

# Assessment Updates

Newsletter from the Office of Assessment & Program Review

*“Each institution that responds to the call for assessment of student academic achievement seizes the opportunity to more fully achieve its unique mission and educational goals.” (Lopez, 1996, p.20)*

## What is Assessment of Student Learning?

Judgments made about assessment programs by Consultant-Evaluators from the Higher Learning Commission (e.g., North Central Association) are very similar across types of institutions (Lopez, 1996). The similarity in judgments still occurs regardless of the evaluator’s home institution: “public-private, size of student body, number of years, level or kinds of degrees awarded, level of financial resources, or geographical location” (pg.19). This trend indicates that faculty within the North Central Accreditation (NCA) region, “collectively and as individuals share an understanding of what constitutes good practice in programs for the assessment of student learning. This shared understanding also

reflects an underlying agreement on the meaning and value of assessment congruent with the following recently published definition of assessment drafted by the Director of the Assessment Forum at the American Association for Higher Education and refined by educators across the nation:

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to docu-

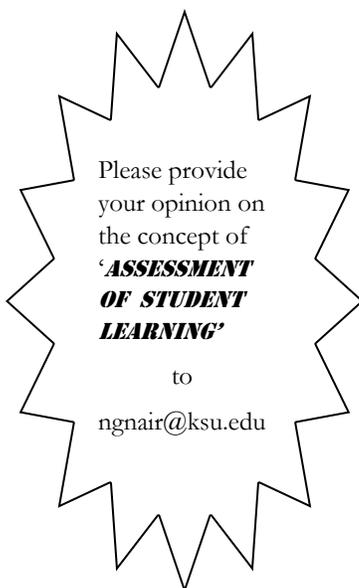
ment, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within the larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education (Angelo, 1995).” (Lopez, 1996, p.19-20)

Source:

\* Lopez, Cecilia L., *Opportunities for improvement: Advice for Consultant Evaluators on Program to Assess Student Learning* March 1996, pg.18-20;

<http://www.ncacihe.org/resources/assessment/>

\* Angelo, Thomas A., *AAHE Bulletin*, November 1995, p.7 (secondary source)



## NCA: Expectations for K-State

In 2002, K-State was reaccredited by the North Central Association (NCA) of the Higher Learning Commission for another 10 years, however, two main areas that need improvement are: (1) Assessment of student learning, and (2) Diversity education. Thus, the institution was granted reaccreditation with the *condition* that an Assessment Focused Visit will be conducted in spring 2005.

NCA’s observations in the 2001 Site Visit

“The K-State assessment program is in its infancy; the sup-

porting infrastructure has not been fully developed. A year ago, the provost appointed the associate provost for Planning and Analysis to the position of director of the newly created Office of Assessment and Program Review. The director’s role is to coordinate and monitor assessment efforts on a half-time basis.

However, a year is not enough time to develop the structures needed for (a) educating the University community about assessment, (b) providing administrative leadership that will lead to embedding the

assessment process in the institutional culture, and (c) ensuring the sustainability of the assessment program.

In terms of the Higher Learning Commission’s Levels of Implementation in Assessment Matrix, K-State is functioning primarily at level one, Beginning Implementation of Assessment Programs. In some areas, the institutions are showing some characteristics of level two, Making Progress in Implementing Assessment Programs,

(continued on back)

♠ Have an interesting assessment story to share?  
 ♠ Need more information on assessment?  
 ♠ Need to contact us?  
**Please call or email**  
 Patricia Marsh  
 (Coordinator, Office of APR)  
 at  
[pmarsh@k-state.edu](mailto:pmarsh@k-state.edu)  
 or  
 785-532-5712



## *NCA: Expectations for K-State* (from page 1)

(e.g., Shared Responsibility—Administration, Institutional Support—Resources). However, these characteristics result from recent changes in the University's assessment program, and they are not typical of overall functioning.

### Rationale and Expectations

The team recognizes and commends the many accomplishments in assessment found in various disciplines/departments at K-State. Nevertheless, in evaluating the matrix of assessment characteristics, the Team finds that K-State is at the beginning level of implementing assessment program across the University, with little evidence of making much progress beyond the beginning level. There is also some evidence that

student learning outcome assessment is being confused with other forms of evaluation such as academic program review, accreditation, etc.

The team recommends a focused visit to evaluate whether the institution is making progress in implementing a program to assess student learning outcomes. By the time of the focused visit in 2005, there should be evidence that K-State is moving toward maturing levels of continuous improvement and that faculty, students, and administrators across the University are involved in the assessment process."

### Source:

NCA's Final Report for K-State, 2001, Section 2, pp. 11-14  
<http://www.k-state.edu/provost/academic/nca/>

### Related articles:

"Levels of implementation" guidelines (in Addendum to Handbook of Accreditation, Second Edition)

Lopez, Cecilia L., *Assessing Student Learning, Using the Commission's Levels of Implementation*

<http://www.ncacihe.org/resources/assessment/>

Congratulations to those departments who submitted their Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). As of

January 30th, 2004,

82% of Associates,

90% of Bachelors,

86% of Masters,

and

94% of Doctorate

degree programs

have submitted

their SLOs

## *Upcoming Events*

**\*\* February 13—27, 2004: GTA Communication Survey:** All Graduate Teaching Assistants –GTAs (and GRAs if they have substantial teaching responsibilities) teaching for the first time at K-State are reviewed to assess their communication skills in the classroom/ lab. The review is conducted early in the semester to detect and address communication difficulties early. Thirty four graduate students (GTAs and GRAs with substantial teaching responsibilities) will be surveyed this semester. For further information on the GTA Communication Survey, contact Patricia Marsh (pmarsh@k-state.edu).

**\*\* February, 2004: NSSE :** A sample of 1,500 freshmen and 1,500 seniors will be electronically surveyed starting February 17th. The email will be from Provost Coffman. The NSSE examines everything from faculty participation in the learning environment to how many papers students write. After the survey is completed and the data analyzed, K-State will be able to compare itself to similar institutions all across the country, and to data collected in 2001. Questions about the survey should be directed to the APR office.

**\*\* February 21-22, 2005: NCA focused visit to K-State:** The North Central Association—NCA's Focus visit will include reviewing and evaluating KSU's progress on assessment. A committee is being formed to advise and ensure that NCA's concerns are being addressed in the self-study report. This report is being drafted by members of the APR office. The committee has representatives from Faculty Senate (3), Student Senate (1), Dean's council (1), and from the Student Services & Student Life (1).



### Future Newsletters will focus on:

"Principles of Good practice of Assessing Student Learning."

American Higher Association of Higher Education

"Some characteristics of a good assessment plan." Concordia College;

Ball State University; Higher Learning Commission (NCA)

## Inside Story Headline



*Caption describing picture or graphic.*

## Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 100-150 words.

The subject matter that appears in newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field.

You may also want to note business or economic trends,

or make predictions for your customers or clients.

If the newsletter is distributed internally, you might comment upon new procedures or improvements to the business. Sales figures or earnings will show how your business is growing.

Some newsletters include a

column that is updated every issue, for instance, an advice column, a book review, a letter from the president, or an editorial. You can also profile new employees or top customers or vendors.

**"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."**

## Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 75-125 words.

Selecting pictures or graphics is an important part of adding content to your newsletter.

Think about your article and ask yourself if the picture supports or enhances the message you're trying to convey. Avoid

selecting images that appear to be out of context.

Microsoft Publisher includes thousands of clip art images from which you can choose and import into your newsletter. There are also several tools you can use to draw shapes and symbols.

Once you have chosen an image, place it close to the article. Be sure to place the caption of the image near the image.



*Caption describing picture or graphic.*

# KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

*Primary Business Address*

*Your Address Line 2*

*Your Address Line 3*

*Your Address Line 4*

*Phone: 555-555-5555*

*Fax: 555-555-5555*

*E-mail: someone@example.com*

*This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.*

*It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.*

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**We're on the Web!**

**example.microsoft.com**

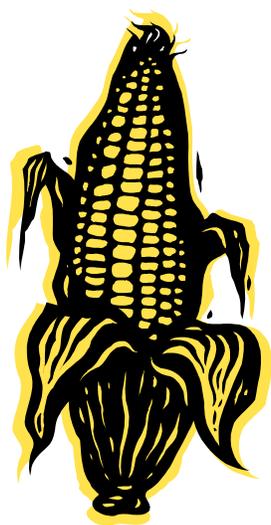
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Your business tag line here.



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## *Back Page Story Headline*



*Caption describing picture or graphic.*

This story can fit 175-225 words.

If your newsletter is folded and mailed, this story will appear on the back. So, it's a good idea to make it easy to read at a glance.

A question and answer session is a good way to quickly capture the attention of readers. You can either compile questions that you've received since the last edition or you can summarize some generic questions that are frequently asked about your organization.

A listing of names and titles of managers in your organization

is a good way to give your newsletter a personal touch. If your organization is small, you may want to list the names of all employees.

If you have any prices of standard products or services, you can include a listing of those here. You may want to refer your readers to any other forms of communication that you've created for your organization.

You can also use this space to remind readers to mark their calendars for a regular event, such as a breakfast meeting for vendors every third Tuesday of the month, or a biannual char-

ity auction.

If space is available, this is a good place to insert a clip art image or some other graphic.