
Subject: College Learning Outcomes Efforts for Spring Semester: PLEASE READ

Date: Friday, February 3, 2017 at 12:11:54 PM Mountain Standard Time

From: Heidi Pasek

To: Distribution - Faculty All

CC: Distribution - Division Directors, Distribution - Executive Team

Priority: High

Good afternoon.

Mandy Wright is going to continue moving forward on our resolution of the NWCCU recommendations regarding student learning outcomes assessment.

As you may remember, last semester, Mandy and Laura Wight co-chaired a task force that rewrote the 8 Abilities as per the following Recommendation:

The evaluation committee recommends that the College rewrite the Eight Abilities in assemble language, and then specifically assess them using both direct and indirect measure of student learning. Moreover, the results of those assessments should be used to demonstrate continuous improvement (Standards 2.C.1, 4.A.4, and 4.B.2).

Now it is time to take the next step by examining our framework so it is up-to-date as per this Recommendation:

The evaluation committee recommends that the College review the formative measures it uses to assess core themes, strategic priorities, Common Ground and the Eight Abilities and develop a summative assessment framework that could be effectively used as evidence to assess mission fulfillment (Standards 1.B,2.C.1, 4.A, and 5.A).

Mandy will be sending out more information about the work ahead. Please make time in your schedule to participate in a focus group to help us with our planning and next steps. We can't do it without you!

As always, thank you so much for all the fabulous things you do. I am certainly enjoying my visits to your classrooms this year. I learn so much by spending time with you and our students.

Best wishes,

Heidi

Dr. Heidi Pasek
Chief Academic Officer
GFC MSU
hpasek@gfcmsu.edu
406.771.4397

Memorandum

To: Dr. Heidi Pasek
From: Mandy Wright
Date: May 1, 2017
Subject: Progress Report on College Learning Outcomes Assessment Project

In my outcomes assessment project, I have focused my efforts during the last three months on researching best practices in outcomes assessment, surveying faculty about our campus outcomes assessment process, and developing a plan to move forward.

Background

This assessment project was implemented to meet the two recommendations from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities regarding our campus assessment process.

- During March/April of 2016, the College Learning Outcomes Assessment Team rewrote the 8 Abilities (now the 5 College Learning Outcomes).
- My current work on assessment focuses on the recommendation that “*the College review the formative measures it uses to assess core themes, strategic priorities, Common Ground and the Eight Abilities and develop a summative assessment framework that could be effectively used as evidence to assess mission fulfillment (Standards 1.B, 2.C.1, 4.A, and 5.A)*”.

Work Completed

- January-April 2017: Research/reading to develop knowledge base around assessment processes and best practices and how other institutions conduct assessment
- February 2017: Conducted 9 focus groups with 31 faculty
- March 2017: Attended Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities training for preparing the mid-cycle accreditation report and site visit expectations
- April 2017: Attended American Association for Community Colleges conference sessions on closing the loop with Student Learning Outcomes, curriculum mapping, implementing active learning, and transforming teaching by establishing a habit of reflection

Work Currently in Progress

During the next ten weeks, I will draft a project management proposal and develop training materials to present to faculty during campus in-service days in August.

Possible Problems and Remedies

During the development and implementation of outcomes assessment training, we may discover that faculty are resistant to further changes in their current process and that some faculty will

require more training in curriculum mapping and active learning than previously anticipated. These issues can be addressed by:

- Surveying faculty before and after training to determine their level of comfort with the revised outcomes assessment process. Should faculty indicate discomfort post-training, we can schedule additional one-on-one training sessions to address their concerns.
- Offer additional open training sessions for curriculum mapping and any other areas of concern expressed during the initial training. Awarding continuing education units for this voluntary training may increase participation.

Future actions

This project will continue until the mid-cycle accreditation visit in March 2018. At that time, I expect to review the implementation plan and make adjustments based on the accreditors' recommendations.

Timeline:

- May-July 2017: develop training materials, draft forms and handbook, conduct syllabus analysis
- August 2017: Conduct training on outcomes assessment process and
- August 2017-December 2017: General Education departments develop mission statements, conduct departmental audits, create common course outlines
- January-February 2018: Write assessment portion of mid-cycle accreditation report in preparation for March site visit
- Post-accreditation site visit: Evaluate current implementation plan and adjust based on accreditors' recommendations

Memorandum

To: Dr. Heidi Pasek

Cc: Leanne Frost

From: Mandy Wright

Date: July 12, 2017

Subject: Progress Report on College Learning Outcomes Assessment Project

This summer I have focused my efforts on continuing to research best practices in outcomes assessment, conducting a syllabus audit of general education courses, and developing a plan to move forward with improving the assessment process on our campus during the 2017-2018 academic year.

Background

This assessment project was implemented to meet the two recommendations from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities regarding our campus assessment process.

- During March/April of 2016, the College Learning Outcomes Assessment Team rewrote the 8 Abilities (now the 5 College Learning Outcomes).
- My current work on assessment focuses on the recommendation that “the College review the formative measures it uses to assess core themes, strategic priorities, Common Ground and the Eight Abilities and develop a summative assessment framework that could be effectively used as evidence to assess mission fulfillment (Standards 1.B, 2.C.1, 4.A, and 5.A)”.

After completing an audit of all general education syllabi from AY 2016-2017, I discovered a number of concerns regarding both how outcomes assessment is presented on the alignment chart, as well as inconsistencies between different sections of the same courses. After making these observations, it is clear that our campus needs to take a step back and work to better align the course content and learning objectives of our general education courses before we can fully implement an improved outcomes assessment process.

Work Completed

- January-April 2017: Research/reading to develop knowledge base around assessment processes and best practices and how other institutions conduct assessment.
- February 2017: Conducted 9 focus groups with 31 faculty to understand their perception of and concerns with outcomes assessment on our campus.
- March 2017: Attended Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities training for preparing the mid-cycle accreditation report and site visit expectations.
- April 2017: Attended American Association for Community Colleges conference sessions on closing the loop with Student Learning Outcomes, curriculum mapping,

implementing active learning, and transforming teaching by establishing a habit of reflection.

- May 2017: Submitted list of recommendations for continuing work on the outcomes assessment process. Attended informational webinar on ETS HEIghten outcomes assessment suite.
- May-June 2017: Analyzed syllabi for all general education courses from fall 2016 and spring 2017 semesters. Contacted Reflective Learning Institute regarding their faculty cohort model, but have not received a response.
- June-July 2017: Continued researching best practices in outcomes assessment. Research focused primarily on The Outcome Primers Series 2.0.
- June-July 2017: Developed project management plan and timeline for AY 2017-2018.

Work Currently in Progress

I am currently working on developing the training materials to work with faculty in the General Education, Business, Technology, and Transfer Division. I am also partnering with Carli Cockrell and Sandy Bauman to develop presentation materials for the 2017 faculty institute on assessment.

Possible Problems and Remedies

During the development and implementation of outcomes assessment training, we may discover that faculty are resistant to further changes in their current process and that some faculty will require more training in curriculum mapping and active learning than previously anticipated. These issues can be addressed by:

- Maintaining a positive attitude and outlook on the process I will be asking faculty to move through. Encouraging faculty to approach this work as a form of scholarship and inquiry as they discover more about making learning outcomes focused rather than content focused.
- Surveying faculty before and after training to determine their level of comfort with the revised outcomes assessment process. Should faculty indicate discomfort post-training, I can schedule additional one-on-one discussion/training sessions to address their concerns.
- Offer additional open training sessions for curriculum mapping and any other areas of concern expressed during the initial training. Awarding continuing education units for this voluntary training may increase participation. Including the eLearning Instructional Designers in these open training sessions is essential.

Future actions

This phase of the project will continue until the mid-cycle accreditation visit in March 2018. At that time, I expect to review the implementation plan and make adjustments based on the accreditors' recommendations. I am also hoping to develop a learning community of faculty

interested in focusing more on assessment and reflective practice. Ideally, this group would start by reading *Taking College Teaching Seriously: Pedagogy Matters!* (Mellow, 2015). This would be a significant step in building a culture of assessment on our campus. I plan to revisit the ETS HEIghten outcomes assessment suite later in the year once the company has developed more modules for learning outcomes. After engaging in the work I have planned for fall, I expect to have a clearer idea of how this tool might serve us as a form of institutional assessment.

Timeline:

- July-August 2017: finish developing training materials for general education course audits.
- August 2017: Conduct training on outcomes assessment process and present assessment plan to General Education faculty during first Division meeting. Encourage faculty collaboration.
- September 2017: Meet with Curriculum Committee to share assessment plan overview and request that they serve as the outcomes assessment advisory board.
- August 2017-December 2017: General Education division and departments develop mission statements, conduct departmental audits, create common course outlines. Faculty develop assessment tasks to meet course learning objectives and map course objectives to AA/AS program outcomes and CLOs.
- December 2017-January 2018: Write assessment portion of mid-cycle accreditation report in preparation for March site visit.
- Spring 2018 semester: General Education faculty develop plans for assessment tasks and tools to implement for AY 2018-2019. Gauge faculty interest in creating a learning community around *Taking College Teaching Seriously: Pedagogy Matters!* (Mellow, 2015).
- Post-accreditation site visit: Evaluate current implementation plan and adjust based on accreditors' recommendations.
- Ongoing: Gather information for and draft outcomes assessment handbook/guidelines, including a list of shared vocabulary and terms. Work with eLearning to develop repository of videos and resources on outcomes assessment. Continue working with faculty on understanding and using different types of assessment (formative/summative, direct/indirect) for different purposes. Revisit ETS HEIghten tool.