

ASSESSMENT SHOWCASE



Spring 2011

Academic Program Assessment

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SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS (SACS) COMMISSION ON COLLEGES

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern States. The Commission's mission is the enhancement of educational quality throughout the region and strives to improve the effectiveness of institutions by ensuring that institutions meet standards established by the higher education community that address the needs of society and students.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Vision

Southern Miss will emerge as the premier research university of the Gulf Coast by leading and empowering individuals to transform lives and communities.

Mission

The University of Southern Mississippi is a comprehensive research extensive university. Our primary mission is to cultivate intellectual development and creativity through the generation, dissemination, application, and preservation of knowledge.

Plan

Four priorities guide the University of Southern Mississippi, each helping to support three priorities, identified through a strategic planning process in 2007, provide a solid foundation for progress.

- f* A CLIMATE FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS
- f* IMAGE DEVELOPMENT
- f* CONNECTIONS WITH COMMUNITY
- f* HEALTHY MINDS, BODIES AND CAMPUSES

A CLIMATE FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our vision for a climate of academic success includes an environment that minimizes barriers for prospective and enrolled students; attracts and hires quality faculty and staff embraces and rec3 Td <00el i

IMAGE DEVELOPMENT

Image development promotes the internal and external reputation of the university and supports the vision of Southern Miss. Image development must be linked to what we do and how well we do it.

Supporting Measures: Results on Chronicle/Gallup Branding Index/Scores in U.S. News & World Report University rankings/Positive national media coverage/Satisfaction surveys of prospective and current students.

CONNECTIONS WITH COMMUNITY

We envision engaged citizens of Southern Miss (students, staff, faculty and alumni) who genuinely invest in their university community and their host communities (locally, regionally, nationally and globally). Our engaged citizens intentionally build community through learning and working together inside and outside the university in order to create and sustain a culture of respect and civility. We do this through hosting, serving, and sharing.

‡ + R V W L Q J U H I H U V W R W K H L P S R A T P U S D O M I N E F I R S T T O Y E L L E S T . F R Q W D F W P D G H

‡ 6 H U Y L Q J D O O R Z V X Q L Y H U V L W \ F L W L J H Q V O R G A N I Z A T I O N S T H R O U G H V O L U N T E E R I N G , S O H service learning, internships, applied scholarship and university/community partnerships.

‡ 6 K D O U S E J O I N H O W W E B U I L D R E L A T I O N S H I P S A N D E N G A G E I N S I D E T H E U N I V E R S I T Y A N D W I T H O U R H O S T communities.

Supporting Measures: Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory results/Student volunteer hours/Sq. ft of sharing (social/learning) space/Attendance at university-sponsored events/Externally funded applied initiatives/Total endowment.

HEALTHY MINDS, BODIES, & CAMPUSES

A culture that emphasizes a multidimensional healthy environment at Southern Miss is deemed central to attain the goals of this strategic plan. An emphasis on healthy lifestyles will enhance the quality of the Southern Miss experience and beyond. Appropriate efforts in campus sustainability and environmental education will contribute to an improved environmental impact and an informed perspective on resource use. Continuous efforts to maintain safety and security of all at Southern Miss will increase the potential to attain individual and community goals.

Supporting Measures: Participation in university-sponsored wellness/wellness activities/Employee absenteeism/Utility Costs/LEED certified buildings & renovations/Solid waste reduction/recycling/Sustainability within curricula/Noel-Levitz SSI response data in Safety and Security Scale grouping.

Assessment Policies

ADOPTED BY THE UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Participants:

- A. Educational Programs HL maintains the official inventory of USM academic programs (<http://www.mississippi.edu/research/stats.html>). To be in compliance with SACS policy, all degree programs in this inventory must assess program student learning outcomes in accordance with the Academic Program Assessment Plan and Report Guidelines.

Assessment Process Overview

SPRING 2011

2010-2011/2011 -2012 Academic Program Assessment Plans in place

An assessment plan includes:

- a) Program Mission/Purpose
- b) Student Learning Outcomes
- c) Measures and Targets

A complete 2010/2011 Academic Program Assessment Report includes:

- d) Findings (due May 31)
- e) Action Plans (due June 30) Action Plans are not required in Year 1 assessment cycle but are encouraged if applicable.
- f) Analysis (due June 30)
- g) ea0 -01jr-1.6(:)TJ T

Annual Reporting Fields

The 20102011 Assessment Report includes the following Annual Reporting data elements:

- f* PROGRAM SUMMARY
- f* ADDITIONAL ACTION PLANS/CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES
- f* ACTION PLAN TRACKING/CLOSING THE LOOP

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Programs are asked to summarize highlights of the past year for that particular academic program. This summary field is needed to provide context to an outside reviewer. Program contributions, activities, and accomplishments should be included in this field. Any data collected outside of the student learning outcome measures could be showcased in this field as well.

ADDITIONAL ACTION PLANS/CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

Any department level or program level action plans for improvement that are not necessarily tied to a specific student learning outcome should be described in this field.

ACTION PLAN TRACKING/CLOSING THE LOOP

Programs are asked to summarize the results of previous plan implementation. This is the opportunity for programs to close the assessment loop, report on the success (or not) of previously implemented action plans. It is very important for programs to respond to this section with thought and detail. This is where programs provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

SACS Fifth Year Interim Report

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is one of only a few accrediting commissions that conducts a comprehensive review of its institutions every ten years. Most accrediting agencies conduct such reviews every 5 to 7 years. The U.S. Department of Education requires accrediting agencies that it recognizes to monitor its institutions more often to ensure that institutions having access to federal funds continue to meet accreditation standards. To that end, the Commission on Colleges () is required to report on the success (or not) of previously implemented action plans. It is very important for programs to respond to this section with thought and detail. This is where programs provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

Student Learning Outcomes

A Student Learning Outcome (SLO) is a statement regarding knowledge, skills, and/or traits students should gain or enhance as a result of their engagement in an academic program. SLOs are the items that complete the sentence, "When they complete our program, students will be able to....." A program does not need to state all possible student learning outcomes, but it should try to articulate those that are fundamental. A program should rotate SLOs. Student learning outcomes should show progressive development between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.

Frameworks for Learning Outcomes

In *Assessing Student Learning, A Common Sense Guide*, Linda Sussek (2009) explains how u

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PHD
2009-2010 Programlevel Student Learning Outcomes

Research Outcome 1: Research Design

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ENGLISH MA

Programlevel Direct Measure

Seminar Papers--Close Reading

Random, anonymous seminar papers

CHILD AND FAMILY STUDIES BS

Program-level Indirect Measure

Exit Survey

Students shall complete a graduation exit survey.

Achievement Target:

Action Plan & Analysis

An action is an organized activity undertaken to help programs more effectively achieve intended outcomes, or an activity developed by program faculty to improve and grow the program for the future.

Analysis is the reflection of the program's findings within/for the criteria set for success on the program's intended outcomes. The Analysis is a summary of strengths and areas in which improvement is needed.

The End of Assessment Is Action

In *Assessment Clear and Simple*, Barbara E. Walvoord (2010) states the goal of assessment is based on information decision making.

“Assessment helps the program determine how well it is achieving its outcomes and suggest effective steps for improvement. That means you should conduct assessment for yourselves and your students, not just for compliance with accreditors. You don't need to collect data you don't use; it's more important to collect a small amount of useful data than to proliferate data that sit in a drawer or on a computer file. If you are collecting information you are not using, either start using it or stop collecting it. Instead of focusing on compl

CHLD AND FAMILY STUDS

Analysis

What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on

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ANNUAL REPORTING

COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES (HEALTH PROMOTION) BS

Program Summary

The Health Promotion degree option is the oldest in the department. Although the degree historically has held the highest number of students, there has been a recent shift of undergraduate students in this degree option to the Health Administration and Policy option. This shift should not be considered a negative for the department because the Health Promotion degree is consistent with high numbers. New additions of faculty for the degree, updated materials and technology for instructors, additional classes offered online, and an expansion of the practicum sites are all reasons the program remains strong. The Health Promotion degree includes coursework that is open to all students at USM. Many students from across a variety of disciplines take CHS courses as electives. Included are classes that have high enrollment (over 100 students that are not CHS majors per semester), such as Personal Health and Human Sexuality and moderate high enrollment (75 students that are not CHS majors per semester) such as Drugs in Society. CHS faculty are actively involved in research with others on campus, serve as resources for the USM faculty in various areas of health, and represent USM as state and national experts in health. As the degree focuses on being an active participant in the community, so does the requirements in of the courses for the CHS BS program. The courses require students to become cognizant of conducting community assessments, program development, program implementation, program evaluation, and working with diverse populations. The activities, then, are to actively engage the students with working in community health facility sites. Research and Scholarly Activities associated with all degree tracks relate to the many health care facilities in which CHS faculty collaboratively work. The working relationships involving research and scholarly activities with these facilities lead students into prosperous practicum experiences and possible employment, as well as affording faculty the opportunity to remain at the forefront in health research. For the academic year there were 9 publications, 8 professional presentations, and over 1 million dollars in external funding received. Public/Community service associated with the Health Promotion degree includes maintaining a working relationship with community health care settings, including hospitals, clinics, and specialty health and governmental sites. Assignments in the required coursework place students in settings to gain valuable experience while working to assist in community health enhancement. With solid coursework and fieldwork, the Health Promotion degree is preparing undergraduate entry-level health care workers. Many will pursue the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree at USM while others will pursue other advanced fields.

MARINE SCIENCES BS

Program Summary

The 2009-2010 cycle witnessed the inaugural graduating class of marine science undergraduate students. The program was originally developed in part to assist the U.S. Navy in better training their enlisted personnel for science and technical fields related to ocean dynamics, the program also serves the more traditional, civilian student body who seek science and technical training in the disciplinary field of marine science. In December 2009, the first class of MARBS enrollees graduated (100% retention/graduation rate); among this group, 9/10 (90%) graduated with academic honors. Three were promoted by the U.S. Navy during the course of their studies with USM, and another five are currently under review for promotion. Three of them (30%) have been admitted to graduate school and are currently seeking an M.S. degree in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) with MSU.

Student participation in field science and research cruises is an integral part of the curriculum. All students within MARBS program are afforded the opportunity to conduct an autonomous undergraduate research project, in

