

Continuous Quality Improvement Options for Courses at UI

Faculty, staff, and leadership are committed to evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement. However, student learning outcomes and program structures vary widely across disciplines and departments. Therefore, we approach continuous improvement in a way that takes greatest advantage of existing processes across Colleges and Departments.

Departments have a variety of systems in place for evaluating curriculum, courses and instruction. Current methods commonly used by departments include:

- Monitoring DFW rates and adjusting course curriculum and placement when those rates exceed a particular threshold.
- Analyzing midterm and final grade distributions, noting whether grade distributions are similar to or different from those of other sections taught during current or previous semesters.
- Discussing course performance by student cohort or course cohort in faculty teams. For example, UI Nursing instructors who work together with the same cohort of students meet regularly to discuss student learning and progress in their courses. Rhetoric instructors meet during and at the end of the course to discuss student performance and make adjustments in readings and assignments.
- Creating and using course Assessment Reports. For example, UI Engineering faculty write an end-of-course analysis of student performance, effectiveness of assignments, and recommendations for the next offering of the course.
- Using end-of-course student ratings items that focus on the course-level learning outcomes. Departments and Colleges report on what they learn from course-level assessment questions.
- Using continuous assessment during the course. For example, in world languages, arts, and performance-based classes, the daily student progress in building skills shapes instructor decisions about how to proceed in a course. The same kind of assessment occurs in lab-based courses.
- Evaluating the skills of students in downstream courses. Faculty in sequenced and pre-requisite courses meet to evaluate the student performance in downstream courses, which feeds back into decisions about earlier courses in the sequence.

These assessment activities already occur on a regular basis, and have been used to strengthen courses and curricula and support student success. However, in the past, this data has only been reported to people who have a use for it.

Now, as required by recent legislation, we will devote time and institutional resources to compile continuous improvement plans and report at an aggregate level how departments and faculty members collect information to help them make improvements in each of their courses. We will now begin tracking these plans within the university. On an annual basis, we will report on plans in use and examples of changes made based on these plans.

Implementation

Deans of each College will be asked to report what continuous improvement methods are in place to help their DEOs and faculty members collect information about strengths and potential areas for improvement in each of their courses.

Deans will also be asked to provide representative examples of changes made in courses on the basis of information they have collected.

Central administration will collect compilations from each Dean, confirm that each course has a continuous improvement plan in place, and report examples of how data collected through continuous improvement has been used in courses. The **Regents Summary** (Appendix) will be used to provide an annual summary to the Board of Regents.

Appendix: Regents Summary Form

Continuous Improvement in University of Iowa Courses	
<i>June 2014</i>	Report Date
<i>2013/14</i>	Report Period ¹
Number of Courses, Students Enrolled	
###	Total Number of Courses
#####	Total Student Enrollment in Courses
Number of Courses² Utilizing Continuous Improvement Strategies³	
##	Faculty review of student work during the course
##	Faculty evaluation of student performance in subsequent courses
##	Faculty review of student cohort in multiple courses
##	Faculty review of multiple sections of same course
##	Faculty review of student ratings items related to course outcomes
##	Faculty Course Assessment Report
##	Faculty review of midterm and final grade distribution
##	Department monitoring of DFW rates
##	Other - <i>Examples of other continuous improvement strategies in use:</i>

Examples of ways that information collected through continuous improvement has been used to develop or improve courses:

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

¹ Legislation requires Regents Universities to report on continuous improvement in all courses with enrollment greater than 300 during 2013/14. Courses with enrollment greater than 200 are added to the reporting requirement during 2014/15, and courses with enrollment greater than 100 are added during 2015/16.

² Total number of strategies in use is greater than the total number of courses because many courses employ more than one continuous improvement strategy.

³ The list of strategies identified for the Regents Summary may be extended from one year to the next as additional common strategies are identified by colleges and departments using the “other” option.