CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY FULLERTON

2020-21 University Assessment Report



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Assessment is a campus-wide endeavor involving all colleges and divisions.

In 2020-21, California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) continued its efforts to strengthen and expand the assessment of student learning, student experiences, faculty and staff satisfaction, operational effectiveness, and university progress toward strategic plan goals. Guided by the university-wide six-step assessment process, academic and operational units at CSUF design their assessment plans, develop appropriate learning and performance outcomes, implement direct and indirect measures, and interpret and act upon the results.

At CSUF, assessment is a campus-wide endeavor involving all colleges and divisions. Assessment is coordinated through the alignment of outcomes at the unit level and goals at the institution level. Each unit shares its annual assessment effort through the Assessment Management System (AMS) as part of the six-step assessment process. Operational units complete their assessment report by July 15 and academic units by November 15 every year. The two different reporting dates align with the natural operation cycles of the units and are the result of previous reflections of the annual assessment process. Individual unit assessment reports are carefully reviewed by a team of Assessment Liaisons who represent the diverse colleges, divisions, and units on campus. Feedback from this peer-review process is provided back to the units to help improve their assessment practices.

Information presented in the University Assessment Report relies primarily upon the results from the Assessment Liaisons' reviews. This annual assessment report provides an overview of the status of assessment across the university, presents a snapshot of how well CSUF is achieving learning goals and outcomes, and summarizes how our university is meeting its priorities.

Principles

Assessment at CSUF is governed by UPS 300.022 and the Academic Senate's Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Plan.

Process

Assessment at CSUF is conducted following a six-step process.

Platform

Assessment at CSUF is documented through an online management system known as AMS.



Assessment Liaisons

Assessment at CSUF is impossible without the hard work of faculty, staff, and administrators. Among them, the Assessment Liaisons play a vital role in facilitating assessment efforts.



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Assessment Status

Support

Multiple virtual professional development opportunities were provided in 2020-21 to help faculty and staff develop expertise related to assessment.



Resources

The <u>Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness (OAIE) website</u> hosts a wealth of resources for various university quality assurance processes, including learning and performance outcome assessment, and program performance review. Detailed instructions on how to conduct every step of the assessment process and complete assessment reporting are provided. The website also serves as a central repository for evidence of CSUF's commitment to quality. This includes assessment "showcases" that highlight best practices on campus, summary results of institution-level assessment (e.g., General Education, large-scale surveys), and relevant documents demonstrating the transparency of various quality assurance processes. Important institutional data on students and faculty are also available on the website.

Dissemination

In addition to internal communication, faculty, staff, and administrators disseminate assessment and research efforts and findings with external colleagues to share positive experiences and seek constructive feedback. In 2020-21, the OAIE alone had <u>7 presentations</u> accepted to conferences.

Assessment Engagement

In 2020-21, assessment continued to expand on campus with 192 units expected to participate (compared to 183 in 2019-20). A total of 183 units, consisting of 138 academic units (degree programs and applicable non-degree programs) and 45 operational units, submitted 2020-21 annual assessment reports through the Assessment Management System (AMS). This equates to 95% campus-wide participation in assessment (183 out of 192 units required to report).



Outcomes Overview

Assessment at CSUF is a campus-wide endeavor. Undergraduate and graduate degree programs primarily focus on student learning outcomes, and operational units often examine performance outcomes that aim to improve operational effectiveness. To make assessment manageable, each program/unit is recommended to prioritize and include a reasonable number of outcomes (e.g., 5-7) in its assessment plan. The program/unit is required to assess at least one outcome per year and rotate through all outcomes within the duration of the assessment plan. Curriculum maps and assessment plans can be found on the <u>OAIE website</u>.



Since degree programs make up most of the units participating in assessment, 86% of the outcomes reported were student learning outcomes. Many programs/units surpassed the minimum assessment requirement of assessing one outcome per year, resulting in 45% of outcomes (292 out of 642) assessed in 2020-21, an increase from last year (38% in 2019-20). Among the assessed outcomes, a significant portion (82%) of them were "met," which is higher than last year (77%).

The university coordinates and integrates assessment activities of individual programs/units by aligning outcomes at multiple levels: program/unit level and university level. Programs/units align student learning and performance outcomes with the university strategic plan goals, undergraduate and graduate learning goals, and WSCUC core competencies, where applicable. It is reasonable to expect student learning outcomes to align closely with university learning goals. WSCUC core competencies are required only for undergraduate programs.

Program/Unit Outcomes

2018-23 Strategic Plan Goals

- Transformative educational experience and environment
- Student completion and graduation
- High quality and diverse faculty and staff
- Financial and physical growth

Undergraduate/Graduate Learning Goals

- Intellectual Literacy
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Community Perspective (Diversity)
- Global Community (Diversity)

WSCUC Core Competencies

- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Oral Communication
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Written Communication

Alignment with University Strategic Plan Goals (SPGs)

SPG 1 has more aligned outcomes than SPG 2, 3 and 4. A majority of the assessed outcomes aligned with each SPG are "Met."

Strategic Plan Goal	Aligned Outcomes	Percent of Assessed and Met
SPG1 - Transformative educational experience and environment	548	84%
SPG 2 - Student completion and graduation	55	74%
SPG 3 - High quality and diverse faculty and staff	31	100%
SPG 4 - Financial and physical growth	12	60%

Alignment with WSCUC Core Competencies

A significant number of the reported outcomes are aligned with Critical Thinking and Information Literacy. Almost all assessed outcomes aligned with each Core Competency are "Met."

Core Competency	Aligned Outcomes	Percent of Assessed and Met
Critical Thinking	152	94%
Information Literacy	133	98%
Oral Communication	76	100%
Quantitative Reasoning	81	94%
Written Communication	82	96%





Alignment with University Undergraduate Learning Goals (ULGs)

ULG 1, 2 and 3 have more aligned outcomes than ULG 4, 5 and 6. A majority of the assessed outcomes aligned with each ULG are "Met."

University Learning Goal	Aligned Outcomes	Percent of Assessed and Met
ULG 1 - Intellectual Literacy	120	89%
ULG 2 - Critical Thinking	108	93%
ULG 3 - Communication	75	93%
ULG 4 - Teamwork	32	88%
ULG 5 - Community Perspective (Diversity)	32	86%
ULG 6 - Global Community (Diversity)	37	79%

Alignment with University Graduate Learning Goals (GLGs)

GLG 1 and 2 have more aligned outcomes than GLG 3, 4, 5 and 6. A majority of the assessed outcomes aligned with each GLG are "Met."

University Learning Goal	Aligned Outcomes	Percent of Assessed and Met
GLG1 - Intellectual Literacy	107	89%
GLG 2 - Critical Thinking	104	88%
GLG 3 - Communication	67	79%
GLG 4 - Teamwork	44	86%
GLG 5 - Community Perspective (Diversity)	51	90%
GLG 6 - Global Community (Diversity)	29	94%

Assessment Quality

The annual assessment reports were reviewed by teams of Assessment Liaisons shortly after the reports were submitted. A common <u>feedback rubric</u>, complemented by a rubric review and calibration session, was used to ensure consistency among the reviewers. The rubric examines essential areas for each of the six steps of the assessment process. Areas include whether the outcomes are measurable, whether the measures are valid and reliable, and whether any improvement plans are developed or implemented. A new area included in the 2020-21 review cycle was the interpretation of findings.

Assessment Liaisons review each program/unit's assessment report and provide simple feedback (e.g., "yes," "no," "partial," "unclear") for each of the rubric criteria as well as constructive feedback to elaborate. To give the programs/units a general sense of the state of their assessment practices, an "overall rating" is also provided. The "overall rating" suggests to the programs/units whether they have 1) an "excellent" assessment practice which should be continued; 2) a "solid" assessment practice which has a solid foundation but needs improvement in some areas; or 3) a "good" assessment practice which indicates good effort but has issues that require focused work. The overall ratings provide a consistent measure to gauge the quality of assessment across the university.

The distribution of the assessment ratings in 2020-21 shifted slightly from 2019-20. The percentage of units that received the "Excellent" rating decreased from 49% to 43%, partly due to the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it could have also resulted from the addition of a new rubric area (interpretation of findings).





% of Units that Completed the Assessment 6 Steps Appropriately

Excellent Assessment

In collaboration with the Academic Senate Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Committee, we would like to particularly acknowledge the academic programs and operational units that achieved an "Excellent" rating on their 2020-21 Assessment Feedback Report.

Division of Academic Affairs

- Academic Programs and Enrollment
- Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness
- University Library
- Writing Across the Curriculum

College of Business and Economics

- Accountancy MS
- Business Administration BA
- International Business BA
- Professional Certificate in Personal Financial Planning

College of the Arts

• Dance BA

College of Engineering and

Computer Science

- Civil Engineering BS
- Civil Engineering MS
- Computer Engineering BS
- Computer Engineering MS
- Computer Science MS
- Electrical Engineering BS
- Environmental Engineering MS
- Mechanical Engineering MS

College of Health and Human Development

- Child and Adolescent
 Development BS
- Counseling MS
- Public Health BS
- Public Health MPH
- Social Work MSW

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

- American Studies BA
- American Studies MA
- Environmental Studies MS
- French BA
- Geography BA
- History BA
- Japanese BA
- Liberal Studies BA
- Sociology BA
- Sociology MA
- Spanish BA
- Spanish for Hispanic Media Certificate
- Spanish MA
- Translation: Spanish to English/ English to Spanish Certificate

College of Natural Science and Mathematics

- Biochemistry BS
- Chemistry BA
- Chemistry BS
- Chemistry MS
- Mathematics BA
- Physics BS
- Physics MS
- Statistics MS

Division of Information Technology

Division of Student Affairs

- Admissions
- Assistant Deans
- Associated Students, Inc.
- Athletic Academic Services
- Career Center
- Center for Internships and Community Engagement
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Dean of Students Office
- Disability Support Services
- Diversity Initiatives and Resource Centers
- Financial Aid
- Housing and Residential Engagement
- Student Academic Services
- Student Health Center
- Veteran Resource Center
- WoMen's Center and Adult Re-Entry Center



Assessment Best Practices

Many examples of "best practices" were observed in the review of the 2020-21 assessment reports, a small number of which are briefly described in this report. More examples may be viewed on the <u>OAIE</u> <u>Assessment Showcase website</u>.

Academic Affairs – Academic Programs and Enrollment

In alignment with the CSU's Accessible Technology Initiative (ATI), the Office of Academic Programs and Enrollment (APE) is committed to ensuring information technology resources and services are accessible to all students, faculty, staff, and the public. APE houses a total of 12 websites which are scanned guarterly using the campus's Compliance Sheriff software to identify issues. Compliance issues are provided to the APE ATI lead, who is responsible for fixing errors throughout the year. A final scan is conducted at the end of the academic year and is used to measure the accessibility of APE websites. All websites are expected to have a health score of 95% and have all their "Top 10 Issues" addressed and fixed. Results from the end-of-year scan revealed that all issues identified throughout the year were resolved. Additionally, all websites had a health score of at least 96%. The APE ATI Lead will continue conducting quarterly scans and create a checklist for webmasters that list common ATI mistakes and how to avoid them.

College of the Arts – Dance BA

The Dance BA program prepares students to be performing artists by developing required techniques, performance skills, and movement vocabulary. Juried performance reviews were used to evaluate students' performance during the Annual Dance Major Assessment. Faculty co-designed rubrics to assess students' application of technique and performance skills. A specific rubric was developed for each sub-discipline to account for the different skills and concepts. Thirty-seven fourth-level dance majors were assessed in ballet technique and modern technique in spring 2021. The panel of Dance faculty members submitted results for each student, then discussed the final rubric score for each student. Both ballet and modern technique rubric scores were over 70% in all areas of the rubrics. For ballet technique, 99% of students met or exceeded expectations. Similarly, 100% of students met or exceeded expectations for modern technique. The results demonstrate that students can apply and utilize the developing skill sets from each level of their training. Additionally, the program compared the scores to previous years, with this year's results signaling a positive impact from prior years' improvement actions.



College of Business and Economics – MBA

MBA students were assessed on their ability to "demonstrate an understanding of key functions of business enterprises" using both direct and indirect measures in the Capstone in Strategic Management course, BUAD 591. Two of four openended questions on a mid-term exam aligned to the outcome were scored with a rubric, designed to capture students' "a) breadth of knowledge of business functions, b) depth of knowledge of business functions, and c) association between business functions and competitive advantage." Rubric norming sessions were held before scoring, and a random sample of exams (30%) were rescored to further test for inter-rater reliability. Overall, the criteria for success were met, with 75% of students demonstrating "developing" or "mastery" of knowledge in at least two of the three rubric areas. The program also disaggregated results by rubric area and identified "breadth of knowledge" as an area of strength and "depth of knowledge" as an area of weakness. Exit Survey data were also collected to measure students' selfperception on acquiring cross-functional knowledge. Of 55 students responding to the survey, 88% reported "satisfaction" with their acquired cross-functional management skills. Although the outcome was met, the program plans to use the results to inform improvement actions, particularly in the area of "depth of functional knowledge." Results will be shared with the MBA steering committee for additional reflection and discussion.

College of Education – Education MS (Special Education)

The Special Education, MS program assesses various skills and values required of educational leaders, including technology use, commitment to improvement, and dedication to advancing just, equitable, and inclusive education. Using surveys and course assignments, three outcomes were assessed in 2020-21. Surveys were used to gather information about the student experience in the program and were administered through Qualtrics to all enrolled candidates each semester. Course assignments varied but were administered each semester and scored using rubrics. Overall, the results from the surveys demonstrate that students agree the program prepared them in many ways, including: to examine their role in schools through the lens of just, equitable and inclusive education (100% of candidates; n = 46); to work in communities with diverse educational settings (97% of candidates; n =46); to collaborate with other professionals in school settings (100% of candidates; n = 46); and to foster relationships among diverse schools, families, and communities to enhance student learning (100% of candidates; n = 46). Additionally, a thesis research project and comprehensive exam were used in 2020-21 to assess proficiency in educational technology. The assignments were assessed using a calibrated rubric and yielded a 100% pass rate. Similarly, for the outcome on advancing just, equitable, and inclusive education, a "diversity assignment" was used as the direct assessment measure and scored using a 4-point rubric. One hundred percent of students passed, with the majority receiving a perfect score. The high pass rates may result from the assignment changes made in the prior year, after faculty reviewed and discussed the assessment data. Faculty will continue to meet and discuss needed "revisions to coursework and pedagogy that promote student learning."





College of Health and Human Development – Public Health MPH

The Master of Public Health (MPH) program prepares students to interpret and apply research findings to inform public health practice, policy, and research. The program used both direct and indirect measures for assessment. A research paper from one of the final courses was used to assess student learning. The course instructor used a 3-point rubric to score the papers. The program assessment committee members also scored de-identified papers to ensure inter-rater reliability. The average score between the instructor and the committee member was used as the final score for each student paper. A total of 23 student papers were scored. Ninety-one percent of students (n = 21) received a score of "good" or higher, while 9% of students (n = 2) scored in the "needs improvement" range. A qualitative summary of common findings from the papers was also developed to identify potential improvement actions. Additionally, the program administered an exit survey via Oualtrics from one of the final course instructors. Students were asked to self-assess their skills on a scale of 1-5. Of the graduating students to complete the exit survey (n = 16) in spring 2021, 81% rated their ability as "very strong" or "strong," and 19% rated their ability as "adequate." Closing-the-loop efforts for the 2020-21 assessment cycle included clarifying important outcomes and expectations to students early in the program, and devoting time in the departmental retreat to identify and plan opportunities for improving students' writing.

College of Humanities and Social Sciences – History BA

History BA assessed a student learning outcome focused on students' ability to "devise a research project driven by a thesis, informed by historiographical contexts, and structured by a clearly articulated analytical framework appropriate to the field of study" using both direct and indirect measures in HIST 490T, a course at or near program completion. Using a calibrated rubric to score the projects, the program triangulated data with relevant questions from the University Undergraduate Exit Survey to validate students' learning. Of the research projects assessed (n = 41), 98% achieved a score of "Exceeds Expectations" or "Meets Expectations," which well exceeded the established criteria for success (70%). Exit survey results revealed that approximately 96% of students "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" that their experiences in the program improved their ability to "conceptualize problems and use research to find answers to them." The results confirmed the effectiveness of the improvement actions the program has implemented since first assessing the outcome in 2012. Specifically, the program implemented curricular changes that require completing HIST 300A and 300B before taking HIST 490T. The program noted that "making these intermediate-level courses prerequisites for HIST 490T ensured that students had the preparation, practice, and experience that helped them to successfully complete the capstone research paper." The most recent assessment data showed that student performance increased significantly (by 34%), an excellent example to "close the loop." Based on the positive results, the program decided to assess the SLO in HIST 300B and obtain baseline data to better capture students' progression of skills - a further indication of their commitment to continuous improvement!

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics – Biochemistry BS

To capture the full scope of Biochemistry BS students' ability to "demonstrate literacy in concepts underlying fundamental analytical instrumentation and instrumentation techniques," the Chemistry and Biochemistry department's Assessment Committee combined questions from an external, direct measure emphasizing "hypothesis development" and adapted items from a published study to assess "the ability of analytic scenarios in spectroscopy and chromatography to elicit evidence of critical thinking." The resulting survey used to assess the SLO was comprised of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. A test for inter-rater reliability was performed on coding the open-ended questions for critical thinking attributes. The survey was administered to graduating Biochemistry BS students. Of the 29 valid survey responses, a mean of 71% of items were answered correctly on the multiple-choice questions, with additional descriptive statistics analyzed to gauge student performance further. The open-ended responses suggested that students demonstrated "moderate to high-level" critical thinking about spectroscopy or chromatography. Overall, 76% of students earned a score of at least 65% on the assessment, which exceeded the criteria for success. Results were shared with faculty with plans to reassess within the next two years to monitor performance and improve the assessment methods by adding an observational component to capture students' ability to apply the skills.



Division of Information Technology

The Division of Information Technology focused on "empowering the university with technologies for data-driven and insightful decision making to support student success." This performance outcome was assessed by measuring faculty use and experience with the Faculty Student Success Dashboard (FSSD) piloted in 2020-21. The FSSD is a multi-dimensional tool that allows faculty to access the academic performance, progress, and success of individual students enrolled in their courses, allowing faculty the opportunity to observe and understand the critical role they play in student success. Sixteen workshops to train faculty on FSSD were held between July 2020 and March 2021. Three surveys were administered to assess how faculty used the FSSD and seek improvement feedback. Results included identifying the top three favorite features of the FSSD reported by faculty: 1) graded Class List and SOQ, 2) access to real data, and 3) current students' stats. Sixty-one percent of faculty (*n* = 315) agreed they felt "more empowered to support students with data-driven insights." The FSSD pilot assessment results exceeded the criteria for success, and improvement plans include creating a "sustainable way to engage faculty with the Dashboard."

Program Performance Review

Program performance review (PPR) is a reflective assessment and forward-looking, evidence-based planning tool that can guide an academic program's strategic actions and strengthen its capacity to implement program improvements. All academic programs complete the PPR process at least once every seven years. The assessment of student learning outcomes is an important component of this process.

The PPR process begins with preparing a self-study and completes with a culmination meeting between the program, college, and university. The entire process typically takes two academic years to complete. Details about the PPR process, including the guidelines and schedule, can be found on the <u>OAIE PPR website</u>. The thorough nature of PPRs provides opportunities to assess the university's general state of operation. Each year, PPR documents are analyzed by the OAIE to identify common themes that apply to a significant portion of the programs reviewed. These themes are organized into commendations, recommendations, and resource requests.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PPR reviews were extended for 2020-21, drastically decreasing the number of programs participating in the PPR process. A total of six programs completed their PPR process in 2020-21. Reflected in the themes that emerged from these PPRs, curriculum, diversity and inclusion, and student success and

2020-21 PPR Themes

Commendations

- Curriculum
- Diversity and inclusion
- Student success and satisfaction
- Community partnerships

Recommendations

- Assessment
- Community partnerships

Resource Requests

- Faculty hiring
- Equipment/facility needs

satisfaction remain as strengths of the programs. In addition, community partnerships were commended in all PPRs. The most prevalent recommendations were in the areas of assessment and, interestingly, community partnerships. The presence of community partnerships in both commendations and recommendations highlights the importance of this area in an academic program's operation and its continuous efforts to improve them. Themes that emerged in resource requests concentrated on faculty hiring and equipment/facility needs.



Closing the Loop

Summary

CSUF's progress toward a sustainable campus wide assessment infrastructure continued in 2020-21. Both academic programs and operational units continued examining student learning, student experiences, faculty and staff satisfaction, and operational efficiency through thoughtful and sophisticated assessment processes. Though slight, there is a continued increase in the percentage of programs and units that appropriately engaged with "Step 5 – Improvement Actions" (from 94% in 2019-20 to 95% in 2020-21). The increase perhaps hints at a "sense of maturity" for assessment at the overall university level. For a large institution, the broad participation of diverse faculty and staff in assessment at all levels of the university is inspiring. Accompanying these promising statistics is the positive perception of assessment on campus. Despite the challenges with COVID-19, participants from the annual University Assessment Forum 2021 (virtual) indicated the continuation of <u>a positive culture of assessment at CSUF</u>.

Next Steps

The assessment process continues to stabilize and deepen at CSUF. The 2020-21 assessment report indicates campus-wide commitment and engagement in using data to improve teaching, learning, and operation. As the campus strives to reach the Graduation Initiative 2025 goals, such as graduation rates and equity gaps, the assessment process ensures that student learning and experiences remain equally prominent in the discussion of student success indicators. With a network of assessment-savvy faculty and staff and a culture of data-informed decision-making, we hope that our students will graduate on time and with the knowledge and skills that will position them well for future success.

Acknowledgment

We would like to express sincere gratitude to the assessment liaisons for their hard work in reviewing a large number of annual assessment reports and providing feedback to the individual programs/units. Their review served as the foundation of this report. We would also like to thank all the programs, units, colleges, and divisions for participating in the assessment effort, and thank all the faculty, staff, and administrators for engaging in this critical endeavor. Our deep appreciation also goes to the assessment committee members and coordinators at various levels across the university.

The commitment and support of the President's Office, the Provost's Office, and the leadership teams from all the colleges and divisions are instrumental in making assessment possible at CSUF. We are also grateful for the continued support of the Academic Senate's Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Committee, and their continued promotion of assessment as a top priority on campus.

For questions or comments, please contact the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness.



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