

Assessment Summary 2009

Division: Cooperative Education

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1. Describe program review processes that inform your division's efforts to improve program or discipline student learning outcomes.

Improvements to the co-op 'program' occur on two levels. The first is the way learning is organized that is the same for all students in all programs such as number of hours a student works per credit. The second level is learning that is organized to best meet the needs of a specific group of students such as a career technical program like nursing or academic discipline like psychology.

Lane's nationally recognized model of centralize administration with decentralized faculty allows for program consistency and efficiency where appropriate (such as the use of one Agreement Form for all programs) and program individuality to optimize student learning. Lane's model encourages co-op faculty to organize student learning so that it is discipline specific rather than dictate that all students in all programs must follow identical learning delivery. As a consequence, most co-op program improvement is seen at the discipline level rather than at the broader Co-op program level.

In addition, Co-op faculty members are liaisons between career technical instructors who set program outcomes and the practitioners who provide learning opportunities for co-op students in the field. Co-op faculty visit students at their work sites where they gain knowledge about best practices, new developments and changes in the discipline/field that are then considered by the career technical program faculty and used to make changes to career technical programs. With close discipline level ties, learning outcomes at the work site function as "third party" assessment of learning in the discipline; most career technical programs at Lane require a co-op internship where students 'demonstrate' their learning in a work setting and receive an evaluation by the work site of both their discipline specific skills as well as many of the Core Abilities that Lane has identified as outcomes of earning a college degree.

At the broader 'program' level the Cooperative Education Division conducts a variety of program review processes that inform program improvement and student learning. These include: 1) Program review by the Cooperative Education Council (Co-op Council) - the Co-op Council is composed of eight division faculty members who meet weekly to discuss issues and recommend program changes; 2) quarterly all-division faculty meetings where programmatic issues are discussed and changes agreed upon; and 3) a yearly two-day planning retreat where the Co-op Council engages in in-depth analysis of important programmatic issues and makes recommendations for all division consideration and adoption. Data from the unit planning process is utilized by division faculty to assess the co-op program and contributes to the development of goals and initiatives. As needed, issue-based taskforces are convened to examine a particular issue or topic and craft recommendations or solutions.

Another method employed by the Cooperative Education division to do program review is through the College's Student Follow-up Survey which is conducted periodically (the last was 2005-06.) The

Follow-up study asks students specific questions about their co-op-related learning and the value of this learning to their success after leaving Lane. After each Follow-up Survey is conducted, the Co-op Council reviews the results to assess the Co-op program. Program modifications are recommended and implemented as appropriate based on the information from the Follow-up Survey.

In addition to the existing program review processes, the Cooperative Education Division undertook an extensive research study to: 1) Understand, across all disciplines, how employers rated student performance on standard student learning outcomes as identified by the Supervisor Evaluation of Student (SES) tool (completed by each supervisor at the end of the term for each student) and 2) determine how the evaluation parameters on the SES matched Lane's core abilities and demonstrate student performance on these abilities. To complete this research study the Office of Research and Planning assisted with the creation of an Access data base and created an appropriate sampling process of SESs.

Another pilot project was initiated to see if more program specific data could be gathered on the SES. The pilot project consisted of a personalized letter to each supervisor, in two different disciplines, which contained a 3 to 5 point bulleted list of topics specific to the discipline and requested that they provide information about the student's performance on these items when filling out the SES. The pilot project ran for one year at which time it was concluded that it was not effective at eliciting the requested information. A new study is being planned in 2010 to test a different method for getting more discipline specific feedback.

2. Based on assessments of program or discipline outcomes, what changes have been implemented since 2004 to increase student success and improve student learning?

At the conclusion of the research study the SES was revised to better align with the College's Core Abilities. New evaluation items were added including: 1) Reading, writing and information skills, 2) ability to communicate effectively, and 3) appropriate use of technology. As a result of this modification of the SES co-op student's learning across all disciplines will be better assessed in relation to the College's Core Abilities.