Ad Hoc Report to
Address Recommendation 2 of the
Fall 2015 Year Seven NWCCU
Peer-Evaluation Report

Prepared for:

The Northwest Commission
On Colleges and Universities

By:

Portland State University

March 1, 2017
## Table of Contents

2017 Ad Hoc Report to Address Recommendation 2 of the Fall 2015 Year Seven NWCCU Peer-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction 3  
2. Recommendation 2 3  
3. Assessment at Portland State 3  
4. Academic Program Review 3  
5. Progress since Recommendation 2 4  
6. Annual Assessment Update 5  
7. Preliminary Annual Assessment Update Findings 5  
8. Providing Support for Improving Assessment Activities 6  
9. Conclusion 6  
10. Appendices:  
   Appendix A: Assessment Planning Guide 7  
   Appendix B: Rubric for Scoring Established Assessment Plans 9  
   Appendix C: Academic Program Review Guidelines (excerpt) 11  
   Appendix D: Steering Committee 12
Introduction

In the fall of 2015 Portland State University (PSU) submitted our Year Seven NWCCU Self-Evaluation Report and hosted a team of on-site evaluators. In the reaffirmation letter of February 1, 2016, the Commission recommended the following.

Recommendation 2

The Assessment Table and interviews indicated that Portland State University does not yet regularly and comprehensively assess all student program learning outcomes for undergraduate and graduate programs (Standard 4.A.3). Additionally, graduate program student learning outcomes were not published for all graduate programs (Standard 2.C.2). The Commission recommends that the assessment of student learning outcomes be systematically accelerated such that continuous improvement resulting from assessment leads to enhancement of student achievement and to a meaningful evaluation of mission fulfillment (Standards 2.C.2, 4.A.3, and 4.B).

Assessment at Portland State

Portland State has taken steps to improve and accelerate the assessment activities on campus in the following ways.

- Revised the Academic Program Review guidelines to require more detailed information on a program’s assessment of student learning outcomes.
- Developed an Annual Assessment Update for all programs to inform the Office of Academic Affairs of their assessment activities.
- Created a support mechanism for programs to improve their assessment activities and practices.

By instituting these changes, PSU has created a systematic and accelerated process to examine assessment practices across campus and provide developmental support to improve these practices, which will contribute to the continuous enhancement of student achievement.

Academic Program Review

The Academic Program Review (APR) process is the primary method for a program to report on their assessment activities and findings.
Portland State’s APR policy states: “the academic program review process at PSU is designed to provide continuous improvement of academic quality within academic units through self-study, external review, and internal action plans.

The overall goal of program review is to assist academic units in:

- articulating their goals and objectives in relation to the University’s priorities, and initiatives,
- instituting a regular process of internal and external review of qualitative and quantitative information about program activities and impact,
- demonstrating progress toward achievement of program goals,
- using outcomes for program improvement and goal-setting,
- providing deans and the provost with more thorough and reflective evidence of program progress.

APR is accomplished through a recurring seven year cycle of goal setting, data gathering, analysis, and reporting. Through a college’s planning process, the academic program:

- establishes its goals and objectives related to teaching, scholarship and service for its respective programs;
- provides analysis of data received and/or collected to demonstrate progress toward the stated goals and objectives;
- reports on its progress toward meeting its goals and objectives within the unit’s and the University’s mission.”

Progress since Recommendation 2:

The Academic Program Review guidelines were updated to ask more specific questions about a program’s assessment practices. A program is now required to provide the following: evidence of student learning, evaluation of student academic performance, analysis of the results of this evaluation, post graduate outcomes, and how a program has closed the feedback loop.

The new guidelines help with reporting on assessment and bring awareness of the centrality of assessment to the enhancement of student achievement.

New to this APR process is support to improve assessment activities in the year prior to a program’s APR review. The Institutional Assessment Council (IAC) has developed a planning document to help programs create an assessment plan and a rubric to score existing assessment plans. The IAC contacts the programs that are scheduled for APR in the upcoming academic year with an offer to review and score their assessment plan using the rubric. The Office of Academic Innovation (OAI) then follows up with support and guidance to close any gaps in the plan prior to going through the APR process.

1 Portland State University Academic Program Review Policy
Annual Assessment Update

To accelerate the review and improvement of assessment across campus, the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA), OAI, and IAC developed an **Annual Assessment Update** survey. This survey was distributed to deans, chairs, and directors and asked them to respond to the following questions:

- Do you have an assessment plan? If so, please provide.
- Has your program carried out the assessment activities listed in your assessment plan?
- Provide an example of closing the feedback loop based on assessment findings. (improve student learning, classroom instruction, and assessments; review, evaluate, and modify the curriculum in the programs.)
- Where are your undergraduate learning outcomes posted?
- Where are your graduate learning outcomes posted?

The implementation of this Update is providing PSU with a more comprehensive baseline for the status of assessment practices across campus. At the same time, the yearly process helps create awareness of the expectations about the assessment of program learning outcomes across campus. The Annual Assessment Update is intended to be a developmental process. When submissions are received and reviewed, OAI will follow up and provide guidance and support to help programs to develop effective assessment processes. The results of the Update will be tracked from year to year to gauge the effectiveness of this developmental process.

OAI will provide support to develop an effective formal assessment plan for programs without one. For programs with a formal plan, OAI will utilize the IAC rubric to score the assessment plan and provide formative feedback to improve the quality of assessment. A key function of OAI’s review will be to identify any gaps or areas of assessment that need improvement in established assessment plans.

**Preliminary Annual Assessment Update Findings**

For the purposes of this update we focused on all 218 bachelors, masters and Ph.D. programs offered by Portland State University. We achieved a 100% response rate to the Update from all academic units.

While analyzing the responses to the Update, we made the following baseline assumptions: 1) a program must have a formal assessment plan in order to actively perform assessment; 2) a program must be actively doing assessment in order to use the findings.
While most of the 218 degree programs on campus do assessment, 68 have a formal assessment plan. Sixty-Seven of those programs with a formal plan are actively performing assessment as described in their formal plan. Sixty-six of the programs who are actively doing assessment have used the findings to improve student learning, classroom instruction, and assessment, and to review, evaluate, and modify the curriculum in the programs.

A majority of graduate programs (86 of 118) list their goals or objectives on their web pages. We are working with programs that still need to post their specific program learning outcomes. We will use the yearly update survey and the follow up support to increase the number of graduate learning outcomes that are clearly articulated and published.

Providing Support for Improving Assessment Activities

The Office of Academic Innovation and the Institutional Assessment Council have important roles to play in the continuous improvement of assessment.

The Office of Academic Innovation (OAI) is home to PSU's campus experts on learning outcome assessment. While OAI provides support to faculty in many areas, Director Janelle Voegele, Ed.D. and Associate Director Vicki Wise, Ph.D. lead the Teaching & Learning, and Assessment area. With their leadership, the Institutional Assessment Council (IAC) was reconvened to help provide guidance and support for university assessment activities. The IAC has developed a number of documents to help programs with assessment and provided valuable feedback on the revisions to the APR Guidelines and the creation of the Annual Assessment Update:

- Assessment Planning document to help programs create a plan.
- Rubric for Evaluating Outcomes Assessment Plan and Progress.

Conclusion

The establishment of the new Annual Assessment Update process in conjunction with the more in-depth APR process brings new visibility across campus to the importance of assessing student learning outcomes.

By instituting the Update as an annual process, creating an assessment planning guide, developing a rubric to score established assessment plans, and by providing developmental support, we have created a systematic approach which accelerates the assessment of student learning outcomes across campus. Processes are now in place that will lead to continuous improvement which will result in enhanced student achievement.
# Appendix A: Assessment Planning Guide

## Assessment Planning Components

In creating an assessment plan, please use the guiding criteria to help shape your plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formalized Assessment Plan</strong></td>
<td>Formal plan has identified - learning outcomes; - appropriate assessments, including at least one direct measure of student learning; - a process to analyze the results of the outcomes assessed; - a plan to adjust or improve program from results of the learning outcomes assessed; and - has included faculty involvement in assessment planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignments</strong></td>
<td>Clear relationships between student learning outcomes at the program level with - course-level outcomes; - campus-wide learning outcomes, if undergraduate program; - professional standards, if applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Evidence that expected student learning outcomes identify the intended knowledge, understandings, or abilities that students will acquire through the academic program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Activities</strong></td>
<td>Evidence that assessments activities - align to student learning outcomes ; - are appropriate measures to assess learning outcomes; and - engage faculty in assessment implementation process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Quality</strong></td>
<td>For at least A PORTION of program assessments there is evidence of - process to check for inter-rater reliability, if applicable; - process to check for quality (see detail below); and - process to ensure sampling quality (see detail below).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Findings</strong></td>
<td>Results for outcomes collected and discussed. For example: - reporting addresses findings from each learning outcome assessment activity. - assessment findings are used to: 1) improve student learning, classroom instruction, and assessments; and 2) review, evaluate, and modify the curriculum in the programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Quality
Basically what you want to know if your assessment method is credible. Here are some ways to check:

Quantitative Assessment:
1) Content Validity: Is there a match between test (assessment) questions and the content or subject area assessed?
2) Face Validity: Does the assessment appear to measure a particular construct as viewed by an outside person?
3) Content-related Validity: Does an expert in the testing of that particular content area think it is credible?
4) Curricular Validity: Does the content of an assessment tool match the objectives of a specific curriculum (course or program) as it is formally described?
5) Construct Validity: Does the measure assess the underlying theoretical construct it is supposed to measure (i.e., the test is measuring what it is purported to measure).
6) Consequential Validity: Have you thought of the social consequences of using a particular test for a particular purpose?

Qualitative Assessment:
1) Have you accurately identified and described the students for whom data were collected?
2) Can the findings be transferred (applied to) to another similar context?
3) Is there dependability in your accounting of the changes inherent in any setting as well as changes to the assessment process as learning unfolded?
4) Can the findings be confirmed by another?

Sampling
For program review, we ideally want a combination of assessment evidence to address program goals. This evidence includes assessment of all students in the program at times, and assessing only a subset of the students at other times. We often see this difference in the choice to use quantitative vs. qualitative assessment methods.

Quantitative Methods
A randomly selected sample from a larger sample or population, giving all the individuals in the sample an equal chance to be chosen. In a simple random sample, individuals are chosen at random and not more than once to prevent a bias that would negatively affect the validity of the results. We strive in sampling for representativeness of the sample to the population from which it was drawn.

Qualitative Methods
Having a large number of students is not essential using qualitative methods, as the goals may be to 1) explore topics in depth, 2) try a new method that explores a topic of interest, and 3) the assessment method used is labor intensive (e.g., portfolio reviews), as an example.
## Appendix B: Rubric for Scoring Established Assessment Plans

### Rubric for Evaluating Outcomes Assessment Plan and Progress

The purpose of this rubric is to assist programs in their assessment planning, and to prepare them for the Academic Program Review process. This rubric is aligned with NWCCU (Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities) standards for institutional assessment reporting as well. This rubric will allow for consistency in assessment reporting, and it will simplify expectations for quality. Please note that many specialized accrediting bodies have their own expectations for meeting accrediting performance standards. It is more than likely that those standards may exceed the ones specified here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>(1) Does not meet expectations</th>
<th>Meets expectations (2)</th>
<th>Exceeds expectations (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Plan</strong></td>
<td>Does not meet one or more criteria specified in the met expectations column</td>
<td>Formal plan has identified - learning outcomes; - appropriate assessments, including at least one direct measure of student learning; - a process to analyze the results of the outcomes assessed; - a plan to adjust or improve program from results of the learning outcomes assessed; and - faculty involvement in assessment planning.</td>
<td>Exceeds by one or more criteria (specified in the met expectations column), for example: - assessments include approx. 50% direct measures. - plan specifies assessment for continuous improvement of the program. - plan for multi-year data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignments</strong></td>
<td>Does not meet one or more criteria specified in the met expectations column</td>
<td>Clear relationships between student learning outcomes at the program level with - course-level outcomes; - campus-wide learning outcomes, if undergraduate program; - professional standards, if applicable.</td>
<td>Evidence that program alignments are revisited annually to reflect changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Does not meet one or more criteria specified in the met expectations column</td>
<td>Evidence that expected student learning outcomes identify the intended knowledge, understandings, or abilities that students will acquire through the academic program</td>
<td>Evidence that program communicates program-level learning outcomes to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Activities</strong></td>
<td>Does not meet one or more criteria specified in the met expectations column</td>
<td>Evidence that assessments activities - align to student learning outcomes; - are appropriate measures to assess learning outcomes; and - engage faculty in assessment implementation process.</td>
<td>Evidence that assessments are reviewed annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Quality</td>
<td>Does not meet one or more criteria specified in the met expectations column</td>
<td>For at least A PORTION of program assessments there is evidence of: - process to check for inter-rater reliability, if applicable; - process to check for quality (see detail below); and - process to ensure sampling quality (see detail below).</td>
<td>For ALL program assessments: - process to check for inter-rater reliability, if applicable; - process to check for quality (see detail below); and - process to ensure sampling quality (see detail below).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Findings</td>
<td>Does not meet one or more criteria specified in the met expectations column</td>
<td>Results for outcomes collected and discussed. For example: - reporting addresses findings from each learning outcome assessment activity. - assessment findings are used to: 1) improve student learning, classroom instruction, and assessments; and 2) review, evaluate, and modify the curriculum in the programs.</td>
<td>Evidence that data are collected over time allowing for pre-post measures of student learning Findings used in strategic program planning</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix C: Academic Program Review Guidelines (excerpt)

Section V. Assessment of Student Achievement

The Institutional Assessment Council (IAC) has developed a rubric aligned with NWCCU standards to provide guidance to programs on the assessment process and developing an assessment plan. The Office of Academic Innovation (OAI) can assist programs in development of an assessment plan.

A. Evidence of Student Learning
   - List and number the expected student learning outcomes for your program. Outcomes should explicitly describe what students know, understand, or are able to do. For undergraduate programs, draw connections between these program level learning outcomes and the PSU Campus Wide Learning Outcomes.
   - Describe the kinds of experiences that you expect students to have inside and outside of the classroom to meet these learning outcomes.

B. Evaluation of Student Academic Performance
   - Define meaningful curricular goals and present defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals.
   - Specify what direct measures you are using to assess student learning. Direct assessment includes students’ demonstration of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

C. Analysis of the Results of Assessing Student Academic Performance
   - Report and discuss the findings from each learning outcome assessment activity.
   - Review Assessment Plan to see if any changes or modifications will create a more meaningful process.

D. Post-graduate Outcomes for the Program
   - Articulate how you prepare students for successful careers, meaningful lives, and where appropriate, further education.
   - Collect and provide data about whether you are meeting these goals.

E. Incorporate changes Based on Assessment Evidence of Student Learning Outcomes
   - Describe how the assessment findings are used to improve student learning and classroom instruction. How the assessment findings are used to assist in strategic program planning?
   - Provide examples that show how the program has closed the feedback loop and used assessment findings to review, evaluate, and modify the curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section V Supporting Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common elements (required):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Program level learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Assessment plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Measures and indicators used to assess student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Number of students assessed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Steering Committee

Sona Andrews- Provost, Office of Academic Affairs
Scott Marshall- Vice-Provost, Office of Academic Affairs
Gerardo Lafferriere- Administrative Fellow, Office of Academic Affairs
Janelle Voegele- Director for Teaching & Learning, and Assessment, OAI
Vicki Wise- Associate Director for Teaching, Learning and Assessment, OAI
Brian Sandlin- Accreditation Liaison Officer, Office of Academic Affairs

Institutional Assessment Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janelle D. Voegele, Co-Chair IAC</td>
<td>Director, Teaching, Learning and Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicki L. Wise, Co-Chair IAC</td>
<td>Associate Director for Teaching, Learning and Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariela Bao</td>
<td>Graduate Assistant, Office of Academic Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Beasley</td>
<td>Humanities/Social Science Librarian, Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Becker</td>
<td>Professor of Science Education, Director, PSU Center for Science Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowanna Carpenter</td>
<td>Director of Assessment and Upper Division Clusters, University Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micki M. Caskey</td>
<td>Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Graduate School of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy L. Donaldson</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Speech &amp; Hearing Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Gerwing</td>
<td>Professor, Environmental Sciences and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Klein</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Anthropology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michele Morales</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, MSW-DO Ashland Site Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsy Natter</td>
<td>Interim Director, Honors Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Sandlin</td>
<td>Accreditation and Compliance Coordinator, Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimee Shattuck</td>
<td>MSW Assistant Dean of Student Life Enrollment Management &amp; Student Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen West</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Management</td>
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