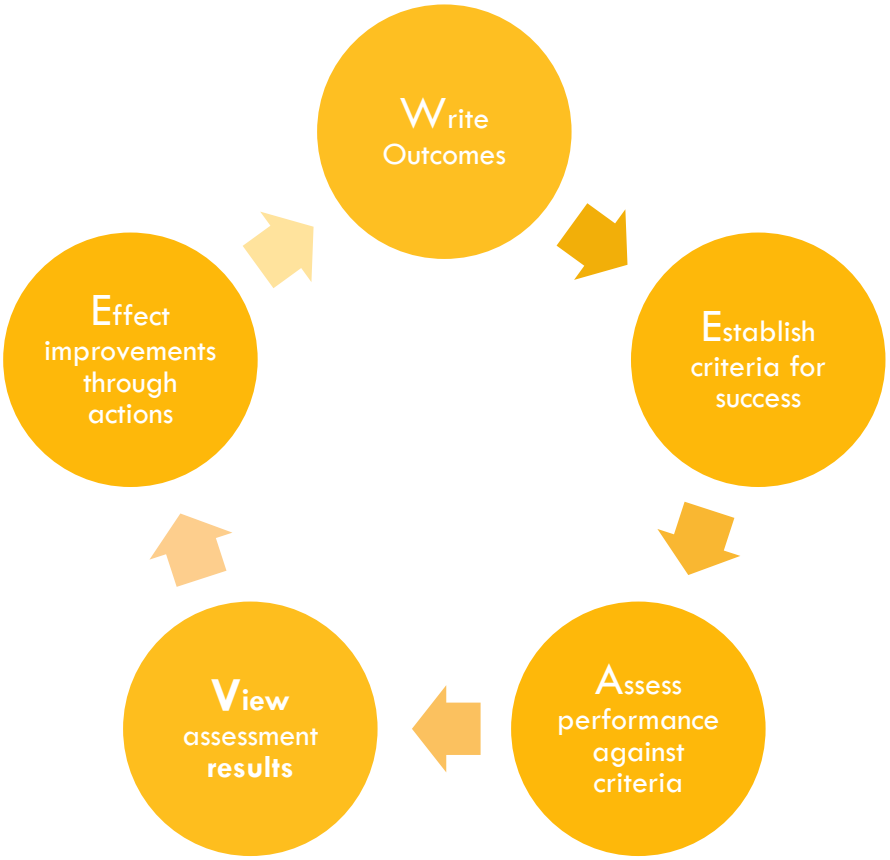
ASSESSMENT SHOWCASE



Spring 2014

Academic Program Assessment

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT SHOWCASE

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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

Assessment of Administrative Outcomes Participants:

E. Administrative Support Services – The Office of Institutional Research (IR) maintains the official USM Organization Chart annually submitted to IHL. To be in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, all units with primary administrative support functions identified on the Organization Chart must assess in accordance with the Administrative Unit Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. Administrative Support Units include all Vice President for Finance and Administration units (including similar Gulf Coast campus units), all Vice President for Advancement units (including similar Gulf Coast campus units), Executive Assistant to the President for Administration units, General Counsel, Intercollegiate Athletics, and Executive Assistant to the President for External Affairs units.
UAC Approved 02.19.14

F. Educational Support Services – The Office of Institutional Research (IR) maintains the official USM Organization Chart annually submitted to IHL. To be in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, all professionally staffed units with primary educational support functions identified on the Organization Chart must assess in accordance with the Administrative Unit Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. Student organizations identified on the Organization Chart are assessed by their advising unit. Educational Support Units include Provost units (including similar Gulf Coast campus units), Vice President for Student Affairs units (including similar Gulf Coast campus units), and Special Assistant to the President for Military and Veterans Students Affairs.
UAC Approved 02.19.14

G. Research within its educational mission, if appropriate
The Office of Institutional Research (IR) maintains the official USM Organization Chart annually submitted to IHL. To be in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation all units with primary research or research support functions identified on the Organization Chart must assess in accordance with the Administrative Unit Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. Research units include administrative units, centers, and institutes reporting to the Vice President for Research.
UAC Approved 02.19.14

H. Community/Public Service within its educational mission, if appropriate
The Office of Institutional Research (IR) maintains the official USM Organization Chart annually submitted to IHL. To be in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, all units with primary community and/or public service functions must assess in accordance with the Administrative Unit Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. Community and Public Service units include the Center for Community and Civic Engagement, Center of Higher Learning - Stennis, Institute for Disability Studies, Office of Professional Development and Educational Outreach, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and the Trent Lott National Center for Economic Development and Entrepreneurship.
UAC Approved 02.19.14

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 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 will continue (1) its recognition of academic programs judged to provide adequate and commendable support to SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1; (2) to hold the annual Assessment Showcase that recognizes academic programs judged to provide commendable support to SACSCOC 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. Programs not achieving at least an adequate rating will follow up with a plan of improvement to the respective Dean and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

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 SACSCOC 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; Modified 03.19.14

Items for future consideration:

UAC recommendations for the future are that (1) University Assessment Committee processes be incorporated into the program prioritization processes, 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; UAC Modified 03.19.14

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. Student learning outcomes must show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.
8. Each student learning outcome must have two measures; one must be a direct measure. At least one measure is required for Program Objectives.
9. 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 2014

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 2013-2014 Academic Program Assessment Report includes:

d) Findings (due May 31)
e) Action Plans (due June 30) - *Action Plans are required in Year 2 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

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 SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1.

Implementation of 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 amendments were presented in the 2013 Assessment Showcase Booklet and are effective with the 2013-2014 Assessment Cycle.

The guidelines state: 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. At least one measure is required for Program Objectives.

Efforts to improve enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, licensing, and certification should be captured in the Continuous Improvement Initiatives (Additional Action Plans) field.

Revision to Academic Plan Guidelines to include SLO progression among degree levels. The University Assessment Committee approved a modification the Academic Assessment Plan Guidelines to provide support to SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.1:

The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs. (Post-baccalaureate program rigor)

The guidelines state: Student learning outcomes must show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.

New Policy – Less than Adequate Reports. The University Assessment Committee approved an amendment to the University Assessment Committee Policy Regarding Academic Programs' Participation in the University-Wide Assessment Process. Beginning Spring 2015, programs not achieving at least an adequate rating will follow up with a plan of improvement to the respective Dean and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The policy is found on page 8 of this booklet.

New Certificate Assessment Report Evaluation Rubric. The UAC approved a Certificate Assessment Report Evaluation Rubric to use in reviewing certificate programs. This rubric was implemented in the fall 2013 review.

New Policies - Assessment of Administrative Outcomes Participants. The University Assessment Committee approved new policies to define the units that are to participate in the four areas of administrative unit assessment. The unit assessment reports will be used as supporting documentation for SACSCOC Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1.2, 3.3.1.3, 3.3.1.4, and 3.3.1.5. Policies E through H are found on page 6 and 7 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)

2014 Showcase

CHILD AND FAMILY STUDIES BS*
Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students completing a B.S. degree in the Department of Child and Family Studies will demonstrate an understanding of basic theoretical principles and concepts related to individual, child, family and community systems, through written and oral communication.

2. Students completing a B.S. degree in the Department of Child and Family Studies will apply critical thinking skills to societal problems impacting children, families and communities.

3. Students completing a B.S. degree in the Department of Child and Family Studies will demonstrate values, attitudes and behaviors that reflect cultural sensitivity and social responsibility required for professional practice in human service and educational settings.

4. Students completing a B.S. degree in the Department of Child and Family Studies will develop and implement prevention, intervention and/or educational programs based on individual/community needs assessments.

5. Students completing a B.S. degree with an emphasis in Child Development will appropriately assess developmental domains (social, emotional, intellectual, and physical) of young children (PreK- K).

6. Students completing a B.S. degree with an emphasis in Child Development will create and implement developmentally appropriate early childhood curricula.

7. Students completing a B.S. degree with an emphasis in Child Life will appropriately assess the psychosocial and developmental needs of children and families during healthcare experiences. (Child Life Emphasis- Hattiesburg Campus Only)

8. Students completing a B.S. degree with an emphasis in Child Life will plan and implement evidence-based child life practices for children and families during their healthcare experiences. (Child Life Emphasis- Hattiesburg Campus Only)

9. Students completing a B.S. degree with an emphasis in Family Relations will demonstrate professional behaviors necessary for success as an entry level child and family professional.

10. Students completing a B.S. degree with an emphasis in Family Relations will apply knowledge and skills necessary for success in future graduate study or employment as an entry level child and family service professional.

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.

2014 Showcase

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MBA**
Program-level Direct Measure

M 2: Statistical Analysis Project
Student performance (grouped by campus location) in statistical analysis skills, assessed on a comprehensive analysis project in MBA 610 using the "Mathematical and Statistical Accuracy" dimension on a 5 part rubric.
Target: 85% of MBA students will meet or exceed expectations on this dimension, of a 5 part assessment rubric used in MBA 610.
Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met
Assessment results for the Spring, 2013 semester in MBA 610 (all students in Coast cohort) indicate this goal was met. Of the 27 students enrolled in the course, 25 students (93%) exceeded expectations in Mathematical and Statistical Accuracy and 2 students (7%) met expectations. No student failed to meet expectations on this rubric dimension. Therefore, 100% of students assessed met or exceeded expectations on this measure in 2013.

CHILD AND FAMILY STUDIES MS**
Program-level Direct Measure

M 1:Practicum Site Supervisor Evaluation (Professional and Ethical Standards)
The practicum site supervisor will evaluate each student's ability to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior in the practicum setting. Section 1 (Professional and Ethical Standards) of the CFS-MS Practicum Evaluation by Site Supervisor Form is used to measure professional and ethical behaviors. There are 15 questions in this section.
A 5-point scale is used (1=poor, 2=below average, 3=average, 4=above average, 5= excellent).
Target: 80% of students will achieve a mean composite score of 3.5 or greater on section 1 (Professional and Ethical Standards) of the Site Supervisor Final Practicum Evaluation form. This form is completed by the practicum site supervisor.
Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met
Fall 2012: 100% of students achieved a mean score of 3.5 or greater on section 1 (Professional and Ethical Standards) of the Site Supervisor Final Practicum Evaluation form (n=3/3).
Spring 2012: 100% of students achieved a mean score of 3.5 or greater on section 1 (Professional and Ethical Standards) of the Site Supervisor Final Practicum Evaluation form (n=3/3).

SOCIOLOGY BA
Program-level Direct Measure

M 1: Performance on relevant theory exam questions
All sociology majors are required to take Sociological Theory (SOC 482). As part of that class, they will be given exam questions on classical theorists and will be required to explain accurately in their own words the meaning of central theoretical concepts associated with those theorists.
Target: At least 70% of students will earn a score of 70% or better on discussion questions on examinations in SOC 482 (Sociological Theory) that require explanation of core concepts in classical theory. This course is a required course for all majors and is offered once per year, each fall.
Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Partially Met
In Fall 2012, 14/20 students (70%) in Sociological Theory earned a score of at least 70% on the discussion questions on Test 1 regarding core concepts in theory. On Test 2, 12/19 (63%) earned a score of at least 70% on the discussion questions (one student did not take the test). On Test 3, 15/20 (75%) earned a score of at least 70% on the discussion questions.

SOCIAL WORK BSW*
Program-level Indirect Measure

M 1:Student Self-Evaluation Survey - Ethical Principal
Student Self-Evaluation Survey is designed to assess students' self-reported mastery of core competencies. The survey utilizes a 10-point Likert scale in which "1" is presented as lowest achieved and "10" as highest achieved. All graduating BSW students will complete the Student Self-Evaluation Survey. Items #7, 19, 20, and 36 of the survey will be used to assess the selected learning outcome.
Target: 80% of graduating students will rate items #7,19,20, & 36 of the Student Self-Evaluation Survey, on average, as "achieved" or "highly achieved" (i.e., a score of 7 or higher on a 10-point rating scale).
Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met
Fall, 2012 - Not applicable: The faculty redefined the vision and mission and identified student learning outcomes relative to the Council on Social Work Education's 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. The new curriculum plan became effective Fall 2012 for the BSW program and the Student Self-Evaluation Survey was first implemented in Spring 2013 based on the new assessment plan.
Spring 2013 - Hattiesburg: 96% of graduating students (N:21/22) rated items #7,19,20, & 36 of the Student Self-Evaluation Survey, on average, as "achieved" or "highly achieved" (i.e., a score of 7 or higher);
Gulf Coast: 94% of graduating students (N:15/16) rated items #7,19,20, & 36 of the Student Self-Evaluation Survey, on average, as "achieved" or "highly achieved" (i.e., a score of 7 or higher).

NURSING BSN*
Student Achievement Measure

M 1: NCLEX-RN
The NCLEX-RN (National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses) is an exam that measures the competencies needed to perform safely and effectively as a newly licensed, entry-level registered nurse. The exam is graded on a pass/fail basis, which consists of items that use Bloom's taxonomy for the cognitive domain as a basis for writing and coding items. The majority of items are written at the application or higher levels of cognitive ability, which requires more complex thought processing. Passing occurs when the student reaches a level of competency determined by a complex computerized algorithm, which means that students may take complete between 75 and 265 items for passing or failing.
Target: The composite NCLEX score for School of Nursing will be at or above the state and/or national NCLEX pass rate level. Pass rate is defined as the percentage of students who pass the NCLEX. First time pass rate is also monitored.
Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Partially Met
The total NCLEX pass rate for BSN graduates in 2012 was 97.68%. The state NCLEX pass rate was 98.17% and the national pass rate was 90.34%. [Total of 98 out of 110 BSN graduates passed first time (89.90%) for May 2012. For December 2012 graduates, a total of 55 passed out of 62 BSN students passed NCLEX first time (88.70%).]

CHEMISTRY BS
Student Achievement Measure

M 12: Employment or Professional School - Exit Interview
Employment or postgraduate studies will be determined with an exit interview. Results of the interview will be evaluated by the Undergraduate Committee.
Target: 75% of students will be initially employed within the field, or enter graduate or professional programs upon graduation
Findings (2012-2013) - Target: Met
88% (15/17) students were either entering employment (4/17), medical/pharmacy school (3/17), graduate school (4/17), or teaching at the high school level (2/17). Two students (2/17) were seeking employment at the time of graduation and the plans of two students (2/17) were unknown. This data was collected using an exit survey and responses of those faculty who knew about the professional placement of individual graduates.

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.

2014 Showcase

ACCOUNTING BSBA
Action Plan

Researching Governmental Accounting Standards
As a result of recommendations in the 2009-2010 AOL report designed to strengthen the students' research exposure and skills regarding the GASB standards, assessments during the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 academic years were conducted on the second of two research cases using the GASB standards. The reported results in these two academic years indicate improvement in the students' reported performance on the GASB research cases, presumably because of the feedback on the first case to the students, and the increased exposure to the GASB standards of two case assignments. However, student and instructor anecdotal feedback regarding the assignment of two GASB cases over these years has indicated that students feel overwhelmed by the number/timing of the GASB cases and other outside-of-class assignments (nonprofit research case, WRDS research case) in ACC 407 - especially within the compressed format of the class during which the reported assessments above were conducted - and their value as an assessment tool may have been negatively impacted. The 2012-2013 assessment results included in this report are based on a single research case during the spring 2013 semester.

As a result of this feedback and prior reported assessment results, the AOL team recommends that the WRDS research requirement (not assessed in this course) be omitted from ACC 407, and that two cases, one of which is an assessed GASB research case, be required in ACC 407. Additionally, the ACC 407 instructors, at their option, may assess during the fall term, in which the course is taught in full semester format (rather than compressed format as in the spring term). The AOL team advises careful implementation of this recommendation, given the history of disparate student performance when varying numbers of cases (first three, then one, now two) of cases have been employed in the past (see closing of the loop discussion). The AOL team believes that this assignment/assessment mix would better serve the students' pedagogical needs and also adequately meet assessment goals. Because this action plan applies to all sections of ACC 407 (Hattiesburg and Coast), an improvement in student performance should occur a both campuses.

In addition to the above required action, the Coast instructor should also: 1) expand the class time devoted to the case assignment process - increasing explanation and illustration of what is expected of the students in successful completion of the assignment, 2) offer the students a review or feedback process to improve their results prior to final submission of the case for a grade, 3) provide additional instruction on acceptable report writing including the referral of students to those on campus who might improve their writing skills, and 4) together with the Hattiesburg instructor, adopt a common rubric that allows the assessment of accessing data bases and written communication to be conducted independently.

Established in Cycle: 2012-2013
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High
Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: ACC 407 Data Base Research | Outcome/Objective: Research databases Measure: ACC 407 Writing Assessment | Outcome/Objective: Communicate Effectively in Writing
Projected Completion Date: 09/01/2015
Responsible Person/Group: ACC 407 Instructors

DANCE (DANCE EDUCATION) BFA

Analysis Answers

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

You will notice overlap in this section and the following in the Licensure emphasis and the Performance/Choreography emphasis area assessment reports. This is intentional and reflects that our majors, regardless of emphasis area, are in the same courses and are held to the same expectations. When measures are specific to one area, they are only addressed in the corresponding report.

- Reviewing the findings in this report reveal that we are primarily meeting targets for all SLOs. SLO#2 and #4 were met by all measures. This indicates that students are meeting our expectations for displaying an integrated and comprehensive knowledge of dance and for being able to articulate dance theoretically and aesthetically. In particular, SLO#2 utilizes 4 measures (capstone presentation, final projects in eight DAN/DED courses, exit interview, Student Teaching portfolio) to assess student achievement. The portfolio measure has been inconsistent in previous reporting cycles, so we look forward to future reporting cycles to support this year's findings.
- Meeting 5 of 6 measure targets for SLO#1 indicates that we are doing well in developing the technical skills of our majors. Four SLO #1 measures vary from performance to written work, so we are assured that our majors are proficient in their skill acquisition on both physical and cognitive levels. That SLO #1 and #2 are mainly met affirms our department value for majors being skilled and further able to integrate their skills to "non-dance" coursework.
- Part of training artists in any field is preparing them for the realities of the "real world" when they graduate. SLO#3 is directly concerned with this. The Licensure area measures this outcome through assessing student work in RDC, their ability to gain employment in the field, evaluations of their work in student teaching, development of alumni to mentor teacher status and results from an alumni/graduate survey. We are most satisfied with the student teacher evaluation measure being met as we have grappled with the most appropriate and effective way to include it in our WEAVE reports. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the summative evaluation from the supervising teacher in the second experience appears to be our best indicator of actual student performance in this area. We look forward to future reporting cycles to affirm this.
- SLO#3 was met except for the measure regarding student work in the Repertory Dance Company which is under review. (Student achievement is not the issue, but how our unit measures it is.) It is worth highlighting that one measure for this SLO, as in others, is the results of an alumni survey. That alumni view themselves as prepared for the field is perhaps the most valuable indicator of this outcome
- SLO#5 was met in 2 of 3 measures. That we expect Licensure majors to demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge of dance making reflects that the degree in a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and that all our dance educators need to be able to engage in the craft of dance making as proficiently as they do their pedagogical practices.

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

While each program SLO was met through more than one measure, there are still areas for improvement. They are:

1. It appears that guest artists evaluate our student dancers from a less rigorous perspective than the regular dance faculty do. This was immediately apparent in the data received and for this reason, we have modified the measure/target to reflect a score that is partially the guest artist and partially the RDC director or faculty rehearsal director.
2. We are still not satisfied with how we are assessing/reporting on student written work in composition/choreography courses. Our measure (meas. #23) regarding journals, final papers and project proposals in DAN 212, 310, 312 and 410 needs attention. In the past 3 years we created and implemented a consistent assignment across these courses, but it appears that there is not yet consistency in how they are evaluated (by the instructors, who rotate) and/or in how "featured" or attended to they are in each course (specifically the journal).

3. Assessment of student work in RDC needs attention. The measure (meas. #11) was changed for the 12-13 reporting cycle, but mid-cycle the assessment instrument was changed as well. The data in this report does not completely capture what we wish for-which is student work inthe rehearsal process (not the process and product combined). What we ultimately care about knowing is how prepared out students are for the "real world" (SLO #3).
4. An area for attention is related to Measure 5 (DAN 402 Growth Grade). This measure was not met in the cycle and reflects an issue that emerges periodically. This measure was met by performance/choreography emphasis area majors and we have the same expectations and standards for performance and growth in DAN 402 (Advanced ballet) for majors from both emphasis areas. When Licensure majors underachieve (yes, the sample size was small: 3) we need to be assured that this is not because we are advancing our licensure students too early in their technical training. Every semester as the faculty discussed technique level placement, we encounter this issue. Findings this year brings it to light, again.

SPECIAL EDUCATION BS

Analysis Answers

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

The Special Education (BS) K-12 program content knowledge licensure assessment continues to show strength as documented by a 100% pass rate on the Praxis II: Special Education Content Knowledge and an overall pass rate of 98% on Praxis II: Principles of Learning and Teaching. The 100% pass rate achievement on the state licensure special education content examination indicates a very strong program for attaining special education content knowledge. The careful alignment of special education coursework objectives to the standards of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) contribute to the outstanding performance on the content knowledge licensure examination. All outcomes were met at an exemplary or mastery level for each program. Additionally, strengths were noted in the use of assessment data to inform differentiated instruction, the integration of current technology into instruction, and using family resources to enhance instruction. Those outcomes represent essential knowledge and skills for successful special education practitioners.

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

Although all outcomes were met, continued attention is required for the outcome of integrating instructional technology throughout the curriculum. It will be necessary to give ongoing attention to teaching cutting-edge technology and developing the skills for integrating that technology into teaching and learning in all content areas. Special education interventions and accommodations are highly dependent on assistive technology and current evidence-based instruction. Continued attention is required for teaching special education candidates how to co-teach with regular education teachers in inclusive classrooms. Attention to student outcomes will be given in the monthly special education faculty meetings based on ongoing formative assessments.

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.

2014 Showcase

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE BA

Program Summary

The purpose of the undergraduate library and information science major (B.A.) is to educate students for careers in the information fields; in libraries the B.A. is a paraprofessional degree. The program supports the mission of the college and the university through provision of curriculum designed to serve the needs of the students while nurturing opportunities that engage students, promote discourse, and enhance quality of life. The curriculum prepares future information specialists for roles that include modeling and valuing collaboration, effective communication, information based problem-solving, an appreciation of and respect for diversity, recognition and sensitivity to standards of ethical conduct and how to organize, access and evaluate print and non-print information resources in a variety of settings.

The Library and Information Science BA program at Southern Miss is a relatively small program serving several constituencies: school libraries' need for certified media specialists, public and academic paraprofessional needs, and general information services personnel interests. Interest in the field of librarianship and information studies varies and is reflected in dramatic changes in LIS enrollment and degree production. Skills developed in the LIS BA are applicable in a variety of venues including general office, information industry, management, and information organization. The LIS program has attracted some increased interest because our courses are offered online. However, these courses are specific to the field of library science and require real-time chat meetings to ensure student/faculty interaction and proper socialization into the field. Students who are not prepared to be challenged to learn the service side of research and reference, or cannot grasp concepts of organization and classification, are not likely to remain in the program, regardless of the vehicle of delivery.

The LIS program provides a service course, LIS 201 Introduction to Information Literacy that is an option in the GEC computer competency selections. While introducing students to basic computer skills, concepts of information literacy and research tools are also elements in the course. Our own students are required to take this course as a preparation for far more detailed instruction in technology, information literacy, reference and research.

FORENSICS BS

Program Summary

The BS Forensic Science program is unique in the State of Mississippi, that this is the only program that offers a multidisciplinary approach that covers multiple areas of Forensic Science with different emphasis plan. The data collected during this academic year, and the analysis indicates that the program is accomplishing the objectives as specified in the assessment process. The BS program in Forensic Science is continuing to grow with students pursuing degrees in the Criminal Justice, Chemistry/Biochemistry, Anthropology, and Biological Sciences emphasis areas. Very few students have chosen Physics and Polymer emphasis areas. The enrollment and the graduation rate of the students in this program continue to grow and several out of state students are attracted to this program. Targets set in all Outcome/Objectives are being met which calls for reevaluation of the criteria used to judge students in these areas. Given the complexity and fast changing technology in forensics, students must be challenged to a higher standard for our program to continue to grow and meet the needs of employers looking to hire our students.

MARINE SCIENCE BS**

Continuous Improvement Initiatives/Additional Action Plans
Improvement initiatives associated with the overall program outcomes/objectives are on-going.

Progress on 2011-2012 suggestions for program improvement (implemented in 2012-2013 AY):

1. Increase availability of funding for ship-time (student research cruises) = MILROY (+ several DMS faculty) routinely include funds for ship-time in their respective research endeavors.
2. Increase availability of funding for undergraduate lab technician opportunities = MILROY (+ several DMS faculty) routinely include funds for ugrad research assistants in their respective research endeavors.
3. Course/lab fees are being used specifically to fund student participation in research cruises.
4. Continued advertisement of the availability of the marine science minor.
5. Build public-private partnerships specifically to inform instructors and students as to the science/technical skill-set expectations among potential employers = on-going part of DMS research and community outreach
6. Significantly grow enrollment and laboratory/field research capabilities within the program in concert with the new science facility at the Gulfpark campus = on-going part of DMS communication & recruitment efforts

Additional suggestions for program improvement in the upcoming 2013-2014 AY:

1. Continued efforts to expand MARBS enrollment using a variety of creative vehicles
2. Work with DMS Chair to prioritize MARBS program growth and increase program visibility
3. Expand undergraduate research opportunities (synergies with MARBS coursework)
4. Expand DMS faculty participation and course offerings
5. Increase collaboration with science faculty @ local 2-yr institutions (opportunities for recruitment and curriculum co-development)
6. Review degree plan for opportunities to improve student choices (more "a la carte" options) in course offerings

NUTRITION AND FOOD SYSTEMS PHD

Continuous Improvement Initiatives/Additional Action Plans
In this reporting cycle, we have done some editing and clean-up of measures and action plans. For our measures, this included 1) rewording of measures to remove targets from the description of the measure; 2) where a single type of measure (e.g. alumni survey) is used to collect data for multiple SLOs, we consolidated targets under that single measure and deleted duplicate measures. To better account for our low enrollments and their impact on assessing targets, we lowered some targets to 75%. Likewise we cleaned up and updated our action plans, closing out those that were no longer active. These efforts will allow us to more effectively use the tools that the Weave system provides. As we enter the next program assessment cycle, we will consult with the Institutional Effectiveness director to explore using more cyclical or multi-year SLOs to allow for a more meaningful assessment of outcomes.

More substantively, we are in the midst of the Program Review for this program. In our recent graduate programs faculty retreat, we made the decision to modify our admissions metric, which assigns points based on various admission criteria. The modifications we made were based on the relationship of certain admissions criteria to performance. These included requiring a minimum grade in statistics and research methods courses take as part of the master's degree coursework, requiring an IELTS score (or TOEFL equivalent) of 7.5 or higher, among others. Although we deferred making any curriculum changes at this time, we will recommend that students consider taking REF 889, proposal development, as an elective.

PSYCHOLOGY BA/BS*

Closing the Loop/Action Plan Tracking

Actions plans for 2012-2013 will continue to be addressed during the coming year. We have observed some improvement regarding the reports of graduating seniors on their training in communication skills and critical thinking. We need to continue to target coverage of career planning in our courses and our general outreach to students. The Undergraduate Coordinator will work with relevant faculty on promoting this emphasis for our majors. In addition, the Undergraduate Coordinator will work with the instructors of PSY 361 (Research Methods) and our capstone course (PSY 418) to ensure consistency in instruction, expectations, and collection of assessment data, particularly across the two campuses. Lastly, increased efforts for improving the response rate to the Alumni Survey will be made through various approaches to disseminating the link to recent graduates and encouraging their input. The Department of Psychology looks forward to reporting on the Continuous Improvement Initiatives undertaken, yet not completed, during 2013-2014. We anticipate continued improvement in supporting our undergraduates.

INTERIOR DESIGN BS

Closing the Loop/Action Plan Tracking

A review of the previously formulated action plans has been completed, and the program has found that some actions were successfully completed while others need to continue to be tracked. Several action plans were completed and one inactive plan was moved back to active. A summary of our review follows:

1) The Mock NCIDQ exam has been modified from inactive to planned. With our 2013 graduates scheduled to take the new Interior Design Fundamentals Exam (IDFX) in the spring, the program has made the development of a mock IDFX exam a high priority for spring 2014. Passage of the IDFX exam the first year outside of school will soon become the new norm for this profession. It is imperative our students pass this exam to be competitive in the industry.

2) The transition from a sophomore portfolio review to a senior portfolio has been successful. However, we are finding that students are not including their foundation work in their exit portfolios resulting a less than desirable scores in the foundation category. A detailed rubric along with stressing that students not discard their lower level work should help improve scores. In addition, ID 238 Design Presentation Media has been modified to include more opportunities for conceptual sketching.

3) The evaluation of target measures and grading scales was implemented in 2012-13 as well as modifying the target from 85% to 75% on the internship mentor surveys. These modifications were implemented due to lower than normal enrollment numbers as well as to reflect the change in grading scale from a 7 point scale to a 10 point scale. These action plans have been completed.

4) New measures that were previously planned last year are now in progress. These measures focus on a students' ability to estimate materials, plan around a historic time period, present a cultural design research topic and evaluate elements and principles of design used in an interior setting. These new measures were added to assess the new minor in interior design.

5) The action plan regarding professionalism will continue to be assessed and has moved from planned to in-progress. Students will continue to document their time in and outside of class in order to prepare for the real world in which their time is often billed by the hour or charged against the job profit. Students will be required to make decisions more quickly and stay on course by completing tasks in a timely manner. Faculty will work closely to see that project deadlines do not conflict between classes so students can successfully complete their work.

By implementing these action plans, the Interior Design Program anticipates continued improvements in 1) Professional Values, 2) Design Communication and 3) Professional Design Knowledge.

DANCE (PERFORMANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY) BFA

Continuous Improvement Initiatives/Additional Action Plans

1. Administering the alumni survey was a large scale departmental initiative encompassed and addressed more than one SLO. The electronic survey was administered to about 40 USM dance program alums. This survey polled respondents on each of the SLOs in this WEAVE report. The responses are reported in this annual report and the department is using them for further department planning and decision making (curricular, artistic and programmatic). The alumni survey is being utilized in establishing the Dance Advisory Board, which will start work in summer, 2013. Generally, survey results are positive and reflect that our graduates are using their degrees and are satisfied with their USM dance education.

2. In 2012-2013 we continued with administering the Chicago Dance Artist Series (CDAS). This program brings a variety of working artists from Chicago to USM to work with students in classes, rehearsals, performances, lec-dems and informal discussion. We had always intended for this program to be a way to expose our majors to dance outside of the immediate geographic region. Literally, we have brought the Chicago dance scene to our majors (and the public who participate). Our original intentions have been magnified and we now have proof that exposure to the larger dance world is essential to the training and development of our students (and will be addressed in our strategic plan). We have seen immediate success and already have a 2012 graduate performing professionally in Chicago. We intend to continue the CDAS model with dance artists from other cities and to see how we can mine the idea to augment our students' educational and artistic experiences at USM. CDAS is not included in this report as a measure because its intent (and rewards) transcend more than one program objective.

3. We are using assessment results to help us make decisions about curricular progression across series of courses. For instance, Capstone final presentations, which are used as a key indicator of student achievement in their final year of study have been (yet again) revised in terms of the scope and expectations for the assignment. 2012-2013 saw modified targets and they were met for both emphasis areas. The curricular links between Capstone and the subsequent course in thesis writing are clearer now and we are better able to see how they work together to develop student skills. The next step is configuring how the pre-Capstone writing/speaking intensive course (DED 360) and the post-Capstone student teaching experience can likewise be beneficial and benefited within the existing curricular structure.

4. We are revising our juried performance assessment instrument (and perhaps processes). The present one has been in use for many years. We are using new(er) faculty to contribute an outside/objective eye to our processes. We are concerned with remaining relevant and being efficient in our juried assessments.

Closing the Loop/Action Plan Tracking

Some departmental processes (for both emphasis areas) are now working effectively and efficiently and reflect past time spent as a result of annual assessment reporting and follow through. They include: assessing student work in ballet and modern technique courses with rigor and consistency; evaluating written work in modern technique courses in a way that is standard, yet flexible for the range of professors who instruct these courses; administering the exit interview and using it as a way to capture student self perceptions on their achievement at the point of graduation (literally, these happen the week of graduation).

All of the above have been under review/revision for several reporting cycles and now we see the rewards of their implementation.

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

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