

California State University, Stanislaus
Office of Assessment of Student Learning
Strategic Plan 1999-2004

Goal 1: Promote Culture of Assessment

For assessment to be successful at a learning-centered university, it must be integrated into all aspects of university life. This means that it should be a basic part of the activities of all offices on campus. However, it is the primary responsibility of the Office of Assessment of Student Learning to imbue the academic community with a sense of the immutable link between instruction, assessment, and student learning. This requires a shift in the way the culture views assessment from one in which assessment stands alone, to a view in which assessment is embedded and indivisible from instruction and learning. The Office of Assessment of Student Learning can promote a culture of assessment through faculty development activities and by working with departments and programs.

I. Faculty Development

Student learning is significantly linked to faculty instruction. Consequently, it is necessary to imbue faculty with a sense of the importance of assessment in the learning process. Furthermore, in order to implement assessment on a broad scale, it is necessary to provide faculty with the knowledge and skills to include assessment in courses and programs. Thus, this becomes fundamentally a faculty development approach to assessment. Thus, much of the budget for assessment goes for faculty development. Faculty development efforts in assessment are focused in four main areas: (1) sending faculty to off-campus conferences and workshops, (2) providing on-campus assessment development activities, (3) developing an annual assessment day, and (4) encouraging faculty to present at conferences.

A. Send Faculty Teams to Assessment Conferences

There is good evidence that faculty participation in assessment conferences and workshops produces attitudinal changes and increased implementation of assessment in courses and programs. The proposed budget anticipates sending more faculty to attend conferences that seem to have the most impact on changing the culture. Potential venues include CSU sponsored, regional, and national conferences and workshops. In the future, the specific workshops and related activities will change. Below are listed plans for 1999-2000.

1. Disciplinary

In spring 1999, the Chancellor's Office sponsored a number of discipline-based meetings in Arts, Letters, and Sciences. The results of these discussions are posted on a website. To date, no comparable set of meetings have been scheduled, but we should encourage faculty to attend if new ones are offered.

2. AAHE

This is the largest assessment conference. Last year, two CSU Stanislaus faculty members attended and were very enthusiastic about the conference.

Presentations were varied, of high quality, and practical. This year we should send a minimum of five faculty, representing the three schools, to the AAHE Assessment Conference in Charlotte, NC in June 2000. At an estimated \$1,500 each, this totals \$7,500.

3. CSU Fullerton Assessment Conference

This is the biggest assessment conference on the West Coast. It attracts participants from across the nation. It is significantly less expensive than AAHE, so it is good "bang for the buck." We should send five faculty for a total of \$2,500.

4. Chancellor's Office General Education Workshop

The Chancellor's Office is offering a workshop for assessment in general education programs at LAX in January. Our General Education Subcommittee is building assessment into its program. Consulting with other faculty and experts will be very valuable at this stage. We should send five faculty (probably the General Education Subcommittee) for a total of \$2,500.

5. Summer Workshop

These workshops take a team-building approach to assessment. They involve the use of an outside consultant working with faculty teams for a week. In the last two years teams have been from Communications Studies, English, Psychology, Finance, Teacher Education, Sociology/Criminal Justice, and Liberal Studies. Teams produced individual course assessment plans as well as department/program plans. Teams were given \$1,000 each to implement assessment. The proposal for Summer 2000 is to include three additional departments. Funding has been obtained from the Chancellor's Office for the outside consultant. Campus cost will be \$8,000.

6. Follow-Up Retreat

This will be a new event scheduled for Winter Term. Faculty who participated in past Summer Workshops and Institutes will be invited to an all day event to discuss progress made toward implementing the assessment plans developed during the workshops. Refreshments will be provided. Total cost will be \$250.

7. Summer Institute

Faculty from last summer's AAHE Institute developed a proposal for the Honor's Program with a significant assessment component. The proposal is in the process of being revised and adopted. This was a good use of funds as it involved a broad spectrum of faculty and has resulted in a high visibility proposal. No costs for this activity are included in the budget.

B. Develop On-Campus Activities

1. New Faculty Orientation

This is an opportunity to introduce beginning faculty to basic ideas of assessment and its relation to a learning-centered university. This was begun in Fall 1999 and will continue.

2. Instructional Institute Day

An introduction to assessment was given in 1999. This is an excellent opportunity to reach interested faculty and will be continued.

3. Outside Consultants

Barbara Walvoord will be on campus March 15, 2000 for a day to focus on classroom-based assessment. This is sponsored by the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Coordination of similar activities should be pursued.

4. Major Assessment Event

A major assessment event is tentatively scheduled for February 14th and 15th, 2000. This event will bring a nationally recognized consultant on campus to highlight the importance of assessment in a learning-centered university. It will be aimed at a campus-wide constituency, introducing the importance of formative assessment to those outside Academic Affairs as well as to those directly involved in student learning. Both large and small sessions will be scheduled over the two days.

5. Assessment Day 2001

The Office of Assessment of Student Learning will sponsor a poster session and discussion of assessment in 2001. This might be viewed as a type of Instructional Institute Day devoted to assessment. It is hoped that by Winter 2001 there will be sufficient assessment activity underway so that faculty and programs with assessment plans will be invited to display their plans for the rest of the campus community. Workshops on how to do assessment will be held.

C. Encourage Faculty Presentation at Assessment Conferences

Faculty will be encouraged to document their approaches to assessment and to submit proposals to local, regional, and national conferences and publications. It is expected that this will produce higher quality assessments and also publicize assessment activities at CSU Stanislaus. A basic part of this will be to inform faculty of the opportunities available and to recognize ongoing activities that merit widespread dissemination.

Goal 2: Develop Department/Program Assessment

Reacting, in part, to the upcoming WASC accreditation review, the Academic Senate passed a Resolution on the Evaluation of Instructional Programs (14/AS/92) requiring departmental plans for evaluating their academic programs by December 7, 1993. Thirty-six programs submitted some type of plan by the end of Spring 1994. These plans were accepted, reviewed by a committee chaired by Dr. Stephen Schonenthaler, commented upon, and filed away. In October 1997, they were again summarized by Jeanne Elliott to be used in preparation for the WASC review. Unfortunately, the original plans were formulated at a time when knowledge of assessment and of its link to learning centeredness was not as well understood on campus. Therefore, nearly all of the plans fall short of adequately specifying goals, objectives, and appropriate methods for assessing these. A major undertaking of this office will be to work with programs and departments to review, revise, and implement effective assessment plans.

I. Reviewing Existing Assessment Plans

Because plans were drafted without much knowledge of best practices in assessment and because of turnover in department chairs and general faculty, it is unlikely that existing plans are relevant to our goal of learning-centeredness. The plans will be reviewed by the Coordinator of Assessment and then sent to departments for their review. The goal will be to inventory programs regarding the validity of plans and the extent to which they have been implemented.

II. Attend Department Meetings

Along with the review will be a general invitation to meet with departments to discuss assessment, in general, and their existing plan, in particular. This will be done to contribute to the cultural change in assessment as well as to promote the development of more relevant and effective plans.

III. Develop New Plans

A. Work with Designated Programs

The Coordinator will work with individual departments and programs on a case-by-case basis to revise existing plans or develop new plans. Those in progress or specifically planned for 1999-2001 include:

1. Distance Learning

2. Liberal Studies and Teacher Education

A model for assessment of the blended Liberal Studies/Teacher Education program was developed by the assessment team that attended the Wharton Executive Education Program. This model was

presented to the programs involved, and consultation was provided to Liberal Studies on implementation. During 1999-2000 the Coordinator will follow-up with these programs to finalize an assessment plan.

3. Honors

The Coordinator is consulting with the Honors Task Force to ensure that assessment is an integral part of the curriculum. Goals and objectives have been delineated and are currently under review by the Coordinator.

4. General Education

Goals, objectives, and assessment measures are being developed for the program and approved courses. An overall plan is being developed.

5. Graduate Studies

Consultation on assessing graduate learning will begin in 1999-2000.

6. Programs Completing Summer Workshops (see "Follow-Up Retreat")

B. Work with Program Review Committee

Outcomes regarding departmental goals and objectives are already mandated in the program review process. The Coordinator will work with the Academic Program Review subcommittee to develop effective methods to include meaningful assessment data in the 5-year review. Once these methods are identified, the Coordinator will work with programs in the cycle.

C. Work with Programs Requesting Assistance

From time to time departments request consultation on assessment. The Coordinator schedules meetings to determine their needs and provide support for departmental assessment activities. In Fall 1999, the following programs have requested assistance from the Assessment Office:

1. History
2. Social Work (MSW)
3. Blended Program

Goal 3: Develop Resources for Departmental/Program Planning and Implementation of Assessment

I. Develop and Administer Assessment Grants Program

\$20,000 is proposed for a new program designed to encourage the development and implementation of assessment plans. This will fund a minimum of five plans at a maximum of \$4,000 each. At least three of the grants will be given for the development of programmatic or departmental assessment plans and their implementation. Up to \$4,000 may be available for course-based assessment proposals. Funding will support development of the plan and seed money for implementation (see call for proposals for more details).

Goal 4: Secure Funds for Implementation of Existing Plans

Once plans have been designed, there will be need for funds to continue the assessment process. The budget proposes \$17,100 for this purpose during 1999-2000. This includes \$6,000 for implementation of the School of Business Administration plan and sets aside up to \$3,700 for each of three additional programs. This is funding that potentially could be used by programs which already have developed plans during the summer workshops, institutes, or part of their program revision processes, and are ready to implement them. Funding would not be for

planning, but for the cost of actually running the assessment program. It is anticipated that this amount will continue to grow as more programs implement and continue the assessment process. Assessment costs will be ongoing costs and should not be considered only one-time costs.

Requests for implementation funds will be made to the Coordinator who will make a recommendation for funding to the Assessment Advisory Committee and UEPC. The Coordinator may consult with Departments of Programs to determine ways that assessment plans can be made more effective and cost effective.

The current proposal from the School of Business Administration is under review by the Assessment Advisory Committee. The proposal totals \$12,000. It is hoped that the proposal can be pared down to \$6,000 without compromising the integrity of assessment. Otherwise, a phase-in of the approved program will be needed to spread the cost over a period of time.

Goal 5: Develop Organizational Structures

Currently, there is no clear structure for coordinating the many assessment-related activities on campus. In the past two years, two new offices have been established with responsibilities for different, yet overlapping areas of assessment. A Coordinator for Assessment of Student Learning was appointed as a quarter-time position under the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. An Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Assessment was hired to reorganize the Institutional Research office. A priority must be to clearly define the responsibilities of each office. Furthermore, it is recommended that a university-wide committee be established. The membership of this committee would be from various constituencies generating and using assessment data. The purpose of this committee would recommend to the Provost and/or President policies and procedures for assessment across the campus.

I. Develop Office for Assessment of Student Learning

An Office for Assessment of Student Learning was founded in Spring 1999. It is located in L-145G, adjacent to the Faculty Development Center. This has provided an area where faculty can meet with the Coordinator and where assessment materials and files can be kept. In 1999-2000 two important enhancements will take place.

A. Funding for Office of Assessment of Student Learning

<u>Coordinator</u>		
Reassigned Time	6 units x \$1,270.00 =	\$7,620.00
Summer Stipend	8 stipends x \$280.00 =	<u>\$2,240.00</u>
Subtotal		\$9,860.00
<u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Graduate Assistant	\$3,600.00 =	\$3,600.00
O&E	\$1,400.00 =	\$1,400.00
Coordinator Travel	\$1,000.00 =	<u>\$1,000.00</u>
Subtotal		\$6000.00

B. Define Role of Assessment Advisory Committee

The Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC) is an ad hoc subcommittee of UEPC. It consists of five members: the Coordinator for Assessment of Student Learning, UEPC representatives, and representatives from each of the three schools. The charge of the AAC is to make recommendations regarding assessment to UEPC. Further definition of the committee's role will be defined by UEPC and the committee during 1999-2000. A report will be presented to UEPC.

C. Coordinate Academic Assessment with Institutional Assessment

Two separate but overlapping types of assessment occur on campus: assessment of student learning (also referred to as academic assessment), and institutional assessment. The primary role of the former is in enhancing student learning, relevant to the university's commitment to being a learning-centered university. The primary role of the latter is in collecting and interpreting data that can be used in institutional decision making and accountability. These functions intersect at many points. The offices involved can provide important mutual assistance to each other. It is important for them to communicate with each other and with the university constituencies they rely on, and in turn, rely on them. This would include student services, enrollment services, alumni services, as well as academic services. It is proposed that coordination of assessment activities could best be accomplished through a university Assessment Committee.

D. Coordinate Activities with Faculty Development Center

Enhancing instruction through the use and development of individual and departmental/ programmatic assessment strategies is a primary role of the Office of Assessment of Student Learning. This can most effectively be accomplished through faculty development activities. Many of the faculty development activities were described above.

Goal 6: Develop Academic Assessment Plan

In 1997, the Academic Senate of CSU Stanislaus adopted a tentative Academic Assessment Plan. The plan painted assessment with a big brushstroke, but has little in the way of specifics. It will be up to AAC to review the existing outline and replace it with one that reflects a greater sophistication regarding how assessment can be carried out on this campus. The plan will be reviewed in Fall 1999 and work will be done on providing a more detailed and comprehensive working document to be fully in place by Spring 2001. Work on the new Academic Plan will entail the development of a set of principles and procedures that can be agreed upon by the entire academic community.

I. Develop and Adopt Principles

The University needs to develop and adopt the guiding principles of academic assessment for this campus. These principles will largely determine the procedures adopted for the actual assessment of student learning. The Assessment Advisory Committee will review principles from sources including the AAHE, Board of Trustees, local and state-wide academic senate, and other sources on assessment and submit proposals for campus consideration.

II. Develop and Adopt Procedures

The Academic Advisory Committee will draft a set of procedures to govern assessment of student learning at CSU Stanislaus. These procedures will follow from the principles referred to above and should be consistent with the philosophy and culture of the campus. They should contribute to fulfilling the university goal of learning centeredness.

III. Obtain Approval of Principles and Procedures

Principles and Procedures will be drafted by the AAC. Once approved by a vote of the AAC, the documents will be approved by UEPC, Academic Senate, and the Institutional Assessment Committee.

IV. Develop Assessment Management Program

Once principles and procedures are approved, the office will work with the AAC to develop an appropriate method for managing information regarding plans and the data they generate. Questions regarding the amount and kind of data to be shared with a central office will need to be discussed and resolved. The who, what, when, and where questions will be crucial in determining the role and extent of the Office of Assessment of Student Learning involvement.

Goal 7: Develop Outside Sources of Funding

Although assessment of student learning is fundamentally a part of academic programs, sources of outside funding for development of assessment should be sought. These sources include organizations such as FIPSE and AAHE. As in the past, the Chancellor's Office has some funding specifically designated for assessment. These sources should be pursued.

Goal 8: Develop Sources for Communication of Information

It is important to provide the university community with information on assessment of student learning. Two vehicles are listed below:

I. Develop CSU Stanislaus Assessment Website

The Coordinator will develop a website on assessment which is linked to CSU Stanislaus Academic Affairs and the Faculty Center. The website will provide information such as assessment news on campus, announcements of workshops and conferences, discussions on assessment topics, and links to other assessment sites.

II. Develop Assessment Newsletter

Much of the information from the website, such as news and announcements, can be converted to a newsletter format and distributed on campus on a quarterly basis.

Proposed Assessment Budget 1999-2000

Goal 1

I. Faculty Development

A. Assessment Conferences:

2. AAEH (Charlotte, NC) (5 attendees @ \$1,500 each)	\$ 7,500.00
3. GE Assessment (LAX) (5 attendees @ \$500 each)	\$ 2,500.00
4. Fullerton Conference (5 attendees @ \$500 each)	\$ 2,500.00
5. Summer Workshop	\$ 8,000.00
Outside Consultant (Chancellor's Office)	-0-
6. Follow-Up Retreat	\$ 250.00

B. Develop On-Campus Activities

Outside Consultant Costs (no costs noted in proposal)	-0-
Food (no costs noted in proposal)	-0-
Materials (no costs noted in proposal)	-0-

subtotal Goal 1: \$20,750.00

Goal 2

No monies requested

subtotal Goal 2: -0-

Goal 3

I. Develop and Administer Assessment Grants Program

\$20,000.00

subtotal Goal 3: \$20,000.00

Goal 4

Secure Funds for Implementation of Existing Plans

School of Business	\$ 6,000.00
New Proposals (3 programs @ \$3,700 each)	\$11,100.00

subtotal Goal 4: \$17,100.00

Goal 5

I. Develop Office for Assessment of Student Learning

Coordinator

Reassigned Time (6 @ \$1,270 each)	\$ 7,620.00
Summer Stipend (8 @ \$280 each)	\$ 2,240.00

Operating Expenses

Graduate Assistant (1 @ 3,600 each)	\$ 3,600.00
O&E (1 @ \$1,400 each)	\$ 1,400.00
Coordinator Travel (1 @ 1,000 each)	\$ 1,000.00

subtotal Goal 5: \$15,860.00

Goal 6 No monies requested

subtotal Goal 6: -0-

Goal 7 No monies requested

subtotal Goal 7: -0-

Goal 8 No monies requested

subtotal Goal 8: -0-

TOTAL:	\$73,710.00
Budgeted	\$23,842.00
Additional Funds:	\$49,868.00