Cornerstone University
Annual Assessment Report

2007-08

Mishqelet Project

Traditional Age Undergraduate

Professional & Graduate Studies

Grand Rapids Theological Seminary

Asia Baptist Theological Seminary

Objectives of Assessment

1. To clearly articulate a set of curricular and co-curricular objectives to inform a student's

    - knowledge level of a given content area
    - skill level as appropriately defined
    - worldview formation leading to a set of values

2. To develop a well-defined strategy to achieve those objectives, including identifying and monitoring

    - trends in student profiles
    - trends in student learning
    - the instruments and methods used in assessing student learning

3. To offer verifiable evidence of the achievement of those goals by

    - the use of direct methods of assessment
    - the use of indirect methods of assessment

4. To provide a means of accountability to insure ongoing assessment

    - through appropriate organizational accountability processes
    - through meeting the guidelines of the Higher Learning Commission
    - through the development of campus ethos of assessment

5. To gather, interpret and use the evidence of assessment in the institutional decision-making processes of instructional program improvement, strategic planning and resource allocation

    - by implementing the University's strategic planning process
    - as guided by Chief Academic Officer, the Dean of Assessment and the divisional chairs
    - used widely across all units of the campus community

6. To provide yearly and other regular reports to the campus community to

    - report the work of assessment
    - provide feedback for curricular and co-curricular development
    - inform logistic and strategic decision making
    - develop a campus ethos of assessment

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To be receptive to change, members must understand their role in the fulfillment of a larger purpose and see how change will better enable to accomplish organizational goals. (Leading Organizations Through Transition, Deetz, et al., p. 154)

2007-08 was an interesting year of change for our campus community. As one considers the following events, it is amazing how much change happened as we transition into the future:

- presidential resignation
- appointment of a new president
- an academic prioritization process
- a new general education curriculum
- a decline in enrollment
- restricted budget
- two divisional chair changes
- a new organizational structure for assessment and institutional research

Those events are enough to shake the foundations of any organization.

One thing that hasn't changed – the need for our campus community to be at the work of the "assessment of student learning". In fact, one thing I have learned through this time of organizational transition is that the Mishqelet Assessment Project provides us with a sense of stability as we continue to meet the learning needs of our students through the stated learning objectives, collected data regarding our daily work and the use of that information to guide the decision-making processes as we move into the future.

Onward we go……one stone at a time.

Tim Detwiler
Associate Provost

Celebrating Campus Achievement

The Office of Assessment is pleased to announce the division receiving the **"Eagle Assessment Award"** for 2007-08.   This award is presented to an individual or to a division who has modeled exemplary assessment practices for the campus community.

History & Social Sciences Division

Brenda King (chair), Daniel Ehnis, Nicole McDonald, Scott Sanders, Nola Carew, Erik Benson, Scott Carroll, Rick Railsback

The 8th Eagle Assessment Award is presented to the History & Social Sciences Division for the following reasons:

- each member of the division is learning about assessment
- the division has hosted two assessment workshops
- reports have been submitted by the division regarding senior assessment
- decisions are being made based on assessment data

The Eagle Assessment Award was created to recognize divisions who are working diligently in the area of assessment. Every division is working through a variety of assessment issues and this award recognizes those divisions which are making unique or outstanding contributions to the camps assessment effort and in so doing are leading by showing excellence.

2007-08

Assessment – A Year In Review

In looking at the "next steps" section from the 2006-07 Annual Assessment Report, the

following steps continue to guide us or have been accomplished:

1. The assessment of student learning is being embraced across the campus as each professional educator is better understanding his/her tasks. (**in progress**)

2. An Office of Assessment and Institutional Research was established with a named Director (and since moved to a Vice Presidential position).   (**accomplished**)

3. The "systems and processes" of assessment continue to mature at a variety of institutional levels. (**in progress**)

4. The newly adopted university objectives are being used to align university activities. (**in progress**)

5. The completion of learning objectives for each program. (**in progress)**

6. A campus-wide assessment plan designed to guide academic and student development learning. (**in progress**)

7. The purposive use of "closing-the-loop" decision making practices. (**in progress**)

8. A progressive implementation of a faculty development program. (**in progress**)

9. Accountability processes for those over-seeing specific assessment project. (**in progress**)

10. A more thorough assessment of the general education core curriculum. (**in progress**)

11. Continued use of macro-assessment instruments. (**accomplished**)

12. A never ending practice of "assessing toward quality". (**in progress**)

In Sum – much good work was done on campus during the 2007-08 academic year, but much more work needs to be done.

Onward We Go

Best Practice – Divisional Involvement
This best practice models an entire division involved in the work of the assessment of student learning.

History and Social Science Division
Assessment Report
2007 - 2008

The History and Social Sciences Division includes History, Family Studies, Psychology, Social Work, and Sociology. Each of those majors was previously aligned with the University's learning objectives. In addition, means of assessing the major have been developed. That work needs to be revisited and an implementation plan developed for each program.

For the 2007-08 academic year, the division continued its assessment of core classes. In addition, faculty were asked to review their core courses in light of the new core curriculum and begin developing an assessment plan. To assist in the assessment process, two mini-workshops were held for the division during Fall 2007. On 9/25, Mrs. Rebecca Wolfe reviewed writing measureable learning objectives. Dr. Nicole McDonald continued the discussion by suggesting how to write quality objectives and connect those objectives to assessment tools. Division members were encouraged to use insights gained in the assessment of their courses. The following is a summary of the assessment activity by major.

HISTORY

Dr. Erik Benson assessed HIS 115, American Studies. This is the second year he has done so. While suggesting the learning has occurred, he noted some areas that need to be addressed (e.g., "clarifying nuances" in content and considering the course schedule to ensure coverage of important material. Please note: statistical significance was not determined.

PSYCHOLOGY

Dr. Daniel Ehnis assessed PSY 111, General Psychology, and PSY 323, Theories of Personalities. A pre-test post-test was used to assess PSY 111 and showed statistically significant improvement in content mastery ($t = 10.164$, $p < .05$). Course-embedded assessment was used for PSY 353; Dr. Ehnis notes that students performed above average on each of the embedded tests.

SOCIAL WORK

Mrs. Nola Carew assessed SWK 221, Human Behavior in the Social Environment. Student learning was assessed both by a pre-test post-test and by self-report. The results suggest increased student learning. Please note that lower means for question # 10 suggest improvement (given the anchor points (*1=excellent knowledge in working with the group; 4 = poor knowledge).* In addition, it should be noted that while the averages declined (suggesting increased knowledge), the difference between pre- and post-test averages are quite small and may not be statistically significant. This will need to be examined in the future.

SOCIOLOGY

Dr. Brenda King assessed SOC 243, Social Problems and SWK/SOC 417, Human Diversity/Minorities. The SOC 243 assessment suggests student learning for each of the objectives assessed on the pre-test post-test. However, two objectives were not assessed, Christian perspectives and articulation of a Christian response to social problems. Items will have to be developed to assess this on

the pre-test and post-test. In addition to a pre-test post-test, a self-report of students' perceptions of the extent to which each objective was met and of the course in general was conducted.

The assessment of SWK/SOC 417, Human Diversity/Minorities, included the final exam, an End of the Semester Feedback Report (Appendix E), and Cultural Competence Self-Assessments (a pre- and post-test) developed by Doman Lum. While not all objectives were assessed with these instruments, those that were assessed demonstrate student learning. Future instruments need to ensure that all learning objectives are being measured.

Next Steps for the Division
1. Each member of the division will be asked to revisit alignment of their programs with the CU mission and objectives.
2. Realistic timelines for assessing each program will be developed.
3. Individual meetings will be held with faculty members to review their assessment activities and suggest ways to improve ongoing assessment.
4. Each faculty member will be asked to match assessment items/methods with each course objective for core courses to ensure that assessment is being done and asked to file an assessment report. The assessment will report will include the following material
    a. Fit between course learning objectives and Cornerstone University objectives
    b. Measurable Learning Objectives
    c. How each Objective was Assessed
    d. Assessment Results
        i. Interpretation: To what extent is each objective being met?
        ii. Patterns of Weakness Detected (over time) or potential weaknesses that need to be monitored
        iii. Development of strategies to maintain strengths and correct weaknesses

Best Practice – Course level assessment (core curriculum)

The following report models how one professor used a simple pre and post test method to identify whether student learning took place in a general education core course.

Students in General Psychology were assessed using a pre- and post-test measure of a random sampling of psychological concepts covered in the course through lectures, readings, discussions, multi-media presentations, and other course activities. Comparison of the pre-and posttest scores resulted in a statistically significant result (p<.05), suggesting that students' achievement scores were significantly higher following participation in the course. Overall, the t-score was 10.164 with a mean difference score of 13.75 (standard error – 1.35).

Instructor graded exercises and assignments indicated that student performance was above average. Instructor graded exercises and assignments indicated that student performance was above average. All objectives were met satisfactorily. The group presentations were outstanding as demonstrated by research skills, data presentation and class involvement. Therefore, additional group presentations will be employed in the next class. Students' performance on exams and quizzes were very consistent, ranging from 75.21 (SD – 14.03) to

Best Practice – Content Area Course Assessment

This best practice models the use of a nationally normed instrument used in a local situation.

ECN 231 Macroeconomics Fall 2007 Assessment
Dr. K. Brad Stamm

For the FALL 2007 Macroeconomics ECN231 course students improved by 22.31% over the pretest compared to an improvement of 43.33% for the nationally normed group. The total average raw score for Cornerstone University students was 10.8 while the nationally normed group was 15.15. Students did improve their performance by 17.64% in the EA category which is the "Explicit Application of Basic Terms, Concepts, and Principles." The RU score improved by 26% over the pretest which measures the "recognition and understanding of basic terms, concepts, and principles" while the IA score increased by 31% from the pretest. The IA score measures "implicit application of basic terms, concepts, and principles."

These were considerable improvements in Fall 2007 over Fall 2006 postest in the EA (+2.54%) and IA (+2.7%) and RU (+3.57%) areas along with the overall increase of 2.37%. Thus, changes in pedagogy from last year's assessment have improved all scores from 2007.

More detailed analysis reveals that there is considerable correlation between the pre and post test (41% of the variation in the dependent variable post-test can be explained by the dependent variable pre-test). In addition, the post-test was highly correlated (Correlation Coefficient of .42 and Multiple R-squared of .42) with student's final grade points and the regression was significant (t-value of 3.8 and F=14.49) while the pre-test and final grade points had a multiple r-squared of .31 and was significant.

Possible Courses of Action:

1. Continue creating situations or assignments so that students are weekly applying the concepts and principles.

    a. For both macro and micro I know have "additional reading" assignments which are books that are popular and pragmatic such as "A Beautiful Mind" and "Freakonomics."

2. Test in ways that would require students connect the theoretical with the abstract

    a. I have reduced some of the abstract and or highly analytical work from the exams such as not having students solve for changes in GDP given MPC, MPS, etc.

3. Develop daily or weekly 1 minute papers to be sure students are grasping the theory along with the ability to make applications

4. Continue to include additional current topics which apply economic principles and tie in the economic theory.

Best Practice – A macro-divisional assessment practice

This best practice illustrates how a division plans for large scale assessment work.

Grand Rapids Theological Seminary
Assessment Report
2007-2008

Academic year 2007-2008 was given to refining several dimensions of our assessment systems. The full attention of the faculty and administration was given to critiquing our approach to assessment, refining the approach in certain areas, and fully implementing systems. It was a fruitful year in strengthening the infrastructure supporting our assessment plan and system.

The following are a few of the items achieved during 2007-2008:

1. The student learning portfolios were moved from a paper based system to an electronic environment (e-portfolio). This change shifted the burden and responsibility for the portfolio submissions from the faculty to the students.

2. An e-portfolio training strategy was developed and implemented, providing students with education on how to submit documents to their e-portfolio.

3. The portfolio checklist was reviewed and revised. The complexity of the system was enhanced with the development of portfolio checklists for each of the GRTS degree programs.

4. The mid-point assessment process was fully implemented. All GRTS students who completed 50% of their degree program were funneled through the process. Going forward the system will be coordinated every fall and spring for those students who meet the required % of program completion.

5. A survey was developed and administered in relation to the experience and satisfaction of the female students at GRTS (i.e., female student satisfaction survey). The data will be used as the basis for focus group discussions in fall 2008. With the GRTS community moving from 5% female student population to 35% in just the past 8-10 years, this research project is timely and important.

6. A system of student background checks was researched and a plan was developed. The background check system will be required of all students before they participate in ministry residency experiences and/or counseling practicum and internships. The system will be launched in fall 2008.

7. A case study model was developed along with a couple of sample cases. The model serves as a tool to foster learning and assessment in theological education as it relates to interdisciplinary competency. The model and sample cases will be refined by faculty and eventually embedded within the GRTS curriculum. A final case will be built into the program completion seminar, serving as a capstone assessment of interdisciplinary competency.

2008-2009 Assessment Plans

1. Assessment Project #1- The ministries division will engage in an assessment project related to the ministry residency required in the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts (Ministry). The project includes several elements related to student learning and satisfaction:
    a. Survey of students (satisfaction with Ministry Residency Program as a student)
    b. Survey of mentors (satisfaction with Ministry Residency Program as a mentor)
    c. Reflective portfolios analysis (assess student learning and development)-The members of the division will read across a sample of reflective essays to assess growth and development of the students as a result of the program.

2. Assessment Project #2- The Old Testament division will assess a core student learning outcome (exegetical competency in Old Testament) of the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts (OT). Kennedy and Lawlor will read and score a sample of OT III papers (capstone course in the OT sequence) using a rubric (core outcome nuanced with sub-outcomes) to assess student learning in this important area.

3. Assessment Project #3- The counseling division (Mueller-Bell and Lehman) will develop and administer an alumni survey for the Master of Arts in Counseling degree.

4. Assessment Project #4- A survey will be developed and administered to students to assess the level of multicultural competency at GRTS. This project will be coordinated by the Office of the Dean.

5. Assessment Project #4- Focus groups will be coordinated to make sense of the survey data collected last academic year in relation to the female student experience at GRTS. This project will be coordinated by the Office of the Dean.

6. Assessment Project #5- A survey will be developed and administered in relation to the Urban Cohort Initiative. A focus group may also be used to make sense of the data. This project will be coordinated from the Office of the Dean.

Best Practice – Leadership Journey Experience

This best practice was selected to illustrate the point of making decisions based on collected assessment information.

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Assessment Report
Student Leadership Development and Service Learning
June 2007-June 2008

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Means of assessment:

Interviews
- CU personnel, new students, and student leaders.
- Qualitative interviews for LJ students done by CUFs 4 interviews per group.
- Interviews with 40 Sherpa candidates about Personal Story paper.

Meetings
- Weekly meeting with Student Dev colleagues (Spir Form, Student Life, Student Gov).
- Monthly meetings with CU facilitators for Leadership Journey.
- Bi annual meetings with Grace Adventures to discuss Customs data and CUF/GAF data.
- Meetings with Admissions, IS, Financial Services, Student Development.
- Meet with all Service-Learning places that have LJ groups

Surveys
- "Customs" evaluation form for Leadership Journey curriculum
- Leadership Development Social Change (LDSC) assessment tool

Essays
- student leadership scholarship recipients
- Leadership Journey students

Programs, Events, Trainings assessed
- May 2008 CUF training
- Aug 2007 Leadership Journey
- Arrival and hospitality of new students in August 2007
- Student Leader hiring process
- MGT 100 class syllabus
- Student Leadership Scholarships Aug 2007-April 2008
- Leadership Journey and Admissions process/timeline Feb 08-Aug 08.

Decisions made based on assessment
- Restructure the order of journaling assignments in MGT 100 for Aug 2008
- Keep the Personal Story assignment as a new student assignment. Embed it in MGT 100 syllabus.
- Allow CUFs to select service-learning places before fall semester 2008.
- Provide more information regarding service-learning for CUFs
- Explain MGT 100 and IDS 100 syllabus to all FOD attendees in April 2008
- Discuss with Advancement the need to raise more money for Leadership Scholarships

Summary

The work of the assessment of student learning continues on even amidst the organizational

transition which is all around the campus community.   This Annual Report provides many best

practice models as we set a course for the future.

As we continue the campus assessment initiative, here are few "next steps" for the

campus community and the resultant goals for 2008-09:

1. All areas of the campus community must continue building the Mishqelet wall (objectives, assessment instruments, data-based decision-making) one stone at a time; continually over time.

2. The changing organizational structure must settle in and direct the rhythms of the campus work on assessment.

3. Faculty development opportunities must be offered on a continual basis.

4. Decision-making must be increasingly guided by the collection and use of data.

5. The campus community must hold another accountable for the work of assessment as the issue is more about internal quality and less about external HLC oversight.

To be receptive to change, members must understand their role in the fulfillment of a larger purpose and see how change will better enable them to accomplish organizational goals.

(Leading Organizations Through Transition, Deetz, et al., p. 154)

Campus Assessment Information

For more information regarding the work of assessment for the 2005-06 academic

year, please consult the following Odyssey website for:

- specific divisional reports and filings
- specific course reports and filings
- results of campus-wide macro- assessment data
- the reporting forms used to guide the yearly activity
- minutes and activities of the Assessment Committee

To access the Odyssey Assessment Website:

1. Go the http://odyssey.cornerstone.edu or follow the link on the Eaglesnest
2. Upon entering the Odyssey website, locate "CU Assessment"
3. Under the general CU Assessment course, you will find material on many areas of assessment at Cornerstone University. The Annual Assessment Reports from each division may be found under the Assessment Reports tab in the Divisional Assessment Reports folder.

In addition, the following website is useful in seeing how the university posts its

Assessment work to the world via the internet.

www.cornerstone.edu/assessment

Cornerstone University

** University Diamond Logo**

Assessing Towards Quality