

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:hberglan@ewu.edu)), Interim Director for the Faculty Commons, by September \_\_, 2016.**

**Degree/Certificate: Bachelor of Arts (BA)**  
**Major/Option: Race and Culture Studies**  
**Submitted by: Elisa Facio**  
**Date: September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

### **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.

Differentiate between the concepts of racism, prejudice and discrimination, and how lives are situated in or impacted by these concepts.

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;  
\_xx\_ 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.

The course selected for the Program SLO Report is RCST 430-Research Methodologies in Race and Culture. The assessment method selected for this course included critical evaluation, summation and feedback on the student's comprehension of racism, prejudice, discrimination, class, gender, and sexuality. Students provided written summaries from course readings focusing on the aforementioned concepts in relationship to conducting research methods in communities of color or comparative research. Second, students were required to present their summaries during the first hour of a designated class period, which included presenting a question to the class to generate critical discussion. All presentations were presented in a Power Point format. Students were also given an assignment called, "Journey as a Qualitative Researcher," which included five journal entries focusing on the research process, their positionality, and subsequent understanding as themselves as researchers. Students were given five questions throughout the semester and asked to respond in 2-3 pages. The aforementioned assignments described were intended to establish

a critical and comprehensive understanding of Research Methods in Race and Culture. Final assignments required a 12-15-page research proposal including a prospectus, abstract, literature review and selected methodology(s). And, second, students provided an in-class poster board presentation on their research project design/paper. In sum, various methods were implemented in order to illuminate various capabilities among the students. The selected methods provided substantial information concerning student performance in the areas of writing, reading, and analyzing complex social situations, thus allowing the professor to better assess how to best enhance each student's successful completion of the course.

4. **Observations gathered from data:** Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.
  - a. Findings: Findings for this SLO report are drawn from the professor's critical assessment of student assignments, and not necessarily from final grades. Thus, all course requirements engaged students in reading, writing, and analyzing with a critical comprehension and understanding of their own positionality as a beginning point, and incorporating 'home' epistemologies or knowledge(s) drawn from their life experiences as EWU students, their relationships to their families, their respective communities, and the larger society.
  - b. Analysis of findings: Students are more likely to succeed in courses where their own positionality or who they are as EWU students and citizenships of the US are made relevant to course materials. More specifically, students thrive in classrooms where reciprocity of knowledge among students and professors is discussed in order to further augment everyone's knowledge. Also, students appreciate safe spaces where respect for diverse values is welcomed. Given the nature of Race and Culture Studies, courses that critically consider best practices in deconstructing epistemological issues and implementing democratic pedagogies can be successful.

Finally, in my informal discussions with other RCST professors, there is the misleading assumption that upper division students are well grounded and/or possess substantive knowledge about class, race, gender, and sexuality. In my discussion with various students, many stated EWU has not provided a diverse and inclusive curriculum regarding core concepts of US social systems.

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

Even though student performance was ranked as outstanding and those eligible for graduate school, applied and were accepted, the following suggestions are provided as I feel the Race and Culture Program has tremendous potential for Eastern Washington University.

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

My responsibilities as the RCST Director terminated in late June, and will now transfer to Dr. Scott Finney in African-American/Africana Studies. In speaking with various Program Directors, they have stated that a two-year Directorship for such a new major/minor Program may be counterproductive to the overall success of RCST and especially for students pursuing a major or minor degree.

Many RCST students have expressed feelings of isolation, a lack of belonging, as they are not associated with a particular program, but with three programs on a rotating basis. Therefore, it is critical the RCST faculty meet once a month to discuss course content as some faculty have not been in sync nor understand the overall RCST philosophy. Thus, a collective and cohesive vision of course content needs to be discussed. In this discussion, faculty contributions/capabilities as well need to be critically assessed. In other words, what skills do faculty members have, and how are they implemented?

In general, I feel the RCST major and minor are clearly defined and implemented to the best of the faculty's capabilities. However, I believe RCST lacks a cohesive approach to the major and minor, which can be addressed and resolved.

Finally, the advising component of RCST requires an in-house assessment. All RCST majors and minors need to be identified and subsequently assigned a faculty advisor. RCST faculty advisors and duration of the advising relationship should be determined primarily by the student. This proposed advising relationship should also work in collaboration with the overall Advising Unit in Monroe Hall.

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

Even though I am no longer the RCST Director, as part of transferring my responsibilities to Dr. Finney, I would like to propose the following timeline, changes, and possible actions for the 2016-2017 academic year. Please note 2016-2017 courses have been approved for fall and winter quarters. 2017 spring quarter classes will be approved in October.

1. October 2016-May 2017; monthly faculty meetings to discuss course content; epistemological and pedagogical issues
2. October 2016-Identify all RCST major and minor students; develop faculty-student advising relationships
3. November 2016-Develop advising plan with EWU Advising

4. 2016-2017: encourage faculty to meet with student advisees on a bi-monthly basis
6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

Based on overall student performance, I believe the assessment process is productive, and obviously other methods of assessment will be implemented as RCST grows via its curriculum, majors and minors increase, and as well as faculty lines.

In sum, I enthusiastically suggest the following actions:

- 1) Conduct exit interviews of all RCST majors and minors
- 2) Create a data base on RCST majors/minors to compile a RCST Alumni List and possibly establish an Alumni Association, and to document how the RCST major/minor shaped and/or influenced their current occupations, careers, post-graduate education, etc.
- 3) Conduct a longitudinal study focusing on student performance, course evaluations and major/minor degrees granted
- 4) Review course evaluations with faculty at the end of each quarter
- 5) Conduct quarterly classroom observations
- 6) Encourage co-teaching introductory courses, which can promote Program consistency and collaborative working relationships

\*The following information regarding my last two years at Eastern Washington University is provided in order to understand the reasoning behind my responses. I intend for this information to clarify any concerns, questions, etc. Please note the Race and Culture Studies major/minor is entering its third academic year (2016-2017). I arrived at Eastern Washington University in August 2014 and was assigned the Directorship of the Race and Culture Studies major and minor. Given my recent hire, I was not required to submit assessment reports during my first year, as I was given time to accumulate to my new positions, which included Director of the Chicano Education Program, Executive Director of C.A.M.P., and Director of Race and Culture Studies. Hence, this is the first year a Program SLO Assessment Report is being submitted.

## 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

Differentiate between the concepts of racism, prejudice, and discrimination: and, understand how lives are situated in or impacted by these concepts

#### 2. Strategies implemented during 2015-16 to improve student learning, based on findings of the 2014-15 assessment activities. RCST is guided with a general strategy and subsequent philosophy, a philosophy that focuses on transformative social change for US marginal communities. Thus, the following three strategies remained a primary component of the RCST major and minor. Writing, Reading and Research Methods were applied with the following intent and implementation.

- 1) Writing was used for purposes of reflection, action, and participation in academic inquiry.
- 2) Students comprehensively engaged in reading for purposes of reflection, critical analysis, decision-making and inquiry.
- 3) Research involves applying methods of inquiry and conventions to generate new understanding(s)

Given the nature of Race and Culture Studies, students were and continue to be guided toward engaging in transformative practices so they themselves become critical activist student scholars. And, students are obviously academically trained to contribute to the

current RCST discourse with a specific focus on the discipline's contribution to inclusion and diversity in higher education and EWU. The skill of argumentative writing is essential for Race and Culture Studies scholars as they consistently deconstruct systems of oppression; namely, class, race, gender and sexuality from the theoretical approach of "Intersectionality." Being extremely well read is critical; subsequently, RCST students were introduced to a variety of readings from an interdisciplinary perspective. Intersectionality and interdisciplinary are vital elements to RCST epistemology and pedagogy.

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.

Overall, there was noteworthy improvement in RCST student performance. There are a few factors that contributed to this change: curriculum changes, pedagogy, and redistribution/assignment of faculty personnel. Revised curriculum changes based on RCST's overall philosophy for lower-division courses and research methods courses were instrumental. A critical assessment of RCST courses was conducted by the Director, and thus assigned Dr. Norma Cardenas as the lead faculty member for RCST 101. RCST 202 (Privilege and Power) was taught by a new faculty member, Dr. Okera Nsombi. I, myself, taught RCST 304 (Liberation and Social Change, and myself and Dr. Cardenas taught the Research Methods sequence. Professors Kim Richards and Dr. Scott Finney also contributed their teaching capacities to RCST, thus, creating a solid foundation in teaching implementing the theoretical approach of intersectionality from an interdisciplinary perspective. Pedagogically speaking, classrooms were structured more democratically where faculty and students engaged in reciprocal teaching and learning environments. Scholars of color in particular have illustrated that acknowledging 'home pedagogies,' can be instrumental in student recruitment and retention. Basically, home pedagogies argue that student knowledge(s) be honored, respected, and enhanced as part of the course curriculum. RCST students became involved in public intellectual discourse via community Poster Board Sessions and Campus Assignments/Events (the Selfie Project displayed at JFK Library) focusing on inclusion and diversity.

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

As an RCST faculty member and outgoing Director, I intend to share with Dr. Scott Finney, the current RCST Director, program changes with a detailed timeline, and an evaluation assessment plan/process as suggested and outlined in the 2014-15 SLO Assessment Report. The following narrative is an updated version.

Collect all course syllabi for the 2015-2016 academic year and critically assessing our overall mission, goals, curriculum, SLOs, course evaluations, and student performances. Once this

assessment is completed, the RCST faculty and advisors should meet and discuss the aforementioned items. Second, we should meet with our majors and minors in an informal, yet academic setting, to learn from their educational experiences as RCST majors and minors.

Timeline: 2016-2017

November 2016: critically engage/interrogate RCST philosophy, mission, and goals (currently constructing an RCST website, which should be completed for initial approval by December 2016)

-December 2016: Assess student performances and evaluations via professors and SOAR. Create longitudinal data base; quantitative and qualitative measures.

-December 2016: collect syllabi for all RCST classes taught to date; assess current curriculum and provide necessary revisions, additions and/or deletions.

-January 2017: RCST Faculty and Staff Retreat; collective decisions regarding curriculum and relevant/qualified faculty primarily from EWU and possibly other nearby institutions, if needed.

-January 2017: submit course revisions, additions, and deletions to CPAC for approval

-February 2017: RCST Faculty and Staff Retreat; summary of work completed to date, student professional services to be offered beginning 2016 spring quarter; ie. general logistical information include the RCST MAP, internships, conferences, graduate school and other employment opportunities.

*Description of revisions as suggested by results:*

Given the reading and writing demands of RCST courses, we should continue working closely with the Writing Center by focusing on grammar construction and organization of written assignments, which includes descriptions/information regarding explanations and discussions of the paper; for example, introduction, literature review, general analysis, etc. In general, the nature of RCST requires reading and writing tasks be completed with comprehensive efficacy. This process is then complemented with a specific pedagogy(s) focusing on the relationship between the readings and written assignments.

Opportunities for students to *critically engage in reading materials via written assignments and class discussions* appear to be most productive via small groups and accompanying dialogues with the remainder of the class. We have also found students enjoy and are most productive working collectively on course projects. Related to this pedagogical technique is the role of the faculty member. More specifically, the faculty member must be able to engage in the 'why' of the material or theoretical implications of the readings and student's subsequent written understandings of course materials. Students need to complete reading and written assignments with a critical knowledge in understanding social conditions influenced or shaped by class, race, gender, and sexuality.

### *Evaluation of assessment plan/process:*

In order for students to successfully meet the aforementioned RCST SLO, a clear and continuous working relationship must be established with the Writing Center and the JFK Library to assist with research endeavors, specifically literature reviews. Second, a critical assessment of RCST faculty also renders attention focusing on their strengths and potential contributions to the overall assessment plan. Simply being a racialized ethnic scholar does not guarantee the necessary capacities that are conducive to the success of the RCST major/minor and EWU students.

RCST curriculum needs clarity and continuity, which can be accomplished via a concise MAP and critically revisiting our on-line courses. On-line courses may actually undermine the student's progress as a critical scholar of Race and Culture Studies as the nature of the discipline calls for the (de)construction and (re)construction of critical discourse, which is extremely difficult to accomplish via cyberspace. To date, many students have stated they learned how to negotiate computer detail, with little time to truly assimilate course materials. On-line courses render critical attention and discussion for the future of RCST.

### **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](http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based.pdf)*