

College: CSBS

Submitted by: Matthew Cahn

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Please provide an overview of college-level assessment activities, if relevant.

Assessment activities in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences are conducted at the department level, facilitated by the College Assessment Coordinator. The college standard is that all departments are actively applying assessment data to improve their program's learning outcomes. Eight out of the College's nine departments are doing so. The remaining department was directed to redesign their assessment program to be able to acquire meaningful data by Spring 2013.

Facilitation of Departmental Efforts

The College Assessment Coordinator (Matthew Cahn) facilitated several college-wide meetings of department chairs and departmental assessment liaisons through the Fall 2011 semester to align departmental activities with college and university expectations. While departments were at various stages of implementing assessment programs, college-level assessment activities focused on closing the loop. Departments were asked to identify explicitly what they were doing to respond to their evidence on student learning.

During the month of November the College Assessment Coordinator facilitated nine meetings between Bonnie Paller (Director of University Assessment) and each department's assessment liaison and chair. The objective of these meetings was to provide a forum for each department to hear feedback on their assessment progress, and when necessary redirect their assessment efforts to improve the quality of their data and affirm their responsiveness to that data. The meetings were followed up with explicit memos shared between the departments, the office of university assessment, and the Dean -- focusing on areas of success, and areas of needed improvement. The process allowed departments to receive direct feedback on their progress, and allowed departments the opportunity to address questions and concerns.

Participation in Meetings and Conferences

- Facilitated college level meetings.
- Participated in university assessment meetings.
- Participated in the CCAS Assessment Workshop, Denver CO, March 29-30.

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Status of College Efforts to Close the Loop

The primary focus of College level assessment activities is to facilitate improvement of all departmental assessment programs with the following objectives in mind:

- Cogency and validity of data collection methods – are the departmental methods for collecting assessment data valid? Are departments measuring what they say they are measuring?
- Utility of evidence – can the data be effectively applied to improving each program's learning outcomes?
- Closing the loop – are departments making programmatic changes that respond to the assessment data they are collecting?
- Continual improvement – are departments continually improving the quality and application of their assessment program?

As the departmental Annual Reports indicate, CSBS departments have achieved different levels of success in meeting each of these objectives. Eight of the nine CSBS department are at the stage of successfully collecting data, and integrating that data in curricular and programmatic decision-making. The ninth department is redesigning its assessment program and will have usable data by the end of AY 2012-13.

College-level assessment process:

Is there a college assessment coordinator or college assessment committee? Is this a new position or committee?

Matthew Cahn (POLS) is the College Assessment Coordinator in his role as CSBS Administrative Fellow.

What are their responsibilities?

To facilitate departmental assessment across the college's 9 departments. While CSBS assessment is by department, the college standard is all departments are applying assessment data to improving their program's learning outcomes in a meaningful way.

College-level learning outcomes:

Describe any college-wide learning outcomes.

In addition to the several departmental SLOs, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences has one overall SLO:

- CSBS graduates can reason critically, understand statistics, and make informed judgments on evidence and social contexts.

This is measured at the department level through department-specific SLOs that align with critical (evidence-based) thinking.

Were any college-wide learning outcomes assessed this year? If so, please describe the process used to assess them.

Each CSBS department has a programmatic SLO that corresponds to the College learning outcome. These are assessed at the department level. This past year the following departments measured corresponding SLOS:

Anthropology (Graduate POL 7)

Geography (SLO 2.5)

History (SLO Critical Thinking)

Political Science (SLO 4: Critical Thinking)

Psychology (PLO 1: Statistical Methods)

Social Work (SLO EP 2.1.3)

Sociology (SLOs 2, 3, 4)

What evidence of student learning resulted from the study?

The data vary by department. In sum, the departments of the College of SBS are finding that students are demonstrating partial success in meeting departmental student learning outcomes.

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How will the resulting evidence be used to improve program quality?

Again, this varies by department. The College standard is that each department is closing the loop in a meaningful way by integrating the assessment evidence into programmatic improvements. This is a stepwise process, beginning with faculty discussion in department and curriculum committee meetings and moving toward changes in advisement, pedagogic modifications, changes in course sequencing, course modifications, and program modifications.

The annual assessment data allow for incremental improvements. At the same time, the emerging assessment evidence provides a substantive data archive for more substantial improvements under the auspices of each department's Program Review.

Fundamental Learning Competencies:

Were any Fundamental Learning Competencies (eg. critical thinking, written communication) assessed this year?

Departmental SLOs across the college align with the university's fundamental learning competencies. Although the specific SLOs vary by department, there is overlapping emphasis on all FLCs. Departments with SLOs that align with university FLC Competencies in 2011-2012 include:

Critical Thinking: **ANTHRO; GEOG; HIST; PAS; POLS; PSYCH; MSW; SOC; URBS**

Oral Communication: **ANTHRO; PAS; POLS; URBS**

Written Communication: **HIST; PAS; POLS; SOC; URBS**

Quantitative Literacy: **GEOG; PAS; POLS; PSYCH; SOC; URBS**

Information Literacy: **GEOG; HIST; PAS; POLS; SOC; URBS**

Appendix: Snapshot of Departmental Assessment Activities 2011-12

Anthropology (Helene Rougier, liaison)

- Undergraduate and graduate Program Learning Outcomes revised and approved by department; key additions were PLOs that directly address research methods and communicative competency.
- Developed and tested rubrics (one for advanced undergraduates and one for graduate students) for assessing oral communication competency.
- In conjunction with the Technology committee, developed materials on oral presentations to be posted on Anthropology website.
- Assessed graduate student competency in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting anthropological evidence.
- Began tracking time-to-completion for graduate students to test effectiveness of changes in ANTH 696A and 696B (from independent study to cohorted seminars).
- Qualitatively assessed time-to-completion issues graduate students face.
- Implemented “exit interviews” and questionnaires for graduating seniors and graduating MA students (querying strengths and weakness of the Program; professional plans and aspirations).
- Began program to collect and track professional information from alumni (querying them about current employment; whether or not (and how) they see it as related to Anthropology; which of the skills they attained in Program have been most useful; what skills they would have liked to have obtained from the Program).

Geography (Ron Davidson, liaison)

- During the past year, Geography has continued implementing pre and post tests in Geography 150 to develop a more thorough understanding of the geographic literacy of our incoming students.
- During the past the department focused on two areas of assessment, the ability of students to write literature reviews and the application of field studies.
- Found a significant improvement in the literature reviews of students which is likely due to changes in the curriculum across the entire program.
- In several of our major courses, Geography developed more focus on writing and reviewing published papers in Geography, which appears to have paid off when reviewing senior theses.

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History (Donal O'Sullivan, liaison)

- The Department met in May to review papers from the “gateway” course to the major and assess student learning in that course.
- Based on assessment evidence History changed their advisement to assure that students take Gateway and Capstone courses in appropriate sequence.
- Identified two goals for next year: Review student work from upper division elective courses for majors to assess student learning. A rubric has been developed for this effort. Following the example of many other departments in the college, establish an assessment committee to engage the department more in the assessment process.

Pan African Studies (Anthony Ratcliff, liaison)

- In September 2011, PAS assessed PAS 100 and subsequently met with Bonnie Paller to discuss our department's assessment plan. The department was informed that they need to revise our SLOs so they would be measurable.
- The department is in the process of refining their SLOs and redesigning their data collection methodology to acquire meaningful evidence of learning outcomes. This will include assessing student learning between gateway (PAS 100) and upper division courses.
- PAS is the only CSBS department not yet at the stage of responding to assessment data.

Political Science (Jennifer DeMaio, liaison)

- POLS continued assessing their gateway and capstone courses.
- In response to their assessment evidence, POLS is discussing the creation of a writing lab and are looking at other university resources such as WRAD that we could utilize in our classes to improve writing.
- POLS is improving assessment for 2012-13 by increasing the sample size of papers assessed and by changing the measurement scale in order to gather more finely-tuned data. In addition, POLS will strengthen its program by disaggregating their SLOs on their rubric.
- POLS is also developing an instrument for assessing their Title 5 courses.

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Psychology (Ellie Kazemi, liaison)

- Implemented cross-sectional comparison of PSYCH 140 (gateway) and PSYCH 321 (capstone).
- Improving assessment program to provide better quality data.
- In response to assessment evidence, department is considering requiring all PSYCH 321 students complete online research certification by the NIH.

Social Work (Hyun-Sun Park, liaison)

- The department has collected pre and posttest data from all 311 students assessing the effectiveness of the overall program in helping students to meet all learning and practice objectives.
- They have a common assignment in each course, and a grid that faculty complete to evaluate student competencies in all aspects of the course.
- They have been acknowledged by CSWE – their accrediting agency – that their assessment plan should be the model plan used by other schools of social work, as they are evaluating from multiple perspectives, including field instructors who supervise students at their field placements.
- Assessment evidence is used by the department for every curricular and program decision.

Sociology (Victor Shaw, liaison)

- The department implemented content evaluations across three upper division courses, including SOC 496J, SOC 496SC, and SOC 420CSL.
- SOC is in the process of improving assessment methodology for AY 2012-13.
- The results indicated that the exiting cohort scored higher on the exam than the incoming cohort, however mean scores were relatively low.
- In response to assessment data SOC is considering a “Writing for Sociology” course to improve student writing.

Urban Studies and Planning

- URBS implemented 2 waves of data collection using an instrument constructed with the full participation of URBS faculty. URBS 150 and URBS 310 were assessed.

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- It does not appear that student learning across URBS 150 is systematically promoting the achievement of the department's primary program objective, however, Student learning across URBS 310 strongly promotes the achievement of program objectives.
- Assessment evidence is used by the department for every curricular and program decision.
- The department is considering a course modification of URBS 150 in response to the assessment data.