

Meta-assessment Analysis Report for the College of  
Humanities and Social Sciences

Please return the completed report back to the Office of Academic

Planning and Assessment by **May 30, 2014.**

## **Section 1: Purpose and Introduction**

Meta-assessment is an important tool for helping ensure that all programs at Sam Houston State University are engaging in a meaningful and effective continuous improvement assessment process. Continuous improvement assessment is an important best-practice in higher education as it helps programs determine whether key objectives are being met, identify areas for improvement, and develop actions for implementing changes that will have a positive effect on the student learning environment. Meaningful and effective assessment is also the cornerstone of many discipline-specific accreditations, as well as University accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

In fall 2013, the Director of Assessment formed an ad-hoc committee of faculty and College administrators from the Colleges of Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Education, Fine Arts and Mass Communication, Health Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Sciences. Using a locally developed rubric (Appendix A) the ad-hoc Meta-assessment Committee evaluated 2012-2013 assessment plans for the 135 academic degree programs documented within the Online Assessment Tracking Database. Each unit assessment plan was independently evaluated by two anonymous reviewers; one from within and one from outside the College from which the assessment plan originated.

The results from the meta-assessment review have been used in multiple ways. First, completed rubrics were distributed to the departments and programs to serve as formative feedback for use in continually improving unit-level assessment plans. Second, college-level data were analyzed by the college to identify the general strengths and weaknesses within their units' annual assessment processes. This information has been used by the college to determine what training, resources, and strategies are necessary to address any general weaknesses identified within its units' annual programmatic assessment efforts. A summary of the college's findings are provided within this report.

## **Section 2: Plan for Distributing Completed Rubrics to Units**

*Detail the College's plan for sharing the completed meta-assessment rubrics with its departments and programs.*

The Associate Dean in charge of promoting assessment compliance is in constant contact with chairs and departmental directors of assessment. This contact has and will continue to consist of providing personal feedback regarding unit performance per the meta-rubric.

CHSS has plans to institute a formal college-wide assessment committee in the fall of 2014.

## **Section 3: Feedback and Suggestions for Improvement of the Meta-assessment Rubric and Process**

*Please describe the process by which feedback was collected from the College on the meta-assessment process. Provide any suggestions for the improvement of the meta-assessment rubric and process.*

Chairs and departmental directors of assessment were interviewed to determine their understanding of rubric guidelines and of the feedback provided by the reviewers. These department representatives were also polled on their experience of implementing the rubric.

The suggestions gathered focused on two themes. Introduction of the rubric mid-year necessarily limited department capabilities in formulating plans to meet all the rubric demands

There was no consensus on amending the rubric itself.

#### **Section 4: Observed Strengths within College Assessment Plans**

*Detail the general strengths identified by the College after reviewing its units' assessment plans. What general aspects of the annual assessment processes are units mastering? Are there any units that you would recommend serve as exemplary models?*

The process has been successful in focusing attention at the department and program level on the importance of the assessment process. There has also been good progress in strengthening understanding of the logic and vernacular of assessment. Moreover, the process has served to highlight the calendar of upcoming external assessment responsibilities, most notable the mid-decadal certification and upcoming reaccreditation of the university by SACS.

#### **Section 5: Observed Weaknesses within College Assessment Plans**

*Detail the general weaknesses identified by the College after reviewing its units' assessment plans. What general aspects of the annual assessment process are units specifically struggling with?*

The current weak point across most of the programs in CHSS is production of meaningful and meaningfully accurate plans for continuous improvement. There is a lingering tendency to use the plans to discuss comparative assessment techniques rather than to demonstrate how outcomes of assessment are shaping curriculum and pedagogy.

#### **Section 6: Strategies Needed to Address Identified Weaknesses**

*Detail the College's strategies for addressing the general weaknesses identified after reviewing its units' assessment plans.*

Currently, the weaknesses in production of good plans for continuous improvement is the prime focus of assessment activity in CHSS. It is hoped that demonstrated enhancements of PCI's reported at the end of the current cycle will lay the issue to rest.

#### **Section 7: Training and Resources Needed to Implement the College's Improvement Strategy**

*Detail the types of training and resources that would assist the College with implementing its improvement strategies.*

None at present. However, planned implementation of new reporting software will necessitate rigorous training support.

### **Section 8: Proposed Plan for Implementing Meta-assessment Within the College**

*Outline the College's proposed plan for implementing Meta-assessment with the College during the fall 2014 semester. Include a basic description of who will be involved (e.g., a committee of senior faculty or college administrators), your proposed methodology for evaluating unit assessment plans, steps for ensuring reliability, and a basic timeline. Additionally, describe how the College will utilize meta-assessment results to continue to improve assessment efforts of its units.*

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences has undergone significant personnel changes in recent months. The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences has been reassigned to the College of Health Sciences.

The chair of Political Science will change hands as will the chair of Sociology.

Additionally, the college is welcoming a new dean, Dr. Abbey Zink. Dr. Zink comes to SHSU from another campus and will require some time to familiarize herself with university policies and procedures.

Accordingly, the CHSS plan is to reconstitute a college-wide Assessment Committee headed by the Associate Dean charged with assessment oversight. The committee will consist of the chairs and or their appointed associates or directors of assessment. Meetings will coincide with bi-monthly meetings of the chairs held by the dean. These meetings will serve to maintain appropriate focus on assessment deadlines as set by the SHSU Office of Assessment and Strategic Planning and to share information and progress regarding assessment practices of the various units.

To increase reliability and utility of assessment planning among the units, and to address the known weaknesses in existing Plans for Continuous Improvement (PCIs), the CHSS Assessment Committee will pursue internal training of appropriate program personnel charged with assessment duties. This training will base itself upon a series of assessment texts and manuals.

Banta, Trudy W., et. al. *Designing Effective Assessment*, (San Francisco: 2009).

Middaugh, Michael F. *Planning and Assessment in Higher Education*, (San Francisco: 2010).

Suskie, Linda. *Assessing Student Learning*, (San Francisco, 2009).

Walvoord, Barbara E. *Assessment Clear and Simple*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco: 2010).

**Appendix A**  
**(See Attached File)**