

## Faculty Program Assessment Guidelines - Palo Alto College

### Dear Faculty Member,

Program Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes is an important component of Palo Alto College's system to continuously improve. Every degree, certificate, and academic program should plan to assess its student learning outcomes, conduct the assessment, and report on the findings and action plans every year. The reports from the previous year should inform the plans for the upcoming year for each student learning outcome.

### Why are we doing this?

The Palo Alto College Assessment Mission Statement and Assessment Values Statements on our Outcomes Assessment website <http://www.alamo.edu/pac/assessment/development/default.aspx> affirm that faculty assess student learning with the goal of improving student learning by aligning expectations, using a common language to communicate those expectations to our students, and collaborating across disciplines to help each other improve student learning.

Additionally, we assess student learning of important skills to demonstrate to ourselves, our community, and our accrediting agencies (Southern Association Colleges and Schools (SACS) that students have attained proficiency for those skills we expect them to acquire as a graduate.

SACSCOC 3.3.1.1 states that, "The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on an analysis of the results in educational programs to include student learning outcomes.

The SACS re-accreditation in particular requires that we continuously assess the student learning outcomes that faculty have specified for degrees and certificates for those students close to graduation and then use the results to improve student learning. If we are not accredited by SACS, then we will not receive federal funds for student aid among other things from the Department of Education. Many of our PAC students rely on scholarship funds to access an education.

### Guidelines for Creating Program Assessment Plans

#### Use the Program Assessment Plan Report

**Step 1.** Review the Student Learning Outcome statements for the program from the previous year's report for possible revision. Here are some questions that program area faculty may want to consider for each of the Student Learning Outcome statements:

- Does each program learning outcome describe an essential skill or behavior expected of program graduates?

- Are each of the program learning outcomes measurable?
- Should the learning outcome be clarified or refined?

**Step 2.** Review the assessment measures for each outcome from the previous year's report for possible revision. Here are some questions that program area faculty may want to consider for each of the assessment measures:

- Are the measures a direct measure of student learning?
- Does the measure provide the student an opportunity to adequately demonstrate the skill or behavior?
- Where necessary, are scoring guides in place for the measures?

Determine who will develop any new measures and the accompanying scoring rubrics.  
Who will compile the assessment results for your program?

**Step 3.** Review the achievement targets for each outcome.

- Review the achievement targets for each outcome?
- Are the achievement targets still appropriate?

### **Guidelines for Reviewing Assessment Results**

**Step 1.** Evaluate the previous cycle's action plans. Summarize the implementation of the previous cycle's action plan, identify challenges that emerged, and explain to what extent was the action plan successful.

**Step 2.** Record the results of your current assessment method on the program assessment report.

**Step 3.** Identify whether or not the target was met.

**Step 4.** Based on these results and your previous action plan create a new action plan for improvement of student learning. The action plan may address several program learning outcomes.

#### **Note:**

Faculty may consider the following questions when writing actions plans or evaluating the previous cycle's action plans:

- Is there a different use of technology that might better support student learning?
- Should we implement additional professional development/training for the faculty?
- Could improvements to advising support better learning outcomes?
- Should we revise course pre-requisites?
- Should we revise course sequence?
- Should we revise course content?
- Should we revise scoring guides (rubrics or test blue prints)?
- Should we make use of peer study groups or required tutoring?
- Are there other high impact practices-learning communities, problem-based learning, or other active learning strategies that would improve student learning outcomes?
- Should we make use of Canvas or other on-line resources?

Email the completed report to Joseph Coppola at [jcoppola2@alamo.edu](mailto:jcoppola2@alamo.edu) by 9/30/14.

#### **Additional Resources to Complete Program Assessment Reports**

Washtenaw Community College <http://www4.wccnet.edu/departments/curriculum/progdata.php?levelone=courseassessment>

Mesalands Community College <http://www.mesalands.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Student-Learning-Assessment-Program-Reports-2012-2013.pdf>

Lane Community College article from Trudy Bers <http://www.lanecc.edu/sites/default/files/assessment/proglevelassessmentbybers.pdf>

IDEA PAPER [http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/IDEA\\_Paper\\_45.pdf](http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/IDEA_Paper_45.pdf)