

# OFFICE OF ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

## ASSESSMENT TIP OF THE MONTH: DOES YOUR FIVE-YEAR ASSESSMENT PLAN HAVE A CURRICULUM MAP?

### Department Assessment:

#### Political Science

[Kristy Michaud](#), Assessment Liaison

The Political Science Department used a Progressive Direct Assessment approach to assess three SLOs in 2012-13 - critical thinking, political decision making, and political analytical skills. The assessment coordinator chose a random sample of 15 student papers from eight courses. The assessment committee, comprised of five full-time faculty members, was asked to read the sample papers and score them according to the SLO rubrics. The scores were then averaged and synthesized into charts that show the percentages of papers meeting the 'unsatisfactory,' 'elementary,' 'developing,' 'proficient,' and 'exemplary' designations. The committee inferred that political science students would benefit from more structured course sequencing, beginning with a course that would introduce them to the field of political science and possible career paths for political science graduates. A curriculum proposal is being developed for a new course. The committee also identified the need for methodological changes to the assessment approach. Beginning 2013-14, the department will begin using a longitudinal approach that will allow tracking students as they progress through the major.

[Annual assessment reports](#) are available for review through the Office of Academic Assessment.

### **CRITICAL THINKING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC**

[Bonnie Paller](#), Director, Academic Assessment and Program Review

An effort that started with a team of representatives from each College across the CSUN campus, led to the development of a [rubric for Critical Thinking assessment](#). The rubric is a "Laundry-list model" providing for customization through selection of relevant line items for each discipline. A team of faculty participating in the Learning Habits Project used the Laundry-list to create a rubric to assess students' Critical Thinking skills within the project.

### The Learning Habits Project

[Bonnie Paller](#), Director, Academic Assessment and Program Review

The Learning Habits Project has been tracking the learning habits of groups of CSUN students since 2007. Using a combination of interviews during their freshman, junior and exit years as well argumentative essays from their freshman and junior years, the Project has aimed to gain insight into best learning practices which can be shared with all CSUN students. In summer 2013, using 12 pairs of essays from students in their freshman and junior years, a faculty group led by [Irene Clark](#) assessed student essays for improvement in written communication. While the sample was small, the results are interesting and point the way to further research. Review the [Learning Habits Written Communication Project Report](#) for more details. In fall 2013, a new faculty group has convened to assess improvement in critical thinking for a larger number of pairs. We hope to have results from this critical thinking assessment task by early 2014.

### Program Review Launch: August 2013

Fifteen faculty representing 8 departments and programs, attended the 2013-2014 Program Review Launch Meeting during the first week of Fall semester. Program Review Coordinator [Eli Bartle](#), Academic Assessment and Program Review Director [Bonnie Paller](#) and graduate assistant [Roxi Diaz](#) facilitated a discussion of the self-study, the external reviewers' visit, and the final MOU process. [Bettina Huber](#), Director of the Office of Institutional Research (IR), discussed the statistical data that is posted on the [IR website](#) and how to navigate the site. Any discrepancy in data should be reported directly to [Dr. Huber](#). [Dianah Wynter](#), Assistant Professor in Cinema and Television Arts, explained the new campus climate section in the self-study. Programs and departments are asked to document the atmosphere, perceptions and attitudes of faculty, staff and students within their departments in relation to diversity and inclusivity and the steps they've taken to positively affect their campus climate. The list and status of all Departments and Programs conducting their program review is updated weekly on the Program Review [website](#). If you have further questions about writing the self-study or how to begin your external review, please visit the [Program Review website](#) or contact [Eli Bartle](#) or [Roxi Diaz](#) via email or telephone (Ext. 2969).

### **UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:**

GENERAL EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT: DISRUPTIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES  
NETWORK FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL CONFERENCE  
FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 1, 2014, PORTLAND, OR

### **Contact the Academic Assessment Team:**

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