Academic Assessment Council
2018-2019 Annual Report

Executive Summary

The Academic Assessment Council, formed in May 2018, has continued to meet twice per month under the leadership of the Interim Director of Assessment. This is the second yearly report submitted by the committee, whose membership includes faculty and administrators. The committee's charge is to develop and implement assessment processes and reporting timelines for academic programs in all four colleges that comprise the university, as well as to provide feedback and guidance on the use of assessment data to enhance the student experience and ensure and improve student learning.

These processes and timelines had a positive effect on the University's academic assessment activity. In one year, all programs collected assessment data on at least one student learning outcome, and almost all programs collected assessment data on all of their program student learning outcomes. We use our assessment software, Nuventive, to store information and generate useful reports. Most importantly, academic programs are using assessment data to make changes with the goal of positively impacting student learning, examples of which appear in this report. The Academic Assessment Council and department assessment committees and groups are improving the assessment process by refining rubrics, rethinking measures, and revisiting curriculum maps. Throughout the year, increased transparency and communication have helped to share ideas and foster a culture of assessment. The report concludes with a set of recommendations that are intended to make assessment more sustainable, effective, and student-centered, and thus serve as a guidepost for the upcoming academic year.

General Education assessment is conducted by the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC.) GEAC submits an annual report to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Spring 2019 report was submitted in October 2019.

Progress since last report

Successes and challenges

After being placed on warning by Middle States in June 2018, Kutztown University embarked on a plan to create a culture of assessment using evidence to improve the educational environment for our students. In June 2019, Middle States issued the following action: "To reaffirm accreditation because the institution is now in compliance with Standard V (Educational Effectiveness Assessment)." The following assessment achievements were begun starting in June 2018 and the University continues to work to maintain a culture of assessment.

- The number of individuals and groups of individuals involved in assessments has increased substantially.
- We established a campus-wide effort to educate ourselves about best practices in assessment.

- We identified expectations about appropriate assessments, especially that assessments are used for continuous improvement, and we are holding ourselves accountable.
- We developed a systematic, organized process for conducting assessments, and have applied this system twice, to the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years.
- All programs have Student Learning Outcomes, as well as methods and measures for assessing those outcomes, and have collected program assessment data in 2018-2019.
- All academic programs align learning outcomes with the designated Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (which are the General Education Outcomes.)
- New Institutional Student Learning Outcomes have been drafted and are being discussed by campus constituencies. These new outcomes are designed with the University's graduate programs in mind, in addition to the undergraduate programs.
- We increased transparency in our assessment work and encouraged collaboration within and across divisions and departments.
- We see a campus commitment to engaging in assessment and improving the education we provide our students.

As these accomplishments demonstrate, Kutztown University has made great strides in the assessment of program student learning outcomes. We would like continue this progress by making changes that allow for a practical, sustainable assessment process. The cycle and deadlines for assessment will be adapted, to allow programs to assess their student learning outcomes over a period of three years. Annual assessment reports will be due in the fall semester, to allow programs more time to discuss and analyze results and to determine how to use those results to make improvements to increase student learning. Professional development will continue, through two annual assessment days, occasional workshops, and a redesigned website. The goal and focus will always be to gather useful data and to use that data to improve student progress toward learning outcomes.

<p style="text-align:center">Professional Development</p>

Throughout AY 18-19, the Office of Assessment and the Academic Assessment Council organized 11 short (one-two hours in length) workshops to assist faculty and staff in understanding and implementing sound assessment practices. All sessions were recorded and posted on the Office of Assessment website, along with any materials that were distributed during the workshop.
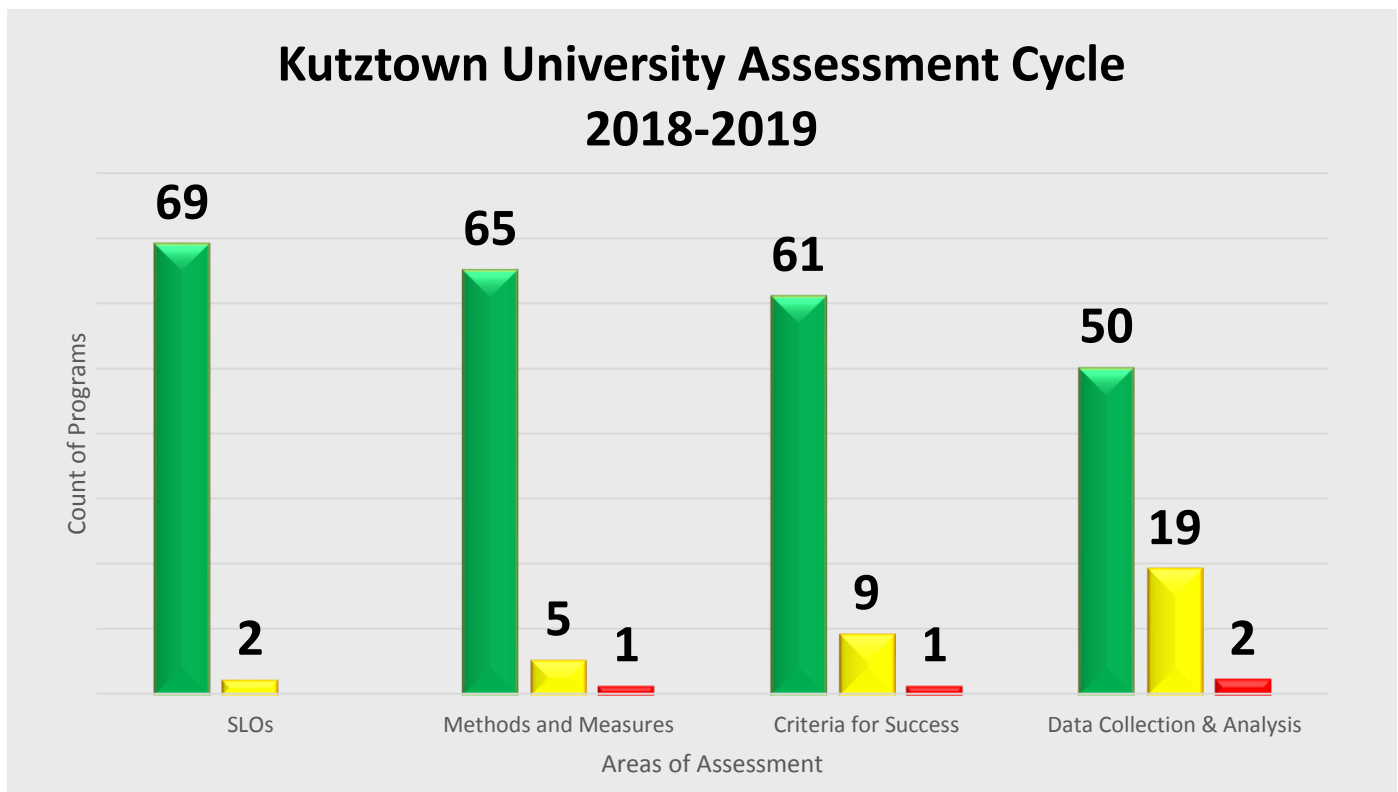
Furthermore, we re-instituted Autumn and January Assessment Days. In September 2018, assessment consultant and author, Linda Suskie, spent a day at Kutztown University meeting with various campus constituents. After her visit, the Office of Assessment supplied every department and dean's office with two books, both of which were authored by Suskie. In January, sessions were led by two KU deans, the chair of the General Education Assessment Committee, and the Vice President for Administration and Finance. Workshops targeted academic, as well as administrative units. Attendance was significant at both Assessment Day events.
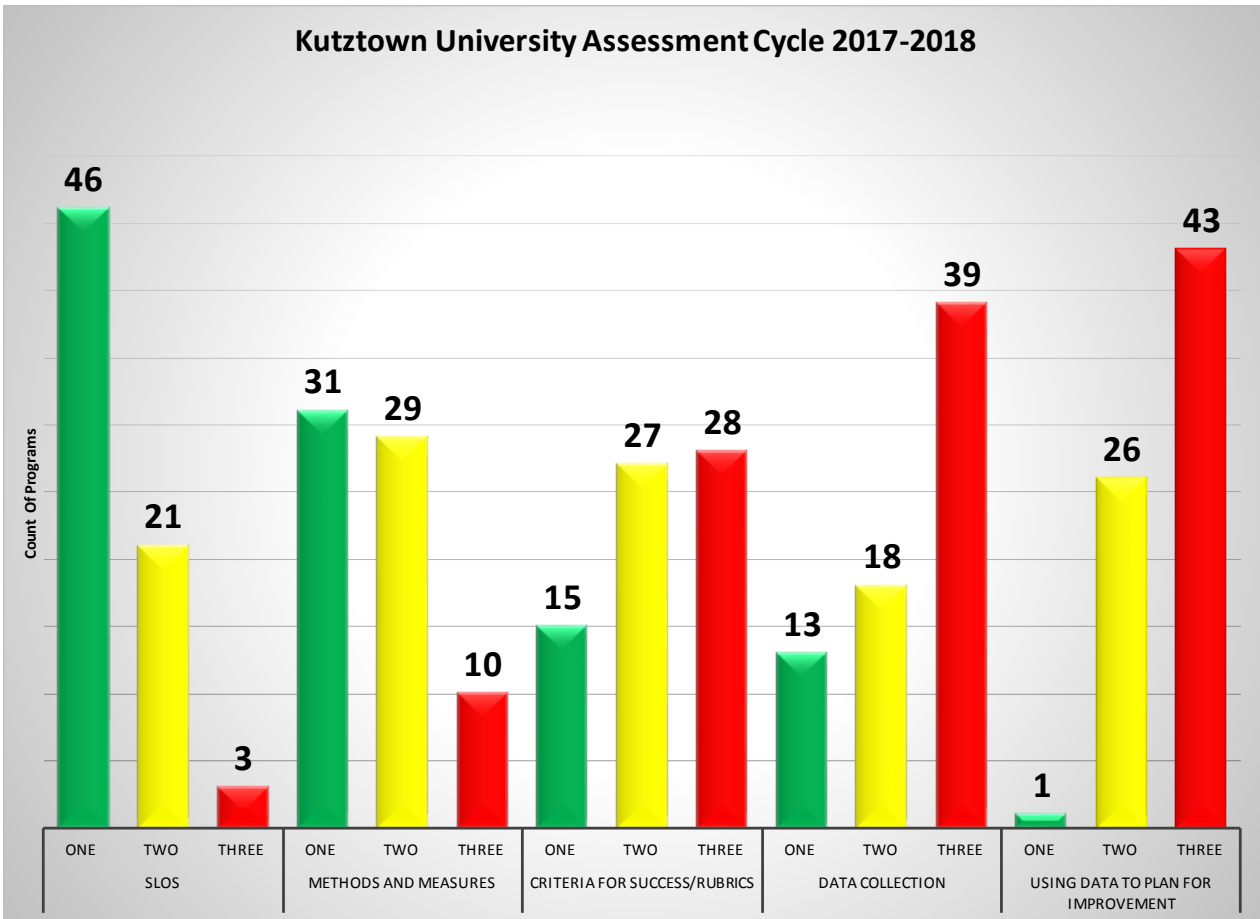
The Office of Assessment and the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects continued to dedicate resources to further assessment practices and to foster a culture of evidence-based decision-making at the university by means of the Assessment Grants program. Four of these grants, which have a maximum amount of $5,000 each, were awarded during the academic year. Upon completion of the work detailed in the grant, the investigators are required to submit a summary report to the Interim Director of Assessment.

Finally, through a program organized by the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching (CET), ten faculty fellows participated in a Summer Institute whose purpose was to develop and implement an innovative approach to the teaching of a course, or a core course component, and to design an assessment plan to gauge the impact of the new approach.

Charting our Progress

The following charts show the significant progress made in the assessment of Student Learning Outcomes by KU's academic programs. In the 2018-2019 chart, the data was gathered by using this rubric to evaluate the annual assessment reports submitted by academic programs in June 2019. The work was rated by multiple members of the Academic Assessment Council. A different set of criteria (somewhat simpler) was used to gather the data for the 2017-2018 chart. In both charts, a rating of "red" meant that the program simply did not have that component. One program was red in three categories in 2018-2019, General Studies, a unique program in which students design their own major. The other program that was in the red in 2018-2019, Student Affairs, is going through significant program and personnel changes, and will be prepared to complete all parts of the assessment cycle in the next year. The yellow category was chosen if a particular dimension on the Academic Assessment Council rubric was missing some essential elements. Green was awarded to items meeting all criteria for that part of the assessment process.

Kutztown University Assessment Cycle 2017-2018

Count Of Programs

	SLOS			METHODS AND MEASURES			CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS/RUBRICS			DATA COLLECTION			USING DATA TO PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT		
	ONE	TWO	THREE	ONE	TWO	THREE	ONE	TWO	THREE	ONE	TWO	THREE	ONE	TWO	THREE
	46	21	3	31	29	10	15	27	28	13	18	39	1	26	43

Nuventive Improve

Nuventive's Improve software is used as a repository for assessment information and to generate reports. During AY 18-19 we initiated a process to configure the software in a way that reflects the assessment template and process developed by the Academic Assessment Council for program Student Learning Outcome assessment. The graduate assistants for assessment populated each program's student learning outcomes, curriculum map, methods and measures, and results in the software. All programs present a consistent profile in Nuventive/Improve while respecting the unique features of those programs' assessment plans. After this information has been entered, we can generate assessment reports for a variety of uses, including in five-year program reviews. In AY 19-20, we intend to share that progress with each chair and train interested faculty in the use of the software.

Changes and Action Plans based on Assessment Results

In the interest of pursuing Kutztown University's vision to serves as a "regional center of excellence," the faculty have coordinated the collection of evidence on student achievement in their respective programs and collaborated to make decisions based on that evidence. When students are not meeting benchmarks, plans are put in place to enhance student learning; when benchmarks are met, decisions are made to work toward continuous improvement. In what follows, we highlight examples of those data-based decisions and plans to provide an outstanding educational experience for our students. The complete range of assessment data and responses to that data for each academic program is available in our software system, Nuventive Improve.

College of Business: all programs (7 undergraduate and 1 graduate) submitted annual reports.

The BSBA Department assesses the business core, a set of thirteen courses taken by all undergraduate business majors. As a result of this year's assessment process, the faculty noted a marked improvement in student performance on SLO 1b, "Written Communication." This higher level of achievement seems to suggest that changes made last year have had the desired effect in enhancing the students' writing skills. These changes included: requiring the students to submit a draft, adding spelling and grammar to the evaluation rubric, spending class time on stylistic devices to increase ease of reading and the logical presentation of ideas.

In the Accounting track of the BSBA major, the benchmark was not met for either SLO 3, "Apply research skills and technological tools to solve accounting problems," or SLO 4, "Recognize ethical issues and understand the impact of professionalism in making critical accounting and business judgements." In assessing the student work product submitted for SLO 3, faculty indicated that written communication should be improved and to that end, recommend an additional project that stresses the importance of the accompanying memoranda required as part of the project. Furthermore, increased emphasis will be placed on correctly citing the tax authority when introducing the tax research network.

Faculty in the Marketing track noted that students were not able to fulfill the expectations stated in SLO 1 "Understand basic marketing principles and be able to apply them in a global context." Accordingly, more time will be devoted to international markets and concepts, particularly in Marketing 210, "Principles of Marketing." With respect to SLO 3, "Analyze environmental forces and develop plans to utilize marketing principles in order to solve problems," faculty indicated that expectations were not met. Thus, although environmental forces are introduced in MKT 210, all upper-level classes in the track will review the concept and a short activity on environmental factors will be incorporated into MKT 320, "Marketing Management."

College of Education: all programs (8 undergraduate, 8 master's level, and one doctoral level) submitted annual reports

In the MEd in Instructional Technology program, faculty used the Core Digital Portfolio produced in LLT 585, "Digital Portfolios," to assess the following: SLO 1 ("Candidates inspire and participate in the development and implementation of a shared vision for the comprehensive integration of technology to promote excellence and support transformational change throughout the instructional environment."), SLO 3 ("Candidates create and support effective digital age learning environments to maximize the learning of all students and promote digital citizenship.") and SLO 5 ("Candidates assist teachers in using technology effectively for assessing student learning, differentiating instruction, and providing rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning experiences for all students.") As a result of this evaluation in Fall 2018, the faculty determined that students were not meeting expectations in one area: "assisting teachers in using technology effectively." Throughout the Spring 2019 semester, the faculty increased their emphasis on assisting teachers and provided specific strategies for doing so. The result was that performance on this SLO was improved, and at least five online courses designed by the MEd in IT candidates were adopted into school districts' curricula.

The BSED Grades 4-8 program in the Department of Elementary Education assessed SLO 1 ("Learner Development – The teacher candidate will be able to understand how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive,

linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.") and SLO 2 ("Learning Differences – The teacher candidate will be able to use understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.") in AY 18-19. Although data collected indicated that students are meeting the benchmark, the COE alumni survey points to a significant need in the area of working with students who are English Language Learners (ELL). In January 2019, the college held an assessment retreat with over 80% of the college faculty in attendance. As a result of several consensus-building activities, the faculty made a determination to focus on ELL. In addition to hiring a new tenure-track faculty member who specializes in ELL, the college faculty also articulated the following action plan to address the issue: 1) Require special education students starting in 2020 to take EDU 150, "Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners," 2) Implement an advisory board and an ELL focused conference May 2nd, 2020, 3) Identify a required diverse field experience in Elementary Education programs, 4) Complete a curriculum mapping specific to ELL competencies in each program, 5) three faculty (one in the Special Education Department, two in the Elementary Education Department) are voluntarily working on or have completed their ESL Program Specialist certification.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: all programs except General Studies submitted annual reports

In its first year as a newly approved major, the Public Relations program assessed SLO 1 "Students will be able to construct communications for diverse audiences via a wide range of platforms." One of the measures to assess this SLO was the writing of a news release, a signature assignment in WRI 216, "Writing for Public Relations." Although students met the benchmark, the program faculty will standardize expectations for news release formatting and issue a style guide to all students.

The MA in English faculty noted that students did not meet the benchmark for SLO 2, "Students will be able to analyze a theoretical or rhetorical issue in a text." Despite the low n, which means that the difference between meeting the benchmark and not is only one student, the faculty would nevertheless expect to see better results for this SLO. Thus, they plan to include more workshopping of drafts so that all students can gain a better sense of expectations for the graduate-level application of theory and rhetoric. Moreover, the faculty will devote time to one-on-one conferences with students in order to address any issues with the formal conventions of English syntax and mechanics (response to assessment of SLO 2, "Students will be able to demonstrate a mastery of stylistics and formal conventions").

The Physics program will introduce numerous small changes to courses in the upcoming year as a result of their analysis of student work during AY 18-19. With regard to SLO 2, "Students will be able to demonstrate experimental and computational skills required of a physicist in higher education or industry," for instance, expectations were not met in PHY 340, "Computational Physics." Accordingly, the action plan for the upcoming year is to improve students' ability to handle more complex programming challenges when implementing numerical techniques, by spending more time at the beginning of the course introducing and reviewing fundamental programming concepts, structures, and techniques, like FOR loops, WHILE loops, IF/THEN statements, and the different types of data structures (integers, floating numbers, arrays).

Computer Science faculty engage in robust program assessment. This year, for example, assessment results of SLO 4, "Students will demonstrate an ability to recognize professional responsibilities and make informed judgments in computing practice based on legal and ethical principles," suggested that students were not meeting expectations. The faculty, therefore, are developing a new course that will seek to

address professional responsibilities and problem-solving/decision-making based on sound legal and ethical principles germane to the discipline.

Evidence collected as part of the assessment process in the Psychology program led the faculty to make several suggestions for improvements, many of which will be discussed in the beginning weeks of the fall 2019 semester. Assessment of SLO 1, "Knowledge base in Psychology," and SLO 2, "Scientific inquiry and critical thinking," in particular, were two areas in which students did not meet the benchmark. Items for discussion in this regard are how to ensure knowledge of key Psychological concepts and whether the active solving of problem(s) that allow for selection of appropriate inferential statistics statement of hypotheses, data analysis, and inclusion of conclusion statement would allow for a more appropriate index of comprehension.

Based on their assessment of SLO 2, "Students will be able to analyze and disseminate data and information," the faculty in the Master in Public Administration program plan to introduce data analysis earlier in the curriculum, for instance, more data activities will be incorporated into POL 509, "Approaches and Methods in Political Science." Additionally, data modules and lecture videos from POL 509 will be made available for the POL 538 "Program and Policy Evaluation" students to review. In their analysis of the results of the assessment of SLO 5, "Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to communicate professionally," the MPA faculty acknowledge the positive impact that a real-world project in the capstone course has had in bolstering performance and student success, while also revealing some areas for improvement, such as data analysis and written communication skills. The program faculty will discuss changes to three courses (POL 509, "Approaches and Methods in Political Science," POL 515, "Principles and Problems of Public Administration," and POL 538, "Program and Policy Evaluation") to introduce complex skills earlier.

College of Visual and Performing Arts: all programs (11 undergraduate and 4 graduate) submitted annual reports

Four of the college's programs are fairly new. The BS in Social Media Theory and Strategy, the MA in Arts Administration, and the MEd in Music Education are two years old; the BFA in Applied Digital Arts has been in existence for three years. Thus, while discussion has begun in response to results of assessment, more time and data on student learning are needed before significant changes are made.

In some drawing courses in the BFA Studio Art Program, there will be a focus on creating signature assignments to ensure that objectives are clearly delineated across sections. Related to SLO 2, "Develop knowledge of art history," two new courses required for BFA students should boost student progress in this area. There are also expanded offerings in art history (due to new faculty) which will also address issues in the field.

In order to address the results for SLO 4, "Create research projects guided by communication theory" in the BA Communication Studies program, the department discussed revisions to their core. They agree that more specific preparation should be taking place in COM 10, "Fundamentals of Oral Communication" and COM 140, "Introduction to Communication Studies," and that they need to increase the amount of research writing and style mastery in COM 240 "Survey of Communication Theory." They would like students to enter COM 380, "Senior Capstone Experience" ready to collect data so that more time can be spent on data analysis and interpretation. In regard to SLO 5, "Analyze communication norms through diverse points of view," the department is discussing ways to apply theory to real world scenarios, rather than in the context of an assignment, to help better prepare students to achieve in this area.

The curriculum of CDE 10 "Digital Foundations," was discussed by the BFA Communication Design faculty and they issued a departmental directive stating that content and assignments must be the same in all sections of the course, so that students receive the same content and develop the same skillset. Faculty teaching this course met in May 2019 to plan for fall 2019. In CDE 374, "Portfolio Seminar," and CDE 398 "Communication Design Professional Practices," more attention will be given to professional presentation skills, specifically to allow students to practice these skills in preparation for meetings and mock interviews with industry professionals.

Assessing the Assessment Process

Any sustained and sustainable system of assessment whose aims is to ensure student learning demands a critical eye on the process itself. Indeed, during AY 18-19 many of the academic programs not only made changes to curriculum and/or teaching practices as noted above, but also refined their assessment process. Several examples, once again organized by college, are cited below.

College of Business:

In the BSBA core program, many of the recommended changes revolve around improvements to the assessment process itself, including increasing inter-rater agreement and revising the rubric to assess interpersonal skills, particularly teamwork.

Sport Management plans to standardize rubrics, communicate expectations for internship experiences more clearly to on-site supervisors, and revise their senior exit survey.

The MBA program reports the need to refine its assessment process, including the assessment of leadership and teamwork skills. The Dean encourages the faculty to develop an action plan.

College of Education:

The non-certification undergraduate program in Educational Studies noted the need to refine their assessment processes particularly with regard to SLO 3, "All students will assist in the administration of the organization."). Given that the internship rubric allowed for significant variation in interpretation, the faculty will revise the rubric before any data is collected in fall 2019.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences:

The Modern Language Studies faculty (majors in German and Spanish) will revise the rubric for SLO 3, "Intercultural competence" to include a minimum of 4 levels.

The Biology faculty will reconsider the success criterion for SLO 1, "Students will demonstrate advanced competence in their area of specialization, either organismal biology/ecology, cell biology/microbiology, or pre-professional health services." A history of student scores on the ETS Major Field Test will be reviewed and the faculty will vote on lowering the criterion from the 70th percentile or above to the 50th percentile or above (with 60th percentile or above the benchmark for the Pre-Med students.)

Information Technology reported numerous revisions to the program's assessment process: CSIT faculty will review and consider revising some PIs (SLO 1 "Able to explain appropriate solutions to various security threats to a network environment" and SLO 3 "Apply design principles pertaining to advanced topics in computer science and/or information technology" noted); the course coordinator will meet with instructors of CSC 354 Software Engineering to better define material to be collected for assessment; the target threshold will be increased for SLO 2, "Demonstrate an understanding of design principles pertaining to advanced topics in computer science And/or information technology"; some rubrics will be updated; formative assessment will occur in CSC 328 "Network Programming" in the future.

Faculty in the Criminal Justice program are focusing their efforts on improving their assessment process. This past year, they used one measure (final paper in Senior Seminar) to assess all five of the program SLOs. This attempt was unsuccessful. Therefore, the rubrics will be refined (three levels do not sufficiently distinguish student achievement) and the entire assessment plan will be reconsidered.

The Sociology program has been collecting data and making improvements to their program and assessment process for several cycles. In the Spring 2019 program report, faculty noted that since all benchmarks were met, the criteria for success for all SLOs will be raised beginning with the Fall 2019 semester.

College of Visual and Performing Arts

The four undergraduate music programs (Music, Music Performance, Commercial Music, Music Education) identified the need to focus on the assessment process in the upcoming year. No other immediate changes (to curriculum or otherwise) were noted.

In the BFA Studio Art program, in the assessment of SLO 3, "Demonstrate technical proficiency in the production of art," the department feels that larger sample sizes will provide more useful data, as will cross-sampling from other survey courses that address this SLO. Drawing faculty will meet to discuss norms and standards related to SLO 1, "Demonstrate competency with the elements and principles of visual art." Changes to assessment instruments and revisions to rubrics and success criteria will be made in several areas.

The Faculty who teach in the BA Communication Studies program will discuss SLO 5, "Analyze communication norms through diverse points of view," to determine how it fits with the core classes of the major. When the core was designed, this SLO was not addressed in any of the courses. They have discussed adjusting their core syllabi in the core courses to address this SLO, or revising the core by adding a course that addresses this SLO, or discussing whether or not this SLO is a priority for the program. The SLO is addressed in many courses, but they are all electives.

In several courses in the BS Cinema, Television, and Production program, assignments will be better aligned to SLOs. Whereas in some cases the assignments will require more detail, so that students have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement at a higher level, in other cases the assignments will have a more industry-focused topic, or will ask for preproduction materials in addition to the final product. The faculty believe that some students could have achieved better scores but the assignments did not allow for achievement at higher levels, so these adjustments will be made. The Internship Site Supervisor Form will also be updated so that it aligns more closely with the associated SLO.

Evaluation of Assessment of Academic (Major) Programs

Upon reflection on the past academic year, there is little doubt that we have made significant progress in the assessment of academic programs and the processes to do so. Moreover, our regional accrediting body, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, has recognized that progress and reaffirmed our accreditation. While we acknowledge those achievements, we also remain keenly aware of the need to further our work by continuing to cultivate a learning community that centers on providing the best possible education for our students, and thus fulfill our mission. To that end, we present by way of conclusion the following recommendations that will provide us with a map to guide our efforts in AY 19-20 and beyond.

Recommendations

1) Increase focus on using data to make decisions with the goal of improving student learning.
2) Establish a three-year assessment cycle that requires academic programs to assess all of their student learning outcomes during that three-year period. Connect annual assessment reports to program review.
3) Create a later deadline for the submission of the annual assessment reports so that programs have the opportunity to reflect and discuss data and assessment results. In the past, the deadline has been in May; henceforth, the deadline will be September 15 in any given year.
4) Continue offering professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, including the Autumn and January Assessment Days.
5) Create an assessment how-to guide for faculty and staff that includes a glossary of assessment terms in frequent use at our institution.
6) Consider venues to disseminate and discuss the data and evidence provided by the National Survey of Student Engagement.