

**University of Minnesota Duluth**

**REPORT OF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES  
May 2011**

Executive Summary

This is the first assessment report compiled since UMD initiated the development of a campus assessment system in 2008. In three years, UMD has adopted institutional learning outcomes, programs have written outcomes and development assessment plans, and we have completed one cycle of data collection, analysis, and reporting. The attached document is a summary of the individual program results that were submitted during Fall semester 2010 from data collected during 2009-10. The report describes how we evaluated the reports and what we learned.

The primary emphasis of UMD's assessment work to date has been around building a system that would support assessment goals. For the most part, the system appears to function well. What we learned was that some modifications will be required so that the results of multiple program assessment plans can be rolled up in a way that will tell the campus how we are reaching UMD institutional goals and outcomes.

Going forward, the primary emphasis needs to be on development of an assessment culture where all participants see its value in the improvement of student learning. In this first year of reporting, we saw limited evidence that assessment results were being used in decisions surrounding curriculum and pedagogy.

To address this gap in the process, the Council for Advancement of Student Learning will be re-constituted another year with broader participation from faculty versus administrators. Ten faculty liaisons have accepted invitations to be members with the understanding that they are part of a professional development effort. Planning has started for a peer review process which will provide an opportunity for interdisciplinary groups of faculty to participate in "assessment of assessment."

We also expect the two liberal education assessment pilot projects will contribute to broader interdisciplinary discussion of assessment and its value in teaching and learning.

Overall, significant progress in acceptance and understanding of assessment has taken place in three years. Continued emphasis by UMD leadership is critical to expansion of the effort, and the integration of assessment in the teaching and learning function of the University.

Council for Advancement of Student Learning (CASL)

## University of Minnesota Duluth

### REPORT OF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES May 2011

An effective assessment system will focus on the use of assessment tools to monitor and improve student learning. It will also provide a means of producing data that can be used to support institutional effectiveness in meeting our stated outcomes.

This report represents analysis of assessment activities at University of Minnesota Duluth during the 2009-10 academic year. The process has been monitored by the Council for Advancement of Student Learning (CASL).

CASL membership in 2010-11 included: Jerry Pepper, Bruce Munson, Stan Burns, Arden Weaver, Wayne Jesswein, Shannon Godsey, Mary Keenan, Sue Darge, Julie Westlund, Julie Ernst, Nik Hassan, John Schwetman, Donn Branstrator, Curt Philips, and Jackie Millslagle. Shannon Godsey, instructor in Communication Sciences and Disorders, received half-time release to be the primary on-campus consultant for the programs as assessment plans were developed. CASL met bi-weekly to advise and monitor assessment processes.

Communication between CASL and individual programs was accomplished with the identification of assessment liaisons. Since forming in 2008, CASL has sponsored a variety of workshops and activities to set the foundation for assessment work. In summer 2010, CASL sponsored summer workshops for all liaisons, deans, and department heads which focused on basic assessment principles and expectations for data collection and reporting. In spring 2010, members of CASL facilitated multidisciplinary workgroups to determine student learning outcomes for each of the new liberal education categories—a first step to ensure that student learning assessment was an integral part of the liberal education package that will begin in 2012-13.

#### UMD's Nine Institutional Learning Outcomes

Of UMD's nine learning outcomes, CASL determined that results for academic and co-curricular program outcomes that mapped to UMD outcomes 1, 7 and 9 would be analyzed this year. All nine outcomes will be studied over a three-year cycle.

UMD undergraduate graduates will ...

- 1. Demonstrate competence in a major field. (Knowledge)**
2. Construct, integrate, and apply knowledge from instruction and experience. (Knowledge)
3. Think critically and creatively in seeking solutions to practical and theoretical problems. (Thinking)
4. Use ethical reasoning to make informed and principled choices. (Social Responsibility and Self-Realization)
5. Demonstrate self-knowledge across a range of developmental areas. (Self-Realization)
6. Communicate effectively through writing, speaking, and interpersonal and group interactions. (Relationships)
- 7. Apply understanding of cultural differences in diverse environments. (Social Responsibility)**
8. Contribute to local, national and global communities in which they live. (Social Responsibility)
- 9. Apply life skills to succeed in college and beyond. (Life Skills)**

## Background

The 2008 HLC accreditation team found UMD's progress in assessment of student learning to be inadequate compared with Commission expectations. The team report stated that "responsibilities for assessment are unclear and systems are not apparent. Few examples of direct measures of student learning were provided to the team. Of particular concern is the fact that a systematic approach does not exist for assessing learning achievement in the liberal education curriculum." Following that visit, UMD applied and was accepted to the HLC Assessment Academy. The project defined as the focus of the four-year Academy experience was "The design and implementation of a comprehensive campus assessment system."

Project description (when the Academy project was initiated). This project will lay out a timeline and structure for all departments and functional areas to develop assessment plans for individual programs and units. The project is comprehensive in that it begins with writing outcomes and goes through documentation of feedback. An important part of the project is effective faculty and staff development around best practices for measuring outcomes. The timeline establishes target dates for each step of the process, and the goal of communication and training will be to help those programs that have some assessment practices in place to move forward along the spectrum of activities at a faster pace. The intent to align program objectives with institutional outcomes will be emphasized so that assessment of institutional outcomes will be achieved alongside the programs. Underlying the work is a commitment to foster a culture change at the institution, focusing on student learning.

The plan as developed called for programs to begin data collection in academic year 2009-10. The first reports of assessment results were due October 8, 2010. This document is an overview of the process and the product of the first year of our comprehensive system.

## Process and Results

Development of program assessment plans took place in three steps: (1) write outcomes; (2) map program outcomes to institutional outcomes; and (3) identify and schedule measures for each program outcome over a three-year cycle.

Of a possible 68 identified programs, 59 (87%) submitted student learning outcomes and designed an assessment plan.

Of the 59 programs with assessment plans, one program did not assess any program outcomes that mapped to the institutional outcomes analyzed this year. Two programs had assessment plans that did not include data collection in 2009-10. Nine programs did not submit annual reports. Appendix A is a summary of reports submitted. Overall, of the 59 programs with plans, 50 followed through and submitted reports.

Programs submitted a report for each outcome that was assessed. For the analysis of institutional outcomes 1, 7, and 9, a total of 132 reports were filed that mapped to the three outcomes for analysis this year. Specifically,

- 79 outcomes mapped to institutional outcome #1, demonstrate competence in a major field;
- 21 outcomes mapped to institutional outcome #7, apply understanding of cultural differences in diverse environments
- 32 outcomes mapped to institutional outcome #9, apply life skills in college and beyond.

	N	% of total programs
Identified programs	68	
Wrote Outcomes	59	87%
Submitted Reports	50	74%
Total reports	132	
Mapped to #1	79	
Mapped to #2	21	
Mapped to #3	32	

Programs submitted reports using an online form (see Appendix B).

Reports were printed and reviewed in two steps. Each outcome report was reviewed by two members of CASL using Appendix C. Next, Shannon Godsey, CASL member with release time to assist with assessment, reviewed the overall work of each program, including the assessment plan and all reports, using Appendix D.

Next, Shannon met with one or more representative of each program to review the process and results. The participants in these meetings varied from the program's assessment liaison only to all members of the program faculty/staff. Shannon wrote a synopsis of the discussion following each meeting.

A worksheet was produced to record the following information for each program; not all items could be provided from every outcome report. A separate set of data was recorded for each outcome report for each program. At the time of this report, Shannon had met with representatives of 48 programs.

- Program name
- Report #
- Mapped to 1?
- Mapped to 7?
- Mapped to 9?
- # of samples
- # of satisfactory samples
- % satisfactory
- Type of assessment(s) (DIR /IND)
- Was assessment in a capstone experience?
- Subjective rating of the level of participation among program faculty/staff (1 to 3). Was a rubric used?
- Was a professional development need identified during consultation?
- Will outcomes be revised?
- Subjective rating of culture of assessment among program faculty/staff (positive, negative, neutral). A positive rating was assigned when most or all members of the group are aware and/or involved in the process of assessing student learning, see the potential of the process go enhance the student learning experience, and regular discussions about teaching and learning occur. A negative rating was assigned when assessment activities are seen as extra work and the processes of assessing student learning and analyzing the results are not valued.
- Does the program use ePortfolio?

To follow are statements that were noted or could be inferred from the data.

1. An optional question on the report form asked for the number of samples collected and of those, the number that were satisfactory. Sixty reports included this information. Of these, 36 reported that 100% of the samples were satisfactory. Satisfactory performance ranged from 19% to 100%.
2. Sixty-three reports were from a direct assessment of student work (measures that involve direct application of skills or knowledge by the students); 19 were from an indirect measure such as a survey (measure that involve student perceptions of what they learned); and 12 were from a combination of direct and indirect measures.
3. One program is currently using a capstone experience to assess outcomes; one other program expressed interest in development of a capstone experience.
4. In general, only two programs departments appeared to have engaged all members of the program as active participants in the assessment process.
5. Eleven departments have adopted rubrics for one or more measures in assessment plans. An additional six programs expressed interest in developing rubrics.
6. Two programs shared ideas for professional development.
7. Five programs indicated that the first year's work has prompted review and discussion of revision of the program outcomes.
8. Twelve programs in eight departments exhibited a positive culture of assessment meaning they value the process for student learning and involve all or most of the program in activities and decision making .
9. Three programs in one department exhibited a negative culture of assessment meaning they see the assessment process as additional work and do not value assessment activities for student learning.
10. Twelve programs are either using ePortfolio, are planning its use, or are interested in exploring its use.

## Discussion

The value of the assessment activities and the review process can be discussed from a variety of perspectives. As the description of UMD's Assessment Academy project states: "Underlying the work is a commitment to foster a culture change at the institution, focusing on student learning." A giant first step toward this goal was seen during the first phase of data collection and reporting. While 100% participation is our goal and should be required, 74% participation in reporting results in the first year is encouraging. There is evidence of increasing conversation around assessment, broader participation across program faculty and staff, and more noticeable reference to learning outcomes, in general. The Campus Assembly approved a new syllabus policy which requires instructors to include course learning outcomes in syllabi. All this is especially encouraging when we consider the time and attention that two new campus initiatives (strategic planning and campus climate) required of all faculty and staff during this academic year.

A significant milestone we should be looking for in a successful assessment system is evidence that we are "closing the loop." How did programs take what was learned from the process to improve or enhance student learning? In this first year, we did not see many examples of assessment results being used toward decisions relating to curriculum or pedagogy. We did see increased discussion about student learning and the effects of teaching within and among departments. In many cases, programs want to see more than one set of data before making changes so there is a clearer trend that change is needed.

However, there was evidence that faculty and staff learned a lot about assessment and this better understanding will result in changes to outcomes, assessment plans and ultimately the student learning

experience. Several programs have reconsidered or reconstructed learning outcomes, and many have adjusted or reconsidered measures of learning to be specific to an outcome.

There were 37 measures in 14 programs that reported 100% satisfactory performance on the measure. Twenty-five of these measures mapped to UMD outcome #1—Competence in a major field; 10 mapped to #7—Understanding of cultural differences in diverse environments; and 17 mapped to #9—Life skills to succeed in college and beyond (a single measure could map to multiple outcomes). These programs should be commended and encouraged to re-evaluate the outcome and consider whether expectations were at an appropriate level.

The goal and intent of the system under development is that individual program assessment plans, via mapping to institutional outcomes, will roll up in a way that will point to UMD's success in producing graduates who meet our learning goals. We are not yet at that point. A program outcome may map to multiple UMD outcomes, but the rationale for the mapping is not always evident. An example from one program can be used to describe this point.

The program used one measure to assess “<major name> competence” which was mapped to UMD outcomes 1, 2, 3, 7 and 9. The measure was a 100-item multiple choice exam. It is easy to understand how this maps to #1—competence in the major field. But are there specific questions that address #7 relating to cultural differences? Does the faculty consider knowledge and understanding of the major field a life skill (#9), and wouldn't every program say the same?

In addition, the reporting format does not lend itself well to rolling up the assessment results to the institutional level and needs further study and clarification. In order to get at a certain level of quantifiable data, the optional request for number of samples and satisfactory level needs to be required. In addition, programs will need to define the standard for satisfactory performance.

Our current system of tracking outcomes, assessment plans and results is not adequate. Several program liaisons raised questions and problems with the report format and adjustments need to be made before the next reporting cycle begins. The methods of keeping outcomes and assessment plans up-to-date are inadequate, labor-intensive, and difficult to monitor.

### Next steps

A summary report by college/unit will be prepared and given to each dean/vice chancellor.

The programs continued with data collection during 2010-11 according to approved plans. It is not known how much, if any, adjustments were made by the programs before collecting data a second year. It is likely that what CASL learned from this first year will move out to the programs and will be reflected in adjusted plans for data collection in 2011-12.

Several programs expressed a need for follow-up of graduates. We need to form a small study group and include Career Services and Alumni representation to find an efficient way of doing this with institutional support for all programs.

CASL recently took steps to re-form itself. Based on feedback from our Academy mentor, CASL will consist of more faculty and staff and fewer administrators. At least 10 program liaisons, with representation of all colleges and the co-curricular programs, have agreed to serve. Members will assist with helping to spread understanding of assessment across the campus.

Beginning in September, 2011, we will institute a training session for program liaisons, and in November 2011, a peer review activity designed to provide interdisciplinary discussion of assessment, and an opportunity to share ideas among programs.

Input received on the report format will be considered and some modifications to the report made as early as possible in June in order to notify liaisons who will report 2010-11 results in September. The GRIP system will likely be used one more year.

CASL will conduct two pilot projects during 2011-12 to determine an assessment plan for liberal education. Two categories were selected: Humanities, and Logic/Quantitative Reasoning.

### Conclusion

At the end of our third year in the Assessment Academy, we can see significant progress in the development of a campus assessment system. We need to make some adjustments in the reporting form, and we need to have CASL discussions regarding the “rolling up” of program results to institutional outcomes. It may be necessary to implement revised instructions to programs regarding mapping.

## Appendix A. Summary of Assessment Reports and Mapping to Institutional Outcomes

Program Name	Program outcome mapped to institutional outcome		
	UMD #1	UMD #7	UMD #9
Academic Advising Program		X	
Accounting B Acc	X		
Anthropology	X	X	X
Anthropology B A			
Art B A	X		X
Art Education - K-12 B F A		X	X
Art History B A	X		
Athletic Training B A Sc	X		
Biochem/Molecular Biology B S	X		
Biology	X		
Business Admin B B A	X		X
Career Services			
Chemical Engineering BS Ch E	X		X
Chemistry	X		
Civil Engineering B S C E	X		
Communication B A	X		
Communication Sci/Disord B A Sc	X	X	X
Criminology/Sociology B A	X		
Economics B A	X		X
English B A	X	X	X
Exercise Science B A Sc	X		X
First Year Experience & Students in Transition		X	X
Foreign Language and Literature	X	X	
Geological Sciences B S	X		X
Graphic Design B F A	X		X
Health Education B A Sc - Community	X	X	X
Health Education B A Sc - School	X	X	X
Health Services			X
History B A	X		
Industrial Engineering B S I E	X	X	X
Kirby Student Center		X	X
Mathematics B S	X		
Music	X		X
Philosophy B A	X	X	X
Physical Education B A Sc	X		

Program Name	Program outcome mapped to institutional outcome		
	UMD #1	UMD #7	UMD #9
Psychology B A Sc	X	X	X
Recreation - Outdoor Ed B A Sc	X		X
Recreational Sports and Outdoor Program			X
Stats & Actuarial Science B S	X		
Student and Community Standards			X
Studio Art B F A	X		X
Teacher Education	X		X
Urban/Regional Studies B A		X	
Women's Studies B A	X	X	X
Writing Studies B A	X		

## Appendix B. Assessment Report Format

### Assessment of Student Learning – Analysis of Results University of Minnesota Duluth

This document should report on the assessment of outcomes identified for data collection in one year of the assessment plan. **SUBMIT THIS REPORT FOR EACH OUTCOME ASSESSED IN THE REPORTING YEAR.**

Reporting Year:	
College/Unit:	
Department:	
Program:	
Assessment Liaison:	
Program Outcome Assessed:	
Maps to UMD Outcome:	

Note: 1000 characters, including spaces is roughly 11, 6.5” lines of 12 pt text.

**Program Outcome:** Briefly describe the assessment tools, measures, or forms of evidence used to demonstrate students’ accomplishment of the learning outcome. (Limit 1000 characters, including spaces)

Briefly summarize and discuss the assessment data. (Limit 1000 characters, including spaces)

To effectively use your data toward assessment of institutional outcomes, please provide the following information for each measure taken: (*optional for 2010 reporting, but highly recommended*)

Number of student samples collected:

Number of samples with satisfactory performance:

Describe the process under which the program considered the assessment results, including specific meeting dates. (Limit 250 characters, including spaces)

Describe how the results of the assessment will be used to enhance student learning. (Limit 1000 characters, including spaces)

**Appendix C. Report Review Matrix used by CASL**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Guiding questions</b>	<b>Reviewer 1</b>	<b>Reviewer 2</b>
<b>Measures and outcomes</b>	Was criteria clear and related to the outcome? Was "satisfactory" defined? Were all areas of the outcome addressed in the assessment?		
<b>Data</b>	Quantitative or Qualitative? Did the data come from one or multiple sources? Do you have sampling comments or suggestions?		
<b>Assessors</b>	Was there one or multiple assessors? Were the assessors inside or outside of the dept?		
<b>Changes</b>	Was data shared with department? Was change planned based on assessment data? Is it relevant to student learning? Do you have suggestions? Should a new assessment plan be submitted if major changes were indicated?		
<b>other</b>	Please include any other questions or suggestions.		

**Appendix D. Assessment Rubric**

	<b>Developing</b>		<b>At standard</b>	
<b>Assessment measure alignment</b>	Alignment exists with some aspect of the outcome but is weak/unclear		Alignment between outcomes and assessment measures is complete and clear.	
<b>Program improvement</b>	Some data are used for program improvement but are only available to administrators "as needed". Objectives for learning improvement are vague.		An on going, systematic, objectives based process is in place for using data to make decisions and improve learning within the program.	
<b>Use of assessment data</b>	Some generated data are based on program outcomes and used for learning improvement or program changes but it is unclear how. "satisfactory" data are provided but poorly defined.		Assessment data are shared with faculty/staff with guidance for reflection and learning improvement. "satisfactory" data are provided and well defined.	
<b>faculty staff involvement</b>	Consists of one or two individuals who work on assessment needs and activities. Little or no communication with the rest of the department.		Faculty/staff involvement consists of a small core within the department; discussion for results and learning improvement are discussed and involve all department faculty/staff.	
<b>Learning outcomes statements</b>	Outcomes cover key knowledge, skills and values relevant to the program. Measurability is vague.		Outcomes cover key knowledge, skill and values relevant to the program; clearly stated and measureable; reflect multiple levels of learning including some higher levels.	

Comments and actions:

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