

UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

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Our most important job is to help our students succeed!

From Data to Decisions – Examples from the SACSCOC Compliance Report

This month we wanted to share with you some of the examples of institutional effectiveness we used in our SACSCOC Compliance Report. These examples are from multiple sections of the Report and were drawn from several years of assessment reports. In most examples, we include the relevant goal, the data, and a brief description of what happened. A few examples are from five-year summaries and simply list the improvements made over that time period.

From Academic Records:

Goal 1: Improve user interface on transcript order options on National Student Clearinghouse.

Data: (Clearance rates; excludes walk-in orders of transcripts)

- 2018: 65.56% via electronic delivery methods; almost 7000 transcripts
- 2019: 80.58% via electronic delivery methods; almost 8000 transcripts
- 2020: 88.82% via electronic delivery methods; approximately 8000 transcripts (data reported prior to end of year)

Student feedback noted that the most expedient option for electronically ordering transcripts was listed fourth in a drop-down menu. Drop-down menu was revised to move most expedient option to be listed first.

From University Advancement:

Goal 3: Maximize resources with more efficient/cost-effective processes by providing digital endowment investment and impact reports to donors.

Measurement: Cost of mailing endowment reports vs. electronically sending reports to donors

Data:

- FY2019: 273 total reports printed/mailed; cost of printing materials: \$1,948.99; cost of postage: \$300.30

- FY2021: 230 digital and 57 printed/mailed; cost of printing materials: \$1,240.73; cost of postage: \$62.70

In addition to decreasing the cost of printing and mailing materials, University Advancement received positive feedback from several donors through email. One donor who received the materials electronically decided to increase the number of awards made possible through his endowment and contributed an additional \$30,000 to the endowment.

From History and Philosophy:

SLO 3: Students will develop research skills that promote the acquisition of historical knowledge and emphasize interpretation.

Assessment: Capstone research paper in HIST 499; this example will focus on “Thesis”

Benchmark: 80% of papers will earn “Meets Expectations” or higher on rubric category “Thesis”

Data:

- 2017: 50% of papers met the benchmark rating
- 2019: 87.5% of papers met the benchmark rating
- 2021: 83.3% of papers met the benchmark rating

After the 2017 cycle, History faculty partnered with the Writing Center. Students enrolled in HIST 299 were required to use the Writing Center for both writing clarity and thesis development. Upper division students were also encouraged to use the Writing Center. After the 2019 cycle, although faculty noted an improvement in student performance in the “Thesis” category, they also documented discrepancies in the way the rubric was being applied by individual faculty members, resulting in little correlation in scoring. The faculty planned to implement a task force to streamline assessments and rubrics and to develop calibration sessions to ensure that rubrics are being applied consistently across all faculty. However, the

pandemic interfered with those plans, and the task force was put on hold until the campus could return to face-to-face courses. The 2021 report noted that COVID restrictions had led to some streamlining that proved instructive, so the task force, once implemented, will address those findings as well.

From **Mass Media and Strategic**

Communication:

SLO 1: Produce advanced written, visual, and/or oral communications that effectively achieve strategic communication objectives.

Assessment: Multiple assessments; this example will focus on an APA Literature Review assessed in Communications 701

Benchmark: 80% of students enrolled in the course will score at least 80% on this assessment

Data:

- 2020: 100% scored 80% or higher
- 2021: 100% scored 80% or higher

Assignment was modified from a 2-3 page literature review to a detailed annotated bibliography completed as a group project. The change was made due to previous cohorts' lack of confidence in writing basic APA citations and reading/summarizing scholarly articles. The instructor noted that the students in the 2021 cohort demonstrated a better understanding of APA citations and article comprehension than previous cohorts.

From **Agriculture and Applied Sciences,**

B.S.A., General Agriculture:

Students are required to create a Weed Science ID Collection Notebook as part of a course requirement, and this is used as an assessment for an SLO focusing on demonstrating an understanding of acceptable scientific practices in the plant and soil science industry. For several years, students failed to meet the benchmark of proficiency. Faculty instituted the submission of a mid-term collection as well as a final collection to ensure that students had a good start to their collection by the middle of the semester and that students received feedback on their work to date. In addition, the instructors began showing both good and bad examples from previous classes to help students fully understand what must be done to earn an acceptable grade on the collection.

A series of improvements by **Biological Sciences** on their BIOL 120 course:

- Lecture questions were reworded to make them more general and to improve clarity.
- Low student performance on plant evolution question led to reworking the way the topic is presented in lecture.
- Lab manuals were reworked to allow students more practice in formulating their own hypotheses and predictions.
- Instructors worked together to standardize presentation of the scientific method.

A series of improvements by **Mathematics and Statistics** on their MATH 110 course:

- Course is part of a sequence; content within the sequence was re-arranged to provide smoother transition.
- Topic of regression was difficult for students; topic sequences were changed so that regression would be introduced in Math 100 and presented again in Math 110 to increase exposure to the topic.
- Based on feedback from the Faculty Senate Committee on Instruction, benchmarks were increased and assessments changed from final exam questions to assignments completed during lab portion of the class.

From **Student Health and Counseling:**

Goal 1: Provide evidence-based, cost-effective, and timely physical and mental health clinical services to students.

Data:

- 2019: 87% of women's health and STI clinic patients were female.
- 2020: 56% of STD Services patients were male, representing a 5% increase in total males served and 52% increase in number of male encounters.

In 2019, Student Health and Counseling identified males as an underserved population for STI and prevention services. The unit developed a strategic plan for engaging males and partnered with the Weakley County Health Department in their efforts to increase the number of male patients served. The strategic plan to engage males in STD clinic was implemented and resulted in a 52% increase in male encounters.