

RECOMMENDATION #5: IDENTIFY AND ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES.

The college must develop and implement student learning outcomes across the six sites in order to determine the effectiveness of college programs and services on student learning including:

- Instructional programs at course, program, degree and certificate levels (Standards IIA.1c, and IIA.2i),
- Student services throughout the students' matriculation at the college (Standards IIB, IIB.3, and IIBA),
- Links between student learning outcomes and the planning process (Standard IB),
- Mechanisms for measuring student learning outcomes (Standard IIA.2a), and
- Mechanisms for using those measurements to improve courses, programs, and services (Standards IIA.1c, IIA.2e, and IIA.2f).

Resolution

The College has implemented student learning outcomes (SLO) for 100% of its courses and these SLOs are available in all College course outlines. The course outlines will be available in the evidence room and are also available on the Vice President for Instructional Affairs (VP/IA) website. All degree and certificate programs have student learning outcomes as found in the college's catalogue. [Standards IIA.1c and IIA.2i]

The College's curriculum handbook sets forth procedures for the design and approval for all courses and programs at the College. The approval process for courses and programs also requires the identification and inclusion of SLOs for course and program levels as evidenced by the curriculum committee minutes.

In fall 2009, the curriculum committee began discussion on a common format for course outlines that includes common assessment strategies across all sites. The common course outline format will provide a basis for both determination of the level of student learning against SLOs for individual courses and comparison data of student learning across all sites. [Standards IIA.1c and IIA.2i]

The course syllabi developed by faculty and provided to students include the course SLOs. These syllabi are reviewed and approved by the Director of Academic Programs (DAP) for the national campus and Instructional Coordinators (IC) at their respective state campus sites. The College's more recent Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP) handbook also provides assistance on development of student learning outcomes.

Instructional program evaluation is detailed in the Curriculum Handbook under Appendix T and is available on the VP/IA's website. Program SLO assessment and the updating of program review started at the College as observed by the 2006 visiting team. The IAP handbook which was developed in 2008 further describes the program assessment processes at the College. The handbook is found on the IRPO website and hard copies were distributed to faculty offices across sites. The handbook provides directions and worksheets to guide the development of annual improvement plans and corresponding assessment plans and reports. The worksheets are designed to directly link improvement and assessment plans and reports to the program mission and the College's strategic goals and institutional mission. [Standard IB][Standard IIA.2a] [Standards IIA.1c, IIA.2e, and IIA.2f]

In fall 2009, the college initiated implementation of a formal performance budgeting system for its FY 2011 operations budget. The process including establishing outcomes/objectives (both

SLOs and accomplishments against high level measures such as retention, rubrics, standardized testing, etc.) to be accomplished during FY 2011 and linking human and financial resources to the established outcomes/objectives and is linked to the college strategic plans goals. The performance budgeting process covers all instructional, student services and administrative services programs and forms the basis for monitoring and reporting of accomplishments. The performance budgeting system is supported by data generated by the SIS and other sources. The IAP worksheets described below form the underlying basis for development and assessment of the budgeting scheme and impact of human and financial resources on outcomes/objectives. [Standards IIB, IIB.3, IIBA IB, IIA1c, IIA.2e, and IIA.2f]

An assessment standing committee was established in fall 2008 as a focal point for review and endorsement of assessment plans and reports to the College president for approval. Assessment plans and reports are channeled to the assessment committee through the administrative and standing committee structure as prescribed by the governance policy. The assessment committee's review of plans and reports are channeled directly to the college's planning and resources, curriculum and student services committees to provide a foundation for decisions on resource allocation. Other important committees like finance committee is a subcommittee of the planning and resources committee. Assessment results also form the basis for the upcoming assessment cycles improvement and assessment plans. Documents generated by the assessment committee and assessment plans and reports can be found on the IRPO website.

Course and program assessment results are submitted to the IC's and the DAP as evidenced by emails collected by the IC's and the DAP. The documents shared during the email exchanges will be featured in the next edition of the VPIA website, which is now undergoing usability and content revision. The DAP and ICs assist faculty to set assessment plans at the beginning of fall semester for course and program level assessment. Program reviews using the format of Appendix T found in the Curriculum Handbook are submitted to the vice president's office for initial review and transmitted to the curriculum committee. Program level reports are presented to the curriculum committee for review and input prior to sharing with other programs or forwarded to the VPIA. Prior to 2008, the reports were shared with other committees or offices that would have a need to know the results. Reports on the previous academic year course and program assessments are to be submitted in October. Beginning with the 2008, the program assessment reports are presented to the assessment committee who then forwards to appropriate committees and departments, and shared across campuses.

At the beginning of the fall 2007 and 2008 semesters, faculty were tasked to revisit their program assessment plans for the upcoming semester for their courses and linking to program level improvements and continued assessment.

Reviews of student demographics and achievement data is being reviewed on a regular basis in curriculum, assessment, student services and the planning and resources committees of the college. [Standard IB, Standard IIA.2a]

A variety of mechanisms are being used by faculty in assessing student learning outcomes. Examples range from pre and post tests, portfolios in teacher training programs, skills checklists for vocational and technical classes, scoring rubrics for pre and post expository writing samples,

comprehensive exams in the social science courses, and internship experiences in media studies and business programs. Beginning fall 2008, assessment strategies and mechanisms are included in the assessment plan worksheets.

A revision of general education outcomes was completed in spring & summer 2009 with an assessment plan (IAP process) being implemented in fall 2009. The report on the general education process will be available during the March 2009 site visit.

All student services programs at the national campus have SLOs/objectives, assessment plans and reports for the 2007-2008 periods as can be found on the IRPO website. Additional plans and some reports are available from the state campuses. A summary of the assessment activities for the student services can also be found on the IRPO website.

Student services and programs at the College also follow the same process for the development of improvement and assessments plans, and reports as discussed above for course and program level SLO assessment. The College's institutional assessment plan is based on models from the Kellogg Foundation and National Science Foundation and centered on developing evaluation questions based upon stated SLO/objective with data sources and analysis of data sources identified in the assessment plan. The reporting function is based on answering the evaluation question based on the identified data sources and analysis. Closing the loop is directly linked to the analysis and to whether or not the SLO/objective has been met. The closing the loop recommendations become the basis of improvement plans and development/selection of SLOs/objectives to be addressed in the next assessment cycle. Student services completed and begin administering in fall 2009 a set of rubrics for assessing the level and quality of programs and services across all sites. [Standards IIB, IIB.3, and IIBA]

Mechanisms for measuring student learning outcomes include tracking graduation, retention rates, intake and contact sheets, student records, counseling logs, surveys, interviews, disciplinary citations, committee minutes, and trip reports.

Analysis

Over the 2005-2007 periods, the implementation of student learning outcomes at the sites was at different stages. To address the gaps, the Director of Academic Programs (DAP), the Director of Institutional Research and Planning (DIRP), and the Vice President for Student Services (VPSS) visited all college sites, conducted training workshops, and provided one-on-one technical assistance for faculty and student services staff on assessment planning, assessment mechanics and reporting. State campus instructional, student services, and administrative staff formed local campus-based assessment teams to discuss, plan, coordinate, and implement College wide and campus specific assessment activities. Faculty assessment teams at Chuuk and Yap state campuses have been notably active in conducting program and course level assessment. They are also active in providing and stimulating campus wide conversation through report sharing at curriculum committee as evidenced by the curriculum committee minutes. The national campus-based Director of the Learning Resources Center coordinated library assessment efforts among campuses. All learning resources centers now collect and report the same kinds of library statistics and record and report these data on monthly basis. These data are also used in quarterly

performance budget reports and incorporated in yearly program review. At the end of the fall 2008 a common library survey was administered to patrons at all campus libraries with a report of findings and recommendations pending.

Program review of the Certificate in General Studies, led to a meeting held in October 2007 that brought faculty representatives from state campuses together to provide input in restructuring the College's approach to developmental education. Faculty members and IC's attended conferences of the National Association of Developmental Education and visited with Kapiolani Community College developmental education staff to gather information on best practices and model programs. These activities led to a proposal for a new developmental education program that is currently being presented to the College for review.

Assessment of the AS in Elementary Education offered in Yap, Chuuk and Kosrae combined with the requests by state campuses to offer courses under the Third-year Certificate of Achievement in Teacher Preparation at their campus led to a meeting held in December 2008 at the national site. The group included education faculty from four sites with teacher preparation programs. They spent two days discussing, deliberating and developing a set of recommendations for phasing out the current Associate of Science Degree in Teacher Education program, which is currently offered at the state campuses, and extending the National campus-based Associate of Arts Degree in Teacher Preparation to the state campuses. The extension to the state campuses of some of the courses under the Third-Year Certificate of Achievement in Teacher Preparation was also discussed during the meeting.

These recommendations are now being discussed with campuses and stakeholders in the education departments in the various states. The commission was also contacted by the ALO regarding the extension of existing approved programs to other campus sites and to determine if a substantive change report will be needed. A clear direction is forthcoming from the Commission through the ALO.

The College is now moving to do a 360 view of learning outcomes assessment. An employer survey on the college alumni who are currently employed in the FSM is being conducted by the College. The 4- year institutions in the Pacific Post Secondary Education Council are also sharing data on the retention and persistence rates and semester grade point averages for FSM graduates who transferred and enrolled at their institutions.

COM-FSM, in collaboration with University of Guam, hosts a Partnership BA in Elementary Education program. The University of Guam Education faculty and national campus-based faculty members are collaborating in program assessment. These faculty members are sharing and validating assessment instruments while also incorporating the FSM National Teacher Competency Test as the program level assessment mechanism.

In 2007, the College established a process for the development of annual institutional priorities which includes an annual president's retreat. The retreat brings together internal and external stakeholders to review the state of the College, assess if the College is meeting its mission, and to develop or refocus institutional priorities to guide institutional efforts, budget development and allocation of resources.

The College's instructional affairs department has shared information on the reading grade level equivalency of students on the COM-FSM Entrance Test (COMET) and program review data on certificate level students. This information informed both internal and external stakeholders of the under preparedness of the high school students and the severity of the gap based on the COMET entrance test results. The College sets priorities in the 2008 retreat to details of the president's retreat are found on the IRPO web site.

The College has SLOs and authentic assessment mechanisms in place for courses, programs and degrees as described in the IAP Handbook. A systematic and regular cycle of student learning outcome assessment and program and improvements exists and with each semester is becoming more systematic and institutionalized. Among faculty and instructional division the dialogue about the results of assessment is directed toward improving programs and student learning. Course and assessment results are being used for improvement at the course level, to better align PLO and courses and for program modifications. Faculty submit course level assessment reports each semester to the DAP at the national site and ICs at the state campuses. Included in these reports are recommendations for improving student learning at the course level and ultimately at the program level as all course level SLOs are directly linked to program level SLOs as established in program SLO and course matrixes. Appendix 1A provides an example of the activities, assessment techniques and what the faculty and divisions are doing with the results to improve learning. The rest of the SLO and program evaluation report are available on the IRPO web site.

In conducting assessment for the general education core courses across campuses, the need for greater consistency in the mechanisms used for assessment has become obvious. Currently the general education core consists of 14 general education outcomes (as can be found on pages 40 and 41 of current edition of the College of Micronesia-FSM General Catalog) and requires 29 credit hours. Efforts to conduct consistent and meaningful assessment across all sites for the general education core outcomes have opened eyes to both the desire to revise the general education outcomes and to develop meaningful and manageable assessment mechanisms that can be reduplicated across sites.

Recently the DAP formed a working group to address the revision of the general education core. The DAP and the DIRPO attended a conference on General Education in Baltimore in late February to prepare for revisions and assessment plan development. In 2008, the College identified the need for College wide coordination of the general education core program as well as placement and tracking of developmental students. Beginning with fiscal year 2009, a long unfilled faculty position at the national campus previously dedicated to the design of the entrance test was reassigned to work with the DAP to coordinate the assessment of the general education program SLOs throughout the College. The revised job description has been prepared and recruitment will begin soon.

Since 2007 the DAP and ICs have included assessment plan preparation and assessment results sharing in faculty workshop week at the beginning of the fall semesters. Recently, the faculty have formally expressed through the Faculty/Staff Senate to the Assessment Committee and Cabinet that they are not clear where their assessment reports go after they pass them to the DAP

and precisely how the information and recommendations in the reports are being used in the planning and budget resource allocations. With the development of the IAP handbook the information sharing process and pathways have been identified. The IAP Handbook is being distributed in Spring 2009 with orientation sessions planned for division chairs and faculty.

Although students are made aware of the goals and purposes of courses and programs in which they are enrolled through the inclusion of this information in the College catalog and on the course syllabi, the College has not assessed the level of awareness of the students. The current "course evaluation" completed by students at the end of the course does not include any reference to student learning outcomes. This situation is being addressed during the spring 2009 semester. A revised student teacher evaluation form is being developed to replace the existing one.

Under the leadership of the DAP with the assistance of the director of vocational programs and ICs at state campuses, program coordinators and faculty are working to directly link one assessment cycle with the next and close the loop into the next cycle's improvement plan.

The gap that existed between the national campus and the state campuses in the stages of the knowledge, implementation and effectiveness in using student learning outcomes has been narrowed. The conversation regarding SLOs has changed from what is an SLO to how can SLOs be assessed; data analyzed and report forms utilized as evidenced by trip reports and emails. The College is well on the path to becoming proficient in using the College's assessment process for ongoing and continuous improvement for assuring effectiveness of student learning for courses, programs and degrees. The number of recommendations for changes and continuous improvement of student learning for courses, programs and degrees are documented in the curriculum committee minutes and course level assessment reports.

The adoption of a common course outline format that includes assessment strategies will provide a sound basis for course level assessment and comparison of results across all sites of the college. The general education program assessment in fall 2009 provides a model for compilation and use of results for improvement.

The implementation of the performance budgeting process provides direct linkage between the planning, assessment and resource allocation for instructional program and course SLO's and high level measures. Issues that have arisen in the implementation process include the development/writing of SMARTer outcomes/objectives and the transition to a results based resource allocation system.

Student Services

The department of student services supports the College's mission in maintaining appropriate programs, practices, and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity through its recruitment efforts and emphasis on cultural diversity in its activities. The SLOs established for all programs and services provide the frameworks for delivering high quality services to support student learning.

After the 2006 team visit, the College accelerated its emphasis on improving student services through development of SLOs and assessing them. Training for SLO identification and assessment was provided by the IRPO director and the VPSS at all sites as evidenced by trip logs and student services committee minutes. The series of trainings contributed to the development of improvement and assessment plans and reports which are made available on the IRPO website.

The revised terms of reference for the student services committee emphasizes the role of the committee in the planning, evaluation and resource allocation cycle. The new governance policy which emphasizes participatory decision-making, communication pathways and linking of planning, evaluation and resource allocation, along with all terms of references are also available on the [IRPO website](#).

A series of research and information gathering activities is used regularly by student services functional units. Evaluations are given at the end of most student services workshops. Results are analyzed and used for determining improvement. After action reviews are also being conducted for critical events like student orientation and registration. The results of the review are used for improvement of next year's activities as evidenced by the student services committee minutes.

The College has implemented Phase I of a Student Information System (SIS) that improves handling of student records and improved tracking of student persistence, progression, retention and graduation rates. The SIS allows real time data entry and access to student records at all College sites. The SIS also plays a major role in improved information for student advising. At the end of the fall 2008 semester, all grades were received and graduation clearances for all students who applied were completed in time and the names of eligible students were listed in the graduation bulletin.

In Fiscal Year 2008, the College began institutionalizing tutoring programs at all sites for at-risk students. A tracking system was developed to assess its effectiveness for student learning. The student services support program (SSSP) located at the national campus provides both professional, peer counseling, and mentoring for supported students. The Tutoring Centers (A+ Centers) at the national campus and Pohnpei campus have been built to house all the tutoring spaces and needs for the tutoring program. Kosrae and Yap master plans include student services buildings that will house tutoring programs. The Chuuk state campus student services building currently provides an area for counselors and tutors to meet with students.

Appendix I describes and summarizes assessment activities to date plus the recommendations for improvement and links them to planning and resource allocation. More detailed assessment plans and reports are located on the website for [institutional research and planning](#) office.

The department and its individual offices are currently developing better tools for gathering statistical information from participants (students, faculty and staff) in order to improve the accuracy and reliability of data collected. The department of student services assures the quality of these services regardless of location or means of delivery, support learning and enhance achievement of mission of the institution.

Some student services staff and the vice president for student services continue to conduct training and shadowing by bringing several student services staff from state campuses to national campus for such training. At the same token, they have gone out to the state campuses to retrain student services staff.

Student services assessment and evaluation follows the same process as instructional programs. The student services functional areas have developed assessment plans and are regularly using conducting assessment activities across all sites. The IAP requires development of improvement and assessment plans and reports for instructional programs, student services and administrative services.

Table 1b: Summary of Student Services Assessment Activities

PROGRAM	Resident Housing
Program Level SLO Assessment: (If yes, when, what objectives or evaluation questions)	
Office of the Resident Housing began its program evaluation of objectives in the fiscal year 2008 with the following Strategic goal No.2: Provide institutional support to foster student success and satisfaction. The department mission supports the institution by offering in-house tutoring, reading/study room and computer labs to further aid student access to learning material. The department provides institutional support for its resident's social life with weekly theatre nights, monthly dance socials, intramural games and field trips. The department provides institutional support for the residents' health and spiritual life with weekly AA meetings, Sunday church trips and weekly health and spiritual meetings. The department provides institutional support for the care, maintenance and the safety of Resident Halls.	
Objective Assessment: (how many assessment activities has been done; reports submitted)	
. Objective 1: Office of the Resident Housing will improve its in-house tutoring with monthly follow up reports, hiring more qualified tutors in a variety of subjects and other self-help learning tools. Objective 2: Office of the Resident Housing will improve the quality of leisure activities with Healthier activities, socially conscientious activities and academically inclined/supportive activities. Objective 3: The Office of the Resident Housing will continue to monitor, assess, improve and make recommendations for more reliable security, maintenance and janitorial service for its residents.	
Mechanism for Measuring Objectives: (surveys, interviews, focus group, etc)	
Intake and contact sheets, student records, counseling logs, surveys, interviews, and disciplinary citations, minutes, trip reports.	
Results: (what was changed, end results, actions taken as a result)	
As a result of the implementation of the AA meeting and The Health and Spiritual meetings it should be noted that the residents although are still violating some Residence Hall policies, the number of violent incidents being committed have declined.	

The institution is systematically assessing student services using student learning outcomes and objectives, and other appropriate measures to improve the effectiveness of these services. Funding for a new student information system (SIS) was approved in December 2006 to replace the old database system. Currently, the department of student services continues to monitor and evaluate program objectives to determine if they are fulfilling student needs. Student evaluations will continue to be conducted on a semester basis and from these findings program modifications will be made accordingly.

Additional Plans

- Work is underway for a revised and updated student evaluation of courses that includes questions on student learning outcomes which is to be completed and used in all courses by the close of the spring 2009 semester.

- Training sessions in using the new Scantron scoring and analysis system and other available scanners need to be designed and conducted for faculty and other staff in collaboration with IRPO. This training will need to include use of the software program acquired for designing custom made surveys for a variety of class, program, and institutional research applications.
- Following further training and use of the Smartboard and the Elluminate Live communication software at state campuses, assessment working groups at each campus, in conjunction with the curriculum and assessment committees will have increased opportunities for more real time “dialogue” and interaction for sharing of assessment strategies, results, and in developing improvement plans.
- Further orientation and training in closing the loop will be continued during the remainder of the Spring 2009 semester and revisited at the start of the Fall 2009 semester during faculty workshop week to reinforce the cycle of continuous assessment.
- Student services offices at all sites are continuing their rounds of assessment of their SLOs/objectives.
- Phase II of the SIS will be implemented so that faculty, academic advisors and others assisting students in completing their particular program in a timely manner will have greater real time access to check the students individual degree plan and help the students. The SIS also allows real-time tracking of different student cohorts.
- Similar to the instructional staff, student services units will use Elluminate to hold real time meetings and provide opportunities for staff from all sites to share and discuss assessment find results and increase collaboration across campus to make improvements in student services at all sites.
- The development and implementation of student services rubrics in fall 2009 provides a simple but powerful means to assessment and evaluate the quality, equity and consistency of student services across all sites.
- Annual Institutional survey for student satisfaction with services provided by the college to support student learning.
- Annual Institutional survey for faculty and staff satisfaction with support services and communication pathways identified by the College.

Evidence:

- [VPIA website](#)
- [VPSSA website](#)
- [COMET data and records.](#)
- [Curriculum Handbook](#)
- [Faculty Handbook](#)
- [IAP Handbook](#)
- Detailed assessment plans and program reports are located on the IRPO websites located at www.comfsm.fm under administration and linked to the VPIA and VPSSS websites.
- [Strategic Plan 2006-2011](#)
- Minutes of curriculum, assessment, student services and planning and resources committees.