Assessment Newsletter
Fall 2011

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Important Dates for Fall 2011

November 14  ●  Biennial Reports due to the Assessment Office (credential programs)
December 5  ●  Annual Reports due to the Assessment Office (degree-only programs)
December 22  ●  Signature assignment data and exemplars due to the Assessment Office

Assessment FOR Students

We talk about doing assessment for accreditation or program improvement – and we do. But what about another, far more important reason: for our students? While better programs do help our students, there are other more direct ways they gain from our hard work on assessment:

- **Transparency:** Our SLOs and curriculum maps, when shared with students, make our programs’ goals, expectations, and design transparent to them. So do SLOs and rubrics with clear criteria. While this helps all students, first-generation students may be most likely to benefit from these plainly stated expectations that serve as a road map to success.

- **Transfer of Learning:** When transparency makes visible the connections we see among courses, students are empowered to take ownership for their own transfer of learning across courses as well.

- **Metacognition:** Clear goals and standards can help students learn how to evaluate their own work, fostering skills for lifelong learning and the ability to learn how to learn. Consider having students use the rubrics you have to evaluate their own work or that of peers before submitting it to you.

- **Reflection and Analysis:** Clear outcomes and expectations can be used to engage our students in conversations about expectations, challenges in meeting the expectations, and program effectiveness, fostering habits of reflection and analysis we expect our graduates to display in their own practice.

- **Role Modeling:** Most of our students go to work in education or related non-profits, where they are expected to assess progress and outcomes, work with data, and make changes to improve their programs. Our assessment work models good professional practice – a key element of our goal to prepare professionals with a complete set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

While assessment takes time and effort, it has the potential to not only help our programs but to benefit our individual students directly as well. More than accreditation, more than program improvement, perhaps this is the best reason to do it.
Assessment-related Services

- Data entry
- Data analysis and reporting
- Online
- Scannable paper surveys

Contact the Assessment Office for help in planning and implementing assessment-related data collection.

It’s About the Conversation

It is when program faculty come together to review, discuss and interpret the learning outcomes data they collect that the assessment process gains meaning. Data collection is really a means to an end: the conversation among colleagues that results in ongoing program improvement. Here are some tips to have a productive data discussion with your colleagues:

- Forward data to faculty in advance so they can review the data before the meeting
- Carve out a time-certain on the agenda to discuss the data
- Focus on a specific outcome and drill down into the data:
  - What are you pleased with?
  - What concerns do you have? (if none, move to the next outcome)
  - What do criteria-level data suggest about those concerns?
  - What do you see when you review student work exemplars?
  - What do faculty think based on their own experiences with students?
- Plan your actions

You can find the college’s Data Discussion Guide at: http://www.ced.csulb.edu/assessment/data-discussion-guide

Using Comprehensive Exam Data for Program Improvement

- Have a “debrief” as a program faculty right after you’re done scoring. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the exams? You could easily do this online – no meeting necessary. Whatever format you choose, be sure to capture the key points so you can include them in your annual report and use your ideas for program improvement.
- Hold on to a selection of exams across a range of scores. At a faculty meeting, review these examples. What differentiates a solid “4” exam from a solid “2” exam in terms of strengths and weaknesses? What struggles do you see that your rubric didn’t capture? In what ways is an exam that got all high scores across readers different from one that had more variability across readers?

Assessment Office Contact Information

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Important Links

AO web site: http://www.ced.csulb.edu/assessment/
Your Program Assessment Documents: https://www.ced.csulb.edu/accreditation/assessment-documents-program

90% of faculty have collaborated with colleagues to identify one or more signature assignments for their program
(Source: UAS Survey, Fall 2010)

86% of faculty have discussed SLOs, signature assignments, and/or student performance data with students in classes
(Source: UAS Survey, Fall 2010)