

## **Outcomes Assessment Committee 2014-15 Report to the Faculty**

In the academic year 2013-2014, the Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC) revised its charge in the interest of becoming a consultative body for departments as they developed and implemented student learning goals/outcomes and assessment plans. In order to support that new role and to take an inventory of where departments are in the assessment process, among other outcomes assessment projects, we devoted the most time and resources in the 2014-2015 academic year to reviewing each department's 2013-2014 annual reviews.

In Fall 2014, after deciding on our priorities for the academic year, we conducted a calibration session, in which we analyzed and discussed three sample annual reports. Based on that session, we articulated goals for each department's improving their reports. Kate Goddard created a detailed list of questions to consider as we read the reports; Juan-Ramón de Arana created a flow chart that elaborated the steps of the assessment process. Then, we divided the academic departments among the OAC members, and visited each department that invited us its department meeting. Our main purpose was to help departments improve their student learning goals and assessment plans, to make the assessment process more transparent, and to reassure departments that their reports are more than mere busy work: they are read and they matter. We expect stronger departmental learning goals and assessment plans at the end of this year and in future years.

The urgency of this work increased late in the Fall semester, when the committee received word that Ursinus would be asked to submit a monitoring report to Middle States. Our monitoring report must show that we are systematically and comprehensively assessing student learning. Because the monitoring report is due in April 2016, that means that departments, as well as the college as a whole, must complete an assessment this year, in order to show that we are making improvements based on our assessment results. OAC is now in the process of communicating the importance of this report to faculty and staff and working with departments to improve their assessment plans and implement measurable learning goals.

In visiting departments, we realized that some aspects of the assessment process needed additional clarification for faculty. As a result of these meetings with individual departments, we have revised the annual report form; the new form clarifies previously murky areas, gives more instruction, and emphasizes "closing the loop," i.e., making changes based on the results of the assessment. We have also composed a data sheet explaining terminology, and we attached it with the annual report form.

We have also implemented a series of workshops in Spring 2015 (April 15-18) to give faculty more information and suggestions about their learning goals/outcomes, their assessments for this year, and their assessment plans for next year.

The Outcomes Assessment Committee is committed to helping departments feel more comfortable and competent with the assessment process. We are always available to meet with departments to answer questions and serve as a sounding board for their assessment ideas. We also welcome suggestions for how to support departments better.

*Outcomes Assessment Committee*

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