

Assessment Committee Report to Faculty Senate

Academic Year 2015-2016

Assessment Committee

Colorado Mesa University

Committee Members:

Suzanne Lay, Chair and Faculty Assessment Coordinator

Shawn Robinson, Vice-Chair

Judy Williams

Carmine Greico

Dave Weinberg

Carrie McVean-Waring

Katie Dreiling

Ann Gillies

Gary Looft

Alison Harris

Sean Flanigan

Jeanine Howe

Jason Reddoch

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

Steve Werman / Kurt Haas (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 Essential Learning 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 providing quality feedback and to encourage two-way communication between faculty and the Assessment Committee. By the fall of 2015, all baccalaureate, associate, and technical certificate programs were in the data collection phase of their assessment plans and prepared written feedback. The Assessment Committee reviewed all associate and technical certificate program progress reports and provided feedback to program faculty with an offer for a face-to-face meeting, if requested. Overall, the assessment reports

showed progress in the assessment process. The Director of Assessment of Student Learning and Faculty Assessment Coordinator followed up individually with programs needing extra assistance. The plan is to move into the three-year review cycle of program assessment reporting from this point forward.

Members of the Committee participated in the Fall 2015 session for assessing written communication and critical thinking in Essential Learning. In addition, select members of the Committee participated in a pilot session to assess oral communication using recorded presentations from the Maverick Milestone speech course and the AAC&U Value Rubric.

The Director of Assessment of Student Learning and the Faculty Assessment Coordinator presented “Why Grades Don’t Make the Grade” to the Assessment Committee and to WCCC faculty. The presentation was intended to improve faculty’s understanding of the difference between evaluating assignments for a grade versus for assessment.

The Assessment Committee drafted two new student learning outcomes (SLOs) for ethical reasoning and information literacy. These were two areas that were indicated to be important in 2011-2012, but CMU elected to pursue a smaller number of student learning outcomes at the beginning of the process. The wording for these student learning outcomes was presented to Faculty Senate as an informational item in late spring 2016. The institution will continue to discuss whether to adopt these two additional SLOs in the coming academic year.

The Assessment Committee members continue to work actively as assessment advisors within their departments.

Program Review and Assessment AY 2015-2016

During 2015-2016, five programs were reviewed. As part of the Program Review process, the Assessment Committee reviewed the assessment portion of the reviews for the following programs:

- Mass Communication
- Business Administration
- Culinary Arts

- Emergency Medical Services
- Environmental Science

The Assessment Committee received the program reviews to provide more timely feedback to the programs via the appropriate department heads. In addition, the Faculty Assessment Coordinator and/or the Director of Assessment met with each external reviewer during the site visits. The highlights below represent feedback from the Assessment Committee on the reports. It is important to note that some of the program reviews reported on assessment activities that were developed before significant changes were made to the assessment process. In other words, some data collected was based on old assessment plans (prior to Fall 2013).

Highlights in Program Assessment

Mass Communications

The way the program addresses SLOs and assessments is well organized and intentionally aligns courses with outcomes; anyone reviewing Mass Communications course outcomes would have a good sense of what to expect from course to course, in terms of outcomes and skills development. The SLO #1 Critical Thinking update appropriately displays connection of critical thinking skills development within theory content from MASS140 and MASS 494; plans to add another assessment within a 300-level course is appreciated. In terms of SLO #6 Theory Update, the committee would be interested in a sense of your plan(s) to assess Mass Communications students more consistently at the individual level, given the collaborative nature of the program and its assignments. Great to see consistent use of rubrics; project-based curriculum; and the flipped-classroom environment in Mass Communications courses.

Business Administration

The SLOs are comprehensive and very thoughtful. They reflect that an impressive amount of detail and teamwork went into the initial set up process. The actions taken as the department has progressed with assessing the SLOs is great. The department should be commended for the amount of work done, for getting all faculty involved in the process, and for embracing assessment as a useful tool. The specific exam questions and group projects are

excellent methods for measuring outcomes. Perhaps the use of grades and surveys, since they are not direct measures, could be replaced by methods that provide more specific information associated with a particular outcome.

Culinary Arts

The progress that the program is making with assessment is impressive, both with respect to the plan for assessment and with the data being collecting. As a next step, faculty could begin assessing outcomes in multiple courses to make sure that the students are developing as learners throughout the course of their education. There was a good description of the development of the assessment plan and the successes of graduating students. When reporting on assessment, try to include specific results (both quantitative and qualitative) and planned actions from your assessment plan. While preliminary, it would demonstrate the program's dedication to assessment and ability to implement the assessment plan.

Emergency Medical Services

The assessment portion of the Program Review for EMT has a lot of good information in it. The program faculty demonstrated that assessment is a key piece of the program as a whole. Upon review of the assessment plan/report, it appears as if the faculty will be taxed greatly at the amount of assessment taking place for each outcome. The purpose of student learning outcomes is to target certain aspects of the program that the faculty can assess and then review to determine if students are learning. It would be difficult if faculty had to address each outcome (most listed with 3 or more verbs) multiple times in a semester and in each course. The recommendation would be to find one issue in each outcome that could be assessed in a year's time so that meaningful analysis could take place with implementation of actions taken to address one thing at a time.

Environmental Science

The program has a good start on the assessment plan and collecting data. The SLOs seem appropriate and are being measured and modified as the assessment process develops. The faculty has done a good job of using assessment data to identify changes needed in the program

including increased emphasis on literature reviews and work plans. The capstone course is currently where the majority of assessments take place. As assessment matures, it will be logical to identify other courses within the program for assessment to take some of the pressure and time commitment off the capstone course.

2016-2017 Assessment Committee Plans

During the next academic year, the Assessment Committee plans to maintain the momentum in assessment that has developed. Following is a list of Assessment Committee activities planned for 2016-2017:

1. Monitor progress on implementation of all baccalaureate, associate, and technical certificate program assessment plans.
2. Provide advice to faculty on data collection, reporting, etc, on an as-needed basis.
3. Work with the Essential Learning Committee to analyze the results of the assessment completed in May 2015 for communication and critical thinking based upon the AAC&U Value Rubrics.
4. Review and provide feedback for 2016-2017 program reviews and third year progress reports.
5. Provide guidance on how the new Assessment/ePortfolio system can be used to support program and Essential Learning assessment and provide input on non-technical questions as the system is implemented such as what reports should be developed. We will conduct the first pilot to assess EL written communication using artifacts in the new Digication system.
6. Determine a method to assess EL quantitative fluency. Biology will be piloting an assessment using their EL courses.