

Day 17: Did you know about processes related to the assessment of student learning in academic programs?

[4.B.2/4.B.3] Assessment of learning outcomes for curricular and co-curricular programs and use of outcome information to improve student learning. (Part I)

With campus-wide SLOs in place, faculty moved forward in AY 2013-14 with the development of curriculum maps that guided the writing of program-level outcomes aligned with those at the institutional level. Additionally, each of the University's Curriculum Committee's began requiring that student learning outcomes be part of new program and course proposals. The Assessment Committee provided a template for assessment plans, SLOs appropriate to the degree level, curriculum mapping, designated courses for assessment of the outcomes, as well as appropriate [direct measures](#) (see attached table) for use in collecting data. This step also was aided by an assessment checklist.

Using a review rubric, the Committee evaluated the plans and provided feedback to the faculty. Once program-level outcomes were solidified, faculty members listed SLOs on program sheets, as well as on academic program overviews for each major and on course syllabi. While some programs have reached the three-year review point, most programs are now in their second or third year of data collection, with more detailed data now becoming available. As an example, the Business faculty have developed a B.B.A. dashboard (see attachment) that details their five-year assessment plan for collecting data, evaluating results and implementing any needed changes. These early results are assisting faculty in 1) determining if changes are necessary, and, in response, taking action to make modifications to courses and curricula or 2) continuing assessment with the same methods for another year to gather more information. As another example, after writing the assessment plan, faculty members from the History program realized that an essential skill (Historiography) was missing between introductory courses and the capstone. They developed a new course to enhance learning of this essential skill, and faculty will assess the results of this modification in AY 2017-18.

Over the course of the last four years, the Assessment Committee has reviewed each program assessment plan and report, submitted a review to the program faculty using the program review rubric, and provided suggested improvements for enhancement of the assessment process. In Fall 2016, the first group of three-year summary reports (17 programs) were submitted to the Assessment Committee for review and feedback. Three other programs submitted assessment data and reports as part of program review, and three more assessment reports came from self-studies for program accreditation/approval. Program and course assessment efforts are in varying stages of the process, with some being further along than others in closing the loop for all four SLOs. The work of faculty members in Chemistry (see attached report), Nursing (BSN), Transportation Services (see attached report), and Business (MBA) programs, reflect assessment plans and three-year summaries that are early examples of well-developed and on-going assessment processes.

CMU began administering the ETS Proficiency Profile to seniors each semester to assess capstone-level skills in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Critical Thinking. While the ETS Proficiency exam is a straightforward way to assess the capstone, due to the voluntary, non-proctored nature of the ETS administration, the results have not yielded data considered reliable or valid, especially related to discipline-specific capstone knowledge and skills, nor have they produced results that are actionable. The average scores, overall, exhibited little variance from semester to semester over the past four years, and program faculty have increasingly used other measures to assess discipline-specific capstone student learning. As a result, the Assessment Committee submitted a proposal to the Faculty Senate in Spring 2017 to end the use of the ETS Proficiency Profile and replace it with a model for campus-wide assessment of intellectual skills that demonstrates student learning. The Faculty Senate approved this proposal, and work will begin in AY 2017-18 to develop a different method for assessment.

Assessment of student learning at Western Colorado Community College has been phased in, usually one to two semesters behind the Main Campus, due to faculty turnover, small class enrollments, and the compressed timelines of technical certificate and associate programs. The process used at WCCC is the same model employed on the CMU main campus, based on the four institutional outcomes of Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Quantitative Literacy and Specialized Knowledge/Applied Learning. With guidance from the Assessment Committee, a plan was developed to assess Written Communication, Critical Thinking and Quantitative Literacy through a collection of artifacts from WCCC programs beginning in Fall 2017. Based on research from the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment regarding assessment in community colleges, each WCCC program will continue to submit assessment of Specialized Knowledge/Applied Learning outcomes.

To learn more, log into MAVzone and click on the document link found in the CMU Assurance Argument for HLC channel (top left on the home tab) for the full text of CMU's Assurance Argument. Links to supporting evidence are identified by underlined words but are not available through the PDF version.

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