Annual Report on HSS Program Assessment for 2013-2014
Submitted by Cathy Foos, Chair, HSS Assessment Committee

Part One: Committee Activities

Committee Members: Margaret Thomas Evans, Tanya Perkins, Suzi Shapiro, Mengie Parker, Jessica Raposo, Cathy Foos (Chair)

Professional Development for the committee: Early in the year, three members of the committee—Margaret, Mengie, and Jessica—attended the IUPUI Assessment Institute. Upon returning, they shared key insights with the rest of the committee. Likewise, Cathy shared insights from an assessment workshop she attended at the Academic Chairperson’s Conference. We also had a session led by Mengie, where he explained the Entropy scale that is being Beta tested as part of the Criminal Justice program assessment.

"Next Steps” #1 on last year’s Dean’s report on assessment indicated that a priority for this year should be integration of assessment data with the WEAVE Online database. To promote this, the committee petitioned Ross Alexander to bring the WEAVE trainer back to campus, to lead two training sessions—a beginner session for new faculty (Mengie and Jessica, and others), and an intermediate session for faculty members who needed to enhance their knowledge of the features of the database. These trainings (open to all schools on campus) took place on Nov. 8, 2013. All members of the committee participated.

Professional Development for HSS Faculty: During the academic year, the committee facilitated two assessment workshops for faculty, one each semester. The fall workshop focused on rubric development; the spring workshop focused on closing the assessment loop. These correspond to “Next Steps” numbers 3 and 4 from the 2012-2013 Dean’s Report on assessment. The “Closing the Loop” workshop also addressed Next Step #1; the presentation component dealt with the entire assessment cycle, but the interactive component was broken out into four tables, depending on where a person wanted extra help. The presentation handout for the second workshop is included as an appendix to this report.

Building on Prior Progress: In an attempt to foster a culture of assessment, to regularize assessment as something that is always underway, Cathy created an Assessment Action Plan and Checklist for faculty (a copy is included as an appendix) and revised the Year-End Report Form to include two further questions:

- What changes/improvements to the degree program (or any assessment component) were made this year, based on last year’s assessment?
- Can you see any impact from those changes at this point? Explain.

These questions remind people to close the loop.
Minor Structural Changes to Committee: Subsequent to changes in the school structure and other pertinent situations, the charge to the committee and the committee make-up were modified. The new charge is:

This committee will be responsible for coordinating and overseeing HSS program assessment, including the input of data into WEAVE Online. The committee will also monitor the collection and entering of General Education assessment data into WEAVE Online. This work includes becoming familiar with the expectations for assessment from the Higher Learning Commission and ensuring that all HSS programs are providing the quality of assessment data, reflection, and responsive program changes that would lead to a strong review from the HLC. The Assessment Committee consists of one committee chairperson and one representative from each HSS department. The department representative is responsible for preparing the degree program's assessment plan and annual report. The Committee works to establish a culture of assessment within HSS.

Part Two: Summaries of Program Assessment Reports

Communication Studies: The action steps generated by last year’s assessment were:

1. Develop course assessment measures for 3 core courses (C424, C427, C405);
2. Draft course syllabus/outcomes for CMCL-C490 Capstone;
3. Enter goals and learning outcomes into Weave;
4. Generate assessment plan for the next 3 years.

Items 1-3 were accomplished. Accomplishment of item #4 was slowed by a confluence of personnel issues; however, work has begun on revising the program learning outcomes and curriculum map.

2013-2014 assessment focused on program outcomes not assessed in the past two years (total of 7 outcomes). These outcomes were chosen also because they overlap with General Education competencies.

Overall, the targets for the various outcomes assessed were met. However, several action steps were identified by the Communication Studies faculty for the coming year:

1. Review the assessment map for the program to formulate concise and measurable outcomes that can be measured every year;
2. Establish expected achievement levels for the outcomes;
3. Align assessment rubrics and learning outcomes for LO 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5;
4. Change the details of the assignment used for assessing outcomes LO 1.4 and 4.3;
5. Modify rubrics for assessing LO 2.3 and 2.2.
Criminal Justice: The AY2013-2014 assessment implemented two recommendations from the previous year:

1. Clarifying program objectives
2. Systematizing data collection procedures

Item 1 was achieved by revising the program’s curriculum map to ensure that the Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) were clear and concise. Item 2 was achieved by revising the assessment procedure and instruments to encompass both direct and indirect assessment tools. Revising the new assessment procedures has allowed faculty to identify and close assessment gaps in the curriculum.

For 2013-2014, an exit exam was given to all graduating seniors, with a target of 70% of the students scoring in or above the Proficient Progress (≥ 73%) category. The target was not met:

- Only 3.7% scored in the target category for PLO1.
- Only 11.2% scored in the target category for PLO2.
- Only 48.2% scored in the target category for PLO3.
- Only 22.2% scored in the target category for PLO4.

Based on the analysis of assessment data, the CJ faculty made the following recommendations for the AY2014-2015 (with Item #4 specifically intended to address the target shortfall on the exit exam):

1. Revise data collection procedures.
2. Expand data collection procedures to encompass all sections of Gen Ed courses.
3. Revise PLO3 to be more congruent with the Social and Behavioral competencies.
4. Implement cumulative, class-based exams for seated courses.

English: In last year’s report, the English Department’s major proposed action was to replace one generic rubric for program outcomes with specific rubrics for each of the four concentrations within the major. This was accomplished, and already it can be seen that the data for the Creative Writing Concentration is more useful than previously. A second action step was to *combine exit interview and survey questions in capstone assessment to avoid overlap*. This has been done, and is ready to be implemented next year.

All learning outcomes were assessed, via course-based assessment. Targets were met or exceeded for all 200-level courses (“Entry”). Targets were met or nearly met for 300-level courses (“Mid”). Targets were not fully met for the 400-level (“Advanced”) courses. English faculty will be reviewing the unmet targets in the 400-level courses to determine ways of addressing the shortfall.
Of the items in the Exit Survey administered in the ENG L450 class, one was ranked by students noticeably lower than the others:

*Ability to define historically and culturally-situated rhetorical and linguistic concepts in academic and work contexts. 62% rated this excellent or above average. 25% rated this as average and 13% or one respondent rated this as below average.*

Of the items in the Exit Survey administered in the ENG W470 class, two were ranked by students noticeably lower than the others:

*Ability to understand, summarize, interpret and analyze a range of genres. 50% rated this as excellent and 50% as average.*

*Ability to produce and revise one or [sic] genres of imaginative writing from your own unique experience. 50% rated this excellent, 25% as below average and 25% as not applicable.*

No comments were made in the program report about these Exit Survey results.

Action steps for next year are:

1. review learning outcome target shortfalls for 400-level courses (described above);
2. revise course assessment rotations;
3. implement revised and combined Exit Interview/Exit Survey;
4. revise the new concentration-specific rubrics as needed, as more data are gathered.

One final action step, which will require administrative support, is to get the WEAVE system restructured to better fit the concentrations format of the English major.

**Fine Arts:** During 2012-2013, the Fine Arts program faculty substantially revised their program learning outcomes and put together a curriculum map. The major task for 2013-2014 was to put together an ongoing assessment plan and begin gathering data. This task was accomplished. The first assessment cycle involves gathering 1) formative data on achievement of the three PLOs that are the focus of the required Fundamentals classes and 2) summative data on two of the PLOs that are key in the new Senior Capstone course. This year, data was collected from only one of the Fundamentals classes (F100); over the next several semesters, data will be gathered from all the Fundamentals classes.

The target achievement level for the 100 level courses is an average score of 2.8 out of 4 (70%) in all 3 outcomes being measured. In the Capstone course, the target is an average score of 3.0 (75%) on each of the two outcomes being measured. In the F100 class, the average scores (based on a rubric, available in HSS Oncourse Assessment folder) for two of the three outcomes were 3.0 and 3.1; for one outcome, the average fell just shy of the target, at 2.7. In the Capstone course, the average scores exceeded the target of 3.0 for both outcomes.

This year’s data are not sufficient to warrant any program changes. The focus for next year will be on expanding data gathering to all sections of Fundamentals courses.
History: The action steps proposed for 2013-2014 in last year’s assessment report were:

1. Faculty will work together to tailor course work to better fit class knowledge levels
2. Full-time faculty will see that part-time faculty engage in assessment activities.
3. Recommend to advising staff the urgency of having history majors and Social Studies education majors enroll in HIST H217 in their sophomore year.

This year’s report did not discuss whether the above items were addressed during the past year.

The 2013-2014 assessment focused on PLO #6 (Distinguish and appreciate diverse cultures). This outcome was assessed in one course (HIST-A 301, Colonial America), based on a random selection of original research papers, using a 6-point rubric that assessed student work as emerging, developing, or mastering. Four of the five papers met the target, by demonstrating either the developing (n=2) or mastering (n=2) level. The instructor submitting the report for this assessment suggested that it would be useful to assess the diversity outcome in other History courses as well [Comment: the suggestion is particularly important, given that the one course assessed is a History elective, thus providing limited information about how well the program performs on this outcome].

2013-2014 saw the end of an assessment cycle for the History program; a primary task for fall 2014 is to review the previous years’ reports and develop a new assessment plan for going forward.

Humanities/Music: The actions called for in last year’s report pertained to revising program learning outcomes and the timing of outcome assessment. These tasks were accomplished in 2013-2014. The four revised learning outcomes are broken down into more detailed components, which should greatly aid in assessment. One of the problems with the previous year’s assessment (conducted by interim program coordinators) was that it was limited to summative assessment at the completion the program. The revised plan includes both formative and summative assessment through the program. The revised program learning outcomes and the curriculum map can be found in the Music assessment folder in the HUM SOC SCI Oncourse site.

During 2013-2014, assessment data was collect from Theory II, Theory III, Theory IV, and Sr. Capstone classes. Not much can be concluded by the results of the capstone assessment, as only one student was enrolled (although she exceeded the targets on all counts). Targets for the three Theory classes were also met, although not exceeded by much.

For 2014-2015, the assessment tools and protocol will remain the same. Planned action steps are to revise assignments in the Theory classes in an attempt to improve outcomes. The Music History sequence will be offered next year, so there will be an additional set of data to work with.
Political Science: The action steps identified by the Political Science faculty to be accomplished during 2013-2014 were:

1. Develop measurable objectives for the new learning outcomes
2. Develop a rubric to be used as part of the capstone course assessment.
3. Begin to conduct exit interviews and alumni surveys of our graduates.

NO PROGRAM REPORT WAS SUBMITTED, DESPITE SEVERAL REMINDERS

Psychology: The action steps identified by the PSY faculty to be accomplished during 2013-2014 were:

1. Create Career’s Course
2. Inventory of Assignments in all courses
3. Check correlation between Exit Exam performance and student psychology GPA

Of these, only Item #3 was addressed in the 2013-2014 report:

Students in the capstone courses will complete a multiple choice exit exam covering knowledge of the discipline of psychology. Many of the questions are taken from the P103 General Psychology Final exam.

The correlation between the students’ current or graduating GPAs and their scores on this exam was calculated, as reflected in the chart below.

The disturbing results have generated an urgent task: This suggests a need for both emphasis on critical concepts in the discipline in all courses, and also the need for periodic review of these concepts throughout the program.

Another item from previous assessment results that was addressed this past year was the completion rate for PSY P211, Methods of Experimental psychology. When the co-requisite Computer Literacy course was eliminated and some of the content was integrated into the P211 Methods of Experimental Psychology course, students were having difficulty completing the course. This was especially true when the course was in an online format. To address this issue, the course was revised to a competency-based format, where all assignments may be revised and a grade of 70% is required for the assignment to
count toward the course grade. The results of this change for the first year of the new format were encouraging.

Program Learning Outcomes 3 (critical thinking) and 6 (personal development) were to be assessed during 2013-2014. Results for PLO 3 are not included in the report, as not all faculty members submitted their activity reports.

For PLO 6, students in the Sr. Capstone course were asked to complete an Academic Skills Inventory, to assess how well they achieved the following:

**Students will develop insight into their own behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management and self-improvement.**

1. *Use study skills appropriate to content of course*
2. *Demonstrate metacognition through accurate evaluation of the quality of knowledge or products created*
3. *Demonstrate self-discipline and conscientiousness*

4 out of the 5 students who completed this inventory were above the Exceptional (90%) level on the Personal Development Section of this assessment. However, the fact that only 5 of the 14 students in the course bothered to complete the assessment suggests a problem with conscientiousness.

Efforts are being made to assist students in developing personal skills such as conscientiousness through requirements for revisions of course assignments until a minimal competency is reached in the P211 Methods of Experimental Psychology and K300 Statistical Techniques course and giving credit for notes or other evidence of appropriate student skills in other courses. Ongoing assessment is needed to determine the effectiveness of this strategy.

**Sociology/Anthropology:** The action steps listed in last year’s assessment report were:

1. Sociology identified the key learning outcomes for summative assessment. We will continue to reevaluate and streamline both learning objective and outcome statements for effectiveness and appropriateness in the coming academic year.
2. Sociology will begin summative assessment for all graduating sociology program graduates beginning the program in Fall 2013. We did not feel it was appropriate to assess the one senior with a new assessment rubric.
3. Sociology will need to re-examine the capstone course and assessment of particular learning outcomes in the coming year. With the new summative assessment program new guidelines for the senior project will need to be created.
4. Sociology will work on the creation of rubrics for the senior seminar projects as well as other formative learning outcomes in the coming academic year.
5. Anthropology need to develop learning outcomes and objectives for the Anthropology Advanced track.
Of these, only Item #1 was addressed in this year’s report. Learning outcomes were streamlined for measurement purposes in several sociology courses.

During 2013-2014, assessment was done in SOC-S 340, Social Theory, which is a designated summative assessment site for the program (along with the capstone project). The course is only offered every other spring. The results are summarized in the table below. Coursework from 27 students out of 33 was completed and used for assessment purposes (6 of the students did not complete all the coursework and any partial work was not used for assessment purposes). Selected questions from Exams 1, 2, and 3 and the final paper were used to evaluate competency in the learning outcomes.

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The instructor identified the primary factor in scores lower than desired as students not adequately fulfilling the instructions for the assignments. She concludes that *modifications in the assessment instruments are necessary for this course.* Better instructions were needed for the final paper to ensure that students addressed the questions as needed for assessment purposes. While I personally like essay exams, for assessment purposes, quantifiable exam formats (such as multiple choice) allow for more specificity to directly measure the learning outcomes for this course.

**Conclusion: Observations and Recommendations**

Most units showed clear improvement this year compared with last year. All programs now have coherent assessment plans in place and are gathering data. Many have made concrete changes—to program requirements, courses, program learning outcomes, and/or assessment tools—based on results from previous years’ assessment.
Some units addressed in this year’s report the results of the action steps generated by last year’s report, but several did not, suggesting that “closing the loop” still needs to be stressed. **Next year’s committee should push the use of the checklist, which asks people to make the connection between prior year and current year assessment efforts.**

A number of units submitted incomplete reports, with data missing from individual faculty members. Additionally, it was not always apparent that assessment results were being discussed and tackled by all in the units equally. This suggests that we still have not fully achieved a “culture of assessment.” **Next year’s committee should brainstorm, and implement, ways to address this improving, yet persistent, issue.**

An assessment workshop I attended this past year emphasized the importance of common rubrics within disciplines, to increase the consistency of data gathered. Criminal Justice, Music, and Fine Arts are developing these, but I am not sure that any other units have done so. Additionally, a number of reports submitted concluded by saying that targets had been met, leaving that to imply that no changes needed to be made. These observations suggest that more work needs to be done on communicating the importance of evaluating the quality of assessment tools and measures as an ongoing part of assessment. **Next year’s committee should develop non-threatening ways to critique the assessment strategies of the various units. Showcasing exemplary assessment is probably the best way to approach this.**