

YU Assessment Tip of the Month!  
September 2016

*Please share with your faculty:*

### **Creating an effective assessment plan**

As a new academic year and semester begins, it is important to develop an effective program-level assessment plan. Taking a proactive vs. retroactive assessment approach will ensure that meaningful assessment data is gathered. An effective program-level assessment plan should consider the following questions:

- **Who are the key stakeholders that should be involved in the assessment process?** Identify the key administrators and faculty that should play a role in the assessment process and organize a meeting. Remember that program-level assessment should be a collaborative process. The Program Head might take the lead in organizing facilitating, and documenting the assessment plan and process, but should involve other key stakeholders in the development and implementation of the assessment plan.
- **What student learning objectives will be assessed?** Identify which student learning objectives will be assessed during the current semester. It is recommended that each semester the program assess two program-level student learning objectives. Assessing program objectives on a rotating basis is a useful way to ensure periodic assessment all objectives.
- **When will key components of the assessment processes be implemented?** Decide when in the semester the objectives will be assessed, and when the data will be analyzed and communicated to relevant stakeholders. Creating a timeline is useful for developing an organized plan. Schedule a meeting now for the end-of-semester to discuss the assessment findings with relevant stakeholders.
- **Where will the assessments be given?** Decide in which courses or learning experiences the assessments will be implemented. Using a **curriculum map** to identify courses that target a given objective can be helpful for deciding where the objectives should be assessed.
- **Why are you assessing particular objectives and using particular assessment methods?** Be sure to identify the purpose of your assessment plan. You should develop a rationale for why you are assessing particular objectives during the current semester, and why you are using the proposed measures. Think about the questions you would like ask about student learning in your program, and what evidence would be most useful for answering those questions.

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- **How will you assess the objectives, analyze the results, and document the process?** It is important to identify the direct assessment measures that will be used to assess the objectives. The assessment methods should align with the objectives. For example, a multiple choice test might be fine for assessing students' knowledge of a topic, but would not be a valid measure for assessing students' ability to analyze information or create a product. In addition, it is important to think about how you will score the assessment in a valid and reliable way. Rubrics and checklists can be useful for identifying student learning expectations, and producing objective and concrete feedback on assessments. It is also important to decide how faculty conducting the assessments will document, store, and communicate their assessment findings to key stakeholders so that the program can use the assessment information to make meaningful decisions, and improvements. Your assessment plan should be documented and communicated to all relevant stakeholders. Attached is an **Assessment Planning Form** that you can use to document your assessment plans.

**Check Out!:** The following website from Stanford University shares additional useful information on developing an effective assessment plan,  
<https://tomprof.stanford.edu/posting/1455>

**Please contact me** if you would like to meet and discuss any aspect of your Fall assessment plans or if you would like feedback on written assessment plans.