

2005 - 2006 Assessment Report  
August 1, 2007

Assessment of student learning at Indiana University Kokomo is developed and conducted by the faculty and staff of Indiana University Kokomo, with the support of the office of the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CTLA).

In May, 2004, the Academic Council approved a policy statement regarding the assessment of student learning, which states that faculty, staff, and administration share responsibility for assessment of student learning, and that the faculty and staff in the academic and service units of the campus have primary responsibility for assessing their units' student learning goals and outcomes. In August, 2004, an Assessment Council was formed to assist the CTLA director in developing procedures for collecting, evaluating, and sharing assessment information. The Assessment Council approved a common "assessment vocabulary," based on a workshop conducted for the campus by Dr. Susan Hatfield, assessment advisor to the Commission for Higher Education. In addition, the Council developed common formats for assessment plans and assessment reports, a timeline for reporting. Its members regularly engage in peer review of assessment plans and reports.

*Assessment Reports Received*

This all-campus report follows the format approved by the Assessment Council in April, 2007. Assessment reports for the year 2005-06 were due October 31, 2006. At the time of this writing, CTLA had received reports from 70% of the academic degree programs (16 out of 23). This is an increase from 55% participation in 2005 (12 out of 22). One unit submitted a "mid-term" report. The Library and three co-curricular units (Student Development and Campus Life, Information Technology, and CTLA) also submitted assessment reports.

*Assessment Activities Reported*

Academic departments reported using several different types of assessment measures. Some programs used standardized exams, including the ETS Major Field Exam (Business Undergrad, English), the Area Concentration Achievement Test (Psychology) and Assessment Technologies Institute NCLEX Review (Nursing). Faculty in nearly all of the academic programs embedded assessment tasks into their courses (e.g., lab reports, homework assignments, term papers). A few departments used departmentally- or faculty-prepared exams (Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics) or selected specific items from classroom exams (Sociology). Education faculty reported using ratings by IU Kokomo faculty and K-12 teachers who supervise students in their classrooms. Similarly, Radiography students are rated by their faculty and by clinical instructors who supervise their clinical work. The Bachelor of General Studies degree program used an AT&T grant to support a pilot program for using ePortfolio to assess outcomes in writing and speaking.

*Student Learning Outcomes*

All assessment reports received from the academic programs contained student learning outcomes that are clearly linked to the program's goals and mission. The student learning outcomes clearly detailed the skills and knowledge students will have upon completing the program. Most (69%) of programs for whom reports were received collected sufficient data to make assessment decisions

possible. Some smaller programs will need to collect data over several years to have a reliable indicator of student learning. Some programs had difficulty because their mechanisms for collecting data were ineffective. Some programs elected to collect data only on students who passed their courses, omitting valuable information that could inform the program of areas for improvement. A few programs did not collect data on how many students met the learning outcomes, but instead looked at class averages on (for instance) exam items. One unit submitted what they called a “mid-term” report. In every case, the unit was given feedback regarding these issues and it is anticipated that data collection methods will improve.

Of the academic programs who submitted reports, 100% reported using assessment activities which directly assessed their students’ learning. These include the nationally-normed, standardized exams, mentioned above. There are other examples of direct assessment as well. For instance, the writing and speaking skills of School of Continuing Studies students were assessed by a group of faculty using a locally-developed rubric. Biology faculty assessed their students’ ability to apply the methods that biologists use to explore living organisms and evaluate the outcomes of scientific experiments by using student-generated lab reports which were assessed by the course instructor using a rubric. The Library faculty assessed freshman composition students’ Information Literacy skills by tracking their ability to use IUCAT to locate a book in the Library. Psychology faculty reviewed a writing assignment produced by students in their research methods course to determine whether students met the outcome of ability to design basic studies. Some units also reported using indirect assessment methods, such as alumni and employer satisfaction surveys.

#### *Using Assessment Results to Improve the Program*

An integral function of assessment is that it yields information about the program’s effectiveness regarding student attainment of the program’s outcomes and to suggest ways that the program might improve the attainment of the outcomes by the students. Such improvements might include changes in pedagogy, in course content, or in curriculum. Of the 16 reports received, 7 (44%) clearly described how they used the results to improve some aspect of their program. Almost all of these recommended changes in course content. For instance, Radiography incorporated additional exercises and student practice in the skills associated with the outcome. Psychology and the undergraduate Business degree programs changed some assignments to place more emphasis on the skills associated with their outcomes.

Six programs (38%) did not describe any plans to improve their program based on their assessment results. Most of these said that their students were performing at an acceptable level and therefore no changes were necessary. While this may indeed be the case, to support this claim, the report should contain a clear and detailed description of the assessment methods and results, so that anyone reading the report would be able to see how the faculty came to that conclusion. Often this did not occur. For instance, one program’s description of the assessment method used was simply that student work would be graded “based on the instructor’s expertise.” Another program simply listed the courses in which assessment occurred, without describing the methods. Without detailed information about assessment processes, it is difficult to accept a claim that all is well with the program and nothing could make it better. It is hoped that feedback regarding these issues will result in improved communication regarding assessment methods and the basis for finding that no changes to the program are warranted.

### *Disseminating Results*

The members of the Assessment Advisory Council, most of whom are the assessment coordinators for their departments, elected to disseminate assessment results by placing summaries of their assessment reports on a central website maintained by CTLA and a copy of their full report on their home department websites. As of this writing, report summaries have been received by 8 academic programs: Library, English, Humanities, Chemistry, History/Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Business (Undergraduate and MBA programs), and Nursing (BSN). All of these degree programs, plus Biology and Chemistry, provided links to their full assessment reports. The assessment summaries and links to the full reports are available at <http://www.iuk.edu/%7Ekoctla/assessment/results.shtml>

### *Summary: Accomplishments, Challenges, and Next Steps*

IU Kokomo has a long history of assessing student learning, both formally and informally. Since 2004, with the increased administrative support for assessment, an increasing number of academic units are participating in formal assessment of student learning following campus guidelines. All of the reports received specify clear student learning outcomes which are explicitly tied to the programs goals and mission, which are in turn explicitly tied to the IU Kokomo mission. Faculty and academic leadership clearly support assessment of student learning. Plans and reports, for the most part, follow a common format. All of the degree programs submitting reports used direct methods for assessing student learning.

Nevertheless, some challenges remain. About a third of the academic degree programs on campus had not submitted assessment reports by August 1 (4 months past the deadline set by the Assessment Council). Of those which were received, nearly half did not collect sufficient data to make meaningful judgments about student learning in their programs. Faculty in these units, along with their chairs/deans, have been given feedback and suggestions for improvements, and it is anticipated that these issues will be addressed in future reports.

A significant challenge involves disseminating results to students and other stakeholders. The website is an excellent beginning. However, helping students, their parents, employers, and community leaders understand what knowledge and skills students are expected to attain in a particular program, and how well students in that program actually learn those outcomes, will continue to be a challenge, for IU Kokomo as it is for higher education in general.