



# Academic Assessment Report

Academic Year 2022-23

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## Executive Summary

Kutztown University follows a three-year assessment cycle for all programs except General Education, and the academic year 2022-2023 marks the first year of a new cycle. This time period is characterized by significant changes to our General Education assessment plan. We abandoned our approved holistic rubrics, which yielded very few actionable recommendations to improve student learning, in favor of analytic rubrics. The format of rating also changed from virtual and individual to in-person and collaborative efforts as part of an inaugural university-wide Rating Day. Despite these improvements to the general education process, continued leadership shortages in the core program remained a challenge. The lack of leadership for the General Education Committee had repercussions in the day-to-day work of the Office of Assessment.

Much like General Education assessment, programmatic assessment struggled to close the loop. For the first time, the Office of Assessment remitted reports back to departments with the request that action plans for improving student learning be added. We do note, however, that those programs who submit and are awarded assessment grants are more likely to implement educational interventions that increase student achievement, while engaging faculty in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. A new feature of this annual assessment report, therefore, highlights the exemplary work of the faculty who received grants.

Kutztown University is now at a point at which our culture of assessment must produce real results for our students; and while meta-assessment continues to have a place in the evaluation of our operations and processes, as an institution we must move beyond the revision of our assessment plans to assurance of learning.

## Personnel

The office continued to be staffed by the two Assessment Fellows, Drs. Baranczyk and McClure, supervised by K. Rauch. Fall semester opened with the support of two graduate assistants--one 20-hour assistantship through the Office of Assessment, and a second assistantship with duties split between CLAS and assessment duties. Midway through the fall semester, the student in the split assistantship withdrew from classes and assistantship. This resulted in having only one graduate assistant for the second half of the fall semester. A new student was hired for the spring semester, returning the office to full graduate assistant staffing.

# Professional Development

At Kutztown University, the Office of Assessment's mission includes a focus on professional learning that is relevant, differentiated, and timely. The following chronological summary of the sessions we organized spans both in-house events and nationally known invited speakers.

September Assessment Day included a "state of assessment" approach with the presentation of both program and general education results from 2020-21 and an information session regarding annual program assessment reports. As a follow-up to the professional learning event, the Office of Assessment created and shared a document that included major takeaways from the day's session.

M. Baranczyk conducted a one-hour workshop on assessment challenges in General Education (October 18).

Dr. Ruth Slotnik, Director of Assessment at Bridgewater State University, was the featured plenary speaker for January 2023 Assessment Day. Her Zoom presentation, "Assessment--Make it Meaningful and Manageable," highlighted several case studies in varied programs. These case studies showcased various ways assessment could be incorporated into classes and programs. Her presentation was followed by a faculty workshop on how to work toward a more seamless alignment between program SLOs and course outcomes as shared on first-day handouts, led by Dr. Erin Kraal, Faculty Director of the Kutztown University Center for Engaged Learning.

We rounded out the academic year on May 23 with our first in-person, university-wide Rating Day for General Education Assessment. This day started with a morning workshop session to norm student artifacts. Following lunch, raters were paired up so that each pair contained a faculty member from one of the physical sciences along with a non-science faculty member. Ratings were uploaded as they were completed, so the end of the day concluded with initial discussion of the alignment of artifacts provided and student achievement of the SLO.

# Communication and Assessment Infrastructure

The Office of Assessment continued its goal to increase effectiveness and frequency of communication with all campus constituents, a goal made more pressing when all but a few offices on campus were barred from accessing the faculty listserv as of May 2022. The increased communication occurs in several ways including committee membership, newsletters, drop-in virtual sessions, and our software system--Nuventive. Feedback is provided to programs in Nuventive for both annual reports and action updates. Feedback on both reports helps establish a consistency of communication and allows for viewing of both current and historical comments to better see trends within a program.

Drop-in virtual sessions regarding Assessment Grants continued to be offered after the success of instituting them in Spring 2022. M. Baranczyk held two informational sessions to advertise to and support faculty in submitting Assessment Grants. Additionally, faculty met individually with M. Baranczyk to prepare their proposals.

Throughout the year, the Office published four assessment newsletters shared directly via email with deans, chairs, and assessment contacts, and subsequently posted on the Office of Assessment website. Topics included upcoming deadlines and instructions for completing assessment reports, professional development opportunities, and grant funding, among others. The newsletters also contained links to report templates and submission folders, simplifying the collection of annual reports and action updates.

The Academic Assessment Council continued to function as an umbrella committee for all programmatic assessment as well as the assessment of General Education. The committee was chaired by N. McClure. Additionally, members of the Office of Assessment staff sit on all the college assessment committees with the exception of the College of Business.

N. McClure and M. Baranczyk attended CLAS meetings, K. Rauch serves on the College of Education Assessment Committee. N. McClure attended VPA assessment meetings.

## Assessment Grants

Faculty closing the loop--implementing changes to improve student learning outcomes--via assessment grants can provide examples for programs on ways to complete the typical assessment cycle. Below are the summaries of the results of the four assessment grants awarded in the past academic year:

### Academic Dishonesty: "Assessing Institutional Learning Outcome E: 'Practice Social and Professional Integrity.'"

Overview	Goals	Findings/Recommendations
<p>This project was a joint faculty/staff assessment involving the Academic Honesty program. Research questions were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the rate of recidivism among students who are reported for academic honesty, and does the type of resolution correlate with recidivism?</li> <li>2. Do students perform significantly differently following an academic honesty violation report?</li> <li>3. Are there significant differences in retention rates among students who have academic honesty violations when compared with university and other students in their major?</li> </ol>	<p>The goal of this project was to come to a fuller understanding of academic honesty policy reporting practices in order to assess how well this program currently fulfills Kutztown University Institutional Learning Outcome E (above), which aligns with the Kutztown University Mission Statement passage that we "Prepare students for ethical, social, and career challenges."</p>	<p>Recommendations were robust, including, but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assign a case number to all past and future infractions.</li> <li>2. Students who are held responsible should receive some training or education on how to avoid academic honesty infractions.</li> <li>3. Clarify the rights of the Academic Honesty Committee to alter or not alter the sanctions suggested by the instructor.</li> </ol> <p>Recommendations include echoing a call from the first phase of this study to revise Policy ACA-027 to address AI infractions explicitly.</p>

### English: "Assessing SLO 4 (History) in the BA in English Program."

Overview	Goals	Findings/Recommendations
<p>As part of a revised curriculum inaugurated in 2018, the English program has an SLO that focuses on history: "Students demonstrate the ability to read, paraphrase, and interpret texts that illustrate social change over time because they are written in a historically inflected form of English."</p>	<p>To measure students' progress over time given that the major requires completion of three courses that contribute to this SLO.</p>	<p>Results were focused on meta-assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Revise the SLO to lend clarity</li> <li>2) Revise curriculum to increase the variety of courses offered that address this SLO</li> <li>3) Increase the availability of explanatory information on this SLO and the courses that lead to student success therein.</li> </ol>

**Secondary Education: “Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Pedagogies for Secondary Pre-Service Teachers”**

Overview	Goals	Findings/Recommendations
<p>This project provided a deep-dive analysis into the programs’ undergraduate alignment with Pennsylvania’s new Culturally relevant and sustaining education (CRSE) competencies.</p>	<p>1) deepen our collective understanding of the CRSE competencies;                  2) informally share assessment practices that we already implement in individual courses which align with CRSE competencies;                  3) revise course assignments and instructional practices to better align with CRSE;                  4) develop a program-level matrix of course alignment with CRSE competencies; and                  5) implement the new assessment in Fall 2022 teaching and report data analysis using either quantitative or qualitative approaches as relevant to the material.</p>	<p>One standard (Competency 6) still needs to be integrated successfully into the undergraduate program, but the others are now part of the objectives for instructors and embedded in assessments. Analysis of student work reveals that students are adequately performing on the CRSE standards 1-5 and 7-9, although we hesitate to make strong claims with this initial data analysis. When broken down into specific standards, students perform unequally across them. More difficult or controversial introspection about microaggressions, for instance, is less successful.</p>

**Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies: “Assessment of WGS Course Electives in Meeting Objectives of the Minor.”**

w	Goals	Findings/Recommendations
<p>The impetus for this evaluation was the result of an earlier grant-sponsored project conducted in 2020.</p>	<p>To evaluate how the elective courses offered for the WGS minor connect to the objectives of the WGS program since quite a number of faculty teach the electives.</p>	<p>This assessment yielded insight into how faculty need to align their course syllabi and first-day handouts for such electives to reflect WGS program objectives more clearly. Faculty who teach the electives are working on course revisions and/or being more explicit on first-day handouts as to how the course fulfills the WGS minor's objectives.</p>

In Spring 2023, the Office of Assessment received 7 grant applications. Two of these were funded, Art and Design and Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies:

- “Inclusive Art Critique”
- “Assessment of 300-level WGS Requirement: Focus on Both Student and Faculty Artifacts”

Challenges in the grant proposal process were noted during this academic year. The due date for proposals immediately following spring break seemed problematic; faculty overestimated their own productivity on the proposals over the break. Additionally, most of the proposals asked the Grants Office for the stipend/benefit breakdown the weekend prior to the due date, resulting in a bottleneck of requests for that office. Finally, the post-spring break deadline provided limited consultation with the Assessment Fellow as no office hours are held over spring break. These factors resulted in an

extension of the deadline. Plans to change the due date to earlier in the semester and the Grants Office to *DocuSign* the process is in progress. These changes intend to minimize the disruptions in future proposals.

## General Education

Leadership challenges in GEAC continued in the Fall 2022 semester. One proposed solution was to allow the Assessment Fellow (non-voting member) to chair GEAC. This proposal encountered difficulties regarding the associated course releases. Ultimately, the Assessment Fellow could serve as interim chair for the Spring 23 semester, but that provision is unlikely to be extended, leaving GEAC again with no one in the chair position.

C1 (SLO 2A) and C2 (SLO 2B) courses were scheduled to be assessed in Spring 2023. Progress and significant changes to General Education assessment occurred during AY 22-23. First, GEAC voted to switch from holistic to analytic rubrics in the assessment of General Education artifacts. The decision to move to analytic rubrics was made due to faculty feedback about the difficulty of holistic rubrics. In addition, analytic rubrics should provide more specific areas of success and reveal areas for improvement. Beginning with C1 (SLO 2A) rubric, GEAC worked with faculty in the subject area to revise the rubric used during the last rating cycle.

A second major shift in General Education assessment occurred with an in-person rating day. Although there was some faculty resistance due to the day being scheduled after May commencement, twenty-eight faculty members signed up, and C1 artifacts were rated. C2 (SLO 2B) artifacts were not addressed at the in-person rating day for several reasons: many were submitted late or not at all (see compliance); 2) many were multiple choice items and thus not well suited to collaborative assessment; and 3) the small number of raters rendered completing the assessment of both sets of artifacts impossible.

As indicated above, compliance was better for C1 courses (100% compliance) compared to C2 courses (70% compliance). It should be noted that in the first-round assessments of the 2018 General Education curriculum, faculty compliance for C2 was one of the lowest if not the lowest of all the SLOs. This merits discussion with those programs that requested to have their courses included in General Education, Category C2, affirming that if approved, they would submit artifacts. Although artifacts in C1 were more aligned to the learning outcomes, up to 44% of artifacts were rated as “unable to assess” depending on the dimension rated (44% unable to be assessed in organized and evaluate data).

Finally, resulting from collaborative work and numerous discussions concerning the coherence of the General Education curriculum, a combined committee, the General Education Program and Assessment Committee (GEPAC), was proposed in Spring 2023. The proposed leadership structure of GEPAC includes 3 co-chairs each with a 3-credit course release to ensure sufficient leadership in the new committee.

## Academic Program Assessment

All but two academic programs submitted assessment reports for the 22-23 academic year: MED in Multicultural Education and the EDD in Transformational Teaching and Learning. The latter program offered no courses during the academic year while the faculty were reorganizing the doctoral program, including embedding authentic assessments.

Due to perfunctory completion or a failure to create adequate actions plans that would lead to continuous improvement, several reports were sent back to various programs. Issues with reports included the N of students assessed, summary and interpretation of the report, and absent action plans. Requested revisions specified the missing information.

A few programs have a history of citing inadequate evidence or failing to make action plans until “statistically significant results” are obtained. The Office of Assessment requested and met with representatives from each program in early Spring 2024 to clarify assessment and reporting expectations. These meetings proved generally productive and resulted in specific actions for improvement. The suggested changes should be observed beginning with Fall 2024 reports.

## Exemplary Practices

In addition to the exemplary work of those programs with assessment grants, we wish to highlight two other programs whose assessment practices are characterized by rigor, consistency, and advances in student learning.

### **ANTHROPOLOGY**

The principal means of assessing the Anthropology program's SLOs is a comprehensive portfolio that includes not only a sampling of student work products from various points in the curriculum, but also the student's résumé and a reflective essay. The creation of the portfolio is planned with the faculty advisor, a collaboration that spans the student's entire time at KU. Students revise and resubmit all artifacts included in the portfolio. Assessment of the portfolio is conducted by a team of anthropology faculty, including the advisor. This assessment process has many of the hallmarks of a high-impact academic practice.

Moreover, the Anthropology program has consistently reported continuous modifications to improve student learning by acting on previous plans and setting specific timelines for future action plans. These modifications resulted in impressive increases in student learning outcomes.

### **ARTS ADMINISTRATION**

The assessment of the Arts Administration program's SLO #1 (explaining the administrative complexities of arts organizations in public, private, and non-profit sectors) is based on three separate criteria pertaining to financial statements, mission statements, and organizational programming. The Arts Administration program displayed strong assessment practice in creating an action plan for improvement after failing to meet the success criteria for the financial overview assignment material.

Specifically, program faculty implemented a mastery-learning approach in which students complete a preliminary “finance worksheet” and receive feedback prior to incorporating the material into the final paper. Also, a tutorial video was produced to assist students in locating the required financial data in 990 forms. The Art Administration program's strategy for corrective action in addressing SLO #1 is characterized by its specificity, measurability, and relevance. This approach shows a strong understanding of sound assessment practices, which contributes effectively to the “closing the loop” process.

## Developing Practices

### **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:**

As indicated above, program assessment remains uneven. While many programs are engaged in thoughtful assessment practices, several continue to struggle. In general, programs in the College of Business and the College of Education are developing in assessment practices, or in reporting in complete and timely manners. Even if assessment practices are sound, they cannot be exemplary if they are not being recorded and reported. An additional area of improvement concerns action plans and closing the loop. Many programs this year did not submit an adequate action plan by indicating actions like “continue doing what we are doing and reassess” or vague plans like “consider discussing ideas.” As this has been an ongoing problem for some of the programs, this year's template for reporting included more specific instructions for the action plan on the form:

**From the Template for the 2022-2023 Report:**

**Action Plan:** What actions will you take in response to these findings? Even assessments that yield successful criteria should have an associated action for continuous improvement. If all students meet the success criterion, you can raise the standard a bit.

Action items should employ concrete language and include the timeframe for the implementation of the change or teaching/learning intervention. Example: "The unit on ethical behavior will be supplemented by case studies by Spring 2024." Programs will be asked to report on the status of these action plans in the Spring 2024 semester.

#### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

The department is using a comprehensive exam in the senior seminar to gradually measure most of the SLOs (1, 2, 3, and 5), and they are also using a writing assignment to assess SLOs 3, 4, and 5. The methods and instruments seem appropriate.

To progress in assessment, action plans need to address pedagogical and curricular processes to support student learning. Currently, the action plans focus on the development of the comprehensive exam as an assessment instrument. In one case, for SLO 3, the action plan states, "While students performed at a satisfactory level, there is room for improvement. This is historically one of the more challenging areas in our discipline, so this is unsurprising. Individual items will be reviewed with faculty." To make headway, program faculty need to make decisions about tools and strategies that can help students better meet the learning outcomes. A similar lack of actionable items characterizes the action plan for SLO 5.

#### **MATHEMATICS**

The program faculty assessed SLOs 4 and 5 (communicating about mathematics and using technology in mathematics, respectively) using an oral presentation, a writing assignment, and a project. The methods and instruments seem appropriate.

The program faculty did not provide an action plan for SLO 4 because the criterion for success was met. In a culture of ongoing improvement, however, the goal is to demonstrate how we're improving, even if most students are learning what's expected. Similarly, the action plan for SLO 5 is to come "to a consensus within the department on how the proper use of technology should be taught to the students, and if no consensus can be reached, reevaluating the inclusion of this SLO in our program." For the action plans to have a positive effect on student learning, they should focus on pedagogical and curricular strategies for scaffolding and otherwise supporting student learning. The conversations alluded to should occur prior to the submission of the annual report so the department can report the outcome of the conversation instead of reporting the intent to have a conversation.

## **Action Plan & Recommendations**

### **Status of goals set for AY 22-23**

#### ***Continued support and growth of the Assessment Grant program.***

**Completed and continuing.** Improvements suggested to facilitate the process of assessment grant proposals. Changes will occur in AY 23-24.

#### ***Continue professional development and mentorship for assessment practices.***

**Completed and continuing.** Rating Day, held in May 2023, helped to address professional development, and changing attitude toward assessment practices. Planning is underway to continue these professional development days to impact both assessment and connections amongst faculty.

- Offer more program specific check-ins to discuss and brainstorm on best assessment practices.
- Provide professional development workshops and opportunities with extra emphasis on diversity and equity.
- Continue to work towards changing attitudes towards assessment.
- Continue in-person Rating Day.

***Revised and improved reporting procedures.***

**Continuing.** As new faculty become department chairs or assessment contacts, they are added. Same for administration. Because staffing changes occur so frequently, this is a continuous process of updating. The current method of groups by college for communication of information appears to be working well.

- Create revised templates for both annual reports and action updates to clarify what information needs to be reported as well as to better match the updated shell in the Nuventive database.
- Update and maintain contact information for each program to ensure that communications are received.

***Implement the updated Nuventive program.***

**Continuing.** The transition data to the new cloud-based program is complete. Training faculty and administrators to use the new program is underway. Several staff training sessions were offered.

***Address leadership issues in General Education Assessment Committee***

**Continuing.** Continuing as the combined GEPAC progresses through approvals. GEPAC's structure of a chair and two co-chairs should help ensure leadership for the committee.

## New Goals for AY 24-25

The Office of Assessment will separate the inclusion of goals from this annual report moving forward. It seems counterproductive to establish goals for the 23-24 academic year when the report is not completed until January or February of the following year. A few reasons for this change are detailed below.

1. A few years ago, annual report due dates changed from May to September to give programs time to complete assessment over the summer and in the beginning of fall. Previously the inclusion of goals in this report made sense but no longer does after extending the program annual report due date.
2. This new cycle better aligns with other administrative unit cycles in which goals are set in May-August for the upcoming academic year.
3. The Office of Assessment can use results, outcomes, issues, and concerns noted in the annual report to better inform goals for the following academic year.