



Summer 2022

## Creating a Culture of Assessment: Building a Sustainable Model for Communicating Results to Guide Change

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## **2022 Assessment Mini Grant Program Report (Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022)**

**Award No:** 02-2022

**Principal Investigator(s):** Amy Heath & Carrie Barrett

**Award Amount:** \$1,483

**Period of Award:** March 7, 2022, through June 30, 2022

**Department:** Physical Therapy

**Project Title:** Creating a Culture of Assessment: Building a Sustainable Model for Communicating Results to Guide Change

**1) Description of accomplishments (as related to your original proposal): general description of the project's final outcome addressing the degree to which objectives were attained; results of the stated purpose; and the overall effectiveness of the proposed plan. This should also include any tangible output/results.**

The purpose of the project was to develop a sustainable model for communicating results from different assessment data points which will allow faculty to discuss areas of improvement and/or change for both the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program and curriculum. The final product includes a structured design for communicating results from graduating student feedback sessions, Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) results and NPTE Benchmark reports (available via the FSBPT), with any faculty concerns or questions. The design includes a faculty retreat to present and discuss results with the faculty as a whole.

The retreat preserved time for faculty to a) think about the lockstep DPT curriculum as a whole (as opposed to individual courses) and b) allow time to review and discuss the results from the first graduating cohort's curriculum feedback session (held December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022).

The data from students was collected in early Fall 2022 and was analyzed in March 2022. The results from the NPTE and the respective Benchmark reports were available and reviewed in March 2022. The retreat was scheduled for May. The retreat was designed and facilitated by the members of the department's curriculum and program evaluation and assessment committee (CPEAC): Dr. Amy Heath and Dr. Carrie Barrett.

Overall, the project was a huge success. There are certainly components we will modify moving forward, but in general we feel like we've created a sustainable model that can carry us forward into continued program and curriculum assessment and continuous quality improvement. Our plan was fully executed, and all our initial goals were met. A survey was sent to all faculty participants at the conclusion of the retreat and 5 out of 9 faculty responded. All respondents (100%) indicated a favorable impression of the event. All (100%) indicated they thought the

retreat was well organized, the data shared prior to the event was beneficial, and that the location was conducive for the event. Additionally, as a result of this program we've been able to develop a clear timeline for data collection from various stakeholders and we plan to submit our process as a case study to *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*.

## 2) Specific outcomes: uses of individual outcomes and how they impact the department/academic unit.

Our primary outcome was to develop a sustainable model of assessment.

Data collection timelines have been operationalized, systematized, and made to be reoccurring (See Table 1) to ensure that all stakeholders know when and why they are being asked for data. The timing of data collection is key to when assessment and dissemination can take place. The assessment process is detailed and communicated to students and faculty to facilitate their engagement in the process. Beyond dissemination, the faculty need the information and time to review and process the data prior to discussing. All data was shared with the faculty in order to develop a culture of transparency. Along with the raw data an executive summary was shared to highlight the areas that CPEAC would be addressing at the faculty retreat so that faculty could be active participants.

**Table 1. Timelines & Stakeholders for Assessment**

Stakeholder	Tool	Timeframe	Evaluation Component
Faculty	Faculty Survey	August	Program
1st Year Students	Orientation Survey	August	Program
2nd & 3rd Year Students	Student Survey	September	Program
Graduates	Debriefing Session	December (just prior to graduation)	Curriculum & Program
Graduates	NPTE Reports	February	Curriculum
<b>Working to Include in Future Assessments</b>			
Graduates	Graduate Survey	December (beginning in 2022)	Curriculum & Program
Employers	Employer Survey	December (beginning in 2022)	Curriculum & Program
Professional Advisory Committee	Discussion	February (beginning in 2022)	Program
Clinical Education Advisory Committee	Discussion	February (beginning in 2022)	Program

A secondary goal was to preserve faculty time so that all may participate.

The funding from the WMU Assessment Mini grant made developing (and paying for) a retreat possible. The faculty was asked to reserve a Wednesday after the Spring semester ended and prior to the start of the summer session prior to the date. CPEAC coordinated a venue off-campus and food/drink, which included coffee/tea/water, breakfast snacks, and lunch. A faculty social gathering was planned at a local venue for after the retreat. Faculty were asked to commit the entire day (8:30–4:00) to the assessment retreat and the social gathering following was optional. At the onset of the retreat CPEAC explicitly asked faculty to refrain from responding to emails and to set their technology aside, unless it was being used to investigate information related to the discussion at hand.

The retreat was scheduled from 9:00–12:00 for curriculum assessment, lunch from 12:00–1:00 and nature hike (although it rained so this did not occur), and 1:00–4:00 program assessment. During both the curriculum assessment and program assessment components participants had 20 minute “Bio and Tech” breaks. CPEAC members alternated facilitating discussion and taking notes. Conversations among faculty were facilitated by both open forums (i.e., no specific structure, simply gathering voluntary participant feedback) and using a Liberating Structure® design which required faculty to reflect, discuss with other participants, and share their ideas.

Anecdotally, the results of the retreat were overwhelmingly positive. All faculty participated in both open forum discussions and Liberating Structure discussions with lively exchanges that were focused on the data. Several solutions to areas of improvement were identified. Ultimately though there were topics that needed more focused attention. Workgroups and existing committees were tasked with developing topic solutions to bring back to the faculty at a later date.

Our final goal was to engage all faculty in continuous quality improvement.

To engage all faculty, CPEAC recognized the need to meet faculty where they are regarding assessment. As a result, both complete raw data and summary information were sent 1 week prior to the assessment retreat so that faculty could review prior to the retreat. During the retreat, the emphasis on continued quality improvement allowed faculty to shift the focus from “me” and “my course” to thinking about the curriculum and the program as a whole. Areas of improvement identified by CPEAC that could be perceived as one faculty member’s responsibility led to a pre-dissemination meeting with that faculty member and the CPEAC chair so that the faculty member, a) had a deep sense of the data and analysis, and b) would not feel “attacked” on the day of the retreat.

Program results indicated a need to address improvement in admissions processes—specifically as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Another area of improvement identified was the

variability in a sequence of faculty-directed research courses (Applied Discovery). Both areas had faculty workgroups established as a function of the assessment retreat. Curriculum results identified orthopaedic content and interventions content in which students were performing below the national and regional bar. Given that the curriculum performance results were based on a single cohort, the faculty spent time discussing how to “improve” in the short-term and CPEAC was tasked with continuing to monitor.

We created a model to include “hearing all the voices” of various stakeholders. The stakeholders included faculty and students. In the future it will also include employers of our graduates and graduates. We were able to accomplish providing space to share authentic perspectives with students during the debriefing meeting by first allowing the students to gather and submit their thoughts via survey, then following up with open-ended questions in which the responses were documented and triangulated with survey responses. With faculty, we were able to accomplish the engagement in participation with having individual faculty write out ideas and then sharing in pairs and small groups throughout the retreat. During the retreat, all faculty participated on multiple occasions, and everyone appeared engaged throughout the duration of the retreat.

Since the conclusion of the retreat, other results indicating engaged faculty 1) the Program Director has been able to refer to discussion at the retreat to discuss resolutions more openly to current concerns and 2) after the retreat CPEAC met to review/edit consistency in their notetaking during retreat day. These notes were then sent back to the faculty for feedback (member-checking) to enhance the trustworthiness of the process. One faculty member did respond with additional comments and questions regarding how the process of workgroups versus committee work would move forward and CPEAC was able to address this.

### **3) Summary: your judgment about the assessment impact from the grant.**

The impact of this grant is significant. The funding from this grant allowed CPEAC to engage faculty more fully in the assessment of our DPT program. Since the DPT program is relatively new (only having graduated one cohort upon completion of this report) we did not have an existing framework or established historical practices. The funding allowed us to really devote time and resources to creating an infrastructure/sustainable model for assessment into the future. We have just completed the survey component of data collection and are planning for the debriefing sessions with the graduating students this fall. The Faculty Assessment Retreat date for 2023 will be set soon and we are working to submit a case study regarding our process to help inform other programs that may be looking for a place to start their own assessment processes.