

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Feedback to Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in 2006-2007 Annual Reports

DEPARTMENT Mathematics DATE November 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW Joan Hawthorne, Nabil Suleiman

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| • Were any goals referenced? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were goals well articulated? | YES <u> </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>X</u> |
| • Do goals address student learning? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

In addition to the Departmental goals, please also consider UND's Institutional and General Education goals for student learning (shown in alignment within parentheses). For each goal, use a Y (yes), N (no), or ? (qualified y/n or uncertain) to indicate whether this department has a similar or related goal.

- 1 Communication ("communicate effectively, both orally and in writing")
- 2 Critical/creative thinking ("think critically and creatively" and "be intellectually curious and creative")
- 3 Informed choices ("make informed choices")
- 4 Understanding across disciplines ("understand how conclusions are reached in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and sciences" and "acquire knowledge over a broad spectrum of subject areas")
- 5 Lifelong learning ("commit themselves to lifelong learning")
- 6 Cross-cultural appreciation ("develop some familiarity with cultures other than their own")
- 7 Service/citizenship ("commit themselves to...the service of others," and "share responsibility both for their communities and for the world")

Comments regarding Departmental goals and alignment of Departmental Goals with Institutional and General Education Goals:

Undergraduate: Undergrad goals heavily use words like "awareness" and "appreciation," which are difficult to pin down in terms of meaning. In some cases, meaning is clarified through objectives. While having some goals of this sort is highly reasonable, it may be worth revisiting whether any of these goals might be productively worded as skills or knowledge goals. Putting more emphasis on knowledge and skills goals may be helpful in faculty discussions of overall satisfaction with goal achievement.

Graduate: Graduate goals seem reasonable in the general approach, but also fairly vague – which is reflected in the grad portion of assessment report. E.g., the report mentions that better learning around oral communication is needed, although that is not identified in the departmental learning goals.

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 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: The idea of looking at learning in subsequent courses is a clever approach to assessing the durability of intended learning. However, the difficulty faculty had with assessing goal 6 is a reason for revisiting the question of whether SOME of the goals could be productively reworded in terms of measurable knowledge and skills.

Graduate: Learning is demonstrated in the independent study or thesis, but there is no indication in this report that data have been collected systematically (as opposed to intuitively) from those documents.

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__X__	NO__	QUALIFIED Y/N __
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?	YES__X__	NO__	QUALIFIED Y/N __
• Were the results tied to goals for student learning?	YES__X__	NO__	QUALIFIED Y/N __

In addition to departmental goals, some assessment results may be applicable to Institutional and General Education goals. A list of the latter goals is included below. Please indicate with a Y, N, or ? whether results reported are applicable to Institutional or General Education goal achievement. For items with a Y or a ?, please describe findings in the appropriate section below.

- _____ 1 Communication (“communicate effectively, both orally and in writing”)
- _____ 2 Critical/creative thinking (“think critically and creatively” and “be intellectually curious and creative”)
- _____ 3 Informed choices (“make informed choices”)
- _____ 4 Understanding across disciplines (“understand how conclusions are reached in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and sciences” and “acquire knowledge over a broad spectrum of subject areas”)
- _____ 5 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)
- _____ 6 Cross-cultural appreciation (“develop some familiarity with cultures other than their own”)
- _____ 7 Service/citizenship (“commit themselves to...the service of others,” and “share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

Comments regarding results and the application of results to Departmental, Institutional and General Education Goals:

Undergraduate: Both direct and indirect data were reported. We note the 60% success rate and wonder if the department sees a need for action based on that percentage.

Graduate: No data reported for the grad program.

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported?	YES__X__	NO__	QUALIFIED Y/N __
• If so, do curricular or other improvements/changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?	YES__X__	NO__	QUALIFIED Y/N __

Comments:

Undergraduate: Based on indirect evidence (transcript analysis), there appears to be some difficulty with universal achievement of goals 4 and 5, and plans are being made to address that problem.

Graduate: The report documents two conclusions, but neither is tied to grad program goals and neither is clearly rooted in data collection.

SUMMARY

Strengths

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

Areas for Improvement

- ☐ 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.
- ☐ No results are reported.
- ☐ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Undergraduate program assessment appears far more advanced than graduate program assessment. However, it appears that both assessment plans could benefit from faculty review of goals now that plans are being implemented and difficulties are being discovered. It is very important that data be reported for the grad program as well as the undergrad program, and collection of data around graduate learning is usually fairly straightforward if rubrics are used during culminating events (thesis/independent study review, defenses, etc.).

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Section 1: Y Section 2: Y Section 3: Y Section 4: Y

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