**2009 Physical Education Feedback**

**Assessment Committee Contact Person: Melissa Mercer-Tachick**

**Plan also reviewed by: Beth Lincoln**

Thank you for the hard work that went into your assessment plan. As we carefully reviewed your Steps, it became clear just how much thought and effort went into your work. There were some real strengths in your work, and we celebrate these with you!

In general, there were a few themes that the Assessment Committee noticed. First, it is most helpful when the progression from Step 2 to Step 3 and Step 3 to Step 4 are clear. That is, after you have articulated your learning goals, the clearest proposals are explicit in how the courses/experiences in Step 3 directly support the learning goals. And Step 4 should take full advantage of all of the places in Step 3 where data might be collected. Second, make strategic use of both direct and indirect measures, and think about whether data can be collected at the beginning, during the program of study, and at the end. This gives a richer sense of where and when your work contributes strongly to learning goals and where improvements might be made. Third, make your plan manageable! All data need not be collected annually; some can be done every other year. And you may choose not to measure for all of your learning goals right now. Make claims that you can (a) intellectually, ethically stand behind and (b) find resources to measure.

Please feel free to contact either of us with questions about your feedback. We want to help your assessment plan be successful in collecting relevant data to inform your work! We will be happy to work with you toward timely completion revisions to the first four steps, submission of preliminary findings, and/or completion of this iteration of data collection.

Comments specific to your plan:

Steps 1 and 2 were clear. Step 3 appears to be your catalog course listing. What would be greatly helpful here is to link back to the learning goals in Step 2 and provide clear indication of which courses work toward which outcomes. Not only with this help your readers understand how the third step follows from the second, but it may also help you clarify in your own thinking how these are related.

Focusing in on Step 2, we find a little bit of a mix in terms of the degree to which learning goals are concrete or fuzzy. The learning goals for the Pedagogy and Exercise Science tracks are all written behaviorally. The same is true for the first four outcomes of the Athletic Training track. Goals 5-10 in the Athletic Training track are programmatic goals. That is, they are written to describe what the program will be doing, not what students should be able to do. Strictly speaking, to focus on those would be evaluation (as opposed to assessment). We suggest either eliminating those goals or reframing them to identify what students will be able to do as a result of your program.

In terms of outcomes, there is also some diversity. The Pedagogy outcomes seem to be written with an eye toward measurement. They seem to be ready to go. The Exercise Science outcomes are a little fuzzy because they are so comprehensive. For example, the fourth item is to “demonstrate competency in the knowledge, skills and abilities”—we are looking at all sorts of inputs including cognition, psychomotor, and perhaps other domains—“in exercise physiology and biomechanics”—two different domains—for the understanding of human movement and function in sport performance, physical activity, health promotion and disease prevention.” Wow! This is wonderful, and we are in awe of the scope of your work! But for assessment purposes, that one statement could be broken up into at least twelve distinct outcomes. We suggest working backward: what should students be able to demonstrate, and do you have (or can you develop) the resources to collect that data? If so, make a claim about it. Even if you currently do not have a way to collect the data, you may want to keep the claim if it is critical to your work, but you should explain how you plan to pursue measurement of the degree to which you achieve the learning goal.

The Athletic Training outcomes (1-4) are a bit mixed. The first is easily measured. The other three could use definitions. (Would all people agree what it means to be ethical or effective in communicating? Likely, there would be overlap, but there would also be differences.) If there is a code of ethics in the field, reference to that document might be key to providing the definition this item needs. Defining communication skills—interpersonal, written, formal, informal, etc.—would be helpful. Similarly, decision making skills could be further clarified. Starting with outcome 5, these are programmatic outcomes, not student learning outcomes. They could either be dropped from your student learning goals or rewritten in a form such as “students will be able to” in order to make them student-centered.

We are really impressed with the breadth of your thinking about collecting assessment data! It is heartening to see so many measures being collected for your assessment! We have a few questions about some of them, and we hope that this feedback will help you critically think about which measures are communicating more effectively about student learning outcomes and which may need more development.

How do the data sources relate to the learning goals? Are all learning goals covered by the selected measures? It might be helpful to either create a matrix demonstrating which measures apply to which learning goals or address each learning goal (and the measures you will use to assess it) in turn. It is unclear whether you have sufficient data for all of your learning goals.

As written, you have both direct and indirect measures. We are unsure of the degree to which the faculty evaluations and clinical instructor evaluations are direct—like the question of validity of measures, it depends on what they are used for. Alumni and employer surveys are likely indirect, but without more knowledge of what is in the surveys, it is difficult to determine. Tests may be direct measures, if they are constructed to measure knowledge and you are using them as indicators of student knowledge. For example, the Basic Skills Test is only a valid direct measure if you are making a claim about basic skills. We found it difficult to determine which learning outcome would be substantively supported by this data.

For the certification exam results for all three tracks, does the department get a breakdown of various areas? Can we determine which particular learning goals may be met more strongly or less strongly based on this data? Do these exams cover all learning goals, or some more than others?

Are there artifacts produced in your courses that you could collect to assess student learning for movement skills, for example?

One other thing to consider is pre-/post- program gains. Are there any assessments that are repeated? If so, those can give you an indication of the effect of your program (and/or time, maturity).

Please take this feedback as encouraging and constructive! We can see your dedication to excellence, and we want to help support you in making informed decisions based on evidence collected from students. That can only improve the work that we all do!

We look forward to reading how the data collection and analysis has gone, and to learning how you have used the data!

Next Steps:

In coordination with your Assessment Committee reviewers and their written and verbal feedback, please observe the following deadlines for your assessment cycle:

September 15: Revisions to Steps 1-4 due (if necessary)

October 1: Completion of Steps 5 & 6 using preliminary data

November 2: Final Fall 2009 plans due

**Fall 2009:** The **Physical Education Department** has done a solid job of collecting, analyzing, and acting upon their assessment data. Their work is all included in the Google Doc that was created in the Fall of this year, and I believe we can give hearty thanks for a nicely completed assessment report!