ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING AT WITTENBERG

(Faculty Manual, 2015-2016, pages 239-243)

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.

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 Committee on Assessment of Student Academic Achievement (referred to hereafter as 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 responsible for a major/minor/concentration/track. In those cases, administrative responsibility rests with the chair or program director. 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 major/minor programs administered through the School of Community Education, the responsibility rests with the Community 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.
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. The Schedule of Program Reports is available on the [Assessment resources website](#).

**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 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.

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

**March 15 following the August 1 deadline:**
Optional: Departments/programs file responses to the Assessment Committee response.

**April following the August 1 deadline:**
The Academic Program quadrennial reports, along with the final Assessment Committee responses, are posted electronically In MyWitt under Assessment Information maintained by the Provost’s Office.
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?”

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 graduates per year in each program.
2. The program's learning outcomes/goals, including the General Education foundational goals that should be met in the major (i.e., computing, diversity, research, and speaking).
3. The program's requirements for each major and minor, all general education courses, and any program gates (see examples below).
4. Graphs, tables or charts showing all program-related courses and how the sequence of courses aligns with the program learning outcomes.
5. The program assessment methods utilized for each outcome.
6. The changes in the preceding (1-5) that have occurred during the previous four years, describing especially any changes that were implemented based upon findings in the previous assessment, and describing the impact of those changes on student learning.
7. Statements of course and program assessment findings 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.
8. A statement of changes in goals, objectives, outcomes, requirements, or practices that the program has identified for future implementation as a result of this assessment.

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)
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- 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

The Assessment Committee Response

The Assessment Committee reviews the Assessment of Student Learning report 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.

If the department or program submits a response to the Assessment Committee response, then the Assessment Committee may revise its original response (especially if there was a misunderstanding) or append the Department/Program response to the original response. This change will be considered the final Assessment Committee response.

Program and department reports will be posted electronically, with links to both the Assessment of Student Learning Reports and the final responses of the Assessment Committee. The posted reports and responses will serve as resources for department chairs and program directors, and will be made available to accrediting agencies and others interested in documenting assessment efforts at Wittenberg.