

UNM-Valencia State of Assessment Report

2013-2014 Assessment Period

Overview:

When I arrived at UNM-Valencia in September 2014, I was extremely pleased by the presence of a culture of assessment on the campus. We have an active CARC, and a CARC chairperson who has devoted herself to creating a meaningful assessment system over the past several years. Because of her work, all academic areas of the college report on student learning outcomes, and the importance of the process seems to be respected. The CARC focuses their work on program assessment in the fall and course by course assessment in the spring, although we may need to adjust that schedule based on the needs of main campuses' reporting structure. Because the faculty already are familiar and comfortable with the assessment process, this should not be an issue. UNM-Valencia has six academic divisions with oversight of twenty-eight associate degree and certificate programs.

Academic Program Maturity Rubric Scoring and Evaluation:

I believe that the process of assessment at UNM-Valencia is known and appreciated. However, as is reflected in the maturity scores, I believe there many also be a bit of "grade inflation" in play. The vast majority of our programs rank at the highest levels on the maturity rubric as determined by the CARC and the Valencia rubric already in place. This seems to stem from a good intention – to foster the growth of a culture of assessment on campus. The CARC is extremely helpful and nurturing of the academic leaders who are reporting the assessment results, and as a result may not give strong enough advice about how to improve the assessment system overall. For example, some programs do not have a firm-enough grasp of the difference between student learning outcomes' assessment and program assessment. Additionally, as a part of the maturing process, we need to create a more consistent system of embedded assessment activities. Currently, we do not have all adjunct faculty participating in assessment using such embedded assessment activities, but that is the goal.

During the 2013-2014 cycle of assessment, there were only two programs that did not submit assessment data: the associate of applied science degree and certificate in Information Technology. These two programs are very much in flux. One full-time faculty member retired at the end of the 2012-2013 academic year, and then the only other full-time faculty member in the program resigned at the end of summer 2014. We are currently in the process of completely overhauling this program, with a focus on stackable certificates and Health Information Technology, due to a new grant that the campus received in fall 2014.

For the 2014-2015 cycle of assessment, UNM-Valencia will work on consistency. The faculty have now created a strong assessment platform, so strengthening all the components of the system will become the priority. Bringing all adjunct faculty into the assessment process will be one goal, as well as creating more standardization in the area of assessment methods and techniques. I believe that the faculty would benefit from some assessment workshops across the year, and I intend to make assessment one of the main topics of our fall orientation sessions. Another possibility is to hold an “Assessment Day” towards the end of the academic year to wrap up activities from the prior year and look forward to the subsequent year. I will reiterate that I am very pleased with the progress of UNM-Valencia. The hard part – the cultural piece – has been accomplished. Now, we look forward to tweaking the system to make it more rich and to ensure that we are successfully “closing the loop” with our recommended actions designed to improve student learning.

Reported by:

Dr. Laura Musselwhite
Dean of Instruction, UNM-Valencia