Results of the Spring 2010 FAO Workload Questionnaire

Response rate:

The questionnaire was distributed to FAOs for 18 majors, seven stand alone minors, one graduate program, and Core 1, across SSHA, NS and Engineering for a total of 27 requested responses. Eighteen completed questionnaires were returned along with an additional two that were incomplete. Of those 18, a single individual completed two, one for the program for which s/he is the FAO and a second for a program in which as a faculty member s/he supported the FAOs efforts. Complete responses were submitted by 50% of FAOs in Natural Sciences, 20% in Engineering, and 86% in SSHA.

A blank questionnaire is provided in Appendix 2.

Summary of results:

Question 2: Hours worked per week on teaching, research and service:

- FAO's reported spending an average of 55 hours per week on teaching, research and service during a typical academic year (n=17), ranging from a low 44 to a high of 80.

Question 3: Hours spent on assessment and assessment-specific tasks:

- FAOs reported devoting an average of 57 hours to work[1] associated with assessing their first PLO (n=17), ranging from a low of 17 to a high of 119 hours. One FAO reported devoting 1040 hours of work to assessment. It was not included in the mean.

- On average FAOs devoted an average of 1.7 hours per week (range 0.5 to 3.5) to assessment during the academic year, assuming an academic year of 34 weeks and that all assessment work was conducted during the academic year. This is equivalent to 3.3 hours per week per a semester[2] of 17 weeks. If assessment was conducted exclusively during the 15 weeks of summer, FAOs would devote an average of 3.8 hours per week to assessment.

- 71% of FAOs reporting conducting 90% or more of their assessment work during the academic year. The other 29% completed 25 to 50% of their assessment work during the summer.

[1] A faculty member spends 37.5 hours a semester in class for a course that meets for three, 50 minute lectures per week over 15 weeks.
[2] A faculty member spends 2.5 hours per week in class for a course with three, 50 minute lecturers per week.

- Table 1 provides the average percentage of the total time devoted to assessment that FAOs spent on specific activities. The first four activities listed (a-d) account for approximately 69% of reported total FAO effort and are responsibilities that are either exclusive to faculty (for example, item b) or require substantial faculty involvement. If all activities requiring substantial FAO involvement are included (items a-d, f, m and o), FAOs are responsible for approximately 77% of assessment-related tasks. The remaining 23% include analytical and clerical work as well as activities for which there is external support. For example, the SATAL program can conduct student interviews and focus groups. These results suggest that while knowledgeable staff can support a number of these responsibilities, a large fraction of assessment-related work remains the responsibility of FAOs.

Question 4: Time spent working alone and with others.

- FAOs have shouldered much of the work of their program. On average, FAOs reported working alone 73% of the time spent on assessment (range 30-90%); 75% of FAOs reported working alone 70% or more of the time (n=16).

Question 5: Collaborations

- Table 2 summarizes FAO collaborations in support of PLO assessment. 100% of FAOs reported collaborating at least once with Senate colleagues and 71% with non-Senate colleagues. In terms of collaborations with non-faculty colleagues, 94% of FAOs reported working at least once with CRTE staff, 44% with IPA staff, 33% with School staff, and 17% with library staff.

- Of the 12 FAOs who identified their top three collaborators[3] in terms of the amount of time spent with the collaborator and the helpfulness of the collaborator, on average, FAOs reported spending

    - The most time with their Senate colleagues and ranked them as most helpful.
    - The second largest amount of time with Lecturers, who were ranked as fourth most helpful.
    - The third largest amount of time with IPA staff, which were ranked second most helpful.
    - The least amount of time with CRTE and school staff, who were ranked third and fifth most helpful respectively.

[3] FAOs were asked to rank the three collaborators with whom they spent the most time and the three most helpful collaborators.

Question 6: Assessment activities in which collaborators participated.

- Table 3 summarizes the types of assessment activities in which collaborators participated and the percentage of FAOs reporting these collaborations.

Question 7: Relative importance of potential resources to make FAO work sustainable.

- Table 4 summarizes FAO ratings of the value of different resources to sustaining FAO assessment efforts. Rank order preferences, based on the percentage of respondents rating a resource to be important or very important (percentage provided parenthetically), appear below.

    1) Staff knowledgeable in the design and execution of PLO Assessment (82%)
    2) Course release (76%)
    2) Clerical support for PLO assessment related tasks (76%)
    2) Explicit recognition of FAO work in tenure and promotion criteria (76%)
    4) Incentives to promote broader faculty participation in assessment (65%)
    4) Stipend for organizing PLO assessment (65%)
    7) Summer ninths or other stipend payments to support attendance at assessment conferences or workshops (53%)
    8) Funding to support graduate student participation (25%)

    Two additional resources were identified by two FAOs, who rated their importance as very high. These resources are
    a) Funding for costs associated with assessment (photocopying, mailing, etc.).
    b) Funding for lecturers to participate in assessment.

- *Are the FAOs who rated the support of assessment knowledgeable staff as important or very important already taking advantage of campus resources?* Yes, 79% (11/14) identified CRTE as one of the three collaborators with which they spent time the most time. Additionally, 36% (5/14) ranked IPA as a top three collaborator.

- *Did FAOs who rated course release as important or very important spend more time on assessment than FAOs who did not prioritize this potential resource as highly?* Yes. FAOs who rated course release as important or very important devoted a median of 69 total hours to assessment (range 17-110) versus 45 hours (range 20-119) for those that did not prioritize this resource.

- *Are the FAOs who rated clerical support as important or very important already report the use of such support?* Largely not. Only 33% (4/12) indicated they had worked at least once with a school staff member and only 25% (3/12) had rated school staff as one of the top three collaborators.

- *Did FAOs who rated incentives for broader faculty participation as important or very important spend a larger percentage of time working alone?* No. FAOs who prioritized this resource reported worked alone an average of 70% of the time (range 30-90%) versus 75% (range 60-90%) for those who did not rate this resource as important or very important.

Question 9: Other thoughts FAOs provided in relation to the workload associated with assessing PLOs.

- Appendix 1 includes the full text of FAO responses to this question. However, some general themes emerge:
    - Doing assessment well requires substantial faculty time (Responses 1, 2, 5).
    - A reward structure that recognizes the FAO's additional work is necessary to continue to effort (Responses 1, 3, 5, 9).
    - Budget for assessment related material support including tests, mailing, photocopying etc. (Responses 1, 3).
    - Need clerical support (Responses 1, 8) and it is important that this support be budgeted into staff responsibilities (Response 1).

- There is some question about the how the workload will change over time. One FAO anticipated that assessment will not be "too much work" once the procedures are in place (Response 8). A second discussed the difficulties of predicting the change in workload, expecting that assessment may not become routine for "quite some time" (Responses 7).

Table 1: Rank order of assessment activities by the average percentage of the total time devoted to assessment spent on each activity. "Other reported activities" describes additional forms of assessment-related work written-in by one or more FAOs.

Assessment Activity	Number of programs reporting >0 hrs spent on activity	Average % of Total Time (range)
a) Writing and editing the report	17	30% (6-50%)
b) Reviewing student work	16	18% (4-49%)
c) Developing or identifying student work for review	16	11% (5-36%)
d) Developing rubric(s)	13	10% (2-48%)
e) Analyzing results	15	10% (5-31%)
f) Developing student surveys, interviews or focus groups	10	6% (1%-56%)
g) Identifying or retrieving extant survey data	9	4% (2-17%)
h) Collecting student work	12	4% (3-15%)
I) Conducting student surveys, interviews or focus groups	5	2% (4-12%)
Other reported activities:		
j) Communicating/coordinating with faculty regarding assessment	1	1%
k) WASC-related meetings	1	1%
l) Planning how to proceed, coordinating schedules	1	1%
m) Consulting with colleagues	3	1% (5-7%)
n) Scheduling meetings and rooms	1	1%
o) Consulting with CRTE and IPA	2	1% (3-4%)

Table 2: A) Percentage of FAO respondents who reported working at least once with listed collaborators (n= 17). B) Average rank order for time spent with a collaborator. FAOs were asked to rank the three collaborators with which they spent the most time (n=12). For each collaborator an average rank was computed across responding programs. These averages were then ranked. C) Average rank order for helpfulness of a collaborator. FAOs were asked to rank the three most helpful collaborators (n=11). Reported ranks were calculated as for column B.

Possible Collaborator	A) % of FAOs who worked at least once with the indicated collaborator	B) Average rank order for time spent with collaborator	C) Average rank order for helpfulness of collaborator
Senate colleagues	100%	1	1
CRTE Staff	94%	4	3
Lecturers and adjuncts	72%	2	4
IPA Staff	44%	3	2
School Staff	33%	4	5
Undergraduates	33%		
Library Staff	17%		
Student Affairs Staff	6%		
External consultants	6%		
Graduate students	6%		
Graduate Division Staff	0%		

Table 3: Percent of FAO respondents that reported working on the indicated assessment activity with the indicated collaborator[4]. Blanks equal 0%. (n=15)

	Instructors		Staff from						Students		Other	
Assessment Activity	Senate	Lecturer & Adjuncts	Your School	Grad Division	Center for Research on Teaching Excellence	Institutional Planning and Analysis	Student Affairs	Library	Undergrad	Graduate	External consultants	Other
Developing or identifying student work for review, e.g. embedded questions, etc.	100[5]	50	13		38	19		6	19	6		
Collecting student work	92	44	25		6				13	13		
Developing one or more rubrics	83	31	13		25	13						
Reviewing student work	92	44	13		6	6				6		
Identifying and/or retrieving extant survey data or resources	25	19	19		13	19						
Developing student surveys, interviews, or focus groups	17	13	6		13	19						
Conducting student surveys, interviews, or focus groups	17	13	6		13	13			6	6		
Analyzing assessment results	83	31	6		19	6						
Report writing and editing	75	25	6		38							
Other (please specify): Meeting & Planning Regarding Assessment	6	6	6		6	6						

[4] Senate faculty responses reflect only programs that have Senate faculty with which to collaborate.
[5] Of programs with Senate faculty with which to collaborate.

Table 4: FAO respondent ratings of potential resources to support assessment, reported as percentage of respondents (n=16).

Resource	Unimportant	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
Clerical support for PLO assessment-related tasks	0%	6%	18%	29%	47%
Summer "9ths" or other stipend payments to support your attendance at assessment conferences or workshops	8%	0%	29%	29%	24%
Support of staff with experience in the design and execution of PLO assessment	0%	6%	12%	29%	53%
Stipend for organizing PLO assessment	6%	0%	29%	12%	53%
Course release for organizing PLO assessment	6%	6%	12%	29%	47%
Funding to support graduate student participation	19%	31%	25%	0%	25%
Explicit recognition of the organization of PLO assessment activities as part of instructional responsibilities in tenure and promotion evaluation criteria	12%	6%	6%	24%	53%
Incentives to promote broader faculty participation in assessment	18%	6%	12%	18%	47%
Other:_____					

Appendix I: FAO responses to a question soliciting additional thoughts about the workload associated with assessment.

1) Doing assessment *well* requires a significant amount of faculty time, particularly from the FAO but also other faculty and lecturers. In addition, much of the work is most reasonably accomplished over the summer (fewer other instructional demands, greater availability of staff to enter data and help with other clerical tasks associated with assessment, etc.). There should be some compensation for the added responsibilities the FAO must take on in the summer. Likewise, a course release would free up time to focus on assessment without detracting from the many other demands faculty face with respect to research, teaching, and service. It is difficult to imagine how carrying out my program's planned assessment activities can be reasonably accomplished without some faculty member spending a substantial amount of time overseeing the process. In order to ensure that research productivity and teaching effectiveness remain high, faculty taking on this role need to be freed from other responsibilities. That is the case on other campuses where I have been, and those more established universities are doing far less time-consuming work with respect to program assessment (and have fewer other additional service burdens associated with program building than we do here).

   Also, as we have greater numbers of students and assessment becomes routinized, it is important that resources be allocated to it, specifically. There need to be systems in place so that I don't need to use my personal incidental account to pay for expenses related to assessment (photocopies, mailings), but rather some programmatic budgetary line that is not tied to me personally. Likewise, staff time needs to be budgeted for helping faculty with assessment, it can't be an after thought. Staff time seems thinly stretched as it is, so consideration of their availability is also important.

   Further, the assessment reports we are required to submit are very time consuming to prepare. I wonder if a briefer format could be adopted to streamline the process and save FAO time.

2) Because the looming deadline of the EER required LIT to do an interim assessment on sample writing that has only some overlap with what we want to use in our long-term assessment, this was really just a dry-run of the first rubric. I spent a great deal of time reading assessment literature and adapting rubrics from the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition. To my knowledge, this has not been used in evaluating writing before, so I was unable to find any shortcuts. Long term--that is, after we work through our first five outcomes--the amount of time working on rubrics should decrease.

   On the other hand, because this was a dry run and was done during the academic year, rather than at the end of the A/Y as we planned, I wanted to protect the time of our grad students and faculty. That is why I did the scoring alone, and did just enough to get a sense of how well the rubric was working. When we run this assessment for real, we'll need to pull in other faculty and grad students for 2-3 days of reading, beginning with a half day of "norming" our scoring practices. This practice will take about 150 hours every year in May (six people for three days plus the clerical time to prepare for the reading and to record the scoring). Adding to this the time we'll need to respond to what we learn, the total time spent/year will, I estimate, reach at least 200 hours to assess direct evidence.

3) Some sort of incentive for the PLO would be very important to continued effort, whether it be a stipend, a course release, or a summer 1/9th.

   And a budget to buy tests, process their results, and analyze them, is also necessary.

4) I found that I needed to make significant use of my background in statistics and statistical software from my previous corporate career to complete the PLO assessment report. I think that programs whose faculty cannot be expected to have experience with statistics and statistical software will have considerable difficulty completing these reports.

5) I just want to mention that without not doubt assessing of PLOs represent a considerable amount of time. In addition of all the work that requires analyze the results of the assessment and to write the final report, FAOs have to spend extra time coordinating the assessment. In my case, the reason I did most of the work related to the assessment of this first PLO was the lack of time to organize meetings, specially to look for a time good for everybody to meet, etc. Consequently, while I agree a 100% with the idea that everybody should participate in the PLOs assessment, I find that coordinating that effort is also extra work for the FLO. Actually, this academic year, since we have started our assessment earlier, I am trying to involve all faculty (tenure track and lecturers) and while they are responding in a very positive way to my request to asses students, it is requiring from me a considerable amount of time just in exchanging e-mails. For this reason, I consider that FAOs that take their responsibilities seriously have extra workload that should be recognized in some way by their institutions.

6) I'll just add that for this assessment two additional faculty--Teenie Matlock and Michael Spivey--contributed a substantial amount of time and energy. I was not sure how to note that elsewhere on this survey. I imagine they spent 5-10 hours each. I think that should be recorded and factored in to your analysis somehow.

7) As a new, growing program (both in terms of students and faculty), the level of effort for this first assessment may not be representative of such effort in the future. For example, we may have more student work to review as our major grows and/or we may find ways to distribute the faculty workload differently as more faculty join our program. It's difficult to determine whether the future will hold more or less work when it comes to assessment.

   In addition, one thing we learned is that such assessment may not become "routine" (i.e., able to rely on existing structures) for quite some time, as we make adjustments in our assessment methods and, perhaps, our programmatic objectives. This does not bode well for a decrease (rather than an increase) in faculty effort necessary for assessment. We might also anticipate, for example, that we will have to shift from a qualitative to a quantitative assessment, which may require creating new tools for assessment. The answer to Question #7 above tries to anticipate some of these needs, but it is largely speculative.

   Please note that we also spent time developing exit survey questions that will, in part, further assess the PLO we focused on this year. This survey will be competed by graduating seniors in May, however, so the effort on that is largely unreported in this questionnaire, except to note some time spent with Mike Roona and Karen Dunn-Haley on this aspect of PLO assessment. Finally, note that we have no full-time lecturers and only one part-time lecturer in our program, so the answer to Question 8b does not reflect exclusion of lecturers from the assessment process. Rather, it simply reflects the size of our program and an appreciation for the other responsibilities our part-time lecturer must bear.

8) Once we get the general procedures established, I don't think this will be too much work. The main things that would help me would be other senior faculty with whom to share this and other aspects

of the work of running the chemistry program (assistant professors should not be spending their time in this way), and a reliable staff person to take care of the non-academic aspects of doing assessments. I should not have to arrange meeting times, schedule rooms, collect independent research reports from my colleagues, etc.

9) In order to maintain active faculty participation in the assessment practice, I feel there needs to be some appropriate reward structure. At present, the urgency of WASC serves as a strong motivator, but that will dissipate once accreditation is granted.

10) The process of assessment needs dedicated IT resources, i. e. staff hired to specifically develop state of the art systems that enable the most efficient collection, analysis and assessment of results.

    The process of assessment was confusing. A very simple calendar indicating when different documents are due as well what exactly each document is to contain would make this process much more valuable.

    I personally find the actual goals of the process legitimate, stimulating and generally very useful but the process during the past year can only be described as "chaotic". Presumably the learning curve will take care of that. However, the beauty of simplicity and clarity should be goals, if possible.

11) Please note that estimates submitted on this form are extremely rough estimates.

Appendix II: Workload Questionnaire for Faculty Accreditation Organizers

Dear FAO:

To properly support and streamline assessment, we need to know how much it costs in time and treasure. This questionnaire, which asks you to estimate how much time you've spent on assessing your program's first learning outcome, will (1) help your program and school fund your assessment efforts, (2) provide essential evidence for us to use in our Educational Effectiveness Review report to WASC.

As you respond to the following questions, please consider only the work you conducted in support of the assessment of your program's first Program Learning Outcome. Example activities include gathering and reviewing student work, developing surveys, drafting rubrics, analyzing results, writing the report, or coordinating these activities. With few exceptions, this work will have taken place **between February 1, 2009 and January 30, 2010.** Please do ***NOT*** include in your estimates time spent developing your program's assessment plan submitted in January 2009.

1) To enable connection of assessment needs to programs, please provide the name of your program: _____.

2) On average, how many hours per week do you spend on teaching, research, and service **during a typical academic year**?

____ hours per week

3) a) Please estimate the number of hours that *you* spent engaged in each of the following activities, working collaboratively or independently, as part of the assessment of your first Program Learning Outcome between February 1, 2009 and January 30, 2010. Please enter 0 or skip to indicate when an activity is not applicable. Fractions of hours are welcome.

Assessment Activity	**Total Hours Spent on Activity**
a) developing or identifying student work for review, e.g. embedded questions, portfolios, capstone projects, pre/post tests, papers, etc.	
b) collecting student work	
c) developing rubric(s)	
d) reviewing student work individually or with colleagues	
e) identifying and/or retrieving extant survey data or resources	
f) developing student surveys, interviews or focus groups	
g) conducting student surveys, interviews or focus groups	
h) analyzing assessment results	
i) writing and editing the report	
k) other (please specify:_____)	
l) other (please specify:_____)	
m) other (please specify:_____)	

b) Please estimate the percentage of the work, indicated in Part A of this question, that was done during the academic year and during the summer. These values should total to 100%.

During the academic year ___ % During the summer ____ %

4) Please estimate the percent of time you worked alone and with others on tasks related to assessing your first Program Learning Outcome. These values should total to 100%. Do not include time spent developing your program's assessment plan submitted in January 2009.

Worked alone ____% Worked with others ____%

5) In the first response column below, please indicate everyone with whom you collaborated at least once. In the following two columns respectively, please rank up to the three top collaborators with whom you spent the most time working and that you found to be the most helpful.

Possible Collaborators	**Worked with at least once (check all that apply)**	**Spent most time working with (rank top 3)**	**Found most helpful (rank top 3)**
Senate colleagues			
Lecturers and adjuncts			
Staff in your school			
Staff from the Graduate Division			
Staff from the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence			
Staff from Institutional Planning and Analysis			
Staff from Student Affairs			
Staff from the Library			
Consultants external to UC Merced			
Undergraduates			
Graduate students			
Other (please specify:_____)			
Other (please specify:_____)			

6) Please review each assessment activity below and indicate those in which your collaborators participated.

	Instructors		Staff from						Students		Other	
Assessment Activity	Senate	Lecturer & Adjuncts	Your School	Grad Division	Center for Research on Teaching Excellence	Institutional Planning and Analysis	Student Affairs	Library	Undergrad	Graduate	External consultants	Other
Developing or identifying student work for review, e.g. embedded questions, etc.												
Collecting student work												
Developing one or more rubrics												
Reviewing student work												
Identifying and/or retrieving extant survey data or resources												
Developing student surveys, interviews, or focus groups												
Conducting student surveys, interviews, or focus groups												
Analyzing assessment results												
Report writing and editing												

Other (please specify):												
Other (please specify):												

7) Please rate the importance of each potential resource below to the sustainability of your efforts to organize your program's Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment given that PLO assessment will be an annual activity and that it must be conducted by the faculty and involve direct analysis of student work.

Resource	Unimportant	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
Clerical support for PLO assessment-related tasks					
Summer "9ths" or other stipend payments to support your attendance at assessment conferences or workshops					
Support of staff with experience in the design and execution of PLO assessment					
Stipend for organizing PLO assessment					
Course release for organizing PLO assessment					
Funding to support graduate student participation					
Explicit recognition of the organization of PLO assessment activities as part of instructional responsibilities in tenure and promotion evaluation criteria					
Incentives to promote broader faculty participation in assessment					
Other:_____					

8) a) Please indicate the number of ladder rank faculty in your program (other than you) who worked on some aspect of the assessment of your first Program Learning Outcome between February 1, 2009 and January 30, 2010. Please exclude people who only provided a cursory review of the assessment report.

Number of ladder rank faculty _____

b) Please indicate the number of non-Senate faculty colleagues associated with your program who were involved in the assessment of your first Program Learning Outcome.

Number full time _____ Number part time _____

9) If you have any other thoughts about the workload associated with assessing PLOs, please share them below.

THANK YOU!

To submit this questionnaire, please scroll to the top and click the submit button. Alternatively, you may save the completed form to your desk top and attach it to an email to Laura Martin, lmartin@ucmerced.edu. Thank you!