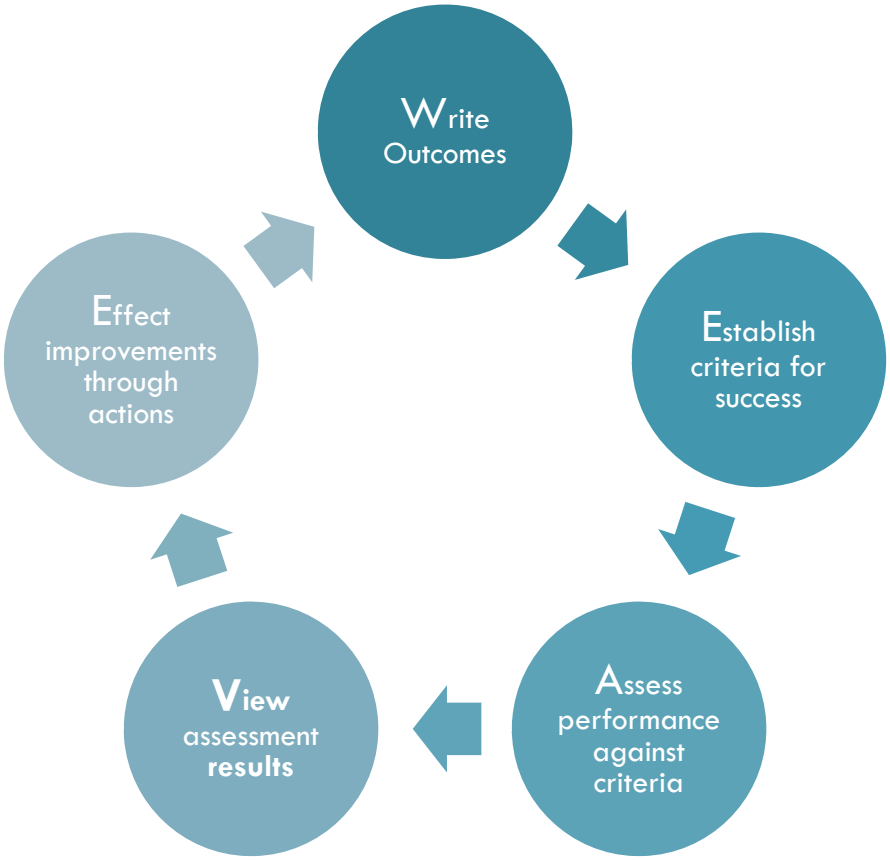
ASSESSMENT SHOWCASE



Spring 2017

Academic Program Assessment

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT SHOWCASE

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Site and delivery mode inventory is maintained by the Office of Institutional Research.

*Programs that fall in the multi-site and/or multi-mode category are marked with a single asterisk.

**Hybrid delivery programs, programs that are 50 percent to 100 percent online without a face-to-face equivalent, or programs that rest entirely at one of the teaching sites off the Hattiesburg campus are marked with a double asterisk.

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS COMMISSION ON COLLEGES (SACSCOC)

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. The Commission's mission is the enhancement of educational quality throughout the region and it strives to improve the effectiveness of institutions by ensuring that institutions meet standards established by the higher education community that address the needs of society and students. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Latin America and other international sites approved by the Commission on Colleges that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degrees. The Commission also accepts applications from other international institutions of higher education.

PRINCIPLES OF ACCREDITATION

FOUNDATIONS FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

CORE REQUIREMENT 2.5

The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. (Institutional Effectiveness)

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.3.1 - INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

- 3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
- 3.3.1.2 administrative support services
- 3.3.1.3 educational support services
- 3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
- 3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

MISSISSIPPI INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING (IHL)

The Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL System), under the governance of its Board of Trustees, will operate as a strong public university system with eight distinct, mission-driven universities, and will enhance the quality of life of Mississippians by effectively meeting their diverse educational needs. In so doing, the IHL system will be characterized by, and become nationally recognized for, its emphasis on student achievement and on preparing responsible citizens; its adherence to high academic standards and to quality in instruction, research, service and facilities; and its commitment to affordability, accessibility, and accountability.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

MISSION

The University of Southern Mississippi is a community of engaged citizens, operating as a public, student-centered, doctoral-granting research university serving Mississippi, the nation, and the world. The University is dedicated to scholarship and learning, integrating students at all levels in the creation and application of knowledge through excellence in teaching, research, creative activities, outreach, and service. The University nurtures student success by providing distinctive and competitive educational programs embedded in a welcoming environment, preparing a diverse student population to embark on meaningful life endeavors.

VISION

The University of Southern Mississippi aspires to be a model student-centered public research university that prepares students to thrive in a global society by providing high quality programs and transformative experiences in a community distinguished by inclusiveness.

VALUES

The mission of the institution is supported by the following values:

1. Research and instructional excellence focused on student success at all teaching sites and through campus-based and distance education
2. Student engagement that fosters personal growth, professional development, and a lifelong commitment to wellness
3. An inclusive community that embraces the diversity of people and ideas
4. Institutional governance that respects academic freedom and faculty inclusion
5. A campus culture characterized by warmth and mutually-supportive connections among students, faculty, staff, and alumni
6. An approach to academics, research, and personal conduct based on integrity and civility
7. An evolving curriculum that fosters lifelong curiosity and critical thinking
8. Community participation that promotes social responsibility and citizenship

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Support student success to foster retention, progression and graduation
2. Promote teaching, research, and creative excellence
3. Strategically expand undergraduate and graduate enrollment
4. Strengthen economic and community partnerships
5. Invest in faculty and staff to maximize their potential
6. Promote a culture of inclusiveness of people and ideas
7. Enhance physical, technological, and financial infrastructure to support our mission, vision, and values
8. Improve efficiency and effectiveness of institutional processes and systems

Assessment Policies

ADOPTED BY THE UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Participants:

A. Educational Programs – IHL maintains the official inventory of USM academic programs (http://www.mississippi.edu/research/stats.html). To be in compliance with SACSCOC policy, all degree programs in this inventory must assess program-level student learning outcomes in accordance with the Academic Program Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. Programs that offer more than one degree option at the same level may combine assessments, provided appropriate distinctions are made within the report (e.g., BA/BS, MA/MS, or EdD/PhD). The UAC can recommend programs address multiple degrees within the same report by having several common student learning outcomes and at least one separate student learning outcome for each degree. Graduate programs that offer fallback degrees may combine assessments, provided appropriate explanation is provided within the report. A fallback degree is defined as a degree option for students pursuing, but not completing a doctoral degree (e.g. EdS/PhD, MS/PhD). This combined assessment should be explained in the assessment plan/report. UAC Approved 9.30.09; Modified 2.22.17

B. Certificate Programs – The Office of Institutional Research maintains the inventory of active USM certificate programs (http://www.usm.edu/institutional-research). To be in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation policy, all stand-alone certificate programs in this inventory must assess program-level student learning outcomes in accordance with the Certificate Program Assessment Plan and Reporting Guidelines. A stand-alone certificate is defined as a program of study that does not have a "parent" degree. Certificates with parent degrees can be assessed within the parent degree assessment plan/report. If the assessment is embedded, it should be documented in the parent degree assessment plan/report. UAC Approved 9.30.09; Modified 2.29.12; 2.22.17

C. Emphasis Areas – All teacher licensure programs must assess separately. All other programs with emphasis areas determine whether they assess at the program-level or the emphasis-level. Many programs have elected to separate their assessments at the emphasis-level. The UAC encourages programs to consider emphasis-level assessment if plans of study vary greatly. The UAC can recommend emphasis-level assessment if program-level assessment reports are deemed inadequate. The UAC can also recommend programs address emphasis areas within the same report by having several common student learning outcomes for the program and at least one separate student learning outcome for each emphasis area.
UAC Approved 10.28.09

D. Stand-alone Minors – All stand-alone minors must assess minor-level student learning outcomes in accordance with the Certificate Program Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. A stand-alone minor is defined as a program of study that does not have a "parent" degree.
UAC Approved 10.28.09; Modified 02.29.12

Assessment of Administrative Outcomes Participants:

E. Administrative Support Services – The Office of Institutional Research (IR) maintains the official USM Organization Chart annually submitted to IHL. To be in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, all units with primary administrative support functions identified on the Organization Chart must assess in accordance with the Administrative Unit Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. Administrative Support Units include all Vice President for Finance and Administration units, all Vice President for Advancement units and other organizational chart units not identified as an Educational Support Service, Research Unit, or community/Public Service Unit.
UAC Approved 02.19.14; Modified 2.25.15

F. Educational Support Services – The Office of Institutional Research (IR) maintains the official USM Organization Chart annually submitted to IHL. To be in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, all professionally staffed units with primary educational support functions identified on the Organization Chart must assess in accordance with the Administrative Unit Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. Student organizations identified on the Organization Chart are assessed by their advising unit. Educational Support Units include Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs units (including similar Gulf Coast units), Vice President for Student Affairs units (including similar Gulf Coast units), and Special Assistant to the President for Military and Veterans Students Affairs.
UAC Approved 02.19.14; Modified 2.25.15

G. Research within its educational mission, if appropriate
The Office of Institutional Research (IR) maintains the official USM Organization Chart annually submitted to IHL. To be in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation all units with primary research or research support functions identified on the Organization Chart must assess in

accordance with the Administrative Unit Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. Research units include administrative units, centers, and institutes reporting to the Vice President for Research.
UAC Approved 02.19.14

H. Community/Public Service within its educational mission, if appropriate
The Office of Institutional Research (IR) maintains the official USM Organization Chart annually submitted to IHL. To be in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, all units with primary community and/or public service functions must assess in accordance with the Administrative Unit Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines. Community and Public Service units include the Center for Community and Civic Engagement, Center of Higher Learning - Stennis, Institute for Disability Studies (university institute reporting to the Vice President for Research), Office of Professional Development and Educational Outreach (to be phased out as of June 30, 2015), Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and the Trent Lott National Center for Economic Development and Entrepreneurship.
UAC Approved 02.19.14; Modified 2.25.15

University Assessment Committee Policy Regarding Academic Programs' Participation in the University-Wide Assessment Process

The purpose of the University Assessment Committee (UAC) is to support the process of continual self-evaluation and improvement across all academic and administrative units at The University of Southern Mississippi. Assessment involves the articulation of desired student learning outcomes, the design of measures to assess student learning in relationship to those outcomes, and the systematic collection of findings to determine if, and to what extent, student learning is occurring. Student learning outcomes assessment data are reported and preserved in WEAVEonline, the program adopted by the UAC as the university-wide assessment database.

Each year, a report of program and academic unit assessment participation is made to the deans, provost and president of The University of Southern Mississippi. The UAC will include in that report a list of any academic programs that did not submit plans and reports required within the university-wide assessment process. The UAC will continue (1) its recognition of academic programs judged to provide adequate and commendable support to SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1; (2) to hold the annual Assessment Showcase that recognizes academic programs judged to provide commendable support to SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1; and (3) to provide focused guidance and assistance to those programs that do not achieve at least an adequate rating in a given year. Programs not achieving at least an adequate rating will follow up with a plan of improvement to the respective Dean and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The UAC finds it unacceptable that some academic programs consistently do not participate in the university-wide assessment process and documentation of such in WEAVEonline. Such lack of participation undermines the university-wide efforts in assessment and jeopardizes the university response to SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1. The UAC supports academic programs' participation in discipline-specific accreditation processes; however, this participation does not exempt a program from participation in the university-wide assessment process.

UAC Approved 04.19.11; Modified 03.19.14

Items for future consideration:

UAC recommendations for the future are that (1) University Assessment Committee processes be incorporated into the program prioritization processes, and (2) successful completion of assessment documentation be incorporated in performance evaluations of those department chairs and program coordinators responsible and of their respective deans. It is essential to the continued success of the university that assessment data are collected and the results be acted upon for improvement of student learning.

UAC Approved 04.19.11; UAC Modified 03.19.14

Plan and Report Guidelines

Academic Program Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines

ACADEMIC PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT PLAN GUIDELINES:

1. All USM degree programs on the IHL Academic Program Inventory assess student learning outcomes at the program level.
2. Separate assessment plans are encouraged at the emphasis level.
3. To assist with teacher education accreditation assessment requirements, all teacher licensure programs assess at the emphasis level.
4. Programs that offer separate online emphasis areas or distinct emphasis areas at different sites assess separately.
5. Programs with two degrees at the same level in the same subject can choose to assess within one plan or separate plans. Graduate programs that offer fallback degrees may combine assessments. (See Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Participants Policy for items 1-5.)
6. Program-level Assessment Plans have a minimum of five outcomes. At least four outcomes must be Student Learning Outcomes and at least one outcome must be a Program Objective focused on student achievement. This Objective is labeled O/O in WEAVE. Student achievement includes enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, licensing, and certification.
7. Student learning outcomes must show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.
8. Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes/Measures must demonstrate (1) knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.
9. Each student learning outcome must have two measures; one must be a direct measure. At least one measure is required for Program Objectives.
10. Overall course grades cannot be used as measures.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT REPORT GUIDELINES:

Programs offered at multiple teaching sites or by multiple delivery modes must report their findings by site and include all sites and/or modes in the findings analysis.

The following components are required for a complete assessment report:

1. **Findings** (separated by site/mode if applicable)
2. **Action Plans** (required in year 2 of the assessment cycle; recommended in year 1 if applicable)
3. **Updated Implemented Action Plans**
4. **Analysis** (Two Fields: Strengths or Progress and Continued Attention)
5. **Program Summary** - Programs are asked to describe the program and summarize program highlights of the past year. The summary field is needed to provide context to an outside reviewer. Program contributions, activities, and accomplishments should be included in this field.
6. **Continuous Improvement Initiatives/Additional Action Plans** - Any department-level or program-level action plans for improvement that are not necessarily tied to a specific student learning outcome or program objective should be described in this field. Efforts to improve enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, licensing, and certification should be captured in this field.
7. **Closing the Loop/Action Plan Tracking** – Programs are asked to summarize the results of previous action plan implementation. This is the opportunity for programs to close the assessment loop – to report on the success (or nonsuccess) of previously implemented action plans. It is very important for

programs to respond to this section with thought and detail. This section is where programs provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

8. **Technology Use Narrative** – Programs are to state/explain the role of technology in the discipline and outcomes related to technology. Programs then develop a narrative to support this statement by providing program assessment results (if applicable), examples of technology being used to enhance student learning, examples of technology being used to meet program objectives/outcomes, and examples of providing access to and training in the use of technology.

Certificate Program Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines

All certificate programs must identify a minimum of *two* student learning outcomes. Each student learning outcome must be assessed with at least *one* direct measure.

Certificate programs must assess annually, following program-level calendars. The following components are required for a complete assessment report:

1. Findings (separated by site/mode if applicable)
2. Action Plans
3. 2-part Analysis to include Closing the Loop as applicable

Stand-alone Minor Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines

All stand-alone minors must identify a minimum of *two* student learning outcomes. Each student learning outcome must be assessed with at least *one* direct measure.

Stand-Alone Minors must assess annually, following program-level calendars. Stand-Alone Minors shall follow certificate reporting guidelines.

Assessment Process Overview

SPRING 2017

2016-2017/2017-2018 Academic Program Assessment Plans are in place.

An assessment plan includes:

a) Program Mission/Purpose
b) Student Learning Outcomes
c) Program Objective(s)
d) Measures and Targets

A complete 2016-2017 Academic Program Assessment Report includes:

e) Findings (due May 31)
f) Action Plans (due June 30) - *Action Plans are not required in Year 1 of assessment cycle*
g) Analysis (due June 30)
h) Annual Report (due June 30) - *alternative calendar programs have a due date of September 30*

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) directs the assessment process at the University of Southern Mississippi. Southern Miss follows a two-year planning and annual reporting cycle. With this cycle, assessment plans are in place for two years, action plans are developed every two years, and assessment reports are annual.

In the spring semester of the second year of the cycle, departments are asked to gather faculty; review past assessment reports (including data from the current year); reevaluate learning outcomes, measures, and targets; and develop action plans for the next assessment cycle implementation. With the two-year cycle, departments should have more than a full year of data (including any summer semester data) to evaluate when developing new action plans for improvement and revising assessment plans if needed.

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) reviews assessment reports in the fall semester to determine if:

1) Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines were followed
2) The Assessment Report supports SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 and Federal Requirement 4.1

These reviews are returned to the departments and presented to the deans and the provost in the spring semester.

Assessment Updates

Excerpts from **REPORT OF THE SACSCOC REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE**

March 1-3, 2016

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas (Institutional Effectiveness):

**3.3.1.1 Educational programs, to include student learning outcomes*

The Off-site Reaffirmation Committee noted that institution provided samples of Detailed Assessment Reports for all degree levels (including certificates), teaching sites, and modes of delivery for a variety of academic programs in its six colleges. The reports included the identification of expected learning outcomes for the students, how those outcomes are assessed, targets for successful outcomes achievement, and discussion regarding how the collected data is used to make improvements.

Additionally, the institution described how the assessment cycle is directed, and by whom. Guidelines, policies, and administration were included in this description. Samples of the reviewers' reviews of reports were included as well.

The institution provided information regarding degree program accreditation by national agencies and information for those programs who do not have national accrediting bodies, as they are required to participate in program evaluation as well.

Following a review of the detailed assessment reports provided by the institution and conversations with University personnel, the On-site Reaffirmation Committee noted that is clear that the institution identifies student learning outcomes, assesses the achievement of those outcomes and makes improvements based on those assessments. The institution deploys assessment for program-level student learning outcomes assessment; emphasis-level for plans of study that vary greatly; certificate programs and distance education, dual-site, and teaching sites. On-site interviews with the Director, Institutional Effectiveness and

several present and past members of the University Assessment Committee demonstrated a culture of assessment that enables the university to achieve its educational mission. In summary, the Committee reviewed documents, conducted interviews in support of the institution's case for compliance, and affirms the findings of the Off-site Review Committee.

**4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, course completion, and job placement rates; state licensing examinations, student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals. (Student achievement)*

The Off-site Reaffirmation Committee noted that the institution demonstrated the use of several methods to track and assess student achievement. Traditional methods, such as enrollment, retention, and graduation rates are used. Also, the institution discussed how it used data from student learning outcomes and General Education competencies to demonstrate student achievement. Licensure/certification scores and job placement rates are used, as well. All tracking methods identified goals and the degree to which those goals were met. Additionally, if the goals were not met, plans were provided for future action to meet said goals.

The On-site Reaffirmation Committee noted that success is defined for students in the university's mission and value statements. Interviews were conducted with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and the Director of Institutional Research during the visit. Based on the discussions and the documentation in the Compliance Certification, it is evident that the institution uses a data-informed approach to setting goals for and tracking student achievement through a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods for program-level student learning outcomes, the QEP, and General Education. Trend data are also followed and include job placement, enrollment, and retention and graduation rates. In summary, the Committee reviewed documents and conducted interviews in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-site Reaffirmation Committee.

GUIDE TO ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

I. To ensure continued compliance with SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.1, the University Assessment Committee implemented **Assessment Plan Guideline #7: Student learning outcomes must show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.**

SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.1 The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs. *(Post-baccalaureate program rigor)*

SACSCOC Resource Manual Rationale and Notes
Post-baccalaureate degree programs are progressively more complex and rigorous than undergraduate programs and are consistent with the expectation of higher education institutions.

SACSCOC Resource Manual Relevant Questions for Consideration
A. What process is used by the institution to clearly define the content and rigor of post-baccalaureate degree programs?

B. What evidence exists that the institution has post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and master's and doctoral programs that are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs?

Graduate programs are asked to review the 2015 SACSCOC Compliance Certification response to this standard and example SLOs **to ensure this standard is met in every graduate program assessment plan.**

Progressive Distinction **Student Learning Outcomes example:**

- English BA – Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate a clear thesis and fully developed argument
- English MA - Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate a clear thesis and fully developed argument that is informed by scholarly research and an appropriate methodology
- English PhD - Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate a clear and original thesis and nuanced argument that makes a unique contribution to the field and is informed by scholarly research and an appropriate methodology.

II. To ensure continued compliance with SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.2, the University Assessment Committee implemented **Assessment Plan Guideline #8. Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes/Measures must demonstrate (1) knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.**

SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.2 The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences. (*Graduate curriculum*)

SACSCOC Resource Manual Rationale and Notes
Effective graduate instruction provides the foundational knowledge and skill development to support independent research and professional practice. Graduates have the ability to contribute to a profession or field of study. Although the extent to which students are expected to demonstrate these competencies will vary with the level of the graduate degree, faculty within graduate programs define the skills, knowledge, and competencies required and evaluate the ability of students to engage in independent research and professional practice.

*SACSCOC Resource Manual Relevant Questions for Consid*eration

A. How is the literature of the discipline incorporated into the curriculum requirements?
B. What evidence exists that the students are engaged in ongoing research or appropriate professional practice and training experiences?

SACSCOC Resource Manual Required Documentation

1. Publications containing program requirements
2. Course syllabi

SACSCOC Resource Manual Examples of Other Types of Documentation

3. Examples of independent research projects, portfolios, case studies, theses, dissertations, or other examples by graduate students
4. Use of examples in CS 3.3.1.1 {*WEAVE Assessment Reports*} that show student knowledge of literature in the discipline

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Graduate programs are asked to review the 2015 SACSCOC Compliance Certification response to this standard and examples provided below **to ensure this standard is met in every graduate program assessment plan.**

Knowledge of the literature of the discipline **examples:**

To meet this part of the standard, programs need to document that students have an awareness of the field. Appropriate measures include article reviews, presentations, annotated bibliographies, review of literature, comprehensive exams, & evidence-based projects.

Sample {Knowledge of the Discipline} Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the body of theory and research that constitutes the foundation for (our discipline). **Communication (Communication Studies) MA/MS**

- Students will be able to demonstrate functional knowledge of the business environment. **Accounting MPA**

- Students will articulate and demonstrate special education content and theoretical knowledge in their specialty areas of special education research and study. **Special Education MEd**

- Students will be competent consumers of the discipline's research literature. Students will demonstrate the ability to competently read and review published literature. **Audiology AuD**

- Students will critically analyze data and evidence for improving advanced nursing practice and will develop new practice approaches based on the integration of research, theory, and practice knowledge. **Nursing (Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner) MSN**

- Students will have both broad and specialized knowledge of chemistry and biochemistry. **Chemistry PhD**

Sample {Knowledge of the Discipline} Measures:

- Students will take a comprehensive essay exam after completing required coursework for the master's degree. This exam will contain one or more questions that pertain to the learning outcomes 1-4. The exam will be read by a two-person examination committee and rated on a form containing a specific criterion for knowledge of the field; critical reasoning; ability to understand and conduct research; and, ability to apply and utilize research and theory. **Communication (Communication Studies) MA/MS**

- The (graduate) curriculum requires students to be competent consumers of the research literature. The ability to competently read and review published literature is a necessary component if graduates are to continue to learn and grow their knowledge of the field. This learning of the literature review process will also be useful to students in preparing for the Praxis Exam. Each student will complete an annotated review of the literature in (discipline) as part of the requirements for the Capstone course. The final product shall consist of reviews of no fewer than eight peer-reviewed articles published in professional journals related to a topic in (discipline) that has been approved by the capstone director. Each student is required to write a review of each article in adherence to a review format designed by the capstone director. One article is reviewed per week during the 10-week summer semester. At the end of the semester, each student combines and summarizes the reviewed articles in the form of an annotated bibliography. This document may also serve as a reference document for the student and their colleagues. **Audiology AuD**

- Students enrolled in (graduate course) work in groups to complete an evidence-based project. Each group chooses a national clinical guideline that has not been reviewed in at least two years. After faculty approval of the guideline topic, the group completes the project in three phases: I) evaluate new evidence through research and compare to current clinical practice guidelines, II) determine how new evidence should be applied to current guidelines, and III) report recommendations. In phase I, students 1) perform a literature review for research relevant to the chosen clinical guideline, 2) critically evaluate research performed since the last guideline update, 3) grade the evidence of recent research studies, and 4) extrapolate new evidence that either validates or conflicts with current practice guidelines. **Nursing (Family Nurse Practitioner) MSN**

- The Doctoral Annual Review is conducted annually during the fall semester. All doctoral students and candidates participate and are given formative feedback regarding their professional development. Candidates develop a technology-based presentation which is given to doctoral faculty and fellow doctoral students/candidates. In addition to the curriculum vitae, students/candidates discuss their status in their doctoral program as well as timelines and goals for completion. The presentation must include evidence/artifacts demonstrating pedagogical knowledge and skill development, research and scholarly activity, and leadership and service activities. Ratings on the rubric are superior (4), acceptable (3), emerging (2), and unacceptable (1). **Special Education PhD**

Ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences Examples:

To meet this part of the standard, programs need to document that students have engaged in research and/or professional practice. Appropriate measures include research projects, thesis, dissertation, field work, internship, clinicals, colloquiums, conference presentations, and journal articles.

Sample {Research} Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to carry out original and independent primary and secondary research, use sources effectively to support an argument, and employ appropriate discipline-specific documentation. **English PhD**
- Master's degree candidates demonstrate an understanding of scientific research, its role in building a knowledge base in library and information science, and demonstrate knowledge about research methods applicable to library and information studies and the ability to identify and apply appropriate research methodology to specific problems in library and information science. **Library and Information Science MLIS**
- Master's students will learn how to conduct research in marine science in their chosen emphasis area. **Marine Science MS**

Sample {Professional Practice} Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will gain experience in the practical aspects and skills of public history. **Public History Graduate Certificate**
- Students will demonstrate a mastery of practical skills necessary for successful (engagement) in their chosen sport. **Sport Coaching Education MS**
- Students will have the ability to teach effectively. **Mathematics MS**
- Students will demonstrate skills in assessment and intervention consistent with entry into the professional practice of counseling. **Counseling Psychology MS**

Sample {Research/Professional Practice} Measures:

- Students will earn an acceptable score on the Internship Evaluation Instrument in HIS 695 (required course), a supervised internship in a private, state, or federal facility dedicated to public history. **Public History Graduate Certificate**
- Practicum supervisor evaluations are comprised of written evaluation resulting from practicum instructors' rating on a 5-point scale of students' competencies in the following counseling-related domains: (list of domains). **Counseling Psychology MS**

- The Internship Clinical Performance Evaluation is an evaluation of competency based on the (National Organization) Competency Guidelines. The evaluation is an instrument consisting of 10 domains of competency, with a total of 37 items. The evaluation is completed by the intern's clinical preceptor validating the intern's ability to perform satisfactorily in a (discipline) role. **Nursing (Family Nurse Practitioner) MSN**
- Students who are GTAs are required to have one semester of MAT 500. This class is designed to prepare students for teaching, and involves several opportunities for observational assessment of teaching to a lesson plan. The student teaching evaluation instrument assesses the students' presentation skills, ability to cover the material in a timely well-paced fashion, and the ability to interact well with student questions. **Mathematics MS**

Student Learning Outcomes

A Student Learning Outcome (SLO) is a statement regarding knowledge, skills, and/or traits students should gain or enhance as a result of their engagement in an academic program. SLOs are the items that complete the sentence, "When they complete our program, students will be able to….." A program does not need to state all possible student learning outcomes, but it should try to articulate those that are fundamental. A program may choose to rotate SLOs. Student learning outcomes should show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.

Frameworks for Learning Outcomes

In *Assessing Student Learning, A Common Sense Guide*, Linda Suskie (2009) explains how understanding and using frameworks can assist with the task of identifying and articulating learning outcomes.

The learning outcomes in various frameworks could be summarized into three categories:

- Knowledge and conceptual understanding - remembering, replicating a simple procedure, and defining, summarizing, and explaining concepts or phenomena.
- Thinking and other skills:
  - Application – capacity to use knowledge and understanding in a new context
  - Analysis – ability to identify elements, relationships, and principles of a complex process
  - Evaluation, Problem-Solving, and Decision-Making Skills – skills in making informed judgments
  - Synthesis – capacity to put together what one has learned in a new, original way
  - Creativity – abilities to be flexible, take intellectual risks, and be open-minded to new ideas
  - Critical Thinking – capacities to seek truth, clarity, and accuracy; distinguish facts from opinions
  - Information Literacy – broad set of skills reflecting today's reality of research practice
  - Performance Skills – physical skills
  - Interpersonal Skills – abilities to listen, participate as an effective team member
- Attitudes, values, dispositions, and habits of mind – "personal and social responsibility skills"

(Suskie, 118 – 124)

Expressing Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes should be neither too broad nor too specific:

Too vague: Students will demonstrate information literacy skills.

Too specific: Students will be able to use the college's online services to retrieve information.

Better: Students will locate information and evaluate it critically for its validity and appropriateness.

(Suskie, 130)

2017 Showcase

2015-2016 BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MBA

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1: Concepts and techniques in all functional areas
MBA graduates will demonstrate knowledge of business concepts and techniques in all relevant functional areas (e.g., managerial accounting, marketing, management, finance, and strategy).

SLO 2: Leadership and Team Building Skills
MBA graduates will demonstrate skills in leadership and team building.

SLO 3: Ethical and Cultural Awareness
MBA graduates will demonstrate the ability to identify and understand ethical and cultural perspectives.

SLO 4: Effective communication skills
MBA graduates will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively.

SLO 5: Creative Critical Thinking Skills
MBA graduates will demonstrate creative critical thinking skills by integrating and applying appropriate concepts, technologies and decision making techniques to effectively evaluate and manage a business in a global environment.

Program Objective

O/O 6: International rankings of MBA program outcomes
International percentile rankings of MBA student knowledge at the conclusion of the MBA program will be used as the most externally valid Student Achievement Objective for the MBA program. MBA results on the MBA ETS Major Field Exam will be compared to the external results prepared by ETS to assess program achievement over time. This comparison for each year's MBA graduating cohort will show what our MBA students know at the conclusion of their program to more than 25,000 MBA students world-wide who take the same standardized exam at more than 260 institutions.

Measures

A measure identifies evidence and methods used to determine achievement of expected outcomes. Targets show criteria for success for each student learning outcome. The findings that result from these measures should be used to demonstrate student learning and provide direction for improving learning.

Measures and Targets should show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit. Simple rates, frequencies, or percentages of activities are not true measures of student learning outcomes.

Direct Measures

The best measures for student learning are **direct measures** in which students demonstrate that they know or can do the specified learning outcome. Direct measures directly evaluate student work. Examples of direct measures include portfolios, exams, papers, projects, presentations, performances, standardized tests, licensure exams, comprehensives, and internship evaluations.

An overall course grade is NOT an acceptable direct measure. And in various cases, an overall exam, project, or paper grade is not an appropriate measure. However, the grading process can be used for assessment, if the classroom exam or assignment **actually measures** the learning outcome and the **criteria** for evaluating student work **is stated explicitly** in writing (usually in the form of a rubric).

Indirect Measures

Indirect methods such as surveys and interviews ask students to reflect on their learning rather than to demonstrate it. Indirect measures also include job placement rates, admission rates into graduate programs, employer surveys, alumni surveys, focus groups, honors/awards earned by students & alumni, student participation rates in research publications, & conference presentations.

Expressing Measures

Measures should be detailed and specific. Measurement should ensure that comparisons are “apples to apples,” and should ascertain that, for those programs that are offered at more than one site or by more than one mode, the measure can be duplicated at all sites/modes and the findings can be separated by site/mode. Evidence can include qualitative as well as quantitative information.

2017 Showcase

ACCOUNTING MPA
Program-level Direct Measure

M 4: ACC 660 project assignment
MPA students enrolled in ACC 660 are assigned a project at the end of the semester that is designed to assess their critical thinking skills.

Target: Using a rubric to assess critical thinking, students will be evaluated on four attributes. The four attributes are identification of the problem, analysis of issues involved, development of a conclusion for the problem, and justification of the conclusion. For each attribute, a student's performance will be assessed as either advanced, proficient, minimally acceptable, or unacceptable. The achievement target will have been met if 80 percent or more assessed students are classified as "advanced" or "proficient."

Findings (2015-2016) - Target: Met
100% of assessed students were classified as *Advanced* or *Proficient* on each of the four traits of critical thinking on an end of semester project in the spring 2016 ACC 660 (Fraud Accounting and Valuation) class. Therefore, the target was met. The findings for this assessment for Spring 2016 and Spring of 2015 appear below:

	Spring 2016 n = 23				Spring 2015 n = 19			
	Advanced	Proficient	Minimally Acceptable	Unacceptable	Advanced	Proficient	Minimally Acceptable	Unacceptable
Trait 1 Problem Identification	13 (57%)	10 (43%)	0	0	11 (58%)	8 (42%)	0%	0%
Trait 2 Analysis of Issues	9 (39%)	14 (61%)	0	0	8 (42%)	11 (58%)	0%	0%
Trait 3 Conclusion Development	12 (52%)	11 (48%)	0	0	10 (53%)	9 (47%)	0%	0%
Trait 4 Justification	9 (39%)	14 (61%)	0	0	6 (32%)	13 (68%)	0%	0%

In ACC 660, also taught during the spring semester in 2012 - 2015, the instructor gave a critical thinking assignment at the end of the semester, and the overwhelming majority of students performed above the *Minimally Acceptable* level on all four critical thinking traits measured. This result is not surprising given the results on the critical thinking assignments in ACC 605, which is taught simultaneously. More specifically, the students were expected to perform well on a critical thinking assignment administered at the end of the semester in ACC 660, after their critical thinking case(s) were administered in ACC 605.
Given the sustained high level performance on the critical thinking assignments in ACC 660 during the past five years, re-evaluation of the assessment of this measure has been considered by the AOL Committee. **This high level of performance represents a closing of the loop and a strength of performance that signals a change of assessment is in order.** Curriculum changes coincided with the evaluation of assessment in the course; ACC 660 has been moved to the summer session and categorized as an elective for MPA students. Thus, ***this assessment of critical thinking skills in ACC 660 will be discontinued in future administrations of the course.***

NURSING (FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER) MSN
Program-level SLO Direct Measure

M 1: Internship Clinical Performance Evaluation
The Internship Clinical Performance Evaluation is an evaluation of competency based on the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty (NONPF) Competency Guidelines. The evaluation is an instrument which measures student's progress toward meeting core competencies and independent practice competencies. The evaluation is completed by the student's clinical preceptor (course NSG 664L FNP Internship) validating the student's ability to perform satisfactorily in an advanced nursing practice role. Clinical preceptors of FNP students complete this instrument electronically through a patient/clinical encounter tracking database (Medatrax) that is password protected. The instrument allows preceptors to rate whether the student meets objective consistently or frequently, demonstrates progress towards meeting the objective or routinely needs guidance or does not meet objective. A Likert scale of 1-5 is used. *(2012 NP Core: Scientific Foundation 6, Quality Competencies 1, 2, 5; Practice Inquiry 2, 3, 4, 6; Technology and Information Literacy 2, 3, 5, Health Delivery Systems 3, 7; Ethics 1-3; Independent Practice 2, 3, 4. 2013 FNP pop-focused independent practice competencies)*

Target: At least **90% of students** in NSG 664L FNP Internship will receive "met" or "exceeded" **on all proficiencies relevant to patient communication** on the Preceptor Evaluation domains patient relationship, teaching, professional role, and communications (items 23-30, 32, 34).

Findings (2015-2016) - Target: Met
100% of students (n=30) in 664L in Spring 2016 received "met" **on all proficiencies relevant to patient communication** on the Preceptor Evaluation domains patient relationship, teaching, professional role, and communications (items 23-30, 32, 34).

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (LICENSURE) BS
Program-level SLO Direct Measure

M 1: Upper Division Assessment (Exam Questions)
All BSC majors are required to complete BSC 380/L (Microbiology). The course material spans many subjects of biological sciences including metabolism, genetics, cell physiology, and taxonomy. Students enrolled in BSC 380 (Microbiology) demonstrate an understanding of course-specific content.

Target: In BSC 380 70% of students score 70% or better on the comprehensive final exam, which comprises questions designed to assess understanding of course-specific concepts. In both courses, answers are graded subjectively by the instructor and the cohort is separated into students seeking the B.S. in Biological Sciences, the B.S. in Biological Sciences (Licensure), or the B.S. in Marine Biology.

Findings (2015-2016) - Target: Not Met *(See associated Action Plan on page 24.)*
Fall 2015:
Hattiesburg: 100% (n = 2) of students seeking a B.S. in Biological Sciences (Licensure) scored 70% or greater on the comprehensive final exam.
Gulf Coast: 67% (n = 3) of students seeking a B.S. in Biological Sciences (Licensure) scored 70% or greater on the comprehensive final exam.
Spring 2016:
Hattiesburg: 80% (n = 5) of students seeking a B.S. in Biological Sciences (Licensure) scored 70% or greater on the comprehensive final exam.
Gulf Coast: BSC 380 is not offered on the Gulf Coast in the Spring.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MBA
Program-level Student Achievement Program Objective Measure

M 33: International rankings of MBA program
Annually, results on the MBA comprehensive exam (the MBA ETS Field Exam) will be compared to the total international cohort. This externally valid comparison of knowledge in 5 areas critical to MBA program learning will provide an annual benchmark for our graduates. Additionally, national perceptual rankings for the USM MBA program will be reported.

Source of Evidence: Benchmarking of learning outcomes against peers

Target: Annually, the percentile ranking for the USM MBA graduating cohort on the MBA ETS Field Exam will be at least in the 50th percentile internationally.

Findings (2015-2016) - Target: Met
Results are reported for the cohort of MBA students who took the MBA ETS Field Exam in the spring of 2016. This exam also serves as the comprehensive examination for the MBA program. The total graduating MBA cohort at USM was 44 students; students took this exam at the completion of the MBA program in the capstone course for the program (MBA 660).

In 2016 the mean composite score for Southern Miss MBA students was 255.4. When benchmarking against the international cohort of more than 25,000 students who took the same exam at 260 institutions worldwide, a mean composite score of 255.4 ranks at the 68th percentile in 2016.

Therefore, our Student Achievement Objective measure documents that Southern Miss MBA graduates are in the top 32nd percentile internationally for knowledge at the conclusion of the program. Therefore, the goal of being in the top 50 percent internationally was achieved and far surpassed.

NUTRITION AND DIETETICS (DIDACTIC PROGRAM IN DIETETICS/ COMMUNITY NUTRITION/ NUTRITION AND FOOD SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT) BS
Program-level Indirect Measure

M 5: Graduate Follow Up Survey
Survey sent 6 months post-graduation.

Source of Evidence: Student satisfaction survey at end of the program

Target: $\geq$ 80% of graduates will indicate that they have adequate or more than adequate knowledge and skills in food systems management to begin an entry level position, as reported on the graduate follow up survey

Findings (2015-2016) - Target: Not Met *(See associated Action Plan on page 24.)*
Of graduates that completed the graduate follow up survey (7/13 = 53.8% response rate) 60.3% indicated that they have adequate or more than adequate knowledge and skills in food systems management to begin an entry level position.

Action Plans & Analysis

An action is an organized activity undertaken to help programs more effectively achieve intended outcomes, or an activity developed by program faculty to improve and grow the program for the future.

Analysis is the reflection of the program's findings within/for the criteria set for success on the program's intended outcomes. The Analysis is a summary of strengths and areas in which improvement is needed.

The End of Assessment Is Action

In *Assessment Clear and Simple*, Barbara E. Walvoord (2010) states the goal of assessment is information-based decision making.

> "Assessment helps the program determine how well it is achieving its outcomes and suggest effective steps for improvement. That means you should conduct assessment for yourselves and your students, not just for compliance with accreditors. You don't need to collect data you don't use; it's much more important to collect a small amount of useful data than to proliferate data that sit in a drawer or on a computer file. If you are collecting information you are not using, either start using it or stop collecting it. Instead of focusing on compliance, focus on the information you need for wise action." *(Walvoord, 2010, p. 5)*

The Most Common Actions Resulting from Assessment

Three common actions that result from assessment in the department, in general education, and in the institution:

1) Changes to curriculum, requirements, programmatic structures, or other aspects of the students' course of study

2) Changes to the policies, funding, and planning that support learning

3) Faculty development

(Walvoord, 2010, p.5)

Are the Actions Working?

To close the loop, programs should not only use assessment information to inform action, but should come back and examine (and document) whether the action led to improvement of student learning.

2017 Showcase

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (LICENSURE) BS
Action Plan

Recommend remediation of material through BSC Tutoring Center
The BSC Tutorial Center has been improved with the addition of tutors for BSC 380. Faculty will recommend students that are performing below expectations to meet with a tutor regularly during the semester.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: Medium

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: Upper Division Assessment (Exam Questions) | **Outcome/Objective:** Broad-based knowledge of Biology

NUTRITION AND DIETETICS (DIDACTIC PROGRAM IN DIETETICS/ COMMUNITY NUTRITION/ NUTRITION AND FOOD SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT) BS
Action Plan

Knowledge and Skills in Food Systems
Findings were shared at the July 2016 faculty retreat. It was determined that graduates often perceive their knowledge and skills should be at higher levels for practice; however graduate mean scores in the Food Systems domain on the national registration exam are higher than the national average. Nevertheless, we added new experiential activities with Aramark in our Food Systems courses to provide students more preparation, and we will be updating and revising the course content in the Food Systems Management series of courses. An advisory board meeting to specifically discuss the food systems management practice area is scheduled for the Fall of 2016.

Established in Cycle: 2015-2016
Implementation Status: Planned
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: Comprehensive Exam Scores **| Outcome/Objective:** SLO 2: Adequate Knowledge and Skills in Food Systems
Measure: DI Director Survey **| Outcome/Objective:** SLO 2: Adequate Knowledge and Skills in Food Systems
Measure: Graduate Follow Up Survey **| Outcome/Objective:** SLO 2: Adequate Knowledge and Skills in Food Systems

Implementation Description: The program director will meet with Food Systems Management Course instructors to revise course series and conduct advisory board meeting.
Responsible Person/Group: Food Service Management course instructors, program director, and chair.

MUSIC BM

Analysis Answers

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?

Students in the BM degree met or surpassed the learning outcome benchmarks in all areas of the degree. Acceptable measures that were adopted in 2012-2013 have been met consistently since that time. Communication between and among faculty regarding concerns for individuals in this degree plan may attribute to the increase of student success in certain areas. The current administration with support of faculty has begun to work to identify student career planning sooner in each students' undergraduate experience. This may have resulted in the increase of student academic success in various areas. Curriculum delivery and assessment changes in theory, conducting, and some areas of applied instruction may also be attributed with the shown improvements in these areas of study. Specifically, all music students spend the most of their course work time with their applied instructors. Changes in personnel in several applied music studios seem to have resulted in improved student attitude and personal application to their degree studies as a whole. While correlation and causation may not be able to be scientifically measured in all regards of student achievement, the changes mentioned are fairly new to this degree and we are seeing positive increases in the addressed areas of student learning outcomes. It should also be noted that while all music students were negatively impacted by the tornado, destroyed instruments, a gross lack of suitable rehearsal space, and loss of performance opportunities may have affected BM and MM students more than others. The resolution of these setbacks may also be a positive affecting variable resulting in increased retention.

What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?

We need to continue to look at ways to have targets met and surpassed with all established student learning outcomes. There are several reactions being considered for this degree plan to further insure its success. This includes development of exit surveys, job placement tracking, and graduate school acceptance tracking. Now that we are reporting measures in various music domains of study with each major separated out (a significant effort for this reporting period), we can look more specifically at what measures are most appropriate for elevating the success of this program. Though retention may be considered good when compared to other units or retention rates with the BM degree at peer institutions, we will continue to consider strategies for increasing student retention.

The BM degree has a considerable number of students that are dual majors (BM/BME). Efforts need to be made to better advise these students and monitor their progress toward degree completion.

COMPUTATIONAL SCIENCES (MATHEMATICS) PHD

Analysis Answers

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?

Proven strengths shown by our assessments include:

1. Effectiveness at teacher training. In spite of their lack of experience, Graduate Teaching Assistants consistently earned ratings from student evaluations that are comparable to average ratings earned by faculty.

2. Retention and completion. We have had some part-time students that have been in the program for quite some time, and some students in these situations give up as they already have careers. However, this is not the case in our department. Through their persistence and that of our faculty, our part-time students are completing their degrees.

3. Training in mathematical software. Students are acquiring the skills they need in their careers, such as proficiency in LaTeX and appropriate mathematical software.

4. Interdisciplinary research. Students are given opportunities to broaden their research experience by working with faculty at other institutions, through connections to our faculty.

What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?

These objectives will require continued attention:

1. Students are taking longer than desired to complete the program. Generally it is intended that students take three years beyond the Master's degree to complete the PhD, but our current students are on track to need 5 years, and have waited until the end of their third year to complete the comprehensive exams. That meets the letter of our current requirements, but is not conducive to finishing in a timely manner. When we eventually revamp our curriculum, this requirement will be changed so that the comprehensive exams must be completed sooner (likely by the beginning of the second year). Students are now being strongly encouraged to quickly complete all required coursework for the comprehensive exams, and initiate their dissertation project with an adviser during the first year in the program. This appears to be working, as we have recently had 4 students complete their comprehensive exams by the end of their second year, or the beginning of their third year. Furthermore, we had three students give their prospectus presentations within the 2014-15 cycle. However, more work needs to be done in this area. In particular, a change in mindset on the part of our faculty advisers is required: the prospectus presentation should be given at the beginning of a project, not after most of the work for the dissertation has already been completed, as this defeats much of the purpose of the prospectus.

2. The department needs to secure more external support for students in the PhD program. The stated target was barely met in the 2010-11 cycle and has not been met since then, though it will be met in the 2016-17 cycle due to having two MSSGC fellowship winners. To meet or exceed it, additional efforts must be made to pursue funding from a variety of sources, so that GTA appointments can be used

primarily for MS students as intended. By making it a department-wide initiative to submit applications annually to fellowship programs such as those offered by NASA or the Krell Institute, we hope to see success in this area once again. In the last two years, three out of four applications for the MSSGC have been successful. The key is to actually get more applications submitted.

3. Students need to try harder to get their work published. Recent graduates have completed their dissertations with the intent to submit portions thereof as journal articles, but for the sake of ensuring sufficient quality in their work and also establishing their careers after graduation, this needs to be a made a priority as the research progresses. A few students who have recently graduated have had some success in this area, so hopefully this bodes well for the future. As with other issues that need attention, a change in mindset on the part of some faculty advisers is needed.

4. Students need to be better prepared for the comprehensive exams. Until recently, students had been consistently passing these exams on the first attempt, but lately several students have failed one or more of the exams, and a few have failed twice. Fortunately, we have yet to have a student dismissed from the program due to failing the exams, but needing three attempts (after an appeal) is impeding progress on research. An essential change that must be made in our core courses is to structure assignments so that they give students a meaningful indication of what is expected on the exams.

5. Students need to broaden their education by taking courses in computational science outside the department. In time we intend to modify the curriculum so that such courses will be required; there are courses in physics and computing that appear to be suitable.

6. Students need to acquire experience in presenting their research at conferences. Not only is it good practice for the oral defense, but it is also helpful toward establishing a career, just as publishing is. There are some on-campus and regional conferences that can provide this practice, and we have had some success in securing external travel awards to help with this endeavor.

Annual Reporting

Annual Reporting Fields

The Assessment Report includes the following Annual Reporting data elements:

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Programs are asked to summarize highlights of the past year for that particular academic program. The summary field is needed to provide context to an outside reviewer. Program contributions, activities, and accomplishments should be included in this field. Any data collected outside of the student learning outcome measures could be showcased in this field as well.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES (ADDITIONAL ACTION PLANS)

Any department-level or program-level action plans for improvement that are not necessarily tied to a specific student learning outcome or program objective should be described in this field. Efforts to improve enrollment and retention rates, graduation rate, job placement rate, licensing, and certification should be captured in this field.

CLOSING THE LOOP (ACTION PLAN TRACKING)

Programs are asked to summarize the results of previous action plan implementation. This is the opportunity for programs to close the assessment loop – to report on the success (or nonsuccess) of previously implemented action plans. It is very important for programs to respond to this section with thought and detail. This section is where programs provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

TECHNOLOGY USE NARRATIVE

Programs are to state/explain the role of technology in the discipline and outcomes related to technology. Programs then develop a narrative to support this statement by providing program assessment results (if applicable), examples of technology being used to enhance student learning, examples of technology being used to meet program objectives/outcomes, and examples of providing access to and training in the use of technology.

2017 Showcase

INTERIOR DESIGN BS
Excerpts of Annual Reporting Fields

Program Summary
The Interior Design Program saw impressive results coming out of the graduating senior cohort in the spring of 2016. Of the 10 graduates, 90% were hired in the profession by June 20, 2016, and two students were accepted into graduate programs. This cohort excelled academically with a 3.51 average GPA with 70% graduating with Honors, Highest Honors or Latin designations. While the Interior Design Program accounts for only 8% of the enrollment numbers for the School of Construction (SoC), the interior design majors represented 26% of the SoC graduates during the spring 2016 semester. One spring graduate was ranked 1st in SoC, 3rd in the College of Science and Technology and 6th in the University. Lastly, the program placed one graduate at HOK in Houston, a top global architecture firm and also placed an intern at Gensler, New York City, which is the number one global architecture firm in the country. Another student was offered a position at Perkins + Will in Chicago, but chose to stay in the region. One student was hired by HGTV to help with the new t.v. series "Hometown" which airs in 2017.

The American Society of Interior Designers was active this year and offered 18 lunch and learn educational events in which local vendors came to showcase their products or offer CEU topics. These rep groups provided lunch to an average of 25 students for each event. In addition, ASID partnered with the US Green Building Council to offer an afternoon of CEU's for professionals and student members. These same students participated in Arbor Day tree plantings across campus. Fifteen ASID student members attended the ASID Regional Career Day held at Louisiana Tech University and won 10 Gold Design Awards, 7 Silver Design Awards and 4 Bronze Design Awards as well as took 1st place in the team poster competition. In addition, the students fund-raised over $1,500.00 to help offset travel expenses for the senior trip to Chicago and the Junior trip to Houston.

Noteworthy accomplishments for this academic year include the successful collaboration with professional architect and interior designer, Constantine Vasilios, who taught the ID 490 (Capstone) course in the spring - referred to as the "Chicago Studio". Students traveled to Chicago during their spring break to tour their assigned historic buildings and research the history and context for the design of a non-profit facility of 30,000 - 60,000 sq. feet. The project was presented during a public presentation at a downtown venue followed by an Awards Ceremony and Senior Banquet. The Juniors were also challenged to design a 25,000 sq. foot office space in Houston's historic Pennzoil Place designed by Philip Johnson. They were able to take a trip to Houston to network with leading design firms, get critiques and feedback from Houston designers and visit their space first hand during the spring semester.

Continuous Improvement Initiatives/Additional Action Plans

The Interior Design Program successfully met the following initiatives planned for the 2015-16 academic year:

1. We targeted a retention rate of at least 80% and maintained an 83% retention rate from spring 2015 to fall 2016. Retention rate was based on the number of active majors taking classes in the spring that returned for the fall semester to continue in the interior design program. Due to a drop in the sophomore cohort, the program did not successfully achieve its goal of a 5% growth in enrollment.
2. We provided opportunities for the juniors and seniors to work on projects outside the region in Chicago and Houston giving students the ability to network with professional designers and architects in other regions. We saw an increase in the number of students interning outside the region with some traveling to New York and Nashville.
3. We provided opportunities for students to travel outside the region to Houston and Chicago. The travel and lodging expenses were covered by donations and fund-raising efforts, allowing students the ability to attend these trips at a much reduced rate.
4. We promoted a 3-day workshop to practicing design professionals taking the National Council for Interior Design Qualifications (NCIDQ) exam; however, the course did not fulfill the minimum enrollment numbers and was not offered this year.
5. While the program did not identify any regional or national design competitions to incorporate into the curriculum this year; the students did attend the regional ASID Career Day winning many award recognitions for their work in a blind jury review process. (Refer to summary of awards in Annual /Special Report.)
6. The program developed a new course needed for its upcoming CIDA accreditation which was approved by Academic Council. The focus of the course is human factors in the built environment. The course for Healthcare Design was postponed as well as converting 2 lecture courses to online. These modifications will be addressed next academic year.
7. The program has identified several new adjunct faculty that can help with course delivery; however, it will be losing some adjuncts for 2017. Plans will continue next year to increase the current adjunct pool.
8. The program did not complete an interdisciplinary team project this year; however, the sophomore, junior and senior cohorts were able to collaborate with allied disciplines in the aging-in-place, office design and hospitality markets.
9. While the program coordinator did not attend a CIDA accreditation workshop at the annual IDEC conference, a CIDA consultant visited during the summer to help the program with interpretation of the new accreditation standards.

Closing the Loop

The 2014-15 action plans were reviewed and the program completed one action plan, moved three planned actions into progress and developed three new action plans for next year. The sketching requirement for ID 238 and ID 440 was completed and a new sketching action plan is replacing this one that addresses sketching in ID 320 Design Presentation Media in which students focus on quick, timed sketching to overcome their fears of perfection. During the fall 2015 semester, students in ID 320 sketched in a weekly journal and the final exam indicated that they had improved in their speed. Students completed a design renovation of a period fireplace by sketching a solution by hand and blending it with Photoshop to create a poster presentation within the 3-hour final exam period. Action plans that are now in progress include more opportunities for estimating materials and focusing on the

portfolio supplement that will document design knowledge in areas of sustainability, codes and accessibility.

After surveying the alumni in preparation for the spring 2017 CIDA site visit, the program identified that graduates felt more exposure was needed in working within budgets, writing specifications and estimating product materials. We have since incorporated real-world projects in ID 440 Contract Design II in which students are paired with a real client for a university project. They have also been paired with a professional designer to help them identify products in their price points, allowing them to prepare detailed job estimates, written specifications and job books.

Until a full-time faculty member is assigned to the ID 490 Advanced Application of Design Theory, (capstone course), offering the National Council for Interior Design Qualifications (NCIDQ) fundamentals exam has been put on hold. In the meantime, the program has decided to introduce the exam study manual at the sophomore level in spring 2017 and to use this book as a reference book throughout the entire curriculum. We anticipate that the current sophomore cohort will take a practice fundamentals exam in spring 2019 just before graduating from the program.

Lastly, the program has added the option for freshman to pre-record their culture oral presentation in ID 140 Interior Design I since many chose to skip this portion of the assignment due to anxiety. They will introduce and also show the video to the class on their assigned presentation day.

Technology Use

The Interior Design Program measures graduates in an annual exit survey as well as measures the internship mentor's perceptions of an interning student's ability to effectively use computer technology programs (2D, 3D, Rendering, and Business software).

The percentage of graduating students that ranked their computer knowledge as excellent to above average are as follows:

- 100% (9/9) could use computer assisted drafting software to prepare floor plans and other 2D drawings.
- 100% (9/9) could use computer related software for day to day business communications. (i.e.: word processing, spread sheets, slide shows.)
- 100% (9/9) could use computer rendering software to prepare 3D drawings and color renderings. (IE: Sketchup, Photoshop, Revit and similar programs.)

The percentage of internship mentors that ranked student computer knowledge as excellent to above average are as follows:

- 92% (12/13) could use computer assisted drafting software to prepare floor plans and other 2D drawings.
- 100% (17/17) could use computer related software for day to day business communications. (i.e.: word processing, spread sheets, slide shows.)
- 91% (11/12) could use computer rendering software to prepare 3D drawings and color renderings. (IE: Sketchup, Photoshop, Revit and similar programs.)

Connected Document

- *Technology Survey Results*

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BA

Program Summary

Even though the School of Criminal Justice (CJ) has only eight full-time faculty to operate bachelors, masters and doctoral CJ programs, assessment data for 2015-16 reveal that undergraduate CJ majors (~ 400) continue to perform well. Students continued to rate the program highly regarding acquisition of knowledge and preparation for the workforce, while also demonstrating a clear proficiency at oral communication. ALL targets for ALL objectives were fully met on the Gulf Park campus. With regard to the Hattiesburg campus, problems do somewhat exist ... but primarily pertain to writing and theory.

The School of Criminal Justice has a nice balance of faculty experience (3 full professors, 1 associate professor, and 4 assistant professors) engaging with the undergraduate program, and as such are optimistic about the future. With proper mentoring from senior faculty members, the School will (for years to come) have the right blend of stability mixed with new ideas and enthusiasm; when then factoring in the influence and guidance of highly respected adjunct faculty members, the School is confident (and proud) of the educational environment provided for our students. Some current members (but not an exhaustive list) of that adjunct corps include: (1) sitting MS Supreme Court Justice, (2) sitting Juvenile Court Judge, (3) retired prosecutor, (4) retired probation and parole supervisor, (5) retired Major with MS Bureau of Narcotics, and (6) practicing defense attorney.

The relevance and competitiveness of the undergraduate curriculum continues to be closely monitored by the faculty, as evidenced by new and varied topical offerings regarding media and crime, homeland security, gangs, African Americans in CJ system, domestic terrorism, death investigation, serial killers, sex offenders, mentally ill offenders, and women and crime. Moreover, the now two-year old criminal justice student organization continues to attract participation at a steady growth rate, all while continuing to complement broader efforts at monitoring student learning outcomes and maximizing student learning experiences. As customary, the School of CJ also continues to implement and adhere to action plans in identified problem areas.

CHILD AND FAMILY STUDIES BS

Continuous Improvement Initiatives

The department met the target for 77% of the identified undergraduate measures and developed SLO action plans for all targets. In addition to the already measure-specific and department-specific plans to improve student success, overall changes will be made in the program to improve the quality of the education to our students. For example, Child and Family Studies' Graduate Assistants (GAs) assigned to the CoEP Student Advisement and Support Center will be trained to provide tutoring services to students enrolled in Capstone, Writing Intensive and other academically challenging departmental courses. Students on academic probation continued or academic suspension will be required to participate in academic enhancement activities provided by CFS GAs in the CoEP Student Advisement and Support Center throughout the academic semester. At the beginning of the semester, students will review their course syllabi with Advisement Center GAs and create a plan of action to achieve course goals. Students will check-in with their Advisement Center mentors prior to the drop date to examine current course performance. Finally, the departmental assessment director will also be providing detailed information about the overall assessment results and plans at the first faculty meeting which will include an overview

of the departmental assessment plan, faculty assessment responsibilities regarding action plans, data collection and reporting requirements and the value of continuous improvement initiatives within the department.

ENGLISH BA
Closing the Loop/Action Plan Tracking

The English department completed a number of action plans during the 2014-2015 or earlier. The department has established permanent committees for the undergraduate BA, the Coast programs, and the undergraduate licensure programs that review assessment reports and make recommendations to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee as needed. The department's Executive Committee, whose members chair the area committees, reviews all assessment reports annually. The English BA program had hoped to maintain success for all outcomes, but the 2015-2016 data while showing some slight improvements does show weakness in research skills and a slight decline in writing skills (though meeting target) in Hattiesburg, and the Coast BA program failed to meet the target for research. An action plan will be developed to address these unmet research target. Previous action plans to address writing and argument skills in ENG 340 saw results, especially for the Coast English BA but need constant reinforcement.

NURSING BSN
Closing the Loop/Action Plan Tracking

The redesigned BSN curriculum was completely implementation in Spring 2015 semester. A new testing and remediation company (Kaplan) has proven effective for content testing, remediation, and providing a free NCLEX-RN licensure exam review. There are mastery content exams for all nursing courses where previously some courses lacked specific tests. Many of the content integrated student test scores increased to target level. Some of the course testing scores to continue to monitor are: Fundamentals, Pathophysiology, Pharmacology, Health Assessment, Acute, Pharmacology, Comprehensive Med/Surg, Community Health, and Research. Faculty meet with students not passing at mid-term to discuss grades and advise students to drop if not passing.

Faculty are working individually with all students on remediation activities and a written study plan regardless of students meeting the benchmarks. Faculty are providing study sessions and independent study courses to assist students in mastering the content areas. Early on in the semester, any student not passing more than one class in a semester are counseled to drop one course so to not risk failure in all nursing courses. In an effort to increase student success, the NCLEX-RN question trainer and remediation materials were started at the beginning of the senior semester. All students who have a previous failure are strongly encouraged to drop so they will not risk failing a second nursing course and becoming ineligible to progress. Strategies to increase Employer and Alumni Survey responses involve the program directors and faculty contacting individual companies and graduates and hold a Clinical Partnership/Alumni reception to also strengthen partnerships in the community.

NURSING BSN
Technology Use

A. How is the program using technology to enhance student learning? Computer technology use and competency are required in all nursing courses and an integral part of the nursing profession. Students are required to use laptops in and out of the classroom in a variety of ways (research, preparing essays, patient care plans, learning activities, and test-taking exercises). Other types of technology are utilized in the nursing courses in a variety of ways to enhance student learning, assist in meeting the course objectives, and prepare the graduate for practice. In nursing practice, students must be able to collect information and analyze data as well as document and order procedures, tests, supplies, etc. in caring for the patient. Students are trained in the classroom and clinical settings by using various computerized technology from electrical monitors to low and high-fidelity simulators.
B. What evidence documents that technology is appropriate for meeting the objectives of the program? Students are evaluated in the classroom and clinical setting on their ability to use technology through course assignment grading and clinical evaluation tools. Some of the technology used are online testing, documenting care electronically, and providing nursing care through IV virtual care, medication dispense systems, vital sign monitors, and patient simulators.
C. How does the program/department ensure student and faculty access to technology and to the training, use, and applications of technology? Faculty are responsible for attending training on technology equipment in the College of Nursing and in the clinical practice settings. Faculty and students attend clinical orientation at local health care settings to learn about the newest technology. Students have skill and simulation days assigned where faculty and/or peers work on the training, use, and application of the various technology

SPEECH AND HEARING SCIENCES (DEAF EDUCATION) BA
Technology Use

Examples of technology being used to enhance student learning
The Graduate program in Deaf Education uses several aspects of technology to enhance student learning and special knowledge and applications of technology required in the field of education of the deaf. Technology is used to make EOI course delivery more efficient as the graduate academic program is delivered off-campus and some courses are taught in a hybrid manner in a combination of SKYPE and face-to-face delivery. We have BlackBoard-supported courses and so students can access information when it is convenient for them. Skype is used by some USM faculty, by adjunct faculty in another state and by used guest lecturers, including international speakers (e.g., New Zealand). Each student is provided with a flash drive to keep all class notes, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, readings and assignments. Courses are also supported by commercially available educational DVDs and online sources for curricula and information. An outstanding resource is the HOPE online workshop series[i].

Examples of technology being used to meet program objectives/outcomes
Graduate students demonstrate competencies in using technology in online research, website reviews, preparation of electronic materials for parents, and PowerPoint presentations for case studies and assignments. They submit reflections and assignments electronically and major assignments have been moved to an electronic format. As well, graduate students develop their technology competencies across

the curriculum and in their practice they learn to utilize technology to support learning and teaching of young children.

Examples of providing access to and training in the use of technology

Videotaping of teaching, self-reflection and analysis and feedback sessions with faculty enhance the student learning experience and addresses key program goals. Students are required to routinely video their engagement and instruction in three areas: family-based auditory verbal sessions, home visiting sessions and pre-school classrooms. In addition, students may video parent-child interaction for analysis of learning of a child with hearing loss or group interaction of children in a classroom. To support this activity, a variety of equipment purchased with grant funds supports our graduate scholars. Students are each loaned a digital video camera for the year in order to videotape their teaching and auditory verbal sessions. The students are trained how to do video transfer and three Macintosh laptop computers are available for video transfer. As well there is one Dell computer, an Epson projector for classroom use (e.g. PowerPoint Presentations, online and video), a television and a DVD/videotape player available. The laptop computers are available for students to transfer videos onto DVDs for our DVD library of instructional moments. These DVDs are essential for evaluation and self-evaluation. There is a locking filing cabinet for small equipment and DVDs at Magnolia House. The culminating student teaching experience, Advanced Practicum III, is an externship experience and students learn how to send videotapes of teaching to the clinical supervisor for weekly review and feedback

RECOMMENDED READING

General Assessment Resources

Connecting the Dots: Developing Student Learning Outcomes and Outcomes-Based Assessment: 2nd Edition
Ronald S. Carriveau
Stylus Publishing, LLC ©2016

The First-Year Seminar: Designing, Implementing, and Assessing Courses to Support Student Learning and Success: Volume Five
Daniel B. Friedman
University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition ©2012

Introduction to Rubrics: An Assessment Tool to Save Grading Time, Convey Effective Feedback, and Promote Student Learning: 2nd Edition
Dannelle D. Stevens, Antonia J. Levi, and Foreword by Barbara E. Walvoord
Stylus Publishing, LLC ©2013

Real-Time Student Assessment: Meeting the Imperative for Improved Time to Degree, Closing the Opportunity Gap, and Assuring Student Competencies for 21st-Century Needs
Peggy L. Maki and Foreword by George D. Kuh
Stylus Publishing, LLC ©2017

High-Impact ePortfolio Practice: A Catalyst for Student, Faculty, and Institutional Learning
Bret Eynon, Laura M. Gambino, and Foreword by George D. Kuh
Stylus Publishing, LLC ©2017

Assessment Clear and Simple
Barbara E. Walvoord
John Wiley & Sons ©2010

Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide
Linda Suskie
John Wiley & Sons ©2010

Designing Effective Assessment: Principles and Profiles of Good Practice
Trudy W. Banta, Elizabeth A. Jones, Karen E. Black
John Wiley & Sons ©2009

Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers
Thomas A. Angelo & K. Patricia Cross
John Wiley & Sons ©1993

The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach
Judith Grunert O'Brien
John Wiley & Sons ©2008

Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment in College
Barbara E. Walvoord
John Wiley & Sons ©2010

Introduction to Rubrics: An Assessment Tool to Save Grading Time, Convey Effective Feedback and Promote Student Learning
Dannelle D. Stevens
Stylus Publishing ©2005

Discipline-Specific Assessment Resources

Assessment in Engineering Programs: Evolving Best Practices
Edited by William E. Kelly
© AIR

Assessment of Student Learning in College Mathematics: Towards Improved Programs and Courses
Edited by Bernard L. Madison
© AIR

Assessment of Student Learning in Business Schools: Best Practices Each Step of the Way
Edited by Kathryn Martell and Thomas
Calderon
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