



**53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting**  
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## Assessment and Review of Graduate Programs – Master's

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# Context: Graduate Study at Truman State University

- Public Liberal Arts and Sciences University for Missouri - only public highly selective
- Predominantly undergraduate
  - 5% graduate students*
- Master's programs:
  - Accountancy
  - Communication Disorders
  - Counseling
  - Education
  - Biology
  - English
  - Leadership
  - Music

# Context: Assessment at Truman State University

## MATURE ASSESSMENT CULTURE

- 1970'S:  
Nationally-normed senior exam in the major  
VALUE-ADDED: freshman-sophomore tests
- 1980'S:  
Sophomore Writing Experience (SWE)  
G. T. Mitau Award for Innovation and Change-AASCU  
Change in Mission to Statewide LAS  
Senior Portfolio Assessment (SP)
- 1990'S:  
Interview Project for juniors (IP)

***Faculty Participation: 40-50 IP, 50-70 SWE, 50 SP***

# Context: Assessment at Truman State University

**Components of Truman's Assessment Program.** To learn more about an instrument, please view the Assessment Almanac.

| Instrument                                   | Who Takes It?                  | Developed Internally (I) or Externally (E)? | Type?                  | Indirect (I) or Direct (D) Outcomes Measure? |
|--|--------------------------------|---|------------------------|--|
| National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) | Sample of Freshmen and Seniors | E   | Survey                 | I  |
| Student Interview Project                    | Varies                         | I   | Interview              | I  |
| Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)         | Seniors                        | E   | Nationally Normed Exam | D  |
| Senior Tests in the Major                    | Seniors                        | E   | Nationally Normed Exam | D  |
| Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ)       | Seniors                        | I   | Survey                 | I  |
| Capstone Experiences                         | Seniors                        | I   | Performance Assessment | D  |
| Portfolio Project                            | Seniors                        | I   | Performance Assessment | D  |
| Alumni Survey                                | Alumni                         | I   | Survey                 | I  |
| Employer Survey                              | Employers of Alumni            | I   | Survey                 | I  |
| HERI Faculty Survey                          | Faculty and Administrators     | E   | Survey                 | I  |
| Staff Survey                                 | Staff                          | I   | Survey                 | I  |



# ... in Graduate Programs?

HLC Accreditation challenge =  
an OPPORTUNITY!

COMMON FRAMEWORK

Graduate Council

Assessment Specialist

Focus on Learner-centered Assessment

To Be Used with 5-year Program  
Reviews



# Common Framework Parameters

- Provide as much information as possible (actual template)
- Allow for the use of pre-existing materials
- Break it up in steps
- Programs reported on each step sharing best practices
- Flexibility to accommodate variations across programs



# Common Framework Template

- Student learning outcomes aligned with institutional and disciplinary objectives
  - Mission: University, Graduate Studies, School, Department
  - Program
    - Objectives
    - Learning Outcomes
    - Assessment for each Outcome
    - Use of Assessment Results

# Defining Outcomes

- Focused on students
- Using action verbs
- *Master of Accountancy*
  - “*Graduates will be able to work effectively in teams to achieve common goals by organizing, coordinating and performing tasks and promoting effective communication.*”





# Defining Outcomes

What is the evidence for this outcome?

- ... assists in organizing team activities*
- ... completes own share of responsibilities*
- ... contributes to problem solving*
- ... creates collaborative atmosphere by communicating effectively*
- ... assists in conflict resolution*



# Assessment Techniques

- Meaningful, manageable, preponderance of direct evidence
- *Team projects in several courses*
- *Faculty developed rubrics for Teamwork Skills*
- *Students evaluate team members using rubric and faculty summarize*
- *Faculty discuss compiled results*

# Looking back...

- Faculty owned
  - Good leadership in Graduate Council
- Institutional Support
  - Assessment Specialist: workshops and training
  - Scholarship of Assessment Grants
- Collaborative effort across programs
  - Common framework
  - Same timeline
  - Shared working sessions



# Results

## Two Scholarship of Assessment Grants:

- **Accounting**  
Development of Team Skills Assessment Rubric
- **Communication Disorders**  
Authentic Assessment—an Alternative to the Comprehensive Exam



# Communication Disorders

## AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

- Before:
  - Thesis Option
  - Non-Thesis Option with Comprehensive Exam
- After:
  - Thesis and Non-thesis Options
  - All do CLINICAL PROCESS COMMENTARIES  
(sequence of case management projects)

*Impetus from Assessment Plan and  
Implementation through Assessment Grant*

# Communication Disorders

- Comprehensive Exam
  - Good preparation for Praxis
  - 25-30% of students Partial Pass; 3-5% Fail
  - No opportunity for remediation
  - Limited assessment of skills vs. knowledge
  - No information for curricular revision
  - Gate keeper
- Clinical Process Commentaries
  - Comprehensive Assessment *Program*
  - Aligned with ASHA *Knowledge and Skills Acquisition*
  - Aligned with the university and the program mission, objectives and outcomes
  - Formative and summative evaluation
  - Emphasized relationship between academic and clinical curricula

# Clinical Process Commentaries

Second semester (CPC1) and third semester (CPC2)

| CPC1  | CPC2   |
|---|--|
| Second Semester   | Third Semester                                     |
| 15 minute oral presentation                               | Oral presentation with extensive Q&A               |
| Present to faculty and peers                              | Present to faculty                                 |
| Setting goals for growth as clinician                     | Self-assessment of progress on CPC1 goals          |
| Self-assessment of presentation and peers self-reflection | Self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses        |
| Faculty Feedback  | Faculty evaluation of presentation and final paper |



# Clinical Process Commentaries

Key Course Assignments with self-assessment component for graduate portfolio

Students...

- Doing as well on PRAXIS
- Doing as well in internships
- Same percentage doing thesis option

Positive feedback from ASHA





# Assessment in Professional vs. Non-professional Programs

- Professional skills are well-defined
  - Professional expectations are standard
  - Intellectual/cognitive skills manifest in clear behavioral characteristics
- Accreditation
  - Programs are used to its demands
  - Well-defined expectations
  - Program survival depends on it



# English

- *Collaborative nature of Assessment Plans Development*
- *Impetus from 5-year Program Review*

## Direct Measure of SLOs

- Rubric-based assessment of term papers from three courses

ENG 516G – Studies in Literary Genres...

ENG 622G – British/Commonwealth Studies

ENG 655G – Graduate Seminar

# English

Rubric Developed by Faculty

- Three categories
  - Displays knowledge of literary or cultural theory
  - Displays knowledge of previous scholarship in the area of study
  - Demonstrates command of academic discourse conventions
- 4-point scale
  - *Inadequate*
  - *Proficient (low and high)*
  - *Excellent*



# English

- Proficiency levels less than desired  
→ more intentional preparation in each course
- Achievement level uneven across courses  
→ examine best practices, identify best types of assignments
- Alignment of Course Outcomes with Student Learning Outcomes in Syllabi
- Continuous direct assessment (between program reviews)

# Accounting

- Higher Learning Commission
  - Open Pathways Program
  - Assessment Academy (“*Quality Initiative*”)  
Critical Thinking, Leadership, Wellness
- Missouri Performance Funding
  - Five Performance Indicators
  - One is Institution Specific: Critical Thinking
- University Funding for Pilot Projects
  - Accounting



# Leveraging External Forces

- External Accreditation
- Five-year Program Reviews
- University-wide Initiatives
  - Grants/funding
    - Scholarship of Assessment
    - Pathways Project
  - Visibility of Graduate Programs