



UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT REPORT: 2012 – 2014

Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness
Office of Academic Programs

July 2014

California State University, Fullerton has been engaged in the process of student learning assessment in the past several years. The nature and extent of assessment across the university are varied, and the details of assessment have not been systematically documented. To capture such information, an Assessment Activities and Results Survey for 2012-2014 academic year (Appendix 1) was administered in Spring 2014 to all academic departments. The survey asks each academic department and/or program to provide the following information:

1. Program-level student learning outcomes (SLOs)
2. Assessment activities associated with the SLOs that took place in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014
3. Examples of a SLO assessment process, including a description of the assessment method(s), the criteria of success, the assessment findings, and the corresponding improvement actions
4. A brief summary of the assessment planning and implementation process, including its strengths and areas of improvements

Sixty departments and programs completed the survey. The surveys were reviewed by a team comprised of 2 faculty members of the University Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Committee (Dr. Pam Oliver, Dr. Doug Swanson) and the Director of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness (Dr. Su Swarat). Guided by the six-step process of assessment specified in the University Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Plan¹, the review focused on important questions to consider when completing each step of the assessment process. Examples of such questions include “Are the SLOs specific, clear and concise”, “Are criteria of success determined for each assessment tool”, and “Did the department/program use or plan to use the assessment results to improve the program”. Each survey was reviewed independently by individual reviewers, and any discrepancies were resolved through group discussion. The final review results for each department/program were summarized using a standard feedback form (Appendix 2). The feedback form is intended to provide clear and simple comments to each department/program, and to serve as the basis for individual department/program consultation with the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness.

Feedback to individual department/program will be provided through conversations at the college or the department level, depending on the assessment structure and preferences of the department/program. This document summarizes the general state of assessment observed across colleges, and provides a basis for development and implementation of professional development opportunities to advance faculty knowledge about meaningful assessment and continuous improvement in student learning and program quality.

Survey Submission Summary

Sixty surveys were submitted from departments/programs in eight colleges.

¹ The AEEP can be accessed at:
<http://www.fullerton.edu/assessment/studentlearningassessment/effectivenessplan.asp>

Table 1. Survey submission summary by college

College	Number of Departments	Number of Degree Programs	Number of Surveys Submitted*
ART	3	12	3
COMM	3	8	3
ECS	7	11	5
EDU	5	4	5
HHD	8	13	9
HHS	21	37	21
MCBE	6	8	8
NSM	5	16	6
Total	58	109	60

**Note that some departments submitted separate surveys for different degree programs, and others submitted one survey for the entire department.*

2. Student Learning Outcomes

All 60 departments and/or programs provided Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that align with the University Learning Goals (ULGs). The quality of the SLOs vary greatly, with 32 departments/surveys having specific and clear SLOs, and 39 having SLOs that are measurable. Most departments/programs (n=55) have a list of SLOs that are realistic and manageable, and the rest tend to have too many SLOs.

ECS, EDU and MCBE, guided by their disciplinary accreditation requirements, largely have sound SLOs. For example, Civil and Environmental Engineering in ECS identified “an ability to identify, formulate and solve engineering problems” as a learning outcome that aligns with ULG#1 – “Demonstrate intellectual literacy through the acquisition of knowledge and development of competence in disciplinary perspectives and interdisciplinary points of view”. MS-Ed (preliminary credentials) program listed “Use current technologies for teaching and learning” as a SLO that reflects ULG#3, which focused on communication skills. Business Administration (accounting concentration) included “Identify ethical dilemmas and suggest appropriate course of action for resolution” as a SLO that speaks to ULG#4 “Work effectively as a team member or leader to achieve a broad variety of goals” and ULG#5 “Evaluate the significance of how differing perspectives and trends affect their communities”.

The quality of SLOs, however, is uneven within other colleges, with some departments having excellent SLOs and others needing improvement. The overarching issues are: 1) the SLOs are too complex and thus should be unpacked to make them more specific; 2) the SLOs do not describe measurable outcomes.

3. Assessment Methods and Measures

Most departments/programs (n=54) provided clear indication where direct assessment methods were used to measure SLOs. The direct assessment methods included exam-embedded questions, capstone projects or papers, and standardized tests from external agencies. While a few departments/programs focused on one particular direct assessment approach (e.g. capstone

thesis scoring), many used multiple methods to triangulate different data sources. For example, Child and Adolescent Studies in HHD assessed SLOs through exam questions, projects, and student training performances. The use of indirect assessment methods is much less frequent, with only about 30% (n=22) of the surveys indicating such methods. Indirect assessment examples included reflection essays, exit or alumni questionnaires, and student self-assessment surveys. Eleven of the departments/programs used external tests or surveys as part of the assessment methods. Some departments expressed the concern that “home grown” assessment methods are inferior to externally developed, standardized ones. This is not always the case, because with careful design, “home grown” assessment instruments can not only have a more accurate focus, but also hold sound psychometric properties. Approximately 2/3 (n=39) of the surveys indicated that criteria of success (i.e. benchmark to determine whether the SLOs are met) have been determined for the corresponding assessment methods. While many of the criteria of success are appropriate, there are a few that need to be revised due to confusion between learning assessment and grading, syllabi review or curriculum component completion (e.g. participation in internships).

To keep assessment a manageable task, whether to sample student work is an important decision to make. Approximately half of the surveys (n=34) indicated a thoughtful decision-making process on sampling, which resulted in appropriate sampling methods. For departments/programs that had large student population, random sampling of student work was often employed. If the population size is reasonable, the departments/programs tend to score all students’ work to capture the variety. For the several departments/programs that struggled to assess the learning of all enrolled students, the survey reviewers recommended sampling as a way to conduct meaningful assessment with limited resources.

Rubric is a popular choice among the departments/programs to score student artifacts (e.g. papers, projects, thesis, portfolios). Thirty-three of the surveys indicated that an appropriate rubric was employed, while others did not provide sufficient information. However, only 1 department (Child and Adolescent Studies) reported a rigorous process of rubric calibration in order to reach a satisfactory inter-rater reliability among the reviewers. A more thorough rubric validation process is recommended to the departments/programs to enhance the validity and reliability of the instrument.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

A significant amount of data has been collected to assess the SLOs. Forty-six departments/programs provided actual data, and most of them (n=41) offered sufficient evidence to suggest that the data are of high quality and the data analysis procedures are appropriate. For example, Theatre and Dance in ART conducted rigorous juried review of student performance in acting, singing and musical theatre, the progress of which was monitored longitudinally to track skill development. Communications in COMM implemented a common writing assignment across all sections of COMM 362 to assess student written communication skills. The assignment was scored by a panel of external professionals to ensure that the students are meeting employment requirements. Computer Science in ECS employed classroom observation and peer observation in CPSC362 to measure students’ ability to work effectively as a team member. Educational Leadership in EDU used aspects of student qualifying exam to assess their

critical thinking ability. The qualifying exam was scored by a panel of 4-6 faculty using a rubric that addressed several aspects of critical thinking. The Nursing program in HHD monitored student self-assessment of essential skills for advanced nursing practice through surveys upon entry of the program, at midpoint, and upon graduation. The changes over time were tracked to ensure that significant skill development took place. European Studies in HSS assessed the SLO “Understand holistically the historical development of European politics, economics, society and culture” by conducting a rubric-based scoring of student portfolios, coupled with a qualitative review of student self-assessment essays. Business Administration in MCBE required students to write a recommendation report using the case-analysis method to assess their business communication skills, and the reports were scored using primary trait analysis (rubric scoring across five criteria and process levels). Geological Sciences randomly sampled student theses, and used rubric to assess students’ ability to “integrate earth systems and cycles”. An alumni survey was also used to provide additional data on how well students accomplished this SLO (self-perception).

4. “Closing the Loop”

Many departments/programs (n=47) clearly indicated actions or plans to use assessment results to improve teaching and learning practices. For example, Comparative Religion in HSS examined students’ performance on a set of multiple-choice questions designed to assess student’s ability to “analyze and interpret written materials related to the study of religion”, and identified areas in which less progress was made from one semester to the next. Changes were subsequently made in 300 level courses to add more in-class exercises and writing assignments. Similarly, Mechanical Engineering in ECS analyzed data from student exit survey, alumni survey, and industrial advisory board members’ evaluation of student performance in their organizations. The results led to the creation of new computer labs, purchase of new technology equipment, and hiring of 4 new faculty members within the past 2 years.

Excellent examples aside, there are a number of departments/programs where plans for “closing the loop” are preliminary or vague. Statements such as “Faculty will review the data” or “Discussion will take place to determine the appropriate improvement actions” need to be replaced with concrete, specific action items.

With the exception of ECS and EDU, most of the surveys did not indicate a consideration of follow-up assessment plans, in the event that a SLO is not met and subsequent changes are made. This component is critical to the success of the improvement actions, and thus should be considered in developing assessment plans.

5. Assessment Planning

Significant work has been done to set up assessment plans at the program or department level. A total of 43 departments/programs have clear indication of a multi-year assessment plan. ECS, EDU, HHD, HSS and MCBE are particularly strong in this regard, with assessment plans established for most or all departments/programs. The other colleges vary depending on the department/program, with some having a well-defined plan, but others still in need of developing one.

The infrastructure of assessment planning differs by college and department/program as well. ECS, EDU and MCBE have centralized assessment coordination; HHD and HSS have active college-level assessment committees that support the assessment effort at the department/program-level; ART, COMM and NSM employed an approach that is more department/program-driven. Despite the differences, many departments/programs voiced the need for more resources, guidance and support for assessment activities. It is evident that clear expectation and strong support for assessment from the university are much desired.

As a respond to the requests, the university has established two University Policy Statements central to assessment – “Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes” (UPS 300.022) and “University-wide Student Learning Goals” (UPS 300.003). The former UPS describes the definition and principles of assessment at CSUF, and the latter specifies the key skillset that students should develop as a result of a CSUF education. An assessment Taskforce, as well as a University Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Committee (AEEC) comprised largely of faculty, was established to oversee and support the development of an integrated university assessment process and infrastructure. Under such leadership, a University Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Plan (AEEP), a milestone document that details the responsibilities of university constituents regarding assessment, the university-wide six-step assessment process, and the plan to establish an assessment culture at CSUF.

As the assessment infrastructure and expertise differ by college, the university has committed resources to support 10 Faculty Assessment Liaisons (1-2 per college) for 2014-2015, who will work closely with the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness (OAEE) and the departments/programs to ensure that assessment efforts on campus work in synergy. The OAEE was also reconceptualized, with new leadership and expanded team of staff with substantial expertise in research, assessment and evaluation. It has also been relocated to an independent, more visible location, providing assessment a physical presence on campus.

A series of professional development workshops focused on assessment will be offered to help faculty and staff develop assessment expertise, and to walk the departments and units through the assessment process, including the 6-step process and the use of *Compliance Assist*. The university assessment website has been revamped (www.fullerton.edu/assessment), which contains resources and examples on how to conduct assessment, as well as examples that showcase how CSUF departments conducted assessment and used the results to improve practice. The OAEE also meets frequently with colleges and departments to provide hands-on help and individualized support.

We would like to express deep gratitude to Dr. Pam Oliver (Professor, Child and Adolescent Studies) and Dr. Doug Swanson (Professor, Communications) for their hard work in reviewing and providing feedback on the assessment surveys. We would like to thank the Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Committee for facilitating the survey administration process. We would also like to thank all the departments and programs that completed the survey and provided candid suggestions, Dr. Peter Nwosu (Associate Vice President for Academic Programs) who supported and facilitated the survey process, and Teresita De La Torre (our student assistant) for providing assistance in the review process.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Dr. Su Swarat (sswarat@fullerton.edu), Director of the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness. Thank you.

Appendix 1: 2012-2013 & 2013-2014 Assessment Activities & Results Survey

Inspired by the mission that learning is preeminent at CSUF, and considering the newly established (January 2013) university learning goals, the Academic Senate's Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Committee (AEEC) and the Office of Academic Programs request that each department/program provides a brief summary of the assessment activities and results for the periods of AY 2012-2013 and AY 2013-2014. The information collected will be used to establish an accurate inventory of assessment activities at CSUF, to fulfill internal and external accountability requirements, and to demonstrate CSUF's progress in student learning assessment.

We understand that parts of this survey may resemble forms you have completed in previous years. What we are particularly interested in in this survey is how the department/program learning outcomes align with the new university learning goals, and what is being done in your department/program to "close the loop" (i.e. use the assessment findings to improve student learning).

*We ask each department/program to return the completed survey to their respective Dean's Office by **April 15, 2014**. The Dean's Office will then compile and submit the surveys to the Office of Academic Programs. We apologize for the very tight turn-around which is directly related to the new WASC reporting requirements and timeline.*

Please also note that this survey is a one-time occurrence. We are in the process of establishing an assessment and educational effectiveness plan, which will allow departments/programs to better plan their assessment and related reporting activities annually.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and effort.

Department/Program: _____

College: _____

1. Summary of department/program SLOs and related assessment activities:

Please list ALL student learning outcomes (SLOs) for your department/program, based on their alignment with the newly established 6 university learning goals. These SLOs should include those for the GE program and the graduate programs(s). Please check the appropriate box if a SLO is a GE or graduate program SLO.

For each SLO, please briefly describe any related assessment activities your department/program conducted in AY 2012-2013 and AY 2013-2014. These activities can include all aspects of assessment, ranging from planning data collection, data analysis, to data-driven changes or improvement at the course or program level.

Feel free to adjust the number of rows based on the number of SLOs for your department/program.

University Learning Goal	Department/Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)	GE SLO? (Check if yes)	Graduate SLO? (Check if yes)	Related Assessment Activities 2012-2013	Related Assessment Activities 2013-2014
1. Demonstrate intellectual literacy through the acquisition of knowledge and development of competence in disciplinary perspectives and interdisciplinary points of view.					

<p>2. Think critically, using analytical, qualitative and quantitative reasoning, to apply previously learned concepts to new situations, complex challenges and everyday problems.</p>					
<p>3. Communicate clearly, effectively, and persuasively, both orally and in writing.</p>					
<p>4. Work effectively as a team member or leader to achieve</p>					

a broad variety of goals.					
5. Evaluate the significance of how differing perspectives and trends affect their communities.					
6. Recognize their roles in an interdependent global community.					

--	--	--	--	--	--

2. Examples of SLO assessment and “closing the loop” process (i.e. use the assessment findings to improve student learning):

Please choose 3 SLOs from the list above as examples to demonstrate the process of “closing the loop” for your department/program. The process does not have to be confined to the periods of AY 2012-2013 and AY 2013-2014.

For each example, please provide the following details:

- Criteria for Success: The criteria or benchmark used to determine whether the SLO is met (e.g. Average score of 80% or higher on an assessment task, 75% of the students received an A in an assessment task)
- Assessment Methods: The specific method(s) used to collect and analyze relevant data (e.g. student sampling strategy, quantitative and/or qualitative methods, instruments, analysis methods)
- Assessment Findings: The findings regarding the corresponding SLO, as yielded by the assessment data and by judging these data against the criteria for success
- Improvement Actions & Results: The specific improvement plans that reflect and address the assessment findings, and the results of the improvement plans (e.g. revisions to the curriculum resulted in higher student achievement, interventions that led to increased student satisfaction)

SLO	Criteria for Success	Assessment Methods	Assessment Findings	Improvement Actions & Results
1)				
2)				
3)				

--	--	--	--

3. Summary of the Assessment Process in your department/program:

Please briefly describe the assessment planning and implementation process (i.e. how the assessment process was planned and conducted) in your department/program. Reflect upon the process to suggest its strengths and areas of improvement.

Brief summary of the assessment planning & implementation process	
Strengths of the assessment process	
Areas of improvements of the assessment process	

4. Additional Comments:

Please share your thoughts, insights, concerns, or any other comments regarding the assessment efforts at CSUF.

--

Appendix 2: Feedback for 2012-2014 Assessment Activities and Results Survey

Department/Program: _____

1. Feedback on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

	Review Criteria	Simple Feedback	Comments
1.1	Does the program have SLOs that align with the University Learning Goals (ULGs)?	Yes	
1.2	Does the program have additional SLOs that are beyond the scope of ULGs?		
1.3	Are the SLOs specific, clear and concise?		
1.4	Are the SLOs demonstrable and measurable?		
1.5	Are the SLOs realistic and manageable?		

2. Feedback on Assessment Methods and Measures

	Review Criteria	Simple Feedback	Comments
2.1	Are there any direct methods used to assess SLOs?	Yes	
2.2	Are the direct methods appropriate for the SLOs?		
2.3	Are there any indirect methods used to assess SLOs?		
2.4	Are the indirect methods appropriate for the SLOs?		
2.5	Are there any external benchmarking tests or surveys used to assess SLOs?		
2.6	Are criteria of success (i.e. standards for performance) determined for each assessment tool?		
2.7	Are the sample populations and sample sizes appropriate?		
2.8	If rubrics were used, is the rubric appropriate?		
2.9	If rubrics were used, is there any check for inter-rater reliability?		

3. Feedback on Data Collection and Analyses

	Review Criteria	Simple Feedback	Comments
3.1	Were actual data collected?	Yes	
3.2	Are the data of high quality (e.g. valid, reliable)?		
3.3	Were the data analysis approaches appropriate?		

4. Feedback on "Closing the Loop"

	Review Criteria	Simple Feedback	Comments
4.1	Did the department/program use or plan to use the assessment results to improve the program?		

4.2	If changes are needed, is follow-up assessment plan provided?		
-----	---	--	--

5. Feedback on Assessment Planning and Process

	Review Criteria	Simple Feedback	Comments
5.1	Is there clear indication of an assessment plan (e.g. where SLOs are met and assessment occurred in the curriculum)		

6. Additional Comments

--