

INTRODUCTION



This document contains two distinct sections. The first section discusses the philosophy, meaning, values, and expectations for Assessment at Sinte Gleska University. The second section contains the practical application of assessment in the form of guides, management plans, and checklists that provide direction for the process of assessment at Sinte Gleska University.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Sinte Gleska University is engaged in ongoing assessment of student learning for a number of reasons. A primary reason is to honor our institutional commitment to student learning. As a tribal university, we are chartered by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (Sicangu Lakota) “to offer courses, grant degrees, and enter into agreements with public or private agencies to offer higher education on the reservation (Rosebud Sioux Reservation, South Dakota).” Assessment helps us know how the courses and degrees we offer impact the tribal and regional communities. It helps us know how well we have prepared our teachers, our counselors, business leaders, nurses, carpenters, and all of our graduates in meeting the defined goals and objectives that led to their degrees. We also want our current students to know how well they understand and use the knowledge and abilities that faculty articulate as important. Another reason is to provide reliable answers to legitimate questions about student learning that arise from external evaluation by peers, policy makers, and the public. For these reasons, the University has committed to developing a deeper understanding of the level and quality of student learning in each of its programs of study. (Here, program refers to a course of study leading to a degree within each academic department.)

Assessment is tied to the rich traditions and expectations inherent in the Sinte Gleska University Mission, Purpose, and Values. We expect assessment approaches to differ due of the complexity of the educational process and the fact that we are a *Sicangu Lakota* tribal university. We know that collective faculty effort is required to establish learning goals for academic programs and to put in place and sustain a set of ongoing teaching, learning, assessment, and feedback practices that will allow faculty to be more aware of the effects of their work.

Mission Statement

Sinte Gleska University provides a model for Indian-controlled education. It is an institution governed by people rooted to the Reservation and culture, concerned about the future and willing to work to see the institution grow. It provides each Lakota person the opportunity to pursue an education and does so in a way that is relevant to career and personal needs. Sinte Gleska University graduates will help determine the future development of the Tribe and its institutions. In sum, the mission of Sinte Gleska University is to plan, design, implement, and assess postsecondary programs and other educational resources uniquely appropriate to Lakota people in order to facilitate individual development and tribal autonomy.

SGU Purpose Statement

- Sinte Gleska University will work to increase the number of Indian people in middle and upper-management positions.
- Sinte Gleska University will reflect, strengthen, and develop Lakota cultural life.

- Sinte Gleska University works to establish mechanisms for improving the quality of life on the Rosebud Reservation.
- Sinte Gleska University will develop individuals who are citizens of the world, with a solid understanding of Lakota life and the ability to prosper in contemporary society.

SGU Assessment Vision

The University has adopted the following vision statement that provides direction for the development and implementation of assessment practices.

Assessment at SGU is a multidimensional process that

- Documents growth in knowledge, skills, attitudes;
- Promotes individual development and tribal autonomy;
- Provides evidence of essential literacy and critical thinking skills;
- Reflects the four Lakota virtues as represented in the SGU logo.
 - **Woksape** (Wisdom): Woksape is a combination of education and life experiences. Woksape is a life long journey.
 - **Wo’Ohitika** (Bravery): Wo’Ohitika is the courage to defend values and convictions. Wo’Ohitika is accepting responsibility.
 - **Wowacintanka** (Fortitude): Wowacintanka is mental and physical endurance. Wowacintanka is the strength to withstand challenge.
 - **Wacantognaka** (Generosity): Wacantognaka is something you hold in your heart. Wacantognaka is sharing love, honor, knowledge, time and respect.

Institutional Learning Goals

It is our firm belief that all programs and courses lead each student to attainment of the following goals. All graduates will

- be effective and competent **communicators** within the *Oyate* and tribal society demonstrated through the use of technology, verbal and non-verbal forms of communication, and oral and written English language;
- be effective and competent **critical and creative thinkers** whose decisions are guided by moral and ethical character; to show *waunsila* (compassion, caring, sharing, love); and who strive to achieve peace and harmony through the practice of *Wolakota*;
- be **responsible community members** of the *Sicangu Oyate* who have a solid appreciation and understanding of Lakota life, the ability and motivation to improve the quality of life on the reservation, and to prosper in a contemporary tribal society;
- be **confident and competent professionals** with demonstrated knowledge, skills, and dispositions in their chosen profession.

University Assessment

The University Mission Statement, Goal Statements, Purpose Statements, and Value Statements guide all university assessment activities. Assessment honors the diversity of student learners, devises student-focused assessment practices, and acknowledges that learning styles and preferences create a broad spectrum of opportunities for learning and require a broad spectrum of assessment practices.

Effective assessment arises from the learning environments of individual courses and programs.

Effective assessments can serve two purposes: 1) as assignments providing feedback on individual progress toward course goals, and 2) generating meaningful information about collective student performance. Assessment designs and practice should be useful to students and faculty. These elements are regularly communicated to students, primarily through syllabi and other institutional publications such as the department Status Sheets and University Course Catalog. The following elements are required for each course:

1. Clear course descriptions consistent with the published description in the college catalog
2. Clear performance objectives; what exactly students are expected to learn
3. Clear assessment practices which become the basis for judging individual student learning

Student Learning Assessment

Assessment of student learning is at the core of the University's work, purpose, and mission. Learning is multi-dimensional and complex. Classroom assessment employs a diverse array of methods that reflect the varied strategies for teaching and learning styles. Assessment is ongoing and tied directly to course objectives. Assessment of student learning can be explicit through exams or embedded as in course assignments or observations of student behavior. Faculty are responsible for ongoing effective assessment of student learning.

Course Assessment

Each course produces performance data that shows how well students have achieved the expected objectives. Data is analyzed in relation to the goals and objectives for the course. Instructors ensure that course materials are usefulness toward achieving the course objectives and program outcomes. As part of an ongoing program review process, required texts are reviewed to ensure relevancy and appropriateness to meet needs of the current workforce and field of study. Departments are encouraged to have a text-review committee which rotates faculty members on a regular basis.

Each semester, students are surveyed to get their perspectives of course instruction and of their own accountability in the learning process. Faculty members analyze the course evaluation data for their own courses to make instructional improvements. The data is also analyzed across courses at the department level as a part of ongoing program assessment.

Program Assessment

Within the eight academic departments, faculty work together to build assessment of student learning into their shared practices, devising systematic plans for articulating goals for student learning at the program level; gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence of learning; and building on strengths and strengthening areas in which student learning is less successful. Each department is responsible for developing, providing, and maintaining evidence of student learning assessment at the student and program levels. Faculty document student learning in ways that support the program and its students, help prepare for program accreditation and assist in the development of degrees and other academic opportunities that support the growth and autonomy of the Sicangu Oyate.

The following elements are required for each program review:

1. Program Description
2. Program Alignment with college Mission and Purposes
3. Alignment with Community Needs
4. Student Participation and Success

- a. Student enrollment
 - b. Student retention
 - c. Student completion
- 5. Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) and Curriculum and Instruction
 - a. Curriculum map to program learning outcomes
 - b. Program learning outcomes data summary and program decisions
 - c. Current program syllabi
 - d. Composite of student evaluations with analysis and decisions made
- 6. Human, Financial and Physical Resources.
 - a. Faculty qualifications, experiences, and contribution to program and institution
 - b. How well human resources are meeting program needs including any staffing gaps
 - c. How well physical resources are meeting program needs
- 7. Program Strengths and Recommendations

Programs are reviewed at least every three years on a rotating basis:

- 2016 All Programs
- 2017 Institute of Technologies (Building Trades, Data Processing, and Office Technology), and Liberal Arts/General Education
- 2018 Environmental Science, Computer Science, Business, and Art Institute
- 2019 Education, Human Services, and Nursing

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) groups have been established for each of the degree programs. These groups review student progress toward selected PLOs each semester. PLOs have been mapped to courses and assessment activities within those courses. The PLO assessment is documented by student or other data samples, a course syllabus, an assessment report, and meeting minutes.

SGU Assessment Coordinator

The SGU Assessment Coordinator works closely with the University faculty, student services, and the administration to carry out the institutional assessment plan and coordinate assessment activities on the campus. The Assessment Coordinator is instrumental in communicating assessment results for use in decision-making and planning campus-wide. The Assessment Office serves as a clearinghouse for various assessment activities and data such as Program Reviews, PLO Assessments, and various student surveys developed and conducted.

SGU Assessment Committee

The SGU Assessment Committee provides oversight and coordination of campus-wide efforts to understand and improve learning outcomes in all of the University's academic programs. This committee facilitates the use of student learning and other program related data in decision-making regarding student learning, program offerings, and student services. It is responsible for understanding the Higher Learning Commission's requirements for assessment of student learning, developing strategies for meeting those requirements, and ensuring that the programs use assessment data for ongoing quality

improvement and decision-making.

The SGU Assessment Committee is comprised of faculty members and the Assessment Coordinator. It monitors institutional practices and recommends policies that affect the work of teaching, learning, and assessment. Recommendations are provided to the Faculty Council and to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee as appropriate. The SGU Assessment Committee shares information with the Faculty Council, the Department Chairs, and the Provost Leadership Team. The Chair of the Assessment Committee serves as a member on the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

SGU Assessment Committee responsibilities are to:

1. Carry out assessment plan;
2. Receive and review compiled PLO findings for common themes and make recommendations for action;
3. Coordinate and contribute to the annual program review process;
4. Compile assessment results received from academic units made after recommended changes have been introduced and compare them with pre-changed assessment results;
5. Facilitate the use of data to improve recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation/completion
6. Facilitate the use of retention, persistence, and completion data in planning and decision-making; and
7. Evaluate and improve the assessment processes and procedures across the institution, including what data should be collected and available through the Jenzabar system.

The Assessment Committee may also assist in the approval of survey distribution and synthesis of survey findings.

Developing new degrees or emphasis areas and making changes to current degree programs.

Making changes to current degree programs or developing new degrees can be a natural outcome of the Program Review process. At times, the program review process may highlight the necessity to close a degree program or emphasis area. In evaluating current programs or the need for new programs, information is gathered to address specific questions on whether or how to proceed with new emphases, courses, or degrees. Data collection and evaluation questions must be relevant and sufficient in quantity. Although the evaluation questions drive the selection of data collection techniques, there are a number of factors to consider.

- **What** information needs to be collected?

The information that needs to be collected is determined by the evaluation questions. Questions could focus on: student interest, local tribal and regional career opportunities, current trends in the field, ability to attract faculty for the particular field, use of or interest and ability to use distance learning, or collaborations with other educational agencies

- **Who** are the information sources? (target audiences)

- People (student participants – current, past, withdrawn, perspective; support staff – tutors, counselors; program staff; faculty; parents; administrators)
- Documents
- Records
- Observations

- **How much** information should be collected?

- Entire population

- Sample of the population: random or specific>male/female; range of ages; cultural considerations such as Lakota speakers and non-speakers
- How should the information be collected? (**methodology**)
 - Surveys (paper, web-based, scan form)
 - Focus groups or interviews
 - Observations (events, behaviors, level of engagement)
 - Document analysis (program documents, activity logs, student work)
 - Record analysis (university student record system, attendance records)
 - Literature review
 - Other existing data sources (retention data, workforce data)

Some evaluation questions are best addressed by using a variety of data collection techniques. For example, a survey may be administered to gather information from a large number of people, with follow-up interviews or focus groups conducted with certain respondents to obtain more in-depth information. Additionally, using several different sources of information helps to substantiate the findings. For instance, if adding or changing an emphasis area in a degree program, a data collection strategy may include a survey and/or focus groups for students, a survey and/or interviews for non-students employed in the field, and a record analysis of current and past student enrollment and attendance in courses leading to completion of an emphasis area. Triangulation, or using multiple data gathering strategies from several sources, helps to more completely explore the evaluation questions. Faculty are encouraged to engage in authentic and committed research when evaluating their programs, especially when seeking to make a significant change or addition. This type of program assessment is expected, as is attention to the time, cost, and scope of the evaluation.

The amount of time to develop the data collection instruments (e.g., survey, focus group protocol, document analysis guidelines), gather the information (e.g., distribute the survey, conduct the focus groups, review documents), and analyze the data must be realistic in terms of timetable and availability of the program staff and administrators.

Results of Program Assessment, including the number of potential students and budgetary requirements, must be provided administrative authorization is required before any program changes can be initiated.

FACULTY GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

Assessment is a process for identifying, collecting, using and analyzing data to determine whether or not a goal or objective was attained; assessment aids in making decisions based on the results. At the university level, program improvement is based on the evidence that is obtained from a variety of assessments.

- **Formative assessment** is used to monitor learning progress during instruction and to provide continuous feedback to students, program directors or department chairs. Formative assessment should be conducted frequently and should be used to provide feedback about the student's developing knowledge and/or skills.

Assessment instruments are tools or devices (tests, surveys, checklists, etc.) that explicitly measure the goals and/or objectives of programs or courses; the effectiveness of the instruments depends upon validity, reliability and practicality. Examples of assessment instruments include, but are not limited to:

- **Achievement tests** are standardized tests designed to efficiently measure the amount of knowledge and/or skill a person has acquired, often as the result of classroom instruction. Such testing results in a statistical profile used as a measurement to evaluate student learning in comparison with a set standard or norm.
- **Case studies** refer to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular individual, group, event, program, or process. Students are required to complete a systematic inquiry and collect data via multiple methods often using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- **Product assessments** require students to prepare a product reflecting their learning. Instructors use rating scales, rubrics, or provide written comments to assess student learning as reflected in the product. Examples of product assessments include:
 - **Portfolios** are a systematic and organized collection of a student's work over time that demonstrates mastery of specific performance criteria against which the tasks in the portfolio can be judged. The collection should involve the student in selection of its contents, and should include information about the performance criteria. Portfolios may be in the form of a physical collection of materials, videos, CD-ROMs, reflective journals, etc.
 - **Work samples** provide longitudinal records of student progress. Work samples might include written work (report, test, essay); artwork; tape recordings; a construction project done in industrial arts, etc.
 - **Logs or journals** require students to record insights, conclusions, opinions, or feelings about any given experience. Logs or journals provide a running record that can be used to review and check on progress.
 - **Media products** include audiotapes, videotapes, or computer-assisted presentations concerning some aspect of a curriculum.
- **Performance assessments** are direct, systematic observation and ratings of student performances of an educational objective. Assessment is usually done using a rubric or an analytic scoring guide to aid in objectivity. Examples of performance assessments include:

- **Oral presentations** require students to prepare a report, an essay, a reflection, or a computer-assisted presentation on a selected topic and present it to a specified audience.
- **Demonstrations** require students to demonstrate their skill in some type of athletic, musical, dance, or dramatic performance. Skills can be demonstrated in a science lab, a computer class, an art class, a language class, or any other class where the student's learning is best reflected in actual performance.
- **Interviews** and **individual conferences** can be used to evaluate cognitive skills as well as dispositions and values.

Benchmarks are student performance standards (the level(s) of student competence in a content area. Benchmarks measure progress toward achievement.

Evaluation is a process for reviewing the results of assessment data collection in order to make sound judgments about a given situation; evaluation will yield information regarding the worthiness, appropriateness, validity, legality, etc., of a reliable measurement. Evaluations are usually done in the context of comparisons between what was intended (learning, progress, behavior) and what was obtained. There are three types of evaluation:

- **Diagnostic evaluation** is used to determine students' individual levels of competence, to identify those who have already achieved mastery of the requisite learnings, and to help make placements.
- **Summative evaluation** is done at the end of a unit of study or a course and is intended to: a) determine the extent of the students' achievement and competence; b) provide a basis for assigning grades; and c) provide the data from which reports, transcripts, etc., can be prepared.

Goals describe broad learning outcomes; goals are expressed in general terms.

- **Program Goals** explicitly state the overall purposes of the program; they should be the guidelines under which the program operates.
- **Course Goals** state the overall view of what you plan for the students to learn, to be able to do, and to value/appreciate from the course; course content is guided by the course's goals.

Lakota terminology:

- **Wacantognaka** – generosity
- **Waunsila** – compassion, caring, sharing, love
- **Woksape** – wisdom
- **Wolakota** – peace and harmony
- **Wo’Ohitika** – bravery
- **Wowacintanka** – fortitude

Matrix refers to a tool commonly used to summarize the relationship between components (curriculum, courses) and goals (program) and objectives (courses).

Mission Statement is a reflection of the institution's general purpose and expresses the uniqueness of the institution.

Multidimensional assessment gathers information about a broad spectrum of abilities and skills and uses a variety of assessment instruments.

Objectives are statements that explicitly state what the student will know, be able to do, and value at the end of an instructional period. Objectives should indicate whether student outcomes have been met at the course and program level. Objectives provide the basis for an assessment of the program's strengths and limitation. The most useful objectives describe a set of desired learning behaviors. There are basically three types of objectives that provide for a holistic approach to learning:

- **Cognitive** objectives focus on intellectual skills. (Bloom's Taxonomy is often used to insure that higher-order, creative, and critical thinking skills are included.)
 - **Cognitive objectives** are often evaluated through the use of: a) tests developed by instructors; b) achievement tests developed by local, regional, or state agencies; and c) nationally standardized tests or scales.
- **Psychomotor** objectives focus on the skills students are to acquire. In listings of professional standards, the term *performances* is sometimes used.
 - **Psychomotor objectives** are evaluated through performance and product tests.
- **Affective** objectives deal with attitudes, values and interests. In listings of professional standards, the term *dispositions* is sometimes used. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and values related to the institution's and programs' mission statements.
 - **Affective objectives** are often evaluated through attitude scales, opinion polls, open-ended questions, checklists, observations, anecdotal notes, or interviews.

Outcomes are statements that specifically describe the knowledge, skills and behaviors students are expected acquire by the time they finish a course or by the time they graduate.

Program refers to a course of study leading to a degree within a given academic department.

Rating scales are based on descriptive words or phrases that indicate performance levels. Qualities of a performance are often described as advanced, intermediate, or novice, for example, in order to designate a level of achievement. The scale may be used with rubrics or descriptions of each level of performance.

Rubrics provide a systematic scoring guideline to evaluate performance through the use of detailed performance standards on a continuum. Rubrics are designed to have thorough ways of describing what is expected at each performance level. Rubrics allow for both teacher assessment and student self-assessment.

Self-assessment is a process in which students engage in a systematic review of a performance, a written report, a product, or a piece of artwork usually for the purpose of improving future work. Self-assessment involves comparison with a standard or established criterion to assure objectivity.

Standards are agreed upon values used to measure the quality of student performance, instructional methods, curriculum, etc.

Surveys are commonly used with open-ended or close-ended questions that require the respondent to answer questions from a provided list of responses. Results of the surveys are used for program and university improvement.

Triangulation is the process of using multiple data-gathering strategies from several sources and helps to more completely explore the evaluation questions.

The definitions in this guide were derived from several sources, including:

- Glossary of Useful Terms Related to Authentic and Performance Assessments.
- Grant Wiggins.
- The ERIC Review: Performance-based Assessment. Volume 3, Issue 1.
- Methods of Effective Teaching: Meeting the Needs of All Students. Burden, Paul and David Byrd.
- Measurement, Assessment and Evaluation in Education. Dr. Bob Kizlik.
www.adprima.com/measurement.