

John Carroll University's Assessment Academy Project Midpoint Report

The Background

Following the IAC Hearing in early spring 2015, the Provost directed Dr. Robert Todd Bruce, the Director of Assessment, to prepare an application for John Carroll University to join the Higher Learning Commission's Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning, a four-year program offered by the Commission's Quality Division to help improve assessment of student learning at member institutions.

Dr. Bruce met with the Academic Assessment Advisory Committee to discuss the content of the proposal and the make-up of the five person leadership team. Once the application had been composed and then vetted by the AAAC and a number of administrators including the Provost, it was submitted. While waiting for word on acceptance, Dr. Bruce solicited faculty volunteers to fill the four other slots in the Academy Leadership Team. Working in conjunction with the administrators, he selected Brendan Foreman (Math), Maria Marsill (History), Yi Shang (Education), and Tina Facca-Miess (Marketing) to make up the Team.

The five members of the Leadership Team attended the Academy Roundtable in June and outlined the plan for the next four years. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Mark McCarthy (Student Affairs) joined the Leadership team to help emphasize the institutional scope of the project.

Central Question

To what extent do John Carroll University students meet the expectations described in the University Learning Goals?

Intended Outcome

The Academy Action Team will design and implement an institutional assessment system, focused on the new University Learning Goals, which brings together existing assessment efforts (the new Integrative Core Curriculum, student affairs, program-level and course level student learning assessment in academic programs, and academic program review) to determine whether students are meeting the University Learning Goals.

The Past: Assessment Since 2014

Since the HLC visit in 2015, John Carroll University has made remarkable strides in the area of assessment. Every academic department has appointed an assessment coordinator. All majors, minors, and concentrations have developed specific learning goals aligned with the University Learning Goals, identified summative direct measures, and begun the process of collecting data, meeting to analyze and use data, and filing annual reports to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. All academic/student support programs and co-curricular programs have also developed assessment plans and begun the annual reporting process.

The newly developed Integrative Core Curriculum (designed around nine academic learning outcomes) has been implemented, and the Core Committee has simultaneously refined and implemented an assessment plan.

The Academy Action team has mapped the relationships among these various assessment processes, institution-wide surveys (NSSE and HERI), and the University Learning Goals. (Available on the web at <http://sites.jcu.edu/assessment/academy/>). Additionally, the team has considered a number of options to fill any possible gaps (<http://webmedia.jcu.edu/assessment/files/2017/09/Pre-and-Post-Assessment-Group-Final.pdf>).

The Present: A Pivotal Moment

John Carroll University is at a key moment of transition. Following the successful effort to remedy the problems that led JCU to be placed On Notice, the Provost has become interim President, the former head of the Institutional Effectiveness unit has become interim Provost, and a large number of faculty and staff have taken advantage of a retirement package offer (designed to help position the University for long-term fiscal sustainability). This large number of changes in a short time forces everyone to re-evaluate commitments and reconsider operational procedures.

Accordingly, and at the moment when the work will pivot from theoretical to actual, all members of the Academy Leadership team and Academy Action Team will be asked to carefully consider whether or not to continue their service with the project. Simultaneously, a call for new volunteers will be shared through a number of campus venues (Faculty Meeting, Staff Council, etc.). Any Leadership team vacancies will be filled from continuing Action Team members. This membership transition will be complete by the end of the fall semester of 2017.

The Future: Two Years to Implementation

In spring 2018, the Action Team will convene five times. At each meeting, they will examine all the possible data sources that contribute toward a particular University Learning Goal category (Character, Leadership, Service, and two meetings for Intellect).

These data sources include the core, academic program, other programs, institutional surveys, Fact Book, student engagement, etc. The meetings' stated purpose is to craft a report or dashboard giving an *institutional* view of data in the area of the particular Goal. If there are data gaps, the Team will then consider mechanisms to close that gap.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Action Team will consider ways to institutionalize the processes of the previous year via the Office of Institutional Assessment, the University Committee on the Student Learning Experience, and Institutional Assessment Committee.