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

DEPARTMENT____COMPUTER SCIENCE_____ DATE_____APR 10, 2006 ____

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW_____Tom Steen, Beth Bjerke _____

1. 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: At both levels, student learning goals are very nicely spelled out. I would prefer to some goals refined so it's more specific and clear what students will be able to do (e.g., knowledgeable, feeling well prepared, guided by ethical principles, (expertise in X or Y), which would help with assessment, but what they want their students to learn is clear from this report.

Undergraduate:

Graduate: Even though the assessment plan is still in developmental phase here, goal topics are clear—would suggest refining as above so it's more clear what students would be able to do upon completion.

2. 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__X__   QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a "multiple measures" approach?   YES_____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N _N?_

Comments: Based on this report, linking goals and assessment methods seems like the major issue for CSci to sharpen up. By my analysis approximately 2/3 of the assessment methods in use are indirect (e.g., graduate surveys, course evaluations). The direct methods—letter grades in key UG courses and student displays (samples of student work)—are useful but appear to be in need of revision. For one, it's not clear how letter grades reflect student accomplishment of the program goals (or which goals are targeted in those courses). For another, it's not clear how student displays are assessed or how they are sampled to represent the rest of the students. At the graduate level, where the plan is still developing, the same issues may apply particularly in assessment of goals such as "broad knowledge" and "expertise" in specific areas.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?   YES_X_   NO_____   QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- 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__X__   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments: Quite a few results were reported here but they were primarily about indirect factors such as enrollment, graduation rates, and facilities issues. I did **(or did not?)** find results that reflected assessment of students' knowledge or expertise in specific areas, which were major goals at both levels. Similarly, I did not find assessment results on the behavioral and affective goals in the UG program. This leads me to conclude that CSci may want to revisit the UG plan and especially try

to sharpen the alignment of goals-methods-results. Since the department seems to have a very good grasp of what it wants its students to learn, this task seems to be a "doable" one.

Undergraduate:

Graduate: Since the graduate program assessment plan is behind the UG plan in development, I think I'd recommend revising the UG plan first. Then when that plan is shaped up, the department can take what they learned with the UG plan and apply to the grad plan.

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment
results reported?   YES_____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N __? _
- If so, do curricular or other improvements/
  changes arising from assessment results
  directly address goals for student learning?   YES_____   NO__X__ QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments: At both levels, the faculty has made several curriculum changes. However, the major results that formed those decisions seem to mainly be indirect measures, such as enrollment, student surveys (course evaluations), and exit surveys. I did not see decisions that were based on direct assessment results of student learning, which is not surprising given the assessment methods used and results collected (above). This leads me to conclude, again, that improving the alignment of the assessment plan is the key need. I would also follow that with a recommendation to develop ways to aggregate results in such a way as to support faculty decisions about what/how to improve in their programs.

5. SUMMARY

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

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

See above, especially in the Sections 3 and 4.

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Section 1: __Y___   Section 2: __?___   Section 3: __Y___   Section 4: __?___

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