

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Feedback to Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in 2004-2005 Annual Reports

DEPARTMENT: Anatomy & Cell Biology

DATE: 8/28/06

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW: Ginny Guido & Barbara Voglewede

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Were any goals referenced? YES x NO QUALIFIED Y/N
- If so, were goals well articulated? YES x NO QUALIFIED Y/N
- Do goals address student learning? YES x NO QUALIFIED Y/N

Comments:

Undergraduate: *n/a*

Graduate: *Student learning goals and the assessment activities, results, and decisions are described in both the departmental assessment plan and in the annual report. Both are directed toward the doctoral program, though some recognition is made in the annual report of the department’s particular student learning objectives for its undergraduate courses.*

ASSESSMENT METHODS

- Were any specific assessment methods referenced? YES x NO QUALIFIED Y/N
- If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals? YES x NO QUALIFIED Y/N
 - Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a “multiple measures” approach? YES x NO QUALIFIED Y/N

Comments:

Undergraduate: *n/a*

Graduate: *The department’s assessment plan provides a table for each student learning goal (for graduate students only), listing the specific student experience involved (courses, seminars, teaching, presentations, and dissertation), and specific assessment methods, timelines, and responsible faculty for each experience. The annual report further describes each learning experience and assessment method, relating those experiences back to the mission of the department, and identifying the direct or indirect nature of the assessment methods.*

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

- Were any assessment results reported? YES NO QUALIFIED Y/N x
- If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals? YES NO x QUALIFIED Y/N
 - If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement? YES NO QUALIFIED Y/N x
 - Were the results tied to goals for student learning? YES NO QUALIFIED Y/N x

Comments:

Undergraduate: *n/a*

Graduate:

The department’s annual report makes a few references to what the assessment process has revealed, more generally in regard to its graduate program (e.g., “...found through assessment that students may not be learning as much or as effectively as they potentially could be...” and “...not enough time was devoted to the teaching of those methods...”). These few references are tied to implemented changes. However, (1) the references are not made with regard to each goal or assessment experience, (2) in none of the existing references are specific results discussed, and (3) there is not a clear explanation of how even the generalized conclusions affirm specific student learning goals.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported?

YES _____ NO _____ QUALIFIED Y/N x

- If so, do curricular or other improvements/ changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?

YES _____ NO _____ QUALIFIED Y/N x

Comments:

Undergraduate: n/a

Graduate: The department’s assessment plan refers to a process of an annual meeting of faculty to review course outcomes, and of meeting with individual graduate students to discuss their learning results. The plan concludes generally that decisions regarding changes decisions “are based on collected and presented data.”

As described above, the only mention in the annual report of responsive action is made with regard to generalized conclusions rather than to specific assessment results. Further, the correlation between changes made and particular student learning goals is not clearly articulated. Changes are related to “student learning” more generally.

SUMMARY

Strengths

Areas for Improvement

- x A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- x Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- x Assessment methods are clearly described.
- ? Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- ? Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- x Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- Results are reported.
- (x) Results are tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

- No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- x No results are reported.
- (x) Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The departmental assessment plan and annual report seem well thought-out and focused on student learning, but do not describe results specifically, nor how implemented changes tie back to specific student learning objectives. In order to better understand and analyze those two areas, it would be helpful if the annual report would more specifically articulate results and their correlation to specific student learning goals. It would also be helpful if the report could better reveal how the department arrived at the decision that a particular response was appropriate, and what level(s) of student learning would justify a response or change.

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Section 1: _Y___ Section 2: _Y ___ Section 3: _N/? __ Section 4: _N ___

Coding Key:

- Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well
- N = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
- NA = no information available
- ? = action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done