Central Washington University
Assessment of Student Learning
Department and Program Report

Please enter the appropriate information concerning your student learning assessment activities for this year.

Academic Year of Report: 2011-2012 College: CEPS
Department Nutrition, Exercise and Health Sciences (NEHS)
Program: Master of Science Exercise Science

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?
In answering this question, please identify the specific student learning outcomes you assessed this year, reasons for assessing these outcomes, with the outcomes written in clear, measurable terms, and note how the outcomes are linked to department, college and university mission and goals.

The program assessed the following student learning outcome (SLO):

“Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively assist professors in the classroom or lab setting and collaborate on research.”

This SLO is an essential component for all graduate level students and is linked to department Program Goal 4 “Faculty and students will collaborate to promote academic and professional growth.”, College Goal 4 “Provide for an outstanding academic and professional growth experience”, and University Goals 1: “Maintain and strengthen an outstanding academic and student life.” and 6: “Build inclusive and diverse campus communities that promote intellectual inquiry and encourage civility.”

2. How were they assessed?
In answering these questions, please concisely describe the specific methods used in assessing student learning. Please also specify the population assessed, when the assessment took place, and the standard of mastery (criterion) against which you will compare your assessment results. If appropriate, please list survey or questionnaire response rate from total population.

A) What methods were used?

Graduate Director requested a reporting from faculty supervising exercise science graduate students assigned GA duties in lecture and/or lab, and engaging students in collaborative research related efforts such as preparation of research protocols, grants, submission of research papers to peer reviewed conferences and/or journals. A-priori criteria related to SLO included the following: (1) 90% of GAs having responsibilities in assisting professors will “satisfactorily” execute their responsibilities as noted by the professor, (2) 90% of graduate students will successfully complete their final culminating experience (EXSC 700: Thesis, Project, Examination) as noted by a satisfactory score by the graduate students committee during their final quarter of study, and (3) 50% of students completing EXSC 700 or 595 (Graduate Research) work will submit a research abstract to a local, regional or national meeting.
B) Who was assessed?

Graduate students – exercise science

C) When was it assessed?

Throughout the 2011-12 academic year by the Graduate Director.

3. What was learned?

In answering this question, please report results in specific qualitative or quantitative terms, with the results linked to the outcomes you assessed, and compared to the standard of mastery (criterion) you noted above. Please also include a concise interpretation or analysis of the results.

Exercise science GAs spent part of their 20 hour per week workload in the Clinical Physiology and Exercise Science programs assisting professors in lectures, labs, supervising practicum students in the fitness testing lab, and holding study sessions in the cadaver lab. In addition, part of the teaching workload for the 2011-2012 year was spent instructing in the Physical Activity program. Along with teaching related responsibilities, exercise science GAs also assisted faculty in research activities.

At approximately seven weeks into Fall, Winter and Spring quarters, the Graduate Director communicated with faculty who were supervising GAs to inquire about GA performance for assigned duties. Furthermore, the Graduate Director met with all GAs during week 10 of each quarter to engage in discussion regarding assigned responsibilities and to assign duties for the subsequent quarter.

Students were an important asset to professors last academic year by assisting in the following courses:

- EXSC 350 Anatomical Kinesiology (lecture and cadaver laboratory)
- EXSC 351 Scientific Foundations of Health and Fitness (lecture and physiology laboratory)
- EXSC 360 Scientific Principles of Strength Training (lecture and laboratory)
- EXSC 450 Physiology of Exercise (lecture and laboratory) EXSC 455 Fitness Assessment and Exercise Prescription (lecture and laboratory)

Note that exercise science GAs assisted in about 40 laboratories that were associated with the above courses during the 2011-2012 academic year.

The consensus from faculty is that the exercise science GAs gained valuable professional and educational experiences by assisting in the aforementioned teaching related tasks. Professors reported that GAs were of great help in assisting with various duties such as prepping for labs,
monitoring and assisting students in a laboratory setting, holding study sessions, developing and grading select assignments, and on occasion delivering a lecture. Professors felt that the GAs were a valuable asset in the classroom and laboratory settings, and certainly of great benefit in helping to better manage growing class sizes. GAs effectively assisted professors in both the classroom and laboratory setting. GAs also felt that being involved in helping professors in lecture and laboratory settings was valuable and contributed significantly to their overall graduate school experience.

Graduate students also supervised and provided supplemental instruction in “open cadaver laboratory” for an average of 12-16 hours each week per quarter, a service to undergraduate students that is immensely appreciated given the challenging and unique nature of this discipline. The supervisor of the cadaver lab reported that GAs fulfilled their responsibilities of assisting undergraduates in better understanding human anatomy and physiology through the utilization of anatomical models and cadavers.

In the anthropometric and functional fitness testing laboratory, graduate students supervised undergraduate students as they provided fitness testing in body composition, strength/power, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness for the University and Ellensburg community. In the fitness testing laboratory, GAs play a critical role in training and supervising undergraduate students in this practicum setting. The supervisor of the fitness testing laboratory reported that GAs successfully executed their responsibilities.

In the Physical Activity program, GAs instructed in physical activity classes throughout the academic year. The physical activity program offered by the Department of Physical Education, School and Public Health is large, with upwards of 60 class offerings serving the needs of approximately 1500-2000 students each quarter last academic year. The teaching related experiences (prep, teaching motor skills, management of students, grading etc…) gained in this program served our exercise science GAs well. The director of the Physical Activity program reported that each of the exercise science GAs executed their teaching responsibilities successfully.

Result statement regarding GA teaching related duties: 100% of exercise science students holding GAs have satisfactorily executed their responsibilities of assisting in the clinical physiology and exercise science programs and the Physical Activity program. This result exceeds the stated criteria (e.g. 90%).

GAs were also assigned research related duties. GAs have a long history of collaborating with faculty and undergraduate students on investigations that culminate in local, regional, and international presentations of research. Faculty sponsored and mentored research has a record of manuscript publications in peer reviewed scientific journals (Journal of Strength and Conditioning, Medicine and Science in Sport and Exercise, Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene, and International Journal of Health and Nutrition). Graduate students also have a consistent record of presenting research at peer reviewed conferences such as the North West and National American College of Sports Medicine meetings - highly regarded conferences for clinicians, educators, researchers, scientists and students. Regarding
presentations on the CWU campus, graduate students regularly present research work to SOURCE, a highly valued research dissemination activity at this institution. Also note that 100% of students successfully completed their final culminating experience (EXSC 700: Thesis –research related, Project, Examination) and successfully completed EXSC 595-Graduate Research work.

Result statement regarding GA research related duties: 100% of students satisfactorily completed their final culminating experience, EXSC 700 –Thesis, Project, Examination. This exceeds the criterion of achievement (e.g. 90%). Complete information regarding submission status of papers to conferences and/or journals by the recent graduating co-hort (June 2012) will not be realized until the completion of this academic year.
4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?
In answering this question, please note specific changes to your program as they affect student learning, and as they are related to results from the assessment process. If no changes are planned, please describe why no changes are needed. In addition, how will the department report the results and changes to internal and external constituents (e.g., advisory groups, newsletters, forums, etc.).

The faculty members in clinical physiology and exercise science are pleased with the demonstrated graduate student ability reflected in this assessment. Again, the consensus among faculty is that exercise science GAs have demonstrated that they are effective in assisting faculty in lecture and laboratory settings, and assisting with research. One-hundred percent of NEHS exercise science GAs satisfactorily executed their assigned responsibilities in teaching related tasks and in research.

Much of the GA workload is teaching related with some workload hours in research. The heavy emphasis in teaching associated tasks is related to the growing number of students majoring in clinical physiology and exercise science. Programs in NEHS have experienced significant growth over recent years with undergraduate student majors and minors now totaling about 550. Excluding programs in paramedicine and nutrition, the clinical physiology and exercise science programs alone currently have about 300 plus students. GA teaching related duties are now exclusively in clinical physiology and exercise science (started Fall 2012) in order to help meet the tremendous growth in student numbers in our undergraduate courses. The department believes this is a positive change that will provide our GAs with added opportunities in teaching and research.

5. What did the department or program do in response to last year’s assessment information?
In answering this question, please describe any changes that have been made to improve student learning based on previous assessment results. Please also discuss any changes you have made to your assessment plan or assessment methods.

Most recent change has included a more robust admission criteria into the MS Exercise Science program (highlighted in last years report). NEHS believes that the newly adopted changes in the admission criteria has yielded more talented graduate students. This is positive since the faculty believe it has resulted in an academically stronger cohort. Such a strong and talented cohort is important since those graduate students holding a GA play such a critical role in assisting faculty in teaching and research.

6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University:

None at this time.
December 7, 2012

Dear Connie,

Enclosed, please find an assessment report for the MS Exercise Science program. Have a great holiday season.

Thank you.

Leo

Dr. Leo J. D’Acquisto, Professor
Director Graduate Studies  NEHS