SACS, Assessment & WEAVEonline®

In early fall 2010, George Mason University will submit documents to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) for our reaffirmation of accreditation. Among the documents, there must be a response from each unit addressing the following requirement listed in the “Principles of Accreditation:"

“The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs (including student learning outcomes for educational programs) and its administrative and educational support services: assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.”

All university units, both academic and support, must identify their goals, how they are assessing them and how that information is used to improve programs. SACS requires that this information be available electronically to the off-site review team. Mason has purchased a license to WEAVEonline®, an assessment system designed to meet reporting requirements as well as manage assessment activities.

We need at least two complete assessment cycles for our reaffirmation of accreditation. Cycle I was closed on June 30, 2009 and Cycle II opened this fall. All units should now be working in Cycle II. Select examples of good unit assessments in WEAVEonline® are posted, with permission from the units, at https://weave.gmu.edu.

Assessment Example

Below is a section from the Administration of Justice, BS degree program:

**Outcome:** Written and oral communication

“ADJ majors will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.”

**Related Measures:** Oral Communication

“ADJ 303 (Experience the Criminal Justice System) is our department’s writing intensive synthesis course. The final oral presentation in this course is graded using a standardized grading rubric by both the instructor and an outside justice professional, such as a judge or police administrator. These grades will be used to classify students as strong, adequate, or weak on this objective.”

**Source of Evidence:** Academic Direct Measure

**Achievement Target:** 75% of students will be assessed as strong or adequate on this measure.

**Findings (Cycle I):** Achievement Target: Met

“The findings are based on assessments of 52 oral presentations given in three ADJ 303 courses. This course is designed to give ADJ students a firsthand, practical journey through the criminal justice process and system. The course requires students to write a series of papers based on a specific criminal case. Each paper examines the case from a different perspective. For example, the paper used in this assessment addressed the case and particular crime involved from an academic perspective, exploring what is known about this type of crime. A second paper requires either interviews with individuals involved in the case, such as police investigators, and/or observation of the trial for this case or a similar case. Individual faculty vary somewhat in how this course is taught, but all require at least three 5+ page papers. The course culminates in an oral presentation that ties together the three (or more) papers and addresses the question: Was justice served in this case?

The presentations were judged by two raters. We try to recruit practicing professionals in the criminal justice field to help rate these oral presentations. This was successfully done for two of these three classes. For the third class, a second faculty member provided the second set of ratings. All presentations were rated on five dimensions. All items were rate on a five point scale (1=not effective; 2=somewhat effective; 3=effective; 4=very effective; 5=highly effective).”

*The rest of the ADJ assessment, along with other academic and administrative unit examples, can be found at https://weave.gmu.edu.*
WEAVEonline® Timeline for SACS (2009-11)

**Cycle I Completed**

- Analyze the results of assessments and describe how results will be used.
- Enter into the WEAVEonline® Action Plan module.
- Action plans developed in Cycle I can continue to be updated in the succeeding cycles.

**Cycle I**
Closed June 30, 2009

**Fall 2009 - Spring 2010**
See specific hints on https://weave.gmu.edu.

- Cycle II is open. You will see Mission, Goals and Outcomes rolled forward from Cycle 1. Please verify they are correct and run a Detailed Assessment Report to check formatting.**
- **Assess 3 outcomes.**
  - You may:
    - Repeat or modify previous measures
    - Select new outcomes to measure
    - Assess the same outcomes from Cycle I
- Enter measures and assessment plans.
- Administrative units follow the same procedure for their outcomes.
- Conduct assessments of learning outcomes.
- Enter the findings and new action plans (include comments & updates on Cycle I action plans) in CYCLE II by June 30, 2010.
- Update the Action Plan tracking in WEAVEonline®
- Mason’s SACS reports are due in September 2010. Your Weave material is very important and needs to be complete.
- Test your report and make corrections by June 30, 2010.**

**Fall 2010 - Spring 2011**

- SACS reports are evaluated by off-site teams in Fall 2010.
- The campus visit takes place in March 2011.
- After reaccreditation, the next step will be to move to a two year assessment cycle whereby each unit will report on assessment activity every other year rather than annually.
- Specific information will be provided at a later date.

**Upcoming Assessment Workshops**

- **Learning Outcomes**
  - February 9
  - 10:00 - 11:30am
- **WEAVEonline®**
  - February 17
  - 1:30 - 3:00pm
- **Curriculum Mapping**
  - March 9
  - 10:00 - 11:30am
- **Developing Rubrics**
  - March 30
  - 10:00 - 11:30am
- **Using Assessment Data**
  - April 6
  - 10:00 - 11:30am

Visit our website regularly to see what workshops have been added to the schedule.

*Register online for our workshops at https://assessment.gmu.edu/workshops.cfm

**OIA Staff**

- **Karen Gentemann**: Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness
genteman@gmu.edu
- **Ying Zhou**: Director of OIA
  yzhou@gmu.edu
- **Mary Zamon**: Associate Director of OIA
  mzamon@gmu.edu
- **Sarah Baker**: Assessment Specialist
  sbaker@gmu.edu
- **Rawa Jassem**: Applications Analyst
  rjassem1@gmu.edu
- **Karen Manley**: Assessment Support Coordinator
  kmanley@gmu.edu
- **Ashley M. Sieman**: Assessment Analyst
  asieman@gmu.edu

**To learn more about assessment, or to register for one of our workshops, visit https://assessment.gmu.edu.**

Please submit feedback on this publication to Karen Manley, Eye on Assessment Editor: kmanley@gmu.edu 703-993-8834  MSN 3D2