

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in FY 2012 Annual Report
GRADUATE PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT: Pharmacology, Physiology and Therapeutics **DATE:** April 12, 2013

PROGRAM(S) COVERED IN REVIEW: *Pharmacology, Physiology and Therapeutics*

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW: Paul Drechsel and Bradley Myers

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> x </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Do goals address student learning? | YES <u> x </u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments: The department assessment plan identifies four student learning goals. The plan has 2 learning objectives for each goal. The department selected two of the goals to focus on for the period covered by their report. The goals and objectives each address student learning. While well-articulated, the goals and objectives are subjective as are most of the assessment methods identified in the plan.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

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

Comments: The department didn’t openly identify the assessment methods used for the period covered by the report. The department plan lists the assessment methods for goals as: “Course examinations, presentations, discussions, and written assignments. Oral presentations at journal clubs, research vignettes. Written and oral presentation of thesis and dissertation. Student course evaluation surveys.” It is not clear from the plan or the report how the assessment methods used differ from the methods used for course assessment. The reports state that: “Mastery of critical thinking skills and communication skills were assessed by faculty feedback from several settings.” It identified the setting as the PPT 521, advanced topic course, from the first year, advanced topics courses from one to two years later and finally the grant applications/comprehensive exam/dissertation defense the final year.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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

Comments: The only results reported were that of “the consensus of the faculty is that over that last 5 years (during which PPT 521 became focused specifically on critical thinking and the communication of its content, as well as an intentional emphasis on written and spoken communication in the advanced course setting) that their students are performing much better than before these changes were put in place.” The faculty gave feedback, but the report doesn’t really tell us much else. It could easily be that the faculty got together and discussed how their students’ critical thinking and communication skills were doing. While we recognize the value of these conversations, we feel more

specificity in the report would be better. The report did specifically identify things that the department would do, or at least would like to do, in response to the results.

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: The report indicates that the department has decided that they should incorporate the development of critical thinking and communication skills in all of our courses.

SUMMARY

Strengths

- x A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- x 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.
- x Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
- (Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Department of Pharmacology, Physiology and Therapeutics has clearly identified its goals for student learning. Although the departmental assessment plan calls for the data to be collected from each student each semester, no data was actually presented. This may reflect the subjective nature of the department's goals and objectives and the primary reliance on qualitative methods. The department may find it easier to produce the kind of data called for in its plan if it selected a limited number of assessment methods from its plan for a more comprehensive analysis in any given year.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

- x Annual report
- ___ Appendices (cited in annual report)
- ___ Other (please describe)

- x Assessment plan (as posted)
- ___ Previous assessment review

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Reviewer(s): | Name | Bradley Myers | Paul Drechsel |
| | Department | Law School | Aviation |
| | Phone Number | 7-72228 | 7-4923 |
| | e-mail | myers@law.und.edu | drechsel@aero.und.edu |

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

Coding Key:

- Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well (*bearing in mind the kind of program(s) reviewed and recognizing that assessment is a cyclical process, i.e., with additional kinds of data to be collected in other years*)
- 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