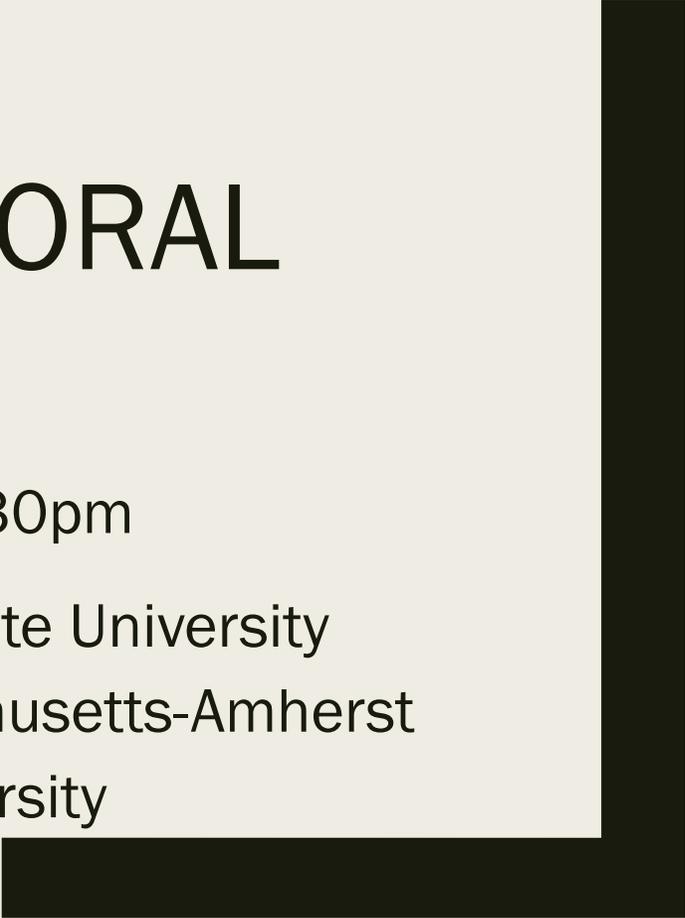# REVIEW OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS:
MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL

CGS Annual Meeting,

Pre-Meeting Workshop,

December 5, 2018 2:00-4:30pm

Ben Caldwell, Missouri Western State University

Barbara Krauthamer, Univ. of Massachusetts-Amherst

Paula McClain, Duke University

Learning outcomes for this session

- Better understanding of assessment tools and techniques

- Identify factors that influence assessment at your institution

- Strategies for developing a culture of assessment

Purpose of Assessment

- What are we trying to do? Why?

- What is a program/unit/course supposed to accomplish?

- What do we want our students to be able to do and/or know?

- How well are we doing what we are trying to do? How do we know?

- How do we use the information to improve or celebrate successes?

- Do the improvements we make contribute to our intended end result?

Purpose of Assessment?

ASSESSMENT is the ongoing process of:

- establishing clear, measurable, expected outcomes that demonstrate institutional effectiveness;

- implementing programs and practices designed to achieve those outcomes;

- systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well programs and practices are working at meeting their expected outcomes; and,

- using the resulting information to understand and improve institutional effectiveness.

EVALUATION is a part of the assessment process

- whether programs are achieving their stated goals;

- the relative strengths and weaknesses of programming strategies; and,

- what changes in program goals and strategies might be appropriate.

Differences between Assessment and Evaluation

ASSESSMENT

- Formative: ongoing to improve learning
- Process-Oriented: how learning is going
- Reflective: internally defined criteria/goals
- Diagnostic: identify areas for improvement
- Flexible: adjust as problems are clarified

EVALUATION

- Summative: final - gauges quality
- Product-Oriented: what's been learned
- Perspective: externally imposed standards
- Conclusive: an overall grade/score
- Fixed: determine success/failure in reaching desired outcome

Creating a Culture of Assessment

The Essential Question - Why do we assess?

- Accreditation - as a measure of Quality
  - *At program level and institutionally*
  - *Determine strengths and weakness*
  - *Identify areas needing improvement or corrective actions*

- By whom and how often?
  - *External - usually periodic by outside evaluators;*
    - quality indicators
  - *Internal – ongoing, by faculty/administrators;*
    - focus on program outcomes and student learning objectives

- Must have → Faculty Buy-in
  - *Must be meaningful – allow use of professional judgement*
  - *Not punitive – to provide ownership*

Missouri Western State University

Ben Caldwell, Graduate Dean

- Regional Public Institution, offering bachelor's and master's degrees

- Established 1915 – St. Joseph Jr. College, St. Joseph, MO
  - *1968 – Missouri Western College*
  - *2005 – Missouri Western State University*

- 2007 – 1st graduate degree offerings –
  - *3 Master's programs, 1 certificate,*
  - *41 students*

- 2018 – 5,600 total students, 235 graduate students
  - *25 programs – 19 master's, 6 certificates*

Student Profile

- 69% in-state

- 19% out-of-state (domestic)

- 11% International

- 65% part-time students

- 85% employed part/full-time

- 64% w/in 60 mile radius

- Majority of students commute or on-line
  - > 5% students live on campus

History of Graduate Programs Assessment at MWSU

- 2011 – External Consultant Review – 1ˢᵗ 5 years of graduate program offerings
  - *Assessment found to be needing greater emphasis*
  - *"immature & needs considerable work"*
  - *Need to identify/specify learning outcomes for each course and for programs*

- Graduate programs submitted annual program reports
  - *Template document of topics to provide narratives*
  - *Mostly data driven (systematic) -enrollments, credit hours, curriculum changes graduations, apps/admits, recruitment activities, resource needs*
  - *Little true assessment or introspective content*

Emphasizing Assessment Institutionally

- Hired first Assessment coordinator in 2015 in preparation for re-accreditation review (2016) - Higher Learning Commission (AQIP – 8 yrs; now Open Pathway – 10 years)

- Attended HLC Assessment workshop February 2016

- Began development of campus wide assessment program

- 2016 – Created University Assessment Committee to direct assessment activities
  - *Began offering "Assessment 101" workshops;*
  - *All academic and operational units were to develop assessment plans*

- 2017 – initial assessment plans reviewed revised

- 2018 – 1st assessment reports submitted

- 2018 – development of rubrics for plans and reports

Assessment Terminology

- **GOALS** – essential function or responsibility of program
  - *Reviewed/updated every 3-5 yrs;*
  - *Must align with mission*
  - *If achieved, indicates program is functioning properly*
- **OUTCOMES OR OBJECTIVES** – end product expected when goal is achieved
  - *Generally reviewed/updated every 2 yrs*
  - *i.e. demonstrate what students have learned (content/concepts), can do (skill or competencies) or value (disposition/perspectives)*

- **MEASURES** – assessment tools or data that informs if an outcome/objective is attained
  - *Tasks or evaluations already embedded in a program*
  - *Direct measures evaluate actual performance – i.e. exam pass rates, writing samples, etc...*
  - *Indirect measures evaluates perceived performance - i.e. employer/internship supervisor survey*
- **TARGETS** – i.e. benchmarks; a set performance level indicating success of a specific outcome
  - *Should be justified via comparison to national/external or institutional trends*

Developing Assessment Plans

ASSESSMENT PLANS

- 2 or more Goals (minimum) for each unit to be assessed each year
  - *Academic units have assessment plans for each degree program*
- 2 or more Outcomes per goal
  - *Academic units should have Student Learning outcomes*
- 2 or more Measures (sources of data)
  - *Heavy reliance on direct measures*
- Justified Targets for measures – should be based on national or institutional trends,
- Assessment schedule for all outcomes and measures – who does what/when

ASSESSMENT REPORTS

- Data with samples sizes for each measure
  - *Academic units should report data for each semester of the assessment year*
- Indicate whether the planned target for each measure was achieved
- "Closing the Loop" – what conclusions have been made and what actions have been/will be taken?

Model Assessment Plan Template

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MWSU

Academic & Co-Curricular Assessment Report

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Assessment Cycle: September 1 – August 31   Academic Year:
Unit/Program Name:
Unit Supervisor: Phone:
Person completing this form: Phone:

Please refer to the Assessment Plan & Report instructions sheet to complete this form. Please expand upon this form as desired.

Goal 1.

Outcome 1:

    Measure 1a: _____

        Direct or Indirect:

     Target:

     Justification:

Unit/Program Name: MAA in Written Communication

Goal 1.

Promote student involvement in applied learning projects, including internships and work done for external clients.

Outcome 2: All students in the technical communication option will participate in a "real world" applied learning project done for an external client.

Measure 2a:

Submission of documents created for the external client in EPR 620, ETC 520, ETC 524, or other required or elective course. Source of evidence: Documents created for the relevant course.

Direct or Indirect: Direct

Target: 100% of TC students will have completed a project for an external client during their required or elective coursework.

Justification: All TC students are required to take EPR 620, in which they create a grant proposal for a "real world" client. These documents are assessed by the client, by the instructor, and by visitors to the final night of class, in which they are publicly presented. Clients also fill out final evaluations on this experience.

Findings: Five students completed EPR 620 and created a grant proposal for a real world client. Two students received an A on the assignment and three received a B.

Conclusion: THIS MEASURE WAS MET.

SLO 1:Interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary understanding of Marine Science
Students will gain a broad knowledge and conceptual understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of marine science as a basis for proceeding to specialization in an emphasis area.

Related Measures

M 2:Successful completion of Ethics in Research training
Students will learn to conduct research ethically based on earning an RCR certificate.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other
Target:
100% of first-year master's students will demonstrate their knowledge of the ethical conduct of science by earning the RCR certificate, which certifies satisfactory understanding of basic ethics in various, defined aspects of science.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
Stennis - 100% (9/9) first-year master's students in the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 cohort have earned an RCR certificate. One part-time student is due his RCR requirements who was admitted during fall 2013. For future reference, our faculty are developing a face-to-face component of RCR training. 37% (7/19) in the Spring 2014 semester of master's students attended their RCR face-to-face training on 09 April 2014 at Stennis. This training session for spring semester 2014 was entitled Research Misconduct, intended to educate students about avoiding the pitfalls of plagiarism.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

We plan to include a face-to -face component in the next evaluation period and have already made partial progress to this object...

Lessons Learned

- Some programs do only the bare minimum

- Faculty are concerned with being penalized if targets are not met

- Ask units or faculty experienced in regular assessment to assist others with less experience

- Identify examples on your campus of how assessment has led to meaningful changes

- Over-assessing can become an issue and a burden to the unit
  - *Too many objectives or measures are assigned*
  - *Ex. Each course is assessed continuously (every semester)*

- Some units may set unrealistic targets (too high/too low)
  - *Targets sometimes set arbitrarily with little/no justification*

Acknowledgements