

Assurance Argument
Adler Graduate School - MN

7/30/2019

**4 - Teaching and Learning:
Evaluation and Improvement**

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

4.A.1 - The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

AGS maintains a practice of regular program reviews, using as framework the [institutional effectiveness plan](#) developed in January 2018. This is a living document that is updated as progress is made and goals are achieved. The last data review was conducted at a June 21, 2018, strategic planning retreat that included all AGS's constituent groups (alumni, board, faculty, staff, and students).

In addition to the overall institutional effectiveness assessment, [programs](#) are reviewed according to a regular schedule, and individual aspects of each program are reviewed as needed at program and/or at Academic Council levels. Student Learning is assessed according to a [planned cycle](#) and our [program evaluation plan](#). Quality of instruction is reviewed by program Chairs as part of the faculty evaluation process and by students, at the end of each course, through SmartEvals (the School previously used IDEA, but changes in that platform led to a switch to SmartEvals). As part of

the School's engagement in continuous improvement efforts, Chairs discuss the results of student evaluations with individual faculty members.

Details of student learning, programmatic, and institutional assessment are discussed under core component 4.B.

4.A.2 - The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

AGS does not award credit for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning. The School does accept credit transfer from other accredited institutions. The evaluation process for decisions about possible transfer of credits is described below.

4.A.3 - The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

AGS accepts transfer of up to 12 credits into any of its programs, subject to transcript and syllabi review by the program Chair or their faculty designee. Credits to be transferred must be from an accredited institution, must be consistent with current AGS curriculum, and must have been completed with a grade of B or higher. The policy for transfer of credits describes requirements to be met for credit transfer acceptance and is published both in the Catalogue/Student Handbook and on the AGS website.

4.A.4 - The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Student learning objectives, course design, curriculum mapping, and expectations for rigor of courses are developed by faculty at program level. These and all other academic policies and procedures are approved by Academic Council. The Council also reviews results from assessment of student learning, faculty evaluations, and other aspects of rigor of education, as part of the quality assurance process.

AGS does not have any dual credit programs or programs for high school students.

4.A.5 - The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

Specialized accreditation is available for the Art Therapy, Counseling, and School Counseling programs. Seeking and obtaining specialized accreditation for these programs is goal [4.4.2 of AGS's institutional effectiveness plan](#).

The Art Therapy Program is approved by the American Art Therapy's Educational Programs Approval Board. The program meets accreditation standards established by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and is preparing a self-study to be submitted for accreditation by October 1st of this year.

The Counseling Program is positioning itself for accreditation by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Curriculum for this program has been

aligned with the 2016 CACREP curricular standards, key performance indicators that meet accreditation requirements have been identified, and dispositions and program evaluation processes have been implemented.

Significant progress has also been made toward CACREP accreditation regarding institutional standards. One of the standards that are traditionally challenging to programs requires a ratio of student full-time equivalent (FTE) to faculty FTE no higher than 12:1; AGS's [FTE ratios](#) are well within these parameters. The biggest challenge AGS faces in preparing for this accreditation are two CACREP standards that require programs to:

- Have a minimum of three full-time faculty members that qualify as core faculty. In order to qualify, faculty must hold a doctoral degree in counselor education and supervision or have held a full-time faculty position in a counseling program for a minimum of one full year, prior to July 2013. The program has made significant progress toward meeting this standard in the last 12 months, going from a fully adjunct faculty at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year to eight full-time faculty members who meet core faculty requirements (or are about to meet, as two are ABD expecting to defend their dissertations in the next six to eight months) at the start of the 2019-2020 academic year.
- Have core faculty teaching at least 50% of the total credits taught in the program in any calendar year. Significant progress has also been made in the [percentage of credits](#) taught by these core faculty members, but the 50% threshold has not been met yet.

Adler Graduate School is actively recruiting one more counselor educator and is also working on improving course scheduling in order to optimize faculty utilization. It is expected that with the hiring of an additional core faculty member and with improved faculty utilization ratios the program will be in a position to apply for CACREP accreditation by the end of 2020.

4.A.6 - The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

We believe the two quantitative indicators of graduate success most relevant to our mission are employment rates and passing rates in licensure exams. Prior to 2018, School Counseling was the only program to systematically track the rate of student employment at the time of graduation. Between July 2017 and May 2019 this program graduated 21 students, of which 16 (75%) were employed as school counselors, 2 (10%) had school counseling jobs, and the other 3 (14%) had jobs unrelated to school counseling upon graduation.

Systematic employment data collection for all graduating students was implemented with the creation of the exit survey, in November 2018. Interestingly enough, college-wide [data collected in November 2018 and June 2019](#) mimic the trend observed by the School Counseling program, with 85% of the graduating students reporting they have jobs in the counseling field. The survey includes a request for graduates to keep their contact information current. We hope that this, along with the newly organized [Alumni Association](#), will allow us to obtain longitudinal information about the success of our graduates.

Information about alumni success was also collected as part of an alumni survey performed by

Student Success Services in 2016. A large number of alumni responded to the survey (181), allowing us to obtain significant information about graduates' success. According to [survey results](#), 82% of the graduates were employed in the field from which they graduated, 81% had obtained licensure or were in the process of doing so, and 70% had annual salaries above \$40,000. In addition, 35% of the graduates reported that their internship led to employment at the field experience site, and 92% reported being satisfied to completely satisfied with their work.

As a result of our self-study and as part of the institutional evaluation process we realized that AGS was not engaged in systematic data obtention and evaluation of graduates' success as indicated by licensure and gainful employment. A [plan](#) has been created to survey alumni very five years, an employer survey is being developed, we have added a question about contact information post-graduation to our exit survey, and the newly organized alumni association has created processes for increased engagement with graduates.

Sources

- ACAD_FTEs_2018-19
- ACAD_Full Time Faculty_FTE
- PRES_Institutional Effectiveness_2019-2021.pdf
- QAA_2018-19 Exit Survey_Employment.pdf
- QAA_AGS_Evaluation_Plan
- QAA_Assessment_Plan_Cycle
- QAA_Retreat Report_Goal 4.1.2
- REG_Attrition
- REG_Graduation Rates
- REG_Persistence
- REG_Retention
- SSS_2016AlumniSurvey_Graduate Success
- WEB_Alumni Association

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

4.B - The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

AGS's commitment to this goal is demonstrated through participation in the HLC Assessment Academy. We began the Academy in 2015 and have made an institutional commitment to create a culture that promotes educational excellence through evidence-based academic programming and services. In our first [Assessment Academy report](#) (11-29-15) we shared our roundtable experience and identified the need to create a comprehensive and systematic approach to the analysis of data that impacts student learning. Our commitment is best demonstrated through the review of progress made in the Academy. Below is an overview of how Adler Graduate School meets core **components in 4.B.**

The second [Assessment Academy report](#) (10-23-16) highlights AGS's commitment to improving student learning. One major change in year one was the purchase of a new Learning Management System (LMS; LiveText). We use this data collection system to help us organize our student learning outcomes (SLOs), map our curriculum, and measure student learning through key assignments. Thus, creating a system that starts at the classroom level and then aggregates up to the department level for ongoing evaluation. We identified 4 goals at this time: 1) Begin reviewing Direct Assessment Data from LiveText; 2) Collect and review our Indirect Assessment Data forms (Sample: [student dispositions](#); [orientation survey](#)); 3) Implement measurement across all our programs (starting with a pilot study); and 4) Create a plan to communicate our assessment efforts to our stakeholders.

Our commitment continued as highland in our third [Assessment Academy report](#) (5-18-17) to the HLC Assessment Academy. We Created a new [assessment cycle](#) that we launched and presented to staff and faculty at a Professional Development training. This cycle identifies what AGS's assessment process looks like and helped us to create benchmarks/goals for our roll out. We found this to be key to our sustainability. We also created an [Assessment Portfolio](#) in LiveText where we archived and tracked our progress. This also services as a way to make our assessment academy work transparent to all our stakeholders. While working on our program assessment cycles we also revisited our institutional information. At this time we decided to rework the Institution Vision, Mission, and Value statements with feedback from all our stakeholders (see 4.B.4). This redesign helped us to align our guiding statements to what we were really doing at Adler.

Along with the rework of the Vision, Mission, and Values, we also created three core Student Outcome areas we determined would provide valuable data to improve student learning. These areas include:

Student learning: Student Learning Outcomes are used to assess student learning and to determine decisions we make regarding curriculum and student experiences. Sample: [Data Results Report](#).

Retention and Graduation: A measure of student success is retention and graduation. AGS tracks graduation rates and post-graduate opportunities for students. Sample: [data on graduation](#), [persistence](#), and [retention](#).

Career Outcomes: When students graduate from AGS they enter into service careers or professional work focused on transforming society through social interest in action. Sample: data on [employment](#), [alumni work stats](#).

In our initial launch of our assessment initiatives we gathered data from our stakeholders in our [AGS Institutional Culture of Assessment Survey](#) that was recommended by our HLC mentor. This survey collected data on Purpose of Assessment, Uses and Perceptions, and Training Needs. Per the survey the faculty and staff were supportive and stated that they would like to see more assessment being done.

4.B.1 - The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Our fourth [Assessment Academy report](#) (10-15-17) and fifth [Assessment Academy report](#) (01-11-18) highlight the work we did in creating clearly stated goals for student learning and how we assess student learning and achievement of these goals. Our [Student Learning Outcomes](#) document lists the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each program and the measurable SLOs associated with each KPI. Our KPIs were chosen from several accrediting bodies. They include the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), and the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB). We created our own competencies for the Applied Adlerian Psychology in Leadership program. We mapped these competencies throughout the full curriculum for each program. Here is a copy of the curriculum maps broken down by program:

- [Applied Adlerian Psychology in Leadership Map](#)
- [Art Therapy Map](#)
- [Clinical Mental Health Counseling Map](#)
- [Core Counseling Map](#)
- [Co-Occurring and Addictions Counseling Map](#)
- [Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling Map](#)
- [School Counseling Map](#)

The SLOs are developmentally mapped in the above curriculum maps. They are Introduced (I), Reinforced (R), and Applied (A) throughout the curriculum. Thus, each SLO is measured three times throughout a student's program. Additional Competencies are mapped and are identified as either being a primary (P) or a secondary (S) competency in the course.

AGS implements effective processes to measure student learning outcomes through the development of [Signature Assessments](#). The majority of our KPIs are measured through LiveText and some

through in course collection (i.e., quizzes, written papers). An [Action Planning Form](#) is used to evaluate data for decision making. Once data is collected at the classroom level, a team meets to critically evaluate the data and create an action plan based on the results. It is also used to complete the feedback loop and record an action plan. This form has three purposes. The team can choose their objective to answer the questions: What did the program want to find out? and How does his impact student learning? The three choices are: 1) Evaluation of a SLO(s), 2) an Assessment Question(s), or 3) an Assessment Activity. Samples can be found in **4.B.3**.

AGS's academic programs have a [Program Evaluation Plan](#). This plan provides a timeline for when evaluations are conducted. It includes an area for guiding questions, assessment tools, data collected, timeframe of evaluation of data, and who is part of the evaluation. It also includes an area for linking results of the Action Plan and additional resources needed to accomplish the action plan. The Academic Council evaluates Core program data and program data is evaluated at the program level.

4.B.2 - The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

As stated above in 4.B.1, AGS has processes in place to evaluate achievement of identified learning outcomes (see [Signature Assessments](#) and [Program Evaluation Plan](#)). In addition to these assessment practices, student achievement is continuously evaluated with the student. The [final Assessment report](#) (10-29-18) identified the process of the creation of an [Online Professional Portfolio](#) to replace Master Thesis Projects. Our Master Projects were research driven papers that were written after all academic work was done. This did not demonstrate cumulative learning or helped to evaluate student achievements throughout their program.

The AGS team worked for several months ([roll out documents](#)) to create a formal system of evaluation that included students in the evaluation of their learning. We created online [training modules](#), conducted a [pilot study](#), and received [feedback](#) from our HLC mentor that we incorporated in our final version. The Online Professional Portfolio evaluates **curricular and co-curricular (i.e., Practicum and Internship, Service Activities, Professional Development)** activities through rubrics to measure achievement and attainment. The rubrics are best viewed through the [Professional Portfolio Manual](#). Students are to demonstrate learning in each of the 10 areas below. Guiding rubrics and [3 formal evaluations](#) (by an advisor) are used to support students through this process.

- Section I: Introduction
- Section II: Evolving Professional Philosophy
- Section III: Writing Competence
- Section IV: Practicum and Internship
- Section V: Professional Development
- Section VI: Service Activities
- Section VII: Adlerian Theory
- Section VIII: Multicultural, Social Justice, and Advocacy Competencies
- Section IX: Program Competencies
- Section X: Professional Documentation

4.B.3 - The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Through involvement with the Assessment Academy, AGS has been able to create processes that support academic excellence through information gained from our assessment initiatives. Below is a sample of this progress:

We began piloting our intentional analysis of data with the School Counseling Program in Fall 2016 and Winter 2017. We used data to develop [Action Plans](#) based on Student Learning Outcomes analyzed from the following three courses:

- [570 Foundation of School Counseling](#)
- [571 Group Counseling in Schools](#)
- [574 Career Development in Schools](#)

This preliminary pilot helped us to organize and create our current system of evaluation reported in this section. In addition, we piloted a checkpoint system to measure student experiences several times throughout their program. The data gathered for this includes Admission Data, Professional Disposition and Academic Readiness Data, Internship Feedback, and an Exit Interview. The analysis of this data can be found in this [Transition Checkpoints Data and Action Plan Report](#). These preliminary systems helped to shape our current processes, evaluate our teaching methods, and develop new measurements to help us improve student learning.

AGS uses LiveText to assess SLOs. Highlighted here is a sample of [Student Learning \(SLO\) data](#) from Summer 2018 – Fall 2018. Data was collected from signature assessments that were created and mapped to the curriculum. The Academic Council evaluated several reports from LiveText to 1) determine which reports were most useful in analyzing evidence related to student learning, and 2) to determine the extent to which Signature Assessments were measuring what they were intended to measure. Several conclusions were drawn and are highlighted in our [Action Planning Report](#). As a direct follow up to this action plan, a team analyzed [additional data](#) on course 500 in March 2019. This [analysis](#) yielded several discoveries and decisions that were put in place.

Part of the assessment of student learning yielded the decision to create a [universal writing rubric](#) that all faculty would use to assess writing competence. This decision was made based on faculty and student feedback that measurement of student writing differed across campus. We used the the recommendation of the HLC mentors and developed a rubric that was informed by the VALUE rubrics developed by the Association of American Colleges & Universities.

Analysis of data also covers sources outside of classroom student learning data. For example, this [report](#) is an analysis of exit surveys and student feedback. Based on this feedback, the team determined that a system of advising was needed. Here is the initial [advising](#) schedule implemented. This system included hiring new faculty, changing job descriptions, and ensuring every student is assigned a faculty advisor.

Additionally, through this analysis we concluded that students' level of professional competence and satisfaction was increasing (see above report). We determined that the significant increase in student confidence in their professional identity and preparedness appears to be directly correlated with the level of student satisfaction with advisor's commitment to 1) providing useful feedback and 2) helping students to develop their professional identity, especially with the switch from master's project to professional portfolio. This indicates that the implementation of the new advising framework and of the development of a professional portfolio appear to be achieving their expected goals of improving student learning and the overall quality of their experience at AGS.

4.B.4 The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

The Assessment Academy Project has changed the culture of assessment at AGS and is an example of our commitment and continual improvement. We have created sustainable systems of assessment and evaluation across the institution that positively impact student learning. Here is a sample of some of the ways we have included our stakeholders in our processes:

- We present our [assessment results](#) at our AGS Board of Directors Meetings.
- We have included students in pilot studies (see 4.B.2).
- We are implementing new evaluations (SmartEvals) that students can complete to provide feedback on their courses. Our previous evaluations were inconsistent.
- We collect Exit Survey data from students (see 4.B.3).
- We collect Field Experience data from our site supervisors who work with our students.
- SLOs (developed by faculty input) guide the curriculum by program and across programs thus leading to better sequencing of courses and less redundancy (see 4.B.2).
- We revised our Vision, Mission, Values and Goals with [feedback](#) from all stakeholders.
- [Strategic planning](#), metrics development, and institutional assessment are being unified to inform the other processes.
- Based on [student feedback on our online courses](#), we now have solid policies (Sample: [online policies](#)) that help drive consistency for our faculty and students, especially with our faculty who teach online.

AGS's mission is "*Preparing mental health and human service professionals with a strong Adlerian foundation to foster encouragement, collaboration, and a sense of belonging to the individuals, families, and the culturally diverse communities they serve.*" We strive to mirror encouragement, collaboration and a sense of belonging in our work on assessment.

Our *Planning for the Future Assessment Retreat* is an example of this work. At this event we [invited](#) students, alumni, the Board of Directors, Faculty, and Staff to sit down, evaluate data, have discussions, provide feedback, and make decisions (based on data and institutional goals) on the future of AGS. Here is the [full report](#) from this event. This event evaluated data from AGS's current [Institutional Effectiveness Plan](#).

AGS has experienced a lot of growth and change within the last several years. The strong engagement of the AGS team demonstrates their support in our students achievement and attainment of learning outcomes. With growth and change also comes opportunity. Several opportunities have been presented that we are currently working on: 1) all programs are forming Advisory Councils to assist in Program Evaluation, 2) we have created and continue to update a Quality Assurance and Assessment webpage that includes resources and tools, and 3) we are starting to create a blueprint of our assessment of student learning with an Assessment Handbook.

Sources

- ACAD_Advising.pdf
- ACAD_Dispositions Form
- PRES_Institutional Effectiveness_2019-2021.pdf
- PRES_Survey_Feedback_VisionMission.pdf
- QAA_2018-19 Exit Survey_Employment.pdf
- QAA_2018-19_Exit Survey_Online Courses.pdf
- QAA_2019 Online Learning Policies

- QAA_3_12_Data_Results_Planning_500
- QAA_570_Foundations_of_School_Counseling_Rubric_data
- QAA_571_Group_Counseling_in_Schools_Rubric_Data
- QAA_574_Career_Development_in_Schools_Rubric_data
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- QAA_LiveText_C1_Assessment_Report
- QAA_LiveText_C1_Assessment_Report_500
- QAA_Marriage_Coup_Fam_Curriculum_Map
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- QAA_Planning_Retreat_Summary_Report.pdf
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- QAA_Prof_Port_Rollout.pdf
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- QAA_Report_to_Board_January2019
- QAA_SCActionPlans
- QAA_School_Coun_Curriculum_Map
- QAA_School_Counseling_Program_Transition_Action_items_from_Check_Point_Data_docx
- QAA_Signature_Assessments (KPIs)
- QAA_Student_Portfolio_Template
- QAA_Touchpoint_Evaluations
- QAA_Writing_Rubric
- REG_Graduation_Rates
- REG_Persistence
- REG_Retention
- SSS_2016AlumniSurvey_Graduate_Success

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

4.C.1 - The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

AGS has had an average persistence rate of 90% from academic year 2016-17 to academic year 2018-2019, and an average retention rate of 88% since 2013. The retention rate has declined in the last couple of years, to 78% in 2017-18, which as discussed below we believe may be a consequence of increased academic rigor or decreased advising quality, or a combination of both, in this period. With the 2018-19 implementation of a pro-active academic advising program, we expect to see retention return to its former levels of above 90%.

The average completion rate for the college is 82%. However, completion per program varies significantly, with the Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling specialty being consistently and significantly below average. This difference appears to be related to frequent changes made to this formerly stand-alone program (now a specialty within the Counseling program), including both curriculum and auxiliary functions such as advising and field experience coordination, and it is expected that with a developmentally designed curriculum now firmly implemented, stable core faculty, and the new advising framework completion for this specialty will increase to match the college-wide completion rate.

4.C.2 - The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs and 4.C.3 - The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Enrollment management is an integral component of AGS's institutional sustainability strategic priority, and goal 4.2.1 of the institutional effectiveness plan is to "track enrollment, student persistence, retention, and graduation rates in order to identify areas for improvement". The

Registrar tracks [attrition](#) and [persistence](#) term by term, and [retention](#) and [completion](#) rates annually. The average attrition rate is 11%, the retention average is 88%, and the persistence average is 90%. Completion rates vary by program and specialty, with Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling having the lowest average rate, at 51%, and Art Therapy having the highest, at 88%.

Attrition, Persistence, and retention data are discussed periodically by Academic Council, with no set schedule. Prior to 2018 there was no structured plan to analyze and use these data to inform program and institutional improvement. Implementation of the institutional effectiveness plan and of an annual strategic planning retreat have created a structure to formally use these data for as part of the annual planning process, which includes quarterly data examination and analysis by Academic Council.

Information collected on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs was [analyzed](#) by a team consisting of representatives of staff and faculty at the newly implemented Annual Strategic Planning Retreat, held on June 21st, 2018. A student was invited to participate in this effort but did not attend the retreat. The team examined persistence data from 2016 to 2019, retention data from 2013 to 2019, and completion rates from 2017 to 2019. Opportunities for improvement identified by this team include:

- Although our retention and persistence rates are high (88% and 90%, respectively), we may be able to improve them further by understanding when and why students stop attending. Procedures will be implemented to obtain this information from students that stop attending, which includes separating data related to certificates from degree-granting program data.
- Retention rates have declined in recent years. The team hypothesized that the decline may be due to increases in academic rigor, as prior to 2015, AGS did not issue failing grades but rather a grade of "Retake" that had no impact on GPA, grading rubrics were not systemically and systematically used until the 2017-18 academic year. we expect that with the pro-active advising framework implemented in the 2017-18 academic year this downward trend will be reverted.
- Although completion data are reported to IPEDS as a college-wide aggregate, data analysis showed that completion rates vary significantly among programs. The team proposed that we start tracking by program, in order to identify positive and negative contributing factors.
- Student retention, persistence, and completion data are to be published on the Quality Assurance and Assessment page of AGS's website.

4.C.4 - The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice.

AGS uses IPEDS definitions and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and program completion. Although graduate programs are not required to report these data, AGS does submit annual reports to IPEDS. Analysis of this information is an integral component of the institutional effectiveness plan and now includes, in addition to annual review, quarterly review by Academic Council to inform practices that lead to increased student success.

Sources

- QAA_Enrollment Management.pdf

- REG_Attrition
- REG_Graduation Rates
- REG_Persistence
- REG_Retention

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Adler Graduate School is committed to creating a culture of assessment that promotes educational excellence through evidence-based academic programming and services. Through involvement with the HLC Assessment Academy, Adler Graduate School has been able to create processes that support academic excellence through information gained from our assessment initiatives. One of these initiatives include the purchase of a new Learning Management System (LMS; LiveText). This data collection system is used to help organize student learning outcomes (SLOs), map curriculum, and measure student learning through key signature assignments/assessments. Thus, creating a system that starts at the classroom level and then aggregates up to the department level for ongoing evaluation. Adler Graduate School also put in place a system to evaluate data through a new action planning form and a program evaluation plan that sets a schedule for when data are to be evaluated. In addition to the new assessment systems the college also created a student professional portfolio to replace final Master thesis papers. The professional portfolio is an online collection of experience-based materials and reflective information that demonstrates various dimensions of a graduate student's work, philosophy, skills, and attitudes. Students demonstrate, through diverse activities and personal insights, their competency in meeting their respective program's learning outcomes. Our Academy Project has changed the culture of assessment at AGS and is an example of our commitment to academic improvement. We have created sustainable systems of assessment and evaluation across the institution that positively impact student learning.

One of the key performance indicators in Adler Graduate School's institutional effectiveness plan is the tracking of student persistence, retention, and graduation rates in order to identify areas for improvement. The institution collects and analyzes data on these indicators by using IPEDS definitions and methodologies. Although not required of graduate programs, AGS does report data to IPEDS annually. Institutional persistence (88%) and retention (90%) rates are high, and although the college-wide average completion rate is 82%, this varies significantly among programs. As a result of data analysis, a decision was made to start tracking persistence, retention, and completion separately for each degree and certificate program, in order to better identify opportunities for improvement.

Sources

There are no sources.