Assessment Committee Report to Faculty Senate

Academic Year 2016-2017

Assessment Committee

Colorado Mesa University

Committee Members:

Suzanne Lay, Chair and Faculty Assessment Coordinator
Shawn Robinson, Vice-Chair
Judy Williams
Carmine Greico
Dave Weinberg
Kelly Craig
Katie Dreiling
Ann Gillies
Gary Looft (through 12/16)
Alison Harris
Jun Watabe
Jeanine Howe
Jason Reddoch
Bette Schans, Director of Student Learning Assessment (Ex-Officio)
Kurt Haas (Ex-Officio)
Kelly O'Connell (Ex-Officio)
Tim Pinnow (Ex-Officio)
Laureen Cantwell (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. All baccalaureate, associate, and technical certificate programs were in the data collection phase of their assessment plans. The Assessment Committee reviewed three-year summary reports from programs in Cycles 1 and 2 and provided feedback to program faculty with an offer for a face-to-face

meeting. Overall, the assessment reports showed great progress and evidence of closing the loop with program improvements in the assessment process for programs.

Select members of the Assessment Committee and outside faculty participated in assessing written communication, oral communication, and critical thinking in Essential Learning. In addition, the Director of Assessment of Student Learning and the Faculty Assessment Coordinator worked with a group of natural science and math faculty including two Assessment Committee member to plan and implement a pilot for assessing Essential Learning quantitative skills in Biology labs. Pilots using Digication (ePortfolio) for assessing written communication in ENGL 111 courses and critical thinking in one history course were completed in the fall of 2016.

The Director of Assessment of Student Learning and the Faculty Assessment Coordinator presented "Why Grades Don't Make the Grade" to the Montrose faculty. The presentation was intended to improve faculty's understanding of the difference between evaluating assignments for a grade versus for assessment. There was also discussion about Essential Learning assessment with the faculty and they were given a reminder to submit artifacts for critical thinking and written communication. The presentation was well-attended and generated great discussion.

The Assessment Committee reviewed the results of the ETS Proficiency Profile. Because the test was not providing meaningful or actionable data, the Assessment Committee voted to cease the use of the ETS Proficiency Profile starting in fall due, 2017 and work on a replacement model of campus wide assessment of intellectual skills to demonstrate student learning. Faculty Senate approved this recommendation in April 2017.

Due to faculty turnover and the compressed timelines of the technical certificate and associate degree programs, assessment of student learning at WCCC has not taken place in a timely manner. Therefore, a new process will begin at WCCC starting in fall of 2017 to combine the assessment of Written Communication, Critical Thinking, and Quantitative Literacy across all disciplines and that artifacts will be collected from all programs for a campus-wide review yearly. Faculty will continue to assess specialized knowledge and applied learning appropriate to the discipline.

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

Program Review and Assessment AY 2016-2017

During 2016-2017, three programs were reviewed. As part of the Program Review process, the Assessment Committee reviewed the assessment portion of the reviews for the following programs:

- Accounting
- Computer Science
- Early Childhood Education

The Assessment Committee received the program reviews to provide more 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.

Highlights in Program Assessment

Accounting

The amount of hard work and thought that the accounting faculty have put into the assessment portion of their program review was impressive. It is clear that they are dedicated to achieving a high-quality assessment system that drives curricular improvements. It is clear to us that the accounting program has "closed the loop" and made important program improvements with respect to SLOs 2, 3, and 5. We recognize that SLO 2 does not currently have any actions associated with it that directly improve the program; instead, the actions section describes improvements in assessment. However, the conclusions section describes actions that should lead to program improvements. While an action was listed for SLO 5 and should be included in section C, it was not supported by the "Results" or "Key Findings" sections due to inconclusive data. This should not prevent the accounting program from describing this action as "closing the loop." It seems highly likely that qualitative faculty assessments could point toward a need for

improved teamwork. These qualitative assessments could then be included in the "Results" and "Key Findings" sections, and they could demonstrate "closing the loop" in section C of the program review. Beyond that, anything less than perfect performances on the CATME tool, even if preliminary, would show that there is room for improvement.

While the actions for SLOs 2, 3, and 5 may seem relatively minor, they show the dedication of the accounting faculty to improving their program through assessment. It seems unlikely that hard data can be used regularly for major program improvements in any program on any campus, so it is important that any lessons learned from assessment (quantitative or qualitative) be used to drive program improvements. No matter how small each improvement may seem to be, the continual drive forward is extremely important and should not be minimized.

<u>Computer Science</u>

Faculty are involved in assessment of student learning in Computer Science. The Program Review demonstrates interest and activity in collecting and interpreting data surrounding the Student Learning Objectives in the Associate and Baccalaureate programs. Given the value placed on the collaborative approach among departmental faculty related to student learning assessment, we appreciate the inclusive language threaded throughout the report and the evidence of assessment taking place in multiple courses.

Overall, the CS Program Review provided descriptions of course assessment including the assignments and student performance. All 'Results' were summarized in the form of letter grades and percentages, with narrative on interpretation. Growth in program assessment over time is evident in the narrative. Curriculum mapping and key findings are appreciated.

The Program Review identified SLOs in the associate and baccalaureate programs. It may be helpful to include the Computer Science Program Mission and respond to how the SLOs relate to the mission statement and courses as well as how the Computer Science Program SLOs align with and contribute to achievement of the CMU Student Learning Outcomes. Going forward, be sure to discuss direct and indirect measurements used in assessing student learning. For example, the program review identifies meaningful feedback about student learning reflected in faculty evaluations. This is an indirect measurement of student learning.

Many actions were taken which resulted in student achievements. Many more actions are planned, showing a dynamic and forward momentum for student learning. Multiple actions are identified throughout the Program Review. It is clear faculty are responding to the assessment data with ideas and changes. Consider a discussion/narrative about how faculty have embraced assessment over the review period. Assessment meeting dates could be included as supportive documentation on the work on assessment in the program.

Early Childhood Education

Faculty looked at numerous aspects of the program which is quite good, but there were some issues that run throughout the report that could be improved. Substituting oral communication for verbal communication might be more effective in the multiple places where SLOs are listed. Some steps could be taken to clarify the assessment report and to improve ongoing assessment activities.

It might be helpful to specifically describe whether the students achieved the SLO at an acceptable level in the conclusion section. Then, list any actions in the Action section. We would also suggest that a summary paragraph describe direct measurement and program improvements in addition to the charts that were presented. Last, be sure to follow the program assessment plan and gather data according to the planned timeline to stay on track.

2017-2018 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 2017-2018:

1. Monitor continuing progress on of all graduate, 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 for written and oral communication, critical thinking, and quantitative skills

based upon the AAC&U Value Rubrics. Develop and pilot assessment for the milestone interdisciplinary SLO.

4. Review and provide feedback for 2017-2018 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.