2017-2018 Annual Program Assessment Report

Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the Associate Dean of your College, and to james.solomon@csun.edu, Director of the Office of Academic Assessment and Program Review, by September 28, 2018. You may, but are not required to, submit a separate report for each program, including graduate degree programs, which conducted assessment activities, or you may combine programs in a single report. Please identify your department/program in the file name for your report.

College: Humanities

Department: Liberal Studies

Program:

Assessment liaison:

1. Please check off whichever is applicable:
   A. ________ Measured student work within program major/options.
   B. ________ Analyzed results of measurement within program major/options.
   C. ________ Applied results of analysis to program review/curriculum/review/revision major/options.
   D. ________ Focused exclusively on the direct assessment measurement of General Education Natural Sciences learning outcomes

2. Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s). On a separate sheet, provide a brief overview of this year’s assessment activities, including:
   • an explanation for why your department chose the assessment activities (measurement, analysis, application, or GE assessment) that it enacted
   • if your department implemented assessment option A, identify which program SLOs were assessed (please identify the SLOs in full), in which classes and/or contexts, what assessment instruments were used and the methodology employed, the resulting scores, and the relation between this year’s measure of student work and that of past years: (include as an appendix any and all relevant materials that you wish to include)
   • if your department implemented assessment option B, identify what conclusions were drawn from the analysis of measured results, what changes to the program were planned in response, and the relation between this year’s analyses and past and future assessment activities
   • if your department implemented option C, identify the program modifications that were adopted, and the relation between program modifications and past and future assessment activities
   • if your program implemented option D, exclusively or simultaneously with options A, B, and/or C, identify the basic skill(s) assessed and the precise learning outcomes assessed, the assessment instruments and methodology employed, and the resulting scores
   • in what way(s) your assessment activities may reflect the university’s commitment to diversity in all its dimensions but especially with respect to underrepresented groups
   • any other assessment-related information you wish to include, including SLO revision (especially to ensure continuing alignment between program course offerings and both program and university student learning outcomes), and/or the creation and modification of new assessment instruments

2. Background
As a fairly new department, our previous Assessment Liaison worked to develop a new assessment plan. I came on board as Assessment Liaison last year, and it was conveyed to me (by the prior liaison and by the department) that we weren’t receiving as useful of data as we would like. I spent time reviewing the past years of assessment in Liberal Studies. I identified the following issues with our assessment:

- We were doing an entry/exit assessment (with LRS 100 as our entry point and LRS 300 as our exit point) that did not measure the same pool of students for entry and exit. LRS 100 is taken during the freshman year by ITEP Freshmen (one track within our major). LRS 300 is taken, we suggest during the junior year, by ITEP Juniors (another track within our major). These two groups have distinct styles, skill sets, and backgrounds. In measuring ITEP freshmen as an entry point and ITEP Juniors during their junior year, we both did not have a true exit point (Senior year) and did not examine growth within the same group of students.
- The rubrics we were using for assessment were quite vague, and there appeared to be inter-reviewer differences in how the rubric was applied to each paper.
- The Electronic Assessment System was skewing our data and scores. Because “no basis for judgement” was assigned a “3” on a 1-5 scale, and because our assignment was a paper based on observation of a classroom, students could only write about what they observed. This means there was quite often “no basis for judgement,” if what the student observed did not address criteria on the rubric. The “3” score was averaged in with students who did speak to that criteria, skewing our results.
- Our department had a huge number of SLOs. As we were assessing one SLO per year, the “closing the loop” was challenging. We would not assess that SLO again for 7-10 years, so we had no way to effectively gage if we were effectively closing the loop and making needed changes in response to assessment data.

Why We Chose These Assessment Activities
- We decided to overhaul our Assessment Plan in response to the observations above.
- In beginning to consider the Assessment Plan, I realized that the large number of SLOs our department had made assessment very challenging. I met with the Chair and Associate Chair, and we decided to embark on a department-wide process to overhaul the program SLOs first, then overhaul the Assessment Plan.

Program Modifications Adopted This Year
- New Program SLOs
  - I met with Jack Solomon to explore the department’s options in terms of new SLOs and Assessment Protocols. He assisted me in thinking through how new SLOs might align with University core competencies.
  - We held a meeting of all department faculty, the Chair, the Associate Chair, and myself. At this meeting, we went through the existing SLOs and worked together to draft new SLOs.
  - At the next meeting of the ITEP committee (two of the tracks within the Liberal Studies major are ITEP—these are the tracks we are assessing) we presented the SLOs developed by faculty. The ITEP committee made slight adjustments, and then voted to approve the four SLOs. They are as follows:
    The Liberal Studies Program at California State University, Northridge is committed to producing socially responsible, informed and engaged individuals who value diversity and:
1. Demonstrate proficient knowledge in their area of specialization and a range of disciplines.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in multimodal communication.
3. Are able to access, evaluate and make use of a range of informational resources.
4. Demonstrate a depth of critical thinking.
   o These SLOs are now formally adopted and in the CSUN Catalog.

- New Assessment Plan for Program SLOs
  o After the new program SLOs were in place, I began to work with faculty to create a new assessment plan.
  o To address the issue of not comparing the same group of students at entrance/exit points, we have made changes to who we will assess. We will use LRS100 in the fall as an entry point for ITEP Freshmen. We will use LRS300 in the fall as an entry point for ITEP juniors (I will sort the students in the class, and we will only read/assess the work of ITEP juniors who are in their junior year, the first year of that program). We will use LRS491 in the spring as an exit point for both groups. I will sort students in the class, and we will compare the group of ITEP freshmen in that class to LRS100, and the ITEP juniors in that class to LRS 300. This means we are comparing the same group at entry/exit. This also means we will be providing assessment data on two of the most populous tracks within the Liberal Studies major.
  o We have decided to evaluate one of the four SLOs each year. In AY2018-2019, we will assess SLO#3.
  o Since I had identified the need for new, more clear rubrics, I met with the Associate Chair to create a draft rubric for SLO#3, the SLO we decided to assess in AY2018-2019.
  o We took this draft rubric to an ITEP Committee Meeting, solicited feedback by email, and made adjustments. The rubric quantifies number of sources, is more specific in what assessors should look for, and should in general help address some of the variance we experienced before. This rubric is included in this report as Appendix A: New Assessment Instrument.
  o We created a new method for assessment, and will no longer be using the Electronic Assessment System. This will address concerns regarding the use of “3” for “no basis to judge.”
  o I am confident that our new Assessment Plan will address the concerns about our prior assessment. We will evaluate this after AY18-19 and make any adjustments to the plan needed.

- Assessment Plan for GEs
  o Liberal Studies had not previously participated in GE Assessment.
  o We have developed a plan to participate with GE Assessment moving forward. In AY18-19, we will be assessing the Arts & Humanities GE along with the rest of the campus. We have three courses that fall in this category (HUM101, HUM105, HUM106) and we will be assessing all three of these courses.

- Summary
  o We have new Program SLOs.
  o We have a new Assessment Plan for Program SLOs.
  o We have a new Assessment Plan for GEs.
We have all faculty on board who will have courses assessed this year. In AY18-19, we will assess program SLO #3 and the Arts & Humanities GE.

How This Reflects the University’s Commitment to Diversity

- The department decided to include a framing statement with our SLOs, “The Liberal Studies Program at California State University, Northridge is committed to producing socially responsible, informed and engaged individuals who value diversity and...” In so doing, we explicitly state that we aim to graduate students who value diversity. We believe this sends a message from our department that increases sense of belonging for students from underrepresented groups. It also urges all our faculty to frame their course design in a way that promotes inclusion and diversity.
- Gathering more useful data will help us realistically address whether we are adequately serving our students, including students from underrepresented groups. We are eager to produce useful data that can be used to “close the loop” and make constructive changes to better the experience of CSUN students.

3.
As previously stated, in Academic Year 2018-2019 we will use our new Assessment Plan. We will assess program SLO #3 using the rubric developed this year and our own assessment system (not EAS). We will also participate in GE Assessment, assessing HUM101, HUM105, and HUM106.

Note

Overhauling our program SLOs, Assessment Plan, and assessment instruments has required the efforts of the department’s faculty, Chair, Associate Chair, and ITEP Committee. I am grateful to them for their assistance through this process.

APPENDIX A: New Assessment Instrument

Student are able to access, evaluate, and make use of a range of informational resources.

Students are able to:

Access a range of informational resources
5 Evidence of five or more appropriate and relevant resources
4 Evidence of 3-4 appropriate and relevant resources
3 Evidence of two appropriate and relevant resources
2 Evidence of one appropriate and relevant resource
1 No evidence of appropriate and relevant resources
Evaluate a range of informational resources
5   Evidence of five or more credible resources
4   Evidence of 3-4 credible resources
3   Evidence of two credible resources
2   Evidence of one credible resource
1   No evidence of credible resources

Make use of a range of informational resources
5   Appropriately, clearly, and thoroughly utilizes at least two resources for the purpose of the specific assignment
4   Appropriately and clearly utilizes at least two resources for the purpose of the specific assignment
3   Appropriately utilizes at least two resources for the purpose of the specific assignment
2   Limited, inappropriate, or cursory use of at least two resources; or student uses only one resource for the purpose of the specific assignment
1   Does not make use of resources for the purpose of the specific assignment