Assessment of Student Learning at Wittenberg

I. Definitions and Governing Principles

Academic program refers to any organized set of requirements larger than the course level and smaller than the degree: majors, minors, concentrations, tracks, themes, as well as general education.

Program assessment refers to an ongoing evaluation at the program/department/office level on the full range of the program’s budgets, staffing, activities, initiatives, and planning. Program assessment’s chief purpose is to keep both the program’s members and the chief academic officer up to date on the program’s activities and needs. Such reports are made annually to the Provost, who in turns shares them with others as needed.

Assessment of student learning refers to the ongoing evaluation of student achievement of the learning outcomes of a given program. In learning assessment, direct assessment refers to the direct evaluation of students’ learning (such as in comprehensive examinations, senior portfolios, external standardized exams.) Indirect assessment refers to learning gains reported by students or reported by faculty, such as in surveys. Such assessment should be ongoing, with reports to the Assessment Committee and the Provost filed every four years.

Learning outcomes refer to that which every student completing a given program should learn: skills, knowledge, understandings. Every department/interdepartmental program must have learning outcomes in place for each major/minor for which it is responsible. The words “goals” and “outcomes” tend to be used differently in different disciplines. Good assessment reports will make clear the distinction, and will operationalize the terms for their own programs.

Wittenberg’s program for the assessment of student learning operates on a four-year cycle. Responsibility for submitting quadrennial assessment reports rests with each department or interdepartmental program (including the School of Community Education and General Education) responsible for a major/minor/concentration/track. In those cases, administrative responsibility rests with the chair. In the case of the General Education program, the responsibility rests with the General Education Advisory Committee, and the administrative responsibility lies with the Director of General Education. In the case of the School of Community Education, the responsibility rests with the Communication Education Committee and the administrative responsibility rests with the Dean of the School of Community Education.

Maintenance of assessment records is the responsibility of the Office of the Provost.

If the Assessment Committee concludes that national or state professional standards meet the requirements for assessment at Wittenberg, those standards may be used, all or in part, in place of the Wittenberg assessment model herein described. The department or program chair may contact the Committee chair to explore this possibility.
II. Schedules for Assessment Reporting

Quadrennial Reports. While every program should collect assessment data annually, formal reports on that information and its interpretation should be submitted every fourth year, by August 1st.

Group A: Report due on August 1st 2013, 2017, etc.
- Art (BA: Art major with concentration in Studio Art; Art major with concentration in Art History; BFA; minor in Art History, minor in Studio Art)
- General Education: Speaking, Computing, Research
- Geography (major with tracks in Environmental, GIS, Urban Planning; minor with tracks in General/Regional, Environmental, Urban Planning)
- History (major, Integrated Social Studies major, minor)
- Philosophy (major and minor)
- Premodern and Ancient Studies (minor)
- Psychology (majors leading to BA, to BS, minor)
- Religion (major, major combing with another subject, minor)
- Sports Management (minor and major)

Group B: Report due on August 1st, 2014, 2018, etc.
- African and Diaspora Studies (minor)
- American Studies (major and minor)
- Cinema Studies (minor)
- Communication (major and minor)
- East Asian Studies (major and minor)
- Environmental Science (BA major, BS major, minor with tracks in Policy & Management, Earth Science, Life Sciences)
- Environmental Studies (minor)
- General Education: Goals A, B/N, S
- International Studies (major with tracks in Diplomacy, International Economics, Global Issues & Cultures, African and Diaspora Studies, Peace Corps Preparations
- Russian and Central Eurasian Studies major and minor
- Organizational Leadership (major) (School of Community Education)
- Urban Studies (minor)
- Women’s Studies (minor)

Group C: Report due on August 1st 2015, 2019, etc.
- Accounting (major and minor)
- Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (major and minor)
- Biology: (BA major, BS major, Biology minor, Marine Science minor)
- Business (major with concentrations in Entrepreneurship, Finance, Management, Marketing Communication; minor)
- Chemistry (BA major, BS major, minor)
- Computational Science (minor)
• Computer Science (BA major, BS major, minor)
• English (major, minor, Creative Writing minor, Journalism minor)
• General Education: Goals H, L, P, R
• Health Science (minor)
• Languages (Majors and minors in French, German Studies, Spanish; minors in Chinese, Japanese, Russian)
• Mathematics (BA major, BS major, minor in Mathematics, minor in Statistics)
• Neuroscience (minor)
• Political Science (major and minor)

Group D: Report due on August 1st 2012, 2016, etc.
• Criminology and Criminal Justice
• Economics (major and minor)
• Education (majors with licensure tracks in Early Childhood Education, Middle Grade, dual licensure in Early Childhood Education and Intervention Specialist; Chemistry Teacher Licensure, Physics Teacher Licensure, minor)
• Financial Economics (major)
• General Education Goals: E (including W), F, Q (including M),
• Geology (BA major, BS major, Earth Science major, minor)
• Music (majors leading to BA, BME, minor)
• Physics (majors leading to BA and BS, minor)
• Sociology (major and minor)
• Theatre& Dance (major in Theater, major in Dance, minors in Technical Theater, Theater Performance, Dance)

The Academic Year Assessment Schedule

September preceding the August 1 deadline:
For the purpose of providing guidance, a meeting shall be organized between members of the Assessment Committee and the Chairs/Directors of programs who will submit quadrennial reports by the following August, per the schedule above.

October preceding the August 1 deadline:
The program’s faculty should meet to discuss tasks necessary to complete in order to file the report and to file it on time.

No later than March preceding the August 1 deadline:
The program’s faculty should convene to discuss a draft of the report and to determine what work remains to complete the report. While responsibility for submitting the final report rests with the chair, the actual writing may be done by the chair or by a departmental designee.

No later than August 1, per the schedule above:
The program files its Assessment of Student Learning Quadrennial Report with the Provost’s Office, which forwards the report to the Assessment Committee.
September-December following the August 1 deadline:
The Assessment Committee processes quadrennial reports submitted the previous August 1.

January 31 following the August 1 deadline:
The Assessment Committee provides written responses, no more than one page in length each, to the departments/programs who submitted reports, with copies to the Provost.

February 28 following the August 1 deadline:
Optional: Departments/programs file responses to the Assessment Committee response.

March following the August 1 deadline:
The August 1 reports, along with the January 31 responses, are posted on the online Assessment webpage maintained by the Provost’s Office.

III. The Assessment of Student Learning Report

Each academic program develops learning outcomes and chooses curricular requirements designed to foster the achievement of those learning objectives. Assessment of student learning should answer the question, "How do we know that those learning outcomes are consistently achieved?"

All requirements, including all general education requirements met through the major, must be assessed.

The department's or program's student learning assessment should include all of the following:

1. A brief, basic profile of the program: degrees served (BA, BFA, BME, BS); major and minor programs offered; typical annual number of full-time faculty and adjunct faculty; typical number of grads per year in each program.

2. The program’s learning outcomes and requirements, the program gates, the program assessment methods utilized for each outcome, and the changes in the preceding that have occurred during the previous four years.

3. Graphs, tables or charts showing all program related courses and how the sequence of courses aligns with the program learning outcomes.

4. Statements of course and program assessment findings from 1, 2, and 3 above and the evidentiary bases for those findings over the four-year period. This statement can combine narrative with charts, can combine qualitative with quantitative evidence, and may utilize both direct and indirect assessment techniques.

5. A list of any newly identified program goals since the last assessment report, based on the above described course and program assessment findings, with an explanation of how the evidence supported or produced contrary results.
6. A statement of changes in goals, objectives, outcomes, requirements, or practices that the program has identified for future and previous implementation and/or the preparation of this assessment report.

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE IN THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING REPORT

1. Enrollment statistics beyond those cited above
2. Budgetary information
3. Information on faculty accomplishments
4. Personnel evaluations
5. Requests for faculty lines or information in support of such requests

EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

Direct Assessment (always explaining how the technique aligns with the program’s learning outcomes and requirements)

Comprehensive senior examinations (oral, written)

Capstone projects and/or presentations
Non-capstone, signature projects/presentations/assignments/tests that occur before the senior year

External standardized tests (such as GREs, MCATs, GMATs, LSATs, PRAXIS II, Subject Area Tests)

Assessments of previous course work embedded in subsequent course work (such as beginning of term tests, application of techniques or methodologies learned in a previous course, application of skills learned in a previous course)

Program gates. (Entrance interviews, auditions, program entry interviews or evaluations, review of GPA at certain program points, admission into a program, juries)

Indirect Assessment

Surveys of professors concerning the content of their own courses

Surveys of professors concerning their impressions of student learning in courses they did not teach but which relate to the course(s) they do teach

Surveys of students about learning opportunities they encountered

Surveys of graduates

Surveys of employers
IV. The Assessment Committee Response

The Assessment Committee reviews the submission during the fall. It may ask additional questions of the department/program during those deliberations, and will file a written response with the department/program and the Provost no later than January 31. In its one-page response, the committee will indicate whether it finds the department or program’s assessment work Satisfactory or Needs Work. In unusual cases, it may recommend to the Provost that the annual report needs to be resubmitted the following August. The decision on whether to require a second submission rests with the Provost.

Program and department reports will be posted on a webpage, with links to both the DSAs and the responses of the Assessment Committee to those DSAs. The webpage will serve as a resource for department and program chairs, and as a location for easy access to past reports for accrediting agencies and others interested in documenting assessment efforts at Wittenberg.