Response #4

to UW Milwaukee Assessment and Accreditation Material

By Barbara E. Walvoord
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**College of Health Sciences**
For the following programs, I received from Rita Cheng only copies of the web pages that describe the program and student requirements, not assessment. If these departments and programs have no other assessment reports, they need to:

1. State goals for student learning: “when students complete the degree, they will be able to….”
2. Describe the measures they use to determine how well students are meeting the goals
3. Describe how they use that information to improve student learning

**M.S. Health Care Informatics**
Copy of web page “Health Care Informatics”

**Occupational Therapy: M.S.**
Copy of web page “Graduate School Bulletin 2004-2005: Program and Course Descriptions”

**Occupational Therapy: Therapeutic Recreation**
Copy of web page “Academic Programs: Department of Occupational Therapy: Therapeutic Recreation.”

**Kinesiology**
Copy of web pages “Kinesiology: Overview” and “Graduate School Bulletin 2004-2005 Program and Course Descriptions”

“Overview” page contains some useful language that could lead to learning goals statements (“core courses enable students to…”)

**Clinical Laboratory Sciences**
Copy of web page “Graduate School Bulletin 2004-2005 Program and Course Descriptions”

**Health Care Administration**
Copy of web page “Health Care Administration Curriculum”
Communication Sciences and Disorders
Copy of web page “Graduate School Bulletin 2004-2005 Program and Course Descriptions”
College of Health Sciences

Based on:

- Responses to Questions 2&4 on “Accreditation Web Survey for College of Health Sciences”
- Response to Question 2 for Communication Sciences and Disorders, and their pages from the Graduate School Bulletin 2002-2005
- Response to Question 3 for Human Movement Sciences, a copy of a web page “overview for Kinesiology, and Kinesiology pages from the Grad School Bulletin
- For the following departments, I received only the web home pages or Graduate Bulletin pages, which do not give the information needed for an assessment report, so I have not responded to these departments individually:
  - M.S. Health Care Informatics
    - Copy of web page “Health Care Informatics”
  - Occupational Therapy: M.S.
    - Copy of web page “Graduate School Bulletin 2004-2005: Program and Course Descriptions”
  - Occupational Therapy: Therapeutic Recreation
    - Copy of web page “Academic Programs: Department of Occupational Therapy: Therapeutic Recreation.”
  - Clinical Laboratory Sciences
    - Copy of web page “Graduate School Bulletin 2004-2005 Program and Course Descriptions”
  - Health Care Administration
    - Copy of web page “Health Care Administration Curriculum”
Communication Sciences and Disorders

Based on copy of web page “Graduate School Bulletin 2004-2005 Program and Course Descriptions” and response to question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey, sent to me by Rita Cheng, 10/2/04

I did not receive the copy of the learning outcomes which the accreditation web survey response says were sent as an e-mail attachment.

Strengths

- Detailed learning outcomes (I did not see them, but they were evidently sent as an e-mail attachment, and follow requirements of ASHA and DPI, so they’re undoubtedly fine for NCA)
- Each course syllabus lists the learning outcomes that will be covered in that course, and instructors develop rubrics for each exam or assignment (a new procedure this year)
- Eventually, student outcomes on the course-based measures will direct course and curriculum changes
- NTE exam in place, and its results are being used

Suggestions

- Give careful thought to working out HOW the course-based SLO outcomes will be used for department decision-making.
- Do you have, or could you benefit from, a student questionnaire or focus groups to get some feedback about how the program is experienced by the students and what suggestions they have for change?
**Human Movement Sciences**

Based on
- Response to Question 3 of the Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs (Q 3: Describe and comment on the effects of any senior-level assessment tools indicative of accomplishment in the major…”)
- Copy of web page “Kinesiology Overview”
- Copy of Kinesiology pages from Graduate School Bulletin 2004-2005

**Strengths**
- The senior internships provide a fine opportunity for assessment

**Suggestions**
- There is no statement of learning goals except the broad ones implied in the response to Q3.
- How are the internship experiences and the portfolios evaluated and used by the department to assess students’ progress toward achieving the learning goals?
What follows is a summary of the departmental reports. I have also attached this summary to the end of my response to each department in PSOA.

**PSOA in General**

Responses in the PSOA are longer than they need to be, with data that, while impressive, will confuse NCA readers, make them think you are padding the report, or that you do not recognize the distinction between assessments that result in grades or student progress, and assessments that are used for program-level improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, etc. All you need are three headings:

1. **Learning goals.** All reports lack statements of student learning goals; those need to be included.
2. **Measures to determine how well students are meeting the goals:** list and describe each measure that is used at the department or program level, NOT those measures that are only used for grades or for monitoring student progress through the degree. Describe the systematic, ongoing measures that are being used, not the data that result from these measures at any given point in time.
3. **A description of how the data are used by the department or program for improvement, and an example of two of how the department has used data to make changes.**
Film
Based on response to Question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng

Strengths
• A portfolio project is in place, with a faculty meeting to review the portfolios
• Juried film & video festivals, public presentation of student final projects are present in the BFA
• MFA has semestery graduate review committee and portfolio submissions for certain academic awards or teaching assignments, and the department tracks national and international screenings and awards for works by its students

Suggestions
• You need a statement of learning goals. What should students in each track or degree be able to do when they graduate?
• You describe how the department gives feedback to students and tracks student progress, but not how the department uses the data for program-level decisions. For example, when the department meets to review portfolios, does the faculty discuss their strengths and weaknesses as a group, and how changes might be made to improve student learning?
• Your description could be much shorter and to the point. Focus on learning goals, the measures the department uses to assess students’ achievement of the goals, and how those data are used to make improvements. The actual outcomes (awards students have won) are very important to the department, and very impressive, but not called-for in this particular report, in which outsiders want to know your systems for assessing student learning in order to make programmatic changes.

PSOA in General
Responses in the PSOA are longer than they need to be, with data that, while impressive, will confuse NCA readers, make them think you are padding the report, or that you do not recognize the distinction between assessments that result in grades or student progress, and assessments that are used for program-level improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, etc. All you need are three headings:
1. Learning goals. All reports lack statements of student learning goals; those need to be included.
2. Measures to determine how well students are meeting the goals: list and describe each measure that is used at the department or program level, NOT those measures that are only used for grades or for monitoring student progress through the degree. Describe the systematic, ongoing
measures that are being used, not the data that result from these measures at any given point in time.

3. A description of how the data are used by the department or program for improvement, and an example of two of how the department has used data to make changes.
**Music**

Based on response to Question 2 on the Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng.

**Strengths**
- A number of measures are in place

**Suggestions**
- There is no statement of the learning goals: when a student completed the degree (or track within the degree), he or she should be able to……
- It is not clear how the department uses the data, not just for student grades or student progress through the degree, but in the aggregate, for program-level decisions. You state in V.C. that Praxis I and II exam results “will be examined to help determine adjustments in core music courses and…curriculum.” THAT is what needed for all the assessment. HOW do the data from the assessments come before the faculty and how are those data used for program-level change? The NCA will be very focused on that point. Descriptions of data gathered and used only for student grades or student progress will not be enough.

**PSOA in General**
Responses in the PSOA are longer than they need to be, with data that, while impressive, will confuse NCA readers, make them think you are padding the report, or that you do not recognize the distinction between assessments that result in grades or student progress, and assessments that are used for program-level improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, etc. All you need are three headings:

1. Learning goals. All reports lack statements of student learning goals; those need to be included.
2. Measures to determine how well students are meeting the goals: list and describe each measure that is used at the department or program level, NOT those measures that are only used for grades or for monitoring student progress through the degree. Describe the systematic, ongoing measures that are being used, not the data that result from these measures at any given point in time.
3. A description of how the data are used by the department or program for improvement, and an example of two of how the department has used data to make changes.
**Theatre**

Based on answers to Question 2 on Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng.

**Strengths**
- A number of assessment measures are in place, especially for K-12 Theatre Ed
- The department states how it uses the data from the assessment measures, especially in TEP

**Suggestions**
- There are no statements of learning goals. When students finish each program, they should be able to….. You have a start for the BA Theatre Studies. It’s stated as “the program is designed to…, but it implies some learning goals. Extract those, use the “students will be able to…. format, and enhance it.
- The list of assessments employed (organized by course methodology) is impressive, but are all these assessments used for PROGRAM-level deliberation and change? I’d list and describe only those that are used at the program level.
- You need more detail about how data are used. What is the mechanism: who gets the data? What do they do with it? In what format is it presented to committees or to the department as a whole? How does the department reach decisions based on the data? Give some examples of changes that have been made, based on data.
- PTTP has no description of its assessments or how they are used for decision-making, but only a list of the data from one of those assessments—students performance/production activity. You need to say that your assessment methods are student performance/production activity, X, Y, and Z. Then tell how the department evaluates those data in the aggregate, not just for student grades or progress, but for departmental-level changes in curriculum, structure, pedagogy, etc.

**PSOA in General**
Responses in the PSOA are longer than they need to be, with data that, while impressive, will confuse NCA readers, make them think you are padding the report, or that you do not recognize the distinction between assessments that result in grades or student progress, and assessments that are used for program-level improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, etc. All you need are three headings:
1. Learning goals. All reports lack statements of student learning goals; those need to be included.
2. Measures to determine how well students are meeting the goals: list and describe each measure that is used at the department or program level, NOT those measures that are only used for grades or for monitoring
student progress through the degree. Tell the systematic, ongoing measures that are being used, not the data that result from these measures at any given point in time.

3. A description of how the data are used by the department or program for improvement, and an example of two of how the department has used data to make changes.
Dance

Based on response to Question 2 of Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng

Strengths

- A number of measures are in place.
- There is some indication of how the data are used for improvement (at end of paragraphs beginning “Two student” and “Graduate students”)

Suggestions

- There are no statements of learning goals: when they complete program/degree/track X, students will be able to…..”
- The data you present about your successes is impressive, but what is needed here is not that, but rather a balanced report of your assessment STRATEGIES, not the outcomes at a particular point in time. The report needs to answer 3 questions: What are your learning goals? What strategies do you use to assess how well your students are achieving the goals (the list under “Other means of Assessment” is good, but eliminate paragraphs beginning “The UWM Dance Dept is the only;” “Dance is committed to diversity hiring;” “Faculty and student attendance;” “During 2002—03 the Department of Dance was re-established;” “Faculty research grants;” “Donor;” and “A review.” You don’t want to include things that the NCA will not consider assessment of learning, because it looks like you’re trying to pad the report, and/or that you don’t really understand what assessment is, in their terms.

PSOA in General

Responses in the PSOA are longer than they need to be, with data that, while impressive, will confuse NCA readers, make them think you are padding the report, or that you do not recognize the distinction between assessments that result in grades or student progress, and assessments that are used for program-level improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, etc. All you need are three headings:

1. Learning goals. All reports lack statements of student learning goals; those need to be included.
2. Measures to determine how well students are meeting the goals: list and describe each measure that is used at the department or program level, NOT those measures that are only used for grades or for monitoring student progress through the degree. Describe the systematic, ongoing measures that are being used, not the data that result from these measures at any given point in time.
3. A description of how the data are used by the department or program for improvement, and an example of two of how the department has used data to make changes.
**Visual Arts**

Based on response to Question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng.

**Strengths**
- Much good information here; many assessment measures are in place

**Suggestions**
- You need statements of learning goals for each program: When they complete this program, students will be able to….
- Streamline, re-organize, and shorten. You need a list of the assessments that are used for department and program-level decision-making, not merely for student grades or student progress through the degree. So, from the first section, which begins “Visual Art’s assessment tools (undergraduate programs), eliminate #1 and #2. The others are fine, but play down your current emphasis on how they are used for student feedback and progress, and emphasize program-level review of the data. After the list of measures, or within each item, explain in more detail how aggregated data are used BY THE DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM for change. You have some of this, but it focuses on provision of courses and scheduling. Then give examples of changes that have been made. You have one good example with “The Art Education program gateway decision to add the teaching portfolio process…has improved student preparations for successful …etc.” Explain the data about learning on which this decision was made, and the measures you are using to provide evidence of your claim that things are improving.

**PSOA in General**

Responses in the PSOA are longer than they need to be, with data that, while impressive, will confuse NCA readers, make them think you are padding the report, or that you do not recognize the distinction between assessments that result in grades or student progress, and assessments that are used for program-level improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, etc. All you need are three headings:

1. Learning goals. All reports lack statements of student learning goals; those need to be included.
2. Measures to determine how well students are meeting the goals: list and describe each measure that is used at the department or program level, NOT those measures that are only used for grades or for monitoring student progress through the degree. Describe the systematic, ongoing measures that are being used, not the data that result from these measures at any given point in time.
3. A description of how the data are used by the department or program for improvement, and an example of two of how the department has used data to make changes.
Primary/Middle Special Education

Based on “UWM Primary/Middle Special Education Program Standards and Performance Assessment,” sent to me 10/2/-4 by Rita Cheng.

Strengths

- Standards, Indicators, and Evidence are all described
- Clear instructions to students about their portfolios, linked to the standards

Suggestions

- How does the department/program analyze and aggregate all these data and use them for program change? Can you give an example or two of changes made, based on the data?
Primary/Middle Regular Education

Based on “UWM Primary/Middle Regular Education Program Standards and Performance Assessment” sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng

Strengths
• Standards, Indicators, and Evidence are all described

Suggestions
• How does the department/program analyze and aggregate all these data and use them for program change? Can you give an example or two of changes made, based on the data?
Early Adolescence-Adolescence: English

Based on “UWM Standards for Professional Education, Early Adolescence-Adolescence: English” sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng.

Strengths
- Guiding Principles, Courses and Experiences, and Evidence are all described

Suggestions
- How does the department/program analyze and aggregate all these data and use them for program change? Can you give an example or two of changes made, based on the data?
**Early Childhood Education**

Based on “Early Childhood Education Program Conceptual Framework” sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng.

**Strengths**
- Learning goals (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) are all described.
- Courses/Experiences are described.

**Suggestions**
- Under “Courses/Experiences,” you use the term “evidence,” but the column seems to contain a combination of curricular requirements, experiences such as field work, and references to Currins. What is not clear is which pieces of student work, or additional student surveys or other data are used to determine how well students are achieving the knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and then how those data are used by the department/program for program-level changes, and an example or two of changes made, based on the data.
Administrative Leadership

Based on response to Question 2 of Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng

Strengths

• Professional portfolios are related to knowledge, dispositions, and skills of the Wisconsin State Standards and School of Ed Guiding Principles. Faculty members will judge the portfolios for programmatic changes.

Suggestions

• You should omit the online discussion, electronic portfolios, and papers paragraphs unless these modes of assessment are used beyond the classroom, shared in the department like the portfolios, and used for program-level change.

• All you really need here is the paragraph on professional portfolios. It’s a fine mode of assessment, related to the learning outcomes specified in the State Standards and the School Principles, and used not only for student feedback but for programmatic change.

• If you use any student surveys or focus groups, alumni surveys, feedback from employers, career progress information, etc., to inform programmatic change, include those here, as well.
Curriculum & Instruction

Based on response to Question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng

Strengths

- Under grad and grad programs have levels and standards (what NCA will call learning goals and objectives) in place.
- Measures of assessment, including portfolios and field observations for undergrads, theses for masters’ candidates, and annual meetings (as well, I assume, as qualifying exams and doctoral theses) for doctoral students
- The report specifies that each of the measures is used by the department for program-level improvement

Suggestions

- I would omit the masters’ level conferences with students’ major professors, or else make clear how these are used for program-level assessment.
- If you use student evaluations or focus groups, alumni surveys, or if you track post-degree employment or further schooling, those, too, are measures of assessment that should be listed here. Be sure to describe how the department uses the information for improvement.
Educational Policy and Community Studies

Based on Response to Question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng

Strengths

- An alumni survey is in place and being used by the department for improvement
- The program also appears to track its students’ future career paths
- Undergraduate in community education appears to have a set of learning goals, as reflected in the description of the 35-item questionnaire given to graduates.

Suggestions

- For each of the two programs, I’d suggest three subheadings: (1) Learning goals (or standards, principles, whatever terms you use); (2) measures to determine how well students are meeting the goals; and (3) how the department uses the data for improvement. Under learning goals, describe the documents that obviously informed the graduating student questionnaire you cite. Under measures, list and describe (it can be done in bullet form) the alumni surveys, and graduating student surveys, and other measures you may use such as portfolios or projects whose results are used not only for student feedback but also for departmental improvement; and the like.
- Omit the results of your assessment measures—for example, the final paragraph about your graduates’ achievements. The NCA wants to know your ongoing structures and strategies for assessment, not the results at any given point in time.
Educational Psychology

Based on Response to Question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng. I was not sent the Appendices that are referenced in the report.

Strengths

- Learning goals and objectives are in place for school psychology
- The APA, the external professional committee, and the site visit review all bring outside judgment to bear on the assessment data and make recommendations for improvement.

Suggestions

- You do not describe the measures you use to determine whether students are meeting the goals and objectives. Do you have portfolios that are viewed by a committee or by the department to determine students’ strengths and weaknesses as a group? Do the annual student progress reviews get aggregated and presented to the department or program for program-level action? Do you have students evaluations or focus group? Alumni surveys? These all should be listed.
- You describe your external review processes, but how does the department itself review its own information and make improvement?
- Are there examples of changes you have made on the basis of data?
Exceptional Education

Based on response to Question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng

Note: Some of the programs, such as Special Education, have sent their own separate responses, and I have responded to those.

Here, I respond only to the description of Master’s and Doctoral assessment

What you need for these graduate programs are three sections: (1) learning goals that state, when the student receives the degree, he or she is expected to be able to…”; (2) a list of the measures you use to determine how well students have achieved the goals; and (3) how the departments uses those data for improvement at the program level.

Under the measures, you have theses, but these are relevant only if the results are aggregated and considered by the department for program-level change. If they are, describe how that happens. You also have surveys of your graduates surveys. Do you conduct any surveys or focus groups of students during their course of study? If so, that should be listed.

Under use, describe how the department analyses and uses the data from its assessment measures. For example, in some doctoral departments, the department meets annually to discuss assessment data and take action. All faculty who are supervising doctoral or masters’ theses or administering qualifying exams report student strengths and weaknesses as a group and any problems or concerns they or their students have noted. At the same time, the graduate studies director reports results of student and alumni surveys, student career progress, and other measures. The department then considers how well it is doing and makes change as appropriate.
School of Business Administration

Based on response to Question 4 of the Accreditation Web Survey for Deans and to Question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng

Strengths

- Comprehensive Learning Outcomes formulation is under way.
- An array of assessment mechanisms is in place
- Program reviews are being introduced, as of 2003
- Examples of modifications are provided

Suggestions

- You are moving forward in an ambitious way. Be careful not to overload the system by collecting more data than you an actually digest and use.
Architecture

Based on the following documents sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng:
  • Response to Question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs for Architecture
  • “Assessment Environmental Scan Architecture and Urban Planning”
  • “Department of Architecture 1996-1997 Planning Document”
  • “April 12, 1994 Department of Architecture Policy for Tenured Faculty Development and Review”
  • “Department of Architecture Merit Procedures”

Strengths
  • NAAB levels of performance supply what NCA will terms learning goals and objectives
  • An array of assessment measures are in place, including GPA, performance in courses, and use of grades and portfolios for admission to sophomore, junior, and graduate levels
  • There is a good description of how the assessment data are used by the department for deliberation and change

Suggestions
  • You are quite reliant on grades and GPA for your assessment. NCA will question this because grades are so blunt an instrument for assessment that they don’t really reveal strengths and weaknesses of students, unless one has more diagnostic information about the criteria and standards on which the grade was based. For example, if X % of the students get a “B” in a certain course, and you’d like to raise their performance, you don’t know, just from the grade, what to work on. What other information would the department or the committee have in that case, that would be used for departmental deliberation?
  • Your 1996-97 planning document lists other measures: annual awards program through which faculty as a whole view student work and presumably form judgments about strengths and weaknesses; employment rate of graduates; awards to students in blind comparative reviews from regional and national to international levels, the jury system throughout the school, and faculty DAR peer teaching review (if these reveal information about student learning in the classes, and if they are used at the department-program level for more than individual personnel decisions). Is all this information available in the quality-monitoring process you describe? More information about its use would be helpful.
**Urban Planning**

Based on the following documents sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng:

- Response to Question 2 of the Accreditation Web Survey for Department Chairs for Urban Planning
- “Assessment Environmental Scan Architecture and Urban Planning”

**Strengths**

- Urban Planning accreditation process supplies learning goals and objectives
- Program has an array of assessment measures in place, including comprehensive exams, a first-semester writing assessment, and student self-reports

**Suggestions**

- You have a bit of information on how the assessment results are used; but you need more. Include any department meetings, committee reports, or other venues where the department discusses data from assessment. Include also your accreditation review and any other program reviews, describing what data are reviewed and how that review leads to action by the department
**College of Engineering**

Based on “1. Educational Objectives and Outcomes” and then reports from each of the five departments, sent to me 10/2/04 by Rita Cheng. I assume these are sections of the college’s most recent ABET review.

**Strengths**

- Your work for the ABET accreditation review is the basis also for NCA review. You have many elements in place or planned.

**Suggestions**

- In some cases you are relying on course grades and setting metrics and standards for a certain percent of the students to achieve a certain grade. This is a good practice as long as the standards and criteria for that grade are clear, and as long as diagnostic information is supplied as the basis for departmental action. For example, you provide diagnostic information you discuss students’ strengths and weaknesses on the prerequisite examinations in Civ Eng under 3.5.1 for Civil Engineering.
- Some of your program outcomes (e.g. Electrical Engineering1.3) are stated as things students will have experienced. The format that begins “students will have experience in…” is not a learning outcome. What will students have learned to do as a result of this experience?