Academic Program Assessment
Summary Report for 2008-2009 Academic Year

Presented to Waded Cruzado, Executive Vice Pres. & Provost
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by Shelly Stovall, Chair OAC1 & Interim Asst. to the Provost

cc: Carmen Santana-Melgoza, Director Institutional Research, Planning & Outcomes Assessment

Overview of 2008-09 Process

During the 2008-09 academic year, the Outcomes Assessment Committee 1 (OAC1) for Academic Program Assessment implemented radical changes in the reporting process for academic units. Changes were intended to address long-term areas of concern: 1) Un-timeliness of reporting and feedback, 2) inconsequential feedback, 3) inconsistent feedback, and 4) perception of assessment as a mandated reporting process with no value to programs, faculty and students.

A Four-Phase process was initiated wherein programs submitted 1) Mission, goals, objectives and at least 1 direct student learning outcome, 2) Assessment plan, 3) Implementation & results of assessment, and 4) Final edited report. Deadlines were distributed for each phase. Departments received feedback in the form of rubrics following each Phase Report.

In the course of the year, some deadlines were adjusted, and Phase 4 became optional.

Upon submission of Phase 3 reports, each program was contacted by the OAC1 chair to schedule a meeting during which feedback on the Phase 3 report would be given in person. To date, only 5 departments have not yet met with the OAC1 chair.

Efforts of the OAC1 in support of Academic Program Assessment:

- Development of Phase 1, 2 & 3 reporting templates for departments
- Development of rubrics distributed to departments and used to evaluate Phase Reports
- Norming sessions for committee members to increase consistency of report reviews
- Development & distribution of a booklet "Assessment Revisited: A Guide to De-Cluttering the Assessment Process", to assist departments in their Phase 1 process
- Distribution of quality examples from NMSU departments of mission, goals, objectives & direct learning outcomes
- Development & distribution of appropriate examples of Phase 2 reports
- Chair was available to meet with heads, assessment committees and faculty at large as requested to assist in assessment processes

Effectiveness of Implemented Changes

The OAC1 changes addressed the identified areas of concern in the following ways:

1) Un-timeliness of reporting and feedback - In the past, departments were reporting on and receiving feedback from their assessment anywhere from 9-12 months after the assessment had taken place and were already collecting data on the next year before feedback from the prior year was received. In 2008-09, most departments implemented their assessment in May (or late April), and submitted reports mid-June or later. With the exception of the departments that have not yet met with the OAC1 chair, all received feedback in July or August.

2) Inconsequential feedback - In the past, feedback was of little or no value to departments partly due to the reporting and feedback schedule, and partly because the amount and quality of feedback was very limited due to the feedback instrument. Use of feedback was perceivably used to create an 'acceptable report' rather than to develop an assessment process that provided evidence worthy of impacting student learning. Multiple phase reporting, use of rubrics and person-to-person meetings provided continuous, developmental and applicable feedback.

3) Inconsistent feedback - Because of rotating membership on the OAC1 and because of the varied levels of expertise in assessment of committee members, evaluation of departments' assessment endeavors were frequently inconsistent. First, norming sessions were held to provide greater consistency among committee members in their feedback to departments. Second, the OAC1 chair reviewed all committee members' feedback to departments, and was granted liberty by the committee to make adjustments to feedback reports as seen fit. Because the final deadline for Phase 3

reports was moved back to June 15, Phase 3 feedback was done solely by the committee chair, and was done in-person through meetings with the department head, person completing the Phase 3 report, and/or multiple faculty members.

4) Perception of assessment as a mandated reporting process with no value to programs, faculty and students - Faculty and department head attitudes toward assessment have historically been less than ideal. Because of the past approach to assessment, most have seen it as a reporting process - not something that is of value for improving and sustaining quality academic programs. By increasing interaction, providing opportunities to discuss concerns/opposition to assessment, meeting one-on-one or in small groups, maintaining an open line of communication and accountability, it appears attitudes are beginning to shift. Department heads and faculty are beginning to see that assessment is a tool that can be used to help them, their students, and their department use evidence to continually monitor and improve learning experiences for their students. The continuous exchange of ideas and information also increased awareness and perception of assessment as something that is valued by the institution, and that should be taken seriously.

Changes in Reporting for the 2009-10 Academic Year
An updated reporting time-line was developed by the OAC1, and approved by the Assoc. Deans for Academics at the ADAC meeting on Aug. 10, 2009. Reporting for the 2009-10 academic year will be in two Phases. Additionally, programs will choose a Fall Implementation or Spring Implementation option that will allow for flexibility in implementing and reporting assessment findings.

Expressions of Appreciation
OAC1 members should be commended for their willingness and efforts to make this transition effective. A special thanks should also go to staff support personnel Valerie Stuart for her commitment to the committee and the institution, and her undying patience in collecting information and providing resources in this process.

RESULTS
Fifty-one academic departments were identified to participate in academic program assessment. Of these, one was undergoing extensive curriculum review (Wildlife Science), and three were in the process of being restructured (Sociology, Anthropology and Women's Studies). Women's Studies did complete all three phases of the assessment process. Of the remaining 48 departments, 45 (94%) participated in at least one phase, and 43 (90%) participated in all three phases, including implementation & reporting of findings. One of the departments that did not participate in the Phase 3 indicated they would begin implementation in fall of 09, as spring of 08 was not conducive with course offerings.

Forty-two (42) of forty-four (44) undergraduate departments participated in at least one phase of program assessment. Of the 42 participants, 2 did not report that they had implemented their assessment plan.

Total Number of Undergraduate Departments	Participation in at least one phase	Participation in Phase 3 (implementation)
44	42/95%	40/91%

Thirty-four (34) of forty (40) departments with graduate programs participated in at least one phase of program assessment. Of the 34 participants, 3 did not report that they had implemented their assessment plan.

Total Number of Graduate Departments	Participation in at least one phase	Participation in Phase 3 (implementation)
40	34/85%	31/78%

Of the 84 total graduate and undergraduate departments 76 participated in at least one phase of program assessment, and 71 implemented their assessment plan in the 2008-09 academic year.

Total Number of Departments	Participation in at least one phase	Participation in Phase 3 (implementation)
84	76/90%	71/85%

NMSU-Las Cruces met its goal of having at least 75% of its academic departments involved in the assessment of student learning.

Results by College

College	Number of Departments		Participation in at least one phase		Participation in Phase 3 (Implementation)	
	Graduate	Undergrad	Graduate	Undergrad	Graduate	Undergrad
Ag & H E*	7	8	6/86%	7/88%	6/86%	7/88%
A & S	18	21	13/72%**	20/95%	11/61%**	19/90%
Business	4	5	4/100%	5/100%	3/60%	4/80%
Education	4	3	4/100%	3/100%	4/100%	3/100%
Engineering	5	6	4/80%	5/83%	4/80%	5/83%
H & SS	3	3	3/100%	3/100%	3/100%	3/100%

*Wildlife Science involved in extensive curriculum review.
**There may have been confusion between what OAC1 requested (both undergraduate & graduate assessment), and what the College of A&S requested (undergraduate assessment).

Additional Concerns Addressed by the OAC1
The OAC1 continues to identify and support the need of the institution to have a Director of Assessment or like position on the NMSU-Las Cruces campus. They officially supported the request, in writing, made by the UOAC to the Interim Provost Moulton in the spring of 2009 for such a position.