Program Level Assessment

1. Identify program SLOs. Program SLOs are broad measurable statements of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes students will have attained upon completion of a course cluster constituting a degree or a certificate.
    a. The recommendation is to have between 4-6 SLOs
    b. SLOs should be identified for all degrees and certificates within programs
    c. Program SLOs should be demonstrated to show that a student is competent and has integrated the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes learned throughout the program.
    d. Programs should identify a measurable level of expected student performance when leaving the program.

2. All program and certificate SLOs must be assessed by May 2012
    a. If you cannot get all the program SLOs assessed there should be a plan in place for assessment. The plan must include method of assessment and when it will be done.

3. Assessment of each program and certificate SLO: The goal is to assess student learning and create cycles of improvement.
    a. Indicate program assessment strategies: how will you assess the SLO? Possible assessment tools are rubrics, capstone course, portfolio, culminating project, performance assessment, skills assessment, department testing, vendor or industry certification exam, internship.

4. Assessment and grades are different
    a. Assessment – assess the students (aggregate) ability to meet each learning outcome
        i. Assessment is an ongoing process designed to monitor and improve student learning. Once faculty define what students should learn, assessment is completed to verify that the curriculum is designed to foster that learning, and use this data to improve the program (Allen, 2003, 2006)
    b. Grades – assess or evaluate individual students
    c. Faculty can use a grading tool like a rubric or test for assessment purposes. This is called embedded assessment. Embedded assessment is both effective and time efficient.

5. Collection of evidence or assessment is divided into two categories: Direct and Indirect.
    a. Direct evidence is based on an analysis of student behaviors or products which demonstrate how well students have mastered the learning outcomes. Some examples of direct assessment include tests/questions, portfolios, performance evaluations, oral speech, debate, projects and papers.
        i. Direct assessment is preferred. Ask students to do the outcome.

b. Indirect Assessment is based on an analysis of reported perceptions about student mastery of learning outcomes. The perceptions may be self reports by students, or others such as alumni. Some examples include surveys, reflective self assessment essays, interviews and focus groups.

6. Describe the criteria and standards used to appraise student work.
    a. How do you know if your students have met the selected outcome at a proficient level? Are students learning what you want them to learn? Most programs have best practices or performance standards, based on peer review research or industry standards, to use as a guide. Reference these in your assessment report.
    b. Process: set the performance standard for the desired student work. What are the qualities desired in student work to show that they have learned? Consider how you will collect the data to measure how the students are meeting the standards.
    c. Performance Standard examples:
        i. Many programs attach rubrics to show performance standards. Think in terms of three levels of performance: developing, competent, or exceeding competency. You can have more level if that works better for your program.
        ii. Consider how you will collect the data to measure how the students are meeting these standards?
    d. Another approach is to describe how SLOs and assessment relate to best practices or industry standards. What is working? Would you recommend changes? Many Health Science program SLOs are aligned with the standards set by their professional accrediting agencies. Program Coordinators often times make changes to course and program curriculum based on these standards.

7. Document assessment results and analyze student success in achieving the program SLOs.
    a. A program assessment report should be completed each year and sent to department chairs and dean.
    b. Assess the selected program SLO using data you have collected as evidence: to determine how successful students have been at meeting the program SLOs. Collect your data, aggregate the results, and record the results on the reporting template. Analyze discrepancies between outcomes and performance levels.
    c. Assessment is a collaborative activity conducted among members of a program/department/discipline. Assessment is the first step in the “closing the loop” process. This process includes assessment, determining impact, and using data for program improvement.
    d. How do you know students have been successful in meeting the program SLOs? Analyze discrepancies between outcomes and performance levels. Look at trends over time. Are there any improvements you want to implement in the future?
        i. Also consider these questions as part of assessment. Your assessment report can document the following:

1. Evaluate the relevance, appropriateness, and currency of SLOs being reviewed.
2. Discuss how course competencies, assignments, and standards for sequenced courses relate to program student learning outcomes, program success, and general education outcomes (if applicable). Think about and refer to course program SLO alignment matrix.
3. Assess previous changes made in teaching/learning methodologies and class assessment techniques. What worked? Any revisions needed?
4. Assess the need for curricular revisions and discuss revisions that were made earlier based on new SLOs and alignment grids (matrices).
5. Indicate revisions made based on the review of best practices or performance standards in a discipline area. Have the revisions been successful?
6. Indicate changes faculty have implemented to promote student success.

e. All program assessment reports should be used to complete the student learning outcomes section on the comprehensive program review.

8. Next Steps:
   a. Current level of student learning is proficient and should be maintained in the next cycle
      i. Current SLO is effective as validated through assessment.
   b. Strategies to promote improved learning. Describe the improvements planned.
      i. Changes may be curricular, pedagogy, student support, faculty support
      ii. Things to think about:
         1. Are there any improvements you want to implement in the future. These are learning opportunities
         2. Evaluate the current curriculum. Does it offer sufficient breadth and depth of learning?
         3. Does the curriculum content align with the program SLOs?
         4. How does your program compare to similar programs at other colleges?
         5. Do you want to change the sequence of courses?
         6. Do you want to redesign a learning experience, if yes, how might you do that?
         7. Would you like to try a new teaching methodology?
         8. Should the number of students allowed in a course section be reviewed?