



All Things Assessment at KU

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Middle States Accreditation Visit

As the Kutztown University community welcomes the Middle States Accreditation Team to campus on March 4-7, 2018, it is an apt time to reflect on the assessment work done here, by many people and groups, over the past several years. To prepare for the Team’s visit, seven Working Groups and the Steering Committee created the Decennial Self-Study. During the two years spent completing the Self-Study, the Working Groups and Steering Committee addressed the issue of assessment as it relates to each of the seven standards for accreditation.

Three of the intended outcomes of the self-study process deal with assessment:

- To reflect on current assessment activities (both institutional effectiveness and student learning).
- To consider how assessment activities inform institutional planning.
- To determine how to improve the effectiveness and integration of planning and assessment.

It is important to note that assessment is woven throughout the self-study document, rather than being isolated in one chapter or section. Assessment work has become part of the continuous improvement cycle at Kutztown University. Our academic programs are assessed through regular self-studies and external reviews, completed through the internal Program Review process, which is a five-year cycle, or on the schedule of external accreditors. This review process, whether governed by an external source or the State System, provides a regular cycle by which academic program mission, goals, and objectives can be examined to ensure that they are appropriate and support the University Strategic Plan, and to determine whether or not the recommendations from previous self-studies were addressed. Program and departmental resources are examined to define their adequacy, and assessment data and procedures are analyzed to decide if they are effective and contribute to a continuous cycle of improvement.

Resource allocation planning is also tied to the continuous cycle of improvement, and allocation is directly informed by the Strategic Plan. For example, when the campus facilities master plan was recently updated, the update was designed to support strategic initiatives as identified in the Strategic Plan. Allocation of the Student Technology Fee and the new gainsharing program, both discussed in chapter six of the self-study, are examples of processes that allow individual units to request resources that will be used to support achievement of a specific university objective. At the

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end of each year, strategic plan objectives are reviewed to determine their status and plan objectives and actions are modified or confirmed, depending on assessment results.

The general education assessment process has significantly improved since 2011, and there is an article in this newsletter devoted to that development.

Using Campus Institutional Research to Identify Appropriate Students as Data in General Education Assessment

Mary Eicholtz, Chair General Education Assessment Committee presented at the AAC&U 2018 General Education and Assessment conference in February in Philadelphia, PA.

Identifying which students should be assessed is a difficult task for most General Education program assessors. After a number of attempts to collect good data, the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) developed a methodology that used the KU institutional research (IR) office to identify students who would be assessed. In past assessments, data collection was sporadic and faculty compliance was poor. To alleviate this problem, GEAC evaluated the data collection methodology and determined that a new procedure would be implemented for 2016-2017 general education assessment. The committee shifted its focus from a course centered unit of analysis where data from all the students in a course identified as achieving a particular student learning outcome (SLO) were assessed to a student-focused approach, where students' progress was assessed and the students were the analysis unit.

GEAC wanted to know if students were achieving SLOs by the time they completed most of the General Education requirements. IR was asked to identify each student who was completing their required Humanities or Social Science requirement for general education in the Spring 2017 semester along with their instructor and course. As there are several different configurations of general education requirements depending on college and major, IR applied several parameters to the class schedule to identify these students. Once compiled, the data was converted to an Excel spreadsheet and reviewed for duplicates and idiosyncrasies.

Each faculty on the list was sent a request to submit a student work sample demonstrating the student learning outcome for the students in their classes who were in their final Humanities or Social Science requirement. The number of students on a faculty request ranged from one to thirty, with an average of seven students per faculty member. A copy of the description of the SLO and the VALUE rubric used in

the evaluation was included to help faculty select an appropriate assignment. Students in classes with 100+ student enrollments were dropped from the data collection because it could be assumed there was not a significant number of individual work samples beyond objective tests. Seventy-three students were enrolled in a class with 100+ students for their final required Social Science or Humanities course. Faculty could submit the completed student assignment uploaded to the course management system, by email attachment, or copied and sent through campus mail. Seven hundred and twenty-six (726) pieces of student work were requested from 102 faculty members.

Overall, of the 96 faculty who were asked to submit student work, 48% of the faculty complied and provided 235 pieces of student work. Approximately 50% of the student samples were reviewed and scored. Ten faculty volunteers reviewed anonymous student samples against the VALUE rubric for each SLO, with each sample reviewed by two raters. Overall, 44% of the two scores were the same and 83% of them were within one performance level.

On a scale of one to four, with four being capstone level and one being benchmark level, the overall average score for the Humanities was 2.20. Fifteen samples did not have enough information or were inappropriate for evaluation. When samples were grouped by course level, an increase in the performance level is evident as the course level increased. Typical entry courses (000) received the lowest performance level scores (2.0) while 300 level courses scored the highest at 3.0. However, there is not a significant difference in performance level between the course levels of the samples. Additionally, there were only two 300 level course samples.

On a scale of one to four, with four being capstone level and one being benchmark level; the overall average score for the Social Sciences was 2.25. Seven samples

did not have enough information or were inappropriate for evaluation. When samples were grouped by course level, as the course level increased, an increase in the performance level is evident. Typical entry courses (000) received the lowest performance level scores (1.9) while 300 level courses scored the highest at 3.5. The result is probably also a function of the type of assignment that would be given at these different levels. Additionally, there were only two 300 level course samples. The full report about the 2016-2017 results can be found on the GEAC website <https://tinyurl.com/yatw6lqr>.

The new methodology for collecting student work samples and asking faculty volunteers to participate as objective reviewers and scorers was successful and should continue with two new domains of the current General Education program until the new program is adopted and new assessment plan implemented.

In the new Assessment Plan as well as with AY 17-18 assessment of the current general education program, criteria for success should be determined. Identifying what percentage of students should be achieving at each performance level will assist in monitoring progress and maintaining excellence.

VPA Spotlight – Applied Digital Arts

In February 2018, the new BFA degree program in Applied Digital Arts held its first advisory board meeting. The four program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) were used as a framework for the meeting, which included student presentations, Q&A with students and the advisory board, and followed by faculty round table discussion. Those students who presented were instructed to frame their presentations around SLOs one and two, which are the learning outcomes appropriate for sophomore and freshmen level study. One advisory board member commented that “freshmen were getting a best foundation in space

and surface that will be key to their success in upper level course work.” Students at the meeting were also prompted to prepare questions for the advisory board on SLOs three and four. This engagement with the students regarding these SLOs prompted reflection from the advisory board that has been used to resolve and refine course content in forthcoming course proposals. The dialog that Applied Digital Arts was able to foster in the Advisory Board meeting was highly positive and is in use to create an atmosphere of continuous improvement and a tradition of excellence in this new KU program.

College Assessment Committee News

College of Business

Anne Carroll, Dean’s Office

The Department of Business Administration conducted two rounds of assessments of the program’s five learning outcomes, following each round with an improvement effort. Assessments included both standardized tests and applying rubrics to student work products. Generally speaking, the benchmarks were achieved for communication, oral and written, teamwork, and critical thinking (standardized test), although improvements were identified and implemented. Assessments of the fundamental business knowledge learning outcome, which relied on ETS’s Major Field Test, and soon performance on this test will factor into course grades. Finally, assessments of the current issues outcome did not reach the benchmark and improvements include designating specific courses to increase attention to current issues

in business and faculty clarifying those business issues that are most important to continually monitor.

The Department of Sport Management and Leadership Studies completed assessments including direct and indirect measures of all six of the program’s student learning outcomes, as part of their COSMA accreditation in 2015. In all cases, the vast majority of students demonstrated the learning outcomes, including fundamental knowledge of the discipline, communication skills, critical thinking, and the ability to apply technology to sport management practice. The department also identified several areas where improvements can be made, including efforts to improve the internship experience and the resulting student portfolios.

College of Education

John Ward, Dean’s Office

The College of Education is working very hard in developing and using new assessments. The Council for Teacher and Counselor Educators and the College of Education Advisory Board now both have formal roles in advising programs on assessments and evaluating outcomes data for continuous improvement. Both of these groups include external partner representatives. The College is piloting a new assessment of student teaching closely based on the Framework for Effective Teaching (the Danielson model) which is the evaluation used for all in-service teachers in our region. A new dispositions assessment is being piloted. This assessment will replace our current model which is a “concerns-based” approach where students are only assessed when there is a perceived problem. The new assessment is meant to be proactive and to help students learn the behaviors and dispositions that are important to the profession. Many programs are revising program specific assessments to meet the rigorous requirements of their Specialty Program Association (SPA). Each of these SPAs define seven or more standards which serve as the student learning outcomes for these programs.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

David Beougher, Dean’s Office

The CLAS Assessment Committee continues to devote its efforts to college-wide assessment efforts. Some highlights from the recent past include working to assess the effects of learning communities, a resiliency study, and analysis of GPA and class size data for at risk students. Regarding Learning Communities in CLAS, students involved in learning communities are retained at higher rates than the CLAS non-learning community population (~77% vs. ~70%), students involved in learning communities persist at higher rates than the CLAS non-learning community population (~65% vs. ~53%), and students involved in learning communities graduate in four years at higher rates than the CLAS non-learning community population (~41% vs. ~33%). Among at-risk students, those with less than a 2.0 in their first semester are unlikely to persist at the University, and students who earn a 3.0 or better in their first semester are, on average, enrolled in more small (< / =25 students) classes than those who receive a 1.0 or lower GPA in their first semester (2.1 small classes vs. 1.3 small classes.) The Resiliency Study is still in the analysis phase, and data includes information from qualitative interviews during which students discussed

reasons for academic jeopardy and the types of support and characteristics that help students succeed despite academic jeopardy status. Current and future work of the committee focuses on the advising process and identifying characteristics of successful students.

College of Visual & Performing Arts

Michelle Kiec, Dean’s Office

Three programs in CVPA, Art and Art History, Art Education and Crafts, and Communication Design were recently reaccredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. According to their 2015 self-study, assessments of specific learning goals tended to find that students’ performances on the learning outcomes were satisfactory. Senior portfolios are often reviewed by external evaluators, and evaluators have judged that the vast majority of students are demonstrating the requisite artistic skills and competencies. The Art Education program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation/National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and students are part of the above assessments and are held to the same standards as other students of teacher education.

The Department of Cinema, Television, and Media Production prepared a self-study as part of a Program Review in 2015-2016, and is currently revising its approach to outcomes assessments and is beginning to implement signature assignments in its required courses. The Department of Communication Studies introduced an assessment method that relies on seniors’ portfolios where students provide specific artifacts as evidence for each program-level learning outcome. Initial assessments indicate that students are demonstrating that they have achieved the outcomes.

Programs in the Department of Music were re-accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in 2015. As reported in the study, music students are evaluated each semester by a jury on their progress in their applied medium, and students must also give a senior recital, with the recital occurring once a recital hearing jury provides approval. Music Education is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation/National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and students are part of the above assessments and are held to the same standards as other students of teacher education.