

Foresight 2020: 2012-2013 Report on Student Learning Assessment

Summary

The Board's strategic Plan, Foresight 2020, directs system colleges and universities to report annually, beginning in spring 2014, on the results of student learning assessment in three areas: (1) mathematics/quantitative/analytical reasoning; (2) written and oral communication; and (3) critical thinking/problem solving. This initial report provides a baseline for future annual reports. 09/17/14

Background

The second goal of *Foresight 2020* includes the aspiration to respond to expectations of business and industry for core workplace skills in mathematics/quantitative/analytical reasoning, written and oral communication, and critical thinking/problem solving. Having agreed on the three broad areas to be assessed, each college or university determined the instruments to use in assessing its students. For this initial report, institutions were asked to report on the area or areas assessed, the instrument used in the assessment, and the assessment results.

The reports provided in this document comprise the first annual report on how the system's colleges and universities measure student learning. It serves as a baseline for future reports on each college and university's assessment of what its students have learned in these areas.

Instruments used to Assess Student Learning

System institutions assess student learning through a variety of instruments. Some are common to both two- and four-year institutions, while others are specific to a sector. Over time, these assessments of student learning are meant to assist each school in determining how effectively its students are being prepared in the critical areas of mathematics/quantitative/analytical reason, written and oral communication, and critical thinking/problem solving. Colleges and universities also assess student learning on multiple dimensions, using multiple methods and sources, to enable faculty to improve the curriculum and instruction.

An institution chooses assessments that most closely align with the characteristics of its student body and the educational programs it offers. University Qualified Admissions criteria, including the University of Kansas' variant, are used to create an incoming class that is congruent with each state university's mission and character. Community and technical colleges use open admissions policies, bolstered by placement tests and other examinations for student's seeking specific educational programs. Given the diversity of students in the system, the breadth of educational programming across the system and given that assessment information is best when collected on multiple dimensions, using multiple methods and sources, a single, system wide test is both impractical and ineffective.

University Assessment Instruments

Listed below are the principal instruments system universities report using to assess student learning in each of the three core areas.

Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA): assesses critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving and written communication skills.

Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP): a standardized, nationally normed assessment program from ACT that enables postsecondary institutions to assess, evaluate, and enhance student learning outcomes and general education program outcomes. CAAP offers six

independent test modules: Reading, Writing Skills, Writing Essay, Mathematics, Science, and Critical Thinking.

iSkills Assessment: measures students' ability to navigate, critically evaluate and make sense of the information available through digital technology. It does this through seven task types designed to represent a range of ways students manage information through digital technology: Define, Access, Evaluate, Manage, Integrate, Create and Communicate.

ETS Proficiency Profile: measures four general education skills: reading, writing, critical thinking and mathematics.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NESSE): annual survey of student participation that provides an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. While not assessing student learning directly, survey results point to areas where colleges and universities are performing well and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved.

Departmental/Program-based assessments: focus on assessing student learning to determine whether students have acquired the skills, knowledge, and competencies associated with their specific program of study. The results from an assessment process provide information to determine if intended outcomes are being achieved and how programs can be improved.

Community and Technical College Assessment Instruments:

Listed below are the primary instruments community and technical colleges use to assess student learning.

Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA): see above.

Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP): see above.

COMPASS: a computer-adaptive college placement test that evaluates student skill levels in Reading, Writing Skills, Writing Essay, Math, and English as a Second Language.

ASSET: a placement test measuring basic writing, numerical and reading skills; and advanced mathematics measures for elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, college algebra and geometry.

ACT: a curriculum- and standards-based educational and career planning tool that assesses students' academic readiness for college.

WorkKeys: a job skills assessment system that measures foundational and soft skills (e.g., Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, Reading for Information) and offers specialized assessments that may be targeted to institutional needs.

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE): annual survey of student participation that provides an estimate of how undergraduates in two-year institutions spend their time and what they gain from attending college. While not assessing student learning directly, survey results point to areas where colleges are performing well and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved.

Departmental/Program-based assessments: see above

Institutional Reports by Sector

For this initial report, not every school reported on all three core areas. Over time, it is expected that all will do so, as well as reporting on student achievement in other key educational areas.

The material in this report is an abridgment of the material provided by each institution. The excerpts focus primarily on direct measures of student learning. Many, if not most, institutions also report on findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, two indirect measures of student perceptions.