

Western Connecticut State University
Assessment Committee
Annual Report, 2006-07
Submitted by Jerry Wilcox, Chairperson

The Assessment Committee met six times during the year: September 21, October 19, November 16, December 14, February 8, and April 12. Members included L. Clark, M. Rossi (alternate representative of deans), C. Hawkes, W. Ball, W. Cramer, A. Zink, M. Leahey, K. Koza, K. Wiss, A. Nigro, P. Schachter and J. Wilcox. Guests included Provost L. Rinker and P. McDaniel.

The major project of the year was the construction of a website with WestConn Assessment Information -- <http://www.wcsu.edu/assessment/>. Appendix 1 contains a list of the documents available electronically from the website. The website went live on February 21, thanks to the wizardry of Jeff Shpunt, WestConn's Web Content Specialist.

On September 21, 2006, the draft Assessment Report prepared for NEASC-CIHE was discussed. The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) mandated the report when it granted WestConn reaccreditation in March 2004. NEASC initially requested the report on August 15, 2006, but was persuaded to extend the deadline to October 15, 2006. Interim Provost R. Stewart asked all departments with degree programs to submit their annual assessment reports by May 15, 2006. J. Wilcox assembled the reports in June and July and composed the draft report. NEASC-CIHE later approved the report.

On October 19, proposed revisions to the bylaws were discussed. Major revisions included the addition of an elected member from the School of Visual and Performing Arts, and the subtraction of an appointed faculty member.

On November 16, discussion of revisions to the bylaws concluded. It was recommended that language be inserted in the first paragraph to reflect **student outcomes** in assessment programs and to use this data for the improvement **of student learning**. There were no objections to this change. The chairperson distributed the 'Good Practices' document he had compiled using various assessment criteria of the different departments in all the schools. It was an impressive document applauded by the committee. Dr. Clark sent over some suggestions to be incorporated into the document and there were no objections. Appendix 2 contains the minutes of this meeting.

On December 14, Provost Rinker met with the Committee.

On January 18, a draft of WestConn Assessment Website was presented for discussion. Karen Koza suggested adding links to AACSB and other accrediting agencies.

On February 8, the primary agenda item was to finalize web links and documents for the WCSU Assessment Website. There was consensus that the website was ready to "go live." With the support of the Provost, the website was ready on Feb. 21.

Because of the absence of a quorum at the April 12 meeting, no election for chairperson was held. J. Wilcox agreed to convene the first meeting of the 2007-08 year.

WestConn hosted the Four Campus Assessment Conference on April 27, 2007. More than 100 people attended, and several members of the Assessment Committee participated. In addition, A. Markert, P. McDaniel, M. Steinberg, D. Isaacs and L. Vaden-Goad assisted in the planning and implementation phases.

APPENDIX 1: CONTENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT WEBSITE

WESTCONN ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

WestConn Assessment Documents

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [The Institutional Plan for Implementation of Student Outcomes Assessment](#)
- [Assessment Guidelines for Academic Departments](#)
- [Report to NEASC on Implementation of Assessment](#)
- [Selected Good Practices](#)
- [The Busy Person's Guide to Assessment](#)
- [Assessment Resources for Reference](#)

External Assessment Links

NEASC — OUR REGIONAL ACCREDITING ASSOCIATION

- [New England Association of Schools and Colleges -- Commission on Institutions of Higher Education](#)
- [WCSU NEASC Reaccreditation Self-Study 2001-2003](#)

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC ACCREDITATION WEBSITES

- [The Connecticut State Department of Education](#)
- [American Chemical Society](#)
- [The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#)
- [The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs](#)
- [Council on Social Work Education](#)
- [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education](#)
- [The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business](#)

GENERAL INFORMATION — COLLECTIONS OF WEB LINKS

- [Internet Resources for Higher Education Outcomes Assessment](#)
- [Association of American Colleges and Universities -- Assessment](#)

BIBLIOGRAPHY -- Paper Copies in the IRA Office, UH 303

- Peggy L. Maki, *Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment across the Institution*. AAHE: 2004
- Martha L. A. Stassen et al., *PROGRAM-Based Review and Assessment*. UMass-Amherst: 2001
- K. Manning, J. Kinzie and J. Schuh. *One Size Does Not Fit All: Traditional and Innovative Models of Student Affairs Practice*. Routledge: 2005.
- George D. Kuh et al. *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter*. Jossey Bass: 2005.
- George D. Kuh et al. *Assessing Conditions to Enhance Educational Effectiveness: The Inventory for Student Engagement and Success*. Jossey Bass: 2005.

APPENDIX 2

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE BYLAWS (Approved by the Committee on November 16, 2006)

I. PURPOSE

To ensure that the University fully develops and implements an ongoing, systematic program for the assessment of student learning outcomes which includes but is not limited to setting educational and student developmental goals; gathering and interpreting information and evidence to demonstrate whether students are reaching such goals; and using data for improvement of student learning.

II. OBJECTIVES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND POWERS

- A. To advise the University Senate and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs on assessment matters;
- B. To facilitate assessment programs on an institutional, school, and program level;
- C. To coordinate assessment efforts with other standing committees of the University Senate (UPBC, Student Life, etc.)
- D. To recommend policy which will ensure compliance with state, regional and federal assessment mandates or requirements;
- E. To promote and maintain current assessment activities at the University;
- F. To disseminate assessment information;
- G. To monitor the Institutional Assessment Plan;
- H. To foster principles of good practice for assessing student learning throughout the University community.

III. MEMBERSHIP (13)

Member Appointed/Elected

- 1 Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, or designee
- 1 Academic Dean, or designee.....Appointed
- 1 Dean of Student Affairs, or designee
- 1 University-wide Assessment Coordinator or
Director of Institutional Research & Assessment.....Ex officio
- 1 Representative of General Education faculty.....Appointed by A&S Dean for 2-
year term
- 5 Four (4) teaching faculty (one from each school.....Elected by teaching faculty
and one (1) librarian/counselor/coach) for overlapping 2 year terms
- 1 Administrative faculty.....Appointed for 2-year term
- 2 Students with overlapping 2-year terms.....1 appointed by SGA,
1 appointed by administration

APPENDIX 3

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 16, 2006

WS Ancell Room

In attendance: Jerry Wilcox; Abbey Zink; Wesley Ball; Walter Cramer; Karen Koza; Carol Hawkes and MaryAnn Rossi

The meeting was called to order at 2:45 PM by Dr. Jerry Wilcox, Chairperson.

There were a number of handouts associated with agenda items for the meeting. The first was the Assessment Committee Bylaws. It was recommended that language be inserted in the first paragraph to reflect **student outcomes** in assessment programs and to use this data for the improvement **of student learning**. There were no objections to this change.

Dr. Rinker would like to meet with this committee after 12/13 at the mid-town student center. Jerry Wilcox will check with Terry Buzaid for dates.

Dr. Wilcox passed out the 'Good Practices' document he had compiled using various assessment criteria of the different departments in all the schools. It was an impressive document applauded by the committee. Dr. Clark sent over some suggestions to be incorporated into the document and there were no objections.

Ancell Assessment Coordinator Karen Koza wanted to know where this goes after committee. A version of the 'Good Practices' document has been sent to NEASC. Dr. Koza was wondering if there might not be an opportunity for 'brown bag' meetings (possibly through CELT) so that we could share 'Good Practices' with other departments. This suggestion was well received. Dr. Hawkes said that at the upcoming assessment conference in the spring at WCSU we should do a presentation on our Good Practices.

Dr. Wilcox reminded members of the committee about the CSU Assessment Conference to be held at WCSU on Friday April 27th at the new student center on the west side campus. Anyone receiving a grant for this conference must at the very least present a poster of their project or 'practice'.

There could be a table devoted to a particular 'Good Practices' at the conference.

CELT could assess 'brown bag' sessions.

Individual documents could be put on eRes.

Get people from outside to present at conference.

Walt Cramer suggested that students from Center Stage could do something around 'Good Practices'. Karen Koza said that 'Good Practices' are visions and desired achievements. Walt Cramer said that theater games are used to help corporate types break out of the mold. Role playing exercises are valuable. NYU has a unique project in theater showing the transition from high school to college.

Carol Hawkes said that the Strategic Plan needs to state outcomes. The burden has been on the teaching faculty, now there is a shift to assess student learning. We need to modify the language in 4.3 (B) of the Strategic Plan document.

Carol Hawkes said that we need to refine the measurement tool. We need to plan general principles.

Jerry Wilcox said that we need strategies for meeting standards and enhancing student learning. Survey student engagement to seniors (110 credits). Also survey all first year students (less than 30 credits). In March the NSSE surveys sent to students initially by mail. There may need to be student incentives to answer surveys. NSSE results will be back in August 2007. Last year there were no surveys with academic content. Jerry Wilcox reiterated the importance of staying with the national program. The key to success was a high response rate. It was important to have faculty promote the surveys in class.

Some university catalogs and orientation materials tell students from day one that there will be assessment for the benefit of students and improvement of the institution.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM

Respectfully submitted by

MaryAnn Rossi and Jerry Wilcox