**Special points of interest:**

- Essential elements of assessment
- Program Reviews in progress
- Close that loop! Some examples...
- Curriculum maps

## Essential elements of assessment

The following is a list of the top 3 questions I'm asked when working with programs on their assessment plans.

1. What do you want to see in our assessment?

2. Do you have any examples of what that should look like?

3. If I do this, will you be happy, or will you move the target?

In your assessment plan, I want you to *define 4-6 Student Learning Outcomes*, which are the critical things you want your students to leave your program knowing, doing, and valuing. Excellent SLOs include the following examples. <u>From Chemistry</u>: "Students will be able to analyze laboratory data, techniques, and instrumentation in order to solve problems in each of the chemistry sub-disciplines." <u>From History</u>: "Students will analyze historical sources or events in their social, political, economic, or cultural contexts." <u>From Theatre</u>: "Theatre majors will apply skills and techniques in performance, technical production and play script analysis to direct productions."

What do all of these have in common? They are core requirements for the discipline, they use action words (analyze, apply) rather than passive words (understand, appreciate), and they

are "big picture" in nature, referring to a program goal rather than a specific competency (such as a specific instrument in chemistry, a specific historic event or period, or a specific play).

What else do I want to see? That *each of these SLOs is measurable*. I can't measure if someone appreciates something, but I can measure how well a student analyzes a historical event in a political context.

*I want to see you measuring the same thing in successive semesters.* Show me your rubric in the Document Management section of Weave. *I also want to see you close that loop. See examples from your campus colleagues on* **page 2**.

If you do these things will I be happy? Yes! As long as you also have a curriculum map in the Document Management section of Weave, findings entered for each year, action plans for targets not met, analysis questions answered thoughtfully, evidence of closing the loop for previous unmet targets...

Please remember too that assessment is all about continuous improvement, so as assessment at UNK evolves it's likely I will ask for changes or additional items.

## Program Reviews in progress

It's that time of year again... Academic Program Reviews are in progress. I want to extend a huge thank you to all of you who have been involved in the APR process this year. I know what a time commitment it is to put together a self-study, and to serve on a review panel. Please know that the administration takes these reviews seriously, and does its best to take action on any recommendations the review panel puts forth.

So why do we have to do these program reviews along with WEAVEonline reporting, Taskstream assessment of General Studies courses, etc? In short, it's a requirement of our accrediting body. Not only do they want to see continuous assessment, they also want to know we're doing a comprehensive review of each academic program every five years. The APR involves a great deal more than assessment, to which those of you who have done one recently can attest.

[APR guidelines](#) are found under Institutional Documents on the Academic Affairs website. A link to the [master schedule](#) is found within the document. (Hyperlinks from the electronic version of this newsletter will take you to the documents.)

## UNK Office of Assessment

**Dr. Beth Hinga, Director of Assessment**
**Karin Covalt, Assistant**
**Founders Hall 2124**
**Phone: (308) 865-8255**
**hingabd@unk.edu**

WEAVEonline tips—**CURRICULUM MAPS**

1. A curriculum map is a table that you build (for each academic program) using a list of required courses in the program, and the Student Learning Outcomes you've defined for that program in WEAVEonline. It should be put together with input from all instructors of required courses.

2. The purpose of a curriculum map is to be sure you are teaching appropriate content to address your Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) within your required courses in your program, so you are assured all students are exposed to the material.

3. There is no need to use the Mapping function in WEAVEonline to put together a curriculum map. It's very easily done in Excel.

4. To complete a curriculum map: List your required courses along the left side of the table, and your SLOs along the top of the table. Place the appropriate letter in the box that corresponds to the course in which students develop knowledge (K), analyze information (A), and synthesize information to solve complex problems (S) for each SLO.

5. When you're finished, save your work with a name that indicates the program, date, and fact that it's a Curriculum Map. Store in Document Management (under Assessment). For an example, see ***http:// www.unk.edu/uploadedFiles/academicaffairs/Assessment/Training/ CurriculumMapGuide.pdf*** And feel free to contact Beth for help.

**Visit our website for training materials, reports, checklists, NSSE data, and past Higher Learning Commission site visit reports and responses.**
**http://www.unk.edu/academicaffairs/assessment**

## Close that loop! Some examples…

Here are some examples of programs that have successfully closed the loop. Each case includes identification of a concern from the assessment process, implementation of an action plan to address the concern, and further assessment to see if the action plan resulted in elimination of the concern.

1. Communication Disorders: To address alumni and employer noted weaknesses, the department has added graduate courses that include child language and articulation disorders, added activities to practice creating computerized IEPs. A new faculty member was hired to address pediatric swallowing. There were no broad-based concerns regarding child language or articulation in the most recent survey data, suggesting the attention in these areas has been successful.

2. Business Education: The most significant change outside of hour requirements was the change made to BSED 302. To accommodate the added information including networking in this class, the amount of keyboarding instruction went from a 3-credit course to included for about 4-5 weeks in BSED 302. The emphasis is on how to teach keyboarding and technique rather than just doing assignments out of a keyboarding textbook similar to high school keyboarding. Because WordPerfect was no longer available in the computer lab, 6 weeks of software application programs was in response to student concerns. Current 6-12 business teachers gave suggestions with Web design, Dreamweaver, Indesign, Photoshop, and movie projects eventually being added. An accounting resource project was also added to the course. The feedback from cooperating teachers and students has been positive. Most stakeholders comment that the students are very well prepared.

3. Recreation and Tourism Management: Another very beneficial outcome of this assessment process has been the examination of how different concepts were being taught and in which classes they were being taught. We realized that some concepts are taught primarily in one class. When that was the case, those concepts needed more emphasis compared to other concepts that were discussed in two or more other classes. Our student achievement scores have been inching up as a result of the changes we have made to put more emphasis on those concepts that didn't get additional reinforcement in more than one class.