



The Road to STATE'S REAFFIRMATION 2015



WVSU's Dedication to Educational Achievement

As we learn more about the reaffirmation of accreditation each week in *The Road to State's Reaffirmation 2015*, we will examine how select elements of West Virginia State University (WVSU) campus life and culture interact with the Self-Study Report. It is essential that the University demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning. As a result, let us briefly examine dedication to educational achievement at West Virginia State University.

WVSU is committed to student learning and achievement for all of its curricular and co-curricular programs. This commitment is reflected in the University's mission and core values, which emphasize the creation and advancement of knowledge through effective teaching and research that promotes student learning and the achievement of student success.

In the University's 2005 HLC review, it was noted "assessment at WVSU has become a part of the culture of the institution." This evaluation may be due in part to the development of approved assessment plans with clearly defined program learning outcomes for all academic programs.

In the years following the 2005 HLC Self-Study Report, WVSU has continued its efforts to strengthen an institutional culture of assessment and emphasize the importance of the assessment of student learning. However, these efforts have not been without significant challenges. From 2005 forward, assessment measures were taking place, mainly at the course level, though efforts were uneven and inconsistent across the University. The absence of assessment support services and staff resulted in a lack of consistency in the way the institution's academic and co-curricular programs approached the task of ongoing assessment of student learning. Recognizing the need for greater expertise and leadership around assessment issues, WVSU hired a Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and merged the assessment and institutional research functions under one unit which is now entitled the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Effectiveness. The then-hired Director has since left the University. As the search for a new Director of Institutional Research, Assessment and Effectiveness continues at WVSU, the work that has been conducted has brought new energy and ideas for evolving assessment and effectiveness plans to a new level. Key achievements include:

- Development of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for academic programs;
- Development of Curriculum Maps for academic programs;
- Identification of assessment coordinators assigned to each academic program;
- Adoption and implementation of LiveText as a centralized electronic system for collecting and maintaining program-level assessment data; and
- Implementation of faculty training and staff support for the development of comprehensive assessment plans for academic programs.



The Road to STATE'S REAFFIRMATION 2015



The University continued to build on these achievements towards systemic assessment by creating faculty surveys, conducting focus group sessions, and acquiring feedback from assessment coordinators to identify and prioritize the types of support needed by faculty to move the assessment process forward. Major needs identified by faculty as part of this process included:

- Additional training on the development of program-level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs);
- Additional training on the use of LiveText to generate student learning assessment reports; and
- Greater access to technical support for the use of LiveText.

The results of these fact finding efforts were analyzed, and a strategy was developed to address the major concerns. In response to this evaluation of assessment challenges, the University hired an HLC Assessment Academy consultant to conduct two training sessions with assessment coordinators and faculty in spring 2013. Topics focused primarily on the fundamentals of SLOs and curriculum mapping. In addition, the University opened a computer lab that same semester to expand technical support for faculty on the use of LiveText. These more recent activities build upon prior initiatives and serve to reinforce WVSU's commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

The departments continued to work on refining and in some instances developing PLOs and mapping those outcomes to their programmatic curriculum. Additional evaluation of the assessment process at the University continued in fall 2013 by gathering information through meetings with assessment coordinators, an assessment questionnaire, and an assessment status tool, which sought information about assessment planning, data collection and analysis, assessment reporting, and the use of data for continuous improvement. Using this assessment status tool, academic programs provided information about where they were regarding the assessment of student learning. Results from the self-reported data indicate that all academic programs have developed PLOs and most programs have created curriculum maps that link those outcomes to the courses or activities in which those outcomes will be assessed.

Information from all evaluation methods indicated that although academic departments were actively engaged in the assessment process and understood the importance of ongoing assessment, many desired a systematic approach to assessment for guidance and support. Assessment is ongoing at the course and program level even if not yet fully systematized. The assessment of general education is in a period of transition. The University continues to improve assessment practices as the very nature of assessment is ongoing analysis and reacting to the results of the analysis.

For more information about The Road to State's Reaffirmation 2015, please click [here](#) to discover in-depth information about the process, read the University's Self-Study Report, and more!

For questions or comments regarding the University's reaffirmation of accreditation process or the self-study report, please send all inquiries and information to reaffirmation@wvstateu.edu or call (304) 204-4300.