

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT STATUS REPORT FOR 96/97 AY
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
BACHELOR OF ARTS AND BACHELOR OF SCIENCE**

Return to Academic Programs Office by June 1, 1997

ATTACH ADDITIONAL PAGES OF RESPONSES AND COMMENTS AS NEEDED.

Department/Program: Chemistry Respondent: Committee (K. Cousins representing) I.

Current Status of Assessment efforts in your department program

1. At what stage is your program developing and/or implementing your assessment plan?

Answer: Implementing Assessment plan and carrying out first round of assessment

2. What problems have you encountered and what concerns do you have?

One of our major problem is finding and/or developing assessment tools that are not biased by our own opinions: its hard to assess oneself objectively, in a way that is easily applied and comprehensive (no time or money has been provided to implement our plans, so developing assessment measures that can be performed with current resources is essential).

Another issue which keeps cropping up is the separation of student assessment from program assessment. Some of our program assessment measures are incorporated into student assessments already given or planned, but in fact our committee's goal is NOT to assess the students, but to assess learning outcomes (our program and ourselves).

3. Have your Mission, Goals and Objectives been communicated to students or publicized?

With receipt of this questionnaire we have decided to (1) post the mission statement, goals, and objectives document on the department's student information bulletin boards, and (2) on the department's web page. The former has already been done; the latter will be done by the end of the quarter.

4. Has revision or rethinking of Mission, Goals and Objectives occurred/anticipated due to work in the past two years on assessment plan?

Incredibly so. Initially no one could define succinctly what our mission was (to teach chemistry! but you can't assess that broad statement). After writing our goals, we discovered that as written they were difficult to assess. We revised our goals (consistent with our mission statement) to be more amenable to practical assessment methods. Revision continued as feedback from school and university committees was provided, and as we realized that we can only hope to "spot check", and not test every outcome at every juncture. We anticipate further revision during implementation, and see our assessment package as a living document for improvement of the education of our students.

5. What are the next steps planned for your assessment process?

Our first round of assessment is currently in progress. We are collecting baseline data, where available, from previous years, performing first round of assessments for courses offered in the spring quarter, and distributing surveys. The Assessment Committee will meet to compile data after the end of the spring 97 quarter.

II. Results of first Assessments

We have too little data to effectively answer questions 6-10.

III. General Education Assessment:

10. Has your program assessment included General Education or basic skills as part of your assessment of the major/program? If so, what aspects or portions or competencies?

Our assessment measures written and oral communication skills, specifically the ability to write scientific notebooks and reports (second or third year of study), and the ability to make an effective scientific oral presentation (final year of study).

We evaluate baseline math skills with our highly math oriented math pretest for general chemistry, and indirectly measure additional math skills through an understanding of quantitative chemical relationships (245 lab, and 215 final exam embedded questions).

We evaluate critical thinking indirectly throughout the program, including with embedded questions and chemistry comprehensive examinations.

11. What evidence can you provide our committee and GE assessment committee of the effectiveness of our General Education program?

Until we have some data (at least a year's worth!)--nothing.

IV. What Next?

12. What suggestions do you have for the next stages of implementation of Outcomes Assessment on our campus? What aspects need help, clarification, resources, change of procedures, etc.

What's needed are "already prepared" external (unbiased?) assessment instruments.

If a central clearing house were provided as a resource to assessment committees of survey and interview forms, standardized tests in specific disciplines, documents prepared by other departments and universities, much local effort might be saved. These materials would need to be readily available to the campus community. In addition, clerical help for implementation of departmental assessment is greatly needed, as the staff is already overextended, and an effective ongoing assessment requires considerable clerical assistance. An assigned time pool for faculty involved would also expedite the process.