

Examples of Program Reviews and Annual Reports: Using Results for Decision-Making and Program Improvement.

B.S. Physics. The B.S. Physics program made a number of changes, including curriculum updates, addition of new tenure-track positions, increased student research opportunities, and upgrades to laboratory equipment, as a result of its program review. Curricular changes include creating a bridge course between the lower and upper-division physics curriculum, changing the math requirements for the major, revisions to a number of lower-division Physics courses, expanding its Seminar series and opportunities for majors to be involved in meaningful research projects which have led to presentations at regional and national conferences and publications in peer-reviewed journals. The department was also able to hire an additional tenure-track faculty and make major upgrades to laboratory equipment. The program is currently revising its student learning outcomes as a result of the review.

B.A. Theatre Arts. The B.A. Theatre Arts program has a long history of extensive assessment of its program and student learning outcomes. From 2002 – 2011, the program had a very complex set of student learning outcomes, consisting of 3 main outcomes and 16 sub-outcomes. Beginning in 2006, the program implemented a third-year portfolio and assessment class, for which students developed portfolios covering their first two years, and completed a theatre and dance knowledge assessment. The results and analysis, and changes made as a result of this assessment are detailed in Appendix C of the 2011-2012 program review, which contains each of the department's annual reports during this period. Changes were made to the curriculum and advising processes, as well as to the assessment process itself. For example, when the portfolio assessment process indicated that performance students lacked depth in technique, the department created applied singing classes for improving vocal skills and made these classes part of the option curriculum. Faculty also revised the structure of all three of the options. The program revised its assessment plan to make it less cumbersome, specifically, the number of outcomes was reduced, specific artifacts linked to these outcomes were identified, and tracking mechanisms were developed. The artifacts will be evaluated using a standardized departmental rubric, tracked throughout a student's career, and sampled annually by a faculty committee for program improvement, all of which is outlined in the program review. It should be noted that the department has maintained its commitment to its assessment plan despite severe budget reductions and reductions in tenure-track faculty.

B.A. Sociology. The B.A. Sociology program review described the department's current plan for the assessment of student learning outcomes, including a mapping of SLO's to the newly adopted Institutional Learning Outcomes, the assessment instruments used to assess their methods and theory SLO's, a discussion of what they learned from these assessments, and how they plan to implement new pedagogies and assignments to address deficiencies identified through their assessment results. They also examined the effects of demographic variables on assessment results. (The only significant demographic variable identified was marital status, which the department interpreted as being correlated with age/maturity level, which was not a

variable that was measured.) Changes made as a result of the assessment process include strategies to encourage and improve student reading, and more in-class, hands-on practice in methods and theory courses. The department also assessed the outcomes of student placements in the Social Service Option by having each student evaluated by the community field instructors. (Students in this option provided approximately 9,720 hours of community service.) Students' overall ratings on the evaluation measure averaged 3.5 on a 4-point scale. The program feels that implementing a senior capstone course will be the best way to reinforce and improve achievement on program SLO's, but has been unable to implement one up until now because of budget constraints; however, it plans to resubmit the curriculum modification proposal. The program review also contains the program's plan for the coming five years. Along with curriculum changes based on plans for new tenure-track hires, including revising its Diversity core, the program also has plans to change the assessment process, including requiring students in the Social Services Option to create electronic portfolios, which would be periodically evaluated by field instructors. They also outline plans for the next SLO to be evaluated (Sociological Knowledge).

Program Review for Programs with External Accreditation

B.S. Industrial Engineering. The B.S. Industrial Engineering program, which has external accreditation from ABET, has made a number of changes after reviewing its assessment data, including student and alumni surveys. These include replacing, modifying or creating new courses and prerequisites, providing peer-tutoring services, using software to aid student learning, and increasing the collaboration with local companies to provide more industrial applications to enhance classroom learning. The engineering program's ABET review may be found at:

<http://www20.csueastbay.edu/faculty/senate/files/capr/05-10-review-uploads-12-13/engr-abet-09-10-report.pdf>

College of Business and Economics (CBE). All of the degree programs in the College of Business and Economics (B.S.B.A., M.B.A., B.A. Economics, M.S. Economics, etc.) are AACSB accredited. The College of Business and Economics has made a number of major programmatic changes as a result of its program review and assessment processes. Specific changes include: reducing the number of options (areas of specialization) in the MBA program; creating a career center for both undergraduate and graduate business students, implementing a new Master of Accountancy program; revision of the MA Economics curriculum and hiring several new tenure-track faculty; revision of the student learning outcomes for the B.S.B.A. program, with a curriculum revision currently in process.

B.A. Music. Based on the results of its program review, the Music program (which is accredited by NASM), completed a revision of the Bachelor of Arts curriculum to more accurately reflect a liberal arts degree which, in turn, facilitated the program's receiving reaccreditation by NASM.

These changes involved modifying ensemble performance and applied lesson requirements, as well as revising the program's capstone experiences (individual recitals) to more accurately reflect student accomplishment. The department also met its goal of increasing cultural diversity in its performance offerings by creating an African Drumming Ensemble and a Latin Jazz Ensemble.

<http://www20.csueastbay.edu/faculty/senate/files/capr/10-11-five-year-reviews/10-11-music-5yr-rvw.pdf>

Program Reviews for Graduate Programs.

Masters of Social Work (MSW - an externally accredited program). As an externally accredited program, the MSW program has long had a rigorous assessment process. Following is a description of their assessment and closing the loop process following their last program review:

A new assessment instrument was designed that has six items that addresses each SLO. Each item asks the student to self-report his/her mastery level on the SLO prior to beginning and at the conclusion of the MSW program on a 1-4 scale (1-None/Inadequate, 2-Low/Needs Development, 3-Good/Professional Level, 4-Excellent/Professional Level). The instructor then assigns his/her evaluation on the same scale. Instructors' base their evaluations on the student's final paper/report, brief individual meetings with students, and/or knowledge of the student's performance in current course or past courses. (Only instructors' assessments are reported below.)

All students (N = 96) in 7 sections of "Integrative Seminar" (SW6959/6960, Spring 2013; 6 sections Hayward, 1 section Oakland; taught by 4 instructors; out of 8 sections offered), the culminating course for final-year MSW students, were evaluated by their tenured/tenure-track instructors in the last week of classes or finals week.

RESULTS:

- (1) Students began the program with lowest mastery of SLO #1-#3 (62.4%-75.5% starting the program at levels 1/2 vs. 48.4%-54.7% for SLO #4-#6).
- (2) Nearly all students completed the program with "professional level" (levels 3/4) mastery of all SLO (95.7%-100%), except for SLO #6-Communication (79.8%).
- (3) Although nearly all students achieved "professional level" (levels 3/4) on SLO #2-Professional Use of Self and #3-Critical Thinking, these SLO showed the most students not achieving the highest level (level 4) (47.9% and 68.1%, respectively, at levels 2/3).

CONCLUSIONS:

- (1) SLO #6-Communications: Changes under consideration include: (a) hiring a writing tutor for the MSW program to support writing developing in specific courses; and (b) redesigning and balancing "academic" vs. "professional" writing assignments across required coursework.

(2) SLO #2-Professional Use of Self: Individual meetings with students showed that they did not understand the definition of this SLO, which is complex. Department needs to further explore how to better assess and teach this SLO before making any changes.

(3) SLO #4-Critical Thinking: Individual meetings with students, class meetings, and papers showed that they had most difficulty with remembering theories learned and applying theories as well as some had difficulty integrating research-based evidence. Changes under consideration include: (a) teaching fewer theories in the Human Behavior and Social Environment (HBSE) 2-course sequence; (b) more time spent applying theories, including those learned in HBSE, in the Generalist Practice 3-course sequence; (c) more time spent in second year courses on how to read, understand and make use of research findings through assignments and in-class close discussions of articles rather than having students browse a large number of articles on their own, which is what happens currently.

The MSW report to the Council on Social Work may be found at:

<http://www20.csueastbay.edu/faculty/senate/files/capr/10-11-capr-docs/10-11-soc-cswe-accred-rpt.pdf>

Master in Public Administration (MPA). The MPA has a comprehensive assessment plan in place that uses both direct and indirect measures to assess quality. The program has identified five Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that are tied to the University's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and the University's mission. In addition, the program has developed a curriculum map that indicates the courses in which the SLOs and ILOs are introduced, practiced, and mastered. All of the SLOs/ILOs are directly assessed in PUAD 6901, which is the Graduate Synthesis Comprehensive Exam, using rubrics that the program has developed for each SLO. They "close the loop" at their annual retreats during the Summer quarters by discussing the assessment results and any changes in curriculum and/or department policies that the results indicate would be beneficial to program quality.

An example of the MPA program's closing the loop process follows: On April 28, 2014, the PUAD faculty discussed results of the 2013-2014 MPA Capstone Comprehensive Exam administered in Winter 2014 quarter. The take-home exam instructions asked students to write essays on 4 of 5 given topics, each essay topic corresponding to one of the 5 PLOs/ILOs. Performance was strong across all PLOs/ILOs, and because no pattern emerged of most students skipping any one question the faculty concluded that there appeared to be no glaring gaps in their self-judged competence in any of the PLOs/ILOs either.

In the version of the comprehensive exam used in Winter 2014, several questions were asked after each essay question requiring students to reflect on their level of confidence with their performance on that particular essay. The reflection questions were preceded with the instruction: "Based on Essay X that you typed/pasted above, please assess your work using the PLO Rubric provided at the beginning of the essay question." Following this, questions anchored by each rubric criterion (e.g., "Demonstrates ability to justify the use of multi-frame as a way to

develop effective practices and solve problems in the public sector”) were provided for which students rated themselves on a 4-point Likert scale (non-performance, introductory, proficient, distinguished) and were asked to write an open-ended rationale for each rating. These reflective questions were designed to encourage students to practice meta-thinking about their learning and their demonstration of learning while also offering possible diagnostic insights in cases where performance might be weak, both at the individual level and class level.

A problem that emerged with these reflective/diagnostic questions is that students generally provided responses for the first couple of essays, but showed signs of fatigue through tapered and less detailed responses for the remaining essays. The faculty concluded that the exam required revision. Instead of asking these questions for EACH essay, a revised comprehensive exam will ask the reflection questions only at the end for student reflection overall as well as on specific essays if needed. The revised reflection question at the end of the exam currently reads as follows: “Based on the essays that you wrote and the corresponding grading/assessment rubrics please reflect on your own work for each of the PLOs. You may use this section to explain your choices of particular examples and/or references. Additionally, you may choose to articulate how your essays reflect your practitioner competencies for each PLO. Note that this section is NOT graded and your responses will help the MPA program in its efforts to continuously improve students’ learning opportunities.”

Annual Report Excerpts

B.A. Theatre Arts. In 2012-2013, Theatre assessed the culminating performance learning outcome (SLO 3) in student performance in “scenes”, involving 5 courses (THEA 1020, 2035, 2041, 4038, 4048). A rigorous rubric was created for the purpose of the assessment, which was used by faculty assessors. This assessment process resulted in the following curriculum changes, as part of the “closing the loop” process:

- a) Students found that the rubric provided good instructional feedback for their learning, as it specifically informed them of the industry standard and faculty expectations, and areas for improvement. They wanted the instructors to use it not only just for assessment, but also for instruction and grading. The department decided to create the rubric and establish a faculty jury process for each relevant performance course, so that students could get timely feedback and input from a group of faculty rather than just one single instructor.
- b) The department also created a standard list of student performance indicators for future syllabi of the relevant courses.
- c) A similar practice as described above for the Acting Emphasis will be implemented for the Musical Theatre Emphasis courses as well.

B.A. Human Development. In 2012-2013, the department assessed their Critical Thinking SLO (SLO 2). Rubrics were developed and used by all regular faculty in assessing sampled research

papers. They found that students were strong in literature search and inclusion and in developing interesting research questions. However, they need significant improvement on integrating the literature, questioning the underlying theoretical assumptions, and fully understanding the broader theoretical contexts.

Several curriculum modification decisions were made at the faculty meeting:

- a) Provide instructors with HDEV Critical Thinking Rubric as part of the course guidelines.
- b) Create and provide students with a critical thinking timeframe, which may help to lengthen course time devoted to analysis of findings in terms of academic literature.
- c) Provide students with examples of proficient and outstanding papers.
- d) Discuss application of research findings to theoretical frameworks in 3201, 3202, 3203 and other junior core classes
- e) Strongly recommend that students need to have completed WST before registering for the capstone courses (HDEV 4811 and 4812)
- f) Consider having one faculty stay with 4811 and 4812 for consecutive terms, if scheduling and contracts permit.

B.A. Communication. In assessing their SLO 2, which includes using “quantitative”, “qualitative”, and “critical inquiry” methods, for 2012-2013, the assessment coordinator found that even though “critical inquiry” was embedded in many assignments across many courses, it was hard to find specific student performance indicators for assessment. Further review of the curriculum map indicated that the department did not have a particular course that focused on this method. There seemed to be a “hole in the curriculum”. The department is working on the revision of the “core” requirements of the degree in Spring 2014, and one goal was to make curriculum changes to fill the “hole”.

B.S. Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. In 2012-2013, one finding from the department student survey for assessment was that 2-year degree roadmaps of required classes were lacking, and there was inconsistency in advising across advisors. To respond to these concerns, the department published 2-year roadmaps for all student cohorts and modified the timing and format of initial advising sessions to make advising more accessible and easier to students.

B.A. Ethnic Studies. In 2012-2013, the department assessed SLO 1 (understanding legacies of contact, conquest, and resistance to racial oppression, etc.), based on samples from 4 courses (ES 3310, 3553, 4040, 4300). Although the finding on student learning was satisfactory, the department considered it important to extend the learning outcomes more evenly to other courses throughout the curriculum. The following measures were taken:

- a) All faculty contributed to sourcing and expand a knowledge base of terms that were originally developed by one faculty.

- b) Add this knowledge base to all ES courses as a ready-made link with the help of Instructional Technology.

B.A. Liberal Studies. Liberal Studies requires majors to take various courses offered in other academic departments, and does not have its own courses. Although past assessment was done by self-reported CBEST and CSET tests, or portfolio work done by students in different courses, the program found that students lacked scaffolding about learning skills at the beginning of the program, and lacked culminating and reflective experience to integrate their learning for the major.

To respond to this issue, the program developed plans to create an entry level Liberal Studies course and a capstone Liberal Studies course, so that students in the major could get guidance from the beginning, and have a chance to integrate their learning at the end of the program. The new course proposals were submitted to the university committees, and are in the process of academic and administrative review for final approval.

B.A. Sociology. In assessing their SLO 3 for 2012-2013, based on a sample of 61 students, the program found that their students were strong in their ability to form relationships with diverse groups and engage in field experiences. However, they had room for improvement in communication and intervention. The program made the following curriculum/instructional changes:

- a) Communication:
 - a. Adjusted assignment rubrics, placing more emphasis on college level writing
 - b. Provided templates and examples as demonstrations
 - c. Included handouts on common social service terms and concepts
 - d. Used an assignment feedback sheet to draw students' attention to specific areas that need improvement
- b) Intervention:
 - a. Considering the possibility of having smaller field seminar class sizes
 - b. Having field seminar meetings earlier in the day.