To: Rachel Boon, Chief Academic Officer, Iowa Board of Regents
From: Megan Vogt-Kostner, Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
Re: Report on 2017-2018 Compliance with Continuous Quality Improvement Legislation
Date: July 25, 2018

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 May 2018. The survey was given to University of Northern Iowa faculty teaching courses enrolling 100 or more students in all sections over the 2017-2018 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. A majority of faculty provided information on learning outcomes to their classes through multiple methods including:

- 80% of faculty included learning outcomes on course syllabi
- 72% discussed learning outcomes verbally in class
- 51% included learning outcomes on course websites and eLearning pages
- 35% discussed learning outcomes with students in individual meetings
- 38% provided learning outcomes associated with individual 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 noteworthy 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 2017-2018 CQI faculty survey included an open-ended question asking faculty to provide more detailed information on changes they made to their classes as a result of their assessment of student learning; 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 obtaining the necessary outcomes, instructors repeatedly attained feedback through the use of reflection papers and course evaluations for students' thoughts regarding the course, instructors provided students stronger connections between coursework and life outside the classroom to better solidify the material being discussed, and instructors who taught the same course throughout the year collaborated to examine best practices for teaching particular subject areas. 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 2017-2018

This page provides summary information on the types of assessment strategies used during 2017-2018; 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.

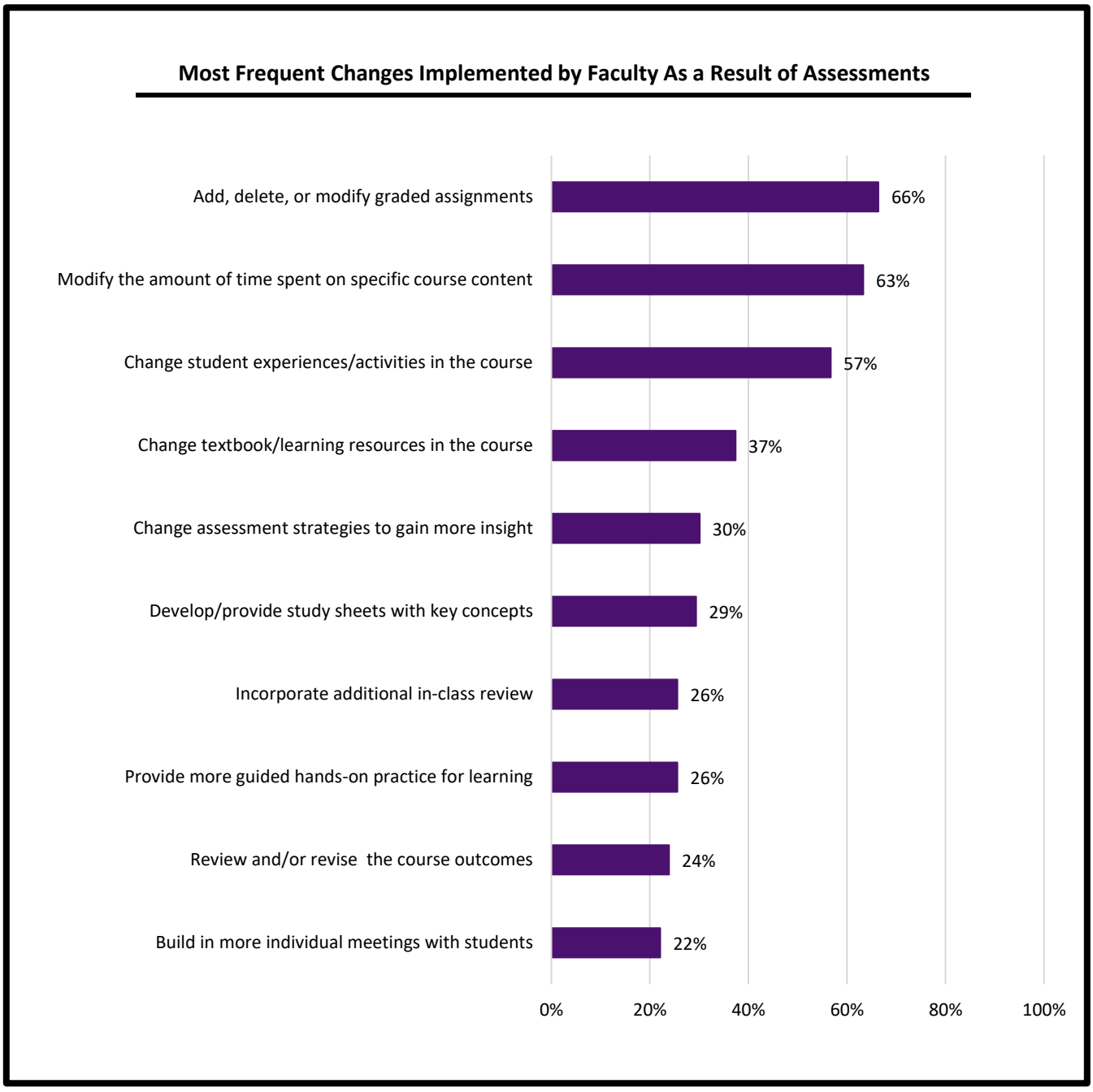
Continuous Improvement in University of Northern Iowa Courses	
July 2018	Report Date
Fall 2017 - Spring 2018	Report Period
Number of Courses, Students Enrolled	
197 courses *787 sections*	Total Number of Courses Offered (enrollment > or = 100 students) Total Number of Sections Offered in 2017-2018 (enrollment > or = 100 students)
104,135	Total Student Enrollment in Courses
Number of Courses[1] Utilizing Continuous Improvement Strategies linked to and assessing learning outcomes and Percent of Respondents Reporting	
193	Locally-developed tests or quizzes (67%)
166	Graded homework assignments (57%)
164	Student understanding of content and concepts as revealed in class discussions (57%)
146	Observation of students doing in-class activities (51%)
111	Specific questions on tests or quizzes (38%)
103	Written or oral student reflections on their experiences and/or learning (36%)
93	Rubrics or evaluation forms for individual project(s) (32%)
78	Discussion in individual meetings with students (27%)
66	Faculty assessment of presentations or projects (23%)
66	Journaling, discussion boards, blog (23%)
58	Faculty review of mid-term and final grade distributions (20%)
49	Rubrics or evaluation forms for culminating project(s) (17%)
48	Formative (non-graded) assessments over the term (17%)
46	Survey of student perceptions of their learning (16%)
44	Faculty discussion of student performance across sections of course (15%)
40	Comparison of course syllabi and/or assignments across sections (14%)
37	Peer assessment of presentations or projects (13%)
29	Evaluation of student performance in simulations activities (10%)
27	Pre- & post-tests (9%)
24	Student's performance in subsequent courses (8%)
23	Other (8%)

[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: written lab reports, multiple public performances of course content, unit projects, analysis of responses to individual test items, analysis of the grade distribution on individual exams and how it relates to the item analysis, cooperating teacher observations, interactions with students during the end of course portfolio conferences, praxis scores, and the assessment of science teaching performances.

Overview of CQI Activities at UNI

As part of the Qualtrics survey administered in May 2018 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 2017-2018 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.

Principles of Marketing (MKTG:2110) "During the past two years I have worked hard to change the content of the course and the learning outcome rubrics. We have changed to online textbooks which can help students monitor their understanding of the chapter content, answering questions as they read and gain greater insights into the connection of one unit of instruction and the ones they have studied previously. Test scores have improved for all unit exams by 8 to 12% each; thus raising the final grades for students. Students who may have struggled in the past can now be tested during the reading as a way of improving their understanding."

Beyond Google (LIBRARY:1030) "This course had two groups of objectives - those associated with the mechanics of literature review and database searching - and those associated with developing a deep understanding of the various economic, political, and technological forces at play within our current online information ecosystem(s). As this is a blended/flipped course that has both significant in-class and out-of-class components, (it is possible - though not advisable - to complete the course as an online-only learning experience), a variety of assessments were interlaced throughout the seven week experience. All students were required to show mastery on a series of seven quizzes that primarily tested the ability to use optimum search techniques with a variety of top tier databases. In class activities provided real-time hands-on opportunities to also demonstrate and reinforce mastery of search skills. Out-of-class exercises also allowed students to demonstrate their facility with information retrieval techniques. A variety of reading (and writing) options allowed students to demonstrate their increasing awareness and understanding of the issues of information. In class discussions also provided a measure of student understanding and served as a forum for synthesizing and relating various "issue" threads throughout the seven week course. Anonymous course feedback opportunities and end-of-course discussions helped professors guide and modify Beyond Google to better facilitate student understanding and to improve the chances of meeting all objectives. Interdepartmental discussion and reflection on the course was ongoing throughout the year both to improve the student experience and to better align the class with rapidly changing database technologies and the rapidly evolving realities of our ever-changing information world."

General Chemistry I (CHEM:1110) "The main change that I made to the course in the Spring 2018 semester was to change my lab schedule so that after the first three lab reports had been handed in the class spent a whole three hour lab period on lab report writing, focusing on how to review and revising their draft reports. This change was made because in my Fall 2017 General Chemistry I class I observed that even with the change to having students only do partial lab reports for each of the first three labs most groups still struggled with writing the reports and were not effective at proof reading the draft reports and fixing the mistakes that they had made."

Educational Technology & Design (INSTTECH:1031) "As part of an ongoing review of the course INSTTECH:1031 Educational Technology & Design, the six instructors meet continuously every Tuesday to discuss the effectiveness of our instructions and to prepare for the new sessions. After attending the Fall Faculty workshop (The Transparency Project Decoding the Unwritten Rules of College to Increase Student Success) we decided to make major modifications on the structure and the language of the assignments. We clarified and simplified the directions, removed jargons and restructured it to be consistent in every assignment. Every assignment in a course is now divided into clear sections such as 'The Purpose', 'Assignment', 'Submitting' and 'Helpful Resources'.""

Methods of Teaching Visual and Performing Arts Integration in the Elementary Classroom (ELEMECML:4123/5123) "As part of the ongoing review of Methods of Visual and Performing Arts Integration in the Elementary Classroom all sections of the course have the same assignments requiring them to create lesson plans and teach them to elementary aged students. The assessments have been revised to meet the needs of the students and connect to the required reading material. Final exam questions are reviewed every semester and the course content is adjusted if necessary. When students were not able to explain how the arts help diverse learners, the instructors added in course content focusing on this content. A section was added on the lesson plan template requiring the students to discuss how the arts help differentiate the curriculum."

General Physics I (PHYSICS:1511) "At the end of the course, I determine what went well and what did not go according to expectations. Then I evaluate why the information provided went well and why it did not go well. In evaluating what did not go well, I evaluate what I could have done to make it better. If it is determined that I could not make it better, I look at other methods that I could have used to do so. I am constantly doing research on the various methods that I could use to better present the information to improve student learning. These methods involve better presentation skills, activities, and simulations. They are all evaluated to improve student participation and there understanding of how they will use this information in their future."

Business Professionals in Training (BUSINESS:2000) "Students in this course participate in weekly seminars and workshops designed to prepare them for success in their professional lives. Students submit a survey following each workshop, asking how valuable they feel the content presented is, how effective the speaker is, and for open-ended comments. One session that has greatly evolved over time is our Innovation in Business workshop. The faculty member and alumna who lead this session identified a disconnect between intended outcomes and student perceptions, as to the relevance of the session. They have incorporated changes each semester and the session has evolved to better connect with students."

Teaching Mathematics in the Elementary School (MATH:3203) "Each semester that I have taught elementary methods (MATH 3203) I have made adjustments to my readings, course assignments, lesson plans, and activities to make the course better. However, there were a few major changes I made to the course recently based on my student performance on assessments. After making major changes to the structure of the course in previous semesters (when and in what order topics are introduced), I didn't feel that I was getting to the bulk of the most important content until later in the semester. I felt that I could get to this content quicker and spend more time engaging with it to improve student learning. I decided to incorporate different topics into the course for the Fall 2017 & Spring 2018 semesters. Specifically, for the Fall 2017 & Spring 2018 semesters I decided to have my students look more carefully at the Common Core/Iowa Core standards for mathematics by creating a short project where they analyzed some of the standards within the Number and Operations in Base-10 strand and looked at some of the available resources related to teaching to these standards. I also decided to spend more time looking at mathematics curriculum materials by providing students an opportunity to carefully analyze and critique different curriculum series and how to modify it. Both of these projects will serve students well when they obtain their first teaching jobs and will be expected to teach to a set of standards (the Iowa Core or Common Core for most of them) using a set of curriculum materials that the school has adopted. I have also incorporated lessons on Number Talks (which are short 15-20 minute lessons where the teacher gives students a problem related to number and operations to support their conceptual understanding and procedural flexibility and fluency). These number talks have deepened my students' own understanding of the content as well as their learning how to support their future students' understanding."