

Examining the Impacts of Assessment Peer Review Participation on Instructional Practices

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BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

Outcomes for today's session

At the end of our session, participants will be able to:

- Explain potential benefits of the peer review process for participating faculty
- Consider how to incorporate faculty development and / or peer review into assessment processes at their institutions



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

Mission: Boise State provides an innovative, transformative, and equitable educational environment that prepares students for success and advances Idaho and the world.

- Public, Metropolitan, High Research Activity in Boise, Idaho
- 26,727 students (74% degree seeking; 86% degree seeking UG)
- ~1,500 faculty (57% FT)
- 7 academic colleges; ~200 degree programs
- Accredited by NWCCU



Program Assessment Reporting

- 3-yr reporting cycle; new in 2016-17
- Process managed via Google Shared Drive
- Report templates
- Peer reviews with feedback returned to programs



IR / IE and CTL: An essential partnership



- Partnership originally focused on develop workshops
- More robust partnership has developed over the years
 - Collaborate on reviewer training, process updates, template, rubric, etc.
 - PAR surfaces potential faculty development opportunities
- Partner with University Foundations (general education)

Report Templates

Template I: Narrative

- Mission, Current Assessment Process, Continuous Improvement (backwards looking), Curriculum Map Discussion

Template II: Assessment Matrix

- PLOs, Measures, Findings, and Actions Taken or Planned

Program Assessment Report (PAR) Template Part I

Date: _____
People completing this report: _____

- Mission:** What is the mission of your program? How does it align with the mission of the college and university? How do your PLOs inform or reflect your mission? [250 words max]
- Assessment Process:** Responses to this item reflect the current state in the department/program. Provide a current 'snapshot' of your PLO assessment process.
 - Engagement & Process:** Describe how the department discusses, uses, and shares information about student learning outcomes achievement (i.e., How does the assessment process work beyond individual courses? Who is involved? How do the department's faculty interact around this topic? How often? How are results shared and with whom?). [750 words max]
 - Strengths & Challenges:** What is going well in the assessment of this program? Are there any challenges, gaps, or areas for improvement in the assessment of this program? [250 words max]
 - National standards (if applicable):** Is your program accredited by an external, national and/or professional agency? If so, briefly summarize the extent to which your PLOs represent the national/professional standards (verbatim, adapted, etc.) and the extent to which other aspects of your assessment process are prescribed by that accreditation (e.g., types of measures used, levels of proficiency, etc.). [150 words max]

Improvement: Responses to this item are backwards looking in that you are reflecting on changes that were identified in your last report!
 (See previous PAR Template II, column 4; Were you able to address action items and discuss the 2-4 specific items and discuss the 2-4 items you are planning to work on?)

Program Assessment Report (PAR) Template Part II

List the Current Intended Program Learning Outcomes (one per row, typically 6-8 per program) Learner-centered statements that address: What should students know, be able to do, and become as a result of completing the program?	Measures Used to Assess Outcomes What evidence is used by the department/program to determine whether the outcome has been achieved? Direct measure(s) such as portfolios, embedded assignments, lab reports, etc. Indirect measure(s) such as surveys, focus groups, etc. of students, alumni, employers, supervisors, etc. Informal method(s) such as faculty observations, informal reports, discussions, etc.	Interpretation of Key Findings What have you discovered about student learning in each of the intended learning outcomes areas?	Actions Taken or Planned Based on Findings Based on the assessments and results reported in this table, how have or will the findings be used by the faculty to make changes to the curriculum, specific courses, and/or to the pedagogy used in the program? Please report: (1) actions already taken, and/or (2) actions planned for the future. Provide relevant examples. <small>* NOTE: These items reflect new action items based on assessment reported in this table. You will report on these action items in your next assessment report.</small>
EXAMPLE: Apply literary criticism in the traditions of the discipline.	EXAMPLE: Review sample of entry-level assignments from XYZ 150 using a rubric – establishes baseline. Review of sample of final projects from XYZ 450 by program faculty to consider course and program revisions.	EXAMPLE: The sample of graduating projects did not show as much growth as expected. We expected to see more students achieving mastery on this PLO. Approximately 35% of the graduating seniors were mastering this outcome – we are targeting 60%.	EXAMPLE: After reviewing the assessment results and our curriculum map, we noticed this topic was not being developed so we added PLO to XYZ 280 and XYZ 350. We expect to see a 60% of students mastering PLO by our next PAR reporting cycle.
1.			
2.			

Curriculum Map Template

Name of Program: <insert here>

Program Learning Outcomes (List program-specific learning outcomes, one per row below)	FF course in the program creates the bookend of the UF curriculum. (No changes to the blue columns)				List all of the department's required courses for this degree program, one per column, and other learning experiences as applicable. In parentheses, include the associated credit hours for each course. (add columns as needed)										FF: <Please denote here>	FF: <If more than one FF, add columns and denote>			
	UF 100 (3)	UF 200 (3)	English 101 / 102 (FW) (3)	Foundations of Comm (FC) (3)															
PLO 1																			
PLO 2																			
PLO 3																			
PLO 4																			
PLO 5																			
PLO 6																			
PLO 7																			
PLO 8																			
< insert rows as needed for additional PLOs >																			

Undergraduate Programs Only Complete the Following (see instructions #4 - 6)

University Learning Outcomes (1 - 5)*	ULO & PLO alignment <indicate alignment by listing corresponding PLO # or #s>	UF 100 (3)	UF 200 (3)	English 101 / 102 (FW) (3)	Foundations of Comm (FC) (3)														
1. Written Communication – Write effectively in multiple contexts, for a variety of audiences.			X	X															
2. Oral Communication – Communicate effectively in speech, both as a speaker and listener.		X			X														
3. Critical Inquiry – Engage in effective critical inquiry by defining problems, gathering and evaluating evidence, and determining the adequacy of argumentative discourse.		X																	
4. Ethics – Analyze ethical issues in personal, professional, and civic life and produce reasoned evaluations of competing value systems and ethical claims.			X																
5. Diversity – Apply knowledge of diversity and systems of inequality to address social issues of local and global importance			X																



PAR Rubric

- 7 domains are evaluated
- 4 possible levels of achievement from No Evidence to Established
- Comments / rationale for the rating
- Data collected in Qualtrics

Score	No evidence	Beginning	Developing	Established
Assessment Process	No evidence or insufficient information was provided	- Program engages in little or no review of student performance on the PLOs - Results of assessment are not discussed or are minimally discussed among faculty and stakeholder engagement is absent or limited	- Program reviews student performance against outcomes but not on a regular or routinized basis - Results of assessment are discussed, among faculty with minimal engagement of other stakeholders (staff, students, alumni, and/or outside professionals of the field)	- Program has a regular or established process for reviewing student performance against outcomes (i.e., routinized process) - Broad-based engagement of faculty and instructional staff - Results of assessment are discussed among faculty and shared on a regular basis with other stakeholders (staff, students, alumni, and/or outside professionals of the field) as appropriate - The program may have an especially distinctive, creative, or innovative way of approaching assessment
Continuous Improvement	- No curriculum, instructional, or programmatic changes were made - No reflection on action items from the prior PAR	- Limited description or examples of how any action plan has had an impact on the program's development or performance - The program did not make at least one substantive curriculum, instructional, or programmatic change - Gaps or challenges to the assessment process identified in the last report may not be fully addressed - Ratings of no evidence or beginning from the last review have not been addressed	- Improvements are described and examples are provided that draw general connections to previous action plans - The program made at least one substantive curricular, instructional, or programmatic change - Clear rationale is not provided for newly identified actions - Gaps or challenges to the assessment process identified in the last report may not be fully addressed - Ratings of No Evidence or Beginning from the last review were at least partially addressed	- The program implemented 2-4 curricular, instructional or programmatic actions or next steps from its previous report; specific improvements are described and examples are provided - Actions from the prior report that are still in progress, were not addressed, or were eliminated / replaced are briefly described - Where applicable, newly introduced actions (i.e., other improvements made based on assessment of student learning) were identified and clear rationale for their introduction was provided - Gaps or challenges to the assessment process identified in the last report or self-identified improvements were addressed - Ratings of No Evidence or Beginning from the last review were specifically addressed (i.e., actions were taken to move the program forward)
Curriculum Map	No curriculum map was provided	- A limited number of PLOs are mapped to multiple learning opportunities in the curriculum OR all of the PLOs are mapped to only one required course or experience - UG Programs Only: Program has not mapped the connections between the five core University Learning Outcomes and its curriculum	- A majority of the PLOs are mapped to multiple learning opportunities in the curriculum - Map does not identify degree of emphasis placed on PLOs in the relevant courses OR the level of competency students will achieve in mapped courses - UG Programs Only: Program has identified connections between the five core University Learning Outcomes and its	- All of the PLOs are mapped to multiple learning opportunities in the curriculum - Curriculum map demonstrates a pattern of courses that fosters student achievement of each PLO - Curriculum map identifies the degree of emphasis placed on PLOs in the relevant courses OR defines the level of competency students will achieve in mapped courses. - Other learning experience (e.g., internships, service-learning, etc.) may be identified
			curriculum in the map though the narrative description may not be complete	- UG Programs Only: Program has identified connections between the five core University Learning Outcomes and its curriculum. The program's narrative includes a discussion of how the program helps cultivate students' development of the five University Learning Outcomes

About our Peer Review Process

- Recruit peer reviewers
- Hold PAR Reviewer training; includes norming activities
- Team approach
 - 3-4 reviewers with a designated leader
 - 8-14 PARs reviewed (depending on the year)
- Review process managed in Google Sites & data gathered via Qualtrics
- Reward
 - Stipend ~\$35/hour; 18 hrs est for reviewers + 7-10 more for leads
 - Faculty can denote this service in Faculty180
- Gather feedback from PAR Reviewers

74 faculty / staff have served as reviewers



PAR Peer Review and Faculty Engagement

- Provides professional development on assessment practices
 - Creates opportunities for reviewers to reflect on their assessment practices
 - Emulates academic peer review
 - Encourages faculty ownership
 - Provides faculty-generated feedback to programs for continuous improvement
- = Builds a culture of assessment



Reviewer Feedback (Annual)

- We gather input to improve the process
 - *“I loved the asynchronous training before the synchronous training. It helped to prepare for where I still may have questions or needed further guidance.”*
- We invite reflection about whether participation changed or informed their thinking about student learning and assessment in their program and/or courses
 - *“I certainly think about assessment from a number of perspectives now (instructor, program coordinator, etc).”*

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Overview of our study

- Focus: to better understand whether serving as a PAR reviewer affected their instructional practices
- 13 participants
 - 8 had served as team leads
 - 2 participated in PAR once; 9 participated 2-4 times, 2 participated 5 times
 - Represented 11 different disciplines from 6 colleges + the library
- Questions focused on: motivation for participating; expectations vs. actual experiences; connections to teaching and assessment practices;

Motivations for Becoming a PAR Reviewer

- Interest or experience in the topic (i.e., choir members!)
- A proactive measure because they had to do a PAR and wanted to learn how to do it (well)
- Service opportunity

Outcomes of Participation

- Participants generally got from the experience what they expected to
- The experience also produced different kinds of benefits, above and beyond what they were expecting
 - Connections, expertise, comfort with PAR
 - Influence on instructional practices

Faculty Development Impact: Course Level

More explicit connections between their courses and their programs

“I have my mind on the the bigger program learning objectives in a way that I didn't before I did the PAR, and so that's been a big change.”

“One of the things I've been starting to do is every time I give a lecture, the very first thing I present is ‘here's what we're going to learn today, here's how it relates to the learning outcome of this chapter, here's how it relates to the learning outcomes of our program’ and then at the end, ‘here's how

Faculty Development Impact: Course Level

Ensuring assessments align to the LOs

*“<l’m> a **lot more explicit in . . . the learning outcomes for specific assignments**, and how they draw back to the course learning outcomes, and how those course learning outcomes draw back to the program and university learning outcomes.”*

*“. . . the most important thing I take back to both my department and my own teaching is **don’t ask them <students> to do something you can’t***

Faculty Development Impact: Instructional Practices

Encourages reflective practice

*“<having> that experience reviewing other programs, it **helps you to reflect on your own practices as an instructor**, and think about even those individual assignments, and how they fit into the whole scheme of things for your class and program.”*

Faculty Development Impact: Instructional Practices

Encourages new pedagogical strategies

*“I definitely think the PAR process has enhanced my empathetic assessment practices **which has led me to this ungrading process.**”*

*“So even yesterday I was doing the training for the PAR, and came across **the section on Bloom's Taxonomy review. I chopped that out, gave that to a student** and said, ‘You know you’re really interested in this. Look, take a look at this.’ The transparency there is needed for them to know what*

Faculty Development Impact: Program-level

Using their experience to redesign programs

*“In our department...we ended up **rewriting our PLOs for our graduate programs completely** based on...looking at those PLOs and going ‘What?’ that’s just not working’ . . . as a reviewer, getting into it, and seeing more, allowed me to be a little bit more educated and and help with that process.”*

Faculty Development Impact: Program-level

Using the PAR as a compass

*“**We’re building our department** and partially how we are doing that is using PAR as some of our foundational building blocks. That seems pretty significant to me, that we have a very real understanding of what will be expected of us. . . I think personally for me and for our department, it’s been hugely beneficial.”*

*“I’m in a department right now that’s just building itself from the ashes, right? So we’ve had people proposing classes and **those of us who have sat on PAR***

Faculty Development Impact: Program-level

Using their experience to help others with the PAR process

*“Just going through the processes helped me be able to stand a little bit more firm on, you know, my understanding of the expectations. . . **it helps to reinforce my own personal authority** . . . in terms of working with the group that I work with.”*

*“<My colleagues> **trusted my expertise**, so when we were floundering for data and feeling like, oh, we’re not doing any assessment and sort of just getting in*

Faculty Development Impact: Program-level

Leveraging PAR as a toolbox

*“I have started **using more norming practices in my departments**, with the XX Program Assessment Committee that I chair, and that . . . has been helpful and well received.”*

*“We’re redoing our curriculum right now and so my experience as a PAR reviewer has helped me to push us as a department back toward . . . **thinking of using that <PAR> as a planning tool for our new curriculum**, not just an evaluation tool for our previous curriculum . . . I don’t know that I would have*

Conclusions

- Serving as a PAR reviewer has an **impact on teaching & learning practices** at multiple levels – course, instructional, and program
- Regardless of their motivation to serve, **many PAR reviewers are changed by participating**

*“I think anything that allows faculty to understand their role as an educator <is positive> and I think this PAR does that for me. . . **I feel like I'm more of an educator.**”*

Your Observations

- Based on what we have shared, what stands out to you the most?

OR

- How do you think you might apply what we have done or learned to your context?



Implications

- How can we sustain the value of the reviewer experience?
 - Should we make the faculty development aspect more overt, or keep it “covert”?
 - Could start the training by having reviewers reflect on what they hope to get out of the process
 - Revise question on PAR Reviewer feedback form to explicitly ask how they can apply what they have learned in their own courses/program
- Reinforces the need to continue expanding the community of reviewers

Questions?

Please reach out to us directly if we can't address your question today.

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Check out our Program Assessment website: <https://www.boisestate.edu/ir-assessment/>