Summary of UAlbany’s General Education Assessment Process

Background:
- Gen Ed Assessment Plan developed by General Education Committee of UAC during 2001-2002 academic year
- Plan was passed by UAC and University Senate in Spring 2002
- SUNY’s General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) Committee reviewed the plan in spring 2003 and approved it.

The Current UAlbany General Education Assessment Plan

Part I: Assessment
1. ongoing procedures for approving and reviewing General Education courses
2. 3 year cycle of Student Perceptions of General Education Program Course Survey
3. 3 year rolling cycle of the assessment of learning outcomes specific to General Education
   - Most recent assessments, Spring 2010, now being summarized for review by Gen Ed Assessment Committee and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education.
   - Assessment follows a 3-part process, as approved by campus and SUNY.
     i. Form 1, due February 25/ describe assessment measures
     ii. Form 2, due May 20/ report on number of students Exceeding, Meeting, Approaching and Not Meeting the learning objectives.
        a. Faculty asked to include sample exams, questions, or exercises used to evaluate student performance on GE learning objectives.
        b. Student performance results are aggregated and shared, along with individual forms for each class, with the General Education Assessment Committee and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education.
     iii. Student Perceptions of General Education Program Course Survey, administered in-class, near end of semester by Director of Program Review and Assessment. Results aggregated by course level and shared with General Education Assessment Committee and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education.

Part II: Internal Review
4. Internal Assessment Review by the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC)
   Purposes:
   i. Review assessment process of the General Education program
   ii. Enlarge conversation around implementation and assessment to engage more faculty in the development, implementation, and assessment of General Education on campus.
5. Report and recommendations by Director of Program Review and Assessment
   i. Report and recommendations shared with Council on Academic Assessment (CAA) and the GEAC, and administration.
   ii. Findings are shared with participating faculty during the General Education Assessment Debriefing Session held during fall semester following the assessment (to be scheduled soon).
   iii. Executive Summary of reports are posted on http://www.albany.edu/assessment/gen_ed_assess.html
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT PLAN

Introduction

In developing its General Education Assessment Plan, the University at Albany’s General Education Committee has made considerable efforts to recognize the varying needs of students, faculty, university governance and administration, as well as requirements set by SUNY System Administration. Overall, this effort has been guided by the following principle, as stated in the report of the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes: “The primary objective of the SUNY assessment initiative is the improvement of academic programs that are responsible for promoting student learning and intellectual growth.” Our emphasis at all points in developing and implementing this plan has been on how the process of assessment and its results can be used to improve teaching and learning.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the University at Albany, through its Office of Institutional Research, established a national reputation in the area of assessment focusing on the relation between classroom and related student experiences and student satisfaction and success. In addition, in the 1990s the University began developing procedures for assessment in the major for all undergraduate degree programs. However, student learning outcomes assessment in the area of General Education has up until the implementation of the new General Education Program not been a focus of the University at Albany’s assessment process. We have, therefore, been in the position of having, on the one hand, considerable experience in the area of assessment and, on the other hand, of implementing assessment procedures focusing on student learning outcomes for the General Education curriculum that are unfamiliar to many faculty. Consequently, we have sought to create a process through campus governance that provides continuity with prior assessment efforts, as well as ensures the desired results. A major objective in establishing this process has been to create a context within which assessment of student learning outcomes with respect to General Education can take root in the academic culture at the University at Albany as a key component of the faculty’s commitment to excellence in undergraduate education. We recognize that assessment of academic programs in order to 1) improve the quality of these programs, 2) promote more effective teaching and learning, and 3) respond to a range of external expectations is central to a strong and healthy educational institution; and the legislation passed by the University Senate situates the assessment of our General Education Program within this context.
GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT PLAN

The following text addresses the 8 points outlined in the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) Group Review Process Guidelines:

1. The objectives for student learning in General Education relate directly to the student learning outcomes defined in the Implementation Guidelines of the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on General Education.

   For each of the categories of the General Education Program, with the exception of Basic Communication and Critical Thinking, focus groups of faculty teaching courses in that category have met to develop the learning objectives for the category. These objectives include, but are not limited to, those defined in the Implementation Guidelines of the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on General Education (see Appendix A which demonstrates that locally developed objectives for student learning incorporate the student learning outcomes defined in the Implementation Guidelines of PACGE).

   At the University at Albany, we have divided Basic Communication into two categories, Oral Discourse and two courses in Writing Intensive (one lower-level and one upper-level). During fall 2003, faculty teaching in these areas will meet to establish the learning objectives for these categories, as well as for the category of Critical Thinking. Critical Thinking is infused throughout the General Education curriculum but will be assessed in conjunction with the assessment of the Writing Intensive category.

   (*** Since this plan was adopted the Faculty Senate voted to accept only the objectives for student learning developed by University at Albany focus groups***)

2. Programmatic activities intended to accomplish the campus’ objectives for student learning in General Education are described.

   The procedure for designating courses as General Education courses at the University at Albany is as follows:

   1) Authority for initial approval and continuing certification of courses as General Education courses resides with the General Education Committee, advisory to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

   2) To be approved as a General Education course, a course must have a syllabus.

   3) The syllabus must contain the following information 1) the category or categories of General Education that the course fulfills; 2) the general criteria governing all General Education courses; 3) the specific learning objectives of the category or categories that the course fulfills.
4) Faculty requesting consideration of a course for approval as a General Education course shall fill out the General Education Course Proposal Form. If a course is being proposed to fulfill the Information Literacy, Writing Intensive, or Oral Discourse category, a separate form is also required.

(** Last year, when we began inviting courses for General Education we relaxed the requirement that course proposals be submitted. It is still required for Info Lit, Writing and Oral ***)

5) On a three-year rotating basis, courses in each of the General Education categories will be reviewed by the General Education Committee to determine their continuing appropriateness for inclusion in the General Education Program. At a minimum, this process will include a review of the initial General Education Course Proposal Form and of the syllabi for the course. In addition, it may include conversations with department chairs and individual faculty to determine the appropriateness of any given course to the General Education Program. It will also include a review of the information generated by the other two components of the assessment plan.

(** The reference here to the “two other components” refers to the student perception data and Form 2 from the course assessment process. The GEAS did this in 2004-2005, examining all the syllabi first and then the smaller subset of courses in the internal assessment reports for each GE category that was part of the assessment the year before. It was in that year that we determined that the syllabi did not give us adequate information to determine the suitability of the course relative to the learning objectives. We did not do this last year because the GEAS was busy doing the SCBA in the Fall.***)

6) As part of the review process, each instructor teaching an approved General Education course shall file a copy of the syllabus used for that specific section of the course with the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

(** I did not take the steps to collect syllabi in the Fall last year; it doesn’t sound like my job here to collect them, but a call has gone out to each instructor from me in the past ***)

7) At the end of the review process, the General Education Committee will propose to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies that a course be 1) continued for another three years; 2) revised and resubmitted for approval; or 3) discontinued as a General Education course, effective at the end of the spring term of the next academic year. Any decision to discontinue a course must provide sufficient opportunity for appeal and revision.

(** We have taken no action to decertify any General Education Course on the basis of our examination since I have been Associate Dean for General Education.***)
The purpose of these procedures is to ensure the appropriateness to the General Education Program of courses proposed for inclusion in it. The procedures are designed to demonstrate that departments and faculty proposing courses for inclusion in the General Education Program are aware of the criteria for such inclusion and can articulate the relationship of the proposed course to these criteria. In addition, the procedures create an on-going review process that will monitor the continuing appropriateness of courses already approved for inclusion in the General Education Program. The procedures have been approved by SUNY System Administration.

(**** These are my italics and bold. This is the function of the GEAS. We need to focus on designing a process that meets this goal in a more appropriate manner *****)

3. Measures selected to assess student learning seem able to provide credible evidence of the extent to which students have achieved the learning outcomes or skills stated in the objectives.

At the University at Albany, a wide range of courses have been approved within each of the categories of the General Education Program. For example, the category of Natural Sciences includes courses taught in the departments of Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Geography, Physics, and Women’s Studies. Moreover, University at Albany faculty work within an academic culture that demands specialization, and the courses they teach, whether part of the General Education Program or not, reflect that specialization; very few courses have been developed primarily to serve the General Education Program. Consequently, the most effective way to assess student learning within the University at Albany’s General Education Program is to do so within the context of individual courses. Each category within the General Education program has a set of learning objectives (see #1 above) that provide the basis for the assessment of student learning within that category. While these objectives are obviously consistent with the objectives of the course as a whole, they are not necessarily co-extensive with them. Faculty are asked to identify the methods they use to determine the extent to which students have met each learning objective. This ensures that faculty will distinguish between their evaluation of student performance in the course as a whole and their evaluation of student performance with respect to the general education learning objectives.

Faculty whose courses are included in the semester’s General Education assessment meet several times during the semester to share assessment strategies and methodologies and to discuss issues of process and procedure. In the beginning of the semester, faculty meet to gain information about the process and the procedures that they will be expected to follow. In addition, faculty complete Assessment Form 1 (see Appendix B) which provides the General Education Committee with the following information 1) the methods to be used to measure the extent to which students have met each learning objective; 2) whether they are assessing the SUNY Learning Outcomes or Albany Faculty Objectives (which include the SUNY Learning Outcomes); 3) the recording mechanism to be used. In the middle of the semester, faculty meet to discuss challenges they have encountered with the assessment process and to share examples of innovative assessment methods. During the final meeting, faculty discuss potential problems with
reporting results and gauge the level of time commitment necessary for the faculty to effectively participate in the assessment process. Additionally, those faculty who will be participating in the next semester of assessment are invited in at the end of the meeting to hear “words of wisdom” from the previous group. At the end of the semester, faculty return Assessment Form 2 (see Appendix B). In addition to reporting the percentages of students Exceeding, Meeting, Approaching, Not Meeting each learning objective, faculty submit specific examples of their assessment measures to support their assertion that the assessment tools were assessing what they purported. We have provided sample items from measures used by faculty during the first year of our assessment cycle for Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences (see Appendices C and D).

(**** This is the course embedded method that we use and, except for the mid-semester meeting that is described above, this process is followed rather faithfully. It is getting compliance to participate in the process that we are hoping to engage the Department Chairs and perhaps Academic Deans ****)

- **The measures have reasonable face validity**

In terms of face validity, faculty who primarily utilize multiple choice items for assessment employ a “table of specifications” model. They identify individual items that map onto the respective learning objective (see Appendix C). Faculty who utilize other assessment methods identify specific essay questions, presentations, and papers that best capture the nature of a particular learning objective. As part of Assessment Form 2, they submit examples of the assignments (see Appendix D).

- **The measures are reliable, particularly with respect to inter-observer reliability.**

For faculty using multiple choice items, reliability is enhanced by developing sufficient numbers of high quality items for each objective. In order to examine accurately the extent to which students have met each objective, access to individual student responses across multiple exams is necessary; this allows faculty to evaluate the level of student learning on each objective overtime. However, this is an extremely laborious process, which, without a keen knowledge of Excel or SPSS, is virtually impossible. As a result, the Director of Assessment and the Director of the Testing Services Center have developed a procedure to assist faculty in tracking student learning. This enables the faculty to spend their time and thought on developing high quality items that assess student learning in a particular objective, while still obtaining reliable student learning data. We piloted this procedure with two courses during the fall 2002 semester, and, in spring 2003, 12 of the 31 faculty members whose courses were assessed used this collaborative initiative.

Faculty using more qualitative assessment methods enhance reliability by using scoring rubrics to grade the assignment, with attention to multiple objectives, if more than one objective is being assessed. Another method involves the use of an exemplar
model. This holistic assessment approach is particularly useful when assessing a specific objective in a paper or in-class essay.

(*** BW can talk more about this, but I do not believe we have made any effort to judge the validity and reliability of the measurements ***)

- **The data to be collected will be representative**

In fall 2002, 32 faculty members from the General Education categories of Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences were selected to participate in General Education Assessment. Faculty were chosen on the basis of their discipline (to ensure representation), the course they taught (size and centrality to program), their status (tenured or tenure track), and their general awareness of general education and assessment. The same procedure was used to select 31 faculty to participate in the spring semester assessment process. It must be recognized that selecting a random sample of students does not align with the objectives articulated in our general education assessment plan, and does not adhere to sound sampling theory. Therefore, the Committee chose courses from across the range of disciplines in each category, sought to achieve a balance between large and small courses, and sought to maximize the number of students included in each semester's review. In subsequent years, we will seek to include different faculty and different courses and will eventually use a random sample of courses in the categories being assessed, holding the option of dropping one or more selected courses if it is clear that small classes are over-selected. Once the courses have been identified, the demographics of student participants will be compared to our population database and statistical deviation from the population will be duly noted. This mirrors our sample selection procedure for identifying students to complete the Student Opinion Survey.

(*** I believe we make an effort to collect a representative sample and, once we remove graduate students and adjuncts, we do pay close attention to disciplinary breadth, class size, etc. We have never collected information on student demographics or compared them to another profile of our student population.***)

4. **The plan proposes standards to which student performance relative to the learning outcomes in the objectives can be compared.**

The General Education Committee has determined the following standards for mapping the relation between the University at Albany’s undergraduate grading system and the required reporting categories: A, A- = Exceeding; B+, B, B-, C+, C, C- = Meeting; D+, D, D- = Approaching; and E = Not Meeting. **Faculty will grade student performance with respect to each student learning outcome in the respective category and report these grades as they are distinct from the overall course grade.** (see Appendix E).

(*** We still use these standards.***)

6
5. The anticipated results of the assessment are able to affirm the degree to which the learning objectives have been achieved and thus make it possible to identify areas that need to be addressed in order to improve learning.

The General Education Assessment Plan at the University at Albany contains the procedures necessary to ensure that the General Education Committee and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies can determine to what degree the learning objectives for each of the categories of General Education have been met, and that make it possible to identify areas that need to be addressed to improve learning. Following each academic year, the General Education Committee conducts an internal review of the categories that underwent General Education assessment. One aspect of this review includes a critical examination of the methodologies used by faculty whose courses were included in General Education assessment. Subcommittees of the General Education Committee will examine all course syllabi and Assessment Form 2, which includes the measures used to examine student learning and the reported results of student learning. The purpose of this review will be 1) to ensure that assessment methods and sample items were reported for each objective; 2) to identify effective and ineffective assessment methods; and 3) to make concrete suggestions for improvement wherever possible. Members of the subcommittee will share their findings and identify important patterns at the level of General Education category. The subcommittee will issue a report on their findings, which will include their recommendations regarding areas needing improvement.

(**** We use the Assessment Form 2 for two things: to compose the report we submit to SUNY and as a representation of the category when we conduct the analysis described in #2 subcategory 5 above. We haven’t shared our findings and we could do this because it would provide a feedback opportunity.***)

6. The assessment plan has been reviewed and approved through the appropriate curriculum and faculty governance structures.

The General Education Assessment Plan at the University at Albany was initially developed by the General Education Committee, which is advisory to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. After receiving her approval, the plan was forwarded to the University Senate’s Undergraduate Academic Council of the University Senate, which spent several meetings reviewing the proposed plan, before drafting the legislation that was brought the to the University Senate. As noted in the Introduction to this document, the legislation was passed at the University Senate meeting of March 25, 2002 and was signed by President Hitchcock on April 16, 2002.

(*** This has changed a bit with the UAC/ Gen Ed / Gen Ed Ass Comm developments in the Charter. SCBA will necessitate a revision of this document.***)

7. The plan adheres to the timetable established by the GEAR Group and agreed to by the University Provost.
The three-year schedule for assessment is as follows:

Fall 2002/Spring 2003: The Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences

Fall 2003/Spring 2004: Europe [Western Civilization], Regions beyond Europe [Other World Civilizations]; Mathematics and Statistics; Foreign Languages

Fall 2004/Spring 2005: U.S. Historical Perspectives [American History], Information Literacy [Information Management], Oral Discourse [Basic Communication], Writing Intensive [Basic Communication], Critical Thinking
8. **The assessment process includes provisions for evaluating the assessment process itself and disseminating assessment results to the appropriate campus community.**

Responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the assessment plan resides with the General Education Committee. Since we view assessment as an integral part of the General Education Program at the University at Albany, the evaluation of the assessment plan takes place in the context of our ongoing assessment of the program as a whole. The purpose of the internal assessment of the General Education Program is twofold. First, it is to review the implementation of the new General Education Program, including the Assessment Plan. Second, it is to enlarge the conversation around implementation and assessment and to engage more faculty in the development, implementation, and assessment of general education on the campus. The overall and encompassing goal is, as always, to improve the quality of undergraduate education as it is presented in the general education program.

The procedures below currently guide the internal review, which is being conducted by members of the General Education Committee. Two subcommittees of the General Education Committee will conduct the internal assessment process. The committees will examine course syllabi, General Education assessment results, and student perception surveys in order to report on the status of General Education and the General Education Assessment Plan at the University at Albany.

1. **The subcommittees will review the syllabi of the courses approved for inclusion in their respective categories to determine whether the courses meet the general characteristics of General Education relevant to their category and the specific learning objectives of their category. The review will also determine to what extent the course syllabi include the general characteristics and learning objectives of a general education course.**

2. **The subcommittees will review the assessment methodologies employed in courses in their respective categories that underwent assessment in 2002/2003. The purpose of this review will be to ensure that assessment methods were reported for each objective, to identify effective and ineffective assessment methods, and to make concrete suggestions for improvement wherever possible.**

3. **The subcommittees will review the report of the Director of Assessment on the Student Perception Questionnaire for their respective categories. Subcommittees will identify patterns of strength and weakness in each category, and recommend areas in need of improvement. Subcommittees will also review the value of the Student Perception Questionnaire and make a recommendation as to its continuance or discontinuance.**

4. **The subcommittees will review the locally developed learning objectives developed for their respective categories to determine if they are indeed assessable.**
5. The subcommittees will review the relation of courses selected for assessment in 2002/2003 to those not chosen to determine what problems, if any, would emerge from going to a system of random selection.

6. In accord with Senate legislation, the subcommittee will recommend for each course that it 1) be continued for another three years; 2) be revised in order to be continued; 3) be discontinued as a general education course.

7. The subcommittees will issue a report on their findings, which will include their recommendations.

Currently, there are no mechanisms in place to provide feedback to students about student learning in the General Education Program. We have undertaken two indirect assessment methods to better understand student perceptions’ of General Education at the University at Albany. In the spring 2003, the Director of Assessment held focus groups with students to examine student 1) level of awareness of the General Education Program; 2) perceptions of the quality of teaching in their General Education classes; 3) perceptions of the value of general education in their overall undergraduate educational experience. This pilot procedure was used to verify the logic and utility of the protocol and will be continued in the fall 2003. Merely talking with students indicates that the University at Albany is interested in student perspectives and committed to improving the quality of their general education experience. The results of the fall 2003 focus groups will be available on the assessment web-site, currently under renovation. The web-site will house the General Education legislation, Assessment Plan, as well as reports on the various aspects of assessment, including general education.

A second indirect assessment method serves to increase student awareness of the General Education Program, its value, and to improve communication between faculty and students as to the goals of General Education courses. Faculty members have received feedback from the Student Perceptions Questionnaire, an instrument that is administered in all courses in the General Education Assessment, in the form of a summary report (see Appendix F). The survey served as an indirect assessment of learning objectives and complements the findings of the course embedded outcomes assessment. Faculty were provided the mean responses for each item for their courses individually and at the category level. This allowed faculty to gauge the relative perceptions of their students to the average in a given category. This information will be used in conjunction with the direct assessment results reported in Assessment Form 2 to compare student perceptions with actual performance on each learning objective.
Rationale

The General Education Program at the University at Albany proposes a set of knowledge areas, perspectives, and competencies considered by the University to be central to the intellectual development of every undergraduate. Taken together, the coursework is intended to provide students with a foundation that both prepares them for continued work within their chosen major and minor fields and gives them the intellectual habits that will enable them to become lifelong learners. Courses within the program are designed not only to enhance students’ knowledge, but to provide them as well with new ways of thinking and with the ability to engage in critical analysis and creative activity.

Courses in the area of Disciplinary Perspectives emphasize multiple perspectives, enabling students to understand that subjects may be approached in a variety of ways and that different disciplines approach subjects in different ways. Courses in the area of Cultural and Historical Perspectives are designed to help students develop an understanding of their own identity and of their relation to various communities, and to increase their ability to interact effectively with persons from different cultural and regional backgrounds. The Foreign Language requirement is also designed to enhance students’ global awareness and to expand their knowledge of different cultures. Finally, courses in the area of Communication and Reasoning Competencies are designed to provide students with an enhanced ability to communicate with others, both through the written and spoken word, to enable them to take advantage of computing technology as a medium of communication. Courses in this area are also designed to develop students’ ability to reason in a variety of symbolic systems and contexts included in the Mathematics and Statistics requirement.
General Education Assessment

SUNY's Streamlining Assessment Resolution

On March 23, 2010 the SUNY Board of Trustees passed a resolution to streamline assessment.

UAlbany's Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment Plan

SUNY approved UAlbany General Education Assessment Plan

Detailed plan for strengthening General Education assessment, adopted in 2006

UAlbany General Education Learning Outcomes

Home page of the General Education Program, includes listing of all categories and learning outcomes

UAlbany General Education Assessment Schedule

Lists categories assessed on 3 year rotating schedule

UAlbany General Education Assessment Forms

- Arts: Form 1, Form 2
- Humanities: Form 1, Form 2
- Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives: Form 1, Form 2
- Regions Beyond Europe: Form 1, Form 2
- Europe: Form 1, Form 2
- U.S. Diversity Form 1, Form 2
- U.S. History Form 1, Form 2
Foreign Language Form 1, Form 2

Math (Combined Forms)
- Calculus
- Logic
- Statistics

Oral Discourse (Combined Forms)

Information Literacy (forthcoming)

Basic Communication Written (forthcoming)

Critical Thinking Written (forthcoming)

Social Science (forthcoming)

Natural Science (forthcoming)

UAlbany General Education Assessment Reports

Summary of the 2008-09 Assessment in UHS courses

Executive Summary of the Spring 2009 Arts and Humanities assessment

Executive Summary of the Fall 2008 Natural Sciences and Social Sciences assessment

Executive Summary of the Spring 2008 Basic Communication and Critical Thinking assessment

Summary of the 2007-08 Oral Discourse assessment in UHS courses

Executive Summary of the Fall 2007 Oral

Forms used in General Education Assessment

Click on the links to read the summaries of the aggregate results of the assessments conducted in the stated categories. Complete reports are available upon request using the contact information at the end of the summaries.
Discourse and Information Literacy assessment

Virtual home of the SUNY-wide committee responsible for reviewing the processes and procedures of each SUNY campus's General Education assessment plan. Links to assessment resources are also provided.

SUNY General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) Group homepage

Background information and links to important documents regarding SUNY's re-design of its General Education program and assessment initiatives.

SUNY General Education Guidelines and Information

Links to reports listing SUNY-Gen Ed offerings, by category, at each State University campus. An informational resource for those interested in how sister campuses have approached implementation of the SUNY-Gen Ed Requirement

Links to reports of approved courses, by campus, for the SUNY General Education program.
General Education Assessments
Schedule

2002-2003  Natural Sciences
            Social Sciences
            Humanities
            The Arts

2003 – 2004  Mathematics (data analysis, quantitative reasoning)
            Europe (Western Civilization)
            Regions Beyond Europe (Other World Civilizations)
            Foreign Language

2004 – 2005  U.S. History
            Oral Discourse
            Information Literacy
            Basic Communication
            Critical Thinking

2005 – 2006  Natural Sciences
            Social Sciences
            Humanities
            The Arts

2006 – 2007  Europe
            Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives
            Regions Beyond Europe
            U.S. Diversity
            U.S. History
            Foreign Language

2007 – 2008  Oral Discourse
            Information Literacy
            Basic Communication
            Critical Thinking

2008 – 2009  Natural Sciences
            Social Sciences
            Humanities
            The Arts

2009 – 2010  Europe
            Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives
            Regions Beyond Europe
            U.S. Diversity
            U.S. History
            Foreign Language

2010-2011  Math
            Oral Discourse
Information Literacy  
Basic Communication  
Critical Thinking

2011-2012  
Natural Sciences  
Social Sciences  
Humanities  
The Arts

2012-2013  
Europe  
Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives  
Regions Beyond Europe  
U.S. Diversity  
U.S. History  
Foreign Language

2013-2014  
Oral Discourse  
Information Literacy  
Basic Communication  
Critical Thinking

2014-2015  
Natural Sciences  
Social Sciences  
Humanities  
The Arts  
(Math)
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY’S ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR
STRENGTHENED CAMPUS-BASED ASSESSMENT

1. The University at Albany learning objectives for the areas affected by Strengthened Campus
   Based Assessment have not changed:

   A. Basic Communication: Students will:
      1. Produce coherent texts within common college-level written forms;
      2. Demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts;
      3. Research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details.

   B. Critical Thinking: Students will:
      1. Identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own and other’s
         work;
      2. Develop well reasoned arguments.

   C. Mathematics: Students will demonstrate:
      1. Knowledge of concepts, terms, and symbols used to analyze data;
      2. An ability to formulate problems in abstract form amenable to mathematical,
         statistical, or logical analysis;
      3. An ability to perform appropriate operations to draw conclusions from data;
      4. An ability to interpret and communicate quantitative information.

2. Our process for evaluating and designating courses that fulfill campus learning objectives in
   these areas of our curriculum have not changed.

3. The University at Albany has chosen to adopt the SUNY-wide disciplinary rubrics to assess
   its learning objectives in critical thinking and writing. We will continue using course embedded
   assessment in these two areas of our General Education program. We are postponing a decision
   on how to accommodate SCBA in the area of Mathematics and Statistics until we can preview
   the nationally-normed measures approved by GEAR. We will adopt the National Survey of
   Student Engagement to assess the campus academic environment.

   In the areas of basic communication and critical thinking:

   The rubrics for Basic Communication (writing) will be adopted campus wide in courses
   designated as satisfying our campus writing intensive requirement. All of the learning objectives
   reflected by the rubric will be assessed. University at Albany considers the critical thinking to be
   an infused competency. It is assessed in the context of our upper-level writing intensive courses;
   the expectation is that these courses are taken by students in their major as a capstone of their
   General Education program.

   Beginning Fall 2006, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) will
   hold workshops for instructors of writing intensive classes that introduce the rubric and develop
   ways of integrating and implementing it into established courses. New courses proposed for
   inclusion as fulfilling the campus writing intensive requirement will be advised of the rubrics and
   referred to CETL. The campus strongly recommends that instructors share the rubrics with
   students. The assessment of Basic Communication and Critical Thinking will occur as scheduled
in Spring 2008. At that time we anticipate full campus adoption of the disciplinary-based rubrics.

After pre-registration in the Fall of 2007 we will sample courses that comprise roughly 25% of enrollments among the lower-level writing intensive offerings (to assess Basic Communication) and 20% of the upper-level writing intensive offerings (to assess Critical Thinking). Instructors whose student work will be evaluated as part of the assessment will meet before the semester commences; CETL will conduct training and norming sessions with this set of instructors to prepare them to implement the rubric. Instructors will submit their assessment plans in advance of the Spring 2008 semester. All members of this instructor pool will be invited to act as independent coders for each other at the end of the semester, for compensation by SUNY System Administration (similarly, we hope that System Administration compensates the University at Albany for the enhanced CETL instruction that training and norming sessions will require). If necessary, additional coders will be recruited from the broader pool of instructors of upper- and lower-level writing intensive courses and trained by CETL. At the end of the semester instructors in the assessment pool will provide examples of student work. They will also submit their assessment of the student work in light of the rubrics. Assessment coders will meet to independently score at least 20% of the student products submitted.

In the area of Mathematics and Statistics:

The Mathematics and Statistics advisory group could not recommend a campus response without additional information and evaluation, and particularly without the opportunity to review an instrument approved for SUNY-wide administration.Were we to repeat the cycle of assessment reflected in our 2002 General Education Assessment Plan, Mathematics and Statistics would be due for assessment in the 2006-2007 academic year. However, since the assessment instrument has not been decided yet, its assessment is now scheduled for the 2007-2008 (see 8 below). As we await final determination from SUNY regarding an approved nationally-normed instrument, the General Education Committee and the Mathematics and Statistics ad hoc advisory committee will continue to consider how all available options might be incorporated into our General Education Assessment Plan.

4. We expect that the adoption of the rubrics by the Faculty Council of Community Colleges and University Faculty Senate signals that these instruments can derive a standard of our student performance relative to other SUNY campuses. We will continue to employ the grade equivalents outlined in our campus General Assessment Plan.

5. Our current campus practice includes an internal assessment review of the methodologies, learning outcomes, and student perceptions of each of the assessed categories by the General Education Committee, the General Education Assessment Subcommittee, the Associate Dean for General Education and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. We continue the practice of sharing the results of this internal assessment with the faculty in whose courses students were assessed. As we begin our second three-year assessment cycle, our sampling procedure replaces faculty whose classes underwent assessment in the previous cycle. This serves the purpose of enlarging the conversation around implementation and assessment and engages more faculty in the development, implementation and assessment of General Education on the campus. The campus-wide implementation of the critical thinking and writing rubrics and their inclusion in
the course proposal process will increase their pedagogic value beyond their implementation in scheduled assessments.

6. Institutional Research will take the lead on analyzing and reporting on the NSSE results, and will work cooperatively with the Director of Assessment, the Council on Academic Assessment, and the Undergraduate Academic Council’s General Education Assessment Subcommittee to relate NSSE findings to results emanating from the campus’s ongoing academic assessment processes. In conformance to GEAR’s suggestion, we will administer the NSSE every three years beginning in Spring 2007. Analysis of results and reports that assess the academic climate, including their relationship to academic assessment results, will be conducted over the subsequent summer and fall terms.

7. In Fall 2005, the General Education Committee and the General Education Assessment Subcommittee reported to the University at Albany’s Undergraduate Academic Council their activities in response to SCBA. In January 2006, the UAC agreed to forward the proposal reflected here to the University Senate for review and discussion before its submission to the GEAR group on behalf of SUNY System Administration. When we have received feedback we will revise the General Education Assessment Plan. Those revisions will receive full review from our governance structure.

8. The second full cycle of our General Education Assessment Plan includes a switch in the scheduled order of the U.S. Historical Perspectives area with Mathematics and Statistics:
   Fall 2005/Spring 2006: The Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences
   Fall 2006/Spring 2007: Europe (Western Civilizations), Regions Beyond Europe (Other World Civilizations), U.S. Historical Perspectives (American History), Foreign Languages
   Fall 2007/Spring 2008: Mathematics and Statistics, Information Literacy (Information Management), Oral Discourse (Basic Communication), Writing Intensive (Basic Communication), Critical Thinking

9. In 2002, The General Education Committee reported to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. It is now organized within the University’s governance structure and reports to the UAC. The Committee and the Council engage in regular review of the campus assessment process.
To: Members of the Board of Trustees  

From: Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor  

Subject: Streamlining of the State University Board of Trustees Policy on Assessment  

March 23, 2010  

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas the State University of New York is committed to core values of broad-based access and opportunity and to the highest standards of academic excellence; and

Whereas the State University of New York and its campuses have been at the forefront of assessment and quality assurance for over three decades, and have been a national model of best practice; and

Whereas, in addition to meeting the assessment standards of the State University of New York, the University’s campuses must meet the assessment standards of regional and programmatic accreditation; and

Whereas the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and programmatic accrediting bodies have significantly increased the rigor of their assessment standards in recent years in response to federal policy; and

Whereas, in response to the Board of Trustees’ Re-engineering SUNY Initiative and requests from the Academic Affairs Committee for streamlining of the University’s assessment policies and procedures to remove unnecessary duplication, the Provost’s Advisory Group on the SUNY Assessment Initiative made recommendations that would achieve that goal while maintaining high standards of academic excellence and enabling campuses to meet or exceed rigorous regional and programmatic accreditation standards; now therefore, be it

Resolved that Trustees’ Resolution 2004-92, adopted on June 22, 2004, be and hereby is, rescinded and, be it further
Resolved that effective in academic year 2010-11, each State University of New York campus shall enhance quality by developing and implementing plans for the regular assessment and review of institutional effectiveness, academic programs and general education, such that the campus meets or exceeds the assessment standards set by section 52.1(b)(3) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education (8 NYCRR §52.1[b][3]), the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and, as appropriate, programmatic accreditation bodies; and be it further

Resolved that in keeping with University policy, the regular review of registered academic programs by the campuses shall include, at minimum, the assessment of student learning and external review, to the extent necessary and appropriate, and the regular review of general education shall include the assessment of student learning in terms of the student learning outcomes of the SUNY General Education Requirement as established by this Board on January 19, 2010 in Trustees’ Resolution 2010-006; and be it further

Resolved that in accordance with Section 6306(2) of the State Education Law, the State University Board of Trustees urges the boards of trustees of the community colleges operating under the program of the State University to adopt this policy; and be it further

Resolved that the Provost of the State University of New York shall review the findings of regional and programmatic accreditation bodies related to assessment on State University of New York campuses, and shall assist campuses when needed; and be it further

Resolved that the Provost of the State University shall work with leadership, faculty and others on the State University of New York's campuses to implement this resolution, shall provide the resources necessary to ensure regular consultation and assistance, including the formation of an assessment advisory group in consultation with faculty governance, and shall report periodically to the Board of Trustees of any additional steps that may need to be taken to insure the smooth implementation of this resolution in a fashion that enhances quality at the State University.
Background

This resolution updates the University’s policy on assessment by acknowledging and affirming the University’s strong, longstanding commitment to assessment for enhancing academic and other excellence. Recognizing the gains made and the evolving external standards in the area of assessment, this resolution rescinds the previous assessment approach and now permits each campus to develop assessment plans that are consistent with its mission and goals within the context of the State University’s mission and goals, while maintaining academic rigor and meeting or exceeding external standards for assessment required by federal and state law.

Further, the resolution:

- removes overlapping and unnecessarily duplicative assessment requirements for campuses; and
- maintains a leadership and quality assurance role for the University Provost within the context of external expectations.

The resolution refers to section 51.21(b)(3) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, which states that every registered academic program shall "...show evidence of careful planning. Institutional goals and the objectives of each curriculum and of all courses shall be clearly defined in writing, and a reviewing system shall be devised to estimate the success of students and faculty in achieving such goals and objectives...".

The resolution also refers to regional and programmatic accreditation bodies, which must meet national standards set by the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), or both.

- The Middle States Commission on Higher Education is recognized by both the U.S. Secretary of Education and CHEA. As shown in Attachment A, its Standard 7 requires assessment of institutional effectiveness and its Standard 14 requires assessment of student learning. To meet these rigorous standards, institutions must present evidence of comprehensive assessment plans, procedures and results, and show how results are used to inform improvement, planning and resource allocation.
- As shown in Attachment B, more than fifty programmatic accrediting bodies are recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education or CHEA, or both. They focus on specific disciplines or professional areas, and have rigorous requirements related to the assessment of student learning and other outcomes. As of fall 2009, every campus within the State University of New York had at least one program with programmatic accreditation, and
many campuses had dozens of such programs. All programs leading to New York State certification or licensure—in such fields as architecture, education, engineering and the health professions—must have programmatic accreditation. Many other programs—in such fields as the arts, business, forestry and public administration—voluntarily obtain accreditation as an emblem of quality. Even programs without programmatic accreditation can be influenced by the standards set by these accreditation bodies.

The resolution reflects a national consensus on how public university governing boards should promote assessment to enhance quality, as expressed in an October 2009 report issued by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes. The report recommends the following.

"Statewide planning and coordinating boards must confirm that all institutions under their scope of influence have effective internal systems of academic quality control supported by assessment data that conform to the expectations of both regional and specialized accreditation bodies. Use language that removes the specter of threat from assessment work. Offer incentives for campuses to develop and share sound practices of outcomes assessment."

To implement this resolution, the University Provost will issue guidance for campuses and consult with campus leaders and faculty to identify promising ways to support campus assessment efforts. The Provost will maintain an assessment budget to encourage a variety of rigorous assessment approaches, although the Provost will no longer provide campuses with formula funding for assessment or pay for campuses to use national examinations and surveys. Depending on need, the Provost’s support for assessment on campuses might include coordination of consultant and mentor services, webinars, conferences, study groups, excellence recognition awards or other approaches.

Attachment
Standard 7
Institutional Assessment
The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

Context
Assessment may be characterized as the third element of a four-step planning-assessment cycle:
1. Developing clearly articulated written statements, expressed in observable terms, of key institutional and unit-level goals that are based on the involvement of the institutional community, as discussed under Standard 1 (Mission and Goals);
2. Designing intentional objectives or strategies to achieve those goals, as discussed under Standard 2 (Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal);
3. Assessing achievement of those key goals; and
4. Using the results of those assessments to improve programs and services, as discussed under Standard 2 (Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal), with appropriate links to the institution’s ongoing planning and resource allocation processes.

The effectiveness of an institution rests upon the contribution that each of the institution’s programs and services makes toward achieving the goals of the institution as a whole. This standard on institutional assessment thus builds upon all other accreditation standards, each of which includes periodic assessment of effectiveness as one of its fundamental elements. This standard ties together those assessments into an integrated whole to answer the question, “As an institutional community, how well are we collectively doing what we say we are doing?” and, in particular, “How do we support student learning, a fundamental aspect of institutional effectiveness?” Because student learning is a fundamental component of the mission of most institutions of higher education, the assessment of student learning is an essential component of the assessment of institutional effectiveness and is the focus of Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning). Self-studies can thus document compliance with Standard 7 by summarizing the assessments of each accreditation standard into conclusions about the institution’s overall achievement of its key goals.

The fundamental question asked in the accreditation process is, “Is the institution fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals?” This is precisely the question that assessment is designed to answer, making assessment essential to the accreditation process. Assessment processes help to ensure the following:
• Institutional and program-level goals are clear to the public, students, faculty, and staff;
• Institutional programs and resources are organized and coordinated to achieve institutional and program-level goals;
• The institution is indeed achieving its mission and goals; and
• The institution is using assessment results to improve student learning and otherwise advance the institution.

While the Commission expects institutions to assess institutional effectiveness, it does not prescribe a specific approach or methodology. The institution is responsible for determining its expected goals and the objectives or strategies for achieving them at each level (institutional and unit), assessment approaches and methodologies, sequence, and time frame. These may vary, based on the mission, goals, organization, and resources of the institution. Whatever the approach, effective assessment processes are useful, cost-effective, reasonably accurate and truthful, carefully planned, and organized, systematic, and sustained.
Useful assessment processes help faculty and staff make appropriate decisions about improving programs and services, developing goals and plans, and making resource allocations. To assist with interpretation and use of assessment results, assessment measures and indicators have defined minimally acceptable performance targets. Because institutions, their students, and their environments are continually evolving, effective assessments cannot be static; they must be reviewed periodically and adapted in order to remain useful.

Cost-effective assessment processes yield dividends that justify the institution's investment in them, particularly in terms of faculty and staff time. To this end, institutions may begin by considering assessment measures, indicators, "flags," and "scorecards" already in place, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates, financial ratios, and surveys. New or refined measures may then be added for those goals and objectives for which evidence of achievement is not already available, concentrating on the institution's most important goals. Effective assessments are simple rather than elaborate and may focus on just a few key goals in each program, unit, and curriculum.

Reasonably-accurate and truthful assessment processes yield results that can be used with confidence to make appropriate decisions. Because there is no one perfectly accurate assessment tool or strategy, institutions should use multiple kinds of measures to assess goal achievement. Assessments may be quantitative and/or qualitative and developed locally or by an external organization. All assessment tools and strategies should clearly relate to the goals they are assessing and should be developed with care; they should not be merely anecdotal information nor collections of information that happen to be on hand. Strategies to assess student learning should include direct—clear, visible, and convincing—evidence, rather than solely indirect evidence of student learning such as surveys and focus groups.

Planned assessment processes that purposefully correspond to institutional goals that they are intended to assess promote attention to those goals and ensure that disappointing outcomes are appropriately addressed. Institutions often have a variety of plans, such as a strategic plan, academic plan, financial plan, enrollment plan, capital facilities master plan, and technology plan. Just as such plans should be interrelated to ensure that they work synergistically to advance the institution, assessments should also be interrelated. At many institutions, effective institutional planning begins with academic planning, which in turn drives the other plans. If the academic plan calls for a new academic program, for example, the technology plan should ensure faculty and students in the new program will be able to use appropriate instructional technologies. Assessments of the technology plan should evaluate not just whether instructional technologies have been put in place but also how effectively those technologies have helped students to achieve the program's key learning outcomes.

Organized, systematized, and sustained assessment processes are ongoing, not once-and-done. There should be clear interrelationships among institutional goals, program- and unit-level goals, and course-level goals. Assessments should relate clearly to important goals, and improvements should clearly stem from assessment results. As noted earlier, because student learning is a fundamental component of the mission of most institutions of higher education, the assessment of student learning is an essential component of the assessment of institutional effectiveness. An institution may therefore create institutional effectiveness documentation that includes a component on assessing student learning (see Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning), or it may create a bridge between two separate sets of documentation, one for the assessment of student learning and one for other aspects of institutional effectiveness.

A commitment to the assessment of institutional effectiveness requires a parallel commitment to ensuring its use. Assessment information, derived in a manner appropriate to the institution and to its desired outcomes, should be available to and used by those who develop institutional goals and carry out strategies to achieve them. As discussed under Standard 2 (Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal), an accredited institution uses the results of assessment for institutional renewal: to maintain, support, and improve its programs and services. Assessment information should be used as a basis for assessing the institution's effectiveness in achieving its stated goals, for monitoring and
improving the environment for student learning, and for enhancing overall student success; to these ends, it should be linked to the institution's ongoing planning and resource allocation processes. Assessment results also should be used to evaluate the assessment process itself, leading to modifications that improve its relevance and effectiveness.

**Fundamental Elements of Institutional Assessment**

An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the following attributes or activities:

- documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve the total range of programs and services; achievement of institutional mission, goals, and plans; and compliance with accreditation standards that meets the following criteria:
  - a foundation in the institution's mission and clearly articulated institutional, unit-level, and program-level goals that encompass all programs, services, and initiatives and are appropriately integrated with one another (see Standards 1: Mission and Goals and 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal);
  - systematic, sustained, and thorough use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative measures that:
    - maximize the use of existing data and information;
    - clearly and purposefully relate to the goals they are assessing;
    - are of sufficient quality that results can be used with confidence to inform decisions;
  - support and collaboration of faculty and administration;
  - clear realistic guidelines and a timetable, supported by appropriate investment of institutional resources;
  - sufficient simplicity, practicability, detail, and ownership to be sustainable;
  - periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution's assessment process;
- evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in institutional planning, resource allocation, and renewal (see Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal) to improve and gain efficiencies in programs, services and processes, including activities specific to the institution's mission (e.g., service, outreach, research); and
- written institutional (strategic) plan(s) that reflect(s) consideration of assessment results.

Institutions and evaluators must consider the totality that is created by the fundamental elements and any other relevant institutional information or analysis. Fundamental elements and contextual statements should not be applied separately as checklists. Where an institution does not possess or demonstrate evidence of a particular Fundamental Element, the institution may demonstrate through alternative information and analysis that it meets the standard.

**Optional Analysis and Evidence**

In addition to the evidence inherent within or necessary to document the fundamental elements above, the following, although not required, may facilitate the institution's own analysis relative to this accreditation standard:

- analysis of the institutional culture for assessing institutional effectiveness, including:
  - the views of faculty and administrators on assessment;
  - faculty and administrators' understanding of their roles in assessing institutional effectiveness;
  - campus-wide efforts to encourage, recognize, and value efforts to assess institutional effectiveness and to improve programs and services;
- analysis of the quality and usefulness of institutional support for assessment efforts, including the quality and usefulness of:
  - written statements of expectations for assessment work;
  - policies and governance structures to support institutional assessment;
  - administrative, technical, and financial support for institutional assessment activities;
○ professional development opportunities and resources for faculty and staff to learn how to assess institutional effectiveness and how to use the results;
➢ clear, appropriate criteria for determining whether key institutional goals and objectives have been achieved;
➢ analysis of whether the institution has sufficient, convincing, written evidence that it is achieving its mission and its key institutional goals;
➢ analysis of results of surveys of students and other relevant groups;
➢ review of evaluations of special, mission driven programs or projects, with recommendations for improvement, and evidence of action based on recommendations;
➢ evidence that institutional assessment findings are used to:
  ○ improve student success;
  ○ review and improve programs and services;
  ○ plan, conduct, and support professional development activities;
  ○ assist in planning and budgeting for the provision of programs and services;
  ○ support decisions about strategic goals, plans, and resource allocation;
  ○ inform appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;
➢ evidence of renewal strategies, made in response to assessment results [included also under Standard 2 Optional Analyses]; or
➢ analysis of evidence that renewal strategies made in response to assessment results have had the desired effect in improving programs, services, and initiatives.
Standard 14
Assessment of Student Learning
Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

Context
Assessment of student learning may be characterized as the third element of a four-step teaching-learning-assessment cycle:

1. Developing clearly articulated written statements, expressed in observable terms, of key learning outcomes: the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students are expected to exhibit upon successful completion of a course, academic program, co-curricular program, general education requirement, or other specific set of experiences, as discussed under Standard 11 (Educational Offerings);

2. Designing courses, programs, and experiences that provide intentional opportunities for students to achieve those learning outcomes, again as discussed under Standard 11;

3. Assessing student achievement of those key learning outcomes; and

4. Using the results of those assessments to improve teaching and learning.

This standard on assessment of student learning builds upon Standards 11 (Educational Offerings), 12 (General Education), and 13 (Related Educational Offerings), each of which includes assessment of student learning among its fundamental elements. This standard ties together those assessments into an integrated whole to answer the question, “Are our students learning what we want them to learn?” Self-studies can thus document compliance with Standard 14 by summarizing the assessments of Standards 11 through 13 into conclusions about overall achievement of the institution’s key student learning outcomes.

Because student learning is at the heart of the mission of most institutions of higher education, the assessment of student learning is an essential component of the assessment of institutional effectiveness (see Standard 7: Institutional Assessment), which additionally monitors the environment provided for teaching and learning and the achievement of other aspects of the institution’s mission, vision, and strategic goals and plans.

The fundamental question asked in the accreditation process is, “Is the institution fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals?” This is precisely the question that assessment is designed to answer, making assessment essential to the accreditation process. Assessment processes help to ensure the following:

- Institutional and program-level goals are clear to the public, students, faculty, and staff;
- Institutional programs and resources are organized and coordinated to achieve institutional and program level goals;
- The institution is providing academic opportunities of quality;
- The institution is indeed achieving its mission and goals; and
- Assessment results help the institution to improve student learning and otherwise advance the institution.

Assessment is not an event but a process that is an integral part of the life of the institution, and an institution should be able to provide evidence that the assessment of student learning outcomes and use of results is an ongoing institutional activity. While some of the impact of an institution on its students may not be easily or immediately measured—some institutions, for example, aim for students to develop lifelong habits that may not be fully developed for many years—the overall assessment of student learning is expected
whatever the nature of the institution, its mission, the types of programs it offers, or the manner in which its educational programs are delivered and student learning facilitated.

While the Commission expects institutions to assess student learning, it does not prescribe a specific approach or methodology. The institution is responsible for determining its expected learning outcomes and strategies for achieving them at each level (institutional, program, and course), assessment approaches and methodologies, sequence, and time frame. These may vary, based on the mission, goals, organization, and resources of the institution. Whatever the approach, effective assessment processes are useful, cost-effective, reasonably accurate and truthful, carefully planned, and organized, systematic, and sustained.

Useful assessment processes help faculty and staff make appropriate decisions about improving programs and services, developing goals and plans, and making resource allocations. To assist with interpretation and use of assessment results, assessment measures and indicators have defined minimally acceptable performance targets. Because institutions, their students, and their environments are continually evolving, effective assessments cannot be static; they must be reviewed periodically and adapted in order to remain useful.

Cost-effective assessment processes are designed so that their value is in proportion to the time and resources devoted to them. To this end, institutions can begin by considering assessment measures already in place, including direct evidence such as capstone projects, field experience evaluations, and performance on licensure examinations and indirect evidence such as retention and graduation rates and alumni surveys. New or refined measures can then be added for those learning outcomes for which direct evidence of student learning is not already available, concentrating on the most important institutional and program-level learning outcomes. Effective assessments are simple rather than elaborate and may focus on just a few key goals in each program, unit, and curriculum.

Reasonably-accurate and truthful assessment processes yield results that can be used with confidence to make appropriate decisions. Such assessment processes have the following characteristics:

Because there is no one perfectly accurate assessment tool or strategy, institutions should use multiple kinds of measures to assess goal achievement. Assessments may be quantitative and/or qualitative and developed locally or by an external organization.

Assessment tools and strategies should be developed with care; they should not be not merely anecdotal information nor collections of information that happen to be on hand.

Student learning assessment processes should yield direct—clear, visible, and convincing—evidence of student learning. Tangible examples of student learning, such as completed tests, assignments, projects, portfolios, licensure examinations, and field experience evaluations, are direct evidence of student learning. Indirect evidence, including retention, graduation, and placement rates and surveys of students and alumni, can be vital to understanding the teaching-learning process and student success (or lack thereof), but such information alone is insufficient evidence of student learning unless accompanied by direct evidence. Grades alone are indirect evidence, as a skeptic might claim, that high grades are solely the result of lax standards. But the assignments and evaluations that form the basis for grades can be direct evidence if they are accompanied by clear evaluation criteria that have a demonstrable relationship to key learning goals.

Planned assessment processes that clearly and purposefully correspond to learning outcomes that they are intended to assess promote attention to those goals and ensure that disappointing outcomes are appropriately addressed.

Organized, systematized, and sustained assessment processes are ongoing, not once-and-done. There should be clear interrelationships among institutional goals, program- and unit-level goals, and course-level goals. Assessments should clearly relate to important goals, and improvements should clearly stem
from assessment results. As noted earlier, because student learning is a fundamental component of the mission of most institutions of higher education, the assessment of student learning is an essential component of the assessment of institutional effectiveness. An institution may therefore create institutional effectiveness documentation that includes a component on assessing student learning (see Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning), or it may create a bridge between two separate sets of documentation, one for the assessment of student learning and one for other aspects of institutional effectiveness. The improvement of overall educational quality and the enhancement of effective teaching and learning is most likely to occur when faculty and administrators work together to implement a sound, institution-wide program of assessment. Because the faculty guide decisions about curriculum and pedagogy, the effective assessment of student learning is similarly guided by the faculty and supported by the administration.

A commitment to assessment of student learning requires a parallel commitment to ensuring its use. Assessment information, derived in a manner appropriate to the institution and its desired academic outcomes, should be available to and used by those who develop and carry out strategies that will improve teaching and learning. Assessment results should also be used to evaluate the assessment process itself, leading to modifications that improve its relevance and effectiveness.
Fundamental Elements of Assessment of Student Learning

An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate the following attributes or activities.

- clearly articulated statements of expected student learning outcomes (see Standard 11: Educational Offerings), at all levels (institution, degree/program, course) and for all programs that aim to foster student learning and development, that are:
  - appropriately integrated with one another;
  - consonant with the institution's mission; and
  - consonant with the standards of higher education and of the relevant disciplines;

- a documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning that meets the following criteria:
  - systematic, sustained, and thorough use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative measures that:
    - maximize the use of existing data and information;
    - clearly and purposefully relate to the goals they are assessing;
    - are of sufficient quality that results can be used with confidence to inform decisions; and
    - include direct evidence of student learning;
  - support and collaboration of faculty and administration;
  - clear, realistic guidelines and timetable, supported by appropriate investment of institutional resources;
  - sufficient simplicity, practicality, detail, and ownership to be sustainable; and
  - periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution's student learning assessment processes;
  - assessment results that provide sufficient, convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes;
  - evidence that student learning assessment information is shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and is used to improve teaching and learning; and
  - documented use of student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment.

Institutions and evaluators must consider the totality that is created by the fundamental elements and any other relevant institutional information or analysis. Fundamental elements and contextual statements should not be applied separately as checklists. Where an institution does not possess or demonstrate evidence of a particular Fundamental Element, the institution may demonstrate through alternative information and analysis that it meets the standard.

Optional Analysis and Evidence

In addition to the evidence inherent within or necessary to document the fundamental elements above, the following, although not required, may facilitate the institution's own analysis relative to this accreditation standard:

- analysis of institutional support for student learning assessment efforts, including:
  - written statements of expectations for student learning assessment work;
  - policies and governance structures to support student learning assessment;
  - administrative, technical, and financial support for student learning assessment activities and for implementing changes resulting from assessment; and

- professional development opportunities and resources for faculty to learn how to assess student learning, how to improve their curricula, and how to improve their teaching;

- analysis of the clarity and appropriateness of standards for determining whether key learning outcomes have been achieved;

- evidence of workable, regularized, collaborative institutional processes and protocols for ensuring the dissemination, analysis, discussion, and use of assessment results among all relevant constituents within a reasonable schedule;

- analysis of the use of student learning assessment findings to:
  - assist students in improving their learning;
  - improve pedagogies, curricula and instructional activities;
- review and revise academic programs and support services;
- plan, conduct, and support professional development activities;
- assist in planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services;
- support other institutional assessment efforts (see Standard 7: Institutional Assessment) and decisions about strategic goals, plans, and resource allocation; and
- inform appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs;
analysis of evidence that improvements in teaching, curricula, and support made in response to assessment results have had the desired effect in improving teaching, learning, and the success of other activities;

- analysis of the institutional culture for assessing student learning, including:
  - the views of faculty and institutional leaders on assessment;
  - faculty members' understanding of their roles in assessing student learning;
  - the quality and usefulness of institutional support for student learning assessment efforts;
  - campus-wide efforts to encourage, recognize, and value efforts to assess student learning and to improve curricula and teaching;
  - evidence of collaboration in the development of statements of expected student learning and assessment strategies;
  - evidence that information appropriate to the review of student retention, persistence, and attrition, is used to reflect whether these are consistent with student and institutional expectations [also included in Standard 8 Optional Analyses];
  - evidence of the utilization of attrition information to ascertain characteristics of students who withdraw prior to attaining their educational objectives and, as appropriate, implementation of strategies to improve retention [also included under Optional Analyses in Standard 8];
  - analysis of teaching evaluations, including identification of good practices; or
  - analysis of course, department or school reports on classroom assessment practices and their outcomes, including grading approaches and consistency.

SOURCE:
http://www.mscshe.org/publications_view.asp?idPublicationType=1&txtPublicationType=Standards+for+Accreditation+and+Requirements+of+Affiliation (January 2009)
Attachment B
Programmatic Accrediting Agencies Recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and/or the Council on Accreditation in Higher Education (CHEA)

AACSB International—The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc.
Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
Accreditation Council for Midwifery Education
Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education
Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc.
Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications
American Academy for Liberal Education
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education
American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Council for Accreditation
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs
American Bar Association Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
American Board of Funeral Service Education Committee on Accreditation
American Council for Construction Education
American Culinary Federation Foundation, Inc. Accrediting Commission
American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation
American Dietetic Association Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education
American Library Association Committee on Accreditation
American Occupational Therapy Association Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education
American Optometric Association Accreditation Council on Optometric Education
American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation
American Physical Therapy Association Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education
American Podiatric Medical Association Council on Podiatric Medical Education
American Psychological Association Committee on Accreditation
American Society for Microbiology American College of Microbiology
American Society of Landscape Architects Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology
American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education
Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc., Accreditation Commission
Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs
Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering Aviation Accreditation Board International
Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs
Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
Commission on English Language Program Accreditation
Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation
Commission on Opticianry Accreditation
Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
Council for Interior Design Accreditation
Council on Chiropractic Education Commission on Accreditation
Council on Education for Public Health
Council on Naturopathic Medical Education
Council on Rehabilitation Education Commission on Standards and Accreditation
Council on Social Work Education Office of Social Work Accreditation and Educational Excellence
Joint Review Committee on Education Programs in Radiologic Technology
Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology
Liaison Committee on Medical Education
Midwifery Education Accreditation Council
Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education
National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences
National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc.
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health Council on Accreditation
National Association of Schools of Art and Design Commission on Accreditation
National Association of Schools of Dance Commission on Accreditation
National Association of Schools of Music Commission on Accreditation and Commission on Community/Junior College Accreditation
National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation
National Association of Schools of Theatre Commission on Accreditation
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc.
National Recreation and Park Association Council on Accreditation
Planning Accreditation Board
Society of American Foresters
Teacher Education Accreditation Council Accreditation Committee

Syllabi Requirements

Senate legislation requires the following information to appear on *all* syllabi:

- Catalog number and title of the course
- Term and call number of the section
- Location(s) and meeting times of the section
- Instructor's name and title
- If applicable, name(s) of teaching assistants in the class
- Instructor's contact information (e.g., e-mail address, office phone number, office location, fax)
- Instructor's office hours
- Course description, overview and objective(s)
  - If applicable, General Education category/categories met by the course and how the course fulfills those General Education objectives
- Prerequisites of the course
  - The instructor should specifically indicate those prerequisites that are critical to success in the class and that are enforceable.
- Grading scheme
  - Whether the course is A-E or S/U graded
  - Overall method by which grades will be determined ("weights" of exams, class participation, etc.)
- Course requirements, including but not limited to:
  - Required textbooks
  - Other required materials, purchases; fees (when applicable)
  - Projected date and time of class exams, papers, projects, midterm, and final
  - Attendance policies for the class
  - General paper, project, and test requirements
  - Requirement of Internet for course work, when applicable
  - Safety policies (when applicable)

The course syllabus may also include such additional information as the instructor deems appropriate or necessary.

In addition, Senate legislation requires the following information to appear on syllabi for courses approved as General Education courses:

- The category or categories of General Education that the course fulfills
- The characteristics governing all General Education courses
- The specific learning objectives of the category or categories that the course fulfills
University at Albany
Student Perceptions of General Education Program Course Survey
Oral Discourse

For each answer, please fill in marks like this:

Please evaluate this course as it relates to the General Education Program.

1. To what extent did your instructor make connections between the subject matter and the General Education category?
   - Very little
   - Somewhat
   - Considerably
   - Greatly
   - Not Applicable

2. To what extent has this course provided an introduction to a field of study?
   - Very little
   - Somewhat
   - Considerably
   - Greatly
   - Not Applicable

3. To what extent has this course introduced you to details of the subject matter?
   - Very little
   - Somewhat
   - Considerably
   - Greatly
   - Not Applicable

4. To what extent did the assignments and exams require you to use or apply information (as opposed to memorize information)?
   - Very little
   - Somewhat
   - Considerably
   - Greatly
   - Not Applicable

5. To what extent has this course made you stop and think about the subject matter and how it relates to the world around you?
   - Very little
   - Somewhat
   - Considerably
   - Greatly
   - Not Applicable

6. To what extent has this course required that you consider the value of the subject matter?
   - Very little
   - Somewhat
   - Considerably
   - Greatly
   - Not Applicable

For the following questions, to what extent did this course help you to gain ...

7. an ability to communicate ideas (creative, expressive, intuitive, intellectual) according to a specific set of criteria?
   - Very little
   - Somewhat
   - Considerably
   - Greatly
   - Not Applicable

8. an ability to establish and maintain an appropriate performer/audience relationship in a given oral exercise, and actively engage with listeners/audience?
   - Very little
   - Somewhat
   - Considerably
   - Greatly
   - Not Applicable

9. an ability to respond to and, where appropriate, incorporate listener's comments and questions?
   - Very little
   - Somewhat
   - Considerably
   - Greatly
   - Not Applicable

10. an ability to critique, orally and in writing, an oral performance?
    - Very little
    - Somewhat
    - Considerably
    - Greatly
    - Not Applicable

Please indicate whether or not the following statements are reasons why you took this course.

11. Fulfilled a major / minor requirement
    - Yes
    - No

12. Fulfilled a general education requirement
    - Yes
    - No

13. Recommended by a friend
    - Yes
    - No

14. Interested in the subject matter
    - Yes
    - No

15. Reputation of the instructor
    - Yes
    - No

16. Friend was taking the course
    - Yes
    - No

Thank you!
Section I  General Education Assessment Plan Review
A detailed description of any changes the campus has made or intends to make to its original Plan. Address each of the nine criteria in the GEAR Guidelines.

1. The objectives for student learning in General Education relate directly to the student learning outcomes defined in the Implementation Guidelines of the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on General Education.

There have been no changes to the earlier plan. The learning objectives include, but are not limited to, those defined in the Implementation Guidelines of the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on General Education. (see Appendix A which demonstrates that locally developed objectives for student learning incorporate the student learning outcomes defined in the Implementation Guidelines of PACGE).

2. Programmatic activities intended to accomplish the campus’ objectives for student learning in General Education are described.

There have been no changes to the earlier plan

3. Measures selected to assess student learning seem able to provide credible evidence of the extent to which students have achieved the learning outcomes or skills stated in the objectives.

- The measures directly measure student learning and have reasonable face validity.

There have been no changes to the earlier plan. We continue to use a course-embedded approach. Faculty who use objective measures are required to identify individual items that map on to each of the learning objectives. Faculty who use other approaches identify specific essay questions, presentations, papers, reports, etc that map on to one or more of the learning objectives.

- The measures are reliable, particularly with respect to inter-observer reliability

The campus will be conducting inter-observer reliability tests with the evaluation rubrics that are being used to assess basic communication (writing) and critical thinking in Spring 2008. Heretofore, we have not had the opportunity to develop inter-observer reliability tests because in many instances they simply were not applicable (e.g. multiple choice test items were used rather than essays) or the costs associated with training raters and conducting such tests were simply too
high due to the faculty-centric course embedded approach our campus uses. Our course-embedded approach results in different methods/metrics in each section assessed, which presents formidable resource requirements for both identifying and training additional reviewers when student written work is used as the evaluative mechanism.

-The plan includes appropriate external referenced measures for the learning outcomes in Mathematics, Basic Communication (Written) and Critical Thinking (Reasoning).

There have been no changes to the earlier plan. In Spring 2008, Albany will use the SUNY rubrics to assess Basic Communication (Written) and Critical Thinking (Reasoning). Albany intends to use the SUNY approved nationally normed test for assessing outcomes in Math in Fall 2008.

-The data to be collected will be representative

There have been no changes to the earlier plan. Albany continues to assess at least 20% of the students in any category. Given the great disparities between the size of its departments and programs a random selection would not result in a representative sample. Our process is to begin with a random sample of courses taught by full-time instructors, then to extract classes that were just sampled under another category the previous semester, use actual enrollments, avoid new continuing line faculty in order not to overburden them, and omit adjunct faculty since it would be inappropriate to require them to do uncompensated work outside of their contractual obligations. Using this process we believe the data collected is representative.

-The plan includes, if the campus opts to use a value-added approach, an adequate description of when measures will be administered and how problems common to pre- and post-testing will be addressed.

There have been no changes to the earlier plan. Albany is not using a value-added approach.

4. **The plan proposes standards to which student performance relative to the learning outcomes in the objectives can be compared.**

There have been no changes to the earlier plan. The General Education Committee has determined the following standards for mapping the relation between the University at Albany’s undergraduate grading system and the required reporting categories: A, A- = Exceeding; B+, B, B-, C+, C, C- = Meeting; D+, D, D- = Approaching; and E = Not Meeting. Faculty will grade student performance with respect to each student learning outcome in the respective category and report these evaluations as they are separate and distinct from the overall course grade.
5. The anticipated results of the assessment are able to affirm the degree to which the learning objectives have been achieved and thus make it possible to identify areas that need to be addressed in order to improve learning.

Yes. The specific artifacts of student work are evaluated to determine the degree to which students achieve mastery of the learning objectives. Therefore, it can be determined which curricular content areas contribute to (or do not sufficiently contribute to) specific learning goals.

6. **Mechanisms for assessing the campus academic environment are described.**

There have been no changes to the earlier plan. Albany will administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in Spring 2008.

7. **The assessment plan has been reviewed and approved through the appropriate curriculum and faculty governance structures.**

The original General Education Assessment Plan was approved at the University Senate meeting of March 25, 2002 and was signed by President Hitchcock on April 16, 2002. The Strengthened Campus-based Assessment Plan was approved by the Albany University Senate on February 13, 2006 and signed by President Hall on February 22, 2006.

8. **The plan adheres to the timetable established by the GEAR Group and agreed to by the University Provost.**

There have been no changes to the earlier plan. See Appendix B for the timetable.

9. **The assessment process includes provisions for evaluating the assessment process itself and disseminating assessment results to the appropriate campus community.**

-Evaluating the assessment

There has been a change with regard to the governance body that oversees the General Education Program. On November 6, 2006 the Governance Council proposed a change to The Charter of the University Senate that moved the General Education Assessment Subcommittee from under the direction of the General Education Committee (GEC) to become a standing committee (General Education Assessment Committee, GEAC) of the Council on Academic Assessment (CAA). The Council on Academic Assessment develops campus policies relating to academic assessment; schedules, coordinates, and supervises mandated and cyclical reviews of continuing academic programs; reviews assessment reports of its committee(s). The change reflected a concern that under
the old structure the same body that was administering the General Education Program was also in charge of its assessment. The new structure allows for a single governance council to be responsible for all academic assessment. The amendment was passed and signed by Officer-in-Charge Herbst on January 2, 2007. To ensure close communication between the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) and the General Education Committee (GEC), the amendment included a provision for the Chair of the GEAC to be a member, ex officio of the GEC, and the Chair of the GEC to be a member of the GEAC. The GEAC, as a standing committee of the CAA, will be able not only to fulfill the function of the previous GEAS, but also take a stronger leadership role with the council that oversees all assessment activity and benefit from the discussions and issues that are raised as part of the larger debate on campus.

-Disseminating assessment results

The GEAC receives copies of the assessment data from all sampled courses for review. See their responsibilities noted above.

Faculty who are sampled in the General Education assessment receive the data from the Student Perceptions of General Education Program Course Survey for their individual course, their category and all the categories sampled that semester.

The Associate Dean for General Education and the Director of Assessment also receive and review the data

Section II  Campus Closing the Loop Report
How has the campus used the assessment process and results to improve its General Education program (curricular programs and pedagogy, the process itself)

1. The campus disseminated assessment data to appropriate faculty/staff for review.

The GEAC receives copies of the assessment data from all sampled courses for review. See their responsibilities noted above.

Faculty who are sampled in the General Education assessment receive the data from the Student Perceptions of General Education Program Course Survey for their individual course, their category and all the categories sampled that semester.

The Associate Dean for General Education and the Director of Assessment also receive and review the data.
2. Appropriate faculty/staff members met to discuss assessment results in relation to intended learning outcomes and relative to a priori standards, and reached reasonable conclusions regarding programmatic strengths and weaknesses

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC), a standing committee of the Council on Academic Assessment, now fulfills the role previously held by the General Education Assessment Subcommittee (GEAS), which was a subcommittee of the General Education Committee. The GEAC:

a. reviews the syllabi of the courses approved for inclusion in their respective categories to determine whether the courses meet the general characteristics of General Education relevant to their category and the specific learning objectives of their category; determines to what extent the course syllabi include the general characteristics and learning objectives of a general education course.

b. reviews the assessment methodologies employed in courses in their respective categories by examining the assignments and narrative explanations supplied by faculty along with the numerical data of outcomes; ensures that assessment methods were reported for each objective; identifies effective and ineffective assessment methods; makes concrete suggestions for improvement wherever possible.

c. reviews the report of the Director of Program Review and Assessment on the Student Perceptions of General Education Program Course Survey to identify strengths and weaknesses in each category; recommends areas in need of improvement in communicating the goals and objectives of the General Education program and its courses to students; reviews the survey itself and make a recommendation as to its continuance or discontinuance.

d. reviews the locally developed learning objectives developed for their respective categories to determine if they are indeed assessable.

e. reviews the relation of courses selected for assessment and to those not chosen to determine what problems, if any, would emerge from going to a system of random selection.

f. submits an annual report on the General Education assessment to the General Education Committee and to the Council on Academic Assessment which summarizes the committee’s findings and recommends policy and/or procedural changes based on assessment results.
3. Faculty/staff made recommendations to curricular/teaching changes based on documented assessment results.

In accordance with its charge, the GEAC recommends for each course that it 1) be continued for another three years; 2) be revised in order to be continued; 3) be discontinued as a general education course. At an institution of this size, with so many departments and a procedure that mandates an interdisciplinary approach to sampling in each category, it is unlikely that changes made to courses as a result of assessment would be communicated up to those of us who administer the process. We will discuss how to improve the ‘closing the loop’ feature to our current process.

4. Assessment results led directly to improvements in curriculum and/or teaching or to other appropriate changes.

As we note above, we do not currently include a mechanism to communicate faculty, course or department specific changes to our GEAC or the General Education Committee. It is highly likely that improvements are made routinely as a result of the process, and evidence we have would be anecdotal. At feedback sessions we have heard from instructors whose teaching was fundamentally changed as a result of the assessment process and we have heard from faculty whose teaching was merely informed by their participation. Providing exemplars on our campus web site that fully engage assessment is likely to encourage faculty who are looking for models to rise to the task. As our three year cycles have been repeated we have tried to connect faculty whose courses were assessed previously with those currently undergoing assessment, hoping to foster communication and reference points for the engagement process within the category under assessment. In this year’s assessment of the Basic Communication categories our new Director of the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership (ITLAL) was included in our group sessions with faculty. He encouraged the participants to use the Center for brainstorming ways in which courses could systematically engage the process and findings of the assessment.

5. Closing the loop process clearly and logically lead to the next assessment round for target learning outcomes.

We believe that our current GEAR approved General Education Assessment Plan effectively addresses this question.

6. Department/program had mechanisms in place for documenting assessment results, closing the loop process, and intended changes resulting from the assessment results.

a) documenting assessment results
Faculty whose courses are included in the semester’s General Education assessment meet at the beginning of the semester to share assessment strategies and methodologies and to discuss issues of process and procedure. In addition, faculty complete Assessment Form 1 (see Appendix C) which provides the General Education Assessment Committee with the following information 1) the methods to be used to measure the extent to which students have met each learning objective; 2) whether they are assessing the SUNY Learning Outcomes or Albany Faculty Objectives (which include the SUNY Learning Outcomes); 3) the recording mechanism to be used. In the middle of the semester, faculty are invited to gather once again to discuss challenges they have encountered with the assessment process and to share examples of innovative assessment methods. At the end of the semester, faculty return Assessment Form 2 (see Appendix D). In addition to reporting the percentages of students Exceeding, Meeting, Approaching, Not Meeting each learning objective, faculty submit specific examples of their assessment measures to support their assertion that the assessment tools were assessing what they purported.

b) closing the loop process
In addition to review by the General Education Assessment committee, the university has conducted day-long assessment seminars for faculty from across the campus in 2005 and in 2006. These seminars shared best practices in both assessment techniques, and in using assessment to improve teaching, from a faculty developmental framework.

c) Beginning with the 2006-07 academic year, the campus has begun to collect annual school/college reports that describe and document the mechanisms each program has in place to keep its assessment efforts on track and useful.

7. Closing the loop process includes planning as appropriate for continued in-service training to enhance communication and ongoing faculty/staff development.

The Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership has been providing faculty with substantial support through printed information, workshops and individual consultation. While it addresses teaching and learning across the curriculum, the Director, Dr. Bill Roberson has been an integral part of the General Education Assessment process. He has attended informational workshops, been involved in planning for the next round of assessment and available to faculty for individual assistance. Moreover, as a current member of the Council on Academic Assessment and a member of the General Education Assessment Committee, he is able to provide members of these groups with expert opinion in matters of teaching and learning. He is also able to respond directly to concerns raised through his workshops and private consultations. Finally, his integral role in General Education Assessment activities enhances communication among faculty, between faculty and administration, and on the governance bodies that review the process.
As part of the Spring General Education Assessment support offered to faculty, Dr. Roberson will be presenting a workshop on classroom assessment techniques on February 28, 2008.

ITLAL also maintains a comprehensive website http://www.albany.edu/teachingandlearning/tlr/teaching_resources.shtml that describes Teaching Resources, new Faculty Resources and recent workshops presented by ITLAL that support teaching and learning across the curriculum, including General Education.

8. There is clear institutional support for departments/programs that wish to make improvements based on assessment results.

The Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership offers “Instructional Innovation Grants” of up to $1,000 which individual faculty can use to make improvements based on assessment results. The description of this program is attached as Appendix E and can also be accessed at http://www.albany.edu/teachingandlearning/i2g.shtml

9. The assessment process itself is evaluated and revised based on the previous assessment round (and approved, as appropriate, by campus governance).

The General Education Assessment Committee reports its findings and makes recommendations regarding the assessment process to the General Education Committee and The Council on Academic Assessment, which develops campus policies relating to academic assessment; schedules, coordinates, and supervises mandated and cyclical reviews of continuing academic programs; reviews assessment reports of its committee(s).

10. Assessment results are disseminated to the larger campus community.

Selected assessment results have been disseminated to the larger campus community via the two annual assessment seminars noted above, and also indirectly through the faculty who sit on the General Education and General Education Assessment Committees, as well as when results are shared in meetings of faculty participating in the assessments each semester. Programs and workshops sponsored by the Institute for Teaching and Academic Leadership also serve to disseminate the usefulness of assessment approaches to enhance student learning.
Appendix A

University at Albany Learning Objectives
(SUNY Learning Outcomes)

Learning Objectives for General Education Arts Courses (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)
Courses in the General Education category of Arts enable students to demonstrate:
1. an understanding of the history and/or practice of one form of artistic expression. (SUNY Learning Outcome 1)
2. recognition of the difference and overlap between creative and critical thinking.
3. an understanding of the function and meaning of form.
4. that they have the vocabulary they need to continue to learn about how art is made and interpreted.
5. depending on the nature of the course, arts courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of how art works are embedded within different cultures at different times and places.

Learning Objectives for General Education Humanities Courses (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)
Courses in the General Education category of Humanities enable students to demonstrate:
1. knowledge of the assumptions, methods of study, and theories of at least one of the disciplines within the humanities (SUNY Learning Outcome 1)
Depending on the discipline, courses in the General Education category of Humanities enable students to demonstrate some or all of the following:
1. an understanding of the objects of study as expressions of the cultural contexts of the people who created them
2. an understanding of the continuing relevance of the objects of study to the present and to the world outside the university
3. an ability to employ the terms and understand the conventions particular to the discipline
4. an ability to analyze and assess the strengths and weaknesses of ideas and positions along with the reasons or arguments that can be given for and against them
5. an understanding of the nature of the texts, artifacts, ideas, or discourse of the discipline and of the assumptions that underlie this understanding, including those relating to issues of tradition and canon
Learning Objectives for General Education Natural Science Courses (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)

Courses in the General Education category of Natural Science enable students to demonstrate:

1. an understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence (SUNY Learning Outcome 1)
2. an understanding of the application of scientific data, concepts, and models in the natural sciences (SUNY Learning Outcome 2)
3. an understanding of the major principles and concepts that form the basis of the knowledge covered in the course and a command of the relevant terminology appropriate for basic discourse in the particular discipline or disciplines of the course
4. that they have become more knowledgeable consumers of scientific information and are prepared to make informed decisions on contemporary issues involving scientific information acquired in the course

Learning Objectives for General Education Social Science Courses (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)

Courses in the General Education category of Social Science enable students to demonstrate:

1. an understanding that human conduct and behavior more generally are subject to scientific inquiry
2. an understanding of the difference between rigorous and systematic thinking and uncritical thinking about social phenomena
3. an understanding of the kinds of questions social scientists ask and the ways they go about answering these questions
4. knowledge of the major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences (SUNY Learning Outcome 2)
5. an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, such as observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, employment of mathematical analysis, employment of interpretive analysis (SUNY Learning Outcome 1)

Learning Objectives for U.S. History (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)

Courses in the General Education category of U.S. History enable students to demonstrate:

1. knowledge of a basic narrative of American history (political, economic, social, and/or cultural), including an awareness of unity and diversity in American society (SUNY Learning Outcome 1)
2. knowledge of representative institutions in American society and how they have shaped and been shaped by different groups (SUNY Learning Outcome 2)
3. an understanding of the relationship (s) between America and other parts of the world 
(SUNY Learning Outcome 3)
4. an understanding of various tools and approaches used in interpreting U.S. history

Learning Objectives for General Education Europe Courses (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)
Courses in the General Education category of Europe enable students to demonstrate:
1. an understanding of the variety of cultures, regions, and countries that make up Europe
2. knowledge of the distinctiveness of Europe as manifested in the development of diverse histories, institutions, economies, societies, and cultures (SUNY Learning Outcome 1)
3. knowledge of the relationship between Europe and other regions of the world as expressed through political, economic, and cultural contact (SUNY Learning Outcome 2)
4. an awareness of how Europe has been used as a cultural standard against which other cultures are measured
5. an understanding of how the knowledge that becomes the basis of historical inquiry is constructed

Learning Objectives for General Education Regions Beyond Europe Courses (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)
Courses in the General Education category of Regions Beyond Europe enable students to demonstrate:
1. knowledge of the distinctive features (e.g. history, institutions, economies, societies, cultures) of one region beyond Europe or European North America (SUNY Learning Outcome 1b)
2. an understanding of the region from the perspective of its people(s)
3. an ability to analyze and contextualize cultural and historical materials relevant to the region
4. an ability to locate and identify distinctive geographical features of the region

Learning Objectives for General Education Global and Cross-Cultural Studies Courses (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)
Courses in the General Education category of Global and Cross-Cultural Studies enable students to demonstrate:
1. an understanding of the impact (e.g. economic, political, historical, cultural) of nations, regions, and cultures upon other nations, regions, and cultures
2. an understanding of the reciprocal interactions between individuals and global systems
3. an ability to see cultural groups from their own points of view
4. an ability to use the analytic tools of a specific discipline to engage in comparative analyses of cultures, nations, and regions
Learning Objectives for U.S. Diversity and Pluralism (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)
Courses in the General Education category of U.S. Pluralism and Diversity enable students to demonstrate:
1. knowledge and understanding of the diversity and pluralism of U.S. society with respect to race, ethnicity, and gender, as well as class, sexual orientation, and/or religion.
2. knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural influences that shape the perspectives of various social groups as well as students' own points of view.
3. knowledge and understanding of the contributions of various social groups to U.S. society.
4. knowledge and understanding of the sources and manifestations of controversy or conflict arising from U.S. diversity and pluralism.

Learning Objectives for General Education Information Literacy Courses (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)
Courses in the General Education category of Information Literacy enable students to:
1. locate, evaluate, synthesize and use information from a variety of sources (*SUNY Learning Outcome 3*)
2. understand and use basic research techniques appropriate to the course discipline (*SUNY Learning Outcome 2*)
3. understand the various ways in which information is organized and structured
4. understand the ethical issues involved in accessing and using information

Learning Objectives for Foreign Language (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)
Courses in the General Education category of Foreign Language enable students to demonstrate:
1. proficiency in the understanding and use of fundamental elements of a foreign language (*SUNY Learning Outcome 1*)
2. knowledge of distinctive features of the culture(s) associated with the language they are studying (*SUNY Learning Outcome 2*)

Learning Objectives for Mathematics and Statistics (Developed by Focus Group of UAlbany faculty)
Courses in the General Education category of Mathematics and Statistics enable students to demonstrate:
1. knowledge of concepts, terms, and symbols used to analyze data (*SUNY Learning Outcome 1d*)
2. an ability to formulate problems in abstract form amenable to mathematical, statistical, or logical analysis
3. an ability to perform appropriate operations to draw conclusions from data
   an ability to interpret and communicate quantitative information (*SUNY Learning Outcome 1e*)
Appendix B

General Education Assessment Timeline

2002-2003  Natural Sciences  
Social Sciences  
Humanities  
The Arts

2003 – 2004  Mathematics (data analysis, quantitative reasoning)  
Europe (Western Civilization)  
Regions Beyond Europe (Other World Civilizations)  
Foreign Language

2004 – 2005  U.S. History  
Oral Discourse  
Information Literacy  
Basic Communication  
Critical Thinking

2005 – 2006  Natural Sciences  
Social Sciences  
Humanities  
The Arts

2006 – 2007  Europe  
Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives  
Regions Beyond Europe  
U.S. Diversity  
U.S. History

2007 – 2008  Oral Discourse  
Information Literacy  
Basic Communication  
Critical Thinking
Appendix C

General Education Outcomes Assessment
Assessment Form 1

Course Number (Section Number)/Name: __________________________________________

Course Instructor: ______________________________________________________________

General Education Category: ______________________________________________________

1. Select the assessment tools you will use to assess General Education objectives (check all that apply):
   [ ] Items on Quizzes
   [ ] Items on Multiple Choice/Fill-in-the Blank Exams
   [ ] Components of Essay Exams
   [ ] Components of In-class Writing Assignments
   [ ] Components of Out-of-class Writing Assignments
   [ ] Components of Term/Research Papers
   [ ] Components of Group Projects
   [ ] Components of Oral Presentations
   [ ] Other (please specify) ________________________________

2. Use the space below or on a separate piece of paper, describe how the assessment measures used enable you to assess student mastery of each objective.

3. Identify the mechanism for tracking student learning on each General Education objective:
   [ ] Test-scoring Services (assistance provided by IR)
   [ ] Traditional Grade Book
   [ ] Other (please specify) ________________________________
Appendix D

General Education Outcomes Assessment
Assessment Form 2

Course Number (Section Number)/Name: __________________________________________

Course Instructor: ______________________________________________________________

General Education Category: Information Literacy

1. Please describe the assessment measures you used in your course.

   • If you utilized items on quizzes and/or items on multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank exams, please cut and paste sample items that correspond to each General Education Learning Objective (Attach copy of Assessment Form 1).

   • If you utilized components of essay exams and/or components of papers/projects, please attach the 1) text of the assignment and 2) either a sample scoring rubric or

   • If you utilized other assessment methods, please provide an example of the method and the criteria you used to measure student learning on the General Education Learning Objectives you used in your course.

2. In the space below or on a separate sheet of paper, indicate how the assessment measures you used enabled you to assess student success in meeting each learning objective.

3. Identify the number of students in the course who achieved at each level for each General Education Learning Objectives you used in your course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Literacy Learning Objectives</th>
<th>A/A- Exceeds</th>
<th>B+/B/B-/ C+/C/C- Meets</th>
<th>D+/D/D- Approaches</th>
<th>E Not Meets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. locate, evaluate, synthesize and use information from a variety of sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. understand and use basic research techniques appropriate to the course discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. understand the various ways in which information is organized and structured</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. understand the ethical issues involved in accessing and using information</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

**Call for Proposals**

**Instructional Innovation Grant (I2G)**
ITLAL invites applications by full-time UAlbany faculty for small grants for the purpose of developing and implementing significant changes in current instructional practices. These grants target innovations focused on practices to improve development of students’ motivation through increased curiosity and intellectual challenge. Creative use of problem- and inquiry-based approaches that will have an impact on large numbers of students are especially encouraged.

**Preview the application**

**Award amounts**
Individual faculty grant applications will be accepted for amounts up to $1000. These grants provide money to be used for small purchases of software, books, equipment, etc.--any materials that will facilitate your teaching. A limited number of larger grants will be awarded to proposals that deal with department or program level innovations focusing on improvement of undergraduate engagement and learning. Program-level grants are capped at $7,500, and require active participation by 4 or more faculty members.

**Priorities to be considered in this round**
Sustainability of impact is a key criterion in designing and planning your project. One-time supplemental activities (a field trip for students, for example) would carry less weight than would an innovation that would become a permanent part of your or your department’s instructional profile and practice. We urge you to consider looking at the literature on inquiry-based and problem-based practices, on team-based and collaborative learning, on making large lecture classes intellectually more engaging and rigorous, etc. ITLAL consultants will be happy to point you to relevant materials. You might also want to tour the Teaching Resources area of the ITLAL website, to identify key items that might inform your proposal.

In summary, we seek proposals on:

1. Instructional approaches, strategies, and techniques that foster student inquiry for increased intellectual engagement and rigor. Note that this does not apply to development of new curriculum content, but rather to methods, strategies, and techniques.
2. Instructional approaches, strategies, and techniques that intensify student interactivity and participation (team-based learning; student collaborations; interactive technologies)

**Allowable uses for an Instructional Innovation Grant Award**

- Books, instructional materials, etc.
- Student labor
- Hardware and Software
- Travel for research into instructional practices
- External consultant fees, travel expenses

*Awards may not be used for faculty release time.*
Application Process
Applications for an I2G must be submitted electronically, using the application form that can be found here.

Application and Award Timeline
Applications are due by February 8, 2008. Awards will be announced on February 15. Smaller awards will be distributed no later than March 3, 2008. Larger awards will be made available in two parts. $\frac{1}{2}$ the funding will be made available as soon as a contract is signed, no later than March 3, 2008. The balance will become available when key benchmarks have been met.

Application Form
Internal Assessment Review (9/04/03)

The purpose of this internal assessment process is twofold. First, it is to review the implementation of the new general education program, including the use of various assessment procedures. Second, it is to enlarge the conversation around implementation and assessment and to engage more faculty in the development, implementation, and assessment of general education on the campus. The overall and encompassing goal is, as always, to improve the quality of undergraduate education as it is presented in the general education program.

The procedures below guide the internal assessment review, which is being conducted by members of the General Education committee. Two subcommittees of the General Education committee will conduct the internal assessment process. One will review Arts and Social Sciences; the other will review Humanities and Natural Sciences. The committees will examine course syllabus, general education assessment results, and student perception surveys in order to report on the status of general education at UAlbany.

1. The subcommittees will review the syllabi of the courses approved for inclusion in their respective categories to determine whether the courses meet the general characteristics of General Education relevant to their category and the specific learning objectives of their category. The review will also determine to what extent the course syllabi include the general characteristics and learning objectives of a general education course. (See Appendix A.)

2. The subcommittees will review the assessment methodologies employed in courses in their respective categories that underwent assessment in 2002/2003. The purpose of this review will be to ensure that assessment methods were reported for each objective, to identify effective and ineffective assessment methods, and to make concrete suggestions for improvement wherever possible. (See Appendix B.)

3. The subcommittees will review the report of the Director of Assessment on the Student Perception Questionnaire for their respective categories. Subcommittees will identify patterns of strength and weakness in each category, and recommend areas in need of improvement. Subcommittees will also review the value of the Student Perception Questionnaire and make a recommendation as to its continuance or discontinuance.

4. The subcommittees will review the learning objectives developed for their respective categories to determine if they are indeed assessable.

5. The subcommittees will review the relation of courses chosen for assessment in 2002/2003 to those not chosen to determine what problems, if any, would emerge from going to a system of random selection.
6. In accord with Senate legislation, the subcommittee will recommend for each course that it 1) be continued for another three years; 2) be revised in order to be continued; 3) be discontinued as a general education course.

7. The subcommittees will issue a report on their findings, which will include their recommendations.
Appendix A
Internal Assessment Review
Syllabus Analysis-Arts

1) Does the course syllabus list the general characteristics of a general education course? Yes No
2) Does the course syllabus list the learning objectives for the category? Yes No

3) Does the course syllabus demonstrate that a course:

a) offers explicit understandings of the procedures and practices of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields
   Clearly Possibly No evidence

b) provides multiple perspectives on the subject matter, reflecting the intellectual and cultural diversity within and beyond the University
   Clearly Possibly No evidence

c) emphasizes active learning in an engaged environment that enables students to become producers as well as consumers of knowledge
   Clearly Possibly No evidence

d) promotes critical thinking about the assumptions, goals, and methods of various fields of academic study and the interpretive, analytic, and evaluative competencies central to intellectual development
   Clearly Possibly No evidence

4) Does the course syllabus demonstrate that students in the course will:

a) understand and/or practice of one form of artistic expression
   Clearly Possibly No evidence

b) recognize the differences and overlap between creative and critical thinking
   Clearly Possibly No evidence

c) understand the function and meaning of form
   Clearly Possibly No evidence

d) demonstrate that they have the vocabulary they need to continue to learn how art is made and interpreted
   Clearly Possibly No evidence

e) understand how art works are embedded within different cultures at different times and places
   Clearly Possibly No evidence

Recommendation:

| Course should be continued for 3 years | Syllabus needs revision to reflect general characteristics and/or learning objectives | Course needs revision to reflect general characteristics and/or learning objectives |

Please provide any comments on the reverse side of this form
Appendix B
Internal Assessment Review
Assessing Assessment Methods

The purpose of this review is to provide the General Education committee with an opportunity to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of our first cycle of outcomes assessment. Each member of the subcommittee will review the description of the assessment tools and procedures used in the courses in their review category that were assessed in academic 2002-2003, then share their results with other members of the subcommittees. Course descriptions will be provided but not the name of the faculty teaching the course. At the end of the review process, the subcommittee will issue a report of its findings, including examples of “best practice” and areas needing improvement in courses, categories, and the assessment procedure itself.

Course ___________________________  Reviewer Name ___________________________

1) Does the Assessment Form clearly identify the assessment methods (multiple choice, essays, in-class writing, etc.) used in the course?

Yes   No

2) Did the faculty member provide examples of the assessment methods used?

Yes   No

3) Does the Assessment Form indicate how the assessment methods (multiple choice, essays, in-class writing, etc.) were used to assess student learning on each learning objective?

Exemplary  Sufficient  Insufficient

4) Do you consider any aspect of the assessment process used in this course to belong in the category of “best practice”?

Yes   No

5) Do you consider any aspect of the assessment process used in this course to be seriously in need of improvement?

Yes   No

Comments:
Appendix B
Internal Assessment Review
Assessing Assessment Methods

The purpose of this review is to provide the General Education committee with an opportunity to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of our first cycle of outcomes assessment. Each member of the subcommittee will review the description of the assessment tools and procedures used in the courses in their review category that were assessed in academic 2002-2003, then share their results with other members of the subcommittees. Course descriptions will be provided but not the name of the faculty teaching the course. At the end of the review process, the subcommittee will issue a report of its findings, including examples of "best practice" and areas needing improvement in courses, categories, and the assessment procedure itself.

Course________________________ Reviewer Name________________________

1) Does the Assessment Form clearly identify the assessment methods (multiple choice, essays, in-class writing, etc.) used in the course?
   Yes          No

2) Did the faculty member provide examples of the assessment methods used?
   Yes          No

3) Does the Assessment Form indicate how the assessment methods (multiple choice, essays, in-class writing, etc.) were used to assess student learning on each learning objective?
   Exemplary  Sufficient  Insufficient

4) Do you consider any aspect of the assessment process used in this course to belong in the category of "best practice"?
   Yes          No

5) Do you consider any aspect of the assessment process used in this course to be seriously in need of improvement?
   Yes          No

Comments:
University Senate of the University at Albany

Resolution on Establishing a General Education Task Force

Introduced by the Senate Executive Committee at the February 8, 2010 Senate meeting, where it was discussed, amended, and approved in its current form

Whereas the SUNY Board of Trustees (BOT), at its January 19, 2010, meeting approved an amendment to Resolution # 98-241 concerning the SUNY General Education requirements, to be effective Fall 2010; and

Whereas one of the principal intents of the amendment is to facilitate the mobility of students from one SUNY institution to another; and

Whereas the amended BOT resolution does not limit campuses in establishing their own local Gen Ed requirements, as long as those local requirements meet the SUNY minimum; and

Whereas UAlbany’s current Gen Ed requirements meet and exceed the new SUNY minimum requirement, while current language in the undergraduate bulletin and agreements with SUNY create ambiguities and/or inconsistencies as to the relationship between UAlbany requirements and the new SUNY requirements; and

Whereas said ambiguities and/or inconsistencies may raise numerous questions for incoming students, including potential legal challenges; and

Whereas Interim SUNY Provost Lavallee encourages campuses to review their existing Gen Ed requirements in light of the changes in SUNY requirements to facilitate student mobility,

Be it Resolved to create a General Education Task Force composed of
a) Three or four members of UAC,
b) A representative from the Provost’s Office,
c) A representative from the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences,
d) A representative from the Student Association,
e) An additional six or seven full time faculty members with substantial experience in teaching General Education courses and with a demonstrated commitment to the evolving aims of General Education, the full membership selected so as to represent primarily and evenly the faculty involved in delivering the general education curriculum, and

Be it Resolved to have the Senate Chair and GOV Chair work together, in consultation with the Provost and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, to propose a slate of members of the Task Force and the Chair of that Task Force to the SEC, which shall vote on the proposed slate in an electronic vote; and
Be it Resolved to charge the Task Force to
   a) Identify and propose short term interim recommendations to address the needs of incoming students for Fall 2010;
   b) Submit such recommendations to the UAC and the Senate Executive Committee no later than Friday, March 19, 2010, and that such recommendations shall then be presented to the Senate for discussion and vote at the April 12, 2010 senate meeting;
   c) Initiate a review of UAlbany’s Gen Ed requirements, with the goal to develop one or several alternate models for Gen Ed requirements at UAlbany that are consistent with the SUNY requirements; and
   d) Provide a progress report to the Senate at the May 10, 2010 meeting; and

Be it Resolved to provide the Task Force with further instructions and guidance, as needed, at the May 10, 2010 meeting.
Introduction
The University at Albany affirms that the assessment of student learning should be driven by educational values, measured in a systematic manner over time, representative of the breadth and variety of the educational offerings in the program, driven by teaching faculty, supported by the administration, with the goal of improving student learning, teaching, and the program itself. It reaffirms that the results of the assessments it conducts will never be used to punish, publicly compare, or embarrass students, faculty, courses, programs, departments, or institutions either individually or collectively (Resolution 0304-05R, passed unanimously by the University Senate, April 19, 2004).

The General Education Assessment Plan 2010 - is intended to be specific enough to give the university community confidence that it meets its assessment responsibilities to the students, the public, SUNY, and Middle States, yet flexible enough to quickly and easily accommodate changes, and is mindful of the diversity of the General Education program at the University at Albany. Except where differences are noted, this plan applies to assessment of classes offered on campus and to those offered through the University in the High School (UHS) program.

Reporting Requirements

With the passage of the assessment resolution by the Board of Trustees on March 23, 2010, the University at Albany has been afforded greater flexibility in how it assesses its General Education learning goals. It remains responsible for meeting the requirements prescribed by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in Standard 12 and Standard 14 (2006).

- Standard 12 requires “assessment of general education outcomes within the institution’s overall plan for assessing student learning, and evidence that such assessment results are utilized for curricular improvement.”
- Standard 14 requires that accredited institutions have “clearly articulated statements of expected student learning outcomes,” and “a documented, organized and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning.” Further, that this process generates “assessment results that provide sufficient, convincing evidence, that students are achieving key institutional program learning outcomes,” provides “evidence that student learning information is shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and is used to improve teaching and learning,” and that there is a “documented use of student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment.”
This plan satisfies Middle States Standards 12 and 14.

Student Learning Objectives
The University at Albany will continue to use locally developed objectives that incorporate student learning outcomes defined by the SUNY Board of Trustees for all of the categories required for students enrolled on this campus.

Process
Each year, the Director of Assessment, after consultation with the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC), and the Council on Academic Assessment (CAA), will share with the CAA the assessment process to be followed in the next academic year.

The process will include on campus and UHS classes and will include the following:
- a list of which category or categories will be assessed
- the type of sample to be employed (e.g., representative, random)
- the size of the sample
- the components of the process (e.g., Form 1, 2, Student Perceptions Survey)
- methodology (e.g., course embedded, inter-rater reliability measures)

Unless otherwise proposed the assessment process for classes offered on the campus will include:
- documentation from each faculty member teaching a sampled class of how each learning objective is being addressed in class (currently in Form 1)
- documentation from each faculty member teaching a sampled class on the numbers of students completing at each level (currently in Form 2)
- the administration of the Student Perceptions Survey No change from current plan
- a review of data and materials by the GEAC No change from current plan
- a review of the process by the GEAC No change from current plan
- a written report by the GEAC to the CAA with recommendations No change from current plan
- a written report prepared by the Director of Assessment summarizing the results of the assessment No change from current practice
- a communication to the faculty whose classes were sampled, of their individual results and aggregate results of categories and surveys, prepared by the Director of Assessment No change from current practice
- feedback from GEAC will be shared with faculty

The assessment process in the University in the High School process will follow the campus process to the extent feasible. Unless otherwise indicated the assessment process for classes offered through the UHS program will include:
• documentation from each faculty member teaching a sampled class of how each learning objective is being addressed in class (currently in Form 1)
• documentation from each faculty member teaching a sampled class on the numbers of students completing at each level (currently in Form 2)
• a review of data and materials by the GEAC  No change from current plan
• a review of the process by the GEAC  No change from current plan
• a written report by the GEAC to the CAA with recommendations No change from current practice
• a written report prepared by the Director of Assessment summarizing the results of the assessment No change from current practice

Sample

a) The sample will be chosen by the Director of Assessment in consultation with the Associate Dean for General Education. No change from current practice

b) A statistically viable sample size will be determined by the Director of Assessment in consultation with the Associate Dean for General Education. Previous the sample needed to be at least 20% of students enrolled in any given category being assessed. Change is to choose N that is statistically viable, but not driven by a specific percentage.

c) The sample will usually exclude faculty who recently completed General Education assessment for a course listed in another category.

d) There may be instances when the General Education Assessment Committee, Director of Assessment, or Associate Dean for General Education may determine that a follow up assessment is needed. In that case, a faculty member may be asked to submit additional information.

c) Current process has not included any follow up. New plan would allow for select follow up assessment when an area of concern is identified by the GEAC/Associate Dean/Director of Assessment. The Associate Dean with the assistance of the Director of Assessment, if needed, will be responsible for the follow up assessment.

Cycle of assessment
Responsibility for developing a cycle of assessment (ensuring that each category of the program is assessed at least twice – GEAC) that satisfies Middle States requirements for an ongoing process resides with the Director of Assessment in consultation with the Associate Dean for General Education.

This is new. The cycle is no longer governed by the SUNY mandate.

Outcomes
The General Education Assessment Committee has determined the following standards for mapping the relation between the University at Albany’s undergraduate grading system and the required reporting categories: A, A- = Exceeding; B+, B, B-, C+, C, C- = Meeting; D+, D, D- = Approaching; and E = Not Meeting. Faculty will grade student performance with respect to each student learning outcome in the respective category and report these grades as they are distinct from the overall course grade. No change from current plan

Internal Review Process
Responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the assessment plan resides with the General Education Assessment Committee. Following each academic year, the General Education Assessment Committee will conduct an internal review of the General Education assessment process and materials. Faculty reports and supporting materials will be provided to committee members by the Director of Assessment after individual identifying information has been redacted.

Version 1. The purpose of the GEAC review is 1) to ensure that assessment methods and sample items were reported for each objective; 2) to identify effective and ineffective assessment methods; and 3) to make concrete suggestions for improvement or changes wherever possible. The process of review will be determined by the GEAC committee in consultation with the CAA. These are the purposes of the reviews from the current plan. Suggestion would be to not spell out the process at the level of detail the previous plan did. If the purposes of the review are clear, then the committees can decide on their approach to review (which may even change year to year).

Version 2: The purpose of the GEAC review is to help ensure that 1) the university has a documented, organized and sustained assessment process, 2) assessment results provide sufficient, convincing evidence of the extent to which students are achieving the learning outcomes, 3) assessment results are used for curricular improvement and to improve student learning, 4) the results are shared with appropriate constituents and are used to improve teaching and learning, and 5) there is a documented use of General Education student learning assessment information in institutional assessment.
Some food for thought – I’ve changed the goals of the GEAC review which still adheres to its Senate charge, but ties into Middle States requirements (see above). Again, there is not detail here about how to review the documents, which may be desirable or not.

The GEAC will prepare a report for the Council on Academic Assessment on its findings with recommendations for improvement. The CAA discusses the findings and recommendations and determines any further action or recommendation to another council or committee for action. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the CAA to follow up with other Council Chairs on recommendations made to their Councils. The GEAC’s report is also shared with the General Education Committee.
The only change here is specifically putting the responsibility for closing the governance loop among Councils in the hands of the CAA Chair.

Although the GEAC reviews materials anonymously, it may find issues of concern in documents submitted for a particular course. It may recommend that the Associate Dean for General Education contact a faculty member regarding such issues as unresponsiveness to requests for materials, a syllabus that lacks information required by Senate legislation, or concerns about how the learning objectives are being incorporated into course materials. Responsibility for addressing individual issues of concern resides with the Associate Dean for General Education. The GEAC may request to know if a follow up has been made, but not the details or identity of the faculty member. This paragraph is new. It is something that is done now, but not spelled out in the plan.

Feedback Loop

Responsibility for reporting assessment results to the faculty community is the responsibility of the Director of Assessment. No change from current practice

- Faculty whose classes were sampled will receive the aggregate results of the direct assessments in their category as soon as they are available. No change from current practice

- Faculty whose classes were sampled and whose students completed the Perceptions Survey will receive their individual results and the aggregate results of their category as soon as they are available. No change from current practice

- Faculty who taught in any of the sampled categories will receive by email a notice of when the executive summary report of findings is posted. No change from current practice

Assessment of the Assessment Plan

The plan itself, like assessment, should be a dynamic document that is reviewed and updated periodically, and when necessary, after appropriate governance and administrative review. Proposed changes to the plan can be made to the GEAC, which will bring those it supports to the CAA for approval. The CAA Chair will be responsible for bringing changes it approves to the University Senate as appropriate and required by the University Senate Charter.

***
Gen Ed Assessment Process Proposal for 2010-11

Three-semester process with Math as experiment

- Faculty working group #1 – review objectives/determine appropriate tools/rubric
- Faculty sample group #2 – classes sampled/ small randomly chosen sub-set of student artifacts
- Faculty review group #3 - GEAC + ad hoc group of category experts/review /second readers

Fall 2010

1. Campus
   - Assess Math classes using faculty created rubrics
   - Tool: final exam questions/other student work
   - Sample: all classes because not done since 2003-04 (approx 68 classes) (3285 students/cap)
   - collect of small randomly chosen sub-set of student artifacts across the three types of courses offered

2. UHS
   - Assess Math classes using campus rubric
   - Tool: final exam questions
   - Sample: representative group from approx 37 schools/109 classes/1295 students including
   - collect of small randomly chosen sub-set of student artifacts

Spring 2011

1. Review of Math assessments by GEAC with Math ad hoc group from campus (and UHS when reviewing UHS materials)
   a) review material
   b) do a second read of the random sub-set of sample
   c) report and recommendations

2. Begin review of Oral Discourse learning objectives by Faculty Group #1
   - involve UHS faculty in discussion, either via email or in person
   - review objectives/determine appropriate tools/rubric
Fall 2011

1. Campus
   - Assess Oral Discourse classes (using faculty created rubric)
     - collection of small sub-set of student artifacts (random)

2. UHS
   - assess representative group using campus rubric
   - Tool: TBD
   - collect of small randomly chosen sub-set of student artifacts
CAA brainstorm re incentivizing assessment planning
1/10

Categories based on brainstorm

1. Continue working on the creation of an assessment culture
   a. Give depts. more flexibility about how they report: Let them propose how
      they report [does not presume good asmnt reports already done]; more
      local control for depts re asmnt. E.g., on a case by case basis, we could
      accept accreditor’s requirements for reporting formats. “Ask Sue F.”
   b. Explain how asmnt is a good thing for them.
   c. Provide incentives for faculty to attend workshops like those at ITLAL.
   d. Have an asmnt day, include admin as well as academic depts., include best
      practices.
   e. Departmental asmnt champions/coordinators get release time to ensure
      asmnt practices are implemented; perhaps a rotating position.
   f. Ask the current 5 asmnt coordinators for feedback re what they need.
   g. Write a job description for asmnt coordinators.
   h. Coordinate dept coordinators into a larger group that works together.
   i. Provide funds for a retreat (not necessarily annual).
   j. Identify departments the clearly benefitted from the asmnt process and…?
   k. Attend chair’s meetings; get on the agenda and…?

2. Reward good assessment planning
   a. Excuse departments with extraordinarily good assessment plans from
      reporting for one year, or ask for an abbreviated report.
   b. Feature depts. that have produced very good assessment plans on the IRPE
      website
   c. Provide cash awards for very good assessment plans, e.g. $2k from
      Provosts’ office funds

3. Provide incentives for good assessment planning
   a. Excuse departments with extraordinarily good assessment plans from
      reporting for one year
   b. Tie funds to making changes articulated in the asmnt plans
   c. Co-author papers with faculty who produce good assessment plans
   d. Count asmnt plan development and implementation as university service
      for tenure and promotion; encourage faculty to include a discussion of
      asmnt in their teaching and curriculum materials.

To Do

1. Discuss any items on the list in need of clarification
2. Identify items that can and should be carried out with few or no new resources
3. Make recommendation re such items to appropriate faculty or staff
4. Identify items that can and should be done but require new resources
5. Create proposals for such resources
CAA brainstorm re incentivizing assessment planning
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Categories based on brainstorm

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<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>Oral Discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>Basic Comm/ Crit Th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle II</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Social/Hum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>Europe/Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>US Div/US History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>Foreign Lang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9*</td>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>Fall 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2022</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>Fall 2022</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2023</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>Fall 2023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 13</td>
<td>Fall 2024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2025</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part 1 Review of the Process Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling of classes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the current method of selecting the sample fair to faculty? Is the sample representative of the program?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing and distribution of assessment documents and info</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the current schedule for the distribution and collection of forms/surveys/syllabi reminders/workshops reasonable and helpful?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time commitment for faculty</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the time required to complete the assessment forms reasonable?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration of survey</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the process and timing for administering the survey reasonable and effective?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative support</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there sufficient administrative support (workshops, information session, mid-stream assistance) for faculty engaged in Gen Ed assessment?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there a sufficient and timely methods for providing feedback to faculty/students/administration about the results of the assessment?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part 2 Review of the Assessment Components

#### A. Student Perceptions Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey design and format</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the questions on the survey clearly stated and necessary?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Survey results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the survey provide usable evidence about student perceptions of their General Education courses? Are they, in aggregate, useful as a basis for making recommendations to the program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation to: 
Recommendation: 

### Survey feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there an effective mechanism for providing feedback to the faculty/students/administration about the results of the survey?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation to: 
Recommendation: 

### B. Syllabi

#### Syllabi review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the review of syllabi a necessary part of the committee’s process? Is the process for the review of the syllabi clear and effective? Does the review provide evidence of how sampled classes are addressing the learning objectives?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation to: 
Recommendation: 

#### Syllabi feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there a clear and effective mechanism in place for giving feedback to faculty about their syllabi?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation to: 
Recommendation: 

### C. Content on Assessment Forms

#### Forms 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the forms well-designed and easy to use? Do they enable instructors to clearly document their assessments? Are both forms useful to the assessment process (participants) and the review process (GEAC)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation to: 
Recommendation: 

#### Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the objectives measurable and appropriate for the courses being assessed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation to: 
Recommendation: 

#### Assessment tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the current process make it possible to determine if the tools used in the sampled classes are appropriate and valid?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation to: 
Recommendation:
## Supporting materials
Are the supporting materials (samples, syllabi) necessary and useful in reviewing the assessment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation to:</th>
<th>Recommendation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Results
Do the results reported on Form 2 seem useful to the participants? Are they used as a basis for course planning?
Are they, in aggregate, useful as a basis for making recommendations to the program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation to:</th>
<th>Recommendation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Standards
Are the current standards to which student performance is measured relative to the learning outcomes acceptable?
(Exceeding=A,A-/Met= B+ through C-/Approached= D+,D,D- / Not met = E)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation to:</th>
<th>Recommendation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Part 3 Review of GEAC Communication with other entities

### Communication with governance
Is there an effective process for communicating with other governance bodies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation to:</th>
<th>Recommendation:</th>
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</thead>
</table>

### Communication with administration
Is there effective process for communicating with the administration?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation to:</th>
<th>Recommendation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Communication with faculty
Is there an effective process for communicating with the faculty?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation to:</th>
<th>Recommendation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>