

MEMORANDUM

SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

TO: BONNIE IRWIN, CHANCELLOR
KRIS RONEY, VICE CHANCELLOR OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
BRUCE MATHEWS, DEAN OF CAFNRM
MICHAEL SHINTAKU, CHAIR OF THE CAFNRM FACULTY SENATE

FROM: SERI JUANGRINITH, ACREDITATION LIAISON OFFICER
Seri Juangrinith

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE 2020-2021 CAFNRM SELF STUDY

CC: ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This memorandum constitutes the evaluation of the document submitted August 26, 2020 as evidence of program rigor, integrity, and quality of instruction and operations in the various programs within the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resource Management, University of Hawai'i at Hilo.

The members of the writing team—Dr. Norman Arancon, Dr. Lorna Tsutsumi, and Dr. Lissa Tsutsumi—are to be commended for putting together this document in the face of faculty resistance due to the former study ending in an impasse over an unagreed-to-MOU. This team was also willing to work directly with the ALO to revise key elements of the program review guidelines to ensure the process and its links to accreditation are made clearer.

That being said, the self-study reflects the ongoing challenge of developing programmatic assessment in individual departments and programs. In the case of CAFNRM, the lack of a wider culture of assessment leaves the college open to criticism regarding the rigor and quality of degrees. As this is a primary concern for WSCUC compliance, the ALO will devote this review to observations and recommendations regarding student learning assessment as they have been and are being currently conducted in the Program.

I. 2014-2015 CAFNRM Self-Study

The WSCUC Commission in 2004 noted “efforts to implement assessment initiatives have not yet reached the level of campus-wide engagement. Many faculty still resist the assessment initiatives and much work remains to be done In all cases, the University must maintain its momentum so that faculty will understand that the ultimate purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning. Assessment and cultures of evidence are tools to that end.”¹ This is reflected in the 2010-2015 self-study which only offered indirect assessment (student surveys). While the results from that survey were helpful in identifying areas needed for improvement, such as class time conflicts and Saturday classes (p. 26), and supported general student satisfaction with learning per student course evaluations (p. 27), there was no direct assessment of student work. Learning outcomes were listed from pages 28 through 32, but no

¹ Ralph A. Wolff to Rose Y. Tseng, WSCUC Action Letter, June 25, 2004 (Reaffirming Accreditation to 2014), <https://hilo.hawaii.edu/uhh/accreditation/WASCreports/WSCUCactionletterjune252004.php>.

reference to future assessment based on those SLOs were made in the section “Future Goals & Resource Requirements.” Sadly, this is something that was missed by the external reviewer, which leads the ALO to suggest that future reviewers must be made cognizant of this key aspect of program review. Without assessment data, statements of rigor, quality, and integrity of the degree is nothing more than words.

II. 2019-2020 Self-Study

As of the current date, some progress has been made in terms of direct assessment of student learning. A handful of individuals, namely the writers of the self-study (one of whom has long served on the Assessment Support Committee), have been engaged with campus-wide efforts at undertaking core competency assessment. As a result, Section VII, Evidence of Program Quality cites yearly data for upper division courses, beginning in AY 2013-2014. The overall data shows upperclassmen are exhibiting competency or were nearing proficiency in three courses: HORT 450 (Written Communication, AY 2013-2014), ANSC 321 (Oral Communication, AY 2016-2017), & HORT 481 (Written Communication, AY 2017-2018). Actions taken in response to these findings (i.e. scaffolding writing via several drafts and revisions) was also noted.

Needless to say, three courses over the span of seven years may not be enough to determine whether seniors exiting from CAFRNM are competent in the core competencies required by WSCUC. As there was no data on Quantitative Reasoning, the college may need to address this in the immediate future to ensure that degrees from CAFRNM are compliant with [WSCUC standard 2.2a](#). In addition, the college needs to act upon assessment of their many learning outcomes (see “Program Goals and Learning Outcomes,” pages 7 through 12, and Appendix E, pages 47 through 52). In an earlier section). Very little specific information was provided on any plans for assessment on a yearly basis.

The ALO can vouch for the college making a start with programmatic assessment. The ALO worked with the writers of this self-study to develop rubrics for key service-learning courses in Spring 2020. Unfortunately, due to the COVID pandemic, face-to-face evaluation of student skill has not been feasible to date.

These key writers also ensured that diversity and WI assessment were undertaken of late, the latter of which involves comparing artifacts from two different lower division courses, AG 263 and HORT 262. Such comparisons, if expanded, could be extremely beneficial in showing how well CANFRM is sustaining writing intensive learning in its programs.

III. Recommendations

Based on the observations above, the ALO offers the following recommendations:

- A. Develop programmatic assessment based on SLOs, particularly the ones that underlie key degrees. For example, the following was submitted in the self-study (see page 7) for the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture:
 - Learning Outcome 1: Acquire, integrate, and apply knowledge of science and technology to managed agricultural systems.
 - Goal 1. Use multiple sources, including current and older literature, to find, evaluate, organize and manage information related to diverse agricultural systems.
 - Goal 2. Demonstrate competence with both laboratory and field-based techniques used in modern agricultural systems.
 - Goal 3. Understand how global issues including climate change, energy use, chemical use, water availability and food safety impact sustainability of agricultural systems.
 - Learning Outcome 2: Synthesize and demonstrate interdisciplinary knowledge and competence in managing and improving crop and/or animal production systems.
 - Goal 1. Apply concepts of biology, chemistry, nutrition, pest control, diseases, ecology and genetics to manage and improve plants and (or) animal systems and their products.
 - Goal 2. Anticipate and recognize problems and make recommendations for addressing the problems using appropriate techniques and skills.

- Goal 3. Develop, identify and employ best management practices that lead to sustainable solutions and outcomes.
- Goal 4. Apply principles of business, marketing and management to an agricultural enterprise in developing the various components of a business plan.
- Learning Outcome 3: Appreciate and communicate the diverse impacts of agriculture on people.
 - Goal 1: Communicate effectively with various audiences using oral, written, and visual presentation skills, and contemporary networking/social media technologies.
 - Goal 2: Describe and assess the influence of crop and (or) animal production systems and its management on environmental sustainability and restoration.
- Learning Outcome 4: Demonstrate professionalism and proficiency in skills that relate to agriculture.
 - Goal 1: Demonstrate leadership and professionalism, and the ability to collaborate and work in teams.
 - Goal 2. Plan, engage, and learn from actions that demonstrate civic responsibility to community and society.

The ALO strongly recommends that the faculty make use of the rubrics they themselves have already developed as they are directly tied to programmatic learning outcomes, an example of which follows:

ENTO 350 Advanced Beekeeping				
Scale	Inspection Protocol (Discipline Specific Skill--PLO)	Identify existing and potential problems (Discipline Specific Skill--PLO)	Research (GE Learning Outcome 2)	Devise and implement treatment /maintenance plan (GE Learning Outcome 1)
Mastery	Undertakes an exhaustive yet time efficient inspection protocol	Can identify a wide-range of problems, including those that are uncommon.	Undertakes an exhaustive search of information utilizing multiple academic, peer-reviewed literature.	Hive exhibits increased reproductive output (colony is healthy and expanding)
Minimum Competence	Can undertake an inspection but may not do so in an efficient or thorough manner	Can identify the most obvious and common problems.	Utilizes readily accessible materials; some sources may not be academic.	Hive is operational but shows no growth.
Needs Improvement	Doesn't follow inspection protocol at all.	Is unable to identify any problems in the hive.	Research is superficial using unreliable sites and is inadequate to formulate a solution to the problems in the hive.	Hive fails; hive does not thrive.

Developing such measures “in-house” can go a long way to soliciting data that is actionable. More importantly, if these rubrics can also aid in overall grading, the task of assessment will seem less of an “additional” burden as opposed to an activity faculty already to.

B. Plan for a sustainable, annual “culture” of assessment

The 2019-202 self-study does present an improvement from the AY 2014-2015 report. This is as admirable start; however, what is needed is: (1) wider faculty participation; (2) an annual plan for assessment and data analysis; and (3) activities that can help “close the loop” is data results reveal less than competent student performance. This is where college leadership can play a pivotal role in sustaining such efforts.

The ALO again stresses that the work of just two or three individuals is not enough to represent quality assurances in the college. In fact, the college should want to develop data that is can post in support of its [degree statement](#) on our accreditation website. Given the very public and very interactive community role that the college’s programs maintain, being able to cite data on the quality of student learning will go a long way in making arguments supporting CANFRM, especially in these troubled economic times.