

Kennesaw State University
WellStar College of Health and Human Services
WellStar School of Nursing

Assessment Philosophy and Continuous Program Improvement Plan

For the purposes of higher education, assessment is the systematic collection, review, and reflection upon educational programs and is focused on improving student learning and development (Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2008; Hernon, Dugan & Schwartz, 2006; Palomba & Banta, 2001; Palomba & Banta, 1999). The Kennesaw State University (KSU) WellStar School of Nursing (WSN) mission, philosophy, goals, and program and student learning outcomes

program improvement. The plan directs faculty to ascertain program strengths and areas for improvement in order to enhance program effectiveness in meeting the needs of the student and the community. A secondary purpose of the plan is to continually evaluate and refine strategies to assure the most appropriate means of assessing the program and student learning outcomes.

Assessment of program and student learning outcomes is an expectation of programs of nursing education. Program outcomes are performance-based factors which include quality and productivity. Student learning outcomes assess the knowledge a student should possess upon completion of the learning process (Raup, King, Hughes, & Faidley, 2010). Instruments of student learning outcome assessment include the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX) for Registered Nurses, which all undergraduates must pass to be employable in the field of nursing; and the nurse practitioner/advanced practice certification exams sponsored by American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP). All nurse practitioner graduates must pass the certification exam in order to be credentialed for advanced nursing practice within the State of Georgia.

Assessment Process

Assessment is a collaborative process that involves faculty, staff, students, and the professional community. The assessment process should be regularly examined for utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, continuity, and flexibility (Palomba & Banta, 1999). The continuous improvement framework for the WSON is shown in Figure A. The Comprehensive Evaluation Plan (CEP) provides the overall evaluation criteria, phases for data collection, analysis, and synthesis of recommendations and decision-making for the WSON. The Total Assessment Blueprint (TAB) provides the expected student learning outcomes for the graduates of each nursing program within the WSON. The TAB articulates the means of assessment with statements of expectation, the time frame and party responsible for data collection, data analysis and reporting, as well as the use of results for continuous quality improvement.

The Undergraduate and Graduate Program Evaluation Committees are the oversight bodies that ensure the CEP is being followed. The Program Evaluation Committees receive information from various committees on

improvement. The CEP is divided into four sections (Mission & Governance; Institutional Commitment & Resources; Curriculum & Teaching Learning Practices; Assessment & Achievement), representing the four standards of program quality assessed by CCNE for program accreditation. Each program quality standard contain

asked to provide employer contact information. Preceptors of graduate students are considered potential employers. The faculty believes that evaluation by current or potential employers provides data regarding

learning outcomes. Results and findings are presented annually to the undergraduate nursing faculty regarding potential curricular implications.

Scholarly Papers/Projects/Course Assignments

To enhance the robustness of the assessment process, a variety of graded course activities, assignments, tests, and/or competencies have been identified as appropriate measures of specified student learning outcomes. The courses are taken at or near the end of the baccalaureate program. These graded activities have been determined by the faculty of the involved courses to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or competencies involved and to align with the specified learning outcomes. Guidelines and/or rubrics specific to each assessment are outlined in the course syllabi. Faculty within the courses compile and report final data to the Program Evaluation Committee for further analysis. Results and potential curricular implications are presented to the faculty annually.

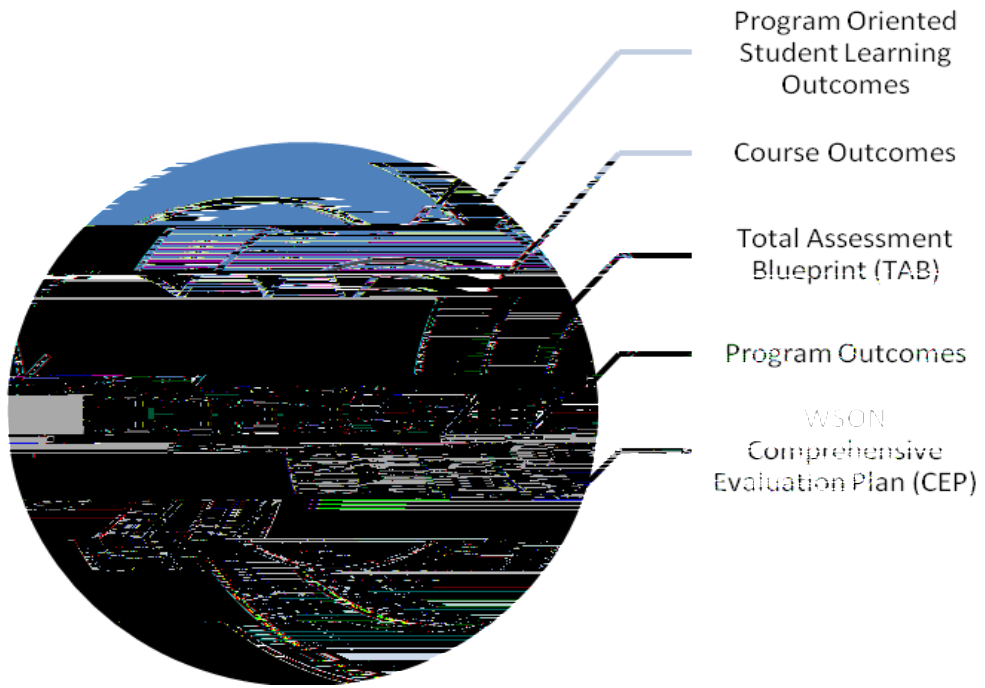
Use of the CEP for Continuous Program Improvement

A key principle of the continuous improvement process is to use data to develop specific, effective strategies to enhance student learning (Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2008). Program and student learning outcome data are collected and analyzed by the undergraduate and graduate programs, as outlined by the CEP, for the purpose of continuous program improvement. On an ongoing basis, the program evaluation committees report assessment data and recommendations to their respective faculties for discussion of changes and revisions to program curricula, policies, documents, etc. The discussion and recommendations for program changes are documented in the undergraduate and graduate faculty meeting minutes. A summary of undergraduate or graduate program-specific changes are reported to the full faculty on an annual or biannual basis. Changes to policies or documents that are WSON-specific, rather than program-specific, are discussed and voted upon by the full faculty of the WSON.

References

Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. (2008). *New leadership for student learning and accountability: A statement of principles, commitments to action*. Retrieved from: http://www.chea.org/pdf/2008.01.30_New_Leadership_Statement.pdf

Figure A: Continuous Improvement Framework for the WellStar School of Nursing



**Table A: Undergraduate Program
Student Learning Outcomes Evidence of Learning**

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME	NCLEX Pass Rate	ATI Comp. Predictor	Alum Survey	Employer Survey	Exit Survey	Preceptor Survey	4416 Leadership Project	4417 Clinical Reflective Journal	4417 EBP Clinical Project	4417 Professional Communication/Behavior	4417 Clinical Skills Checkoff	4412 Population Project	4412 Family Assessment
1	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x		
2	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x
3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
4	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x
5	x	x	x	x	x	x		x			x		
6			x	x	x	x		x	x			x	
7	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
8	x	x	x	x	x	x		x				x	x
9	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x