Many student affairs departments struggle to contribute to an institution’s evidence base of student learning. In part, this results from student affairs personnel not having adequate training in how to assess learning outside the classroom. This is a particular challenge for small community colleges, in which individual units (e.g., admissions or financial aid) may have only one or two employees. Failure to assess co-curricular learning poses challenges to institutions in meeting accreditation standards, placing them at risk for increased scrutiny and loss of state funding under a performance-based system. The purpose of this study was to learn how student affairs professionals' knowledge, attitudes, and demonstrated productivity are influenced by a training program that emphasizes the use of
specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) learning outcomes.

Semi-structured interviews, participant rating forms, and document review provided the data for this evaluation case study. Results were triangulated from multiple sources using mixed methods. Findings suggest the assessment training and support program, *Intentional Change: Making Meaningful Contributions to Student Learning Outcomes in Student Affairs*, had a positive influence on participants’ knowledge, attitude, and ability to demonstrate productivity as related to the assessment of student learning in student affairs. Five major themes developed during the course of the study: (1) awareness of student learning in student affairs, (2) responsibility for assessment of student learning, (3) confidence in the ability to assess student learning in a meaningful way, (4) value, both internal and external to the department, and (5) ownership of the practice of student learning assessment. Pre- and post-workshop participant ratings and a review of the department's annual student learning outcomes plan provided further evidence of the training program’s positive influence.

As the data evolved, the five themes transformed into a hierarchical structure in which each subsequent theme built upon the one before it. Additionally, each of the first three themes aligned with the constructs of knowledge, attitude, and ability to demonstrate productivity, providing insight into how development occurred over the course of the training program. A conceptual staircase model was developed to demonstrate relationships between and across these various components. Additionally, pragmatic recommendations are shared based on participant feedback and insight from an inside researcher perspective.

The findings of this study can assist leaders in student affairs, particularly in community colleges, in developing and delivering a highly effective training program that strengthens and promotes a genuine culture of assessment. Moreover, this study contributes to the field of evaluation, measurement, and research (EMR) by demonstrating an alternative approach for institutional researchers, who are charged with demonstrating the effectiveness of co-curricular programs and services in teaching students. Finally, this study provides an additional example of how effectively quantitative and qualitative inquiry can be integrated with intentionality to strengthen the validity of findings.