



# Academic Assessment Report

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Academic Year 2021-2022

## Executive Summary

Academic year 2021-2022 marks the final year of Kutztown University's three-year assessment cycle and the first full return to regular in-person classroom instruction and campus activity since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic. Mostly all campus instruction has returned to in-person modality with the exception of courses and programs that are offered online per their approved modality.

As noted in last year's report, assessment work suffered due to the pandemic. This academic year saw a much stronger return to "normal" assessment practices with most programs completing a full cycle of assessment. Additionally, programs emphasized the knowledge gained during the pandemic years with an awareness of how course modality, external circumstances, and emergency modifications impact our student learning experience. The Office of Assessment and the Deans' Offices continue to provide extensive feedback to programs to foster sustainability of the assessment process throughout the transition back to in-person instruction post-pandemic.

This report will highlight programs in each college that have a record of sustainable and excellent assessment work, with special attention paid to programs whose assessment practices have strengthened and developed. Additionally, programs that may be struggling with assessment progress have also received recommendations for that continued improvement. The report also includes a review of Office of Assessment activities including a grant program, professional development, and the implementation and refinement of reporting and documenting procedures. The report will conclude with an action plan for the Office of Assessment and Academic Assessment Council as the university begins a new cycle in 2022-2023.

## Personnel Changes

Assessment Coordinator Krista Prock worked alongside Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation Karen Rauch in the fall semester. This was Prock's final semester in the position since her appointment in 2018. With the support of Provost Lorin Basden-Arnold, Prock's position was transformed into two separate faculty fellow positions and a search was conducted in Fall 2021. Dr. Michele Baranczyk, Assistant Professor of Psychology, and Dr. Nicole McClure, Assistant Professor of English, were appointed as Faculty Fellows of Assessment in Spring 2022. The Faculty Fellows continue to teach half-time in their respective departments, while receiving a 6-credit course release to oversee academic assessment for the university.

Dr. Baranczyk assumed a role on the General Education Assessment Council as a liaison between GEAC and the Office of Assessment. Additionally, she oversaw the Academic Assessment Grant program. Dr. McClure stepped into the role of chair for the Academic Assessment Council as well as liaison to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Assessment Committee. Both fellows served advisory roles to all academic programs in the university, and coordinated and planned the January Assessment Day event.

## Professional Development

The Fall Assessment Day included internal and external speakers focused on Making Assessment Meaningful. Dr. Marsha Lovett presented the first session, followed by presentations from Dr. Julie Palkendo, Chemistry, and Doug Scott and Jared Green, Office of Distance Education, regarding active learning, authentic assessment, and course design. Dr. Karen Rauch and Krista Prock, Assessment Office, finished the morning with ways to carry the ideas forward into faculty's own classes.

Several KU faculty members presented at the January 2022 Assessment Day on the topics of authentic assessment and "ungrading." This was the capstone to a year-long faculty book discussion on ungrading and alternative assessment practices.

## Assessment Grants

Three goals related to assessment grants were set for this year. First, we sought to double the number of total proposals received. Second, we sought to receive more variety in proposal types, and were especially interested in faculty/staff collaborative proposals. Finally, we sought to increase the accountability of grants once proposals were accepted. All three goals were achieved (see section on goals).

As in previous years, there are five tracks for assessment grant proposals: academic program assessment, general education assessment, curricular/co-curricular collaboration projects, assessments related to retention and persistence, and assessments of other student performance indicators.

The Office of Assessment received 8 grant applications and successfully funded 4 of those projects. The remaining projects were given feedback and encouragement to revise and resubmit in the future. Grants were awarded to the following projects:

- Assessment of the WGS (Womens and Gender Studies) Course Electives in Meeting Current Objectives of the Minor
- Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Pedagogies for Secondary Pre-Service Teachers
- Assessment of the English BAPLOs: A Continued Study of Program Goals, Outcomes, and Practices
- An Investigation of Academic Honesty Reporting Practices and Outcomes at Kutztown University

## General Education

General Education data were collected on SLOs 3 (Apply skills in critical analysis and reasoning for the interpretation of data) and 8 (Explore concepts, ideas, and methods from a variety of disciplines) in the 2021-2022 academic year. The compliance rate for SLO 3 was low, with 59.4% of faculty reporting usable data. Using a 4-point rubric, the benchmark was set at 2. Overall, 76.4% of students scored at a score of 2 or higher.

The data were also further analyzed by grouping courses into those that required a prerequisite, and those courses that have no prerequisites. As expected, more students (92.6%) met the benchmark in classes that required pre-requisites compared to students (72.2) in classes that did not require pre-requisites.

In addition, courses were also grouped into one of seven broad areas of study: social sciences, sciences, humanities, math, business, education and language. These data showed variability in how many students scored below level 2, with a range from 4% (education) to sciences and social sciences where 28% of students scored below a score of 2.

The only SLO assessed in Spring 2022 was SLO 8 (Explore concepts, ideas, and methods from a variety of disciplines). This limited collection of assessment data was intentional so that a full-cycle review of previous semesters could occur. Results of the Spring 2022 analysis indicated that 96.4% of students scored a level 2 or higher, with 80% scoring at a level 4 on the rubric. These scores indicated that students are taking courses in a variety of subjects based on a review of the course prefixes.

This year was a particularly challenging one for general education assessment with regard to leadership. When the incumbent chair, Amber Pabon, accepted the role as the director of the Frederick Douglass Institute, she had to step down from her role on GEAC. After several calls for a chair, no current voting member was willing to chair the committee. Without strong leadership, the committee fell behind in its activities and reporting. This leadership problem continues to persist with none of the current 8 voting members willing to chair the committee.

## Academic Program Assessment

### Exemplary Practices

**CHEMISTRY/BIOCHEMISTRY:** The programs in Chemistry and Biochemistry continue to provide exemplary assessment data. The program assessed all three student learning outcomes in AY 21-22 and produced data that illuminated specific content areas that need bolstering in the curriculum. Precise plans to execute that were provided in the annual report including revised problem sets and assignment expectations and increased consultation time with students. These recommendations will build upon the previous year's plans to improve communication of expectations and preparation for student projects.

**ENGLISH:** Both the BA and MA programs in English continue to execute meaningful assessment of student learning outcomes. In the BA, the program performed its first assessment of a newly revised SLO 3: "Upon completion of the BA in English, students will recognize the value of diversity and demonstrate an understanding of the role that texts play in promoting a more just and equitable world." The new SLO replaces a 6-credit requirement in courses tagged as "diverse" and emphasizes a program-wide commitment to include diversity in ALL courses offered in the program. This work will lay the foundation for future assessments to ensure that all courses are meeting this commitment in a satisfactory manner. Additionally, an assessment of SLO 5 was also conducted, evaluating the understanding of the program in professional careers. The focus was specifically on the internship experience using student surveys to better understand student experiences in the program.

**ART EDUCATION:** The undergraduate program in Art Education continues exemplary, student-focused assessment. In AY 21-22, the program assessed SLO #1: Investigate purposes and practices of art education and SLO #2: Apply art processes and practices to make works of art. In both cases, the success criteria were met, but it is the analysis and planned action that stand out. While the faculty recognized the success of the program, they have identified multiple points in which improvements can still be made, particularly in relation to equity. For SLO #2, students are assessed by a measure that requires public exhibition of original work. There were four students who were unable to participate in this exhibit due to financial hardships, so faculty are evaluating resources to assist students who face these problems.

**SPORTS MANAGEMENT:** The BA in Sports Management has been working to better coordinate assessment requirements for both the university and their COSMA accreditation. The previous plan included the assessment of every SLO every year. They have since redesigned their assessment plan to allow for more thorough and robust assessment and analysis. This also included the redesign of rubrics. Additionally, this year's assessment of SLO 1 (Demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of fundamental principles requisite for professional success in the sport management

profession) revealed problems of clarity in the internship handbook related to the specific requirements as well as standards of quality related to writing. To remedy this, the program is revising the handbook as well as working with the University Writing Center to provide additional writing support for students.

**EDUCATIONAL STUDIES/EDUCATIONAL STUDIES – VISUAL IMPAIRMENT:** Based on previous assessment data, the Special Education Department is revising the Educational Studies/Educational Studies-Visual Impairment programs to include specific tracks related to projected employment interests. With support from the College of Education Dean's office, the program was able to employ Anthology accounts that have provided information for the course revision rationale. This project includes the revision of an internship rubric that will be piloted/revised in the fall of 2022. Additionally, the program is revisiting the collection of data for the mentor evaluations and will deploy a new electronic format that allows for consistent data collection and analysis, starting in spring 2023.

## Developing Practices

**GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:** Overall, most university programs complete regular assessment of student learning outcomes. Reporting those data to the Office of Assessment in a timely and complete manner continues to be a problem for a few programs. Some faculty cite a lack of resources and time to implement assessment effectively. This is prevalent in some programs that are small. Additionally, communication continues to be a problem. The Office of Assessment relies on notification from individual programs for updated assessment contacts, which has resulted in a breakdown in communication when the Assessment Office is not notified of changes in contact information. The university no longer allows for an all-faculty list serv which eliminated another means of sending this information. In many cases, new faculty conduct assessment each year, and are often not fully informed of the university reporting requirements from their predecessors. While faculty workload is often quite high, the lack of consistency and inter-program communication can present a challenge as we continue the important work of building sustainable assessment practices at Kutztown University. Several programs, such as Music, consistently submit very late or incomplete reports.

As we will receive an update to the Nuventive reporting software starting in the fall, the Office of Assessment is working to revise the reporting template for clarity, detail, and visual and intuitive acuity. The new templates will be used for the AY 22-23 reports and will also include detailed instructions and a glossary of terms. The new template will also align with the Nuventive platform so that swift and accurate data entry is facilitated.

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION:** While the assessment measures put forward by the Public Administration program are sound, the response to the data does not show a reflection on how well the program provides the resources for students to achieve the learning outcomes. Instead, many of the action plans imply that the students were either not prepared for college-level work or not willing to complete college-level work. The action plan should instead include ways in which the program can help all students meet the learning outcomes, thus reframing teaching practice through a strengths-based lens rather than through a deficit-lens.

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE:** For the past several years, the program in Criminal Justice has been revising the exam and rubrics to assess several of their SLOs. In some cases, this has led to deferral of assessment of some SLOs. This was discussed with the program assessment leaders in Fall 2022 and plans to finalize that revision are underway.

**BUSINESS:** The BSBA core program assessed SLOs 1a and 1b, oral and written communication respectively. In accordance with a trend in the discipline tracks within the Business major, action plans are rarely robust; but rather recommend nebulous steps such as encouraging faculty to suggest that students use the Writing Center, or stating that faculty "could" reinforce certain aspects in their teaching. Additionally, programs should aspire to continuous improvement so that even when a benchmark is met, small changes are implemented to ensure and increase learning. Finally, when the benchmark is met, the success criterion should be increased. Overall, this year's assessment efforts show some improvement over last year's, but in general we see little evidence of "closing the loop" in the Business programs.

**STUDENT AFFAIRS:** The MA in Student Affairs program, which utilizes one major project to assess all its SLOs, reports no response to data given that the students met the success criterion for each SLO. As noted above, continuous

improvement is the goal, and the expectation is that in next year's report the program will include improvements made, as well as action plans to work toward increasing the achievements of the graduate students in this program.

## Action Plan & Recommendations

### Status of goals set for AY 21-22

#### ***Expand the Assessment Grant program and strengthen its impact***

- Double the number of grant applications in the AY 21-22
- Increase the number of collaborative grant proposals (faculty and staff joint projects)

**COMPLETED.** The Office of Assessment achieved all three goals set for the 2021-2022 academic year. We saw a marked increase in the number of grant proposals this year with a total of 8 grant applications submitted, and the office had sufficient resources to fund 4 assessment grants. The first co-curricular grant, a collaboration between the English department and the Registrar's office examining plagiarism, was submitted and approved this year. Additional accountability occurred with email check-ins at the start of the fall 2021 semester to track grantee progress. A grant proposal workshop and Q&A session was also offered in spring 2022 to allow for clarification on the process. Past recipients also attended to answer questions.

#### ***Guide and train the university community at large through sharing of results of assessment projects.***

**DEVELOPING.** Assessment grant recipients from the prior year presented updates at the fall 2021 assessment day and in the grant proposal workshop. Annual reports were communicated to the university community, however, this is an area that still needs development. (See discussion of communication issues in the Program Assessment section)

#### ***Continue professional development and mentorship to include equity in assessment practices.***

**COMPLETED AND CONTINUING.** The Spring Assessment Day featured a discussion of the principles of "ungrading," a teaching approach that decouples student assessment from traditional quantitative grading. This approach is inherently designed to create equitable assessments and reach a diverse set of learners. There was considerable interest in this topic and further development in DEI training, so this goal will continue in AY 22-23.

### New Goals for AY 22-23

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

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

- 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.

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

- 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.***

- Transition data to the new cloud-based program.
- Train faculty and administrators to use the new program.

*Address leadership issues in Gen Ed Assessment Committee*