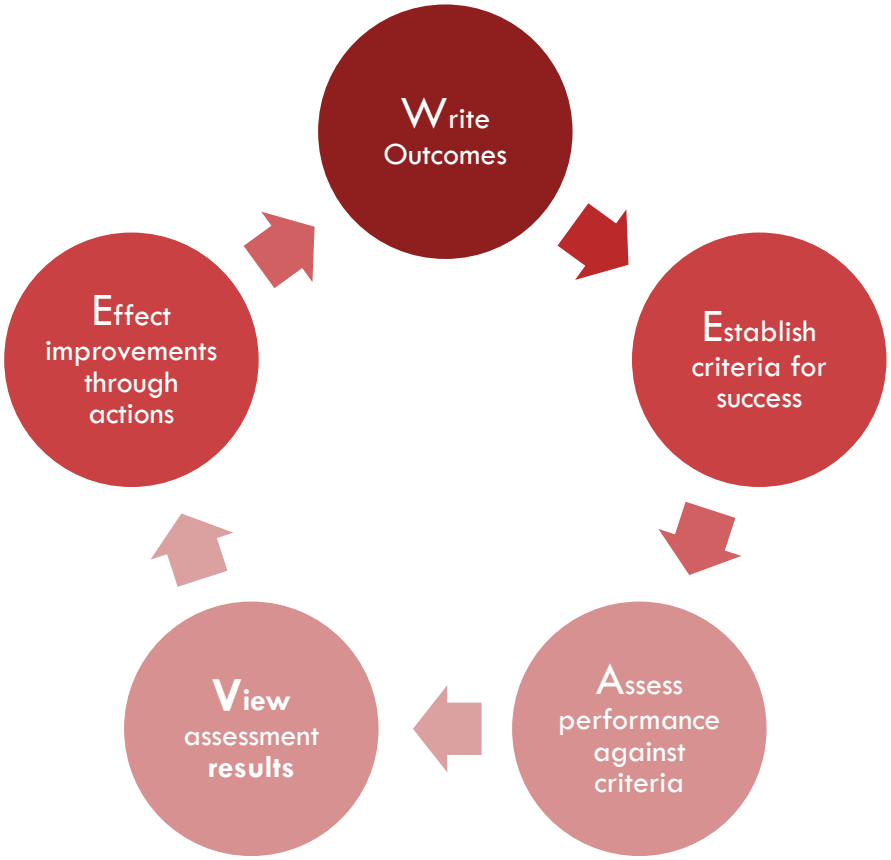
ASSESSMENT SHOWCASE



Spring 2013

Academic Program Assessment

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT SHOWCASE

Table of Contents

PRINCIPLES OF ACCREDITATION 2
USM VISION, MISSION, PLAN 3
ASSESSMENT POLICIES 6
ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES 8
ASSESSMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW 9
ASSESSMENT UPDATES 10
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES 11
MEASURES 14
ACTION PLANS & ANALYSIS 18
ANNUAL REPORTING 23
RECOMMENDED READING 30

Note: Site and delivery mode inventory is maintained by the Office of Institutional Research. Programs that fall in the multi-site and/or multi-mode category are marked with a single asterisk. Hybrid delivery programs, programs that are 50 percent to 100 percent online without a face-to-face equivalent, or programs that rest entirely at one of the teaching sites off the Hattiesburg campus are marked with a double asterisk.

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS COMMISSION ON COLLEGES (SACSCOC)

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. The Commission's mission is the enhancement of educational quality throughout the region and it strives to improve the effectiveness of institutions by ensuring that institutions meet standards established by the higher education community that address the needs of society and students. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Latin America and other international sites approved by the Commission on Colleges that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degrees. The Commission also accepts applications from other international institutions of higher education.

PRINCIPLES OF ACCREDITATION

FOUNDATIONS FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

CORE REQUIREMENT 2.5

The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. (Institutional Effectiveness)

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.3.1 - INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

- 3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
- 3.3.1.2 administrative support services
- 3.3.1.3 educational support services
- 3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
- 3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

MISSISSIPPI INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING (IHL)

The Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL System), under the governance of its Board of Trustees, will operate as a strong public university system with eight distinct, mission-driven universities, and will enhance the quality of life of Mississippians by effectively meeting their diverse educational needs. In so doing, the IHL system will be characterized by, and become nationally recognized for, its emphasis on student achievement and on preparing responsible citizens; its adherence to high academic standards and to quality in instruction, research, service and facilities; and its commitment to affordability, accessibility, and accountability.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Vision

Southern Miss will emerge as the premier research university of the Gulf South – engaging and empowering individuals to transform lives and communities.

Mission

The University of Southern Mississippi is a comprehensive research extensive university. Our primary mission is to cultivate intellectual development and creativity through the generation, dissemination, application, and preservation of knowledge.

Our mission is supported by the values that have been formed through the history and traditions of our institution. These values are widely and deeply held beliefs of our faculty, staff, students, and administrators:

- Education provides opportunities to improve the quality of intellectual, social, economic, and personal well-being. These opportunities should be available to all who are willing and able to meet our standards of excellence.
- Our success is reflected by the degree to which our students become well-read, articulate, and creative and critical thinkers. It is measured by their display of specialized knowledge and abilities suitable to the pursuit of a career and life in our complex, ever-changing world.
- We cherish innovation in the creation and application of basic and applied research findings, creative and artistic expression, meaningful learning experiences, the scope of services provided to our students and the broader community that we sustain, and the continuing evolution of degree programs that both respond to and anticipate the evolving demands of our society, employers, and the labor market.
- Education encourages and advances the ideals of a pluralistic democratic society: civic responsibility, integrity, diversity, and ethical behavior.
- Academic freedom and shared governance are long-established and living principles at the university. We cherish the free exchange of ideas, diversity of thought, joint decision making, and individuals' assumption of responsibility.
- We make efficient and effective use of our resources, for we are accountable to our university communities, the Board of Trustees, and taxpayers.

Plan

Four priorities guide the University of Southern Mississippi, each helping to support our vision. These priorities, identified through a strategic planning process in 2007-08, provide a solid foundation for progress.

- A CLIMATE FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS
- IMAGE DEVELOPMENT
- CONNECTIONS WITH COMMUNITY
- HEALTHY MINDS, BODIES AND CAMPUSES

A CLIMATE FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our vision for a climate of academic success includes a unified environment that minimizes barriers for prospective and enrolled students; attracts and retains quality faculty and staff embraces and reflects diversity; and produces graduates who are truly competitive in the global marketplace.

Students, faculty and staff at Southern Miss, along with the larger community, benefit from a wide range of cultural, social and educational experiences that yield informed, responsible, and productive citizens with a standard of lifelong learning.

University experiences are supported by quality facilities and up-to-date technology accessible to the entire university community. Educational programs adhere to rigorous standards in terms of student advisement, engagement, and mentoring; curriculum development and delivery; and the exploration and generation of scholarly and creative work.

Students admitted to Southern Miss have every opportunity to earn a degree and acquire a comprehensive educational foundation that expands their perspectives, enhances their opportunities, and enriches our society.

Supporting Measures: Baccalaureate degrees awarded/Six-year graduation rates/Student return rates/Square footage of new or substantially renovated facilities/Accreditation for eligible programs/Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory results (Instructional Effectiveness Scale Report)/Percentage of graduates employed in relevant field or admitted to graduate school within one year of graduation/Peer-reviewed publications & presentations/External research funding.

IMAGE DEVELOPMENT

Image development promotes the internal and external reputation of the university and supports the vision of Southern Miss. Image development must be linked to what we do and how well we do it.

Supporting Measures: Results on Chronicle/Gallup Branding Index/Scores in U.S. News & Forbes University rankings/Positive national media coverage/Surveys of prospective and current students.

CONNECTIONS WITH COMMUNITY

We envision engaged citizens of Southern Miss (students, staff, faculty and alumni) who genuinely invest in their university community and their host communities (locally, regionally, nationally and globally). Our engaged citizens intentionally build community through learning and working together inside and outside the university in order to create and sustain a culture of respect and civility. We do this through hosting, serving, and sharing.

• Hosting refers to the importance of every contact made on campus – from the first to the last.

• Serving allows university citizens to invest in people, agencies/businesses, and organizations through volunteering, service learning, internships, applied scholarship and university/community partnerships.

• Sharing focuses on how we build relationships and engagement inside the university and with our host communities.

Supporting Measures: Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory results/Student volunteer hours/Sq. ft of sharing (social/learning) space/Attendance at university-sponsored events/Externally funded applied initiatives/Total endowment.

HEALTHY MINDS, BODIES, & CAMPUSES

A culture that emphasizes a multidimensional healthy environment at Southern Miss is deemed central to attain the goals of this strategic plan. An emphasis on healthy lifestyles will enhance the quality of the Southern Miss experience and beyond. Appropriate efforts in campus sustainability and environmental education will contribute to an improved environmental impact and an informed perspective on resource use. Continuous efforts to maintain safety and security of all at Southern Miss will increase the potential to attain individual and community goals.

Supporting Measures: Participation in university-sponsored wellness/Fitness activities/Employee absenteeism/Utility Costs/LEED certified buildings & renovations/Solid waste reduction/recycling/Sustainability within curricula/Noel-Levitz SSI response data in Safety and Security Scale grouping.

Assessment Policies

ADOPTED BY THE UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Participants:

A. Educational Programs – IHL maintains the official inventory of USM academic programs (http://www.mississippi.edu/research/stats.html). To be in compliance with SACS policy, all degree programs in this inventory must assess program-level student learning outcomes in accordance with the Academic Program Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines.
UAC Approved 9.30.09

B. Certificate Programs – The Office of Institutional Research maintains the inventory of active USM certificate programs (http://www.usm.edu/institutional-research). To be in compliance with SACS-COC Principles of Accreditation policy, all certificate programs in this inventory must assess program-level student learning outcomes in accordance with the Certificate Program Assessment Plan and Reporting Guidelines. UAC Approved 9.30.09; Modified 02.29.12

C. Emphasis Areas – All teacher licensure programs must assess separately. All other programs with emphasis areas determine whether they assess at the program-level or the emphasis-level. Many programs have elected to separate their assessments at the emphasis-level. The UAC encourages programs to consider emphasis-level assessment if plans of study vary greatly. The UAC can recommend emphasis-level assessment if program-level assessment reports are deemed inadequate. The UAC can also recommend programs address emphasis areas within the same report by having several common student learning outcomes for the program and at least one separate student learning outcome for each emphasis area.
UAC Approved 10.28.09

D. Stand-alone Minors – All stand-alone minors must assess minor-level student learning outcomes in accordance with the Certificate Program Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. A stand-alone minor is defined as a program of study that does not have a "parent" degree.
UAC Approved 10.28.09; Modified 02.29.12

The University of Southern Mississippi Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Participants Policy document is a "work-in-progress." The University Assessment Committee will continue to develop these policies to ensure the university is in compliance with the areas of assessment as outlined in SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.:

- *educational programs, to include student learning outcomes*
- *administrative support services*
- *educational support services*
- *research within its educational mission, if appropriate*
- *community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate*

University Assessment Committee Policy Regarding Academic Programs' Participation in the University-Wide Assessment Process

The purpose of the University Assessment Committee (UAC) is to support the process of continual self-evaluation and improvement across all academic and administrative units at The University of Southern Mississippi. Assessment involves the articulation of desired student learning outcomes, the design of measures to assess student learning in relationship to those outcomes, and the systematic collection of findings to determine if, and to what extent, student learning is occurring. Student learning outcomes assessment data are reported and preserved in WEAVEonline, the program adopted by the UAC as the university-wide assessment database.

Each year, a report of program and academic unit assessment participation is made to the deans, provost and president of The University of Southern Mississippi. The UAC will continue (1) its recognition of academic programs judged to provide adequate and commendable support to SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1; (2) to hold the annual Assessment Showcase that recognizes academic programs judged to provide commendable support to SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1; and (3) to provide focused guidance and assistance to those programs that do not achieve at least an adequate rating in a given year. The UAC will include in that report a list of any academic programs that did not submit plans and reports required within the university-wide assessment process.

The UAC finds it unacceptable that some academic programs consistently do not participate in the university-wide assessment process and documentation of such in WEAVEonline. Such lack of participation undermines the university-wide efforts in assessment and jeopardizes the university response to SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1. The UAC supports academic programs' participation in discipline-specific accreditation processes; however, this participation does not exempt a program from participation in the university-wide assessment process.

UAC Approved 04.19.11

Items for future consideration:

UAC recommendations for the future are that (1) University Assessment Committee processes be incorporated into the program prioritization processes used by the University Priorities Committee (UPC), and (2) successful completion of assessment documentation be incorporated in performance evaluations of those department chairs and program coordinators responsible and of their respective deans. It is essential to the continued success of the university that assessment data are collected and the results be acted upon for improvement of student learning.

UAC Approved 04.19.11

Plan and Report Guidelines

Academic Program Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines

PLAN GUIDELINES:

1. All USM degree programs on the IHL Academic Program Inventory assess student learning outcomes at the program level.
2. Separate assessment plans are encouraged at the emphasis level.
3. To assist with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) assessment requirements, all teacher licensure programs assess at the emphasis level.
4. Programs that offer separate online emphasis areas or distinct emphasis areas at different sites assess separately.
5. Programs with two degrees at the same level in the same subject can choose to assess within one plan or separate plans.
6. Program-level Assessment Plans have a minimum of five outcomes. At least four outcomes must be Student Learning Outcomes and at least one outcome must be a Program Objective focused on student achievement. Student achievement includes enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, licensing, and certification.
7. Each student learning outcome must have two measures; one must be a direct measure. At least one measure is required for Program Objectives.
8. Course grades cannot be used as measures.

REPORT GUIDELINES:

Programs offered at multiple teaching sites or by multiple delivery modes must report their findings by site and include all sites and/or modes in the findings analysis.

The following components are required for a complete assessment report:

1. Findings (separated by site/mode if applicable)
2. Action Plans (required in year 2 of the assessment cycle)
3. Analysis
4. Program Summary - Programs are asked to describe the program and summarize program highlights of the past year. The summary field is needed to provide context to an outside reviewer. Program contributions, activities, and accomplishments should be included in this field.
5. Continuous Improvement Initiatives (Additional Action Plans) - Any department-level or program-level action plans for improvement that are not necessarily tied to a specific student learning outcome or program objective should be described in this field. Efforts to improve enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, licensing, and certification should be captured in this field.
6. Closing the Loop (Action Plan Tracking) – Programs are asked to summarize the results of previous action plan implementation. This is the opportunity for programs to close the assessment loop – to report on the success (or nonsuccess) of previously implemented action plans. It is very important for programs to respond to this section with thought and detail. This section is where programs provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

Certificate Program Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines

All certificate programs must identify a minimum of *two* student learning outcomes. Each student learning outcome must be assessed with at least *one* direct measure.

Certificate programs must assess annually, following program-level calendars. The following components are required for a complete assessment report:

1. Findings (separated by site/mode if applicable)
2. Action Plans
3. 2-part Analysis to include Closing the Loop as applicable

Stand-alone Minor Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines

All stand-alone minors must identify a minimum of *two* student learning outcomes. Each student learning outcome must be assessed with at least *one* direct measure.

Stand-Alone Minors must assess annually, following program-level calendars. Stand-Alone Minors shall follow certificate reporting guidelines.

Assessment Process Overview

SPRING 2013

2012-2013/2013-2014 Academic Program Assessment Plans are in place.

An assessment plan includes:

a) Program Mission/Purpose
b) Student Learning Outcomes
c) Measures and Targets

A complete 2012-2013 Academic Program Assessment Report includes:

d) Findings (due May 31)
e) Action Plans (due June 30) - *Action Plans are not required in Year 1 of assessment cycle*
f) Analysis (due June 30)
g) Annual Report (due June 30) - *alternative calendar programs have a due date of September 30*

University Assessment Calendar for degree programs can be found on the Institutional Effectiveness Web site: http://www.usm.edu/institutional-effectiveness/academic-program-assessment

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) directs the assessment process at the University of Southern Mississippi. Southern Miss follows a two-year planning and annual reporting cycle. With this cycle, assessment plans are in place for two years, action plans are developed every two years, and assessment reports are annual.

In the spring semester of the second year of the cycle, departments are asked to gather faculty; review past assessment reports (including data from the current year); reevaluate learning outcomes, measures, and targets; and develop action plans for the next assessment cycle implementation. With the two-year cycle, departments should have more than a full year of data (including any summer semester data) to evaluate when developing new action plans for improvement and revising assessment plans if needed.

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) reviews assessment reports in the fall semester to determine if:

1) Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines were followed
2) The Assessment Report supports SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1

These reviews are returned to the departments and presented to the deans and the provost in the spring semester.

Assessment Updates

Fifth-Year Interim Report. The university's SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report was submitted March 26, 2012. The Fifth-Year Interim Report consists of an abbreviated compliance report that addresses select standards of the Principles of Accreditation and the QEP Impact Report. The Impact Report is a report demonstrating the extent to which the QEP has affected outcomes related to student learning. Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 subsection 3.3.3.1 (*educational programs, to include student learning outcome*s) was one of the standards addressed.

Supporting documentation. A sample of reports from assessment cycles 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 representing all five colleges, degree levels, teaching sites, and delivery modes were included as supporting documentation for SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1. In the interest of full disclosure, examples of Outcomes, Measures, Findings Data, Action Plans, Analysis, Program Summaries, and Continuous Improvement Initiatives from programs not represented in the three-year sample were also presented to document student learning outcomes assessment activities of all 43 degree-granting units.

Closing the Loop documents were included to present specific evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results. These documents highlighted examples of Closing the Loop discussions from a large representative sample of WEAVE reports from each college.

SACSCOC Approval. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), during its 2012 Annual Meeting in Dallas December 8-11, informed The University of Southern Mississippi of its approval of the institution's Fifth-Year Interim Report.

Southern Miss is in compliance with the multiple accreditation standards covered in the report, including institutional effectiveness regarding educational programs; program curriculum; policy compliance; Title IX program responsibilities/financial aid audits; student support services; and physical facilities, among others.

Compliance Certification Report. The university will submit the Compliance Certification Report for the decennial review in fall 2015. A sample of reports from assessment cycles 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014 representing all colleges, degree levels, teaching sites, and delivery modes will be included as supporting documentation for SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1.

New Plan and Report Guidelines. SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation Federal Requirement 4.1 requires the institution to "evaluate success with respect to student achievement" and "criteria may include enrollment data, retention, graduation, course completion and job placement rates; state licensing examinations; student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals." The University Assessment Committee (UAC) reviewed the Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines and current assessment plans in light of Federal Requirement 4.1. An amendment to the Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines was approved by the committee on March 27, 2013. The guidelines and underlined amendments are found on page 8 of this booklet.

Student Learning Outcomes

A Student Learning Outcome (SLO) is a statement regarding knowledge, skills, and/or traits students should gain or enhance as a result of their engagement in an academic program. SLOs are the items that complete the sentence, "When they complete our program, students will be able to….." A program does not need to state all possible student learning outcomes, but it should try to articulate those that are fundamental. A program may choose to rotate SLOs. Student learning outcomes should show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.

Frameworks for Learning Outcomes

In *Assessing Student Learning, A Common Sense Guide*, Linda Suskie (2009) explains how understanding and using frameworks can assist with the task of identifying and articulating learning outcomes.
Examples of frameworks include:

- Bloom, 1956 (Bloom's taxonomy) - 3 domains of learning: cognitive, affective, & psychomotor
- Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001 - a recent update to Bloom's taxonomy
- Costa & Kallick, 2000 – "habits of mind"
- Marzano, Pickering, & McTighe, 1993 – "thinking skills"

(Suskie, 118)

The learning outcomes in various frameworks could be summarized into three categories:

- Knowledge and conceptual understanding - remembering, replicating a simple procedure, and defining, summarizing, and explaining concepts or phenomena.
- Thinking and other skills:
  - Application – capacity to use knowledge and understanding in a new context
  - Analysis – ability to identify elements, relationships, and principles of a complex process
  - Evaluation, Problem-Solving, and Decision-Making Skills – skills in making informed judgments
  - Synthesis – capacity to put together what one has learned in a new, original way
  - Creativity – abilities to be flexible, take intellectual risks, and be open-minded to new ideas
  - Critical Thinking – capacities to seek truth, clarity, and accuracy; distinguish facts from opinions
  - Information Literacy – broad set of skills reflecting today's reality of research practice
  - Performance Skills – physical skills
  - Interpersonal Skills – abilities to listen, participate as an effective team member
- Attitudes, values, dispositions, and habits of mind – "personal and social responsibility skills"

(Suskie, 118 – 124)

Expressing Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes should be neither too broad nor too specific:

Too vague: Students will demonstrate information literacy skills.

Too specific: Students will be able to use the college's online services to retrieve information.

Better: Students will locate information and evaluate it critically for its validity and appropriateness.

(Suskie, 130)

2013 Showcase

CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY BS*

New Program-level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Process

This program underwent a 6th year TAC-ABET accreditation visit in fall 2010. From that visit, it was apparent that the program outcomes in WEAVEonline did not provide adequate resolution from program level to course level. The organization of supporting materials and student samples of work was also extremely difficult to collect and organize in a meaningful manner. It was decided then to reorganize the program learning outcomes to exactly map to the TAC-ABET general and program specific criteria with direct linkages from each course in the program that supported a particular criterion.

Faculty map each of their course objectives to the TAC-ABET criteria using a listing of the tools/methods for assessing each outcome/criteria. This provides evidence of which courses in the program inventory are supporting any given TAC-ABET criteria and also provides a simple index system for staff to organize supporting materials by criteria for inspection. And, while TAC-ABET only requires summative evidence, this approach easily provides for formative inspection of the curriculum. WEAVEonline Outcomes reflect the exact TAC-ABET criteria with two measures for each criteria: one direct and one indirect. The direct measures are the aggregated assessments for all student work samples (projects, exams, quizzes, papers) as determined by the faculty in their mapping exercise. The indirect measures are graduate exit surveys and alumni surveys rewritten to also reflect the TAC-ABET criteria. Faculty report their findings for each section of their courses. At the course level, it was decided to begin this process using targets of 80% of students would achieve 70 (out of 100) on the assessments. The findings are separated by program area the course might serve; for example, a course might have Architectural Engineering Technology (ACT), Construction Engineering Technology (BCT), Industrial Engineering Technology (IET), or other (OTHER) students. These findings are organized in a master spreadsheet so that the findings for each criteria for each program by semester and by delivery type (online or face-to-face) can be summed. This provides the total number of student samples for each criteria meeting the performance target versus total number of students being assessed. The findings for each criteria are then entered in WEAVEonline as annual summation values as well as being reported by semester and by type of site or delivery method. This system allows the program faculty to see the impact of their courses as a whole and individually on each criteria. Beyond the reporting system for SACS and TAC-ABET, the faculty also now have a systematic approach to evaluate each of their course objectives using the defined performance target levels to look at strengths and weaknesses in each course.

CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY BS*

2011-2012 Program-level Student Learning Outcomes

1. BCT students will have an ability to select and apply the knowledge, techniques, skills, and modern tools of their disciplines to broadly-defined engineering technology activities. (ABET General Criteria 'a')
2. BCT students will have an ability to select and apply a knowledge of mathematics, science, engineering, and technology to engineering technology problems that require the application of principles and applied procedures or methodologies. (ABET General Criteria 'b')
3. BCT students will have an ability to conduct standard tests and measurements; to conduct, analyze, and interpret experiments; and to apply experimental results to improve processes. (ABET General Criteria 'c')
4. BCT students will have an ability to design systems, components, or processes for broadly-defined engineering technology problems appropriate to program educational objectives. (ABET General Criteria 'd')

5. BCT students will have an ability to function effectively as a member or leader on a technical team. (ABET General Criteria 'e')
6. BCT students will have an ability to identify, analyze, and solve broadly-defined engineering technology problems. (ABET General Criteria 'f')
7. BCT students will have an ability to communicate effectively regarding broadly- defined engineering technology activities. (ABET General Criteria 'g')
8. BCT students will have an understanding of the need for and an ability to engage in self-directed continuing professional development. (ABET General Criteria 'h')
9. BCT students will have an understanding of and a commitment to address professional and ethical responsibilities including a respect for diversity. (ABET General Criteria 'i')
10. BCT students will have a knowledge of the impact of engineering technology solutions in a societal and global context. (ABET General Criteria 'j')
11. BCT students will have a commitment to quality, timeliness, and continuous improvement. (ABET General Criteria 'k')
12. BCT graduates are capable of utilizing modern instruments, methods and techniques to implement construction contracts, documents, and codes. (ABET Associate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'a')
13. BCT graduates are capable of evaluating materials and methods for construction projects. (ABET Associate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'b')
14. BCT graduates are capable of utilizing modern surveying methods for construction layout. (ABET Associate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'c')
15. BCT graduates are capable of determining forces and stresses in elementary structural systems. (ABET Associate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'd')
16. BCT graduates are capable of estimating material quantities and costs. (ABET Associate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'e')
17. BCT graduates are capable of employing productivity software to solve technical problems. (ABET Associate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'f')
18. BCT graduates are capable of producing and utilizing design, construction, and operations documents. (ABET Baccalaureate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'a')
19. BCT graduates are capable of performing economic analyses and cost estimates related to design, construction, and maintenance of systems in the construction technical specialties. (ABET Baccalaureate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'b')
20. BCT graduates are capable of selecting appropriate construction materials and practices. (ABET Baccalaureate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'c')
21. BCT graduates are capable of applying principles of construction law and ethics. (ABET Baccalaureate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'd')
22. BCT graduates are capable of applying basic technical concepts to the solution of construction problems involving hydraulics and hydrology, geotechnics, structures, construction scheduling and management, and construction safety. (ABET Baccalaureate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'e')
23. BCT graduates are capable of performing standard analysis and design in at least one recognized technical specialty within construction engineering technology that is appropriate to the goals of the program. (ABET Baccalaureate Degree Program Specific Criteria 'f')

Measures

A measure identifies evidence and methods used to determine achievement of expected outcomes. Targets show criteria for success for each student learning outcome. The findings that result from these measures should be used to demonstrate student learning and provide direction for improving learning.

Measures and Targets should show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit. Simple rates, frequencies, or percentages of activities are not true measures of student learning outcomes.

Direct Measures

The best measures for student learning are **direct measures** in which students demonstrate that they know or can do the specified learning outcome. Direct measures directly evaluate student work. Examples of direct measures include portfolios, exams, papers, projects, presentations, performances, standardized tests, licensure exams, comprehensives, and internship evaluations.

An overall course grade is NOT an acceptable direct measure. And in various cases, an overall exam, project, or paper grade is not an appropriate measure. However, the grading process can be used for assessment, if the classroom exam or assignment **actually measures** the learning outcome and the **criteria** for evaluating student work **is stated explicitly** in writing (usually in the form of a rubric).

Indirect Measures

Indirect methods such as surveys and interviews ask students to reflect on their learning rather than to demonstrate it. Indirect measures also include job placement rates, admission rates into graduate programs, employer surveys, alumni surveys, focus groups, honors/awards earned by students & alumni, student participation rates in research publications, & conference presentations.

Expressing Measures

Measures should be detailed and specific. Measurement should ensure that comparisons are "apples to apples," and should ascertain that, for those programs that are offered at more than one site or by more than one mode, the measure can be duplicated at all sites/modes and the findings can be separated by site/mode. Evidence can include qualitative as well as quantitative information.

2013 Showcase

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BA*
Program-level Direct Measure

M 2: Capstone Reflective Essay
Students shall submit, as part of the Senior Capstone Course Portfolio, a reflective essay evidencing knowledge and significance of the historical development, evolution, and structure of the contemporary criminal and juvenile justice systems. The students should include an explanation of how the portfolio materials contributed to the synthesis and analysis of their foundational knowledge. The essay will be divided into five sections: criminological theory, legal theory, juvenile justice, constitutional history, and ethics. Each section will be graded on four components (25% for each component: logic, structure, knowledge and persuasiveness).
Target: 80% of the students will achieve a score of 75 or better on the Theoretical (legal and criminological) and Ethics components of the reflective essay completed in the senior capstone course (CJ 435).
Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
On the Hattiesburg campus, 85% (17/20) of students during the Fall 2011 academic term and 83% (20/24) of students during the Spring 2012 academic term achieved a score of 75 or better on the Theoretical and Ethics components of the reflective essay completed in the senior capstone course (CJ 435). The senior capstone course (CJ 435) was not offered on the Gulf Park campus during the Fall 2011 academic term. In the Spring 2012 term, however, 100% (10/10) of students on the Gulf Park campus achieved an overall score of 75 or better on the Theoretical and Ethics components of the reflective essay completed in the senior capstone course (CJ 435).

DANCE (DANCE EDUCATION) BFA
Program-level Direct Measure

M 20: Teacher Candidate Concerts
Dance education majors choreograph in their second K-12 teacher candidate placement and/or produce dance concerts in the public schools where they student teach. This project includes working on a group of dancers in developmentally appropriate ways while maintaining a commitment to the fundamental principles of quality dance-making. Final work is evaluated by the supervising teacher and through a self-evaluation by the participants. Project also includes a final reflective paper that details the learning process and product, a log of all rehearsals and progress made in each as well as a comparison of the student's junior choreographic work to their dance made in the schools.
Target: 80% of students earn at least 90 points out of 100 in creating and presenting dance in the public schools where they student teach.
Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
Student teaching happens only in the Spring semester.
SP12: Target met. 100% of students (4 of 4) earned at least 90 (out of 100) in creating and presenting dance in the schools in which they student taught. Average score was 95 (out of 100).

HYDROGRAPHIC SCIENCE MS**
Program-level Direct Measure

M 8: Electronic Nautical Chart
Successful application of the principals of geodesy where the student must merge several different data sets, with different coordinate systems, into standard charting horizontal and vertical datums, for the creation of an ENC (Electronic Nautical Chart).
Target: 90% of students will be able to create an ENC, to international standards, on the first attempt. Any error in the ENC resulting from the incorrect application of the principles of geodesy, or by using the incorrect horizontal or vertical datum, is unacceptable.
Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
Nine of 9 students taking HYD 606 successfully created an ENC and paper chart which used the correct horizontal and vertical datums.

ACCOUNTING BSBA*
Program-level Direct Measure

M 9: Transactions cycle case
In ACC 409 (Auditing), students are presented with a case to demonstrate their understanding of transactions cycles; this represents an appropriate vehicle for assessing their functional knowledge of basic accounting skills.
Target: Two traits will be evaluated using rubrics applied to the case. The first trait will represent the ability to identify the need for a cutoff test to determine if transactions are recorded in the proper period. The second trait will be the ability to identify transactions that are not recorded in the proper period. The scale on the rubric in ACC 409 for evaluating students' performances on the two transactions cycle traits will be as follows: did not meet expectations=1, met expectations=2, exceeded expectations=3. The achievement target will have been met if the mean score for each trait assessed is equal to or exceeds 2.0 ("met expectations").
Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
On the first trait examined, (ability to identify the need for a cutoff test in order to determine whether transactions are recorded and included in account balances in the proper period), the mean ratings for the Hattiesburg and coast campuses were 2.25 and 2.24, respectively.
On the second trait (ability to identify transactions that are not recorded in the proper period), the mean ratings for the Hattiesburg and coast campuses were 2.22 and 2.20, respectively.
It should be noted that the same instructor taught ACC 409 on both campuses in the spring 2012, and she used the same assignment on both campuses for evaluating the students' understanding of transactions cycles. These results confirm that the assessment target was achieved.

ACCOUNTING MPA
Program-level Indirect Measure

M 5: Exit surveys
All graduating MPA students will complete a written exit survey. On this survey, the students are asked how they believe their technical skills, critical thinking skills, ability to work as a team, oral communication skills, and knowledge of the business environment have changed as a result of the MPA program.
Source of Evidence: Exit interviews with grads/program completers
Target: Student responses complete the statement "Knowledge of technical skills in accounting that will be useful to you in your career as an accountant." Responses are measured on a 5 point scale, where 1 = knowledge or ability has weakened significantly, 3 = neutral, 5 = technical skill has increased significantly. The achievement target will have been met if the mean student response is equal to or exceeds 4.0.
Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
Concerning the accounting skills or knowledge they had gained in the MPA program, on the written exit survey graduating MPA students were asked to respond to the following statement: "Knowledge of technical skills in accounting that will be useful to you in your career as an accountant." Students responded to this statement by selecting one of five responses on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., running from 1 to 5). A 5 indicated their "knowledge or ability has improved significantly," while a 1 indicated their "knowledge or ability has weakened significantly." The neutral response (i.e., 3) was "knowledge or ability has not changed." The mean response for the 26 students taking this survey was 4.81, which suggests they felt their level of accounting knowledge had increased significantly as a result of the MPA program. Taken together, the responses from the written and oral exit surveys strengthen the integrity and reliability of these indirect assessment measures and allow the faculty to make positive changes to the MPA curriculum to improve student retention and recruitment and to enhance the coverage of relevant material in the program. Although for assessment purposes less weight is given to indirect measures such as exit surveys of students than is attached to direct measures, the students' strong beliefs that their accounting knowledge and skills improved significantly as a result of the MPA program cannot be ignored. This is especially true since the students were adamant about this in both survey instruments (i.e., the written one which provided for anonymous responses and the oral exit survey with the Director).

PARALEGAL STUDIES BA*
Program-level Job Placement Measure

M 12: Alumni Survey - Professional Employment
Alumni will report on an alumni survey that they are employed within the legal profession within six months of graduation. Alumni are surveyed in the spring following the calendar year in which they graduate.
Source of Evidence: Alumni survey or tracking of alumni achievements
Target: 70% of responding alumni will report on an alumni survey that they are employed within the legal profession within six months of graduation.
Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
Hattiesburg/Gulf Coast: 75% (9/12) of responding alumni (class of calendar year 2010 - 12 of 22 graduates responded) reported on an alumni survey that they were employed within the legal profession as a working paralegal or in another legal capacity within six months of graduation. Additionally, 8% (1/12) worked in another field and 17% (2/12) were continuing their education, one in law school and one in a master's degree program.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BS*
Program-level Licensure Measure

M 1: Praxis II: Elementary Education Content Knowledge
PRAXIS II: Elementary Education (0011), developed and administered by Educational Testing Services (ETS), is the required content knowledge standardized test for attaining Mississippi teacher licensure in Grades K-6. Praxis II: Elementary Education measures teacher candidates' elementary education content knowledge, including reading and language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, health, and physical education.
Source of Evidence: Certification or licensure exam, national or state
Target: Ninety percent (90%) of K-6 teacher candidates will be successful on the PRAXIS II: Elementary Education content knowledge professional examination. This demonstrates the candidates` attainment of the elementary education content knowledge required for state licensure. Both the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and NCATE require an 80% pass rate for state teacher education programs.
Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Partially Met*

Hattiesburg	Gulf Coast*	Teacher Assistant Program (TAP online)
Fall 2011	Fall 2011	Fall 2011
81/85 (95.29%) passed	45/53 (84.91%) passed	20/23 (86.96%) passed
Spring 2012	Spring 2012	Spring 2012
64/66 (96.97%) passed	24/25 (96%) passed	16/17 (94.12%) passed
Total	Total	Total
145/150 (97.67%) passed	69/78 (88%) passed	36/40 (90%) passed

**Although candidates in all three programs exceeded the MDE pass rate requirement of 80%, the target of 90% pass rate set by CISE faculty was only partially met.*

NURSING (FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER) MSN
Program-level Time-to-Degree Measure

M 13: Time-to-Degree
Each MSN program of study varies in length slightly, but each student is expected to complete their program of study within 150% of the expected timeframe.
Source of Evidence: Indirect measure - other
Target: 80% of FNP MSN students will complete their program of study within 150% of the expected timeframe.
Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
100% (N=41) of the Fall 2011 graduating FNP class completed the program within 150% of the expected timeframe. No students graduated from the FNP program Spring 2012.

Action Plans & Analysis

An action is an organized activity undertaken to help programs more effectively achieve intended outcomes, or an activity developed by program faculty to improve and grow the program for the future.

Analysis is the reflection of the program's findings within/for the criteria set for success on the program's intended outcomes. The Analysis is a summary of strengths and areas in which improvement is needed.

The End of Assessment Is Action

In *Assessment Clear and Simple*, Barbara E. Walvoord (2010) states the goal of assessment is information-based decision making.

> "Assessment helps the program determine how well it is achieving its outcomes and suggest effective steps for improvement. That means you should conduct assessment for yourselves and your students, not just for compliance with accreditors. You don't need to collect data you don't use; it's much more important to collect a small amount of useful data than to proliferate data that sit in a drawer or on a computer file. If you are collecting information you are not using, either start using it or stop collecting it. Instead of focusing on compliance, focus on the information you need for wise action." *(Walvoord, 2010, p. 5)*

The Most Common Actions Resulting from Assessment

Three common actions that result from assessment in the department, in general education, and in the institution:

1) Changes to curriculum, requirements, programmatic structures, or other aspects of the students' course of study

2) Changes to the policies, funding, and planning that support learning

3) Faculty development

(Walvoord, 2010, p.5)

Are the Actions Working?

To close the loop, programs should not only use assessment information to inform action, but should come back and examine (and document) whether the action led to improvement of student learning.

2013 Showcase

ART (SCULPTURE) BFA
Action Plan

Real Life Gallery Experience Needed
Students do not get to do their oral speeches (which originate from their written work) in a public forum. Although many are just fine in the public domain, evidence shows some inconsistencies in the students feeling comfortable in front of gallery visitors, or more specifically in the museum space. A solution is to make their first oral presentation in front of their peers, that is sculpture majors, and second that their final oral assessment be done as a "gallery talk" in a professional gallery setting.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High
Relationships: Outcome: Oral and Written Communication skills | **Measure:** Senior Capstone

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BS*
Action Plan

Develop a plan for a year-long student teaching experience.
CISE faculty in conjunction with the Educational Field Experience office are collaborating to develop a plan to merge the CISE senior block experiences with the semester student teaching experience to allow for a student teaching experience that encompasses a full year in K-6 partnering schools.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High
Relationships: Outcome: Demonstrate pedagogical knowledge. **Measures:** Praxis II: Principles of Learning and Teaching | Teacher Candidate Performance Evaluation

Implementation Description: Research for this project will be conducted in the schools involving USM didactic and clinical instructors and K-6 faculty beginning in the fall 2012. Additionally, planning meetings will be held to begin the implementation of the full-year clinical experience in fall 2013.
Projected Completion Date: 05/15/2013
Responsible Party: Dr. Janet Boyce, CISE elementary education faculty, Educational Field Experience staff

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE MLIS
Action Plan

Move assessment to less dense course, review presentation for topic
The Library Bill of Rights assignment/assessment will be moved to Information: Libraries in Society (LIS 636). Faculty felt that the number of assessment points in LIS 511 created an unbalanced situation. Moving the assignment and spending more time reviewing writing and instructions should improve performance. Faculty will also examine the presentation of the basic materials for the topic to ensure there is sufficient support for this student activity.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High
Relationships Measure: Interpreting the Library Bill of Rights | Outcome/Objective: Knowledge of and Commitment to ethical practices

Implementation Description: faculty will be reviewing the presentations associated with the assignment and redesigning the assignment for placement in another course.
Projected Completion Date: 05/10/2013
Responsible Party: Curriculum committee, LIS 511 instructor, and LIS 636 instructor

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES BS*

Analysis Answers

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?

After establishing the BSC Assessment Committee last year, we were able to identify specific measures that were inappropriate for the degree assessment. For example, in previous years, course grades were used to assess student learning outcomes. After review of the existing degree assessment plan, the committee was able to establish acceptable measures, identify appropriate methods to measure the student learning outcomes (i.e., rubrics), and identify where appropriate measures are lacking. We intend to establish appropriate rubrics for measuring student learning outcomes in technical skills assessment in the next year.

In addition, we identify areas in which collection of data was difficult. Specifically, the collection of indirect measures of all 5 student learning outcomes were weakly measured due to the lack of consistent use of exit surveys in the various BSC 497 Senior Capstone courses. The BSC Assessment Committee has developed an online survey that will be administered to all students in all sections of the BSC 497 course each semester. This will allow for proper reporting of data and a more complete picture of the information we are attempting to collect.

It is apparent that our students are improving in their written and oral communication skills over the course of their degree plan. We see that students struggle with written lab assignments in the introductory courses, but perform well on similar assignments in upper level courses (BSC 380) and written assignments in the BSC 497 course. We hope to improve writing skills even more by increasing entry level students' awareness of the Writing Center.

What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?

It is apparent that the performance of our BSC students on the ETS Major Field Exam in Biology is not at the level we would like. On average, our students have consistently scored lower than the 50th percentile on the various sections of this exam. For those faculty that have taught the BSC 497 course, there is a feeling that students are not concerned with their performance on this exam and may not be preparing for the exam and completing the exam with the same attention that is given to other course work. The BSC Assessment Committee will address this issue in the next year to develop ways to improve student investment in the exam and hopefully student performance.

Another student learning outcome of interest is the development of technical skills consistent with the major. Though the entry level goal was not met this year, students are demonstrating acceptable technical skills in the upper level assessment (BSC 380 Microbiology). However, when students in the BSC 497 are surveyed, there seems to be a feeling that students are not gaining the technical skills consistent with their major. There seems to be a disconnect in what is evaluated by the faculty in coursework and what the students perceive. It may be useful to include an exercise in the BSC 497 course that focuses on technical skills consistent with the major and how these are appropriate for employment. Highlighting these factors may improve student perception of what they gained technically through the degree program.

INTERIOR DESIGN BS

Analysis Answers

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?

The program surveyed the seniors following an eight week internship in July 2012 and found that 92% of graduates felt prepared for an entry-level position with an interior design firm. The internship host/mentors completed a survey of the student's overall performance, knowledge of job, client interaction, dependability initiative and attitude indicating similar results that graduates were well prepared to enter the profession. The mentor survey results indicated that 95% (22/23) of mentors felt our students were above average to excellent in overall job performance. Students continue to show strength in using various software programs for communicating with clients as well as software programs used for developing portfolios, resume's and digital websites. 80% (8/10) students enrolled in ID 442 Interior Design Internship scored "above average to excellent" in the category of job knowledge that reflects skills in material selections, preparing floor plans, writing specifications, rendering, developing presentation boards, design terminology and trade names. The remaining 20% (2/10) scored average in this category. In addition, 100% (23/23) of the internship mentors rated the interns' attitude as "above average to excellent". Students continue to show strength in being accountable for their actions and creating realistic semester goals.

What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?

Juniors and seniors in the Interior Design Program showed an overall weakness in professional values, specifically in time management, reliability and community service. The senior cohort scored lower than the junior cohort in service and time management. Students continue to struggle with staying on track with project deadlines and tend to spend an excessive amount of overtime in the final days approaching the due date. Faculty members have been asked to pay closer attention to project deadlines in other studio classes to allow adequate time between project due dates. Due dates for the fall 2011 senior studios conflicted with one another and ultimately created time management issues that could have been avoided had deadlines of both studios been considered by the faculty. While the juniors met the minimum expectation for service, the seniors fell short of being involved in their student organizations and volunteerism. More service and professional networking opportunities will be implemented in fall 2012 to help improve professionalism scores for the senior cohort. Because the sophomore portfolios were falling short on adequate content to fully evaluate design knowledge, computer competency, design fundamentals and design communication, the program began to evaluate the senior portfolios in spring 2012. These portfolios fell short in the area of sketching/ideation drawings. More opportunities for ideation drawings and sketching will be required in studio courses and students enrolled in ID 438 Portfolio Presentation will be more closely monitored to make sure they include these drawings in their portfolio. 45% of students omitted these drawings in their portfolio. Areas that were not assessed in this plan but identified as weaknesses in the exit surveys by both mentors and graduating seniors included estimating and working within budgets. New measure will be implemented in the 2012-2013 plan to address these weaknesses.

SOCIAL WORK BSW*

Analysis Answers

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?

Overall, the social work program met the majority of its targeted outcomes. The exit survey was administered at the point of graduation and the results showed that students believed they were well prepared with regard to the application of: values and ethics and knowledge and skills. The students' self-perceptions indicated they were less confident about mastering content related to critical thinking, human development, social policy, and research. On the other hand, the perceptions of field instructors were more positive about students' preparation for field placement. Field instructors believed that students successfully met all learning objectives including critical thinking, human development, social policy, and research. Our goal for the coming years is to 1) increase the perceptions of students about their mastery of knowledge and skills in the areas of critical thinking, human development, social policy, and research and 2) provide additional opportunities for students to enhance their ability to apply knowledge and skills related to critical thinking, human development, social policy and research in both academic settings and field agencies.

What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?

The four outcomes that will continue to require attention are the content areas of critical thinking, human development, social policy, and research. Critical thinking: In the BSW program, critical thinking is infused throughout the curriculum. However, to improve our students' outcomes related to critical thinking, we have included a critical thinking component in one of our Pre-Swk courses (SWK 301). To determine students' understanding of this concept as it relates to social work processes, we introduce the concept of critical thinking and discuss the Triple-A approach (Ask questions, Assess the established facts and issues involved and Assert a conclusion) as defined by Kirst-Ashman (2003). Also, in the capstone course (SWK 431) we have added more components to their weekly logs. Under the Analysis section, students not only have to describe a significant event related to their field practicum, but they have to reflect, identify relevant theory and knowledge, examine dissonance related to that event, summarize and develop a plan of action. Human development: Increasing students' ability to connect between theories of human development and social work practice will be accomplished through various class assignments that integrate developmental theories and social work practice: a) Bio-psycho-social assessment utilizing case scenarios; b) Interview with an older adult; and c) Life event presentation. Through these assignments, students will utilize chronological life span framework and developmental theories to understand human development and behaviors. Additionally, students will understand the diversity in the life course and how life transitions (e.g., marriage, aging) and life events (e.g., abuse, natural disaster, poverty, war) affect human development and behaviors. Social policy: To increase students' interests in social policy, efforts that have been implemented in 2011-2012 will continue through 2012-2013. These efforts include developing opportunities for leadership and advocacy by extending classroom knowledge into community projects that require students to lead and implement their policy assignments. Policy Analysis Assignments will be given to students. These assignments include: 1) Students identify an area of practice of interest to them (child welfare, juvenile justice, community-health, mental health, etc). 2) Students create a social history for a hypothetical client in this practice area. 3) Students identify the primary problem for which the client has been referred to them. 4) Students identify a specific policy at the Mississippi state level that impacts how they work with this client. 5) Students complete a written analysis of this policy using the Policy Analysis Framework developed in the course text. Research: To increase students' interests in research, efforts that have been implemented in 2011-2012 will continue through 2012-2013. These efforts involve 1) teaching research methods through the framework of evidence-based practice; 2) improving students' information literacy skills; and 3) strengthening students' abilities to apply the research discussed in literature to the presenting problem of their clients; 4) encouraging students to engage in research (their own or collaborative with faculty) and present findings of their research at conferences.

Annual Reporting

Annual Reporting Fields

The Assessment Report includes the following Annual Reporting data elements:

- PROGRAM SUMMARY
- CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES (ADDITIONAL ACTION PLANS)
- CLOSING THE LOOP (ACTION PLAN TRACKING)

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Programs are asked to summarize highlights of the past year for that particular academic program. The summary field is needed to provide context to an outside reviewer. Program contributions, activities, and accomplishments should be included in this field. Any data collected outside of the student learning outcome measures could be showcased in this field as well.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES (ADDITIONAL ACTION PLANS)

Any department-level or program-level action plans for improvement that are not necessarily tied to a specific student learning outcome should be described in this field.

CLOSING THE LOOP (ACTION PLAN TRACKING)

Programs are asked to summarize the results of previous action plan implementation. This is the opportunity for programs to close the assessment loop – to report on the success (or nonsuccess) of previously implemented action plans. It is very important for programs to respond to this section with thought and detail. This section is where programs provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

2013 Showcase

NURSING PHD

Program Summary

The Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in nursing degree program was started in 1998 as a collaboration with the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Each university grants its own degree, but there are common admission requirements and a common core of courses that may be taken on either campus. Each institution has different selected fields of study (USM's field of study is leadership). Through the collaboration, students enrolled in the PhD program may take core courses at either university. These core courses are designed to be consistent at both universities and transfer to the student's primary university. This collaboration benefits the student by providing a well-rounded education by faculty that are leaders in their field while meeting the student's individual needs. The PhD program of study prepares scholars who will contribute to the science and practice of nursing through systematic inquiry and theory development. The graduates of this program will be prepared to meet state, regional, and national needs for doctorally-prepared faculty in schools of nursing and other leadership positions in health related organizations. The School of Nursing Program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and approved by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL). The PhD program of study consists of 66 total credit hours--15 credit hours of common core courses, 18 credit hours specific to USM, 21 credit hours of emphasis area support courses, and 12 credit hours of dissertation. The nursing courses are primarily live but web enhanced. Faculty who teach in the PhD program are leaders in the nursing through research, book authorship, manuscript publications, presentations (local, state, regional, national, and international), and professional organization service. AY 2010-2011 a new strategic plan and organizational structure for the SoN was developed and implemented to meet our changing needs. The new organizational structure included a PhD Coordinator and Academic Coordinator. The new organizational structure was evaluated at the end of AY 2010-2010, and the addition of the PhD Coordinator and Academic Coordinator roles was evaluated favorably by faculty and staff. In AY 2011-2012, the SoN was approved to become a College of Nursing. The PhD program will fall under the Department of Systems Leadership and Health Outcomes and will maintain its own coordinator for AY 2012-2013.

PUBLIC RELATIONS MS

Program Summary

The mission of the Masters in Public Relations degree program in the School of Mass Communication and Journalism is to provide students graduate-level preparation in communication management skills, communication and public relations theory, information gathering and analysis, as well as a sound knowledge of the role and function of professional communication in public and private organizations in order to prepare them for leadership positions in public relations and related fields and/or to continue their graduate education at a graduate school of their choice. The Master of Science degree in Public Relations requires 30 hours, with an option of a thesis, major project, or an internship. This is the only Master's program in Public Relations in the state of Mississippi. It is well-known throughout the region for quality education and outstanding alumni. Many of our graduates are leaders in their field and they maintain close ties with the School and the university. Last year, a few of them came back to either give guess lectures or help with portfolio review. To build on our success and make the program bigger and better, we have been considering the possibility of developing a hybrid program in the future when we have required resources.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MBA**

Continuous Improvement Initiatives

During the 2011-2012 year there were several continuous improvement initiatives not directly linked to the assessment of learning outcomes in the MBA program.

1. Increase study abroad opportunities and participation by MBA students. More students traveled to Panama in 2012 than in 2011; MBA students joined students in the MPA program, the Masters in Logistics, Trade and Transportation and the Masters in Economic Development. This globalizes our MBA students and provides the additional benefit of understanding diverse perspectives on the importance of Panama to world trade. Students learned from each other due to Panama research projects that crossed all areas.
2. As planned in 2010-2011, a more dynamic scheduling model was developed and implemented in 2011-2012. The program was redesigned as a Professional MBA Program with a hybrid course delivery format. Student response to the new format has been very positive, particularly in the working professional cohort. Assessment results indicate no declines in learning outcomes due to the change. While this change required an adjustment on the part of students and faculty, both groups report positive results from the class delivery format change.
3. The 2011-2012 year also marked increased partnering with other programs on campus. The MBA Director worked with graduate directors in Nursing, LTT and Economic Development to expand the scope of our MBA program while also providing graduate business electives to other graduate students on campus. The College now has a formal agreement with the Master's degree in LTT; MBA students can choose their electives for an emphasis area and LTT students can choose MBA courses for a business elective emphasis. This work will continue during the 2012-2013 year with similar partnerships in Economic Development programs and graduate Nursing programs.

CHILD AND FAMILY STUDIES BS*

Continuous Improvement Initiatives

The Department of Child and Family Studies experienced a change in leadership this past year that resulted in a new department Chair. In addition, the department revamped its decision-making process by establishing several committees to create a multi-level, collaborative process for making programmatic decisions. The following committees were created: 1) Curriculum Committee, 2) Assessment Committee, and 3) Work Group Committees. Each emphasis area (child development, child life and family relations) established a work group with a designated coordinator. Throughout the past year the work groups, in collaboration with the assessment committee, identified meaningful outcomes and associated measures. Course learning objectives, assignments and rubrics were reviewed and are being revised to ensure that courses are meeting program outcomes and equipping our graduates with the necessary skills to become child and family professionals. This process has resulted in numerous course modifications. One of the major changes included redesigning FAM 401-Family Life Education to serve as the CFS writing intensive course. This will allow students the opportunity to apply skills in a real-life community setting while completing a comprehensive writing and speaking intensive project. Based on feedback from both students and faculty, FAM 455-Family Theories is being modified to integrate a more skills-based curriculum.

Since being formed in August 2011, the assessment committee has undertaken several initiatives to address program improvement across emphasis areas. Collaboration with work groups is resulting in significant modifications to the departmental WEAVE assessments process, which will be implemented in fall 2012. The WEAVE revisions consists of the development of new outcomes and measures that cut across all emphasis areas, as well as emphasis specific outcomes and measures. The assessment committee and work groups worked in partnership to identify meaningful outcomes that represent essential knowledge and skills necessary for success as a child and family professional. The assessment committee is reviewing all assignment guidelines and rubrics associated with measures and making revisions as necessary to enhance quality and increase specificity. In addition, the assessment committee will ensure that all outcomes contain both direct and

indirect measures. The assessment committee is committed to measurements that provide a comprehensive assessment of the outcome. For example, most outcomes contain 1) a faculty measurement, such as an assignment rubric; 2) a student measurement, such as the graduate exit survey; and 3) an external measurement, such as the practicum supervisor evaluation.

It is anticipated these initiatives will result in a meaningful, robust, authentic assessment that strengthens the CFS BS program and provides our students with the necessary skills to become successful child and family professionals.

ENGLISH BA*

Closing the Loop

In the past two years the English department successfully completed a number of action plans that have now been reclassified as finished:

1. begin collecting data at the Gulf Park campus
2. develop a grading rubric (planned as 100-point scale but implemented on a 5-point scale)
3. establish departmental targets
4. reconcile learning outcomes and evaluation methods
5. review assessment criteria for ENG 400
6. develop better, more consistent outcomes for writing
7. develop a common assignment across curriculum
8. make curriculum changes to improve literary knowledge
9. implement new exit survey
10. collect data on and assess oral presentations for Gulf Park site

For the past several years we have been collecting data from the Gulf Park campus in order to complete our dual-site assessment. The department implemented a more manageable 5-point grading rubric rather than the 100-point rubric initially planned in order to develop more faculty consensus about student outcomes. We established departmental targets, reconciled learning outcomes with evaluation methods, identified consistent learning outcomes, and reorganized the curriculum as noted in the Program Summary. We now use the new rubric to assess the English capstone course and encourage faculty to incorporate standard assignment types in 300- and 400-level courses.

In 2011-2012 specifically, we implemented two important action plans. The department devised and circulated an exit survey for graduating seniors in all sections of the capstone course. The exit survey was designed to serve as an indirect measure, and the second measure, for all learning outcomes. It asked students to score themselves for the categories of thesis-argument, analysis, writing skills, research, oral communication skills, and literary content knowledge. The department also began gathering data on oral presentation skills at the Gulf Park campus in order to include these results on our annual report. Prior to 2011-2012, this data was only collected in Hattiesburg.

ACCOUNTING BSBA*
Closing the Loop

Students will be able to research databases and formulate appropriate solutions based on this research and logical reasoning.

ACC 325 Coast
In addition to recommending the changes to the coast ACC 325 class, the 2010-2011 AoL report also recommended comparing the performance of the coast students in ACC 327 with their counterparts in the Hattiesburg ACC 327 class in the spring 2012 to determine if the changes to the coast ACC 325 class brought about the desired result (i.e., improved performance of the coast students in ACC 327). The recommended changes to the coast ACC 325 class were implemented in the fall 2011 as prescribed, and the result is that the coast ACC 327 students in the spring 2012 showed significant improvement in their research skills and case analyses compared to the prior year and performed on an even par in this area with the Hattiesburg ACC 327 students. This positive finding demonstrates a clear "closing of the loop" in our AoL process as a problem was identified in a prior assessment cycle (i.e., coast ACC 325 class appeared to lack the rigor needed for preparing students for higher level accounting courses). Changes were made to the curriculum to remedy the problem, and subsequent assessment procedures (i.e., in the current year) indicate the problem has been resolved.

ACC 407
The curriculum change to ACC 407 recommended in the 2009-2010 AoL report (i.e., to add a second research case) produced the desired results in the students' ability to research this important database. For example, in 2009-2010 in the Hattiesburg ACC 407 class, only 27% of the students located the correct standard in the GASB codification in their case analysis. In 2010-2011, however, almost 87% of the students on the final case in the Hattiesburg ACC 407 class located the correct standard in the codification. In addition, in the coast ACC 407 class in 2009-2010, the mean score on the research trait was 1.89 (i.e., below the "acceptable" rating of 2.00); however, this score increased to well above the "acceptable" rating (i.e., to 2.40) in 2010-2011. These positive results continued into the current year (i.e., 2011-2012) as, overall, 87% of the total students (both Hattiesburg and coast combined) located the correct standard in the GASB codification for use in solving their final case in ACC 407. These results document a clear "closing of the loop" in our assessment process as a problem was initially identified in our 2008-2009 AoL report and confirmed in the following year's report (i.e., 2009-2010) as a systemic and continuing issue; curriculum changes were then recommended and made in an attempt to remedy the problem, and subsequent results in two assessment cycles (i.e., 2010-2011 and 2011-2012) suggest the problem has been resolved. The AoL team recommends the current procedures used to ensure that students possess the skills needed to research the GASB standards and draw appropriate conclusions from their research be continued in the future along with appropriate assessment evaluations of this learning objective.

Students will be able to demonstrate competency in current technology

ACC 309
The 2010-2011 AoL report specifically recommended that a hands-on assignment be made in ACC 309 that required students to demonstrate a working knowledge of the XBRL reporting format for financial statements. This was not an easy task because XBRL programs are not yet available in the academic environment; however, the AoL team felt it was important for the students to have more than just book knowledge of XBRL, as it is the reporting format currently required of publicly traded companies submitting their reports to the SEC. In the current academic year, the ACC 309 instructor located a textbook/manual for XBRL and assigned a project requiring students to prepare a set of financial statements using the XBRL taxonomies. The results column in this report shows that the vast majority of ACC 309 students on both campuses performed well on their XBRL projects. This represents a clear "closing of the loop" in our AoL process as a recommendation for a curriculum modification was made in a prior year's AoL report to keep our program current with changes in

the accounting profession. That recommendation was acted upon in the current year (i.e., 2011-2012) as the hands-on XBRL assignment was made in ACC 309. The results from assessment testing this year demonstrate that students have acquired a working knowledge of XBRL, as well as a basic ability to apply the XBRL process in financial statement preparation.

Students will be able to demonstrate competency in ethical decision making

ACC 409
The SoA has two faculty members who teach ACC 409, and both of them have been diligent in their efforts to improve the ethical decision making skills of our students over time. Only one faculty member taught ACC 409 in the spring 2012 though, and she devoted class time to teaching specific techniques useful in structuring solutions to ethical dilemmas and provided students with examples of the critical points to consider in responding to an ethics issue. Plus, in class, she presented students with a step-by-step outline approach to resolving an ethical dilemma. The work of our ACC 409 instructors demonstrates a clear "closing of the loop" in our assessment process that has transcended several cycles. For example, when assessment of ethical decision making first occurred several years ago in ACC 409, the students scored well below the 2.00 ("met expectations") mark. However, through the work of the ACC 409 instructors and the attention they devoted to ethical decision making skills in the classroom and in their assignments, the students have, for several years now, scored well on their rubrics measuring ethical decision making skills.

Students will be able to demonstrate functional knowledge of basic accounting skills

ACC 409
In an attempt to improve the ACC 409 (auditing) course, enhance the overall accounting program, and positively "close the loop" from the 2007-2008 assessment findings, a transactions cycle chapter was added to the Hattiesburg undergraduate auditing course in the spring 2009. The transactions cycle chapter was added because comments in exit interviews in the 2007-2008 assessment cycle from students who had performed internships with CPA firms indicated these students felt ill-prepared in this area when they performed their internships. Thus, 2008-2009 was the first year this particular assessment procedure was performed in Hattiesburg. In the next year (i.e., 2009-2010), the procedure was continued in the Hattiesburg auditing class and added to the coast auditing class. The procedure is now an integral part of ACC 409 and performed every year on both campuses. The two traits measured for evaluating a student's understanding of transactions cycles are (1) "ability to identify the need for a cutoff test in order to determine whether transactions are recorded in the proper period" and (2) "ability to identify transactions that are not recorded in the proper period." In the first year (2008-2009), the mean ratings on these two traits in the Hattiesburg auditing class were at, or slightly above, 2.0 (i.e., "met expectations"), but the AoL team felt these results could be improved by the instructor making two transactions cycles assignments in the next year (as opposed to only one assignment that was made in the prior year). In the 2009-2010 academic year, the auditing professor made the two assignments as recommended and performed assessment evaluations on the second one. As expected, the results improved, and the instructor continues this practice today on both campuses. For example, in the current year (i.e., spring 2012), the Hattiesburg students' mean scores on the two transactions cycle traits were 2.25 and 2.24, respectively, and the coast students' mean scores on the two traits were 2.24 and 2.20, respectively. In addition to the improved scores in the transactions cycle traits measured in the evaluation rubrics in the last few years, no students having performed internships (nor their supervisors) have noted the students were ill prepared in this area since we began emphasizing transactions cycles in ACC 409 (and ACC 610 as well).The actions taken in relation to transactions cycles demonstrate a clear "closing of the loop" in our assessment process as a problem was identified through assessment procedures one year, the curriculum was changed the subsequent year, and assessment results for the following cycles (years) suggest the deficiency has been corrected.

ACC 327

Two years ago, as an additional measure of determining whether students possess functional knowledge of basic accounting skills, the AoL team recommended that their understanding of IFRS be evaluated in one of the three courses where this information is taught. Accordingly, for both 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, the students' performance on embedded IFRS questions on the multiple-choice portions of the ACC 327 exams were evaluated, and it was found that the students' correct response rates on the IFRS questions were favorable on both campuses relative to the correct response rates on questions dealing with U.S. GAAP. Thus, the AoL team believes that our BSBA students possess the basic skills and understanding of international accounting standards needed to function in entry level accounting positions. This finding demonstrates a positive "closing of the loop" in our assessment process as a prior year's assessment report identified a change needed to keep the curriculum current with practice (i.e., coverage of IFRS), the change was implemented. Subsequent assessment testing in the last two cycles shows the change produced the desired results (i.e., students possess basic knowledge of international accounting standards). The team recommends no changes to the curriculum relative to teaching international accounting standards but suggests that students' knowledge of IFRS continue to be evaluated as part of the annual assessment process to ensure this objective is met in the future as well.

ACC 325 Coast

The results column in this year's report clearly indicates that the changes in ACC 325 on the coast resulted in the cohort of students being better prepared for ACC 327 after the changes than they were before the changes. For example, after the changes in the coast ACC 325 class, the coast ACC 327 students in the spring 2012 on average earned a GPA of 2.222, while the year before (and prior to the change in ACC 325) the coast ACC 327 students earned an average GPA of 1.471. The coast ACC 327 students now appear to be on an even keel with the Hattiesburg ACC 327 students (i.e., the mean GPAs in ACC 327 on the coast and Hattiesburg in the spring 2012 were 2.222 and 2.275, respectively). These findings demonstrate a positive "closing of the loop" in our assessment process as a problem was identified through assessment procedures in a prior cycle, and recommendations were made in last year's AoL report for changes to the curriculum to correct the problem. Assessment procedures performed in the current year suggest the recommended changes brought about the desired results.

RELIGION BA

Closing the Loop

Previously the Religion program had unmet or partially met targets involving direct and indirect measures of Outcome/Objective 1, Understanding Western Religions, as well as Outcome/Objective 2, Understanding Eastern Religions. We also had partially met targets involving indirect measures of Outcome/Objective 3, Understanding Philosophical Reflection on Religion, in addition to Outcome/Objective 5, Capstone Oral Speaking. We initiated action plans regarding all of these weaknesses.

Our action plans mostly appear to have met with success. Almost every previous unmet or partially met target was met this year. While we continue to be aware of prior weaknesses so that we can turn past weaknesses into future strengths, the overall improvement is gratifying.

Where we continue to need work is with meeting the direct measure target for Outcome/Objective 1, Understanding Western Religions. Faculty members whose expertise fall under this objective are still relatively new at USM and it is hoped that efforts here will improve as they become seasoned. As well, since all faculty members engage topics in Western religions at some point or another, all faculty members in the program will be encouraged to be aware of this deficiency and to rectify it with pedagogical attention and emphasis.

RECOMMENDED READING

General Assessment Resources

Assessment Clear and Simple
Barbara E. Walvoord
John Wiley & Sons ©2010

Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide
Linda Suskie
John Wiley & Sons ©2010

Designing Effective Assessment: Principles and Profiles of Good Practice
Trudy W. Banta, Elizabeth A. Jones, Karen E. Black
John Wiley & Sons ©2009

Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers
Thomas A. Angelo & K. Patricia Cross
John Wiley & Sons ©1993

The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach
Judith Grunert O'Brien
John Wiley & Sons ©2008

Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment in College
Barbara E. Walvoord
John Wiley & Sons ©2010

Introduction To Rubrics: An Assessment Tool To Save Grading Time, Convey Effective Feedback and Promote Student Learning
Dannelle D. Stevens
Stylus Publishing ©2005

Discipline-Specific Assessment Resources

Assessment in Engineering Programs: Evolving Best Practices
Edited by William E. Kelly
© AIR

Assessment of Student Learning in College Mathematics: Towards Improved Programs and Courses
Edited by Bernard L. Madison
© AIR

Assessment of Student Learning in Business Schools: Best Practices Each Step of the Way
Edited by Kathryn Martell and Thomas Calderon
© AIR

NOTES