Campus Conversations on the Assessment of Student Learning

Spring Semester 2009
Context (Past)

Current Status (Present)

Initiatives (Future)

- General
- Specific
University Assessment Committee
Members 2008-2009

- Lee Budesheim (A&S)
- Brenda Coppard (SPAHP)
- Maria Teresa Gaston (CCSJ)
- Kathryn Huggett (Medicine)
- Gail Jensen (Grad School)
- Jim Knudsen (CoBA)
- Jeff Maciejewski (A&S)
- Tom Meng (Dentistry)
- Michael Monaghan (SPAHP)
- Tom Kelly (A&S)
- Fran Klein (A&S)
- Joan Norris (Nursing)
- Colette O’Meara-Hansen (DoIT)
- Richard Rossi (Student Services)
- Palma Strand (Law)
- Richard Super (RSP)
- Paul Turner (SPAHP)
- Stephanie Wernig (Institutional Research)
- Mary Ann Danielson, Chair (Office of Academic Excellence and Assessment)
Context

• Self-study in preparation for accreditation visit by Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association of Colleges and Universities

• Identification of three general needs:
  1. Coordination of existing assessment work on campus
  2. Explicit university-wide articulation of values and valued outcomes for student learning
  3. Holistic consideration of the experience of Creighton students
Context

• Much of the necessary assessment work was found to be occurring already but not coordinated, explicit, articulated
• Creighton committed to four-year process of participation in the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning to work on three identified areas of need
• Why the necessity?
Current Status

• Assignment of lead role to University Assessment Committee with campus-wide representation

• Articulation of University Level Outcomes from
  - Mission Statement of Creighton University
  - Mission Statements of individual schools
  - Public statements by Father Schlegel
Current Status

Six University Level Outcomes

All Creighton graduates will demonstrate:

1. Disciplinary competence and/or professional proficiency,
2. critical thinking skills,
3. an ability to communicate clearly and effectively,
Current Status

4. Ignatian values, to include but not limited to a commitment to an exploration of faith and the promotion of justice,

5. deliberative reflection for personal and professional formation, and

6. an ability to effectively work across race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, and sexual orientation.
Current Status

University Level Outcomes

• Are phrased generally and invite interpretation and appropriate application by individual schools and departments

• Give individual schools the ability to align them with existing goals and specific accreditation requirements

• 4., 5., and 6. in particular recognize Creighton’s Jesuit, Catholic character, are less developed, and call for focused attention
Current Status

Poised now at the beginning of the next stage:

• Data collection and organization as to University Level Outcomes from schools, especially with regards to 1., 2., and 3.

• Campus conversations regarding 4., 5., & 6.

• Identification, peer review, and sharing of assessment practices currently being used across schools and programs
Initiatives (General)

“Outside In”

Accrediting Bodies

• traditionally have focused on 1., 2., and 3.
• increasing focus on 4., 5., and 6.

* Note that University Level Outcomes apply to programs rather than individual classes or opportunities.
Initiatives (General)

“Inside Out”
Faculty Inquiry
- Empowering change for continuous quality improvement
- Creating continuous feedback loops:
  “How do we get better?”
- “What will we not do this year that we did last year?”
Initiatives (Specific)

Spring 2009:
Individual school initiatives on chosen University Level Outcome—examples:

• Faculty work this spring to be incorporated in syllabi in the fall
• Faculty discussions of program-level coverage of all six University Level Outcomes
• Paired conversations—one school with another sharing assessment practices
Initiatives (Specific)

• Data collection
• Campus-wide conversations regarding 5.—deliberative reflection for personal and professional formation
• Focus on full set of student experiences
• University Assessment Committee as resource
Conclusions

• Not new—already doing this
• Makes assessment explicit and creates unified message
• Using structures that are already in place
• Anticipate external (accreditation) requirements
• Clarify value added by Creighton in hard economic times for marketing purposes
Questions:

• How can the University Assessment Committee be a resource?
• What are the individual schools’ areas of strength from an assessment point of view?
• What areas have been or will be more challenging?
• What is the posture of the school’s accrediting body?
UNIVERSITY-LEVEL OUTCOMES
1. Disciplinary competence and/or professional proficiency
2. Critical thinking skills
3. An ability to communicate clearly and effectively
4. Ignatian values, to include but not limited to a commitment to an exploration of faith and the promotion of justice
5. Deliberative reflection for personal and professional formation
6. An ability to effectively work across race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, and sexual orientation

PROGRAM REVIEW AND EVALUATION
• Outcomes-based essays or projects, blind reviewed by faculty members
• Student course evaluations
• Academic and administrative program reviews
• Accreditation

IMPROVEMENT
• Reporting to internal and/or external constituencies
• Demonstrating accountability to external stakeholders
• Proposing improvement initiatives based on assessment findings
• Improving assessment methods

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST
Questions regarding student learning based on College/School/Program contextualization of University-Level Outcomes

IMPLEMENTATION/ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING
Direct Measures
- Observational
- Writing assignments
- Group projects
- Research projects
- Exhibitions
- Presentations
- Performances
- Clinical performance
- Student portfolios
- Course examinations
- Standardized national exams
- Licensure exams
- Capstone projects
- Internships

Indirect Measures
- Graduation rates
- Transfer rates
- Retention rates
- Grade distributions
- Satisfaction surveys (by students or alums)
- Employer surveys
- Time to degree

OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING