

Draft Analysis – 8/8/05

Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Core Component 3a: The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

It was noted that The HLC-NCA mentioned in the text (p. 3.2.9) that “institutions offering courses in accelerated, asynchronous, or other nontraditional formats” need to be diligent in determining that the student learning outcomes are met. The former use of “seat-time” to quantify study and learning will no longer work. These comments have significant implications because of MSCD’s large online class offerings.

Examples of Evidence are in italics:

The organization clearly differentiates its learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs by identifying the expected learning outcomes for each.

[and]

Faculty are involved in defining expected student learning outcomes and creating the strategies to determine whether those outcomes are achieved.

Each academic program (major), not each department, has learning goals, also called expected student learning outcomes or exit behaviors. They are used in conjunction with assessment of the major. Most of the goals/learning outcomes were established by faculty in the early 1990s, and there is concern that for most majors the student learning goals have not been reviewed by current faculty. Program faculty are sending assessment reports to the dean and Academic Affairs in such a mechanized way that, except for a few programs, little attention is being given to the assessment results except during program review.

At the time faculty determined the goals, they also proposed strategies for determining if those outcomes have been achieved. Some of the strategies have been revised over the years: others have not.

Academic Affairs has a collection of the student learning goals; some programs print their goals in the *Catalog*, e.g., Art. Other than in the files in Academic Affairs, there is no central source for the goals. An assessment folder will be created on the U: drive.

Tasks:

- 1. Faculty from each program should review their student learning outcomes (assessment goals). This should take place in a meeting of the *program* faculty, not department faculty, and be reported to the**

dean. The multidisciplinary major goals, e.g., the goals for environmental science, should be reviewed by faculty who offer courses for the program. Program faculty should review the assessment methodology also.

- 2. The goals should be available on each program's web site.**
- 3. Create an assessment folder on the U: drive.**

Assessment of student learning provides evidence at multiple levels: course, program, and institutional.

MSCD assesses learning at the academic program (major) level, and assesses General Studies at the institutional level. Course-imbedded assessment is used by some programs for the assessment of the program. MSCD certainly assesses students' performances in courses.

Assessment of student learning includes multiple direct and indirect measures of student learning.

Not only do programs assess their students' performance every year, but during program review surveys are sent to seniors, graduates and graduates' employers asking questions that can be used to infer some information about the achievement of student learning. The assessment is usually broad in scope, e.g., the graduate has the appropriate job-related knowledge and skills.

Surveys are voluntary and sometimes the sample size is small. It's possible that results of these surveys are skewed by those who are either very happy or very unhappy. Surveys are paper and require that they be sent back to MSCD which may affect the response rate. Consideration should be given to using email/web site surveys.

The Criterion Three Committee felt that there were not enough direct measures of learning. There is direct assessment at the course level, but not at the program level and it's not necessarily related to the MSCD role and mission.

Results obtained through assessment of student learning are available to appropriate constituencies, including students themselves.

We need to improve the dissemination of the assessment results to various constituencies, including the dissemination to faculty and students. Some faculty do not know what is happening in their program. On the other hand, other program faculty discuss the results with their advisory committees.

There is a place in Banner where test scores can be entered. PLACE and PRAXIS scores are entered there. We do not ask students to report GRE scores or other scores, which maybe we should do since that would help us evaluate our

programs. GRE scores could be entered into Banner, as could MFAT scores. OIR should be contacted.

Tasks:

- **If it is determined that sufficient useful data could be obtained from GRE, LSAT, and MCAT scores, encourage students to have the scores sent to MSCD and entered into Banner. Consider paying the fee for students. MSCD gets MCAT scores – or knows how to get them -- and may get GRE scores if we ask. Students can request that the GRE scores be sent to four places. To have the course sent to an additional place costs \$15. It costs students \$30 to send MCAT scores to different institutions.**
- **Linda will ask if PRAXIS and PLACe data can be and is used for improvement.**
- **Deans should ensure that chairs realize the importance of sharing assessment information with program faculty**
- **Department chairs should be encouraged to share the assessment information with faculty, electronically if possible.**
- **If possible, assessment results should be available on the department/program's website.**

The organization's assessment of student learning extends to all educational offerings, including credit and noncredit certificate programs.

The only noncredit certificate remaining in the Catalog is Financial Planning which is offered in conjunction with the Financial Planning Association. Successful completion of this program meets the educational requirements for sitting for the Certified Financial Planning® license examination. MSCD is involved with the Association; and because of MSCD's involvement, the courses can be taught at the Tivoli for free. Some money from this arrangement comes to the dean's office. Assessment of the certificate was discussed; pass rates on the Financial Planner Exam were mentioned as a possible assessment measure.

We do not have student learning goals for minors, certificates, or the multicultural requirement. We do nothing to assess achievement of the goals for minors or certificates.

Tasks: Faculty involved in programs with minors/certificates should establish goals and a way in which to assess them.

Correspondence courses are a concern. College policy states: "No more than 30 semester hours taken by correspondence may be applied toward a bachelor's degree." However this policy is not enforced and it is not clear how the courses are assessed. Most are taken by one or two students.

Tasks:

1. **Review the policy on the restriction on correspondence courses.**
2. **Make a recommendation of the assessment of correspondence courses.**

Faculty and administrators routinely review the effectiveness of the organization's program to assess student learning.

This is routinely done as part of program review. External consultants are asked to review the student learning outcomes and the assessment methodology. A list of the program review assessment recommendations has been compiled and is contained in the Assessment of Student Learning Task Force report.

Tasks:**ASSIGNMENTS AND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES:**

The following tasks need to be accomplished. It is recommended that each school establish at least one assessment committee, which may be an existing group. The dean will select the individuals who will serve on the committee(s) and, if necessary, those members will be provided with information about assessment prior to undertaking their task. The purpose of the committee/group will be to help program faculty with the following tasks. The focus will be on using assessment to improve student learning. One goal will be to increase faculty and staff awareness of the assessment of student learning outcomes and the importance for using assessment results to improve student learning.

The following tasks connected with assessment need to be accomplished.**Program faculty as a group (not just one or two) will be requested to:**

1. Review the student learning goals (assessment goals or outcomes) and their assessment methodology for their major. A separate set of goals for each concentration within the major may be needed for effective assessment.
 - The goals for multidisciplinary majors, e.g., environmental science, should be reviewed by faculty who offer courses for the program.
 - Student learning goals should be placed on the program's Web site.
2. Answer the following questions:
 - a. Which General Studies student learning goals are reinforced by courses in your program? Are they reinforced in your senior experience courses? [The General Studies goals will be made available.]
 - b. Students' participation in an internship, practicum, cooperative education or a service-learning course helps them achieve which of your program's student learning goals? How do you evaluate the effectiveness of those experiences? [Alternate wording: *Students' achievement of which of your program's student learning goals is enhanced by their participation in an internship, practicum, cooperative education, or a service-learning course*]
 - c. How do courses in your program enhance students' preparation for a life time of learning and how do or could program faculty assess seniors' preparation for a life time of learning? Is this done in the senior experience course? [MSCD states that it prepares graduates for a "lifetime of learning." This has been interpreted to mean

- that students have developed the skills of intellectual inquiry and a positive attitude towards the acquisition of (a breadth of) knowledge.]
- d. How do you determine that your potential graduates have the ~~technological skills and/or~~ the type of technological skills they will need in the future? That is, how does your program ensure that graduates can succeed in a technological society? [MSCD states that it prepares graduates to succeed in a *technological* society. If your program does not have access to the new technology needed to prepare students adequately, that should be noted and placed in planning documents. Are arrangements made for students to obtain access to this technology at other locations?]
 - e. Do you sponsor co-curricular activities that contribute to students' achievement of some student learning goals? Which activities contribute to which goals? How do you measure the effectiveness of the co-curricular activity?
 - f. What does your program do to ensure that graduates have gained the skills and knowledge they will need in a *global* society?
3. **Develop student learning goals for all certificate and minor programs during 2005-06**
 4. **Develop methods of assessing student learning goals for all certificate and minor programs during 2006-07.**
 5. **Share assessment results with faculty.**
 6. Share the assessment results with students and others, including their advisory council members if the program has an advisory council.

Role of the School Assessment Committee:

As mentioned above, the purpose of the School Assessment Committee will be to help program faculty with the above. The School Assessment Committees will serve as a resource and work with the chairs and program faculty. More specifically the School Assessment Committee will:

1. Review the student learning outcomes and assessment methodologies used by each program in that school. The purpose of the review will be to improve the statements of the student learning outcomes if possible, e.g., are the statements measurable; and, if appropriate, to provide suggestions about additional methods of assessing whether or not students meet the stated goals.
2. **Encourage the use of direct measures of student learning.**
3. Work with faculty on their consideration of and responses to items 2-9.
4. Recommend a common place on the school's website design where student learning goals for the major and certificate will be posted.
5. **Work with chairs and the deans to ensure that assessment results are shared with program faculty.**
6. Encourage faculty to share the results of their assessment activities with their external advisory councils if appropriate.
7. Review the results of the NSSE Survey pertaining to academic and intellectual experiences and, if appropriate, make recommendations to faculty in the school.

Core Component 3b: The organization values and supports effective teaching.

Qualified faculty determine curricular content and strategies for instruction.

This can be demonstrated primarily by the curriculum process and course syllabi.

Task: Faculty should update their resumes.

Individual, “informal” faculty assessment strategies that are tied to a specific course or courses, that can or do result in curriculum change (evidence of “closing the loop”) should be documented. *We need to get the word out to faculty to begin documenting these activities. Staff in Academic Affairs might also assist by checking curriculum paperwork to see if the reasons for making curriculum changes are documented in cover memos and in the rationale for the change in courses – adding, modifying, deleting*

The organization supports professional development designed to facilitate teaching suited to varied learning environments.

[and]

The organization supports faculty in keeping abreast of the research on teaching and learning, and of technological advances that can positively affect student learning and the delivery of instruction.

Tasks:

1. **The professional development activities of faculty need to be placed in an easy to read format or list. The schools should aim to have a list of the PD activities for two years: 2004-05, 2005-06. The support that was given should be described. We probably should also list activities that were not supported. (Include in the Annual Report)**
2. **To address technological advances, we need to have a descriptive list of the special computer labs and/or special software packages that have been purchased for different programs. IT can provide lists of specialized hardware and specialized software that MSCD has purchased, but not the program for which the software and hardware has been purchased. (Information may be in the program review narratives.)**
3. **Many programs receive donations of specialized equipment and software from interested parties outside the College; we should have department/program faculty or Chairs provide a list of these ~~(and also provide evidence of community engagement)~~**
4. **Technological advances may not all be connected with special computer labs or specialized software. Many programs, e.g., music, art, chemistry, nursing have instructional equipment that provides new ways of learning. We need to create a list of those new technologies also. (Information may be in the program review narratives.)**
5. **The grant *Adventures of the American Mind* can be listed in this context.**

- 6. The Academy for Teaching Excellence should be mentioned. If the Master Teachers program is started again, it should be mentioned. Should the Faculty Mentoring program be included?**

The organization evaluates teaching and recognizes effective teaching.

Yes. MSCD does both student and peer evaluations of teaching. Effective teaching is recognized during the annual evaluations, and by certain awards.

Task: We need to create a list of teaching awards, e.g., Golden Key Excellence in Teaching Award, Faculty Senate Teaching Award, School of Professional Study Teaching Award, Psy Chi Teaching Award.

The organization provides services to support improved pedagogies.

[and]

The organization demonstrates openness to innovative practices that enhance teaching.

Yes. Provide information about the Teaching and Learning Center (or the Faculty Resource Center). Another example would be IT's free computer software training classes for faculty and staff. Perhaps mention distance education strategies?

Task: Ask faculty in each program about innovative technology and/or software and/or extra-classroom activities that they use to enhance their teaching.

Faculty members actively participate in professional organizations relevant to the disciplines they teach.

Task: Collect a list of faculty's participation in professional organizations for the three-year time period mentioned above. (Annual Reports)

Core Component 3c: The organization creates effective learning environments.

This criterion includes learning environments outside the normal classroom and special programs: the First-Year Experience, Honors Program, Internships, Study Abroad, Cooperative Education, Faculty-Student Research.

Tasks:

- 1. Create a list of all programs requiring internships. Continue to calculate the performance indicator that determined how many graduates had an internship or cooperative education experience.**
- 2. Create a list of faculty-student research activities. These might be primarily in psychology, biology, physics, and chemistry.**

3. **Perhaps have programs list activities outside the classroom that contribute to student learning, for example:**
 - a. **Visiting artists**
 - b. **Student travel funds**
 - c. **Support for students to present at conferences**
 - d. **Conferences hosted by MSCD.**
4. **Some programs have specialized facilities to enhance student learning, e.g. HMTA, HPSL, Engineering Technology, Industrial Design, AVS, Music, Art, etc.; we should list these.**

Assessment results inform improvement in curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and student services.

Some improvements have occurred in academic areas. What about using the Noel-Levitz results? What changes have occurred from those surveys, especially relative to advising?

See recommendation of the Task Force for Assessment of Student Learning Report (II.3)

Advising systems focus on student learning, including the mastery of skills required for academic success.

The First-Year Program focuses on the mastery of skills required for academic success. Placement testing of students for entry into the Level I classes is an attempt at this. The Advising Center does “developmental advising.”

See Student Learning Assessment Task Force Report on a coordinated means of assessing student advising (I.3).

What do we do after that for students who are further along? That is, what if a sophomore does not have the skills for success?

Student development programs support learning throughout the student’s experience regardless of the location of the student.

We have SMARTHINKING for students. We will need an evaluation of whether or not it is meeting its needs and whether or not it is sufficient for most students.

Core Component 3d: The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

This component includes the library, laboratories, art and music studios and other resources that might be off campus

The organization ensures access to the resources (such as research laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites) necessary to support learning and teaching.

The resources available for the science programs may be a concern. Can we list the opportunities students have to use facilities at other places? *Should this be included in the program review narrative – Linda will discuss with Richard Wagner.*

The organization evaluates the use of its learning resources to enhance student learning and effective teaching.

If we purchase new technologies that faculty believe will enhance student learning, do we ever verify that the technology had the desired effect?

The organization provides effective staffing and support for its learning resources.

Task: Ask faculty and staff in the surveys conducted for reaccreditation if the above is true.

The organization's systems and structures enable partnerships and innovations that enhance student learning and strengthen teaching effectiveness.

A number of programs use resources that are off campus. They also require internships that provide student the opportunity to become acquainted with the latest technology. We may need to describe instances of that. We can discuss physics in this context.

Budgeting priorities reflect that improvement in teaching and learning is a core value of the organization.

We should be able to track recent budgetary decisions that either protected or developed teaching and learning activities.