

UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2017

Assessment Resources

Assessment practices need to evolve to maintain relevance to the continuous improvement of our units and institution. As you think about improving your assessment practices, these additional resources might give you some ideas of how you can change or update your assessment process.

The University of Kentucky operates the ASSESS listserv, which includes members from SACSCOC institutions as well as members from institutions in other accrediting regions. Discussion topics cover all aspects of assessment in higher education. A searchable archive is available to the public, so if you are looking for ideas, this might be a place to start (see <http://lsv.uky.edu/scripts/wa.exe?A0=ASSESS>).

Assessment Commons serves as a repository of tools, articles, and other assessment-related information (see <http://assessmentcommons.org/>). Click on “View All Resources” to see the full list of resources. There are links on the right-hand side of the page for “big” topics such as assessment handbooks or individual institutions’ webpages (so you can browse what other institutions are doing). Using “Control F” on your browser will open a search box if you are interested in a specific topic.

Lehman College in New York has developed an inventory of assessment measures for non-teaching units (see <http://www.lehman.edu/office-academic-programs/assessment/documents/inventory-non-teaching-unit-assessment.pdf>). The inventory includes headings for different units at institutions (such as Finance and Administration, Admissions, Financial Aid, etc.) and lists both qualitative and quantitative measures that can be used.

If you have found a great assessment site that you have used, please share it with us. We will compile a list and share it in a future newsletter.

Faculty Evaluation System Process

UT Martin has begun developing a new faculty evaluation system. Dr. Raoul Arreola met with faculty in an open forum to describe an overview of a process for developing a fair evaluation system that will be consistent across the university. Representatives from each academic discipline participated in a day-long workshop on September 23 to learn how this process works and to become facilitators for their respective departments.

If you were unable to attend the open forum, Dr. Arreola’s presentation slides and other information are available:

- <http://www.facultyevaluation.org/UTM1.pdf> contains the presentation slides; and
- <http://www.facultyevaluation.org/UTM2.pdf> describes a model set of skills for the faculty member as a meta-professional.

Dr. Arreola’s website, www.facultyevaluation.org, contains more detailed information about designing faculty evaluation systems, college teaching as a meta-profession, the validity of student rating forms, and other information pertinent to faculty development and professional growth.

Disciplinary representatives will be meeting with their faculty in the coming weeks to begin the process of developing the faculty evaluation system. It is important that all faculty have the opportunity to provide input into this process, so please make every effort to participate!

Upcoming Due Dates!

Administrative support services reports are due December 15, 2017, and student support services reports are due January 15, 2018.

Now is also a good time to review your assessment guidebook. If your unit makes any substantial changes to your assessment guidebook, please submit those changes to Patty.

From Data to Decisions

The **Department of Music** has as a student learning outcome: *The student will employ musical terms, genres, styles, and concepts while connecting historical and cultural aspects of music.* This SLO is measured using a final paper in a music history course. Student data did not meet the benchmark that 80% of the students would score 80% or higher on the assessment rubric associated with this project. The Department of Music consulted with the **Hortense Parrish Writing Center** and asked a member of the Writing Center staff to give a presentation to the class. In addition, students in the class were asked to visit the Writing Center a minimum of twice prior to the paper deadline to receive assistance in planning, writing, and editing their work. Faculty will reassess this outcome to determine the impact of these interventions.

Another student learning outcome in Music focuses on content knowledge: *The student will explain concepts clearly, coherently and decisively, displaying extensive content knowledge and giving appropriate and well-timed feedback.* For music education majors, this SLO is measured through the PRAXIS Content Exam. Students must pass this exam prior to being allowed to student teach. Music faculty noted that some students were struggling to pass the PRAXIS Content Exam on their first try. The Department of Music has hired a new, tenure-track Coordinator of Music Education, Dr. Angela Ammerman, who has already implemented strategies to improve the first-time pass rate, including the creation of a “PRAXIS CRUSH CLUB.” PRAXIS pass rates will continue to be monitored by the department to determine the impact of these new strategies.

In the **Department of Accounting, Finance, Economics, and Political Science**, finance majors are expected to demonstrate competence in finance through successful completion of a forty-question exam developed by the finance faculty. Faculty noted a low success rate in Fall 2016 and implemented a two-step approach to improving the success rate. First, faculty contacted finance seniors scheduled to take the

exam and reminded them that they needed to bring their financial calculators to the exam. This email also explained that the content of the exam contained questions from Finance 302, 311, 332 and 341, which allowed students to focus their studying on the content of those courses. Finally, the exam grade was included in the computation of each student’s final course grade in BADM 490, providing incentive to the students to perform well on the exam. Faculty noted a 22% improvement in the pass rate (from 33% in the Fall to 55% in the Spring). Although this improvement still did not meet the department’s benchmark, faculty were encouraged by the success of this approach.

Conclusions from this year’s departmental faculty accomplishments reports support the current institution-wide focus on redesigning the faculty evaluation system. The **Department of History and Philosophy** reported the development of a faculty task force to review benchmarks and assessment models and to provide recommendations for new benchmarks and reporting guidelines. While the departmental process has been put on hold pending the outcome of the institution-wide faculty evaluation system process, this task force’s work will inform history and philosophy faculty as they solidify their contributions to the institution-wide process.

The **Department of Visual and Theatre Arts** reported making changes to their faculty performance evaluations in 2016-17 and noted that those changes seem “challenging and fair.” VTA faculty are already performing above expectations on their new guidelines.

Faculty in the **College of Business and Global Affairs** are examining definitions of and expectations for professional development in the context of AACSB accreditation standards. Information from peer and aspirant schools is being used to inform their considerations. The College is also working with Digital Measures to ensure accurate reporting of all faculty accomplishments.

***SAVE THE DATE! ASSESSMENT
WORKSHOP JANUARY 8, 2018,
UNIVERSITY CENTER BALLROOM!
More details coming soon!***