

# **NMJC Institutional Assessment Summary and Status Update Spring 2014-Spring 2018**

NMJC's mission, "success through learning", is measured in how well graduates communicate, critically think and problem solve and interact within their communities as they pursue education and career goals after attending NMJC. Assessment of student learning is a means of providing evidence of value in courses, programs of study and degrees earned at NMJC. This report summarizes assessment efforts for the last several academic cycles as well as responsive initiatives.

Detailed data and analysis can be found in department and program level reports. This document provides results and analysis of assessment of student learning through the process launched spring of 2014. Prior to 2014 other assessment processes existed. Data and reports for assessment activities go back to at least 2006. By "assessing the assessment processes" the current system was developed.

The state of student learning at NMJC could be described as dynamic. It could also be described as a multifaceted and messy endeavor. Assessment is the tool used to track, quantify and bring clarity to the overall goal of improving student learning. Assessment is often not the sole reason for change or improvement. It is also used to communicate adjustment to issues or circumstances and their effect on student learning. NMJC's assessment process provides guidance and intentionality from year to year amid institutional change. After five years with the current process the benefit of assessment might best be described as leading to improvement because it is conducted with transparency and awareness of various factors contributing to student learning and success.

Essential points presented in this summary:

- ✓ Process of assessment covers all levels, but focuses engagement at the course level with reporting at the department/program level.
- ✓ Data collected under current process show very stable results internally and externally.
- ✓ Assessment functions alongside multiple other processes and influences such as program review, faculty evaluation, organizational changes, state higher education department compliance duties (NMHED), regional accreditation expectations (HLC).
- ✓ The work of faculty in assessing student learning has led to various improvements.
- ✓ Goals and initiatives are being integrated campus wide at all levels.

A summary of results is shown next. These results reflect student success on course level assignments designed by instructors to measure skills related to institutional learning goals. All departments and programs contribute to student learning in the three institutional learning goals. Results shown are a compilation from departments and programs. For comparison, an external measure of student learning is also provided in the form of the Proficiency Profile through ETS.

	Spring 2014	Fall 2014- Spring 2015	Fall 2015- Spring 2016	Fall 2016- Spring 2017
COMMUNICATION	84% 1844/2197  ETS: 109.63	82% 3402/4127  ETS: 109.53	81% 4457/5249  ETS: 110.04	82% 4006/4856  ETS: 110.28
CRITICAL THINKING and PROBLEM SOLVING	82% 1410/1730  ETS: 107.13	81% 3290/4051  ETS: 107.44	79% 3572/4514  ETS: 107.41	81% 3983/4910  ETS: 107.10
SELF AND COMMUNITY	85% 2311/2728	86% 5542/6412	82% 6027/7327	83% 6613/7923
ETS	425.10 (421.4-457.8)	424.49 (421.4-457.8)	425.04 (414.8-452.4)	425.24 (414.7-452.3)

ETS summary for all cohorts from 2014 through 2018:

- 951 scores,
- 425.46 overall mean,
- 109.97 Communication,
- 107.42 Critical Thinking

Data indicates NMJC's students are demonstrating proficiency. Our students seem to be meeting expected standards. Simply stated, instructors consider approximately 8 out of 10 students successful with subject area or program goals which correlate to broader institutional goals. These results are very stable for all five years.

Stability in results does not translate to inaction. To the contrary, successful scores on targeted assignments are merely the quantitative part of the state of student learning. The other part is qualitative. Again, internal measures show NMJC students are "above average" while external measure (ETS-PP) shows students are on the low end of average. With that in mind the narrative parts of departmental reports and assessment committee (SLOAC) meeting discussions become relevant. There is an undeniable impression that a deficit in students' abilities in the areas of communication, critical thinking and self and community exists. For example: students may earn a good grade on a writing assignment, but fail to address the professor professionally in email or discussion posts; students may do well on a test, but fail to apply similar skills to a project in the same course on the same material; students may demonstrate a skill in lab, but fail

to document the completion of the task as required. Recognition of the gap between quantitative and qualitative observations led to plans for addressing it.

The following are examples of instructor led, course level efforts to improve student learning with respect to department and program goals. Some of these began several semesters ago and some are just getting started.

- English faculty agree to implement consistent terminology all instructors agree on to help student recognize “transferable” nature of communication skills. Summary of terminology and competencies- *Credibility* (students should be able to evaluate sources for credibility); *Hypothesis, thesis, antithesis* (students should be able to articulate a main idea); *Rhetoric* (students should be able to recognize the effective use of oral and/or written language); *Research paper* (students should be able to identify the components and process of a research paper); *Plagiarism* (students should be able to define plagiarism and identify strategies to avoid it); *Evidence* (students should be able to identify evidence supporting a thesis).
- Humanities and Fine Arts faculty also implemented consistent terminology all instructors agree on to help student recognize “transferable” nature of specific skills- *Primary and Secondary Sources* (students should be able to define and identify primary and secondary sources); *Compare and Contrast* (students should be able to define and perform a comparison and contrast analysis); *Diversity* (students should be able to define diversity); *Relevancy* (students should be able to articulate a connection between the past and present).
- Social and Behavioral Sciences are reviewing departmental learning outcomes in an effort to make them more direct and measurable- *compose coherent thoughts, use the scientific method, demonstrate research/evidence based conclusions, use different approaches, apply quantitative or qualitative approaches as necessary in psychological or sociological situations, show informed thinking*
- Psychology, Sociology, Business, Criminal Justice and other departments are working with the Distance Learning Instructional Designer to develop Canvas course templates. Course templates are developed after student learning outcomes are reviewed. In several courses assessment methods have been improved and rubrics added. Canvas allows rubrics to be tied to institutional outcomes for additional data collection.
- Natural Sciences initiated “content alignment review” for online courses to evaluate academic rigor and establish stronger equivalence between face to face and online courses. Reviews will be completed on a rotation with assistance from distance learning experts and subject matter experts. The reviews result in course templates as resources for current and future instructors.
- Some departments have worked to standardize courses taught by more than one faculty member. For example, English faculty use a departmental hand book developed and updated by faculty over several years; Science faculty are working on an assessment handbook to provide examples and guidance across all varieties of lab science courses; math faculty use a common grading policy and common assessments for all courses taught by multiple faculty.
- Career training programs are working specifically on the Self and Community outcome through their emphasis on professionalism within each field.

- Math faculty are trying to provide clearer communication in syllabi so students understand course expectations. They are also trying to advise students about unwise placement and scheduling.

As stated above, assessment functions alongside multiple other processes and influences. It is the combination of processes and influences with observations of student work to produce actions on the part of instructors. Department and program reports provide additional narrative regarding methods and plans. Essentially, assessment reporting is the means by which faculty communicate evidence and responses that may be tied to program review, success rate data, organizational changes, NMHED compliance duties, HLC expectations. Assessment reports bring it all together and connect to the course level student experience.

Along with the various department/program/course level initiatives SLOAC began considering how it could unify and support faculty in improving student learning at the institutional level. The committee took up the widely recognized concern and frustration of poor communication. During spring of 2018 a subcommittee was formed to develop a minimum campus standard all faculty could implement and enforce with their students. The subcommittee (made up of faculty) developed a four-point standard and hosted a workshop to “sell” all faculty members on the idea of teaching the standard and holding students accountable to it:

- No text language (For example do not use i, BTW, LOL, IDK...)
- Correct spelling and proper capitalization
- Complete sentences (Start a sentence with a capital letter and end it with a period.)
- Logical organization

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and surveys indicated many faculty members will either amplify current efforts or will work to integrate the standard as presented into their classes. Requests were made to post the standard in the common content of syllabi, further evidence of positive response and buy-in. As the campus communication standard initiative moves forward, SLOAC will also begin defining minimum, measurable standards for the other two institutional goals- Critical Thinking and Self and Community.

It will take several semesters to determine if the efforts described in this report lead to improvement in the form of internal, external or qualitative measures. Presently, the conclusion is that as an institution NMJC is indeed working to serve students well so they can confidently pursue “success through learning”.