

College-Wide Assessment Committee
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
End-of-Year Report: Fall 2016 - Spring 2017

With an endorsement from the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee, the College Council approved the creation of the College-Wide Assessment Committee (CWAC) in May 2011. The College-wide Assessment Committee (CWAC) completed its sixth year of work in May 2017, by continuing to build on the solid foundation laid by the committee's first five years. This report covers the activities of the Committee in the 2016/2017 academic year.

It is fitting to start by reiterating the Committee's goals:

1. Receive assessment plans and reports from academic departments and other units of the college in order to make recommendations about them and to identify best practices for the College.
2. Propose to the Strategic Planning Subcommittee, for its approval, broad policy recommendations on the conduct and use of assessment.
3. Promote assessment activities and a "culture of assessment" across the campus through dissemination of information and best practices.
4. Propose to the strategic Planning Subcommittee (College Budget and Planning Committee) broad recommendations on the conduct and use of assessment.
5. In collaboration with the Director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, recommend faculty development programs on the practice of assessment.
6. Guide the development of a website for campus assessment with the support of the office of Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness.
7. At the end of each academic year, prepare an annual report to Strategic Planning Subcommittee and to all units of the college including the college council.
8. Significant, ongoing assessment activities, with recommendations for the next year.

This year the CWAC focused its efforts on the following activities covering items 1, 3, and 5 of our charge. Highlights follow:

Goal 1: Receive assessment plans and reports from academic departments and other units of the college in order to make recommendations and identify best practices for the College.

Of the reports received, the CWAC has reviewed around 46% (12 reports) annually since 2014. This year the committee reviewed reports from the following majors plus Jay-Express

Humanities and Justice, Forensic Psychology, Law and Police Science, Latin American Studies, Criminal Justice BA, Mathematics and Computer Science, Criminology, Cultural and Deviance Studies BA, BA in International Criminal Justice, Fire Sciences, Law Police, Criminal Justice Administration and J-Express:

In addition to the reviews noted above, CWAC's March 30, 2017 meeting was dedicated to an in-committee focused review of Feedback Reports to gain a better appreciation of the state of assessment across the College. The CWAC would like to report on the following lessons on the state of assessment at the College.

Since the inception of the committee, there have been significant improvements in assessment across most departments. The findings show that:

- More departments are currently doing assessment regularly, at least every other year.
- More people are involved in assessment at the departmental level leading to an improved culture for assessment departmentally.
- More detailed and contextualized responses in reports from departments. More details assist reviewers with formulating more meaningful review and suggestions for improvement in departmental assessment.
- Many departments are doing a good job integrating data into their assessment reports, but some still have a long way to go in this regard.

However, challenges that permeate every level of the institution remain. Below are key weaknesses at the departmental, and institutional levels.

Departmental:

- More than half of all departments are still missing linkages between learning objectives being assessed and the program goals. For instance, departments are not sufficiently linking their reports to recommendations/issues raised in CWAC's feedback reports. Many are still not explaining how they are building on previous assessment efforts.
- There is still little alignment between the Assessment Plan and current round of assessments -i.e. how does the current assessment efforts match up with the assessment plan-i.e. what should be assessed, highlight deficiencies, compare with prior assessment reports.
- Mapping objectives to unit goals and mapping learning objectives to program goals is still not effectively done by some departments.
- Explanation of assessment tool needs to be more fully detailed in some reports.

Institutional

- There is no indication of how institutional assessment efforts are being linked to departmental assessment efforts. For instance, the College's strategic plan should be carefully aligned with departmental/program learning components and the services that

support these components. These in turn should be linked to program development, faculty hiring, labs, scholarship, and so on. Clear articulation of these components and their integration is needed at the college level.

- There is no acknowledgement of the limitations that the CWAC faces in building and sustaining assessment efforts -- membership remains a challenge.

Together, our various examinations show that we have made progress in assessment; however, there is still much to be done to create an assessment culture at John Jay. There remain systemic issues regarding assessment that need to be addressed from the departmental level up. The committee needs to assist departments in building a culture of assessment so that our assessment efforts will be sustainable. And, it needs help and support from the institution to do so effectively. One of the new initiatives to support CWAC is a collaboration with the Center for the Teaching and Learning. The director of the center has recommended faculty development programs on the practice of assessment, as well as work to promote a culture of assessment at the College (Items 3 and 5).

Goal 3: Promote assessment activities and a “culture of assessment” across the campus through dissemination of information and best practices.

General Education: Denise and Maria also met with Ray Patton from the Curriculum Committee and the Director of General Education about making assessment meaningful and useful to the General Education process. There is consistency between Ray’s plans and those from the Center for Teaching and Learning to begin work on the 300-level justice core. Ray is also interested in using Big Data to better plan our programs and/or projects. He wants CWAC to discuss ways that he and the Curriculum Committee can be involved in assessment.

Infographic: The committee created an infographic outlining steps in the assessment process along with ideas on how to begin the process. This infographic was disseminated at the Faculty Development Day event in the Spring of 2017, and is available for anyone interested in starting their assessment journey.

Goal 5: In collaboration with the Director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, recommend faculty development programs on the practice of assessment.

After initial contacts by the CWAC, Gina Foster from the Center for Teaching and Learning, and Allison Pease, Administrator with responsibility for Teaching and Learning convened a meeting to discuss assessment. Also at the meeting were representatives from UCASC, General Education Committee, and the Director for Gen. Ed. and member of the Curriculum Committee at the College, Ray Patton. Several issues were put on the table at this useful exchange, and this process needs to continue as part of CWAC’s outreach efforts.

Faculty Development Day (FDD) activity: CWAC co-chairs Denise Thompson and Maria Maras discussed the committee’s ideas for a panel on assessment at the Fall 2016 FDD event. The ideas were well received and along with Gina Foster and Allison Pease planning ensued. The full CWAC committee participated in organizing a panel that took place during the Lunch Hour plenary and drew wide attendance across departments. Based on our lessons from the FDD

event, the CWAC will consider the following activities in its 2017/2018 academic year's activities:

- Work to create a list of lessons learned about assessment, which should also contain some best practices in assessment
- Make a list of readily available assessment tools to aid departments in their assessment process.
- Work to get resources to improve the assessment website to make it useful, relevant and accessible to all department and programs across the college.

Program Improvement Grants (PIGs): In collaboration with Teaching and Learning Center (Dir. Gina Foster), Gen. Ed. and UCASC, CWAC worked to develop guidelines for new funding opportunities for departments and programs wanting to improve their assessment process and their reporting. The group developed guidelines for two to three outcomes assessment projects. The award specifically targeted 300-level courses, and/or capstone classes. Departments will have to apply to be awarded funding under the Program Improvement Grant initiative (PIGs). PIGs were announced in the Spring of 2017, and the first set of funded projects are now being implemented.

Persistent Membership challenges

The CWAC has consistently lacked the full complement of members since we continue to struggle with attracting members, and also because of high attrition rates among its existing membership. This has consistently been the case over the last five years or so. The CWAC therefore has not been able to do the level of outreach or analyses required to effectively guide assessment efforts at the college, despite our best intentions.

The CWAC is one of the mandated college-wide committees and we must do a better job of building and supporting it generally, not only in the run-up to Middle States visits.

Recommendations to the Strategic Planning Committee

Institutional

- Find an “Assessment Champion”. This individual should be a high level administrator who will publicly champion the cause at the College. The Assessment Champion will clearly articulate how the College’s strategic plan aligns with departmental/program learning components and the services that support these components.
- Carefully link institutional assessment efforts to departmental assessment efforts.
- Acknowledgement of the membership challenges that CWAC faces in building and sustaining assessment efforts.
- Work with the Faculty Senate to recruit members to the CWAC. It is one of the college’s mandated committees and can only be as effective as its membership. The committee should be supported in the meaningful work that it continues to do across the college in assessment.

- Commit resources to improve the CWAC website so that it is more helpful and accessible to departments.

CWAC

In the CWAC's 2017/2018 programming, focus should be placed on the following efforts to increase the number of CWAC active members:

- Outreach: Implement a more robust recruitment drive to bring the committee to its full complement-visiting related committees including General Education, meetings with major and minor coordinators, senior administrators including Office for Institutional Effectiveness, Finance, and so on.
- Continue to work with the Director of General Education and the Center for Teaching and Learning on making assessment meaningful and useful to the General Education process. Find ways that all can mutually benefit from activities.
- Review its feedback report rubric: To better assist departments in streamlining their feedback assessment reports, the Committee now plans to review its current feedback reporting rubric currently in use by programs and departments to report on their assessment activities. The review is necessary to ensure that all relevant information is included in feedback reports. These changes will also help the CWAC to standardize feedback reports and clarify what it deems important in such reports.

Meeting Dates - Fall 2017/Spring 2018

Meeting dates for the upcoming academic year will be finalized in the first fall meeting.

College-Wide Assessment Committee Members 2016/2017

Denise Thompson, Public Management, Co-chair

Marie-Helen Maras, Security, Fire, and Emergency Management, Co-chair

Mechthild (Mecki) Prinz, Science

Maureen Richards, Library

Lucia Velotti, Security, Fire, and Emergency Management (started Spring 2017)

Allison Orlando, Institutional Effectiveness

Lisette Delgado Cruzata, Science

Virginia Moreno, Director of Outcomes Assessment (ex officio)

Jim Llana, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness (ex officio until Fall 2016))