Response # 2

to UW Milwaukee Assessment and Accreditation Material

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Anthropology Undergraduate

Based on plans on web, Sept. 17, 2004

Strengths
- Using the capstone as a basis for assessment
- Collecting data to explore connections between student demographic data (e.g. courses taken) and performance on the test

Suggestions
- Need statement of learning goals
- Does the multiple choice test address critical thinking, research skills, etc?
- How are the data used? Does (or will) the department meet to discuss them and take appropriate action?

Anthropology Graduate

Strengths
- Each program (MS, Museum, PhD) contains faculty assessment of student learning

Suggestions
- How are the assessments used at the departmental level? The assessments you mention are normally used for granting grades or degrees to students and for the faculty to assess each individual student’s readiness for the profession. But how are the data about students’ strengths and weaknesses as a group used by the department for decisions about program, curriculum, pedagogy, etc.?
- You have no statement of the learning goals for students. When a Ph.D. student receives a degree, what do you expect him/her to be able to do?
  - Example: We expect Ph.D. students to be able to
    - Conduct publishable work in the field
    - Follow the ethics of the profession in conducting research, working with colleagues, and using sources
    - For those entering teaching: to be able to teach so as to result in high student learning and high student satisfaction with the quality of instruction
- I suggest:
  - Generate a statement of learning goals for each of the three graduate degrees (MS, Museum, and PhD)
- Ask faculty to be systematic in their analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the theses, oral defenses, internships, and other work of the students they supervise or teach, as a group.
- Add a student evaluation from graduate students, asking them how well they thought they met the learning goals, what aspects of the department’s curriculum or program were helpful to learning, and what suggestions they would make for change.
- Meet once a year to consider these data and take department-level action as appropriate.
M.A. Graduate Program in Art History

Based on UWM web record, Sept. 17, 2004

Strengths

• Goal statement
• Graduate Student Self-assessment form is a fine way to tie students’ evaluation of the department directly to their consideration of their own progress toward the degree.
• The Self-Assessment Form above and the exit survey provide rich data about students’ perceptions of their learning
• You state clearly how these survey data are used by the department for decisions.
• Post-graduate accomplishments are tracked.

Suggestions

• Goal #6 calls for “improvement in” writing and oral skills, whereas the other goals have specific performance descriptions (e.g. “ability to address an art historical subject…”). I would suggest stating this goal in the same way: “ability to write such-and-such types of documents effectively for such-and-such audiences”
• The annual department meeting appears to rely only on “indirect” data—that is, the student perceptions of their learning as revealed in the surveys. The “direct” data—students’ performance on tests, exams, assignments, theses, exhibits, etc—is expressed in course completion but seems not to be analyzed in other ways. I suggest finding a way for the teachers in those courses you mention, or a few key courses, to analyze student strengths and weaknesses as a group, and bring that information to the department, along with the survey data and the post-graduation data, so the department makes its decisions based on more than just student perceptions of their learning. Then your process would look like this:

Assessment of the Graduate Program in Art History

Measures

1. Graduate Student Self-Assessment Form
2. Exit questionnaire
3. Analysis by faculty of the strengths and weaknesses of their students as a group, measured against the departmental goals
4. Database for post-graduation activities

Use of the Data for Improvement

[description of your annual meeting and examples of some actions you have taken based on the department’s review of the data]
Chemistry

Based on same “Chemistry Program” 4-column report to which my earlier response was address, plus “Changes in the ’00-’04 time period” on the web, Sept. 17, 2004

My earlier response addressed the report. This response concerns only the “Changes in the ’00-’04 Time Period that Contribute to Learning and Assessment.”

Your report includes some new assessment measures (e.g. the class-specific questionnaires for service courses, and exit interviews), which implement the “Assessment Criteria” in the “Chemistry Report.”

Your report also includes some changes in curriculum, newsletter, lab fee, and the like. It would be helpful if you would make explicit how these changes arose from the assessment data, even if the data you had when you made the changes was only part of what you have now, or was less systematic. For example, you might explain that faculty, on the basis of their examination of student work and/or their use of assessment instruments X and Y, concluded that students lacked understanding of the links between various chemistries. To address this assessment finding, the department integrated its upper-level lab courses, etc.
**Economics**
Based on “Economics Major Assessment Methods” on web Sept. 17, 2004

**Strengths**
- The assessment of student work seems thoughtfully planned
- The student survey asks students how well they have achieved learning goals

**Suggestions**
- The questionnaire for students contains a clearer statement of goals than the opening paragraph on goals. I’d begin your report with a goals statement in bullets:
  - Economics majors, upon graduation, will be able to
    - Use a broad range of economic concepts to analyze the macro and micro economy in which they live
    - Discuss major economic questions of the day [describe how? What characteristics should their discussion have?]  
    - Find and use economic data from various sources, such as….
- In q. 3, I would separate “interesting” and “useful” into two questions, so the parallelism with q. 1 and 2 is very clear, and you get a clear separation in student answers
- When you ask students about how well they achieved the learning goals, the question “how do you evaluate your education” might be rephrased to yield more specific information. For example:
  - How well did you achieve this learning goal (something like: I learned this very well down to I did not learn anything about this)
  - What aspects of your experiences in the department most helped you to achieve this learning goal?
  - How could the department better help students achieve this learning goal?
- You might combine the report on the exams with the report on student surveys, so that, in one annual assessment meeting, the department reviews all the data it has on student learning and takes action as appropriate.
- So your report might look like this:
  - Goals
    - As I have suggested above
  - Measures
    - Evaluation of exams by the committee
    - Student questionnaire
  - Use of the data
    - Annually, the department meets to review the committee’s report on exams and the student questionnaire
    - Examples of how the department has used data to make change
**Geography Graduate Program**

Based on “Geography Graduate Program Assessment Methods” on web, Sept. 17, 2004

**Strengths**
- Graduate survey
- Annual evaluation of student work and oral exams

**Suggestions**
- You have no statement of learning goals: what students should be able to do at the end of the program.
- In the description of the annual evaluation, you only talk about the outcomes for individual students. That’s not yet program evaluation. Discuss how the information is aggregated to determine strengths and weaknesses of the students as a group, and how the department considers and acts on this information.
- The oral exam makes this application to the department very clear. Perhaps your actual outline goes like this:
  - Goals (to be stated)
  - Measures
    - Survey
    - Students’ written course work evaluated annually by the members of the faculty to define strengths and weaknesses not only of individual students but of the students as a group
    - Oral exams
  - Use of the data for decision-making
    - Annually the faculty meet to discuss all three measures and take action as appropriate to enhance student learning
**Geosciences**
Based on “Mission,” Educational Goals,” and tables of scores for goals, on web Sept. 17, 2004

**Strengths**
- Goals
- Rubric describes performance at four levels for each goal.

**Suggestions**
- Not clear to me what data will be collected about students’ achievement of the goals, how the rubric will be used, or how the department will use the information for improvement
**Mathematical Sciences**

Based on material on web Sept. 17, 2004

**Strengths**

- Goals are in place, combining general and specific-area goals, as well as goals for minors and non-majors in a sensible way.
- Questionnaires to faculty about each student and to each student ask them to assess students’ progress on the goals.

**Suggestions**

- There is no description of how the information on learning will be used by the department. Who will examine the questionnaires, and how will this information lead to recommendations and to departmental action?
- Is there other information that should be considered at the same time—e.g. graduate school placement for majors, alumni survey if you have one, etc.??
Political Science Undergraduate Major

Based on material on web Sept. 17, 2004

Strengths

Suggestions

- In describing how you assess each goal, you state that the assessment is whether or not a student achieves a “B” or better grade in a course or completes the course. This way of stating it does not capture the excellent modes of assessment you have, and it will be a red flag to the NCA because it may appear that you are just using grades. But the real assessments are the papers and exams in those courses, which are evaluated by faculty according to criteria linked to the department-level goals. Faculty report student achievement not only through grades but also through the evaluations of student work provided by the Capstone instructor(s) and the instructors of 203 and 390, as well as peer observation of classrooms. I would set up your description to reflect your excellent plan. You could do it by a chart:

Goals: [numbered 1-8]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Measure</th>
<th>Goals Addressed</th>
<th>How Used for Change</th>
<th>Examples of changes made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capstone paper, evaluated by capstone supervisors in a report to the chair</td>
<td>1, 2 [also others?]</td>
<td>Evaluated by chair and director of undergraduate studies, who report annually to the undergraduate committee and the department for action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments in 203 and 390, evaluated by instructors and summarized in a report to the chair</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior exit survey</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student work addressing the goals in relevant courses, as evaluated by student</td>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Measure</td>
<td>Goals Addressed</td>
<td>How Used for Change</td>
<td>Examples of changes made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grades in those courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer observation of classroom teaching</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>“</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other? (e.g. honors or fellowships won by your graduates, alumni surveys, acceptance into grad school, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td>“</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you wanted to keep your present prose format instead of, or in addition to, the chart, just use the chart’s language to rephrase the role of grades and to display the rich array of assessments you have for each goal.

**Political Science Graduate Program**

Based on material on web Sept. 17, 2004

Essentially, I have the same comments as for undergraduate.
Psychology Graduate Program

Based on material on web Sept. 17, 2004

I believe that this material is simply copied from the catalog or bulletin. It describes the department’s programs, it implies learning goals, and it outlines the steps the student must take to progress through his/her degree work, including copies of forms the student and professor must complete at various stages.

What you have here is a careful and thorough program that monitors, mentors, and guides students through the program. What is missing is a description of how information about the strengths and weaknesses of student performance are used by the department for department-level or program-level changes in curriculum, structure of the degree activities, flow of information to students, faculty-student interactions, and other factors that may affect student learning. In the sample grid below, I have pulled material from your catalog description and have also added some suggested strategies such as additional questions on the Annual Graduate Student Evaluation Form and an annual meeting of program faculty to discuss students’ strengths and weaknesses in the aggregate.

**Learning goals:** The student completing [name of graduate program, e.g. Master’s in Behavior Analysis] will be able to…..
1. Conduct behavior and analytic research
2. Understand the conceptual and methodological foundations for applying such research
3. Be prepared for doctoral level study in behavior analysis or for employment as behavior analysts

**Assessment Measures and Use of Data by the Department**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>How Used for Change?</th>
<th>Examples of Changes Made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theses, evaluated by major professor and advisory committees</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Program faculty meet annually to consider the strengths and weaknesses of students as a group and to take appropriate action at the program level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student evaluation of his/her achievement of the goals, as additional questions to the</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>“</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Graduate Student Evaluation Report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement in jobs or further graduate study, tracked by the Director of Graduate Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Women's Studies

Based on material on web September 17, 2004

Strengths

• Measures of learning, both direct and indirect, are in place or planned, and the department describes how data will be evaluated and used for change as needed.

Suggestions

• Learning goals are missing. When a student completes the women’s studies major, she/he should be able to……
Special Education

Based on “UWM Primary/Middle Special Education Program Standards and Performance Assessment,” material mailed to me 9/16/04 by Rita Cheng. Includes School of Education Student Teacher Survey, Principal Survey and First Year Teacher Survey

Strengths

• Thorough and intelligent articulation of standards (what North Central will call learning goals or objectives), each with knowledge/skill/disposition indicators and developmental benchmarks. Tables show how the knowledge/skill/disposition indicators are demonstrated by student work in various courses.
• The three surveys are tied to the standards.

Suggestions

• What’s missing here is a description of how the department or program uses the data for improvement. Is there an annual meeting where you consider all the data and take action? Does the chair or a committee analyze the data and make recommendations?