



Western Nevada College

Assessment Plan

*Assessing Academic & Administrative Programs at
Western Nevada College*



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Academic & Administrative Programs

The intent of assessment is to provide information that leads to improving programs at Western Nevada College (WNC). Therefore, the philosophy that guides assessment at WNC stresses the following elements:

- Academic assessment is most effective when the people who teach within an educational program have the primary role in determining which elements will be assessed and subsequently using the results to make improvements.
- Administrative assessment is most effective when the people who oversee these programs have the primary role in determining which elements will be assessed and subsequently using the results to make improvements.
- Academic and administrative faculty have the primary responsibility for the assessment of their respective programs.
- Academic and administrative assessment requires establishing either clear student learning outcomes or assessment goals, using the most appropriate measurement techniques, and acting on the results of the assessment.
- Assessment is an ongoing process for all programs. One purpose of the Program Assessment and Review Committee (PARC) is to ensure that all programs are assessed at regular intervals.
- Academic assessment can be used to benefit student learning in individual courses, sections of programs, or complete programs.
- Administrative assessment can be used to benefit individual stakeholders (students and staff) as well as the overall administrative program.
- Academic Assessment may be conducted at different times in a program: at the beginning of a program, at the completion of the program, and even years after the student has left the program.
- Assessment results need to be communicated within the college and to those with a vested interest in the college, such as students, graduates, and members of the public.
- Formal assessment of programs requires educating the faculty and support staff about the purpose of assessment; developing their knowledge about key concepts in assessment; and aiding them in the acquisition of skills necessary to become proficient in the use of assessment.

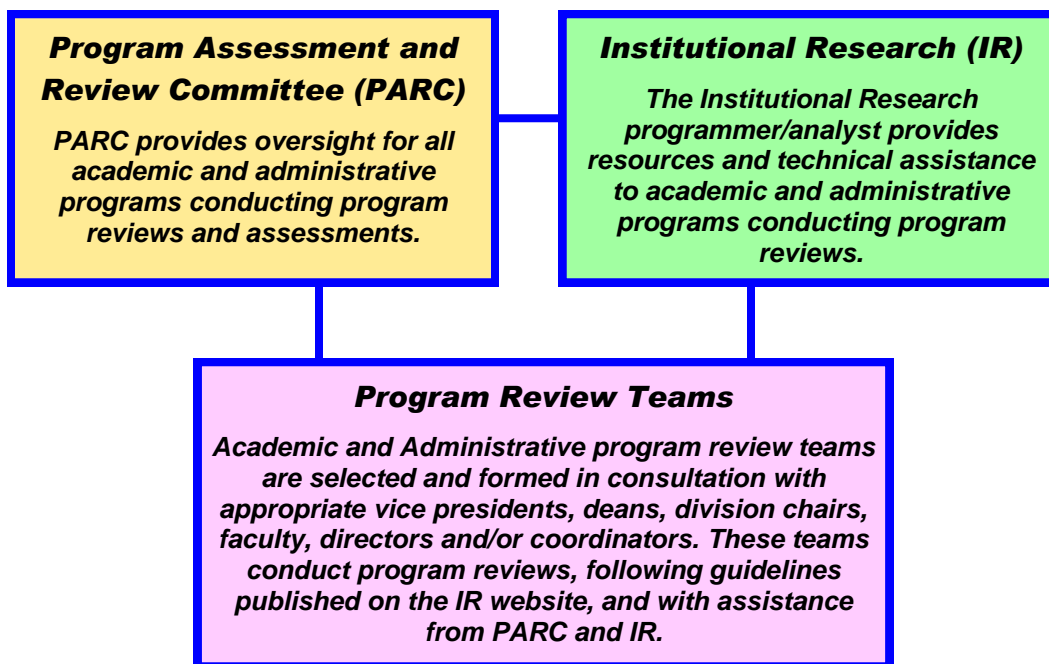
Assessment Plan Components

Organizational Structure for Assessment

Assessment at WNC rests upon a structure that gives teaching faculty the primary voice in determining the curriculum, outcomes, assessment processes, and development of plans to improve educational programs and that gives administrative faculty and support staff the primary voice in determining the goals, assessment plans and procedures of administrative programs. PARC oversees both academic and administrative program reviews in cooperation with Institutional Research (IR). This structure is supported by the administration of the college. The organizational chart below depicts the committees and personnel who are involved in the effort to improve educational programs and services provided at the college. As the chart indicates, the college has implemented assessment across all services and programs. The IR programmer/analyst serves on PARC, a college committee whose members represent a variety of educational and administrative areas of the college.

Administrative Support

The assessment of educational programs at WNC has the full support of college administrators. PARC receives funding through Institutional Research to carry out program review and assessment activities, including training of faculty. The President, the Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs, as well as the other college vice presidents of WNC have consistently affirmed that the assessment of programs is a faculty task, and they have consistently supported faculty efforts to plan and conduct assessment.



Faculty/Staff Involvement

This plan for assessing academic and administrative programs was developed by PARC with input from Academic Faculty Senate, Administrative Faculty Senate, and College Council. Program Review Teams are responsible for conducting assessments and receive requisite technical support from IR.

Assessment Procedures

Relationship to the College's Mission and Goals

WNC operates under a mission and goals statement that has received support from all of the representative bodies: faculty, staff, administrators, students, and advisory boards. The college revised the mission and goals in fall 2006. The mission statement was approved by the Board of Regents.

Mission Statement

Western Nevada College inspires success in our community through opportunities that cultivate creativity, intellectual growth, and technological excellence, in an environment that nurtures individual potential and respects differences.

College Goals

1. Improve student success in program completion and graduation rates
2. Ensure institutional excellence in teaching, programs and services
3. Embrace our college's many communities and respond to their diverse needs.

The committee charged with oversight of the assessment of academic and administrative programs has established its own charges and bylaws as well as the charges for the committees that conduct the assessment and program review. Guidelines for program review and assessment are available on the IR website.

Identification of Academic and Administrative Programs

The regular review cycle of academic and administrative programs is identified by PARC and posted on the IR website. PARC selects the academic programs that are assessed on a regular basis using "programs" as defined by the Board of Regents, which means that every program of study in which a student can earn a degree or certificate is assessed.

Assessment Cycle Activities

The cycle of assessment is based on the five-year program review cycle, but PARC carefully allows for flexibility to enhance assessment projects, accommodate specific challenges to programs, and ensure the integrity of the review process. Regardless of the start dates for the assessment cycle, all assessment follows the same cycle of events.

Assessment of an academic program starts with the establishment or review of the student learning outcomes, selection of research strategies and measurement devices, and the creation of the criteria that will determine whether the program is meeting the standards of success. The program review process requires programs to create a five-year assessment plan and to provide annual updates to that plan in the spring (May 15th) of each year. Programs that receive profession accreditation or certification from a recognized national or state agency may report to PARC on the status, completion and results of their accreditation and/or certification instead of submitting the five-year WNC program review. If the accreditation report does not cover all required information in the program review then that information should be submitted to PARC for completion of the program review process.

PARC also oversees and facilitates other assessment activities that span one or more academic and support programs including annual assessments, and assessment of General Education.

Assessment Reporting and Documentation

PARC has adopted the five column model developed by Nichols and Associates to guide assessment. The original forms and procedures were developed by the former Assessment Office and have been edited by PARC to allow assessment projects to be consistently documented.

Assessment Plan for 2010 – 2015

The first five-year plan for assessment of educational programs covered 2000-2005. Two of the main focus areas of this plan were to educate faculty on assessment and develop a culture of assessment at WNC. The interim accreditation report written in spring of 2005 commended the college for its successes in these two areas. The Assessment Office, in cooperation with Academic Program Assessment Committee developed this second five-year plan during the summer of 2005, covering 2005-2010. The main goals for PARC, 2010-2015, are to oversee the ongoing program review process over a five-year period and to improve the culture of assessment at WNC.

2010-2011: Implementing Assessment ~ A Year to Implement

1. Pilot annual assessment collection tool.
2. Plan and implement college-wide critical thinking assessment project.
3. Conduct professional development workshop for faculty on assessment.

2011-2012: Advancing Assessment ~ A Year to Project

1. Research nationally normed assessment of writing.
2. Implement annual assessment collection tool.
3. Conduct assessment projects (program reviews, critical thinking assessment and annual assessment collection tool).
4. Conduct professional development workshop for faculty on assessment.

2012-2013: Writing Assessment ~ A Year to Write

1. Facilitate college-wide assessment of writing.
2. Continue overseeing ongoing assessment projects.
3. Conduct professional development workshop for faculty on assessment.
4. Assess “Annual Assessment Collection Tool.”

2013-2014: Improving Assessment ~ A Year to Refine

1. Continue overseeing ongoing assessment projects.
2. Conduct professional development workshop for faculty on assessment.
3. Assess “Annual Assessment Collection Tool.”

2014-2015: Reflecting on Assessment ~ A Year to Evaluate

1. Assess the effectiveness of the “Annual Assessment Collection Tool.”
2. Assess the effectiveness of the integrated program review and assessment process.
3. Assess the effectiveness of other assessment projects (e.g., critical thinking, writing, etc.)
4. Conduct professional development workshop for faculty on assessment.
5. Develop Assessment Plan for 2015-2020.