Feeling Your OATS: A Look at Assessment at the University Level

Eric Soulsby
Why Assessment?

... Many reasons

- Accreditation – Regional & Professional Programs
- Institutions Becoming Learner-Centered
- Questions Trustees May Be Asking
  - What institution-wide, general education, and/or cross-curricular learning goals have been articulated as indicative of our institution’s mission?
  - How is evidence of student learning being collected? In other words, what is the process by which students demonstrate and document their knowledge and skills?
  - How is the evidence evaluated and by whom?
  - How is evidence used to improve the curriculum, co-curriculum, or other aspects of students’ experiences?
  - Have resources been allocated or reallocated based on how well students have learned?
  - Are descriptions of what students learn based on data, rather than on unsubstantiated claims?
- Refocusing on Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness
What is Assessment?

... Many similar purposes
Assessment for Accountability
... Regional Accreditation

Six regional accrediting associations in the United States

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA)

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
Assessment for Accountability

... Regional Accreditors


- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA) Middle States Commission on Higher Education accredits institutions in the Middle States region, which includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and several locations internationally.


- The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredits institutions in California and Hawaii, the territories of Guam, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, the Pacific Basin, and East Asia, and areas of the Pacific and East Asia where American/International schools or colleges may apply to it for service.

- The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredits institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia and in Latin America.
Why Assessment?  
... NEASC says so

- New standards went into effect January 2005
- *Institutional Effectiveness* continues as the overall theme
- New emphasis on the *assessment of student learning outcomes*
- Re-emphasizes student learning assessment as stated in the 1992 NEASC Policy Statement on Institutional Effectiveness:

  “While assessment is an overall institutional concern, as reflected in the various standards for accreditation, its primary focus is the teaching-learning experience. To the greatest extent possible, therefore, the institution should describe explicit achievements expected of its students and adopt reliable procedures for assessing those achievements.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Mission and Purposes</th>
<th>5. Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Planning and Evaluation</td>
<td>– Teaching and Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Organization and Governance</td>
<td>– Scholarship and Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Academic Program</td>
<td>6. Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Undergraduate Degree Programs</td>
<td>– Admissions</td>
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<td>– Retention and Graduation</td>
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<td>7. Library and Other Information Resources</td>
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<td>– Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit</td>
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<td>9. Financial Resources</td>
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<td>10. Public Disclosure</td>
</tr>
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<td>11. Integrity</td>
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Each of these has multiple standards and criteria.
NEASC “Standards”

Assessment of Student Learning ...

... is defined by a section within the *Academic Program* standard (paragraphs 4.44 through 4.50) and receives specific attention at many other points in the Standards such as:

- Mission and Purposes (1.4)
- Planning and Evaluation (throughout)
- Academic Program (throughout)
- Faculty (5.3, 5.10, 5.13 and 5.15-5.18)
- Students (6.7, 6.17)
- Library and Other Information Resources (7.8)
NEASC “Standards”
-- Involves Program Assessment

- “The institution implements and supports a systematic and broad-based approach to the assessment of student learning focused on educational improvement through understanding what and how students are learning through their academic program … This approach is based on a clear statement or statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program. … ”

- “The institution's system of periodic review of academic programs includes a focus on understanding what and how students learn as a result of the program.”

- “Evaluation endeavors and systematic assessment are demonstrably effective in the improvement of academic offerings and student learning.”

15 October 2007 -- Eric Soulsby
NEASC (responding to the Spellings Commission?)

... is Becoming More Explicit in Looking at Student Success

- Goal for institutions to become increasingly explicit in the area of student achievement and success
- Greater regularity in how institutions report how they assess student learning and what they are finding out

Possible alternatives to make assessment more explicit

The institution …

... Completes an inventory of how programs assess student learning and use the results and specialized accreditation

... Commits to the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) plus program review

... May elect a framework in which they state claims for student achievement and provide supporting evidence

... Identifies key measures of student success and compares its level of performance to peers
Beyond Accreditation

... Assessment is part of the paradigm shift

Shifting away from the “instructional paradigm”, where

- the mission of colleges and universities is to provide instruction
- teaching has a focus on
  - what the student *is*: learning is a function of the individual differences between students
    - a “blame the student” theory of teaching, based on student deficit, where when students don’t learn it is due to something the students are lacking
  - what the teacher *does*: learning is a function of teaching
    - a theory of teaching, based on transmission of concepts and understandings not just information, where the responsibility for effective transmission is placed on the teacher, rather than the student, thereby making it based on teacher deficit

To that of a “learning paradigm”, where

- the mission is to produce student learning using a model of the teaching-learning process that focuses on the learner learning
- the college aligns all of its activities around this mission, emphasizing results or outcomes, rather than curriculum, gpa, …
- teaching has a focus is on
  - what the student *does*
    - getting students to understand at the level required is a matter of getting them to undertake the appropriate learning activities
  - providing consistent, continual, interactive feedback to students
Beyond Accreditation
... Questions Assessment Hopes to Address

- **Student learning**
  - How well do course objectives track with curricular objectives?
  - To what extent are key curricular goals introduced and reinforced from course to course?
  - Are students suitably prepared for graduate school and/or chosen careers?

- **Curricular efficiency**
  - How well do our service courses contribute to the institution’s general education goals?
  - To what extent are curricular objectives based on documented evidence of what students need to know and do?
  - How many discretionary courses are offered, and is this number excessive?
  - How do you reinforce Gen Ed in the major?

- **Student success**
  - What factors cause students to switch to another major?
  - What is most responsible for success or failure of at-risk students?
  - What is our track record in attracting and retaining students?
  - How confident are students in their ability to compete in the marketplace?

- **Etc.**
So, What is Assessment?

... Many similar definitions

- **Assessment involves the use of empirical data on student learning to refine programs and improve student learning.**
  
  *(in *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* Allen 2004)*

- **Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning.*
  
  *(in *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses* Huba and Freed 2000)*

- **Assessment is the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning.**
  
  *(in *Assessment Clear and Simple* Walvoord 2004)*

- **Assessment is the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students. It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using information to increase students’ learning and development.**
  
  *(in *Assessing Student Learning and Development* Erwin 1991)*

- **Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.**
  
  *(in *Assessment Essentials* Palomba and Banta 1999)*

- **Assessment is a process of reasoning from evidence.**
  
  *(in *Knowing What Students Know* Pellegrino, Chudowsky, and Glaser 2001)*
What does Assessment have to do …
… with Instruction?

Assessment reveals how well students have learned what we want them to learn

Faculty do Assessment at the class and course levels …
… accreditation now mandates it at the program level as well
“People tend to learn most effectively (in ways that make a sustained, substantial, and positive influence on the way they think, act, or feel) when … they can try, fail, and receive feedback from expert learners in advance of and separate from any summative judgment of their efforts.”

What the Best College Teachers Do by Ken Bain, 2004
What does Assessment have to do … … with Programs?

Assessment Learning Cycle

1. Define intended learning objectives
2. Measure selected learning outcomes
3. Compare outcomes with intended objectives
4. Redesign program to improve learning

Assessment leads to curriculum improvement (and institutional effectiveness)
Getting Started With Assessment at UConn

- Assessment Liaisons established in the schools/colleges
- Additional Liaisons established for each of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS) departments
- Started with work on undergraduate programs
- Created material to help educate others (web site, Assessment Notes document)
- Regular meetings of school/college Liaisons to share information
- Regular meetings of CLAS Liaisons to educate and share progress
- Senior faculty member helped guide efforts of CLAS programs
- Hosted assessment webinars
- Suggested participation in NEEAN and NEASC events
- Provided feedback on draft learning outcome statements
- Guided by expectations put forth by the Provost
- General Education Assessment effort moving forward in parallel
Getting Started: Assessment Jargon, Oh my!
We’ve been educating ourselves ...

UConn Assessment website http://assessment.uconn.edu

Assessment Primer

"If you don’t know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else." – Yogi Berra

Various aspects of student learning outcomes assessment are described in the Assessment Primer section menu items presented. Within each section you will be provided with navigation choices to progress from page-to-page or section-to-section. However, you can always click on an Assessment Primer menu section item to navigate directly to that particular area of interest.

Questions which assessment helps address:

- We are spending time and resources trying to achieve student learning – is it working?
- When we claim to be graduating students with qualities like “critical thinking” or “scientific literacy”, do we have evidence of our claims?
- We have the impression that our students are weak in area X – would more systematic research back up this impression and help us understand the weaknesses more thoroughly?
- When we identify a weakness in our students’ learning, how can we best address the problem?
- How can we improve learning most effectively in a time of tight resources?

(Assessment Clear and Simple by Walvoord 2004)
... Learning the pieces of assessment ...

The “Outcomes Pyramid”

Objectives/Outcomes flow from (are aligned with) the Mission and Goals

“One must know what is to be assessed before one knows how to assess it.” (Erwin 1991)

“If you don’t know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else.” (Yogi Berra)
... Starting with learning outcomes

Learning Outcomes identify what the learner will know and be able to do by the end of the program.

Non Sequitur By Wiley Miller

IT MIGHT LEAVE A LITTLE TOO MUCH ROOM FOR RATIONALIZATION. MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY BREAKING IT DOWN TO A FEW SPECIFICS...

Moses and the First Draft

Learning Outcomes require specificity in order to be measurable.

How will you know that a student “understands”?
Some programs had worked with our Institute for Teaching & Learning instructional designers

Others, ...

... it’s a new world!
... Using Bloom’s Verbs to achieve specificity ...
... Realizing it’s an iterative process!

- Achieving specificity may take several passes
- Feedback provided on DRAFT statements of learning expectations
Looking at what we do
... Shifting the MISSION to student learning

**Statistics Mission example**

**FROM:**
To increase the knowledge and use of statistics in the State of Connecticut, as well as in the nation and the world at large through (1) quality teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, (2) effective training of future statisticians, (3) interdisciplinary research, and (4) basic research in the science of statistics.

**TO:**
The Statistics program promotes the intellectual growth and high-quality preparation of students by educating them in the principles, practices, and applications of probability and statistics by emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of this discipline. The program prepares graduates to fill the roles of statisticians capable of making or advising others how to make sound decisions scientifically based on the evidence from real data.

**Italian Mission example**

**FROM:**
The Italian Program is committed to provide the university and the community with an authentic experience of Italian language, literature, and culture, thus contributing to diversify the curriculum and to provide fundamental intercultural and interdisciplinary knowledge.

**TO:**
The Italian Program educates students in the Italian language, literature, and culture and provides fundamental intercultural and interdisciplinary knowledge.
Looking at what we do
... Shifting GOALS to student learning

**Italian Goal example**

**FROM:**
- To offer courses which provide our students with linguistic and cultural skills allowing them to interact with Italian individuals and cultural phenomena.
- To offer courses which provide our students with linguistic and intellectual skills that will enhance their performance in other fields of expertise.
- To offer courses which contribute to enhance and diversify the general education curriculum.
- To offer courses which allow students to specialize in Italian literature and culture and equip with the necessary skills those who wish to enter Master programs in this area.

**TO:**
- Students will acquire general Italian linguistic skills
- Students will develop an awareness of Italian literary culture
- Students will develop an awareness of Italian culture
- Students will develop intercultural competence
- Students will have the ability to construct evidence-based arguments pertaining to Italian culture and other fields of knowledge
Learning About Methods of Measurement
... Many ways to gather evidence

Methods of Assessing Learning in the Major

- Classroom/Course Data
- Individual Projects & Performance Assessment
- Summative Performance Assessment
- Assessment of Collaboration
- Archival Measures
- Interviews & Surveys
- Self-Assessment & Reflection

Source: http://www.apa.org/ed/design_strategy.html
Task Force on Learning Goals & Outcomes, American Psychological Association 2002
### Measurement Methods to Consider

#### Classroom/Course Data
- Objective Tests
- Essay Tests
- Embedded Questions and/or Assignment
- Classroom Assessment Techniques

#### Individual Projects/Performance Assessment
- Written Products (e.g., term papers, lab reports, critiques)
- New Oral Presentations (e.g., speeches, role plays)
- Graphic Tests and Displays
- Poster Presentations
- Structural/Situational Assessments

#### Summative Performance Assessment
- Standardized Tests
- Locally-Developed Exams
- Capstone Experiences
- Internships
- Portfolios
- Assessment Center Methods (e.g., in-baskets)
- Case or Longitudinal Studies

#### Self-Assessment/Reflection
- Student Journals
- Self-Critiques
- Collaboration
- Research Teams
- Group Projects (e.g., written and oral)
- On-Line Group Activities (e.g., chat room traffic)

#### Interviews and Surveys
- Satisfaction Measures (e.g., alumni, seniors, employers, etc.)
- Performance Reviews
- Exit Interviews
- External Examiner Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Follow-up Alumni Interviews

#### Archival Measures
- Transcript Analysis
- Analysis of Transfer Patterns
- Syllabus Audit
- Demographic Data Analysis
- Alumni Database
- Library Use Statistics

Task Force on Learning Goals & Outcomes, American Psychological Association 2002
Leading to Understanding ...
The Program Assessment Process

- Determine learning objectives/outcomes
  - Faculty reach a consensus on program learning objectives

- Curriculum alignment
  - Verify that the curriculum and co-curriculum align with the learning objectives

- Assessment Plan
  - Develop a meaningful, manageable, and sustainable assessment plan

- Measure
  - As the assessment plan is implemented, collect assessment data

- Evaluate and Feedback
  - Evaluate what you have measured and close the loop by responding to identified deficiencies

- Assess the assessment
  - Examine the assessment process itself, learn from mistakes, and improve
What should be documented?
... Assessment as an ongoing/systematic activity

For each degree program, we should document:

- Faculty expectations for student learning
- How these expectations are defined in practice
- How these expectations are assessed
- What results are gained (summary level)
- Based on results gained, what actions are being taken
Assessment Planning and Reporting

Pieces of an Assessment Plan
- Mission
- Goals
- Objectives/Outcomes
- Criteria/Procedures
- Measurement
- Analysis
- Recommended Actions
- Feedback/Improvements

Annual Assessment Report Components
- Mission
- Goals
- Implementation
- Objectives/Outcomes
  - Measures
  - Results
- Recommended Actions

Program MISSION
Program GOALS
Program IMPLEMENTATION

Learning OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME
METHOD(s)
RESULT(s)
ACTION Summary for Learning Objective

15 October 2007 -- Eric Soulsby
Essentially, for each learning objective/outcome there are four components of an annual assessment report:

1. The **Objective/Outcome** being assessed
2. The assessment **Method** used
3. The **Results** from doing assessment
4. The recommended **Action** to be taken based upon what was learned

General preamble material about the mission/purposes and goals of the program along with a discussion on curriculum delivery, curriculum mapping, alignment, etc.
Annual Assessment Report Components

Program MISSION

Program GOALS

Program IMPLEMENTATION

Program Mission or Purpose
- Is a concise statement of what the program or unit is, what it does, and for whom it does it
- Is a clear description of the purpose of the program or unit and the learning environment

Program Goals / Expectations for student learning
- Describe learning outcomes in general terms (e.g., clear communication, problem-solving skills, etc.)
- Flow from the Mission and provide the framework for determining the more specific educational learning objectives and outcomes of a program

Program Implementation
- Consider describing how the learning goals/objectives/outcomes are delivered in the curriculum
- If appropriate, consider using a curriculum map showing the alignment of the objectives/outcomes with courses in the curriculum
- Consider describing targets of opportunity for assessment of student learning
- Consider providing an overview of the approaches used for measuring how well students are meeting your learning expectations

Items that remain fairly constant from year to year
Annual Assessment Report Components

Program Objectives/Outcomes
- Objectives are brief, clear statements that describe the desired learning outcomes of instruction
  - Cognitive objectives: "What do you want your graduates to know?"
  - Affective objectives: "What do you want your graduates to think or care about?"
  - Behavioral Objectives: "What do you want your graduates to be able to do?"
- Learning Outcomes are statements that identify what the learner will know and be able to do by the end of a course or program

Measurement Methods
- Should indicate how you will measure each of your outcomes
- Provide at least two ways to measure each outcome

Results
- An analysis of what was learned from the measurement method(s)

Action Summary
- Recommended actions to be taken based on what was learned from assessing the learning outcome

Items that may (or may not*) change from year to year
*It may take several passes at assessing an outcome to be convinced of a need for curriculum changes
Online Assessment Tracking System (OATS)

Web-based System for Annual Assessment Reporting

- Web-based system obtained from Georgia Tech -- tailored to UConn
- ColdFusion program operating in an Oracle environment
- Similar to packages developed in Colorado, Florida, etc.
- Similar to commercial packages such as WEAVEOnline, TrueOutcomes, etc.
OATS Main Menu

Online Assessment Tracking System
Main Menu

Includes links to
- Instructions (OATS User Manual) and Reports
- News or Announcements

OATS Update as of 15 March 2007
Annual Assessment Update Reports must be submitted by October 1st

Edit Current Annual Assessment Update
View Current Annual Assessment Updates
View Previous Annual Assessment Updates

Allows for
- Editing current updates
- Viewing current updates
- Viewing updates from previous years
OATS Program Menu

2006-2007 OATS Annual Assessment Updates

| Unit: Engineering, Electrical & Computer Engineering |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree - Plan (Plan Code)</th>
<th>Objectives/Outcomes</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Action Summaries</th>
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<td></td>
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# Entered and Last Update

- Bachelor of Science in Engineering - Computer Engineering BSE (COMPEG_BSE)
  - 14
  - 20 Jan 2007
  - 12 Feb 2007
  - 38
  - 23 Jan 2007
  - 38
  - 23 Jan 2007
  - 14
  - 23 Jan 2007

- Bachelor of Science in Engineering - Electrical Engineering BSE (ELECEG_BSE)
- Master of Science - Electrical Engineering MS (ELECEG_MS)

- Searchable by school/college and department affiliated with the program
- Includes enumeration of Objectives/Outcomes, Methods, Results, Actions and date last modified
- Indicates Status/Progress toward completion of the current annual reporting cycle
- can be used for information ("Here’s why we did this last year…") or for feedback from others
## 2006-2007 OATS Annual Assessment Updates

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Selecting a program to **Edit** brings you to the Edit Menu ...
A contrived example to just show how the "preamble" pieces appear when entered into OATS

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A contrived example to just show how the “outcomes” pieces appear when entered into OATS

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<th>Objective/Outcome: 1</th>
<th>Generating electricity from static</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will be able to generate a charge from static electricity on various lengths of shag carpet.</td>
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<td>Only 10% of the students observed had electric personalities.</td>
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**Learning OBJECTIVE/OUTCOME**

- **METHOD(s)**
- **RESULT(s)**

**ACTION Summary for Learning Objective**

Based on the observation of student work, it seems that a more efficient means for generating electricity is needed in order for students to understand electrical static. Rather than change the instructor’s teaching methods, it was decided to install a thicker carpet.
For each objective/outcome, programs define the knowledge and skills to be assessed

- What will students actually demonstrate?
- State in terms of expected behaviors
- Outcomes must be measurable
### Assessment Methods

Programs specify the method(s) by which student learning will be assessed (presentations, embedded exam questions, projects, etc.).

Consider indicating the location in the curriculum

Consider specifying the performance level to be achieved

- The same method may be used to cover more than one learning objective/outcome; e.g., rubrics developed to assess senior design projects might be used to assess technical skills, teamwork, and communication skills.
- Consider triangulation (multiple methods) to increase reliability of measurement.
- Consider the reliability, validity, and quality of instruments used.

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Based on the observation of student work, it seems that a more efficient means for generating electricity is needed in order for students to understand electrical static. Rather than change the instructor's teaching methods, it was decided to install a thicker carpet.
### Assessment Results

Succinctly summarize assessment results found; e.g.,

“95% achieved passing scores on relevant portion of the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam.”

Provide brief analysis and interpretation of results

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<th>The program is structured so that all courses reinforce the need of engineers to do engineering design in a global society.</th>
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</table>

As much detail as desired, keeping in mind that what is of interest are results in an aggregated sense rather than individual student data

Some programs may wish to have more detail if it is desired to have accreditation self-study documents prepared from the OATS material.
### Action: Use of Assessment Results

For each learning objective/outcome, include a discussion of actions taken or pending for the instructional program based on evaluating the results obtained from the method(s) used for assessing student learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective/Outcome: 1</th>
<th>Generating electricity from static</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to generate a charge from static electricity on various lengths of shag carpet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method: 1</th>
<th>Observation of carpet length and charge induced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be observed walking across a carpet and touching a colleague who will record the level of static electricity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result: 1.1</th>
<th>Results of Observation of carpet length and charge induced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only 10% of the students observed had electric personalities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Summary: 1</th>
<th>Action Summary for Learning Objective: Generating electricity from static</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the observation of student work, it seems that a more efficient means for generating electricity is needed in order for students to understand electrical static. Rather than change the instructor's teaching methods, it was decided to install a thicker carpet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that suggestions for curriculum changes may or may not arise from a single application of a measurement method.

Recommended actions can reflect proposed changes to the tool(s) used for measurement or changes to where in the curriculum student work is assessed, etc.

- assessing the assessment is important too!
Opening up the third party *EditLive!* edit window is done via clicking on certain icons on the Edit Menu screen.
OATS Edit Menu
-- Data Entry via EditLive!

*EditLive! may take a few seconds to load Java ...*

... eventually leading to the *EditLive!* data entry window

15 October 2007 -- Eric Soulsby
**OATS EditLive! Data Entry Window**

Use the toolbar to **format** text as it is entered.

1. You can create a numbered list
   - Or, use bullet points

You can create a table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>and enter text</th>
<th>or cut and paste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can insert an image

![EditLive!](image)

**EditLive!** allows for simple data entry with some “MS Word-like” features

You may cut-and-paste material from other sources

But, keep in mind that what you are actually generating is HTML code which has limitations on what formatting may be achieved on a web page.
**Objective/Outcome**  
**Communication Skills**  
Students will be able to communicate in written, oral and graphic forms in such a way as to demonstrate their ability to present information clearly, logically, and critically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Scoring Rubric -- Student Presentations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student oral presentations of projects in the senior capstone sequence will be evaluated by faculty and outside observers for logical organization, mastery of content, and critical presentation of ideas. A scoring rubric will be used, and scores will be compared between raters. 90% of students will meet the minimum standards established.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Results of Scoring Rubric – Student Presentations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This year, 20 projects were rated during May, by two faculty raters and one outside observer, all of whom used the same scoring rubric to rate each presentation. Scores were similar across raters for all but two presentations; the raters agreed on ratings for these two cases after some discussion. The results were as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Logical organization: 90% of the students met the minimum standards established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mastery of content: 90% of the students met the minimum standards established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Critical presentation of ideas: 70% of the students met the minimum standards established.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Action Summary | Action Summary for Learning Objective  
Communication Skills |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The assessment results from oral presentation of senior capstone sequence projects were discussed at the annual faculty retreat in late May. Satisfaction with the ratings on organization and content was noted; concern was expressed over the lower-than-expected ratings for critical presentation of ideas in the presentations. Potential causes cited included possible weak student understanding of the nature of critical inquiry and a possible failure to communicate clearly the expectation for critical presentation of ideas. Faculty members decided to emphasize the nature of critical inquiry in not only core coursework but also in more advanced courses in the major. The basic syllabus for the capstone design sequence will be altered to better define the expectations for critical presentation of ideas when projects are presented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
October 1st of each year is the deadline for submitting the Annual Assessment Update Report.

Within OATS, you can “request feedback” on your Annual Assessment Update Report before “submitting” the final version for the year.
OATS Implementation Costs

- **OATS software**
  - Source code from Georgia Tech: $0K
  - ColdFusion software license: $6.2K
  - (Oracle database): already an Oracle shop
  - EditLive! software license: $6.6K
  - EditLive! Upgrade: $2.8K

- **OATS hardware**
  - Two Servers: $13.7K

- **University Information Technology Services**
  - Server, backup, etc. setup: $1K
  - ColdFusion programming: $18K
  - Database maintenance: $1.2K

- **Ongoing**
  - ColdFusion updates: TBD
  - EditLive! updates
  - (Oracle updates)
  - Database maintenance
  - Backups
  - Enhancements

**Initial costs**
- ~ $30K hardware & software
- ~ $20K setup/programming

**Ongoing costs**
- ~ Guesstimate $10K / year

15 October 2007 -- Eric Soulsby
Summary of OATS web-based approach features

- **Online Method**
  - Consistent format
  - Database storage
  - Ability to track progress over time
  - Process facilitates accreditation e-review
  - Facilitates institutional sharing

- Provides a longitudinal record of assessment activity in each instructional program

- Can be used to satisfy multiple internal and external information/accreditation needs

- **Simple common sense structure**
  - Mission
  - Goals
  - Implementation
  - Objectives/Outcomes
  - Methods
  - Results
  - Actions

- Annual rollover feature (except for assessment results and actions taken) eases the effort from year to year
But ... Faculty Concerns About Assessment
-- Whose job is it?

- "I’ve been teaching for 30 years ..."
- It’s not my job
- Can’t we get somebody else to input the material into OATS?
- Can we get some funds to hire someone to do assessment?
- What should I stop doing to now do assessment?
Faculty Fears About Assessment Reporting

-- We will be “judged” by others

Reality is

- Only the faculty in the program can “judge” the results
- It’s apples vs. oranges when comparing programs
- Assessment is an inquiry into how well your students are meeting your learning expectations … It helps you improve what you do!
- OATS annual reporting is a MUST to meet NEASC and University expectations
Faculty thoughts about Assessment ...

(I know what some of you are thinking ... )
But the reality is ...

... Assessment is not a “fad” which will go away
Higher Ed Needs to Get Moving
... Before it gets worse!

Assessment is here to stay ... and may become even more important ...

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Today's News

Thursday, November 30, 2006

In Meeting With Accreditors, Spellings Pledges Quick Action to Make System 'Work Better'

By KELLY FIELD

Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said on Wednesday that she will move quickly to improve accreditation, saying the system must become more focused on student-learning outcomes.

etc ...

... Higher Ed needs to avoid
So …

We are all in this together … need to share insights and learn from each other
UConn Summary

- Every program will be involved – initially focusing on undergraduate majors
- Assessment web site http://assessment.uconn.edu helped educate the community
- Assessment Liaisons were established in each school/college and in each CLAS department
  - Liaisons have worked with faculty to write Mission, Goals, and Objectives/Outcomes for the undergraduate programs
- Evidence of doing assessment is expected by the Provost
- Assessment results feed into budget decision making
- Assessment of student learning is part of program review
- General Education assessment planning is underway
  - Learning outcomes are being developed for the Content Areas and Competencies
- Online annual assessment reporting system (OATS) implemented
- Graduate and interdisciplinary programs are next
Whew! ... Questions?

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