

EWU Programmatic SLO Assessment

AY 2015-16 and “Closing the Loop” for AY 2014-15

Introduction:

Assessment of student learning is an important and integrated part of faculty and programs. As part of ongoing program assessment at Eastern Washington University, each department is asked to report on assessment results for *each* program and *each* certificate for *at least one* Student Learning Outcome (SLO) this year. To comply with accreditation standards, the programs must also demonstrate efforts to “close the loop” in improving student learning and/or the learning environment. Thus, this template has been revised into two parts.

Resources:

Check this site for sample reports (created with the previous year’s template) by EWU programs and other assessment resources: <http://access.ewu.edu/graduate-education/academic-planning/faculty-support/student-learning-assessment/sample-program-slo-assessment-reports>

Additional resources and support are available to:

- 1) Determine whether students can do, know or value program goals upon graduation and to what extent;
- 2) Determine students’ progress through the program, while locating potential bottlenecks, curricular redundancies, and more; and
- 3) Embed assessments in sequenced and meaningful ways that save time.

Contact Dr. Helen Bergland for assistance with assessment in support of student learning and pedagogical approaches: hberglan@ewu.edu or 509.359.4305.

Use this template to report on your program assessment. **Reports are due to your Dean and to Dr. Helen Bergland (hberglan@ewu.edu), Interim Director for the Faculty Commons, by September __, 2016.**

Degree/Certificate: MFA

Major/Option: Creative Writing

Submitted by: Professor Gregory Spatz

Date: February 8, 2017

Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2015-16

Part I – for the 2015-16 academic year: Because Deans have been asked to create College-Level Synthesis Reports annually, the template has been slightly modified for a) clarity for Chairs and Directors, and b) a closer fit with what the Deans and Associate Deans are being asked to report.

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning outcome as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.

Demonstrating an “advanced understanding of the publishing process...and familiarity with advanced formal and technical aspects of foundational literary works from the tradition and selected contemporary works within the genre of study,” by meeting the core requirement of composing “a literary thesis of substantial length and publishable quality” and defending that thesis in an oral examination.

2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;
 SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;
 SLO is met without change required

3. **Strategies and methods:** Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

Because the MFA thesis and thesis defense is the final measure of our students’ work in Creative Writing, representing the culmination of their education in the MFA program and providing the clearest, measurable figuration of their growth as writers during their time here, we have chosen it here (as we have in recent years) as the “data source” for evaluation of SLOs. Additionally, thesis is the single central cohort element of the MFA curriculum which cuts across all genres of specialization (fiction, poetry and creative nonfiction) and providing an obvious and measurable set data for assessment.

4. **Observations gathered from data:** Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.

- a. Findings:

Of the twenty-two students eligible to complete their MFA Degree Program during the AY 2015-16, nineteen successfully presented and defended their theses. The three students who were not yet prepared to defend have made plans to do so during the 2016-17 AY. One has already defended and graduated in December 2016.

The thesis continues to effectively serve its purpose as a final curricular measure for our MFA students' overall performance, representing the culmination of their studies and creative work in the CRWR MFA Program. While the vast majority of our students are able to complete the degree in a timely fashion, within the programs' given two-year timeline, those whose work fails to meet expectations, or who need additional time for other reasons, are clearly identifiable; the program is flexible enough to accommodate their needs as well.

- b. Analysis of findings:

All defending MFA students met the student learning objective mentioned above. Students presented finished, publishable work as part of their oral defense during the final weeks of spring quarter of 2016, and simultaneously demonstrated an ability to critically contextualize that work in a critical oral discussion involving 15 books from outside their coursework (chosen in conjunction with and approval from thesis advisors).

5. **What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?**

- a) Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).

No program changes appear to be in order.

- b) Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

NA

6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

None needed at this time.

NEW: PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP
FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2014-15 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

In response to the university's accrediting body, the [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#), this section has been added. This should be viewed as a follow up to the previous year's findings. In other words, begin with findings from 2014-15, and then describe actions taken during 2015-16 to improve student learning along, provide a brief summary of findings, and describe possible next steps.

PLEASE NOTE: The university also requests that Deans complete a College-Level Synthesis report, which synthesizes which programs/certificates have demonstrated "closing-the-loop" assessments and findings based on the previous year's assessment report.

Working definition for closing the loop: *Using assessment results to improve student learning as well as pedagogical practices. This is an essential step in the continuous cycle of assessing student learning. It is the collaborative process through which programs use evidence of student learning to gauge the efficacy of collective educational practices, and to identify and implement strategies for improving student learning.* Adapted 8.21.13 from <http://www.hamline.edu/learning-outcomes/closing-loop.html>.

1. Student Learning Outcome(s) assessed for 2014-15

"Understanding of the level of sophistication, care of composition, attention to revision and (when applicable) of the methods and functions of research that are necessary to literary writing."

2. Strategies implemented during 2015-16 to improve student learning, based on findings of the 2014-15 assessment activities.

NA

3. Summary of results (may include comparative data or narrative; description of changes made to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc.): Describe the effect of the changes towards improving student learning and/or the learning environment.

The MFA thesis and thesis defense continues to effectively serve its purpose as a final curricular measure for our MFA students' overall performance, representing the culmination of their studies and creative work in the CRWR MFA Program. While the majority of our students are able to complete the degree in a timely fashion, within the programs' given two-year timeline, those whose work fails to meet expectations, or who need additional time for other reasons, are clearly identifiable; the program is flexible enough to accommodate their needs as well. No programmatic changes are required or new pedagogical strategies proposed.

4. What **further changes to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery**, etc. are projected based on closing-the-loop data, findings and analysis?

Definitions:

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.
2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** This checklist informs the reader whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.
3. **Strategies and methods used to gather student performance data**, including assessment instruments used, and a description of how and when the assessments were conducted. Examples of strategies/methods: embedded test questions in a course or courses, portfolios, in-class activities, standardized test scores, case studies, analysis of written projects, etc. Additional information could describe the use of rubrics, etc. as part of the assessment process.
4. **Observations gathered from data:** This section includes findings and analyses based on the above strategies and methods, and provides data to substantiate the distinction made in #2. For that reason this section has been divided into parts (a) and (b) to provide space for both the findings and the analysis of findings.
5. **Program changes based on the assessment results:** This section is where the program lists plans to improve student learning, based on assessment findings, and provides a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year. Programs often find assessment is part of an ongoing process of continual improvement.
6. **Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed.** Evaluation of the assessment plan and process itself: what worked in the assessment planning and process, what did not, and why.

Some elements of this document have been drawn or adapted from the University of Massachusetts' assessment handbook, "Program-Based Review and Assessment: Tools and Techniques for Program Improvement" (2001). Retrieved from http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based.pdf