

Assessment Updates

Newsletter from the Office of Assessment

NCA affirms K-State's progress on assessment

"The momentum of change to an assessment culture was evident to the team and we have every confidence that the institution will be at a mature stage of continuous improvement across all units in the next two-to-three years.

- NCA Focused Visit Report, 2005

The NCA Evaluation Team that came to K-State in 2005 for a focused visit on assessment finds substantial evidence that K-State is making significant progress in implementing a program to assess student learning. The Team observes that the university is now moving towards maturing levels of continuous improvement. No further Commission follow-up is recommended.

Overall, the Team commended the faculty, administration and student participation in current assessment efforts across the university. The following is some evidence cited by the Team to support its recommendation:

- Student learning outcomes (SLOs) have been defined at the university level and in almost all academic pro-

grams and many support programs. Most units are gathering assessment data or will begin measurements in 2005, including the graduate programs. Some are into continuous improvement.

- The administration and faculty have teamed up to set up structures to educate faculty on assessment and to provide assistance in implementing an effective assessment program.
- The Faculty Senate has endorsed the University SLOs and SLOs for student services have been created. This indicates more buy-in across the institution and agreement about the types of information that constitute an effective outcomes assessment strategy. The system has ample provisions for

flexibility in defining and assessing the outcomes.

- Discussions with K-State constituents reveal a coherent widespread understanding that the purpose of assessment is the continuous improvement of student learning. There is also an understanding of the relationship between assessment, academic program review and accreditation.
- Students are being represented in various committees and faculty members are stating SLOs in their programs and syllabi.

K-State is urged, however, to make more improvement on the assessment of general education and distance learning programs and to increase the involvement of students in our assessment efforts.

ASSISTING EACH OTHER IN ASSESSMENT

Departments sharing their success stories, challenges, and questions or specific needs for assistance through our newsletter can help others across campus.

Please feel free to share short articles and news (which should be around 175-400 words). Send them to Cia Verschelden at cia@ksu.edu.

Departments share annual progress reports

Some departments in various stages in their assessment of student learning have offered to share their annual progress reports of student learning, to serve as examples or assist those in other departments. Data are being collected in

these degree programs and assessment findings are used in various ways.

To measure the 'value added' of learning key management concepts from entry to exit, the Management and Manage-

ment Information Systems programs are establishing benchmarks by creating an exam drawn from three courses and giving them to freshmen and senior business majors. Sample case reports
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Annual Progress Reports on Assessment of Student Learning

The following are the key points that will be addressed in the Annual Progress Report for each learning outcome assessed in the year 2004-2005 for those academic degree programs that have begun the process:

- What student learning outcomes were assessed during 2004-2005?

- What forms of evidence were gathered to assess the extent to which students learned?
- What were the results of the assessment?
- How has the evidence or information gathered been used for improvement?

- To what extent have the improvements worked (or are working)?

A template for the progress reports and rubric for reviewing the progress reports are available at Office of Assessment website, <http://www.k-state.edu/assessment/manual/template/index.htm>.

Key Dates

- March 1— Annual Progress Reports of Assessment of Student Learning due to Deans
- June 1— College Summary Reports due to the Provost

Departments share reports (cont. from page 1)

evaluated on a rubric are used to assess problem-solving and management decision skills. The same tests are being planned again for next year.

The Apparel, Textiles and Interior Design program chose measures embedded in their classes: a sample of relevant questions from an exam to assess textile and materials knowledge, and combined laboratory, exam and evaluation project assignments for juniors and seniors, to assess product evaluation knowledge. The assessment findings made

the faculty reflect on, among other things, the alignment of these learning outcomes with current course materials and assignments, and the chosen assessment methods. The results are being used by the faculty to improve specific elements in course implementation and to refine or create new assessment measures.

Samples of student work were taken from designated classes at the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications. Faculty other than the course instructors use vari-

ous rubrics to assess the SLOs. The results indicate the strengths in student learning as well as identifying specific course content that might need more emphasis. Results from an on-line exit survey of seniors led the program to develop a printed curriculum guide, improve their website to reflect curriculum changes and create an easy-to-use advising guide for faculty members.

The Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering program is engaged in a continuous improvement cycle and changes

have been made in the past six years as a result of assessment. These include curricular changes (e.g., adding or reducing hours, dropping or adding classes, improving emphasis on some areas in courses, increased credit hours for tech electives), improvement in student advising, laboratory and classroom upgrades and more involvement of students in professional societies.

Students respond to GTA Communication Survey

Graduate teaching assistants (GTA) play an important role in supporting instruction at K-State, especially at the undergraduate level. To provide the highest quality of instruction and to evaluate their performance in the classroom, the GTA communication survey

was developed to provide first-time GTAs feedback on their classroom communication skills. The GTA survey is designed to assess the first-time GTA's ability to understand and be understood by students. Students enrolled in the over-30 lecture and labora-

tory classes responded to the survey, which were administered during the week of February 20, 2006. Those departments that have first-time GTAs and have not been contacted about the survey are asked to contact the Office of Assessment immediately.

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We're on the Web!

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