Recognizing Excellence in Campus Assessment: The EIA Designation Program

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Overview

• Student Learning Outcomes & the VSA
• Excellence in Assessment Designations
• NILOA Transparency Framework
Voluntary System of Accountability

- Initiative by public universities to supply straightforward, comparable information on the undergraduate student experience through a common web report – the College Portrait

www.collegeportraits.org
(R)evolution of VSA SLO Reporting Requirements

- Initial Pilot: 2008-2012
- Evaluation & Expansion: 2012-2015
- Adoption of NILOA Transparency Framework
- Announcement of Excellence in Assessment Designations
  - National recognition of campuses using best assessment practices
  - Based on NILOA Transparency Framework
  - Sponsored by VSA, NILOA, and AAC&U
Excellence in Assessment Designations

• National recognition
  • Similar to Carnegie Community Engagement Classification
  • Open to all institutions – public, private, 2-year & 4-year

• Campus-level assessment
  • Vertically integrated – builds from classroom assessment
  • Horizontally inclusive – intentional inclusion of student affairs, external stakeholders
How We Typically See Assessment for External Accountability

Institutional Accreditation

Program Accreditation

General Education Assessment
Really, That’s Upside Down
How?

• Intentional integration
  • Evidence from student work is key foundation
    • Classroom, campus programming
    • Lots of data – grades, self-report
  • Program assessment builds on classroom, etc.
    • Aggregated student data
    • Supplemented by key assessments
  • Fewer key assessments needed at higher levels

• Common or comparable outcomes
  • Applied critical thinking looks different by discipline, but assessment results can be compared
  • Standards without standardization 😊
EIA Designations

- Application completed via campus self-study
  - Expectation for diverse campus application team
  - NILOA Transparency Framework is foundation
- Evaluation by faculty assessment experts
  - Rubric available
  - Criteria are rigorous, but reasonable
- Two awards
  - **Excellence**
    - Strong leadership and commitment to building (or re-building) culture of integrated assessment practices
  - **Sustained Excellence**
    - Leadership and commitment sustained or evolved over a period of at least 5 years
NILOA’s mission is to discover and disseminate effective use of assessment data to strengthen undergraduate education and support institutions in their assessment efforts.

- Surveys
- Web Scans
- Case Studies
- Focus Groups
- Occasional Papers
- Website
- Resources
- Newsletter
- Presentations
- Transparency Framework
- Featured Websites
- Accreditation Resources
- Assessment Event Calendar
- Assessment News
- Measuring Quality Inventory
- Policy Analysis
- Environmental Scan
- Degree Qualifications Profile
- Tuning

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org
In the News | Archive

Laying the Foundations: Early Findings from the New Mathways Project
Tue, May 19, 2015 - 08:00 am
Elizabeth Z. Rutschow and John Diamond for MDRC

Given that approximately 50 to 70 percent of community college students require developmental math courses and only a third of those students actually complete them, the Mathways Project looks to offer an alternative way to ensure these students succeed. For example, the Mathways Project aligns math content to specific fields of study and teaches at an accelerated pace to help students stay on track.

Outcomes-Based Education Initiatives in Ontario Postsecondary Education: Case Studies
Mon, May 18, 2015 - 08:00 am
Gin Liu in Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)

Faculty buy-in and support is key for outcomes-based education (OBE). Institutions looking to implement OBE policies should look to engage faculty and provide support; such as guidance during program reviews or facilitating conversations about learning outcomes.

Student Outcomes
Fri, May 15, 2015 - 08:00 am
Kristina Cowan in American Council on Education’s The Presidency

Colleges and Universities know more now than ever did about student outcomes and the impact their degrees have on graduates’ lives. It is increasingly important to share the results and use them to improve policy.
Communicating Value

- Increasing discussions of value of higher education
  - Cost, debt
  - Outcomes, e.g., employment, skills
  - Quality is questioned, saliency of education for students
- Higher demand for evidence, use of outcomes for change
- Transparency (and accountability)
Transparency: Current Climate

- More information to a widening variety of audiences
- Accountability to consumers, policy makers
- Ratings and rankings, federal scorecards
- Comparability
- Quality Assurance
- Disclosure

About “getting it out there” for “whomever is interested”
Transparency Defined

• Transparent Process
• Transparent Information
• Organizational Transparency (openness, trust)

Jankowski & Provezis (2012)

• Making meaningful, understandable information about student learning and institutional performance readily available to internal and external audiences.
Transparency Finding

• Institutions report assessment results internally.
• When reported externally: opaque, dense, meaningless.
 Reporting Status Quo

• Data dump, long reports, insider language
• More information isn’t always better
• Reactive not proactive

We haven’t told our story well.
Communication is key

More information is not always better – help stakeholders make sense of what the evidence means for the institution and student learning.
What if instead of...
communicate
Central Tenets

- Clarity
  - No jargon
  - Interpretation & application of outcomes
- Easy to find
- Relevant & timely

COMMON TO ALL
- Clearly worded
- Prominently posted
- Updated regularly
- Receptive to feedback
Student Learning Outcomes Statements

What do you want students to know and be able to do when they get their degrees? Complete a program?

- Clearly expressed and understandable by multiple audiences
- Prominently posted or linked in multiple places across the website
- Reviewed and updated when needed
Student Learning
Outcomes Statements

Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

General Education Core: Assessment Overview

Program assessment is essential to ensure that our programs meet professional standards, continue to improve toward academic excellence, strengthen our various higher learning accreditation requirements, and best serve our students. Student mastery of the baccalaureate General Education Core competencies is to be achieved and demonstrated in the senior capstone course.

Undergraduate Core Competencies

- Critical Thinking
  Analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information and ideas from multiple perspectives

- Knowledge Integration
  Fusion of information and concepts from multiple disciplines

- Effective Communication
  Competence in oral, visual, and written language, use of resources and technology for communication

- Social Responsibility
  Application of knowledge and skills gained from the undergraduate experience for the advancement of a diverse society

- Information Literacy
  Information Literacy is an essential skill that supports each of the competencies and must permeate every component of the General Education Core. Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the information. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their learning. (Information Literacy Rubric)

Rubrics

The General Education Coordinating Committee has transformed the definitions of the four Baccalaureate
Assessment Plans

Campus plans for gathering evidence of student learning might include institution-wide or program specific approaches that convey how student learning will be assessed, the data collection tools and approaches that will be used, and the timeline for implementation.

• How are you going to find out what your students know and are able to do?

• Descriptive
• Inclusive
Overview

A perspective of assessment at CLU is portrayed in CLU’s Assessment System diagram:

The diagram shows how:

- We structure data collection and gather direct and indirect evidence of educational effectiveness at various levels of the University;
- Communication and reflection occur through meetings and events;
- This reflection leads to informed decision making and planning; and
- This action returns the cycle to begin the system again.
Assessment Resources

Assessment resources encompass information or training provided to faculty and staff to help them understand, develop, implement, communicate, and use evidence of student learning.

- What information, support, professional development, or resources do you need to implement your assessment plans?

- Language
- Downloadable
- Prominently posted
Assessment Resources

Assessment Vocabulary

Communication about assessment and student learning outcomes sometimes uses multiple terms to refer to the same concept, or the same term with different meanings. A list of commonly used vocabulary terms and definitions related to assessing student learning outcomes is helpful so that everyone is able to speak a common language.

The terms used in this dictionary were selected from regional accreditation and state assessment guidelines, from selected presentations at the Assessment Forums of the American Association for Higher Education, from a group of policy makers, government officials, assessment practitioners, testing company representatives, and from Center for Assessment and Research Studies faculty and graduate students at James Madison University.

Glossary of Common Assessment Terms
Source: James Madison University’s Online Dictionary of Student Outcome Assessment

Assessment Tools and Methods

Currently, the following tools and methods are used for assessment of students by Hocking College. The following documentation describes these tools and methods:

- Types of Assessment Measures
- Triangulation of Data Wheel
- Hocking College Success Skills

Institutional Assessment (IA) Rubrics

- IA Learning & CT Skills
- Institutional Assessment Rubric CCCGA
- Institutional Assessment Rubric Ethics
- Institutional Assessment Rubric for Communicates Effectively
- Institutional Assessment Rubric for Math
- Institutional Assessment Rubric for Human Relations Skills
- Institutional Assessment Rubric for Science
- Leveling Document
- Levels for Rubric Handout
- Oral Presentation Rubric
Current Assessment Activities

Current assessment activities include information on a full range of projects and activities recently completed or currently underway to gauge student learning, make improvements or respond to accountability interests.

- What are you doing right now to assess student learning outcomes?
- Language
- Described
- Connection to mission
**Assessment matters**
High-quality assessment is the first step in improving student learning. Through the use of both direct and indirect sources of evidence of student performance, assessments guide collective actions for improvements in teaching, academic supports, and curricula.

**A culture of assessment**
The Office of Assessment believes in a cooperative approach focused on student-centered learning. Within a culture of trust and shared responsibility, faculty and student life professionals—with participation from students, administrators, alumni and K-State constituents—develop and implement ongoing and systematic assessment strategies to understand what, how much, and how students learn in order to continuously improve learning outcomes. To assist faculty, the Office of Assessment provides support, resources, and training to help department and unit faculty develop and implement assessment practices tailored to their own needs. Read more about the culture of assessment at K-State.
Evidence of Student Learning

Evidence of student learning includes results of assessment activities. This may include evidence of indirect (e.g. surveys) and direct (e.g. portfolio) student learning as well as institutional performance indicators (e.g. licensure pass rate).

- What evidence do you have that students are learning what you want them to learn?

- Explained
- Contextualized
- Graphics
- Disseminated
EXPECT MORE than a degree

At Capella University, we don’t just say our programs are relevant to our graduates’ careers—we prove it. Our academic programs are built on specific, measurable expectations, or learning outcomes that deliver the skills you need to succeed in your field. We also publish career outcomes—research on how our graduates are performing professionally.

LEARN HOW OUTCOMES IMPROVE EDUCATION   PLAY VIDEO

HOW WE CREATE AND MEASURE LEARNING OUTCOMES

We work with faculty and employers to learn what’s needed to succeed, which defines learning outcomes for each program; courses are designed to deliver those outcomes. During the final stages of the program, instructors assess students’ demonstrated proficiency of the learning outcomes and record each student’s achievement. We then publish outcome reports, showing our students’ demonstrated proficiency. We use the reports to continuously improve our programs. At graduation and after, we survey our alumni about their satisfaction with Capella and their professional achievements, and publish the findings.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Our Learning and Career Outcomes helps you before, during, and after your program.

- You know what learning outcomes each of our programs delivers, so you can make an informed choice about enrolling at Capella.
- You’ll understand why you’re taking each course, what you should expect to learn, and how it applies to your degree and career.
- When you graduate, you can move ahead professionally with confidence, advanced skills, and new abilities.

TWITTER FEED
Use of Student Learning Evidence

To what extent is evidence of student learning used to identify areas of improvement?

• What are you doing with your evidence? Is it actionable?
• If changes are made, are they leading to improvements in student learning?

• Audience
• Examples
• Improvement oriented
• Next steps
Use of Student Learning Evidence

If I'd known they wanted me to use all this info— I would never have asked for it!
Assessment

Examples of Excellence

Click on the videos to hear how our faculty used excellent assessment practices in their classrooms.

Faculty Collaboration Strengthens Results:
Jennifer led a faculty committee to implement a study which yielded critical information for department-wide curricular improvement.

Assessment Planning For Student Success:
Craig and his colleagues designed assessments to drive specific student learning and to provide useful information for verifying student success.

College-wide Outcomes Can Be Used In The Classroom:
Jerri used the college-wide outcomes rubric development guide to build scoring tools for her regular classroom assignments.
Division of Student Affairs: Your Voice

Your Voice Matters

The information students provide us on surveys and feedback forms is invaluable. We care what you think and want to help make the most of your Marquette experience. There are a number of important surveys out this semester. Maybe you just completed one. When you get that invitation to participate, we hope you'll consider taking part. When you say it, we listen!

What does Marquette do with all that information from the surveys I complete?

Departments in the Division of Student Affairs and other co-curricular units collect information regularly and use it to make improvements to programs and services. The scrolling box at the right describes just a handful of the many changes that the voices from you and the students who came before you have helped bring about.

Want to know more? Executive summary reports from some of the larger surveys can be found here. If you’d like to know how a specific department uses information from students in making decisions, contact any member of the Student Affairs Assessment Team.

Even MUSG collects data regularly to improve its programs and better represent your voice. Here are some summaries from recent larger surveys they’ve conducted: 2013, 2011, 2009, and a special advising survey in 2007.

What about assessing the effectiveness of my major and academic experiences?

The faculty for every major at Marquette have articulated a set of goals they have for what students will learn through their courses (called “Learning Outcomes” or “Student Learning Outcomes”). Each major is reviewed regularly to assess whether these goals are being met. If you have concerns about the effectiveness of your learning experience, you should discuss this with your academic advisor. For more information about the assessment of majors, visit the Division of Student Affairs website.
Framework in the Field

http://learningoutcomesassessment.org/TFfield.htm
A Closer Look

• Review handout: EIA Designations scoring rubric
• Pair-and-share:
  • In what ways could these tools be useful to you on your campus?
  • Where are already excelling?
  • Where would your campus find challenges?
• Consider for group:
  • Comments, questions, concerns?
  • What’s not clear?
EIA Designations

• Key dates
  • Submission of completed EIA Application: April 1
  • Applicants Notified of EMBARGOED Designation Results: July 15
  • Public Announcement of Desigonees: August 15

www.collegeportraits.org/EIA
Thank you!

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Action Steps

Navigation and Language

• Location, Location, Location
  • Where is your information located?
  • Can visitors to your website find the information they are looking for?
  • Can only assessment “insiders” find the information?
Future of Framework

• Tensions between the Transparency Framework as an organizing framework and a tool to enhance transparency

• Who is responsible for transparency on campus or in programs?
• Who is involved in conversations around evidence of student learning? Who should be?
• What are the most useful communication mechanisms currently in place?
Challenges

• Pressures of “looking good”
• Fears of misuse of results and sharing of data
• Data archive/data dump
• Password protection
• Navigation

Insider-to-insider reporting
We are educators.

We should educate and start/inform conversations with meaningful, targeted information.
Moving Forward

What next steps can you take within your institution to begin or continue to support transparent communication around assessment results?