

**UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Feedback to Non-Academic Units on Assessment Activities Reported in 2011-2012 Annual Reports**  
**NON-ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

**DEPARTMENT** The Writing Center **DATE** December 6, 2012

**PROGRAM(S) COVERED IN REVIEW** The Writing Center

**COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW** **Krista Lynn Minnotte, Ken Ruit, and Bradley Myers**

**1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS**

- Were any goals referenced? YES X NO      QUALIFIED Y/N
- If so, were goals well articulated? YES X NO      QUALIFIED Y/N
- Do goals address student learning? YES X NO      QUALIFIED Y/N

*Comments: The Writing Center’s assessment plan includes a total of six goals for both student writers and for the students who serve as writing consultants. The goals for student writers include increasing strategies for writing and increasing confidence for writing. The goals for the student writing consultants include increased strategies for writing, increased analytical skills, increased listening skills, and increased cross-cultural skills.*

In addition to Program goals, please also consider UND’s Institutional and Essential Studies goals for student learning (shown in alignment within parentheses). Identify UND/Essential Studies goals which are similar to the referenced program goals.

- X   1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)
- X   2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
- 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)
- 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)
- 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)
- X   6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)
- 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)
- 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

*Comments regarding departmental goals and alignment of program goals with institutional and Essential Studies goals: The goal of increasing writing strategies for student writers and student writing consultants aligns with the Essential Studies communication goal. The goal for student writing consultants of gaining increased analytical skills connects to the Essential Studies goal of thinking and reasoning (critical thinking). Lastly, the goal for student writing consultants of gaining increased cross-cultural skills aligns with the diversity goal of Essential Studies.*

**2. ASSESSMENT METHODS**

- Were any specific assessment methods referenced? YES X NO      QUALIFIED Y/N
- If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals? YES      NO      QUALIFIED Y/N   X
- Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a “multiple measures” approach? YES X NO      QUALIFIED Y/N

*Comments: The assessment plan for the Writing Center includes both direct and indirect methods. Surveys of student writers and student writing consultants serve as the indirect methods. The use of “observation” is described as the direct assessment method used to examine achievement of student-learning goals. In particular, the plan states that “observation notes will be analyzed for evidence of learning related to each of the six learning goals.” It might be helpful to specify for outside readers a few examples of how specific observations will confirm achievement of specific goals (for example, what types of observations will show that consultants have increased their analytical skills?). Each method is aligned with goals to the extent that each method is the only one used to measure achievement of all the student-learning goals. In other words, the surveys (indirect assessment) appear to address all six goals and the observations are also used to measure all six goals.*

### 3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	QUALIFIED Y/N <input type="checkbox"/>
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	QUALIFIED Y/N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	QUALIFIED Y/N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Were the results tied to goals for student learning?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	QUALIFIED Y/N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Comments:** Both direct and indirect results are reported. The indirect results are somewhat clear in terms of how they reflect achievement of goals. For example, the results from the survey of student writers show that 13 of 17 writers indicated they felt more confident about their writing following the session than they did beforehand. The response rate to the survey of student writers is so low (it appears that 17 of 1,108 responded to the online survey) that it is difficult to place a great deal of confidence in the results. The Writing Center might wish to increase their efforts to enhance response rates. No response rate is noted for the survey of writing consultants, so it is challenging to know how much confidence to place in the results. The results from the survey of writing consultants are similarly aligned to specific goals. It appears that the survey of writing consultants succeeded in demonstrating achievement of the listening-related goal, but was less successful in showing enhanced cross-cultural skills of writing consultants. The direct assessment results from the “observations” are unclear in terms of how they align with specific goals. It appears that the observational method might not well suited to the measurement of certain goals, such as enhanced analytic strategies or increased cross-cultural skills (as noted in the assessment report submitted by the Writing Center). However, it might be difficult to design other direct assessment methods given the context in which assessment is taking place.

In addition to program goals, some assessment results may be applicable to institutional and Essential Studies goals. Please identify those results which are applicable to institutional/Essential Studies goal achievement. For indicated items, please describe findings below. .

- 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)  
 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)  
 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)  
 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)  
 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)  
 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)  
 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)  
 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

**Comments regarding results and the application of results to programmatic, institutional and Essential Studies goals:** The survey results from both the student writers and the student writing consultants indicate increased skills pertaining to writing strategies (aligns with the ES communication goal). The survey results from the student writing consultants also indicate some increased cross-cultural skills (aligns with the ES diversity goal).

### 4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	QUALIFIED Y/N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• If so, do curricular or other improvements/ changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	QUALIFIED Y/N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Comments:** The Writing Center is in the early stages of development and implementation of the assessment plan (this is the first year that the Writing Center has had an assessment plan and this is the assessment committee’s first review of the Writing Center). The initial report demonstrates a commitment to closing the loop activities. At this point, it does appear that the implementation of the plan itself has resulted in serious reflection regarding how to align program activities with the student-learning goals. Further, it has also led to concrete changes, including focusing on the goals in the training and development of student writing consultants.

**SUMMARY**

*Strengths*

*Areas for Improvement*

- A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- Assessment methods are clearly described.
- Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- Results are reported.
- Results are tied to closing the loop.  
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

- No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- No results are reported.
- Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.  
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

**OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

*This is the first year that The Writing Center has an assessment plan and assessment results. The initial report shows a firm commitment to assessment of student learning and to using assessment results to make improvements. The results from the indirect assessment reveal achievement of many of the student-learning goals. To improve results, the Writing Center should consider finding ways to enhance the response rates of the surveys that are used as methods of indirect assessment.*

**MATERIALS REVIEWED**

- Annual report
- Appendices (cited in annual report)
- Other (please describe)
- Assessment plan (as posted)
- Previous assessment review

Reviewer(s):	Name	Krista Lynn Minnotte	Kenneth Ruit	Bradley Myers
	Department	Sociology	Anatomy and Cell Biology	The Law School
	Phone Number	777-4419	777-2570	777-2228
	e-mail	krista.minnotte@und.edu	<a href="mailto:kenneth.ruit@med.und.edu">kenneth.ruit@med.und.edu</a>	bradley.myers@und.edu

Section 1:  Y  ? Section 2:  ?  ? Section 3:  ?  ? Section 4:  ?

**Coding Key:**

- Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well (bearing in mind the kind of program(s) reviewed and recognizing that assessment is a cyclical process, i.e., with additional kinds of data to be collected in other years)
- N = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
- NA = no information available
- ? = action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done

*Revised 10/11/12*