



Report of the Faculty Senate Assessment Committee

The committee convened through IAV on November 21, 2014. All members were present.

Having determined that **GBC should be assess both *sections* and *courses***, the committee proceeded to determine manners in which this could be done without generating volumes of additional paperwork.

Concerning Common Outcomes for Individual Courses

The committee discussed whether it was prudent or necessary to have a single set of common outcomes for each course.

Given that statewide Common-Course Numbering requirements already require that “All undergraduate courses in the NSHE must be common-course numbered with equivalent courses offered throughout the System,” and that the threshold for courses being different is at least 20%, all sections of the same course at any given institution are already similar enough to one another that the faculty who teach that course should be able to develop a set of common or “core” outcomes. These outcomes would be the ones that students would find upon completing any section of the same course. Many (most?) departments already have these sets of outcomes. At TMCC and at UNR, course outcomes are published in material online. CSN requires that, “When course learning outcomes are revised or updated, the curriculum process requires the course change be communicated to the College Curriculum Committee. The central repository for all course learning outcomes is the Curriculum Office.” (Self-Study, p. 77)

<http://www.tmcc.edu/media/tmcc/departments/assessment/documents/cars/webcollege/1213/ASMTHIST102-1213.pdf>

http://www.unr.edu/cla/engl/core_writing/course_descriptions/course_descriptions_english_102_114.html

It makes sense to the committee that instructors who teach a particular course – and not the whole department – should be primarily responsible for determining what are the core outcomes for each course. Beyond the core outcomes, individual sections of a course may have additional outcomes that the faculty measure.

Which Courses Must Be Assessed?

VPAA Mike McFarlane has clarified that “every course needs to be assessed every five years.” This includes all courses that carry college credit, including developmental courses, courses taught only by adjuncts, and courses taught only as independent studies. “We can’t exempt any class.”

His statement applies the accreditation requirement that every course undergo assessment at least once during every five-year period. For the full set of governing policies, see this committee’s report from September, 2014.

How Might We Assess All of Our Courses?

Each full-time faculty member’s personal course assessments from fall and spring should be of different classes – unless (s)he only teaches sections of the same course.

Each department maintains an assessment plan, indicating the most recent times when they formally assessed each course. Currently, this information is also available through Brandis’ office.

Ideally, each department creates a plan to rotate the assessment of the courses that are taught only rarely. They would update this plan as often as needed.

Each department also assembles into a single report – once every five years – the assessment reports of individual class sections of courses taught by multiple instructors. The department could assemble the collective report across multiple semesters of observation, so that not everyone would need to create a new assessment of the same course at the same time.

After conducting a five-year review of a part-time faculty member, each department also reports his/her assessments of courses that (s)he alone instructs.

Ideally, part-time faculty should also contribute to the assessment of courses that are also taught by full-time faculty. Each department would come up with a mechanism for including their input.