

Motion Recommending the Use of Benchmarking Measure for Critical Core Outcomes

Referred by the Faculty Senate Executive Council

Motion:

Radford University should use the CLA+, a nationally validated assessment tool that uses performance-based tasks, to compare RU students with students at other universities and to track student performance over time.

Rationale:

Radford University currently does not have a valid, reliable, widely accepted measure of critical learning outcomes that can be used to track our success in helping students improve on those outcomes over time or compare our students' learning success with that of students at similar universities. Adopting the CLA+ would enable us to accomplish both those goals. Using such a measure should allow us to better demonstrate the value we add to students while they are at RU, more effectively test alternative core curriculum pedagogy and models, provide external constituencies a measure of student performance they view as valid and reliable, and reduce the amount of time faculty spend on assessment. It would also be invaluable in meeting the accreditation requirements for SACS and other accrediting bodies.

The assessment office would be responsible for developing procedures, administering the exam, analyzing results, and reporting those results back to the Curriculum Committee and other relevant parties.

Overview of the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) and the Collegiate Learning Assessment + (CLA+):

Students today can no longer rely solely on mastery of discipline-based information. They need to be able to analyze and evaluate information, solve problems, and communicate effectively. Beyond just accumulating facts, they must be able to access, structure, and use information.

CAE has pioneered the use of performance-based tasks in the Collegiate Learning Assessment to evaluate critical thinking skills of college students. CLA+ measures critical thinking, problem solving, scientific and quantitative reasoning, writing, and the ability to critique and make arguments.

Over 700 institutions—both in the United States and internationally—have used the CLA+ to benchmark value-added growth in student learning at their college or university compared to other institutions. With the CLA+, new student-level metrics provide

guidance to students and data to faculty and administrators for making decisions about grading, scholarships, admission, or placement.

Institutions can use CLA+ for additional admissions information for college applicants and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of entering students. Results for graduating seniors may be used as an independent corroboration of the rapid growth of competency-based approaches among colleges. Graduating seniors use their results—issued in the form of verified digital badges—to provide potential employers with evidence of their work readiness skills.

Further Information:

<http://cae.org/performance-assessment/category/cla-overview/>

<http://cae.org/performance-assessment/category/home/>

<http://cae.org/performance-assessment/category/cla-sample-tasks/>