

## Program Assessment Leaders – Roles and Responsibilities

Why does Marquette do program assessment? The easiest answer has to do with accountability: we assess to prove that we are doing what we are supposed to do. While that answer is true, there is also a larger context. Assessment is about *growth*--of students, faculty, and disciplines. Looking at it this way, we see that assessment springs directly from the spirit of curiosity, optimism and service that defines and animates Marquette as an institution of higher learning.

While assessing and improving student learning is the responsibility of all faculty, coordinating the formal assessment processes for each degree program is the job of the program's designated Program Assessment Leader (PAL). The process includes:

- Defining measurable student learning outcomes, in collaboration with the department faculty;
- Overseeing broad dissemination of these outcomes on websites, course syllabi, etc.;
- Collecting and summarizing data on student learning;
- Sharing results with faculty for discussion;
- Formally reporting results and areas for improvement to the university's assessment reporting system.
- Working with department faculty to continuously improve programs based on feedback derived from assessment.

In addition, PALs are responsible for:

- Attending a September training session on assessment basics and using the Assessment Reporting and Management System (ARMS) or other designated software for entering assessment reports;
- Bringing any assessment concerns or questions to their University Assessment Committee representative;
- Participating in the annual Peer Review Seminar;
- Providing mentorship to their successors.

### Designation of PALs

Department chairs, or others designated by the Dean, are responsible for appointing a PAL for each degree program in their area, regardless of program size. For interdisciplinary programs, the appropriate chairs should collaborate to assign responsibility. It is preferred, but not required, for PALs to have previous training in assessment; it is imperative that PALs be willing to learn Marquette's assessment processes and carry them out. PALs should be recognized according to the policies of the department or college for comparable assignments. When designating PALs, chairs are encouraged to take into account the faculty member's other responsibilities, especially in the case of junior faculty. Administrative support can help PALs

accomplish their tasks, especially in larger departments. Length of PAL service is at the discretion of the department.

### **Succession of PALs**

Departments should have a succession plan for a change of program PALs, with enough notice to allow ample time for incoming PALs to transition to their role. Outgoing PALs are responsible for mentoring their successors and informing them where to go for further information and training. Chairs are responsible for notifying the Assessment Director when there is a change of PAL.

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