

Customized, Meaningful, Manageable: Assessment at Colorado College - Handout

2018 Assessment Institute in Indianapolis

Session: Building Effective Assessment at Small Institutions

Track 15I; Marriott 3; Tuesday, October 23; 9:30-10:30 am

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About Colorado College:

- Selective liberal arts college (#27 in USNWR liberal arts colleges rankings)
- Student population: 2235 degree-seeking undergraduates, 38 degree-seeking MAT students
- Block Plan: Students take/faculty teach one course at a time for 18 days; 8 blocks/year + summer
- Academic culture is individualistic and freewheeling; originally very assessment-resistant
- Current assessment process dates from 2008-2009 (mandate from Deans' Office)

Meaningful assessment

- Focus on direct assessment
- Built entirely on faculty/co-curricular office interests and concerns
- Built entirely on learning outcomes/curricular goals designed by departments/programs/offices
- Can be blended with program evaluation/indirect assessment

Manageable assessment

- 2-year, 4-semester schedule: identify project, collect information, review and reflect, move forward
- Departments/programs can request flexibility with regard to the schedule if needed
- Assessment report templates included in this handout
- "Department of Criminology" examples on website
- Overseen by Assessment Committee (three professors, a dean and myself; may re-add a librarian)

Customized assessment

- Department/program/office-specific
- Built on relationships, care and compassion
- Strengthened by my background as a sociology professor (including at CC)
- Minimal technology: Canvas and ccassess@coloradocollege.edu only

Continuous improvement

- Frequent interaction with faculty to solicit suggestions for process improvement
- Current process is third iteration since 2008-2009
 - First, large annual reports every other year
 - Second, small reports every semester built on list of required components
 - Now, question-driven reports every semester
- 4-semester plan was originally suggested by a professor to allow time for reflection on findings
- Question-driven reports were originally suggested by a professor on the committee

(over)

My role as Director of Assessment

- Consultant-educator
 - Educate campus about good assessment practices through group/individual meetings
 - Maintain and update extensive educational website
 - Generate process documents for committee
 - Generate requested documents for faculty/offices, such as research on what other institutions are doing (e.g., annotated learning outcomes collections)
- Strategic co-thinker: brainstorm with departments about situations and possibilities (involves learning about important priorities across disciplines and co-curricular offices)
- Listen, listen, listen! Support, support, support! Build bridges!

Website: <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/assessment/>

- Intended as internal education/information source and external education source
- What is assessment and why do it? (3 sub-pages)
- How to assess learning (19 subpages; includes our current schedule and report templates)
- Assessment glossary
- Assessment at CC
- External resources
- Multiple attached documents

Moving forward

- Culturally responsive assessment
- General education/institutional assessment
- Co-curricular assessment

Semester 1 Assessment Report

As a reminder, the current four-semester assessment calendar works as follows:

Semester 1: Plan an assessment project based on a learning situation of interest

Semester 2: Gather information about current student learning

Semester 3: Evaluate and reflect on findings from semester 2

Semester 4: Prepare to implement changes based on semester 3; begin implementing if possible

Please contact Amanda Udis-Kessler, Director of Assessment and Program Review, with questions: audiskessler@coloradocollege.edu. The CC assessment website (<https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/assessment/>) and its many subpages provide a great deal of information about how to do quality assessment.

Instructions:

- Your department's answers to the following questions constitute the entire report required by the assessment committee for semester one.
- If your department wishes to send supplementary materials in addition to the Semester 1 report, please email the files to the committee at ccassess@coloradocollege.edu. (Additional files are not required.)
- Type your answers directly into this word file. The space for each question will expand as needed.
- Please rename this file when you save your answers. Be sure to include your department/program's name at the beginning of the filename.

Program or Department Name:

Date:

Your Name:

Office Phone Number:

1. Which learning outcomes (new or previously developed) will your department/program consider during this round of assessment?
2. Why are these outcomes of interest to your department/program at this time?
3. How do the learning outcomes relate to one or more curricular goals?
4. What information do you need to collect in order to better understand whether students are learning the knowledge and/or skills covered in these learning outcomes?
5. When and how will you gather this information?
6. How much information will you collect? Will you have enough information to look for patterns in student learning?
7. Is there anything the assessment committee can do for or provide to support your department as you start this new project? For example: support with your rubric design, ideas for data to gather, etc.
8. Who will be the representative for your department/program during Semester 2 of this assessment cycle?

Semester 2 Assessment Report

As a reminder, the current four-semester assessment calendar works as follows:

Semester 1: Plan an assessment project based on a learning situation of interest

Semester 2: Gather information about current student learning

Semester 3: Evaluate and reflect on findings from semester 2

Semester 4: Prepare to implement changes based on semester 3; begin implementing if possible

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Instructions:

- Your department's answers to the following questions constitute the entire report required by the assessment committee for semester two.
- Please attach the supplementary files mentioned in Question 4 below or email them separately to the committee at ccassess@coloradocollege.edu.
- Type your answers directly into this word file. The space for each question will expand as needed.
- Please rename this file when you save your answers. Be sure to include your department/program's name at the beginning of the filename.

Program or Department Name:

Date:

Your Name:

Office Phone Number:

1. So that the committee can read this document independently of the last report, please tell us what learning outcome(s) you are assessing.
2. Were you able to carry out the assessment project you described in your semester 1 report? Did your assessment project change in any way from what you intended?
3. How exactly did you gather the information? What kind of assignments, rubrics, or other assessment tools did you use?
4. Please attach all assignments, rubrics, and other assessment tools to this report. [required]
5. Did you gather enough information to evaluate the desired student learning outcomes? If not, is there a way to supplement the information you have?
6. Who will be the assessment representative for your program or department during Semester 3 of the assessment cycle?
7. Would you or someone in your department like to serve on the Assessment Committee? If so, please let us know.

Semester 3 Assessment Report

As a reminder, the current four-semester assessment calendar works as follows:

Semester 1: Plan an assessment project based on a learning situation of interest

Semester 2: Gather information about current student learning

Semester 3: Evaluate and reflect on findings from semester 2

Semester 4: Prepare to implement changes based on semester 3; begin implementing if possible

Please contact Amanda Udis-Kessler, Director of Assessment and Program Review, with questions:
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The CC assessment website (<https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/assessment/>) and its many subpages provide a great deal of information about how to do quality assessment.

Instructions:

- Your department's answers to the following questions constitute the entire report required by the assessment committee for semester three.
- If your department wishes to send supplementary materials in addition to the Semester 3 report, please email the files to the committee at ccassess@coloradocollege.edu. (Additional files are not required.)
- Type your answers directly into this word file. The space for each question will expand as needed.
- Please rename this file when you save your answers. Be sure to include your department/program's name at the beginning of the filename.

Program or Department Name:

Date:

Your Name:

Office Phone Number:

1. So that the committee can read this document independently of earlier reports, please tell us what learning outcome(s) you are assessing.
2. What percentage of students fulfilled each learning outcome you considered?
3. Were there any student demographic patterns (gender, ethnicity, major/non-major, year, etc.) in which particular groups of students were more or less successful in meeting the learning objectives? If so, what do these patterns tell you?
4. All in all, was your original question answered by your findings?
5. Can you identify any departmental /program changes (curricular, pedagogical, other) that might improve student learning in the area of assessment focus?
6. Have you learned anything else from this process not covered by the above questions?
7. Who will be the assessment representative for your program or department during Semester 4 of the assessment cycle?

Semester 4 Assessment Report

As a reminder, the current four-semester assessment calendar works as follows: [see above]

Please contact Amanda Udis-Kessler, Director of Assessment and Program Review, with questions...

Instructions:

- Your department's answers to the following questions constitute the entire report required by the assessment committee for semester four.
- Please attach the supplementary files mentioned in Question 10 below or email them separately to the committee at ccassess@coloradocollege.edu.
- Type your answers directly into this word file. The space for each question will expand as needed.
- Please rename this file when you save your answers. Be sure to include your department/program's name at the beginning of the filename.

Program or Department Name:

Date:

Your Name:

Office Phone Number:

1. So that the committee can read this document independently of earlier reports, please tell us what learning outcome(s) you are assessing.
2. What actions are you taking or planning to take as a follow-up to your findings in Semester 3? When are you planning to take them?
3. Did any new or refined questions or areas of concern emerge from this assessment process? If so what?
4. Colorado College seeks to support assessment that is meaningful, manageable, and measurable (or demonstrable). Would you say your process over the past two years has met these goals? If so, what about the process enabled it to succeed? If your process did not meet these goals, why not?
5. What have you found unnecessarily challenging with the assessment process that we might be able to address? (Please remember: the committee cannot exempt departments/programs from direct assessment.)
6. How, if at all, could the assessment process be modified to make it more meaningful?
7. Is there anything else the College can do to support you in your assessment work?
8. Would you or someone in your department like to serve on the assessment committee? If so, let us know.
9. Who will be the assessment representative for your program or department during Semester 1 of the next assessment cycle?
10. For our records, please attach your mission statement, curricular goals and learning outcomes in their most current form.