

COMPASS: Computer Science Program Assessment

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Regional and national accreditation agencies, such as SACS and ABET, consider program assessment as one of the most important components of program review. Increasingly, these agencies have been looking at program assessment as one of the key elements to program accreditability. This abstract describes our Computer Science Program Assessment (COMPASS). Our department relies heavily on program assessment to guide program improvement and to ensure quality graduates. As with many departments, our program assessment previously relied largely on informal processes and anecdotal data/observations to make needed program improvements. In some years, program assessment has been less than effective due to the inadequacy of some of these informal practices. In order to compose a more complete and accurate picture of our program, we have incorporated a number of formal processes to gather and document needed data and to implement program improvements.

Input to our program assessment includes: department mission/vision; CC2001; CAC/ABET guidelines; faculty/students' input (e.g. surveys/interviews, student focus groups, course portfolios, etc.); external input (i.e. alumni, employers, etc.). Once the input from the various sources is reviewed and analyzed, an action plan of recommendations is formulated and then implemented.

Our curriculum uses the same learning objectives found in the CC2001 for the various courses. We associate appropriate Bloom's levels of cognitive learning to the various learning objectives. This association ensures that learning objectives are assessed at the appropriate level of depth and rigor in each course. Course portfolios include documentation to ensure that the learning objectives, at the appropriate Bloom's levels, have been assessed.

During the spring semester, the department conducts a preliminary and quick review of assessment information/material gathered. The department generates a list of topics/issues to discuss with the student focus group in order to share the preliminary findings and to obtain additional feedback from the students. The focus group is led by an outside moderator in order to insure students' anonymity and avoid possible bias and conflict of interest. Finally, the department generates a comprehensive action plan for implementation.

References:

References and additional material may be found at the department's assessment web site <http://adel.cs.westga.edu/tribe//assessment/assessment.htm>.

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Directory: C:\Inetpub\wwwroot\workdir\New Folder
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Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
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