Closing the Loop(hole): Lessons from 3 Years of Peer-Reviewed Assessment Reports

Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education
June 13, 2017 Louisville KY

Dr. Sara Cushing
Dr. Patricia Gregg
Office of Assessment and Review
Georgia State University

- **Original Campus** Located in historic downtown Atlanta (Bachelor’s through Doctoral Degrees; research mission)

- **5 Perimeter College Campuses** across Metro Area, as well as online (Associate Degrees, access mission)

- **51,000+ Students**

- **Diverse Student Body**

- **250+ Associate, Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral Programs**
GSU Assessment Philosophy:
Faculty Ownership

Academic Programs

Responsibilities

*From the University Senate Bylaws, Article VII. Committees:

**Section 6. Committee on Academic Programs**

1. The Committee on Academic Programs shall be composed of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost; Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success; the academic deans of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Perimeter, Business, Education and Human Development, Law, the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions, the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, and the Honors College; one student who is a member of the Senate; two staff senators; and at least twenty-seven (27) faculty members, as follows: four (4) members each from the College of Arts and Sciences, Perimeter College, the J. Mack Robinson College of Business, and the College of Education and Human Development; two (2) members from the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies; one (1) each from the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions, the College of Law and the School of Public Health; with the remainder elected at large.

2. The duties of the committee shall include the following:
   1. developing long-range plans for the academic affairs of the University;
   2. reviewing and recommending of university policies concerning curricula, new and existing programs, the deactivation and termination of academic programs, and the core curriculum;
   3. assessing academic programs and general education;
   4. approving courses having a university-wide designation;
Assessment Logistics

• Reporter/Coordinator for Each Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral Program

• Submit Annual Reports through SLOAP
  • Previously all due Oct 1, reviewed by Assessment Committees (undergrad and grad) in Oct-Nov
  • As of 2017, short reports due Oct 1, reviewed by staff; long reports due May 1, reviewed by Assessment Committee in May-June

• Support: Office of Assessment and Review in OIE
  • Prior to Jan 2016, one Director of Academic Assessment
  • Jan 2016, added Associate Director
  • May 2017, Director added Senior Faculty Associate
2016-2017 Assessment Cycle

During 2017, we will complete the transition to a three-year reporting cycle. During the first two years of the new cycle, programs will focus on the collection of useful assessment data and will submit a "short" report presenting their findings. During the third year of the cycle, programs will focus on analyzing previous findings and developing proposals for program improvement and will submit a comprehensive "long" report, which will be similar in structure to previous assessment reports. More detailed descriptions of the new assessment reporting schedule and the timing of the assessment cycle are available below.

Long reports for the 2016-2017 academic year are due on May 1, 2017. Short reports are due on September 15, 2017. With the exception of some programs in the College of Education and Human Development (see below), all assessment reports should be submitted in the GSU Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Portal (SLOAP at sloap.gsu.edu).

To submit a report, please complete the appropriate (long or short) assessment report template and upload it in SLOAP as a Word or PDF document. You may incorporate attachments in the template or upload them separately in SLOAP. Links to the assessment report templates and instructions are below.

College of Education and Human Development only: CEHD programs that use LiveText may submit their assessment reports using a LiveText report template also used by the PEF for state program approval and CAEP accreditation. The program report template will be shared with the reporter in their department LiveText administrative account and can be found in a folder labelled “Program Reports – 2016 forward.” The reporter will complete the full report, annually, following a single reporting deadline of September 15. For questions about CEHD program reporting requirements, please contact Dr. Joyce E. Many, Professor and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education and Educator Preparation, CEHD, at jmany@gsu.edu or 3-8104.
Welcome to SLOAP!

Welcome to Georgia State University Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Portal (SLOAP)

Assessment reports for the 2014-15 academic year are due on October 1, 2015.

To view an assessment report, click on the "Report List" tab.

To view the review of a report, click on the "Review List" tab.

To submit an assessment report, log in with your GSU campus ID and click on the "Submit Report" tab.

To submit a review, log in with your GSU campus ID and click on the "Submit Review" tab.

If you need instructions, click on the "Help" tab.

SLOAP is maintained by the Office of Academic Assessment in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact John Duffield at Duffield@gsu.edu or 4-2615.
**Assessment Report for GSU Educational Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department:</th>
<th>Contact person:</th>
<th>Cycle/year: 2015-2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Program:</td>
<td>Email address:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Program Mission and Student Learning Goals**

**Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives (SLOs)**

1. 
2. 
3. 
   [add more as needed; place an asterisk next to those SLOs for which findings are reported this cycle (no more than 5)]

**Program Learning Opportunities**

**Assessment Methods and Targets**

A. 
B. 
C. 
   [add more as needed; for each method, indicate which SLOs are assessed and include a target for each SLO assessed]

**Assessment Findings**

**Analysis of Assessment Findings**

**Sharing and Discussion of Assessment Findings**

**Use of Assessment Findings for Program Improvement (Action Plan)**

**Supporting Documents**

[you may insert documents here or upload them separately in SLOAP]
Reviewing Reports

- Log In to SLOAP
- Select “Submit Review” Tab
- Fill In Identifiers
- Complete 15-Point Rubric with Comments
- Submit (or save as “Incomplete” and return)
1. Program Mission Statement: Focus on student learning

- Absent/Beginning: The report does not provide a mission statement or the statement does not refer to student learning.
- Developing: The statement refers to student learning but the goals for student learning are not clear.
- Good/Satisfactory: The statement contains clear goals for student learning.
- Exemplary/Superior: The report provides a compelling statement of the program’s mission, including clear and meaningful goals for student learning.

Comments
## 2015 Assessment Report Evaluation Rubric

(September 16, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Absent/Beginning (1)</th>
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<td>The report contains no SLOs, or none of the SLOs follow from the program mission and goals.</td>
<td>Some SLOs reflect some of the program goals, but some do not and/or some goals are not reflected in the SLOs.</td>
<td>The SLOs broadly reflect the mission and goals of the program.</td>
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<td><strong>Specificity and Measurability</strong></td>
<td>The report contains no SLOs, or none of the SLOs are stated clearly enough to be measurable.</td>
<td>Some of the SLOs are clearly specified and measurable, but the many are not.</td>
<td>Overall, the SLOs seem clear and measurable.</td>
<td>Each of the SLOs is stated precisely and measurable. Each makes clear the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes that students are expected to acquire.</td>
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<td>No courses or other learning activities are described, or their links to the SLOs are unclear.</td>
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<td>Adequate learning opportunities are provided for most or all SLOs.</td>
<td>Appropriate and well-designed program learning opportunities are available for all SLOs.</td>
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Your turn!

• Instructions: Using the SLOAP rubric, assess the Sociology report on all 15 categories and be prepared to justify your scores.

• Go to PollEv.com/saraspoll to record your responses.
To show this poll

1. Install the app from pollev.com/app
2. Start the presentation

Still not working? Get help at pollev.com/app/help or Open poll in your web browser
For discussion

• Which items were difficult for you to rate? Why?
• Which items engendered the most disagreement? Why do you think so?
• What suggestions do you have for us to improve our instrument?
Lessons Learned

Lesson: Annual reports did not allow program faculty adequate time to reflect on assessment findings; also required many reviewers, with varying levels of expertise and enthusiasm for the task.

Action: Changed to short and long report format. Beginning in May 2017, program faculty submit long reports every 3 years, timed to coincide with the Academic Program Review cycle. Short reports document assessment findings but not use of findings for improvement.

Too soon to know how change will affect quality of reports. Has already reduced reviewing burden. New review committees include fewer, more committed members.
Lesson:
Feedback from reviewers has not necessarily resulted in the improvement of assessment reporting across all measures.

- We may be victims of our own success. Ratings on some items appear to be lower because the expectations of the reviewers have increased.

- In other cases, scoring inconsistencies suggest that we may need more explicit norming sessions for reviewers.
2014 Results

- Program learning opportunities
- Score Distribution
- Sharing & discussion of findings
- Analysis: Impact of past changes
Scores on Item 4 (Program Learning Opportunities) improved over two years…
But scores on items 1-3 & 5 decreased at the same time.
But scores on items 1-3 & 5 decreased at the same time.
But scores on items 1-3 & 5 decreased at the same time.
But scores on items 1-3 & 5 decreased at the same time.
Chemistry mission statement was identical in both 2014 and 2015.


2014 reviewer comment:

“Very detailed mission statement and goals for student learning.”

2015 reviewer comment:

“The mission statement is about the department in general, but does not identify the BS degree specifically. Please provide a mission statement specifically about the BS degree program.”
**Action:**
Members of new committee were invited based on past performance as reviewers.

Committee members attended 1-hour norming session, working through example reports.
Assessment of Student Learning

Our Mission

The mission of the Office of Academic Assessment is to ensure Georgia State University’s compliance with SACS and the Board of Regents standards by engaging the University community in meaningful and effective assessment of student learning. At Georgia State, we assess student learning

a) in every degree and certificate program at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and

b) across the General Education curriculum.

A central element of this mission is helping program faculty to utilize assessment results in the development and implementation of strategies for continuous improvement in student learning.

How We Can Help

The Office of Academic Assessment offers one-on-one consultations and workshops for faculty and

Thank You!

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404-413-2501

Office of Academic Assessment
Georgia State University
http://oie.gsu.edu/assessment

Patti Gregg
pgregg@gsu.edu
678-891-2571
Assessment Report for GSU Educational Programs

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<td>Program: B. A. Sociology</td>
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**Program Mission and Student Learning Goals**

The purpose of the undergraduate program in sociology is to advance the knowledge of our students through exposing them to social behavior, social change, and societal inequality within an environment framed around critical thinking.

**Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives (SLOs)**

1. **Critical Analyses and Understanding**: Students will learn to critically analyze the complexity of social behavior, and how historical, economic, political, and/or spatial relationships develop, persist and/or change. **Target: 80% should demonstrate ability for this outcome.**
2. **Data Collections and Analysis**: Students acquire the skills to collect data; demonstrate appropriate computers skills; and demonstrate the ability to read and understand sociological research reports/articles. **Target: 70% should demonstrate ability for this outcome.**
3. **Analysis of Contemporary Programs**: Students demonstrate ability to identify, analyze and suggest solutions to contemporary problems. **Target: 70% should demonstrate ability for this outcome.**
4. **Analysis of Social Problems**: Students demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze, and suggest solutions to pressing social problems as well as ability to analyze contemporary multicultural, global, and international questions. **Target: 70% should demonstrate ability for this outcome.**
5. **Communication Skills**: Students develop effective written communication and editing skills and show appropriate writing conventions and formats. **Target: 70% should demonstrate ability for this outcome.**

**Program Learning Opportunities**

The program learning opportunities for undergraduate students in sociology to meet the SLOs including the following courses: (1) Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 1101); (2) Social Problems (SOCI 1160); (3) Social Statistics (SOCI 3010); (4) Social Research Methods (SOCI 3020); (5) Sociological Theory (SOCI 3030); and (6) Wealth, Power, and Inequality (SOCI 3201). SOCI 1101 and 1160 are also core (Area G) courses.

**Assessment Methods and Targets**

A. For the General Education courses (SOCI 1101 and 1160), instructors are given a list of multiple choice goal evaluation questions covering the following: (1) Sociological Perspective – demonstrating the ability to analyze contemporary issues within the context of diverse disciplinary perspectives; (2) Multicultural Issues – demonstrating the ability to effectively analyze contemporary multicultural questions; (3) Global and International Issues – demonstrating the ability to effectively analyze contemporary global and international issues. Instructors chose questions from each of these areas and embed them in the final exam. Results are reported to the Department Undergraduate Director.

B. Learning outcomes forms for SOCI 3010 include number of students who rated poor, good, very good and excellent on analytic and critical thinking skills are completed by each instructor or this course and given to the Undergraduate Director. SOCI 3020 has a similar learning outcome form which includes analytic skills, critical thinking, communication and acquisition of knowledge. SOCI 3030 also has a similar learning outcome form evaluating acquisition of knowledge on the course paper and final. The learning outcome form for SOCI 3201 evaluations acquisition of knowledge and ability to identify, analyze and suggest solutions to pressing contemporary social programs from multicultural, national and international points of view and current events.

C. It is the responsibility of the Undergraduate Director to tally the results of the assessment forms and questions and complete the Assessment Report for GSU Educational Programs.
Assessment Findings

1. SOCI 3010: A. **Analytic Skills** – On average across the sections of this course that were taught, 70% of students received a very good or excellent. **Target met.** B. **Critical Thinking** – on average across the sections that were taught, 72% of students received a very good or excellent. **Target met.**

2. SOCI 3020: A. **Analytic Skills** – On average across the sections of this course that were taught, 72% of students received a very good or excellent. **Target met.** B. **Critical Thinking** – on average across the sections of this course that were taught, 72% of students received a very good or excellent. **Target met.** C. **Communication** – on average across the sections of this course that were taught, 82% of students received a very good or excellent. **Target met and exceeded.** D. **Acquisition of Knowledge** – on average across the sections of this course that were taught, 84% of students received a very good or excellent. **Target met and exceeded.**

3. SOCI 3030: A. **Acquisition of Knowledge** – On average across the sections of this course that were taught 60% of students received a very good or excellent. **Target partially met.**

4. SOCI 3201: A. **Acquisition of Knowledge** – On average across the sections of this course that were taught 70% of students received a very good or excellent. **Target met.** B. **Contemporary/Social Problems** – on average across the sections of this course that were taught, 65% of students received a very good or excellent. **Target partially met.**

Area G core courses

1. SOCI 1101 and SOCI 1160: A. **Critical Understanding** – on average across the sections of this course that were taught, 82% answered the required questions correctly. **Target met and exceeded.** B. Analysis of **Contemporary/Social Problems** – on average across the sections of this course that were taught, 68% of students answered the required questions correctly. **Target partially met.**

Analysis of Assessment Findings

For SOCI 3010 and 3020 targets were either met or met and exceed. For SOCI 3030 to target of 70% for acquisition of knowledge was partially met at 60%. But this target was met for SOCI 3201. However for SOCI 3201 the target of 70% for contemporary/social programs was partially met at 65%. For Area G, the target of critical understanding of 80% was met and exceed. However, the target of 70% for contemporary/social problems came in two percentage points under this target.

Sharing and Discussion of Assessment Findings

These assessment findings are shared with the Department Chair, as well as the Director of Academic Assessment and Accreditation. Targets that were partially met will be items of increased pedagogical focus in order for them to be met in the next assessment cycle.

Use of Assessment Findings for Program Improvement (Action Plan)

Instructors will continue to focus on assisting students to meet and exceed our SLO goals.

Supporting Documents

N/A.
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<td>Alignment Between Measures and SLOs</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>No direct methods (e.g., tests, essays, portfolios) are provided, or the alignment between the methods and the SLOs is unspecified.</td>
<td>Direct methods exist for some SLOs, but not all, or the relationship between methods and SLOs is often unclear.</td>
<td>Each SLO is assessed by at least one direct method.</td>
<td>The methods are direct and well designed to ensure that each SLO is thoroughly assessed.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Description of Methods</td>
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<td>Methods lack descriptions, or no direct methods are used.</td>
<td>Some methods are described in sufficient detail to enable an evaluation of their potential effectiveness, but some are not.</td>
<td>The report contains adequate descriptions of all the methods, including the assignment and how it was assessed.</td>
<td>All methods are described in considerable detail and seem well designed to provide thorough, accurate assessment.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Adequacy and Justification of Targets</td>
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<td>No targets are provided, or the SLOs to which they apply are not specified.</td>
<td>Some SLOs and/or some methods have no targets; some targets are not justified or not clear.</td>
<td>Each method contains at least one target, and there is at least one target for each SLO. The targets are reasonable and clear.</td>
<td>All targets are clearly described and well justified; they promise to provide useful data regarding student mastery of SLOs.</td>
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<td>Description of How the Method Was Administered and Data Were Collected</td>
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<td>No information is provided about the administration of the assessment and data collection, such as which sections were assessed, the number of students assessed, etc.</td>
<td>Limited information is provided about the administration of the assessment and data collection, but not enough to generate confidence in the validity of the assessment findings.</td>
<td>Enough information is provided about how the assessment was administered and data collected to generate confidence in the assessment findings.</td>
<td>The description of the administration of the assessment and data collection is detailed and thorough.</td>
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<td>Assessment Findings</td>
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<td>Presentation of Findings</td>
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<td>No findings are provided, or they are not related to specific targets.</td>
<td>Some targets have clearly related findings, but many do not; or most findings are insufficiently detailed to allow useful conclusions to be drawn.</td>
<td>Findings are available for all or most targets, although some findings may not be sufficiently disaggregated to allow useful conclusions to be drawn.</td>
<td>All targets have detailed findings that enable useful conclusions to be drawn about student achievement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Analysis of Assessment Findings</td>
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<td>Interpretation of Findings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The report provides little or no</td>
<td>The report contains some analysis, but it does not make adequate reference to the SLOs or targets.</td>
<td>Each finding is analyzed, with reference to the SLOs and targets.</td>
<td>The analysis of the findings is detailed and thorough, and provides a clear understanding of the implications.</td>
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<td>Impact of Past Improvements and Changes</td>
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<td>The report contains no discussion of what impact previous changes in the program and/or assessment process have had.</td>
<td>The report contains some discussion of the impact of past changes, but the discussion is either incomplete or superficial.</td>
<td>The report addresses the impact of past changes in the program and/or assessment process.</td>
<td>The discussion of the impact of past changes in the program and/or assessment process is thorough and detailed.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Sharing and Discussion of Assessment Findings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The report does not answer this question, or assessment findings are not widely shared among potentially interested faculty.</td>
<td>Assessment findings are shared broadly within the department, but little or no discussion takes place.</td>
<td>Assessment findings are broadly shared, and faculty feedback is sought.</td>
<td>Assessment findings are broadly shared, and multiple faculty are actively involved in determining how to make use of them.</td>
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<td>Use of Assessment Findings for Program Improvement</td>
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<td>Improvement of the Educational Program</td>
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<td>The report contains plans related to most of the assessment findings that require action.</td>
<td>The report contains detailed plans that seem well designed to address all the assessment findings effectively.</td>
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<td>Improvement of the Assessment Process</td>
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<td>No supporting documents are provided, although some would be helpful.</td>
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<td>One or more documents are provided, but many obvious supporting documents are missing.</td>
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<td>Most relevant supporting documents are provided.</td>
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<td>The report makes thorough use of documents to demonstrate the effectiveness of the assessment process.</td>
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