To: Diana Gonzalez, Chief Academic Officer, Iowa Board of Regents
From: Megan Vogt-Kostner, Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
Re: Report on 2016-2017 Compliance with Continuous Quality Improvement Legislation
Date: July 24, 2017

The attached report provides information on course-level assessments conducted at the University of Northern Iowa in compliance with Iowa Code Section 262.9 (36). Information for this report was gathered through a Qualtrics survey administered in April 2017. The survey was given to University of Northern Iowa faculty teaching courses enrolling 100 or more students in all sections over the 2016-2017 academic year. Faculty were invited to respond to the survey individually or in collaboration with other faculty teaching the same course.

In addition to requesting information on the types of course-level assessments being implemented and the kinds of improvements made in response to what was learned from the assessments, the survey also requested information related to the ways in which learning outcomes were communicated to students. Data showed that 79% of the faculty responding to the survey included learning outcomes for their courses on the course syllabus. Learning outcomes were also communicated verbally (69%), on a course website and/or eLearning course web page (42%), and in conversations with students during office hours or after class (38%). Thirty-seven percent of faculty respondents also indicated they identified relevant learning outcomes with information for specific assignments.

The attached report provides information on the types of course changes faculty reported making as a result of what they learned from their assessments of student learning. It is worthy of note that, of the top five changes reported, four deal directly with the student learning experience—the assignments they are asked to do, their activities and experiences in the course, the class time spent on specific course content, and to review or revise course texts and other resources. The fifth most frequently recognized course change noted by faculty was to change the assessment strategies to gain more accurate insight into what students are learning.

In addition to multiple-response survey items, the 2016-2017 CQI faculty survey included an open-ended question asking faculty to provide more detailed information on changes they had made to their classes as a result of their assessment of student learning; almost half of the survey respondents shared stories of their experiences. An examination of these personal narratives showed several repeated themes— instructors chose to continuously reassess coursework used in previous semesters to ensure students were gaining the same outcomes, instructors were also repeatedly attaining input from students through reflection papers and course presentations showing what students were learning in the course, and instructors were providing students stronger connections between coursework and their personal and professional lives through course lectures and assignments. Selected examples of the narratives collected are included in the attached report.

At UNI we believe in the power and critical importance of good teaching. The Continuous Quality Improvement survey for this year again provides evidence of this belief in action.

University of Northern Iowa CQI Report for 2016-2017

This page provides summary information on the types of assessment strategies used during 2016-2017; the following pages provide an overview of the types of course improvements undertaken by faculty and examples of assessments and related activities in selected courses.

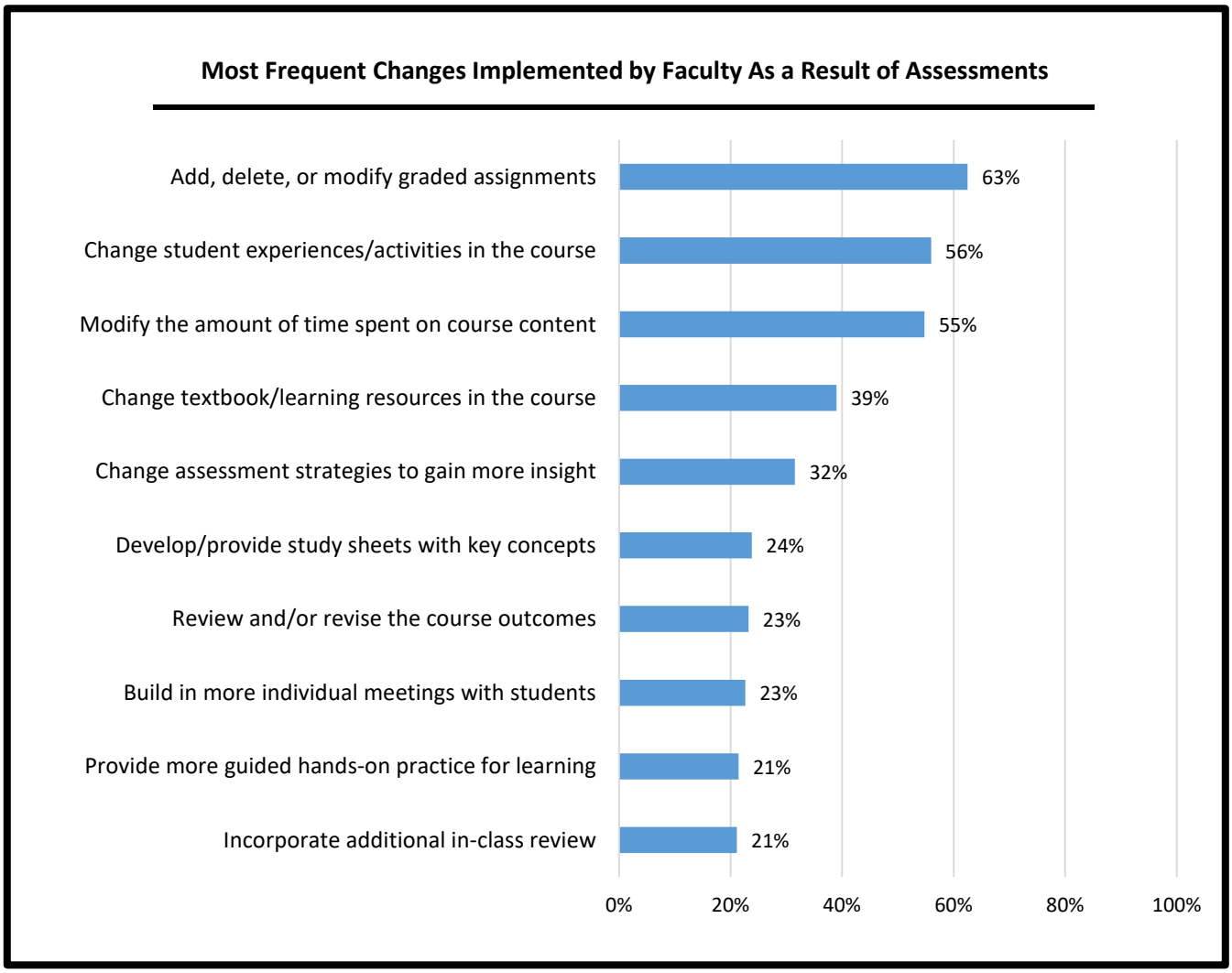
Continuous Improvement in University of Northern Iowa Courses	
August 2017	Report Date
Fall 2016/ Spring 2017	Report Period
Number of Courses, Students Enrolled	
187 courses *762 sections*	Total Number of Courses Offered (enrollment > or = 100 students) Total Number of Sections Offered in 2016-2017 (enrollment > or = 100 students)
109,441	Total Student Enrollment in Courses
Number of Courses[1] Utilizing Continuous Improvement Strategies and Percent of Respondents Reporting	
231	Locally-developed tests or quizzes (69%)
185	Graded homework assignments (55%)
155	Student understanding of content and concepts as revealed in class discussions (46%)
154	Observation of students doing in-class activities (46%)
119	Specific questions on tests or quizzes (35%)
118	Written or oral student reflections on their experiences and/or learning (35%)
101	Rubrics or evaluation forms for individual project(s) (30%)
89	Discussion in individual meetings with students (27%)
83	Faculty assessment of presentations or projects (25%)
66	Journaling, discussion boards, blog (20%)
60	Faculty review of mid-term and final grade distributions (18%)
60	Rubrics or evaluation forms for culminating project(s) (18%)
52	Faculty discussion of student performance across sections of course (16%)
49	Peer assessment of presentations or projects (15%)
44	Formative (non-graded) assessments over the term (13%)
44	Survey of student perceptions of their learning (13%)
35	Comparison of course syllabi and/or assignments across sections (10%)
32	Pre- & post-tests (10%)
23	Evaluation of student performance in simulations activities (7%)
23	Field experience evaluation forms (7%)
19	Review of course or program student portfolios (6%)

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

Other responses included the following methods for assessing student learning: additional summative assessments using standard external assessment instrument items, supplemental instruction peer leader evaluations, discussion boards for online courses, end of program assessments, exit interviews following students' field experiences, graded in-class activities, research papers, and student comments on course and instructor surveys.

Overview of CQI Activities at UNI

As part of the Qualtrics survey administered in April 2017 to faculty teaching courses serving 100 or more students per academic year, one question asked faculty what kinds of changes they were making as they gathered assessment information and worked on continuous improvement. The table below summarizes their responses.



Selected Examples of Assessments

The Qualtrics survey responses for the 2016-2017 academic year included many examples of the efforts made by faculty to keep their courses current and engaging and to support student learning. The examples below are just a very small sample of those provided.

Educational Technology and Design (INSTTECH:1031) "We are continually asking for student input about our Educational Technology and Design class. Last year, our students informed us that they thought our Personal Learning Network (PLN) assignment was "just busywork." At that time, we were trying to encourage our students to participate in the use of social media by asking them to "make 10 Twitter tweets and 10 Pinterest pins" that have to do with educational technology. Upon review of this feedback, we realized that it was rather useless to have our Social-Media-Connected students to engage in these mundane activities. Based upon that, we have expanded the assignment so that the students begin by defining the layout of their existing Personal Learning Network. We then challenge them to expand their PLN by connecting with a favorite author, use social media to exchange ideas with practicing teachers at the grade level where they hope to teach, or engage in a live, online Tweet Chat with other educators so that they can learn from the professionals and make new teaching connections. This upgrade in this Personal Learning Network assignment has been an exciting improvement. Not only do students find it more challenging, they also find it more meaningful because they are making contacts with real people who are outside of their typical daily lives. This process of professionally connecting through social media will benefit our students in their professional lives as well."

Environment, Technology, and Society (CAP:3140) "After teaching this course for several sessions, I realized that students learned better when they did research projects and when they felt they were part of the solution to environmental problems. This is why I have most of the grade of the course based on these projects, and I have moved away from quizzes and tests."

"I assessed the course and my ability to help students learn in multiple ways. One of the most helpful may have been a one-page reflection I assigned at the end of the semester. It was a time when they could articulate what was most impactful to them, and what didn't work. I also surveyed students about 5 weeks into the course to assess what was most meaningful to them in the course content. I tried to tie to those concepts in class periodically. The students' community engagement projects were also a way for me to learn what they were learning. Their presentations, blogs and reflection paper (as well as a peer evaluation) gave me insight into what they were learning and what I wasn't successful in helping them learn."

Methods of Teaching Visual and Performing Arts Integration in the Elementary Classroom (ELEMECML:4123) "As part of the ongoing review of the Methods of Teaching Visual and Performing Arts Integration course, the course assignments are examined and revised to better meet the outcomes of the course. Learning how to document arts integration that happens in the elementary classroom is an outcome of this course and the students have an assignment which requires them to electronically document the lessons they teach in elementary classrooms as part of the course. This assignment gets updated each semester as new technology options become available. This keeps the students aware of the newest technology being used by teachers in the field to document learning. The final test questions are analyzed each semester. During one semester the students had a more difficult time explaining how the arts can meet the needs of diverse students on the final exam. The next semester I built in more examples of how the arts meet the needs of diverse learners into the weekly content and added a differentiation section to the lesson plan format to encourage the students to think about this as they planned their lessons throughout the semester. As a result the students did much better on explaining how the arts can meet the needs of diverse learners that semester."

Religions of the World (RELS:1020) "For many of our students, this course is the first time that they have studied religion in an academic context; this creates both challenges and opportunities. I have adapted my presentations, exams, and assignments based on student and peer feedback, placing a greater emphasis on connected themes and ideas across a variety of religious traditions. I have also added regular, optional review sessions prior to each exam."

Methods of Teaching Early Literacy (LITED:3115) "Based on student feedback and the needs of local elementary teachers who support our field component, I made changes to the class so that it now better supports literacy-integrated approaches to STEM and the Next Generation Science Standards. I changed readings and assignments, and provided hours of feedback to my students, as well as peer feedback opportunities."

Calculus I (MATH:1420) "Calculus is a heavy content class which depends on prerequisite knowledge many students lack. To allow struggling students to catch up, I changed the assessments in two ways: I went from monthly exams to bi-weekly quizzes, and I developed an elaborate gateway/retake system which allows students to retake quizzes but requires a minimum score to advance to the next quiz. This has improved retention, as students can recover from an exposed weakness if they put in the extra effort."

First-Year Cornerstone: I/First-Year Cornerstone: II (UNIV:1000) "I have learned that conferencing with students individually as well as breaking projects into smaller pieces and evaluating some or all of these pieces as the project is developed contributes to higher learning and better quality college-level work (all Cornerstone students are first year college students). Because one of the significant learning outcomes in this course is Communication with the focus on written and oral messages, multiple speaking and writing assignments across both semesters build on each other. Students have the opportunity to have their drafts peer reviewed in class workshops as well as reviewed by me; after a final paper has been turned in or a speech has been given, students are required to do a self-evaluation. These evaluations bring to light what students struggled with, did well with, etc. My peer mentor also regularly meets with students for exam and study review sessions as well as listening to drafts of their speeches."

Visual Perceptions (ARTHIST:1004) "Each semester reveals clearer understanding of what and how students may use the content of the course to better their educational goals and outcomes. In the past year it became clear that students thrived when asked how to apply the course objectives to their professional goals and personal lives. As part of the required format for final project based presentations, students are required to find correlation and significance in how class content relates to current educational goals and how those goals are derivative of personal life interests. This has broadened information retention in that students must apply course objectives to life objectives. This strategy in teaching has developed a great deal of significance in personal development. Students are completing Visual Perceptions with a three-fold grasp on how this core required course will assist in guiding future goal objectives. They understand a deep correlation between meaningful class experiences that broaden their understanding of the significance of creativity in future professional settings and how those correlations establish valuable and motivating interests in life endeavors."

Anatomy and Physiology I (BIOL:3101) "Faculty members involved in teaching Anatomy and Physiology I labs meet regularly to discuss student success and challenges in the course, and to develop ways in which to enhance student learning and improve student success. In lecture, I often meet with students who are struggling with content, discuss study strategies with them, and encourage them to attend Supplemental Instruction for additional study assistance."

General Physics I (PHYSICS:1511) "Last fall, I used an additional summative assessment instrument for the first time in General Physics I. This instrument was developed by the Physics Department using standard Advanced Placement (AP) Physics test items. The purpose of the assessment instrument is to gauge outcomes in student learning of physics concepts in the broad area of Newtonian mechanics. A preliminary review of student answers indicates that students have a good understanding of one-dimensional free fall and its graphical representation. They also seem to have absorbed basic notions of Newton's laws and conservation of energy. However, many students are not comfortable with using these basic concepts to do simple calculations. In future offerings of the course, I will incorporate additional simple calculations in class discussions, which have tended to emphasize conceptual understanding. In Fall 2017, I hope that most, if not all, General Physics I sections will use the assessment to measure student learning."