



Executive Summary of Academic Program Assessment Report: 2010-2011

This report presents the work accomplished in Viterbo University's academic programs in understanding, confirming, and improving student learning. It summarizes the assessment results of the academic year 2010-2011. The report tracks progress made in assessment processes and practices and summarizes the use of assessment for improvements in student learning in majors, stand-alone minors, graduate programs, and general education.

Assessment Practice and Progress

- In its first year, the Academic Program Assessment Committee worked to foster continuous improvement in undergraduate programs, general education, and graduate programs;
- Worked with the deans' council to articulate assessment expectations for new programs;
- Supported assessment-related faculty development activities, serving as panel members in an assessment workshop for faculty during January in-service;
- Established robust goals for assessment progress for the Sept. 2011 updates, which were met;
- Received and made recommendations on the General Education Online Equivalency Assessment Project and on the annual assessment results;
- Established a cycle for in-depth formative peer review on assessment work for academic programs and launched the cycle;
- As one way of ensuring high-quality assessment practices, APAC presented assessment awards for the second year.

Strengthening Learning through Assessment in Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

Of the 46 established academic programs (both undergraduate and graduate):

- All (46) have data on student learning and are in the process of analyzing the data
- 96% (44) have articulated action taken to improve student learning.
- 78% (36) have tested the effectiveness of actions, either confirming learning or taking further action.

| | Sept. 2008 | Sept. 2009 | Sept. 2010 | Sept. 2011 Goals | Sept. 2011 Actual | Sept. 2012 Goals | Sept. 2013 Goals |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Establish a plan: outcomes aligned with teaching strategies and methods | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% (46/46) | 100% | 100% |
| 2) Collect actionable data and draw conclusions through analysis | 92% | 96% | 00% | 100% | 100% (46/46) | 100% | 100% |
| 3) Take action to improve learning | 73% | 83% | 89% | 95% | 96% (44/46) | 100% | 100% |
| 4) Test the effectiveness of actions, either confirming learning or taking further action | 18% | 57% | 63% | 70% | 78% (36/46) | 80% | 90% |
| 5) Disseminate Results | Viterbo University Annual Assessment Report, advisory board reports, and other forms of reporting to stakeholders | | | | | | |

****In 2010-2011, forty-six of the academic programs are considered established programs.**

The academic programs (majors and stand-alone minors) continue to make progress in improving student learning through assessment

The emphasis is on direct measures; indirect assessment at the program level is supplemental.

Eight programs launched assessment plans in 2010-2011, and all of these have a curriculum which is aligned with outcomes and methods of assessment. Six have collected actionable results, and three have taken action to improve learning. This progress exceeds the expectations for the first year.

The Academic Program Assessment Committee set goals for continued progress in the academic programs. These goals were shared with faculty in the January 2011 in-service session on assessment. The goals were met at all levels.

The report highlights examples of strengthened learning through assessment, including the nursing program. Students in the Nursing program had a 96% pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses in 2010, for the second consecutive year. These improvements followed several years of targeted improvements following the low pass rate of 69% in 2007. Using evidence from other direct assessment methods, faculty made changes such as educating faculty on NCLEX testing and on writing test questions related to learning outcomes in their own courses and providing interventions for at-risk students early in the program.

Implementing and Assessing the LIVE Outcomes-based Core Curriculum

In October 2010, Viterbo's Faculty Council unanimously passed the newly designed outcomes-based core curriculum. The resounding confirmation of the new curriculum set in motion a year of implementation. Fourteen faculty committees worked throughout the year to produce the assessment framework for each component of the core curriculum: learning outcomes which align with the eight core curriculum learning outcomes, rubrics for assessing common assignments, and structures for active learning strategies and high-impact practices. 2010-2011 also saw the launching of the first-year seminar in the core curriculum: Franciscan Values and Traditions. A faculty learning community comprised of faculty who taught the seminar met throughout the year to align teaching methods with learning outcomes and the common assessment method. Assessment results from the first year of Franciscan Values and Traditions concluded with adjustments to improve alignment of the curriculum and the common assignment with Social Justice, Ethical Reasoning and Moral Development, Integrative Learning, and Written Communication.

Equivalency across Modes of Delivery

The Modes of Delivery assessment project focused on general education courses which are offered in at least two modes of delivery, one of which is an online (distance) mode. The purpose was to compare the alignment between learning outcomes and curriculum and design in online and face-to-face courses and to compare student learning in critical thinking and written communication. Methods included questionnaire results, content analysis of course artifacts provided by instructors, and course-level assessment results. The assessment results indicate that there are no significant differences in student learning between online and face-to-face formats for the 100-level and 400-level courses, and that for the 300-level course, where there was a difference in evaluation of student learning, scores in the online section were significantly higher. Content analysis revealed highly effective practices such as a standardized template showing alignment between learning outcomes and course activities or assignments for multiple sections of a course. One of the decisions based on the study is to oversample for online courses in future assessment points for the new core curriculum to ensure ongoing assessment of modes of delivery.

The full report is available from the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research—www.viterbo.edu/air. Please contact Naomi Stennes-Spidahl, Director of Assessment and Institutional Research at nrstennesspidahl@viterbo.edu or Penny Blank, Administrative Assistant at plblank@viterbo.edu.