

Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

The essence of education is a teacher and a student. In the end, that is all that matters. It is between the faculty members and students that true education occurs – in the classroom, in the laboratories, and in personal interaction. The faculty member inspires, prepares students for their careers, and solidifies the commitment to lifelong learning. The rest – student services, residence halls, athletics, co-curricular activities, etc. – can all add value to be sure, but they are not essential ingredients. At alumni events across the country and around the world, therefore, it is not surprising that alumni ask not about administrators and buildings and teams, but rather about the individual professors who changed their lives at Missouri State.

Missouri State University values its academic programs and its faculty and demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs through a variety of structures at the department, college, and institutional level.

4.A.1 The institution maintains a practice of regular program review.

Missouri State University has a long history of program review mandated by the state of Missouri. After the last site visit in 2005 the program review process was redesigned and strengthened during the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning. The first cycle of program review was completed after seven years and then the process was assessed. A few minor changes were made and we are now in the second cycle of the new process. The purpose

of program/unit review at Missouri State is to allow the members of a department – its faculty and administrators – to continuously gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of their academic programs. By systematically reviewing mission, goals, priorities, activities and outcomes, the desired result is continuous improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, research, and public service.

The program review process is comprised of three integrated components: 1) strategic planning, 2) annual reviews, and 3) periodic extensive self-study and (external) reviews. The strategic plan allows the program/unit to develop a long-range view (5-7 years) of its mission, priorities and objectives. It represents a realistic view of the program/unit's aspirations as well as a specific plan for how it intends to achieve those aspirations. The annual reviews allow the programs/units to note their accomplishments and, in the process, assess their progress in achieving their goals and objectives. The periodic (external) review asks the programs/units to conduct in-depth self-analyses which are then reviewed by external consultants. As a result of these periodic reviews, the programs/units determine how their strategic plans should be revised to ensure that they respond to the resulting recommendations and, thus, ensure that quality improvements continue.

Examples of the process includes reports from geography, geology and planning; history; political science; communications; kinesiology; and childhood and family development.

4.A.2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

Missouri State recognizes several credit by examination programs and grants credit for certain military experiences, dual credit programs, and college courses taken at other colleges. The University provides course equivalency guides to document how Missouri State classes compare with selected institutions. Missouri State's transfer credit policy outlines accreditation standards, procedures for determining course equivalencies, information about transfer of grades, and dual credit courses. College credit earned through credit by exam programs may count toward degree requirements and allow students to take advanced courses earlier. The University recognizes the following programs:

- Advanced placement exams
- College level exam program
- International baccalaureate
- Military education and experience
- Departmental exams
- Dual credit programs

As a selective admission institution, Missouri State University seeks to admit students with demonstrated potential for academic success. Missouri State evaluates credit in a variety of ways. For example, if students have potential for success not clearly evident, policies outline supplemental application, summer session admission, and other appropriate exceptions for the students to be admitted.

4.A.3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Equivalencies have been developed and are provided for the colleges and universities from which most Missouri State University students receive transfer credit. Missouri State has a transfer credit policy that describes how the institution awards transfer credit for courses taken at accredited colleges and universities. These equivalency lists often include courses that are no longer offered at the institution. Missouri State's transfer credit policies follow the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE) guidelines on transfer and articulation.

4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Each of the six academic colleges has a College Council whose primary purpose is to act upon curricular matters that are referred to it by departments within the college. Each College Council is empowered to approve a departmental proposal, reject and return a proposal to the originating department, or amend and approve the proposal.

Course prerequisites, rigor of courses, and expectations for student learning are set by departments. Curriculum committees in departments review proposals and, based on a faculty vote, proposals are then moved forward to the College Council, then the Faculty Senate.

For professional education courses, the Educator Preparation Provider (formerly known as the Professional Education Committee or PEU) is the representative body to the Faculty Senate that governs the professional education curriculum. Professional education programs are offered in each of the six academic colleges. The PEU was established to encompass all professional education certification programs across the various colleges.

Departments with graduate programs initiate curricular changes. The Graduate Council

Curriculum Screening Committee is responsible for screening and reviewing all graduate level (500 and above) curricular proposals and making a recommendation regarding their disposition to the Graduate Council. The Graduate Curriculum Screening Committee requires that all programs affected by a particular graduate level curricular action be appropriately consulted. In addition to the appointed members of the Graduate Council, the Graduate Curriculum Screening Committee includes ex officio members who represent Meyer Library, Records and Registration, and the Professional Education Committee. Additionally, there are department curriculum screening committees.

From 2011 to 2012, the General Education Review Task Force met to develop and propose a new General Education Program and student learning outcomes. In March 2012, a curriculum structure was proposed to Faculty Senate and approved in October 2012. The new General Education Program was implemented in fall 2014.

Qualifications for on-campus faculty are addressed more fully in Criterion 3.

- **Dual Credit** – To ensure consistency, department heads approve instructors for dual credit classes. The instructors meet the same guidelines for adjunct instructor on campus (a master’s degree or higher, or approved with 18 hours in the discipline, working toward a master’s degree or working toward a Master of Teaching degree). Course syllabi are approved by the department to ensure that the materials are equivalent to content being taught on the Springfield campus. Dual credit programs follow MDHE guidelines. If permission is required as a course prerequisite, that permission must be granted by the department before the class can be added. Some programs with high enrollments of dual credit students have hired full-time staff to visit dual credit instructors on-site. One example is the English Department. The dual credit staff works with the Director of Composition to review syllabi, support instructors by answering questions, observe classes, and provide professional development and materials. Minimally, a faculty member is assigned to be in communication with dual credit instructors. Institutionally, a dual credit coordinator is in communication with all partner schools. The Dual Credit Office has a conference each fall at which instructors are invited to meet with a department representative and learn from guest speakers. The instructors then have a departmental meeting with faculty in the disciplines. The Dual Credit Office visits classrooms and explains to the students what is expected, the guidelines, and requirements for Missouri State University. Dual credit liaisons within departments provide resources and support by phone or email and sometimes by site visits.
- **Learning Resources for Faculty** – All Missouri State faculty have access to a number of resources to assist in their professional development.
 - Technology Training Centers – Computer Services maintains two state-of-the-art

Technology Training Centers which are available to faculty, staff and students: in Cheek Hall 100 and Meyer Library 205. The Technology Training Centers are used to provide various computer related training to groups across the University. University and affiliated departments can reserve the Technology Training Centers for one of the following approved uses: faculty, staff, or student technical training, open lab hours, technology presentations, and technology webinars.

- Digital Professor Academy – The Digital Professor Academy is offered by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning to support faculty who are developing online courses. The faculty development deals with enhancing online collaboration and student engagement, as well as developing assessment plans for online courses.
- **Learning Resources for Students** – Missouri State provides a number of resources for all students to access to succeed in their academic careers.
 - Libraries – In addition to books, journals, databases and other research materials, the Missouri State Libraries have the following facilities for students.
 - Group study rooms – 11 small study rooms, 10 large study rooms, and 8 graduate and faculty study rooms
 - A variety of tables and carrels for group activity and individual study
 - Computers for research and writing
 - Media viewing and listening stations
 - Photocopiers and copying services
 - Building-wide wireless network access
 - Access Technology Center – The Access Technology Center at Missouri State is committed to serve as a resource for faculty, staff and students with disabilities, in addition to those working with individuals with disabilities. The Center strives to provide equal access and opportunity to those with disabilities throughout all the academic programs and social activities Missouri State offers. Through training and assessment of individual needs, conversion of textbooks and academic materials into accessible formats, and providing specialized equipment and software, the Access Technology Center is able to contribute to the mission of universal design.
 - Bear CLAW (Center for Learning and Writing) – This interactive space in Meyer Library unites the resources and expertise of the faculty, library personnel, computer and information technology, the Writing Center, and subject-area tutoring in an environment that fosters informal, collaborative work and social interaction. Business course tutors, mathematics tutors, and science tutors are available to students.
 - Learning Diagnostic Clinic – The Learning Diagnostic Clinic provides services and

support with care and concern to every student who qualifies. To quality, students must have one or more learning disabilities or otherwise be in need of assistance to access and participate in the academics available.

4.A.5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs and appropriate to its educational process.

Thirty-one of Missouri State's academic departments pursue specialized accreditation. It is the policy of the University to attain accreditation for all programs where accreditation is offered. Academic programs having an accreditation review process with similar goals as the Missouri State program review are given the opportunity to utilize the accreditation process as its periodic review. Programs may use the accreditation cycle with approval from the Provost and respective Deans. In addition to the college, department and specific program, information concerning the accrediting or certifying body, year of first accreditation, dates of past and future site visits, and links to evaluation reports may all be found on the University's website.

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and AmeriCorps).

Missouri State tracks its graduates at the institution level using the Graduate Tracking System, which was developed by the University's Career Center. This system allows graduates, faculty and staff a secure, streamlined Web-based application to enter immediate plans following graduation (employment, admission to professional school or admission to graduate school). From this data, customizable reports then may be generated and imported into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. College and university reports are reviewed annually. Discussions about the system have been important to the Deans during academic leadership meetings, and each college is piloting ways to collect the data more efficiently.

For example, the Athletic Training does an excellent job of tracking graduation. The program director does an exit interview; students fill out a short survey over the program which includes questions about future plans; and the department maintains a Facebook page with all seniors receiving a "friend request." The department has an alumni page on its website and hosts an alumni reception at the national professional meeting each year at which time individual alumni information is updated.

At the college level, the College of Natural and Applied Sciences utilizes the department and administrative assistance to review students' names within programs to identify graduate plans.

The University also tracks student involvement in high impact educational experiences since these often have a significant impact on student success. Missouri State defines high impact educational experiences to include: student/faculty research, service learning, internships, practica, student teaching, focused field experience, and Study Away trips. Data is collected annually to determine total student participation in these activities. In 2011 and 2012 nearly 50 percent of all undergraduates participated in at least one of these activities.

4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

One element of Missouri State's 2011-16 long-range plan is "enduring commitments to student learning, inclusive excellence, and institutional impact." The purpose is "to develop educated persons." Characteristics of educated persons, as defined by Missouri State, include: cultivating aesthetic tastes; developing critical thinking skills; fostering serious readers who are broadly literate; and preparing inquisitive and contributing citizens in a global society.

Missouri State has had an assessment office and a Director of Assessment for many years. The office went without a director for a couple of years during a transition period (2010-12). In 2012, the current Provost renewed the commitment to ongoing assessment of student learning and hired a director. The director's initial focus has been on disseminating widely information about student learning collected through institutional assessments and to engage the campus community in the Quality Initiative Project (QIP) to assess public affairs learn at the institutional level.

College Deans have the primary responsibility to ensure ongoing assessment of student learning in programs within each college. Other initiatives related to educational quality include the following:

Institutional Surveys

Assessment	Description
The National Survey of Student Engagement	A nationally normed survey of student participation in programs that institutions provide for student learning and personal development.

The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement	Measures beginning student expectations of their engagement in empirically proven effective educational practices.
Graduate Student Survey	A locally developed survey assesses graduates' views of the Graduate College, their degree programs, and their individual development.
University Exit Examination	ETS Proficiency Profile required by all students with 90 or more hours. Students enroll in GEN 499.

The data from all of these surveys are collected by the Office of Assessment and reviewed by the Assessment Council. The results are posted on the website of the Office of Assessment for others to review.

- **The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement** – When the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) was last administered at Missouri State in 2011, only 545 out of an approximate 2,500 students (21.8 percent) completed the online survey. In 2014, roughly 1,991 paper surveys (79.6 percent) were completed from a possible 2,500 students. The Office of Assessment team worked with Director of Student Orientation, Advisement and Registration (SOAR) to promote BCSSE. One essential strategy was switching from digital surveys to paper. This offered incoming students an opportunity to complete it during their SOAR activities, making it more convenient as they registered for their first semester of classes. The data has been reviewed by the SOAR advisory committee, the student success committee and the assessment committee.
- **The National Survey of Student Engagement** – The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was last administered at Missouri State in 2012. In a report prepared for Missouri State, a consultant from the Center for Inquiry, highlighted the importance of this data to the assessment office and assessment council. Data is reviewed annually by the SOAR advisory committee, the student success committee and the assessment committee.

4.B.1. The institution has clear goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Student learning outcomes clearly state the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education. Student learning outcomes for each unit, college, department, student affairs, and general education are available on the Office of Assessment website and on some of the departmental

websites. Each program has an assessment plan and examples are provided.

The Task Force on General Education Revision developed a draft of proposed general learning goals, rationale, and specific learning outcomes for Missouri State students by drawing from the Association of American Colleges and University's (AAC&U) recommended learning goals, as well as those of other institutions in Missouri and across the country. The outcomes were approved through the General Education review process, General Education Student Learning Outcomes were developed, and a new General Education curricular structure was approved in spring 2013 for implementation beginning in the fall of 2014. The Division of Student Affairs also has learning outcomes.

4.B.2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

Missouri State University has assessment plans that it follows. The assessment plans for programs are developed by the faculty in the programs and monitored by the college Dean. The assessment plan for general education is the responsibility of the Committee for General Education and Interdisciplinary Programs (CGEIP). At a University level, the Quality Initiative Program (QIP) assesses student learning related to public affairs in both curricular and co-curricular areas. The Associate Provost Office for Student Development and Public Affairs, the Division for Diversity and Inclusion, and the Division of Student Affairs all have assessment committees, learning outcomes, and cycles for unit review of assessment.

- **Public Affairs** – The Quality Initiative Project (QIP) was focused on assessing Missouri State University's public affairs mission. The plan was to solicit student work from curricular and co-curricular activities and courses on campus, and then to create a rubric to begin to assess students' levels of understanding regarding community engagement, cultural competence, and ethical leadership – the three themes of the public affairs mission. The following methods were used to help inform the campus community about the assessment of public affairs and to encourage participation from a broad range of faculty and staff.
 - Faculty and staff nominated particular courses and faculty who would be interested in participating
 - Student Government Association members shared courses that they felt had an impact on their learning regarding public affairs; letters were sent out to faculty and staff who taught those courses
 - Personalized letters were sent to faculty and staff who expressed interest in public affairs course work, projects, and assessment in the past
 - Campus email announcements were made in the weekly Provost Communique.

- Graduate assistants collected student work from participating faculty and staff, made copies, and returned the originals in a timely manner
- The intent to participate form was revised from a PDF file to an online form

A QIP task force of faculty and staff developed a rubric. To illustrate alignment of the public affairs rubric with other university goals, maps were created to crosswalk goals from general education, public affairs, student affairs, student development and public affairs, and professional education with the rubric attributes.

The QIP process involved a four-day workshop to review student work in May 2013 and again in May 2014. A one-day review session was held in October 2013. From fall 2012 through spring 2014, 4,011 samples of student work were collected. Of that total, 2,240 samples (56 percent of work collected) were reviewed with the public affairs rubric developed by a faculty committee and revised by faculty and staff, and a collaborative assessment protocol. Results of the reviews have been presented to faculty in several events and actions are being proposed for the future.

The rubric for the review session included nine attributes aligned with the themes of the public affairs mission (three attributes per theme). The results of the assessment is provided in the attached QIP report.

Based on conversations started in the review of student work sessions, the Provost Office is funding assessment grants to support a community of practice around the teaching of learning and public affairs. Faculty and staff who participated in a review session have “first right of refusal.”

- **Co-Curricular** – The Division of Student Affairs has established a Planning and Assessment Team that meets monthly to initiate, review and discuss assessment activities occurring within the division. The team is composed of representatives from several Division of Student Affairs departments and also includes a graduate student member from the Master’s in Student Affairs in Higher Education program. The team has identified seven common student learning domains for units involved in promoting student development and student learning: 1) educated persons, 2) communication, 3) leadership development, 4) cultural competence and diversity, 5) social responsibility and citizenship, 6) collaboration and negotiation, and 7) self-awareness and wellness. Additionally, the Planning and Assessment Team this past year led the Division through a collaborative strategic planning process resulting in a revised Division mission, vision, and values and identified five strategic directions to guide divisional efforts in championing student success. One strategic direction is “Furthering Co-Curricular Student Learning” and includes the major objective of “increasing departmental utilization of Student Affairs Learning Domains in assessment activities.” The Planning

and Assessment Team also assists departmental staff in the use of CampusLabs Baseline, an on-line assessment product used throughout the division for assessment of individual programs and activities. Since becoming a CampusLabs member, the Division of Student Affairs has conducted more than 75 assessment projects encompassing needs assessments, satisfaction surveys, and learning outcome measurement.

- **Assessment Plans** – College plans for gathering evidence of student learning might include institution-wide or program-specific approaches that convey how student learning will be assessed, the data collection tools and approaches that will be used, and the timeline for implementation. Two college examples are provided here.
 - College of Education – Each program in the College of Education (COE) has an approved assessment plan, which is limited to eight assessments. Each assessment is linked to assessing one or more of the learning goals/standards of the program. Each assessment is either embedded in a specific course or is a stand-alone assessment. Results of these assessments are stored in the Student Tracking Evaluation and Portfolio System (STEPS), Banner, or the ePortfolio system by faculty teaching in the specific program. Due to changes required by the state department of education, COE is exploring other data collection systems.
 - College of Health and Human Services – The direct measure that the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) uses to determine how well students have acquired learning outcomes are national Board of Certification exam results. Indirect assessment measures used are exit interviews and alumni surveys.

Indirect Evidence

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was given at Missouri State University in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2012, and will be administered in 2015. The survey was under-disseminated in the past and was rarely used to impact decision-making institutionally, at the college level, or the department level. While at one point, the response rate was in the mid-30 percent range, by 2012 the response rate hovered around 17 percent. The institution has renewed its focus on the surveys. In collaboration with new student orientation, the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement was administered to students on-campus in paper form during summer 2014. NSSE will be administered in spring 2015.

Table 4.1

Educational and Personal Growth To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas. <i>(Quite a bit and very much)</i>	MSU 2008	CUMU 2008	MSU 2012	CUMU 2012
11a. Acquiring a broad general education.	82%	84%	76%	80%
11b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills.	73%	73%	69%	73%
11c. Writing clearly and effectively.	74%	77%	68%	77%
11d. Speaking clearly and effectively.	71%	72%	68%	72%
11e. Thinking critically and analytically.	83%	87%	78%	86%
11f. Analyzing quantitative problems.	70%	75%	67%	77%
11g. Using computing and information technology.	80%	80%	73%	79%
11h. Working effectively with others.	76%	78%	71%	77%

4.B.3 The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Specific examples of how programs use evidence of student learning are collected on the assessment webpage and highlighted via the Provost Communique. These “Assessment in Action” examples describe programs’ efforts at reviewing evidence of student learning and working toward continuous improvement. All of this is reported annually in departmental annual reports.

- Media, Journalism, and Film
- Criminology
- Religious Studies
- Agriculture
- Biology
- Psychology

- **College of Business (COB)** – The Undergraduate Core Course Assessment Initiative began a decade ago as a comprehensive process of assessment and evaluation of the undergraduate curriculum within the College. This initiative was in response to the lack of remedial direction perceived in MFAT, as a guide to curriculum development, and to meet demands for accountability from accreditation bodies and other University constituents. After considerable refinement, the final set of assessment objectives and outcomes were developed.
- **Communication Department in the College of Arts and Letters** – The assessment of student learning outcomes requires all graduating seniors to submit four samples of work meeting four unique student learning outcomes (SLOs). There are three departmental SLOs and each major has its own SLOs. The committee reviews a sample of these artifacts each summer. Using a rubric for each SLO, the reviewers score the reflection students provide on how they met each learning outcome. These results are analyzed and recommendations for improvements are forwarded to the faculty for consideration.

Program Review Action Plans

The program review process includes an action plan and progress reports on that plan. Departments review the external report and develop an action plan to address the findings of that report. This action plan addresses the most salient points made by the external evaluator. The department may agree with the findings and propose appropriate adjustments. In some cases, the department may disagree with certain aspects of the report. Action plans are approved by the Deans and then by the Provost. In the year following the development of an action plan in the program review cycle, a progress report is made relative to each goal of the action plan. This progress report has the Deans' input and approval, and is then provided to the Provost. Changes in the program and new goals for program outcomes result from the sequence of steps from the self-study through the action plans. The action plan progress report identifies program changes that have been made and those that are still to be implemented. These changes go hand in hand with revising the strategic plan for the educational unit and setting new or revised program goals and intended program outcomes.

Major Field Tests

At this time, 10 programs use the Major Field Test from ETS.

As part of its AACSB accreditation, the College of Business tests each student.

Political Science

- All students majoring in Political Science are required to pass the Major Field Test
- Use results of the exam for program assessment and development rather than individual student evaluation
- Include summary of results in program review

- Examine reliability of MFT by comparing it with major GPA
- MFT scores are included in annual reports sent to the Dean

Mathematics

- Uses MFT as a measure of progress
- Outlines the responsible personnel for overseeing the administration of the MFT
- Administers the MFT in the required capstone course (MFT 497)
- All majors required to take it
- Average of graduating students' MFAT scores wasn't as good as the department would have liked

Licensure Exams

Licensure exams are reported in part as part of our Key Performance Indicators. Data on exams not reported on the KPI are available from the office of institutional research.

Annual College Reports

Colleges provide annual reports to the Provost, analyze data and discuss assessment to improve student learning. Departmental annual reviews submitted to the Deans have action plans related to the improvement of student learning. In 2013, colleges and units reported on and updated current assessment cycles, highlighted specific departments that modeled assessment to improve student learning, and indicated one area of improvement with which each college was addressing.

Assessing Institutional Learning Related to the Mission

Missouri State's QIP focused on assessing student learning related to the institution's statewide public affairs mission. A public affairs rubric was developed to assess student learning. A first draft was developed by a committee of faculty and staff. Subsequent drafts were developed and used with student work and revised using AAC&U LEAP Rubrics for Civic Knowledge and Engagement, Ethical Reasoning, and Intercultural Knowledge and Competence. From fall 2012 through summer 2014, 4,011 samples of student work were collected from curricular and co-curricular classes, projects, and experiences. Of that total, 2,240 samples (56 percent) of the student work collected from 72 faculty and staff were reviewed by approximately 54 faculty, staff, and students in three workshops – summer 2013, fall 2013 and summer 2014. The QIP Review Workshop was a positive professional development experience that helped faculty and staff from across disciplines to further their understanding of teaching and learning in public affairs. Based on the evidence, faculty, staff, and students developed a table of contents for a Public Affairs Toolkit as a resource for those who teach public affairs projects, upper level public affairs graduation requirements, and GEP 101. The main principle that guides this toolkit is that teachers will share with their colleagues ideas about how to connect public affairs to their discipline. This will be a way to community of faculty teaching resources based on

public affairs work across disciplines.

The Provost Office is also funding assessment grants for the purpose of developing a faculty-driven community of practice around the teaching of public affairs.

Indirect Evidence Used

Past NSSE and BCSSE scores were brought back to light in fall 2013. The Director of Assessment invited consultants from the Center for Inquiry at Wabash College to come to Missouri State. Over a three-day period, the assessment consultants visited with the President, Provost, Associate Provosts, Deans, department heads, general education coordinators, and students. The visit resulted in this report. The memo resulted in the following updates/changes and attempts to close any communications gaps:

- The revision of the assessment website using the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment
- The showcase of departmental assessment of student learning in the “Assessment in Action” short journalistic pieces on the website
- The realization that in the sub-scale of the NSSE called “Deep Approaches to Learning” students were not measuring up to the benchmark institutions as expected

This information was disseminated through “NSSE Coffee Breaks” hosted by the Office of Assessment, at departmental meetings, with Deans, with Enrollment Management, and with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL). Based on this information, the FCTL used “Deep Approaches to Learning” as a theme for the 2014 Fall Showcase.

The Faculty Senate’s Council for General Education (CGEIP) reviews general education courses and assessment plans. The Assessment Council, a Provost-appointed council, oversees University assessment and provides feedback regarding institutional assessment. Departments utilize Major Field Tests (MFAT) and discipline-specific tests (ACAT, Praxis) and internally-developed tests to assess student learning. Pass rates on licensure exams and exit exams administered to students are part of the University’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This information is used by departments to review curriculum and student learning. Departments have student learning outcomes that are assessed and reported annually.

4.B.4. The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

A Director of Assessment was hired in January 2012, thus sustaining a long tradition of continuous improvement through program review. In 2012 the following goals were adopted for the Office of Assessment: gather, make sense of, and summarize what practitioners at Missouri State are learning about student learning; assess and advance student learning on the University's public affairs mission; serve as a campus resource for practitioners from across the University who are engaging in assessment; and seek out partnerships with curricular and co-curricular groups. Assessment plans are created and monitored by assessment committees in departments, colleges, units, and divisions made up of faculty and staff. The Quality Initiative Project, a university-wide assessment project, collected student work from curricular and co-curricular courses and programs. In May 2013, October 2013, and May 2014, 49 faculty and staff participated in review sessions, and 72 faculty and staff submitted work. Follow-up meetings occurred with faculty and staff to discuss next steps. The Assessment Council consists of representatives from each college. This Provost-appointed council reviews institutional assessment and provides feedback to the Provost and the university community. Programs and departments have assessment committees, as do some colleges. Each General Education course has identified a general education assessment coordinator during the revision process.

4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to education improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

The University chose "retention" as one of the Key Performance Indicators to monitor; it is also a goal in the long-range plan. Various University constituents monitor retention and persistence closely as part of the long-range plan, including the Board of Governors, Administrative Council, Academic Leadership Council and Faculty Senate. Retention and persistence are also in the annual University goals for the past several years.

The University has specific programs that are considered best practices, including: first year seminar, a learning center (Bear CLAW – Center for Learning and Writing), supplemental instruction, discipline-specific tutoring, a TRiO program, curricular learning communities, living and learning communities, and undergraduate research. A Student Success Committee met for two years to develop a plan for improvement that resulted in a faculty Provost Fellow to focus on retention and a pilot program to focus on first-generation students in GEP 101, Missouri State's first-year course. The goal is to increase retention by engaging students in high impact experiences.

4.C.1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

Every five years, Missouri State University re-evaluates and establishes a set of goals for the entire University. The goals in the long-range plan are based on research from benchmark and aspirational institutions, and are true to the mission, purpose and traditions of Missouri State. The goals proposed for the plan are widely discussed on campus and finally agreed upon by large groups of faculty, staff, and administrators. The final step is formal approval by the Board of Governors. The completed 2011-16 long-range plan, *Fulfilling Our Promise*, is posted on the University website and includes specific goals and tactics for student retention, persistence, and program completion that are both ambitious and attainable.

4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

Through the use of Banner enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, the Missouri State Office of Institutional Research collects information on student retention, persistence, and program completion. This information is reported to the campus and the public through the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) page on the University website and through the University's College Portrait, which is part of the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). The Office of Assessment, Office of Student Development and Public Affairs, Enrollment Management Committee, and Student Success Committee are some of the areas that closely monitor and analyze data on these student success factors.

4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Missouri State University has used both data and literature on student retention, persistence, and program completion to inform many decisions surrounding student success. The First Year Programs (FYP) Office is dedicated to programming that will help new incoming students develop necessary skills and learn about campus resources that will aid in their success at the University. The Student Orientation, Advisement and Registration (SOAR) is a comprehensive two-day orientation program for new first-year students and their families. It helps students make a successful transition from high school to life at Missouri State University. SOAR helps students:

- Learn essential information about the University and campus life
- Discuss future goals with an academic advisor
- Register for first semester of classes
- Meet faculty and staff and get to know fellow students

To address students' academic needs, the University created a tutoring and writing center five years ago: the Bear CLAW (Center for Learning and Writing). Due to the success of this center, additional academic support is now being provided through a supplemental instruction

program called PASS (Peer Assisted Study Session). The University also has increased the number of living-learning communities in residence halls to help students living on campus make connections between their learning experiences in and out of the classroom and strengthen their commitment to the University. Finally, a Student Success Committee has been reviewing campus data and peer-reviewed literature on retention, persistence, and program completion for the past two years. This committee is now making recommendations regarding new software, campus programs, and other resources that are widely known to help students succeed.

The Student Success Committee, composed of faculty and staff, reviews best practices and makes recommendations related to retention. One focus in fall 2014 was to offer pilot sections of our first-year course (GEP 101: Foundations) with students majoring in the same college. The Provost Fellow for Student Success, hired in 2013, leads this group inquiry into the experience of first generation students in a first-year course organized by major and college.

Retention is an important focus. Based on retention data and University goals, a variety of programs have been revised or started based on this information. For example:

- Regular reviews of data from GEP 101 courses are used to improve the course curriculum. Beginning in 2012, instructors began following with their students into the next semester with the goal of establishing relationships and become better mentors. In 2014, special sections of GEP 101 were developed in which students were enrolled by college major and by first generation status
- First generation students were invited to join the REAL Life program, a default prevention, grant funded program to help educate first generation students on managing the cost and minimizing debt
- Living-learning communities were started within the past 10 years. A review of these communities is being done in 2014 to determine goals for the future
- Data is available to departments so advisors can follow up with currently enrolled students who have not enrolled at the end of the registration cycle. The Registrar has been more aggressive through an initiative called “Proactive Registration.” The goal is to push information to department heads to provide information to currently-enrolled students and provide similar lists to Academic Outreach, Veterans’ Services, Diversity and Inclusion, and International Student Services
- Partners in Education (PIE) is for entering freshman and their parents. They may sign up so parents can receive their students’ mid-term grades during the first year
- Jump Start is a program for students who don’t meet the admission criteria but are admitted during the summer as part of a special program
- Over time, more effective orientations have been implemented for transfer students. Since convincing transfer students to attend orientation sessions is difficult, an online orientation has been developed. The College of Arts and Letters offered an orientation program for

their new transfers in the college. Other colleges have sent email communications to all of their new transfer students. The School of Agriculture has a picnic each fall semester for all new students

- Advisors also are encouraged to contact students at mid-term

4.C.4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

All of the data on retention, persistence, and program completion that is collected at Missouri State University and reported by the Office of Institutional Research follows IPEDS definitions, which include built-in reliability and validity checks.

Summary

Missouri State University has a strong tradition of planning, assessing, and comparing itself to best practices. That philosophy is evident in the four long-range plans since 1995, the increasing emphasis on assessment, and the 31 individual program accreditations.

The progress on assessment has been accelerated by the Board of Governors' desire to have expanded data on graduates and the Performance Funding model instituted in 2012 for allocating state appropriations. While more can and will be done to assess student learning and student success after graduation, Missouri State has made much progress in recent years.

The key to the ultimate success is student support. Again, Missouri State has made a commitment of resources to provide the support necessary for students to succeed. The University is constantly adapting its services to the changing nature of the student body and, therefore, changing requirements for students to achieve their goals.

In all areas of planning, assessment and accreditations, the University collects and uses effectively a variety of data collected and analyzed by the Office of Institutional Research.

Accomplishments

1. Enhanced a program review with external evaluations, a clearer calendar, and developed a webpage to store all reports. The program review process was assessed after the first cycle with minor changes recommended for the second cycle which began in 2013.
2. Completed a review of the General Education program and implemented a new curricular structure with learning outcomes and assessment plans looking specifically at the University's statewide mission of public affairs.
3. The Office of Assessment was reinvented to focus on institutional assessment, benefiting from outside consultants, the National Institute for Learning best practices, and a Quality Initiative Project (QIP) that assesses the public affairs mission.
4. Increased the emphasis on, and the tools available to measure, the success of Missouri State graduates and alumni.

Areas of concern

1. Missouri State University continues to refine its customized approach to assessment. Departments and programs write their own assessment plans, collect and analyze data and finally make changes in the curriculum based on the data. There is a need to develop a map and calendar of college, unit, division, and institutional assessment for accountability and improvement of student learning. This will connect assessment occurring at

departments and the university that can lead to improvement in student learning.

2. Continue to have conversations centered on post-graduate success, bringing together institutional data from the Office of Institutional Research and Grad Track data from Career Services evaluate post-graduate success.

Evidence File

4A

- ✓ Program Review Evidence Files (3)
- ✓ Program Review Examples - GGP, Communications, Political Science, kinesiology; and childhood and family development
- ✓ Transfer Credit Policies evidence file
- ✓ Link to transfer credit policies in policy manual
- ✓ MDHE guidelines for transfer and articulation
- ✓ MSU-OTC Transfer evidence file
- ✓ MSU-St. Charles Transfer evidence file
- ✓ MSU-WP Transfer evidence file
- ✓ MSU-Crowder Transfer evidence file
- ✓ Articulation agreements with community colleges
- ✓ From the policy manual – need to link to Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws and Faculty Handbook.
- ✓ Agendas and minutes of the following: College councils, PEC, CGEIP, Graduate Council and Faculty Senate
- ✓ Forms and Timelines for Curricular Change
- ✓ MDHE Dual Credit Policy
- ✓ MDHE 2011 Missouri Dual Credit Report
- ✓ Dual Credit – MSU 2013 assessment and survey.
- ✓ List of dual credit enrollments and instructors
- ✓ Dual credit – Need two more evidence files – one with CV’s of dual credit instructors and the other with sample syllabi.
- ✓ Evidence file – Accreditations – Missouri State University along with 4-5 examples – Especially AACSB (college of business), CAEP (college of education), planning or HRA, two health programs.
- ✓ Digital Professor Academy
- ✓ Technology Training Centers
- ✓ MSU libraries
- ✓ Access Technology Center
- ✓ Bear Claw
- ✓ Graduate tracking system
- ✓ High impact educational experiences – KPI #8

4B

- ✓ Student success report
- ✓ Results of all assessments
- ✓ Need minutes of meetings (or agendas) of Assessment Council
- ✓ 4B1 – All SLO’s from all programs

- ✓ 4B1 – All General education SLO's (imbedded in general education evidence file already prepared)
- ✓ 4B1 – need SLO's from student affairs
- ✓ 4B2 – Evidence file with sample assessment plans
- ✓ 4B2 – Office of assessment evidence file
- ✓ Assessment Council evidence file
- ✓ QIP file (this will have all data, all processes and procedures, etc)
- ✓ Division of Student Affairs assessment plan, learning outcomes, results of assessment and action plans.
- ✓ Licensure exams data – all of it
- ✓ Center for Inquiry at Wabash College report and evidence of visit
- ✓ Need annual reports from each of the following listed in the report
 - Media, Journalism, and Film
 - Criminology
 - Religious Studies
 - Agriculture
 - Biology
 - Psychology
- ✓

4C

- ✓ KPI
- ✓ Long range plan
- ✓ TRIO program
- ✓ Student Success Committee – meeting agendas and notes
- ✓ We need to capture the resources available in Bear Intelligence.
- ✓ Enrollment Management committee – meeting agendas and notes
- ✓ First Year Programs evidence file
- ✓ LLC highlights and accomplishments
- ✓ LLC evidence
- ✓ Partners in Education
- ✓ Jump Start
- ✓ Transfer student task force meeting agendas and notes