

**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.