

# Summary Report of Departmental ASLP Submissions

## Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP) Process

2012-13 academic year

2013-14 academic year

2014-15 academic year

2015-16 academic year

2016-17 academic year

2017-18 academic year

2018-19 academic year

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## Introduction: ASLP Process

To create a culture of assessment on campus, the newly formed Assessment Committee at USM (comprised of faculty and administrators) developed a systematic approach in the fall 2012 for gathering information from all academic programs regarding their assessment activities--centered on improving student learning. An in-house form was designed, called the Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP). This form was initially developed to provide a template that would help academic programs understand the NEASC standards in assessing student learning, as well as, the importance of using assessment results for program improvement. The ASLP form was first distributed at the end of the 2012-13 academic year to each department/program. After some initial feedback from faculty, the ASLP form was slightly revised in order to provide clearer directions and examples on the assessment process and then was distributed again at the end of the following academic year, 2013-14. Going forward, all Department Chairs were informed that the ASLP process was going to be an ongoing annual process to document assessment initiatives and activities from each program. This summary report outlines the ASLP process and participation (of each academic department on the campus) for each academic year, to date. This report does not report the quality of the assessment plans.

### 2012-13 Results

In spring 2013, there were 34 departments (out of 47) who completed an ASLP form, and 13 departments who did not submit a form. According to the results, several departments had an assessment process already in place due to their individual program accreditation criteria; whereas other departments were in the early stages of assessment. There were 10 departments that honestly reported they had not started their assessment activities yet (such as, writing or measuring student learning outcomes). Information from the completed ASLP forms was used to give an update to the NEASC commission, on our assessment progress during the summer 2013. Furthermore, the ASLP results informed the Assessment Committee that many academic programs needed to be educated on the program assessment process.

### 2013-14 Results

During the 2013-14 year, the Assessment Committee reached out primarily to those departments who had not yet begun any assessment activities and offered assistance; that is, attended departmental meetings to discuss assessment. In the spring 2014, all faculty were invited to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> annual assessment workshop which focused on “best practices in assessment” and “developing student learning outcomes” (21 faculty attended representing 13 departments). At the end of the academic year, only 4 departments submitted an ASLP form. Many departments reported no major changes in their assessment activities, due to organizational and leadership changes at the institution; therefore, very few departments submitted an updated ASLP form for the 2013-14 year.

### 2014-15 Results

During the 2014-15 academic year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual assessment workshop was conducted for the faculty during the spring 2015 year (26 faculty attended representing 18 departments). The assessment

workshop focused on “addressing the NEASC assessment standards” and “examining assessment methods”; which included presentations from two faculty members who had been doing some classroom assessment projects. A faculty discussion during the workshop informed the Assessment Committee that the departments would like to have written feedback regarding their submitted ASLP forms to help direct and inform them on how to improve their assessment plans for the following academic year. At the end of the academic 2014-15 year, nearly all academic programs submitted an updated ASLP form (i.e. 39 out of 41). As shown on the 2015 ASLP forms, most of the departments had identified student learning outcomes, which was a significant improvement from the 2013 ASLP’s. The Assessment Committee reviewed all the ASLP forms during the summer months, and developed an ASLP-feedback form so that Department Chairs could be given specific guidance on how they might enhance their assessment plans.

### **2015-16 Results**

During the 2015-16 academic year, there was a dramatic increase in faculty and departmental participation on campus in regards to assessment efforts. The Assessment Committee sought out three faculty members who were doing assessment effectively and asked them to be presenters and facilitators for a series of assessment workshops for faculty members. The Provost encouraged faculty participation by offering small stipends for attendance. As a result, most programs had at least one representative at the workshops, and all programs submitted a 2016 ASLP form by the end of the academic year. By reviewing the ASLP forms, it was clear that even though all departments submitted an ASLP form, many academic programs were still struggling with assessment methods and finding it difficult to use their assessment results.

### **2016-17 Results**

During the 2016-17 year, the Provost’s Office financially supported a Mini-Assessment Conference (a one-day conference) to help faculty members learn more about assessing student learning. The Center for Collaboration & Development and the Assessment Committee planned the assessment event in March 2017, which included a guest speaker/assessment scholar from Connecticut College (i.e. Michael Reder) who conducted two interactive workshops on teaching, learning, and assessment. Additionally, four USM faculty members gave presentations on their classroom assessment strategies. There were 75 faculty members who registered and 69 participated in the hands-on workshops. According to the feedback about the conference, many faculty members expressed that the sessions were worth attending and reported that they learned something new about assessment methods.

At the end of the academic year, when all academic programs were required to complete their ASLP forms (i.e. document their program assessment activities), several programs stated that they were reviewing their curriculum, revisiting their student learning outcomes, and examining their current assessment methods. Even though there are still a small number of academic programs struggling with how to assess student learning, the majority of the programs are beginning to understand the program assessment process and are making positive changes.

## 2017-18 Results

During the 2017-18 year, there were several faculty members who contacted the Office of Academic Assessment about resources on how to use their assessment results. Therefore, the Assessment Committee sponsored an Assessment workshop on “Using Assessment Results for a Course/Program Assessment”. The workshop consisted of four presentations from faculty in various programs (Honors Program, Business Program, Professional Education, and Academic Advising); all who explained their process of using their data/evidence to make program improvements. There were 28 faculty members who attended, representing 15 academic departments. The feedback from the attendees was very positive; many said they felt the faculty presentations were very helpful and informative, and several of them said they gained some insights on how others are making decisions based upon their assessment results.

Regarding the ASLP forms that were collected at the end of the academic year, there were 4 academic programs who did not submit their program assessment forms (due to issues in their departments). Out of the 44 programs who submitted their assessment plans, there were 18 programs who had not yet published (or posted) their student learning outcomes on their websites (some were revisiting or revising them). Most programs reported that they examined their assessment results and made at least one small programmatic change or improvement (five departments did not make any changes).

## 2018-19 Results

During the 2018-19 year, the Academic Deans, Assistant Provost, and Director of Office of Academic Assessment continued planning outreach activities to assist individual programs who were still having trouble making progress on their program assessment plans. These administrators attended departmental and college meetings to discuss program assessment plans and explain accreditation assessment standards. In addition, in March 2019, the Assessment Committee hosted an “Assessment Walk-in Day” (on a Friday) which allowed Program Chairs and faculty members an opportunity to “drop-in” to one location, have lunch, and talk about their assessment questions or issues, and pick-up some resources (assessment articles, curriculum maps, etc). The Assessment Committee members were available to offer individualized assistance to help address specific concerns of those who attended; there were 12 academic departments represented. Based upon the feedback from attendees, each of those academic programs left with a clearer vision of how to implement their assessment plan moving forward.

At the end of the 2018-19 academic year, 47 academic programs submitted an ASLP plan, and nearly all programs made some curriculum improvements based upon their assessment results. Most departments made changes at both the program and course level with the intention of enhancing student learning and classroom teaching.

*[\\*Please see the Academic Assessment website \(ASLP webpage\) for information on the Assessment of Student Learning Plans \(ASLP\) forms, ASLP resources for faculty, program improvement reports, and summary reports.](#)*