

History of Assessment in Webster's School of Business and Technology (SBT)

When did SBT Assessment efforts begin?

In Fall 2003, the dean and the SBT Leadership Team began the formal planning process with the goal of successfully creating an academic assessment plan, as well as a culture of assessment, for the SBT.

Who was involved?

In Spring 2004, the Dean recruited an assessment consultant at the recommendation of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The result was the temporary hire of the director of assessment from Winona State University as a consultant to work with our department chairs and faculty assessment coordinators to ensure that each department was creating and implementing a viable academic assessment plan that would provide data, evaluations and insights to improve the curriculum and student learning.

These six faculty took a leadership role in engaging other faculty to create and support academic assessment. The collective goal was to include all faculty in the process, and to ensure that the faculty adopted a culture of assessment within the SBT – both in St. Louis and at the extended campuses.

What approach was adopted?

The SBT has adopted a Program Evaluation approach.

For what programs was assessment designed?

The faculty has determined Program Level Learning Outcomes for each of SBT's 24 programs. These are supported by course level learning outcomes for every required and elective course in the program. There is a plan in place to ensure that all programs will be assessed within a five year period, on a recurring schedule. (See HLC.3.a_SBT_Assessment_5_Year_Plan)

What was the driving philosophy?

The driving philosophy stems from the SBT's Consistency Project, a quality initiative which began in 2000 to ensure that the curriculum for each of SBT's programs was the same, no matter where in the world of Webster it was taught. There are many facets to the Consistency Project, but the primary components include the following for each course taught: An approved textbook list; Faculty Hiring Guides; Faculty Course Guides and Sample Syllabi. This was an important precursor for assessment, because unless the curriculum was consistently taught, assessment would be futile. (The Faculty Course Guides and Sample Syllabi contain Course Level Learning Outcomes for every course to ensure that Program Level Learning Outcomes are being taught in the curriculum in a standard way).

In Spring 2004, each of the department chairs and assessment coordinators attended an AACSB workshop on Academic Assessment. They, and the faculty who were appointed

as assessment coordinators for each department, then worked with the assessment consultant to establish program level learning outcomes for representative programs in Summer 2004.

What methods and approaches were chosen?

Details are available. See [HLC3.a_Assessment_Program_Assignment_Template_2006-07_SBT](#)

How were the extended campus faculty involved in the process? What assurances are there that everyone is trained and participating?

In Fall 2004, assessment piloting began in some courses at the home campus only; however, academic assessment was the primary topic of SBT's presentation to the campus directors at the annual meeting in St. Louis that year.

In Spring 2005, assessment piloting began at selected extended campuses. The regional academic directors of those campuses met with the SBT Assessment Team several times during Spring 2005 to determine a model of assessment (dubbed "Extended Site Model") that would work at the extended campuses. Feedback from the pilot helped improve the model.

At the Fall 2005 Directors' meeting, SBT introduced the "Extended Site Model" of Assessment to the directors, and an announcement was made as to which courses would be assessed during the academic year. A DVD of the presentation was created and sent to each Director so that they could ensure that their faculty was well informed about assessment.

The "Extended Site Model" was launched in Spring 2006 as a pilot intended to last through Spring 2007. Based on experiences of administrators at the home campus as well as the feedback provided by the faculty and directors at the extended campuses, the "Extended Site Model" was improved and made simpler with each term of the pilot.

Also during Academic Year 2005-06, the "SBT Faculty Course Information" channel (SBT Channel) was placed on the Webster University portal, accessible by all directors and all faculty across the world of Webster. This site contains all information needed by faculty for both the Consistency Project and Academic Assessment Program. The site includes a feature which allows instructors to submit their assessment results (summary report) online to the Office of Academic Assessment.

Additionally, an electronic newsletter about the assessment process and progress was rolled out in Spring 2, 2006. It is produced once a term, allowing all faculty to know and understand the process of assessment, the schedule of assessment, and the results of data analysis from the information they provide to St. Louis faculty.

Finally, there is a mechanism in place to report to the Office of the SBT Dean those course/instructors/sites for which no data (summary reports) are received. Appropriate action will be taken, depending upon the situation, to ensure that no faculty can opt out of the process. Since the university has added a statement to all faculty contracts indicating that assessment, when asked, is not an optional activity, and that those who do not cooperate may be dismissed.

How are data managed?

Data are managed electronically. All campuses which offer a course during the term in which assessment data are being collected for that course are asked to assure that the instructor submits the results (summary report) to the University's Office of Academic Assessment. The director of assessment then sends the aggregate data for the course to the associate dean who conveys it to appropriate departmental faculty for review and analysis.

Closing the Feedback Loop

In Summer 2006, the SBT appointed a faculty member as program director for every program to ensure that the data collected from assessment are systematically reviewed and recommendations made and implemented. The primary responsibility of this appointment is to ensure that the curriculum is kept up-to-date. This is done largely by the program director's review and analysis of assessment data with a committee of content experts who will then make recommendations to the department faculty and implement improvements to the curriculum.

Reports are sent to the Office of the Dean by the chair/program director/assessment coordinator and reviewed by the SBT Assessment Team.

*These reviews will take place the term after the data are received. Curricular recommendations and changes will be made when enough data are collected. This will vary by program because some programs are smaller than others, resulting in fewer data points. Course Guides, Sample Syllabi, and Faculty Assessment Packets will be updated at that time, and the changes are communicated to extended campus faculty.

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*Amended February 2007 - The data review will occur when adequate data are received, usually after one academic year of data have been collected.

PM

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