognize faculty and institutions that practice these quality behaviors, and provide much needed examples of effective improvement processes. The 2010 Awards will recognize institutions committed to systematic improvements generated through the use of learning assessment. The Award will recognize those institutions that use assessment to reconsider learning goals, develop a shared commit to improved learning strategies, and check to determine the success of the efforts. AGLS will recognize up to three institutions that use effective and innovative assessment processes and related strategies to improve learning. Application narratives should focus on the commitment to and assessment of just **one** learning domain. Judges will identify the best improvement model for each of three different learning domains. The Awards presentations will be made during the 2010 AGLS conference, to be held October 7-9 in Austin, TX. Winners will be asked to present a discussion of their assessment processes in an identified special session and, if possible, provide a poster presentation for display throughout the conference. Winners will receive the following: a plaque recognizing their efforts, listing in the AGLS Newsletter, recognition of the process on the AGLS website, and half-priced registration for the up-coming conference, including a year’s membership in AGLS.

Award Selection and Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by an Award Committee comprised of AGLS Executive Council members, members of accrediting associations, and recognized leaders in general education. This year’s Award category is based on one of the Systems Analysis Questions, I 1, found in the AGLS publication, *Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Program Review*. Information about assessment and other essential general education program processes can be found in the publication (see below). Awards judging will focus on how well the institution’s systematic program improvement efforts can serve as a practical model for other institutions. Judging will consider how innovatively and effectively an institution has assessed **one** general education learning domain, developed evidence-based improvement strategies, and checked the success of those improvements. That is, the Award application must explain the full “loop” that includes the institution’s processes for defining the outcome, developing and implementing the assessment methods, evaluating the results, deciding on needed program improvements, and providing evidence of successful improvement efforts.

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Application Format

To be considered for the award, an applicant on behalf of an institution should complete:

- Section #1: Contact information for individual submitting the application
- Section #2: Institutional endorsement by either the chief executive or academic officer
- Section #3: Application summary (150 words or less)
- Section #4: Responses to four award criteria, limited to two pages per criterion

Examples of Evidence for Award Criteria

Evidence of merit requires answering the questions under each of the criterion listed in the application below. Evidence should focus on specific activities and processes that employ the continuous quality improvement principles discussed in the AGLS publication *Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Program Review* and found in the supporting reference materials listed in the *Guide*. The application should clearly present the creative solutions and leadership methods used to address the issues, concerns, and goals relevant to I1 processes. Supporting material can be summarized as part of the application and narrative, but **limit your explanations to two pages per criterion**. Please feel free to cite any web addresses that readers or AGLS members might use to better understand or see samples of your efforts.

Award Timeline

March—Application materials available on AGLS website

June 15th—Materials must be received by AGLS

June 20th—Materials distributed to review panel

August 1st—Winners notified

October—Winners' presentations and awards during 2009 AGLS Annual Conference in St. Louis

Suggested Reference Material

Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Learning can be found at: www.agls.org. Supporting literature (from regional and specialized accreditors and from AAC&U) is listed in the *Guide*.

Application Submission

Applications and supporting materials may be submitted as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat format, sent to Paul Ranieri at pranieri@bsu.edu. Applications can also be mailed to:

Paul Ranieri
AGLS Executive Director
Department of English
Ball State University
RB 2109
Muncie, IN 47306

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Section #1: Contact Information of Person Submitting Application

Name	Elizabeth Beaulieu, Ph.D.
Title	Dean, Core Division
Institution	Champlain College
Department/Program	Core Division
Street Address	163 South Willard Street
City, State, Zip	Burlington, VT 05402
Phone	802-651-5953
Fax	802-860-2707
Email	ebeaulieu@champlain.edu
Signature	

Section #2: Institutional Endorsement

Chief Executive Officer or Chief Academic Officer

Name	Robin Abramson, Ph.D.
Title	Provost
Institution	Champlain College
Phone	802-860-2729
Fax	802-860-2750
Email	Abramson@champlain.edu
Signature	

Section #3: Application Summary

Include a summary of the award application. Please begin the narrative with a brief description of your institution and the time frame for the process. Briefly explain your process and why you think it equates with quality. The summary should not exceed 150 words. The text box may be increased in size as necessary.

In September, 2007 Champlain College, a professionally-focused college in Burlington, Vermont, introduced its new interdisciplinary Core curriculum. The new curriculum is a sequence of 13 integrated courses comprised of common reading assignments and common group and individual projects, is writing-intensive, and is delivered almost entirely via the inquiry method. An electronic portfolio was adopted to assess student achievement of college-wide competencies, including information literacy, in the new Core courses. This application explains the process we are using to chart the progress we are making in delivering our college competencies, with a focus on information literacy. In the following pages we chart the best practices we've

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developed, discuss what we've learned, and present the specific changes we've implemented to improve student learning. Some of our findings are included in a sample portfolio (link embedded in Criterion 4).

Section #4: Award Criteria

Criterion 1: Supporting and Defining Learning

Provide a description of how your institution supports and operationally defines learning for one goal or learning domain. What are your learning outcomes for this goal and what is the evidence your institution collects to show that graduates have acquired the general education knowledge, skills, or values expressed by this outcome?

Address the following issues:

- How the goal of this learning domain aligns with your mission
- What process your institution used to define operationally this goal's learning outcome(s)
- What research or evidence your institution used to justify this definition
- Who helped your institution develop this definition
- How you communicate this definition to faculty, students, and other interested parties
- What collaborative efforts members of your institution are making to achieve these learning outcome(s).

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

CRITERION 1

In September, 2007 Champlain College, a professionally-focused college in Burlington, Vermont, introduced its new interdisciplinary Core curriculum. The new curriculum is a sequence of 13 integrated courses comprised of common reading assignments and common group and individual projects, is writing-intensive, and is delivered almost entirely via the inquiry method. An electronic portfolio was adopted to assess student achievement of college-wide competencies, including information literacy, in the new Core courses.

Broadly speaking, *information literacy* refers to the ability to recognize when information is needed, and to locate, evaluate, and use this information effectively. This skill is an important aspect of lifelong learning, and it is a particularly crucial skill for Champlain graduates if the college is to fulfill its mission of endeavoring "to be a leader in educating today's students to become skilled practitioners, effective professionals and engaged global citizens." Recognizing the value of information literacy, Champlain has placed institutional emphasis on defining, supporting, and improving learning in this area. Operationally, this emphasis includes integrating course-embedded information literacy instruction in every semester of the Core curriculum, building on prior work, and assessing student progress by capturing faculty evaluations of student work using course rubrics that have been mapped to information literacy outcomes.

Information literacy surfaced as a possible college-wide competency in 2001, when faculty teams worked

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to identify and define essential student competencies. In the original competency statements, bits and pieces of information literacy were included in competency areas such as critical/creative thinking, writing, ethical reasoning, and technology. When the college began to develop a new Core curriculum in 2005-2007, librarians and faculty worked together to create a new technology and information literacy competency to replace the former technology competency. This new competency, adopted by the faculty in 2007, formed the basis for information literacy instruction throughout the new Core curriculum. After actual usage, the competency was further refined by a team of faculty and librarians and approved by the faculty in 2008. The final iteration of the competency incorporates outcomes in the areas of:

- defining the topic or task
- considering possible sources
- selecting sources
- interpreting and using information
- attributing information
- using technology responsibly
- considering the implications and consequences of technology and information

In defining the competency, faculty and librarians were guided by research and national standards. The field of library and information science includes a strong focus on research- and theory-based models of information seeking, information problem solving, and related skills. In drafting the college's information literacy competency statement, Champlain faculty and librarians relied on models such as Kuhlthau's Information Seeking Process, the Eisenberg-Berkowitz Information Problem-Solving Model, Irving's Information Skills, and others, as well as similar competencies developed by other colleges and national standards developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries and the International Society for Technology in Education. These models and standards provided welcome guidance during the development process.

Librarians, faculty members, the campus instructional designer, and the senior associate provost (the college's assessment specialist) engaged in open and lively dialogue. But interested stakeholders in this learning area extended beyond this immediate group. Champlain's entire assessment program has been established with the intention of making our assessment efforts meaningful to our institution, and with that in mind we have paid particular attention to identifying ways in which this project is meaningful throughout our campus.

We start with students as a primary audience because without them, assessment of learning just does not happen. This is also the area that we are finding to be one of the greatest challenges at the institutional level. Because we know they must participate in a meaningful way, we must find a way to engage them in the process, a way to answer their question, "what is in it for me?" Within our information literacy program we have answered this question by using assignments that are embedded in their courses and for which they will receive grades. By doing so we have tapped into their existing motivation, using the "currency" of the classroom. Librarians conduct instructional sessions that encourage students to apply information literacy skills in their everyday as well as their academic lives, a more meaningful experience than reading about the competency in the student handbook.

Course-embedded assessments also help faculty to make meaning out of assessment work. They are already interested in how well students are learning in their courses, and discussion about the evidence of that learning is naturally interesting to them. Our information literacy program has provided some real opportunities to reach faculty and help them to see the usefulness of looking at how students are achieving at the group level. By using assessment results to refine library instruction, librarians are modeling formative assessment in a context that is not directly threatening to faculty members. By mapping Core course rubrics to the information literacy competency and then reviewing the results with faculty members, librarians are creating a partnership for

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learning, one that faculty members find compelling and worthy of their time. The information literacy program has also served as a bridge to the faculty to help them see the potential value in our electronic portfolio initiative.

Campus administration and outside evaluators are another important stakeholder group. Like all colleges, we are tasked by our accrediting agencies and held accountable by parents, the state of Vermont, and external funding agencies to show that our students are achieving our learning objectives. Our information literacy assessment program has become a valuable example of how, as an institution, we can directly measure and show improvement in the quality of the educational experience, the primary goal of our academic units. As a primary but non-revenue-generating participant, the college library is especially happy to have such evidence when challenged to show the “return on investment” of institutional resources in a resource-competitive enterprise.

In the process of defining, using, and disseminating the information literacy assessment model on our campus, we have identified several approaches that seem to work well and that may provide insight to other institutions:

- Identifying information literacy components in pre-existing college competencies helped faculty to recognize that this was not a new skill, but one they already recognized and valued. This widespread acceptance was heightened by working in highly collaborative teams of faculty members, librarians, and administrators. Likewise, using faculty-developed course rubrics as our primary indicator of student learning ensured greater understanding and buy-in by faculty.
- Embedding this new learning domain into the college's Core curriculum ensured that we were not trying to shoe-horn a new course into the curriculum, or take away time from other content. Similarly, adopting the Core curriculum's chosen teaching technique (inquiry-based learning) for information literacy instruction assured a smoother fit for both faculty and students. And emphasizing the recursive nature of information literacy and reiterating key learning goals throughout the 4-year Core curriculum helps students develop information skills to serve them through college, their career, and their lifetime.
- Embedding a librarian within the new Core Division allowed faculty members to become familiar not only with the concepts but with the people who would be teaching them.

Ongoing conversations, reports, and brainstorming --through Faculty Senate presentations, division meetings, and hallway conversations-- continue the collaborative work that has made this such a strong initiative to date.

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Award Criteria

Criterion 2: The Assessment Process

Describe how your institution assessed the learning identified in Criterion 1 above. Address the following issues:

- What assessment methods and tools your institution developed and used (What are the measures of learning, taken at what levels of student learning, reflected in what type of assignments/activities, and assessed as activities in what program[s]?)
- Who was involved in the development of the assessments and tools
- What institutional support existed for the development of the assessments and tools
- What research was used to develop the assessments and tools
- How the assessments are completed and who is involved (a brief description of the process)

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

CRITERION 2

As Champlain College's Core curriculum was being developed, Core faculty identified that they wanted to use electronic portfolios to assess student learning. This built on the college's previous method of using course-embedded assessments but established a more systematic way to gather information about student learning. As we began exploring the use of electronic portfolios we involved our First Year Seminar team who had been experimenting with electronic portfolios for several years.

A small group guided our portfolio development process; the group was comprised of: 1) faculty and staff who served as directors for each of our college's competencies, 2) our instructional designer, 3) the director of First Year Seminar (and on occasion student life staff who had been involved in that initiative), 4) one dean who was new to Champlain but had worked with electronic portfolio software at his prior institution, and 5) the senior associate provost who had been charged with advancing learning outcomes assessment at the institution.

The college competency directors had been working with the senior associate provost for several years to develop systems for assessing student learning outcomes. Through their research and experience

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the college was already implementing a number of the *9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning* (<http://legacy.iuk.edu/~koctla/assessment/9principles.shtml>), including assessment that focused on actual student performance (direct assessment) that was ongoing rather than episodic and that was focused on the college competencies (as the embodiment of what the college valued). We had piloted stand-alone assessment methods and, like other schools, found the results lacking because of issues related to student motivation outside the classroom. Development of the new Core curriculum allowed us to advance this work while applying an additional principle of good practice: incorporating assessment into this existing change initiative. It was obvious to this group that if we did not incorporate an assessment system into the new Core curriculum we would be missing a huge opportunity.

The additional members of this electronic portfolio team were added to help us define our portfolio goals, guide the selection of the electronic portfolio tool, and plan for implementation. We studied and drew heavily on the work of Dr. Helen Barrett to guide our process for conceptualizing the portfolio and adapted her models to meet the needs of our institution. Two competency directors, the senior associate provost, and a member of the Core curriculum development team attended a training and implementation workshop to enhance their ability to plan for the implementation described below.

Each course in the four-year Core curriculum has at least one common assignment that must be submitted and assessed through the electronic portfolio. Faculty members collaborated to develop an analytic style assessment rubric that each instructor uses to assess this student work. These rubrics directly address the requirements of the assignment as agreed upon by the faculty members, rather than being based on more generic outcomes statements. Faculty score each student's work on each the established criteria (usually 6-8 per rubric) on a four-level scale (exceeds expectations, meets expectations, nearly meets expectations, or does not meet expectations) using the electronic portfolio software. Assessment of the information literacy competency occurs through the use of this required electronic portfolio.

Behind the scenes, within the electronic portfolio software, our portfolio administrators are able to link relevant criteria within these rubrics to the specific outcomes for our information literacy competency. For instance, an assessment rubric criterion "Defining and describing the topic and related issues" for a research paper would be linked to the information literacy outcome "Identifies questions for investigation; narrows and formulates focus."

The common assignments vary in how directly they are related to the information literacy competency. For example, many assignments include criteria related to using information to support a thesis and using proper citation methods. On the other end of the scale, students in the second year of the Core curriculum are required to develop and submit an annotated bibliography that allows us to gather much more information about students' ability to evaluate their sources, explain how they support their thesis, and gather a variety of sources to support their argument.

The key components of this methodology are developing the common assignments, developing the common rubrics, and completing the mapping of information literacy outcomes to the rubric criteria. For each course in the Core curriculum, a team of faculty creates the common assignment and rubric that

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will be used. Our information literacy librarian is part of this faculty team and is also responsible for identifying how the rubric maps to the competency. Rubric development and mapping are both done in consultation with the senior associate provost.

From the outset, the Provost's Office has provided substantial support for the electronic portfolio project by providing the time and expertise of the senior associate provost and a senior research analyst to administer the software and provide data analysis and reporting. They led the team of faculty and staff who evaluated electronic portfolio software products and selected *Chalk and Wire* as the package that would best support our needs. On an ongoing basis, they provide faculty and student training, control the administrative set-up of rubrics and links to the outcomes, and process the data. The senior associate provost has worked closely with librarians and faculty to discover how best to present the data in a format that is useful for a particular audience.

The faculty teams that have developed the rubrics have been responsible for working with their colleagues to discuss the rubrics and facilitate a common understanding of the criteria to enhance the quality of the evidence that we collect about student achievement. We have conducted several inter-rater reliability workshops with the Core faculty to calibrate faculty members' use of the rubrics with one another and will continue to do this at least once each year. In Spring 2010 the librarians are also assessing a sample of student submissions of the annotated bibliography assignment. This will allow them a more direct view of the student work and give us all a better sense of how closely their assessments align with those of the faculty members who have reviewed the same work. Just last month the faculty reviewed the process for collecting work using the electronic portfolio for improvement opportunities and decided to make only minor changes until faculty and students have experienced all four years of the program and a complete picture of the challenges and value of the methodology is available.

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Award Criteria

Criterion 3: Analyzing Assessment Results and Making Improvements

Describe how your institution used the results to identify, select, and implement improvements. Address the following issues:

- What process your institution used to analyze results, who was involved, and what results your institution viewed as significant (positive and negative)
- How your institution identified and selected improvement projects
- What improvement projects your institution selected, including high-impact, active learning strategies, and/or faculty development activities
- What institutional support was provided for the improvement projects, such as funding, personnel, and faculty development
- What collaborative efforts were used to implement the projects

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

CRITERION 3

Champlain identified the electronic portfolio system as a way not only to gather information about our students' progress but also to identify and improve teaching and learning. As explained in the previous section, in order to gather data, students upload common assignments from their Core courses that are assessed in electronic portfolio by faculty each semester using a common rubric. Behind the scenes, the senior associate provost and the information literacy librarian select information literacy outcomes to map to the criteria in the rubrics. For example, the common rubric's criteria will focus on a student's integration of materials. That is "mapped" to the information literacy outcome that reflects a student's ability to locate, analyze, and evaluate relevant information. This data provides evidence that students are learning and able to apply the skills and concepts we focus on during instruction. Simultaneously, the data from the electronic portfolio enables librarians and faculty to react to gaps in student learning by revising instruction to reflect student comprehension and execution of information literacy concepts. For example, an examination of the information literacy assessment data identified documentation and attribution as an area where student performance was weak.

Results from the electronic portfolio were initially extracted and analyzed by the senior associate provost, who shared the results with the library director and the information literacy librarian. This collaboration was particularly successful because of an awareness of and sensitivity to our differing

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comfort levels in examining data. The willingness of the senior associate provost to manipulate and reconfigure representations of data allowed the information literacy librarian and the library director to generate different questions about student learning, anticipate faculty questions, explore the data in a variety of ways, and simply put, collaborate more effectively.

Data on citations and documentation was shared with Core faculty members during faculty meetings with the information literacy librarian and the senior associate provost at the invitation of the dean of the Core Division. Both the senior associate provost and the information literacy librarian fielded questions on content of instruction, method of assessment, reliability, and value of the data to the library, the institution, faculty, and students. Faculty agreed unanimously that citation and documentation was a skill that all faculty and employers value, and that it was a skill where they wanted to see improvement. It was also agreed that instruction needed to add a focus on the ethical use of information in the form of attribution and plagiarism. This level of support, feedback, and collaboration instigated a multi-pronged approach to improving student progress in this area. The following course of action was agreed upon: teaching librarians (those who conduct instruction sessions) would revise instruction to deal more specifically with documentation and plagiarism; the information literacy competency would be revised to reflect emphasis on attribution; faculty would increase emphasis on documentation and attribution in instruction and evaluation of student work; rubrics for common assignments would be revised to reflect these changes.

To address documentation and attribution more fully in the classroom, teaching librarians worked together to create an inquiry-based lesson which asked students to consider plagiarism in multiple contexts: academic, professional, and everyday life. Librarians used active learning activities based around a series of video clips from YouTube to engage students and broaden the context in which they think about plagiarism, citation, and documentation. Through individual and small group work, students and librarians focused their inquiry on creating definitions of plagiarism, critically evaluating multiple scenarios of varying levels of plagiarism, and discussing the role of citation as a tool to share, capture, and attribute useful information. These lessons were delivered to all sophomore students in a two week period in their COR 210: Scientific Revolutions course. The director of the Center for Instructional Practice met with the teaching librarians to offer suggestions, feedback, and classroom management techniques in preparation for leading small group work. Every teaching librarian played a vital role in the design of the sessions, enabling consistent delivery of content in all sections of the course.

As agreed upon with faculty, the information literacy librarian began a review of the information literacy outcomes on documentation. Previously, the outcomes only reflected students' ability to "Accurately cite or attribute information." However, by working closely with faculty, reviewing student work, and reviewing rubrics, faculty and librarians wanted to know more than just how students cited information stylistically. There was also interest in gathering data that reflected whether students attributed the work of others to avoid plagiarism. Subsequently, and as a direct result of faculty feedback and collaboration, the information literacy outcomes have been revised to reflect a dual emphasis: students' ability to "Use documentation style recognized by the discipline to share sources of information", and their ability to "Attribute work by others accurately and appropriately to avoid

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plagiarism and recognize intellectual property of others.”

Because the outcomes had been revised, faculty were faced with creating language in common rubrics to reflect questions of documentation (correct use of style) and attribution (ethical use of information). The information literacy librarian was invited by the dean of the Core Division to serve as a member of all rubric-writing teams, bringing not only her expertise in information literacy but also her experience in writing rubrics. The result was language that was clear and consistently interpretable by all faculty members.

To familiarize faculty with the importance of consistency in assessment and to respond to concerns about the validity of electronic portfolio data, the senior associate provost held a series of workshops for faculty focusing on inter-rater reliability. To date, these workshops, using student work and existing rubrics, have resulted in increased buy-in among faculty, widespread understanding of the language and expectations in a rubric, and shared ownership of assessment by faculty. The librarians also met with the senior associate provost in order to review the electronic portfolio data to make sure all librarians were aware of the role our teaching was having in student learning, and to encourage investment in the new focus on documentation and attribution. The senior associate provost also listened attentively to the changes taking place within the information literacy curriculum so that she and the information literacy librarian could pinpoint when particular outcomes could be measured. For example, while citation style is included broadly in course-embedded rubrics, the rubrics in the second year emphasize attribution rather than adherence to a stylistic standard as they do in the first year.

The cooperation, support, and collaboration of the faculty, the rubric-writing teams, the librarians, the dean of the Core, the senior associate provost, the library director, and the director of the Center for Instructional Practice have led to demonstrated improvement in students’ documentation and attribution skills. The assessment data collected through the electronic portfolio has proven enormously useful in large part due to the effort by the senior associate provost to present the data in multiple formats to provide access for stakeholders with differing values and knowledge bases. Broad consensus was reached in the meaning and importance of the rubrics and the data in a number of ways: seeking and using faculty feedback to revise information literacy outcomes on citation and attribution, faculty working closely with librarians and the senior associate provost in revising rubrics, faculty members participating in inter-rater reliability exercises ensuring the effective and consistent use of rubrics. The teaching librarians, with the help of the director of the Center for Instructional Practice, focused efforts on collaboratively designing and consistently delivering inquiry-based, active learning instruction sessions. All of these factors lead us to conclude that the data collected on students’ progress in this area is a coordinated effort among a variety of stakeholders working toward improving student learning.

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Award Criteria

Criterion 4: Evidence of Improved Learning

Describe your institution's effort to check the effectiveness of the improvement processes and adjustments made as a result. Address the following issues:

- How your institution checked for or identified learning improvement
- Who was involved in checking the learning
- What results of follow-up assessments provide evidence of learning improvement
- What additional considerations and/or improvements to outcome(s), instructional methods, or other follow-up changes or adjustments were considered necessary as a result of the check on learning improvements
- What lessons were learned from the improvement process and check

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

CRITERION 4

The process that we have described in this application has allowed us to measure student achievement in information literacy, identify areas that needed improvement, revise instructional approaches, and recheck student achievement for learning gains. Because we gather data from students each semester and from every Core course we are able to look for progress in several ways. We can track a cohort of students over their time at Champlain and look for improvement in the cohort's overall achievement. We can also look at individual students' progress throughout the curriculum, an approach we've just begun

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to explore. Further, we can review course-level data in different years to determine if changes in instructional approach are associated with changes in student achievement. Details of some of these findings can be found in our illustrative portfolio at <http://tinyurl.com/Champlain-2010AGLS-Award>

Earlier we outlined in detail the individuals who were involved in our procedures for analyzing data, for identifying any needed actions as a result of the data, and for determining strategic changes to improve learning. Throughout this process we remind ourselves and the faculty that the validity of this assessment system rests on their role in generating the data source. This has helped us to keep our assessment processes grounded in the teaching-learning interaction between faculty and students and has impacted how we analyze and present data to the faculty and other audiences. When faculty can see that the results of their work, when viewed at the group level and over time, provide insights into what and how students are learning, their resistance to involvement in the assessment process disappears. This has been an evolutionary process for us and in this, our third, year we are finally able to see the fruits of our labor.

This electronic portfolio initiative has been particularly meaningful for the library because the data it provides is one of the few sources for direct evidence of student learning that is available to them. This is an important outcome in itself, but we have also learned a great deal about implementing such initiatives at the institutional level. For example, if we were to have the opportunity to begin this initiative with the knowledge gained from our current experience, we would more deliberately acknowledge the challenges as well as the potential of the initiative and talk more about evidence of learning than about data analysis. We would know that we must not only conduct our processes in a way that is not threatening to faculty, but we must regularly make those processes clear to faculty so that we can more quickly assuage their fears. It has been important for us all along to be willing to let this process unfold organically and to tolerate the ambiguity that arises when developing a curriculum and the system to assess that curriculum at the same time.

We invite you to take a few minutes to explore the portfolio we've created to illustrate our processes and our results: <http://tinyurl.com/Champlain-2010AGLS-Award>

. We are particularly proud of our work because we believe that it has successfully addressed two of the primary challenges for assessment initiatives: faculty buy-in and "closing the loop." We have described a process that has been centered in exploration of student learning and growth in the skills of information literacy. While our information literacy initiative is our most mature assessment initiative, we use the same process for all of our college competencies; we are well underway in developing the system for global appreciation and anticipate that oral communication will be our next pursuit. Within information literacy we are excited this coming year to be able to look at individual student progress over the entire four year experience and to begin exploring the relationship with student demographics to try to identify the types of students who are benefiting most, and least, from our instructional approach so that it can be further refined to better reach all students. As well, we want to explore how the information that we gather from the electronic portfolio as direct evidence of student learning relates to students' self-reports of learning progress and institutional contribution to that progress via our course

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evaluation system (IDEA) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data.