AY 2013/14 Annual Assessment Report

Academic Affairs
Assessment Office

May 14, 2015
Institutional Report

A. Institutional Summary

Columbia College’s transition towards a culture of data-driven instructional changes to improve student learning sprinted forward during the 2013/2014 Academic Year (AY 2013/2014). There were some stumbles as faculty experimented with new assessment ideas, but each stumble provided insight as faculty regained their balance and tried different ideas.

During the 2012/2013 Academic Year, the Academic Assessment Committee developed goals for the 2013/2014 Academic Year which were to:

• complete program level outcome statements and rubrics for each program’s assessment plan,
• complete course level outcome statements and rubrics for at least one course in each program,
• create a three or five year rotation for course level assessment to allow enough time for full evaluation of results, and
• ensure programs complete an assessment cycle in all three learning venues at Columbia College, focusing on improving student learning based on data collected.

Program level outcome statements and rubrics now exist for every program at Columbia College, although their quality varies. All courses have specific learning outcome statements on master syllabi, and each program has at least one course with specified learning outcomes aligned to assessment opportunities and rubrics. A future goal will be to support faculty members in improving the quality and alignment of their outcome statements, rubrics, and assessment opportunities.

B. Institutional Review of Departmental Assessment

1. What were the institution’s major assessment accomplishments this year?

• An assessment office was created in November 11, 2013. A tenure-track faculty member was given two course releases a semester to become the assessment coordinator and she began work on January 12, 2014. A full-time assessment specialist was hired to assist the coordinator.
• A General Education Task Force was implemented to make a proposal for changes to the General Education requirements. This task force was reframed to develop General Education Outcome Statements so that we can begin collecting data on student achievement of those outcomes. When we have data, we can make decisions about changing General Education based on evidence. This Task Force will continue work during the 2014/2015 Academic Year.
• Departments completed program outcome statements, program-level assessment plans, curriculum mapping, and have created assessment tools such as pre- and post-tests, writing prompts with associated rubrics, and rubrics for assessing portfolios. These
assessments were piloted on the day campus during spring 2014, with the intention to export them to the other two venues after revisions based on the pilot results.

• As advised by HLC, an Assessment Workshop was led by Jennifer Fager, Ph.D, Director of Assessment at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, on June 16-20, 2014, covering rubrics, outcome writing, evidence of student learning, and assessment plans.

2. How did these accomplishments impact the institutional assessment goals?

These accomplishments have moved us closer to realizing a culture of continuous improvement of student learning. This process will take several years to perfect, but we now have a good beginning.

3. How did these accomplishments impact the program assessment goals?

The goals were refined to better align with institutional learning goals.

4. How were these accomplishments related to last year's assessment?

Reliance on standardized assessments was diminished and assessment opportunities were customized to show student learning according to specific Columbia College learning goals.

5. How will these accomplishments relate to next year's assessment?

Next year the piloted assessments will be given in all of the college’s learning venues to determine whether students working towards the same goals are actually provided equivalent opportunities to learn.

6. Reflecting upon program accomplishments, how would the institution improve the assessment process?

Communication among the learning venues regarding assessment needs to improve to increase the value of assessment in improving student learning. Assessment needs to become a seamless part of the learning experience, and students should be encouraged to be self-assessors around their own learning so that they can make it more efficient.

7. What is working well and should not change?

Full-time faculty members are collaborating around assessment more than ever before. We should continue to encourage this collaborate so that we can depend on the synergy it creates around student learning.

8. What was the institution's major assessment hurdle this year?

Communication about assessment procedures needs to become more clear and dependable. Our learning management system, D2L, did not have capabilities to efficiently download assessment data that can be combined with data about students, so for example: we could not follow a
student from pre- to post-tests, we could not identify the venue in which a prerequisite was taken, and we could not determine the point in their program when the student was taking the course.

9. **How did this hurdle impact the department assessment goals?**

Faculty became discouraged when they were asked to complete procedures in different ways at different times, and sometimes they were less able to cooperate with assessment office requests. Also, the learning management system problems resulted in long delays between students being assessed and faculty receiving results. This made it difficult for faculty to interpret the results and implement changes to improve student learning.

10. **How did this hurdle impact the program assessment goals?**

The answer in 9 applies here.

11. **How was this hurdle related to last year's assessment?**

The software issues occurred last year, but we improve the procedures each time we have an assessment cycle.

12. **How will this hurdle be addressed in next year's assessment?**

D2L Insights has been purchased to improve software issues.

13. **Reflecting upon the hurdles you faced, how would you improve your assessment process?**

We need to create standard procedures for disseminating information to all venues. When faculty members at any of the venues do not cooperate, we should hold them accountable.

14. **What would you change to provide the most impact on assessment in the institution? Explain and be as specific as you can be.**

I would get assessment results to faculty more quickly so that faculty can close the assessment loop while the memories of the assessment are fresh. Also, I plan to encourage faculty to use and document formative assessment more often in their classes, and to involve students fully in these assessments and further self-assessments of their own learning.
Departmental Reports

Due to the size of the 13/14 Academic Year Annual Assessment Reports, they are not included in the body of this document. They can be found individually on the Columbia College Academic Assessment website under “Department Reports.”
AY 2013/2014 Annual Assessment Summary

As indicated in the institutional and departmental summary reports, we have made progress in implementing outcomes based assessment for improvement of student learning. However we have long strides to make before we have a robust assessment cycle in place throughout the entire college. We have plans for changes that will bring us closer to this goal, and we are optimistic that our perseverance will yield a malleable process that will enrich our students greatly as their learning improves.