

Faculty Initiatives in Assessment

Academic Year 2012-2013

Assessment Committee

Colorado Mesa University

Committee Members:

Suzanne Lay, Chair and Faculty Assessment Coordinator

Dick Bell, Vice-Chair

Judy Williams

Marcus Reitenbach

Dave Weinberg

Kyle McQuade

Vince Patarino

Brian Horn

Denis Thibodeau/Paul Behl

Heather Patterson-McCulloch

Sean Flanigan

Rick Moritz

Jason Reddoch

Bette Schans, Director of Student Learning Assessment (Ex-Officio)

Steve Werman (Ex-Officio)

Kelly O'Connell (Ex-Officio)

Gillian McKnight-Tutein (Ex-Officio)

CMU Assessment Committee Mission Statement

The CMU Assessment Committee oversees the implementation and advancement of General Education and Program Assessment of student learning and achievement.

The Committee's responsibilities per the Faculty Senate handbook are as follows:

1. Recommend assessment criteria and methods.
2. Research and reflect on current trends and best practices in assessment of student learning.
3. Support faculty within each department working to implement plans and reports in program assessment.
4. Assist programs to articulate student learning outcomes.
5. Verify that assessment results have been used for programmatic improvement.
6. Promote student learning assessment on all three campuses, on-line programs and early scholars programs.
7. Review assessment documents in the initial stages of program review, at the three-year interval and during the final program review in the six-year process. Draw inferences from the results and recommend methods of improvement of the learning experience.
8. Report to Faculty Senate the quality and effectiveness of the overall assessment process on a yearly basis.
9. Analyze results of national student surveys, make comparisons to previous years and make recommendations for the University.

Advancement of Student Learning Assessment at CMU

The Assessment Committee continued to focus on improving the processes of the group. It was decided that the Committee wanted to have a more robust feedback loop. The first decision of the Committee was to assign each program to sub-committees to review assessment plans and reports and then have those sub-committees responsible for providing constructive feedback to the program faculty in person. The purpose of this was to improve the quality of the feedback and to encourage two-way communication between faculty and the Assessment Committee.

In the fall of 2013, all baccalaureate programs provided assessment plans to the Committee. Those plans were reviewed and feedback was provided face-to-face by the sub-committees. Overall, the assessment plans looked very good. Common feedback included:

1. Many programs should consider simplifying student learning outcomes (SLOs); and
2. Many programs were quite aggressive in their assessment plans. The sub-committees simply reminded faculty to make sure plans were both meaningful and manageable. Faculty do not have to assess every SLO, every semester, in every course.

In the spring of 2014, most associate and technical certificate programs provided assessment plans to the Committee. There are still a few assessment plans to be turned in for review. Again, these plans were reviewed and feedback was provided by the sub-committees. Most of this was face-to-face unless the feedback was so similar to the baccalaureate programs in the department that the sub-committee and the program faculty agreed a meeting was not necessary. The common feedback for associate and technical certificate assessment plans was similar to that above.

A survey was administered in the spring of 2014 to baccalaureate programs to get comments on the new feedback process of the Committee. The results of the survey included the following highlights:

1. 100% of programs reported that syllabi contained both program and course outcomes.
2. 55% of programs reported that they had made changes to their assessment plans since they were submitted and reviewed by the Assessment Committee in the fall of 2013.
3. 75% of programs reported that they have started collecting assessment data by using portfolios, rubrics, group work, MFT, presentations, projects, and exams. 60% reported that they will begin reviewing the results this semester.
4. 40% of programs reported that they have used assessment results to revise courses or curriculum.
5. 90% of programs reported that the Assessment Committee subgroup who reviewed the plan was helpful. There were mixed responses on whether the programs thought an additional “help session” would be beneficial to faculty.

6. 85% of programs responded that the assessment plan rubric was helpful.

The Assessment Committee, Assessment Committee Chair and Director of Assessment all participated in meetings with the HLC site visit team during November. The HLC team was provided with much information about the advancement of student learning assessment at CMU in the past few years. While the HLC did recommend a monitoring report on assessment for January 2016, the Committee felt very good about the positive momentum that has been maintained in improving assessment at the University.

The Assessment Committee reviewed the results from the pilot of the ETS Proficiency Profile in both the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014. The ETS Proficiency Profile is a nationally-normed exam that provides a measure of student performance in the areas of communication, quantitative methods, and critical thinking. The Committee also looked at an example of the exam. The Committee is considering the benefit that the ETS Proficiency Profile is providing CMU in assessing student learning. During the pilot, the number of students completing the ETS Proficiency Profile was small. It is not yet clear if the tool will help us to understand student learning.

Approximately two years ago, an Assessment Handbook for CMU was developed. The Director of Assessment updated the handbook during the fall of 2013. The Committee reviewed the feedback and approved the new Handbook to be available on the CMU assessment webpage.

The Assessment Committee members are now working actively as assessment advisors within their departments.

Program Review and Assessment AY 2013-2014

During 2013-2014, five programs were reviewed: Biology, Lineworker, Political Science, Radiologic Technology, and Administrative Office Technology. As part of the Program Review process, the Assessment Committee reviewed the assessment portion of the Program Reviews. In addition, the Chair of the Committee and/or the Director of Assessment met with each external reviewer during the site visits. The highlights below represent comments and/or recommendations from the Assessment Committee. It is important to note that most of the

program reviews reported on assessment activities that were developed before significant changes were made to the assessment process. In other words, any data collected was based on old assessment plans (prior to Fall 2013).

Highlights in Program Assessment

Biology The primary assessment measures reported for the biology program were student satisfaction surveys (exit survey), PRAXIS II licensure exams (teacher education concentration) and MFT scores. The Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) listed in the program review have been updated. The Assessment Committee noted that Biology made some good improvements to the curriculum with courses added. In addition, the assessment plan as of August 2013 showed a well-thought out process of assessing student learning going forward. The Committee was also impressed with the interdisciplinary approach taken with Nursing. On the next program review, the Committee would like to see more specifics about the assessment tools and the use of the data gathered to make curricular changes.

Electric Lineworker The primary assessment measure reported for the lineworker program was the use of the advisory committee for hands-on assessments. The Assessment Committee commended the program for the practical, hands-on assessments and the use of them to make needed changes to the curriculum. The SLOs have changed/improved at least twice since the program review was written. The Committee recommended that the program keep better records of assessments going forward so that they can report it at the next program review. There may have been some confusion that the Assessment Committee was retaining data that should have been retained by the program itself.

Political Science The primary assessment measures reported for the political science program were the alumni survey, the exit survey, the MFT and the general education assessments for POLS 101 and POLS 261. Going forward, the program faculty have identified more direct measures of what the students are able to do and indicate that they are excited about their new assessment plan. The SLOs have been improved since the writing of the program review. The Assessment Committee truly appreciated the honesty of the faculty in identifying assessment as a weakness and the indication that they are now seeing how proper assessment of meaningful SLOs can bring about “a richer understanding of the program improvements that are needed.”

Radiologic Technology The program review included both the AAS and the BAS. The AAS had clear SLOs listed and indicated that the SLOs have always been measurable and applicable as per JRCERT accreditation. The BAS SLOs were developed as of the Fall of 2013. The primary assessment measure reported in the program review was the pass rate on the CRT exam. It was not clear in the report if this was for AAS or BAS graduates or both. The Assessment Committee would like to see clearer reporting of assessment data between the two programs on the next program review as well as reporting on other SLOs besides specialized knowledge.

Administrative Office Technology The program review really did not report on any assessment activities for this program. The Assessment Committee reviewed the SLOs and assessment plan for this program, met with faculty, and made recommendations for moving forward. On the next program review, the Committee would like to see the faculty report on progress in implementing the assessment plan and using the data to identify improvements needed in the program.