INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLAN

AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PROVOST’S ASSESSMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
February 9, 2005
APPENDIX E – PROTOCOL FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN RESEARCH, PUBLIC SERVICE, ACADEMIC SUPPORT, AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES........................................................................................................ 43
OVERVIEW OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLAN

The primary purpose of the University at Albany Institutional Assessment Plan is to ensure a high-quality academic experience for its students and to promote institutional effectiveness in achieving University goals. The University’s long-term vision and goals are described by its Mission Statement and statements of Strategic Values and Goals. Shorter-term objectives and guidance to inform assessment processes are offered by various University planning documents, such as the Mission Review II and SUNY Memorandum of Understanding compacts, as well as by divisional and school/college strategic plans. Within these frameworks, the University at Albany Institutional Assessment Plan provides a road map and expectations for assessment processes that are used throughout the institution to fulfill its mission.

While the Institutional Assessment Plan formalizes assessment activity on the University at Albany campuses, it also acknowledges UAlbany’s long history of using assessment to inform campus decision-making on a number of levels with regard to programmatic and operational matters that affect student social, intellectual, and personal development. It is important to note that many of the ongoing activities described in the Institutional Assessment Plan did not arise in response to the Assessment Plan, but rather gave rise to it. Assessment and linkages to planning and decision-making across the University at Albany precede the more recent national call to arms for accountability in teaching, learning, and institutional effectiveness. Hence, this Institutional Assessment Plan is better viewed as a formal statement of operating procedures at the University at Albany, State University of New York. The Institutional Assessment Plan, as detailed in this document, enhances past assessment activity by laying out a comprehensive approach across the institution with regard to offices and programs included, assessment plan standards, implementation consistency, and documentation of assessment activity. The Institutional Assessment Plan is a shared statement of the University community, and a commitment to share assessment results with students and other concerned parties in support of an institutional culture of assessment.

The approach to assessment throughout the University at Albany is to establish assessment activities on the basis of the institution’s mission and strategic goals (see Appendix A). Underlying this approach is the belief that “good assessment is good research” and that, as a research university, UAlbany possesses the faculty and staff expertise, and the conviction, to use this expertise to evaluate itself, seek improvements, and demonstrate its efficiency and effectiveness in a manner transparent to its various stakeholders.

While many of the examples and supporting materials in this document relate specifically to the institution’s teaching mission, this does not minimize the importance of assessing functions that serve the research and public service missions of the University. Assessment activities promote operational effectiveness and efficiency across the University.
DEFINITION OF ASSESSMENT

It is helpful to consider a formal definition of assessment to center an understanding of the assessment process and the scope of the UAlbany Institutional Assessment Plan. A good starting point is a widely accepted definition of assessment as it relates to student learning:

“Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education.” (Thomas A. Angelo, AAHE Bulletin, November 1995, p. 7)

However comprehensive this definition appears, it is singularly focused on student learning. While student learning may be the primary emphasis of assessment research and public concern, the historical University at Albany approach to assessment, as exemplified by the UAlbany Outcomes Assessment Model (Appendix B), is predicated on a long tradition of higher education research (e.g., Tinto, Pacarella, Terenzini, Kuh, Hossler and others) that explicitly recognizes the vital role of myriad collegiate experiences upon student personal, intellectual, and cognitive development. As such, the many opportunities for interaction that students have with campus support services, the residential experience, and the research and public service pursuits of the University are critically important to student success and student satisfaction with the academic experience. A comprehensive approach to assessment must explicitly recognize that the operations of administrative units also add to the complexity of the organizational milieu upon which institutional effectiveness is predicated, as they support the University’s student learning, research, and public service missions. The practice of making expectations explicit, developing metrics to gauge success, and using evaluation results to retool what we do in and out of the classroom all contribute to institutional effectiveness when viewed in terms of University mission.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLES

Each unit, in accordance with the direction and approval of its respective dean and/or vice president, is responsible for developing assessment plans and timetables for their implementation. An assessment implementation cycle should spread assessment activities over a multi-year period so that, in any given year, at least one aspect of the assessment plan, whether it be the definition of learning or service goals, the development of performance metrics, data collection and analysis of results, or discussions about incorporating assessment results into curriculum review or redesigning operations is being implemented. An important end goal of any assessment plan, whether enacted by an academic or non-academic administrative unit, is to institute a continuous process of reflection and improvement over time. The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee looks to the deans and vice presidents to ensure timely implementation of their units’ assessment plans.
A secondary goal of phasing in assessment plan implementation in manageable steps is to afford units the time to discuss assessment findings with program or unit faculty, staff, and students, and to benefit from the feedback of faculty governance assemblies. Deliberatively paced and manageable implementation also provides opportunities to document how assessment results have been used to affirm or improve the level of student learning or service quality.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

In developing the University at Albany Institutional Assessment Plan, The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee points to the 9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning put forward by the American Association of Higher Education Assessment Forum as principles that underlie the University at Albany approach to assessing institutional effectiveness. While these assessment principles were developed to address issues of teaching and learning, the University finds many of these principles are also relevant to the broad spectrum of institutional activities that support the achievement of other institutional goals.

1. **The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.** Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only what we choose to assess but also how we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what’s easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.

2. **Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.** Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students’ educational experience.

3. **Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.** Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations—those derived from the institution’s mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students’ own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.
4. **Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.** Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students “end up” matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way—about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

5. **Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic.** Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, “one-shot” assessment can be better than none, improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracking the process of individual students, or of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.

6. **Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.** Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment’s questions can’t be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/ae, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.

7. **Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.** Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that faculty, staff, and students really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return “results”; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.

8. **Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.** Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the
institution’s planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.

9. **Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.** There is a compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation—to ourselves, our students, and society—is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.

   In addition, the Advisory Committee has been guided by the following principles that seem particularly suitable to the University at Albany:

   **Goals and Process**

10. **This assessment initiative must respect the diversity that exists among UAlbany’s academic and non-academic programs, especially their missions and varied implementations of their assessment plans.** Efforts must be made to allow programs and support units the flexibility to assess their activities in ways that make sense to them (e.g., capstone courses, comprehensive exams, performance experience, senior essays, student portfolios, etc.) so that they will utilize the results of their assessments.

11. **Good assessment practice requires continuous communication among faculty/staff, departments, UAlbany administration, and the University Senate and its councils.** This should include an ongoing dialogue regarding assessment activities and findings, and a periodic evaluation of the assessment process itself, whether in academic or non-academic units. Such review will enable individual programs and institutional leaders to determine if the process is producing the kind of information that can lead to improvements in student learning and support services, and that improvements in programs are being made on the basis of assessment results.

12. **In order to minimize the resource strain on individual units, operating units should 1) seek efficiencies by embedding assessment into current or planned activities to the extent possible, and 2) implement their assessment plans in manageable steps over a multi-year period.** The University recognizes that developing and implementing assessment activities in a resource-constrained environment is an extremely challenging endeavor. Therefore, units are encouraged to explore opportunities to incorporate ongoing activities into their assessment processes. The University, SUNY, and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, as well as numerous higher education associations, all recognize that developing a strong institutional culture of assessment takes time and patience to establish.

*Regarding Faculty and Student Involvement, we adhere to the principles that:*
13. **With regard to student learning, good assessment practice requires that faculty be an integral part of the process.** This results from a process in which assessment is approached as an opportunity for collaborative goal-setting for academic programs. Indeed, assessment can only be accomplished if there is agreement at the outset on program goals and if assessment is connected to questions and issues that program faculty and professional staff care about. This is vitally important to closing the feedback loop between the results of assessment and their use by program faculty and staff to improve the curriculum or operations. Faculty and staff involvement internalizes the improvement process on its own merits and makes it less dependent on the perseverance of external oversight bodies.

14. **Good assessment practice requires that students are an integral part of the process.** Inasmuch as program improvement ultimately benefits students, academic programs and support units should educate students regarding the importance of assessment and involve them in the development of their assessment plans to the extent possible. Plans for institutional-level outcomes assessments should provide for including students across the assessment cycle.

**Organizational Structure of the Assessment Process**

**Vice Presidential Leadership**

Each University vice president is responsible for developing a divisional assessment plan that ensures units affecting the student experience or impacting the achievement of institutional goals engage in formal assessment processes consistent with the five *UAlbany Assessment Protocol Components*. According to this *Protocol*, each assessment plan should

1. identify goals and objectives within the framework of institutional and divisional mission
2. develop qualitative and quantitative metrics to determine whether goals and objectives are being achieved
3. incorporate the results of assessments into ongoing operations, planning and budgeting decisions
4. document processes of evaluation and improvement
5. detail plans for communicating assessment plans and how assessment results are used to various campus constituencies

Divisional and departmental assessment plans and activity reports will be forwarded or made available to appropriate Senate councils in order to keep the University community fully apprised of the campus assessment process, and to provide opportunities for sharing of best practices, and collegial review of assessment practices. The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee is charged with annually reviewing and promoting this flow of information.
Dean Leadership

In accordance with existing organizational lines of reporting responsibility, deans are ultimately responsible for the development and implementation of assessment plans (according to the *UAlbany Assessment Protocol Components* noted earlier) as they regard teaching and student learning in the academic programs within their schools and colleges. The deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies are responsible for the assessment of University-wide programs encompassing their respective student charges.

In order to ensure that assessment plans are reasonably implemented, each dean shall ensure that the academic departments under their purview provide annual assessment activity reports for each academic program. Annual assessment activity reports of the academic units should:

- state the learning goals assessed in that year;
- describe the metrics or assessment instruments used;
- discuss assessment findings; and
- If applicable, indicate how the findings have been used to influence the curriculum.

Annual assessment reports should be brief and adhere to the points noted above.

In accordance with the pre-existing practice of sharing academic assessment plans with the University Senate Council on Academic Assessment (CAA) for review and comment, deans are asked to forward or make available the annual assessment activity summaries for their academic programs to the CAA for review and comment.

Role of University Senate Councils

The Institutional Assessment Plan recognizes the benefits of participatory and collegial faculty governance in seeking quality and efficiencies across the University. Each of the following University Senate councils is represented on the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee by its chair or the chair’s designee:

- University Planning and Policy Council (UPC)
- Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC)
- Graduate Academic Council (GAC)
- Council on Academic Assessment (CAA)
- University Life Council (ULC)
- Governance Council
- Council on Research (RES)
- Nanoscale Science and Engineering Faculty Senate

These Senate representatives will confer with their respective councils regarding the business of the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee to ensure that this important advisory body incorporates perspectives from teaching faculty, professional staff, and students into its deliberations and recommendations.
Senate councils are also asked to review divisional and unit assessment plans and activity reports, and to provide feedback to the authoring units. This two-way information flow will provide opportunities to share best practices and for the collegial review of assessment practices. The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee is charged with annually reviewing and promoting this flow of information.

The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee

The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee, an advisory body to the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, is charged with ensuring that University at Albany policies, procedures, and guidelines regarding assessment-related activities meet internal needs and external mandates.

The Advisory Committee’s general roles include

1. identifying when and where financial and administrative support is needed to support and advance assessment on the campus
2. advocating assessment and committing to the implementation of a culture of assessment on the campus
3. familiarizing its members with Middle States accreditation standards, particularly Standard 7 (Institutional Assessment) and Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning)

The Advisory Committee’s charge can be broken down into three goals that will shape its future agenda:

- **Goal 1:** drafting an Institutional Assessment Plan and periodically reviewing and updating that plan
- **Goal 2:** working with the vice presidents and deans to create organizational structures to implement and support assessment within each division by
  1. prompting each unit to identify its mission, goals, and objectives within the framework of institutional and divisional mission
  2. assisting units in determining how to measure whether their goals and objectives are being achieved and how to use evaluative measures to improve services and processes
  3. developing linkages between the assessment process and planning and resource allocation functions
  4. aiding units to document these processes of evaluation and improvement
• **Goal 3:** By virtue of goals 1 and 2, the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee will play a significant role in positioning the University to comply with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education’s (MSCHE) accreditation standards. This committee will review the MSCHE Periodic Review Report due in June 2005 and play a major role in drafting the 2010 MSCHE Self-Study Report.

The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee shall include representatives of the following University constituencies:

**Provost’s Office:**
Assistant VP for Strategic Planning & Assessment  
Assistant VP for Enrollment Management

**Faculty/Staff:**
University Planning and Policy Council (UPC)  
Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC)  
Graduate Academic Council (GAC)  
Council on Academic Assessment (CAA)  
University Life Council (ULC)  
Library and Information Systems Council (LISC)  
Council on Research (RES)  
Nanoscale Faculty Senate

**Vice Presidential Divisions:**
Advancement  
Finance & Business  
University Auxiliary Services  
Research  
Student Affairs  
Nanoscale Science and Engineering  
President

**Deans:**  
Graduate Dean  
Undergraduate Dean  
School of Business  
College of Arts and Sciences  
School of Criminal Justice  
School of Education  
University Libraries  
College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering  
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy  
School of Information Science and Policy  
School of Public Health  
School of Social Welfare

**Students:**
Undergraduate
Depending heavily upon the Director of Assessment and the Assistant Vice President for Strategic Planning and Assessment, the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee will be asked to:

1. prepare an inventory of past, present, and future assessment activities
2. help to identify and disseminate assessment best practices
3. maintain a Web site making assessment resources available to faculty and staff
4. maintain a library of campus assessment documents to be used in the preparation of summary reports for Middle States, site visits, and for internal departmental use
5. assist the vice presidential divisions and their units in organizing and implementing assessment activities

**FOCAL POINTS OF INTROSPECTION**

The focal points of introspection with regard to assessment are very much interrelated. For example, student experiences in institution-wide programs like freshmen advisement in the Advisement Services Center have implications for subsequent student study in the major. The support and services of the University Libraries or Information Technology Services (ITS) have direct consequences for success in the academic disciplines, notwithstanding their many other campus-wide impacts. Linkages also exist between teaching and learning, student support services, other administrative services, and the research and public service missions of the University. The following delineation of the focal points of introspection into student learning (on three different levels) and non-academic and administrative services exist more for the organizational purposes of the Assessment Plan than for making distinctions between these important and interrelated activities.

**Assessment of Student Learning**

**Institutional-Level Outcomes**

Institutional-level outcomes span disciplinary and administrative unit boundaries. As such, no program, operating unit, or faculty/staff member is singularly responsible for the achievement of institutional-level outcomes. Student preparedness for further academic study or careers, or student intellectual, personal, and social growth, are examples of institutional-level outcomes. These outcomes are often assessed by employing metrics, such as graduation rates, degrees of student engagement and performance, satisfaction, and placement of graduates, as well as research into the reasons why some students withdraw or leave the University prior to graduation. The Institutional Assessment Plan recognizes and commends the longstanding role of the Office of Institutional Research in developing agendas to research and assess these areas of institutional importance. It is expected that the Office of Institutional Research will also
continue to expand its role by developing a formal plan to assess general institutional-level student learning outcomes.

More specific institutional learning outcomes are detailed under the UAlbany General Education Program, as noted in the following sections. The General Education Program assessment plan specified in Appendix C examines these institutional-level outcomes separately from the more generalized and less tangible goals noted earlier.

University-wide programs, including, but not limited to, the University Libraries, Information Technology Services, Academic Support Services, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), the Advisement Services Center, Project Renaissance, and the Presidential Scholar Program, are also assessed on an institutional-level because the impact of these programs spans academic programs and the intellectual, social, and personal development of all students, regardless of curriculum. Programs of this nature are expected to develop and implement assessment plans that address their unique missions and goals and their impact on student development. These assessments will be coordinated under the auspices of the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs and/or the dean of Undergraduate Studies and the dean of Graduate Studies, as appropriate.

In general, these assessment plans should adhere to the five UAlbany Assessment Protocol Components noted earlier on page 6.

General Education Outcomes

The University at Albany has long been committed to General Education with an emphasis on breadth, coherence and critical inquiry as an integral component of an undergraduate degree. The requirements set by the SUNY Trustees’ mandate were used as a foundation for reorganizing the General Education curriculum into five major categories, providing students with an underlying framework for the knowledge and competencies included in the curriculum. Courses in the category of Disciplinary Perspectives provide an understanding of basic material and an understanding of how scholars in these areas think about the discovery of new knowledge. Courses in the category of Cultural and Historical Perspectives provide an understanding of the history and development of the United States and an ability to place this knowledge in the context of the world. Courses in the category of Communication and Reasoning Competencies provide an ability to locate relevant sources of information (both in print and digital formats); to use critical thinking to evaluate the quality of information and organize it into a cogent argument; and to present it to others, orally or in writing. Courses in Mathematics and Statistics provide an ability to understand quantitative reasoning and perform data analysis. Courses in Foreign Language provide an opportunity to learn about another culture through acquisition of a basic ability to speak a foreign language.

In addition, the University faculty added local requirements: a second course in both the social sciences and the natural sciences; a course in the category of U.S. Pluralism and Diversity, and a course in the category of Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives; completion of the second semester of foreign language; and division of the communication requirement into an oral discourse and two written discourse courses. The latter requirement builds on the University
tradition of “Writing Across the Curriculum,” and most departments offer upper-level, research-focused courses that provide the student an opportunity to do research in his or her chosen field, and to present findings orally in class and in writing. A General Education Committee of the University Senate is charged with reviewing courses for inclusion in the General Education curriculum and for ensuring adequate courses to permit students to complete the requirements in a timely fashion. The full General Education Program is available at http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/general_education.html.

The University at Albany General Education Assessment Plan is detailed in Appendix C. Faculty-defined learning objectives for each General Education disciplinary area are detailed at http://www.albany.edu/gened/learnoutcome.html.

Academic Program and Course-Level Outcomes

Established procedures guide the review of undergraduate and graduate programs on a seven-year review cycle (Appendix D). UAlbany academic programs formally develop assessment plans as part of the program review Self-Study developed every seven-years, and implement them throughout the intervening years. The approach to developing program assessment plans has been quite varied, and this is encouraged, as each academic program is unique in its own right and necessarily tailors its assessment plan to what works for that particular program. However, in general, each academic program’s assessment plan should adhere to the five UAlbany Assessment Protocol Components noted earlier on page 6.

Guidelines regarding the specific content that each section of a program assessment plan should include are also detailed in Appendix D.

Organizational Structure of the Academic Program Review and Assessment Planning Processes

The provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, the campus’s chief academic officer, is ultimately responsible for overseeing the academic program review process through the offices of the dean of Undergraduate Studies and the dean of Graduate Studies. Academic program reviews, and the assessment plan component therein, are written by the faculty within the program. In addition to review by the undergraduate and graduate deans, and each respective departmental chair and dean, each program self-study, assessment plan, and external reviewer report are subject to reviews by a number of University constituencies. These include: the University Faculty Senate’s Council on Academic Assessment; the Undergraduate Academic Council; and the Graduate Academic Council; in accordance with University Senate bylaws. These review documents are also submitted to the SUNY provost, in accordance with the policies of the State University of New York.

As noted earlier, each dean will facilitate the provision and sharing of annual reports concerning assessment plan implementation of the academic programs under his/her purview with the Council on Academic Assessment. The staff of the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee will be charged with providing an efficient means of capturing these reports in an electronic format that can be utilized to support assessment activity in other disciplines across the campus and also to demonstrate to external bodies the University’s commitment to assessment.
It is worth underscoring that not every learning objective must be assessed each year. The University recognizes the multiple demands on faculty and staff time, and encourages academic programs to assess different learning goals cyclically so that over the seven-year program review period, all program learning goals will be assessed thoroughly at least once, if not multiple times.

Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness in Research, Public Service, Academic Support, and Administrative Services

As noted in the Overview to the Institutional Assessment Plan, the University at Albany has a long tradition of assessing its overall student learning environment and essential student support services. While the SUNY Student Opinion Survey (SOS) in use since the mid-1980s has been a primary instrument for assessing student service and administrative units across vice presidential divisions, both local and nationally designed assessment instruments have also been employed. The variety of approaches to these assessments is strongly encouraged by the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee. As with academic program assessment, no two operating units are the same, particularly given their diverse missions.

While a diversity of approaches to assessing the research, public service, and administrative endeavors of operational units is desirable and welcome, the University at Albany’s Institutional Assessment Plan specifies a standardized approach that units undergoing assessment should adhere to. Specifically, each unit, as designated by its vice president, shall develop an assessment plan that adheres to the five UAlbany Assessment Protocol Components noted earlier on page 6.

Appendix E, Suggested Protocol for the Assessment of Research, Public Service, Academic Support, and Administrative Services, provides a step-by-step guide for the development of assessment plans in these non-disciplinary units. The assistant vice president for Strategic Planning and Assessment is available to provide necessary planning assistance to operating units. Once these units begin developing their assessment plans and specifying their missions and objectives, Office of Institutional Research resources will be available for consultation in developing and administering appropriate metrics and survey instruments, as needed.

To ensure that assessment activities are truly continuous in nature, it is expected that each unit will provide annual assessment progress reports to its respective vice president. The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee will provide assistance in developing the means to capture these reports electronically in order to facilitate the sharing of information with both internal and external constituencies. As units fully engage the assessment processes outlined in the Institutional Assessment Plan, they will modify or perhaps reformulate their assessment plans on a periodic basis, as needed.
LINKAGES BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION FUNCTIONS

Assessment processes serve to foster internal improvement and institutional effectiveness, and work best when they are primarily driven by the institution’s explicit goals and objectives. The Institutional Assessment Plan looks to the University’s Mission Statement and statements of Strategic Values and Goals to identify important directions, which are also articulated in Mission Review II and the SUNY Memorandum of Understanding documents.

Assessment provides an opportunity to review the congruence between goals and practices. Therefore, its function is descriptive and informative, rather than evaluative and summative. With the goal to improve unit effectiveness across the University, data-based evidence of performance should be noted in departmental, school/college, vice-presidential, and institutional planning and budget documents.

By their very nature, assessment processes inform the planning and resource allocation functions of the University at its various levels. However, while assessment activities in academic and administrative units can inform resource-allocation, it is important to note that assessment results are not part of any formulae that distribute resources across or within vice-presidential divisions. Assessment-based information is only one of a number of factors contributing to decision-making at various levels of the University.

The University’s institutional assessment plan lays a decision-making foundation that embraces University values and resolve. The assessment process also provides an impetus for the campus to discuss the institution’s explicit operating priorities and principles at various levels. In the midst of the challenges facing it, the University seeks to undertake assessment to identify ways to serve its many constituencies and to carry out its many missions. Assessment processes, transparent and informed, achieve these ends.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ASSESSMENT

The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee

The Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee is a standing committee charged with developing the Institutional Assessment Plan and guiding its implementation. The Committee’s goals and responsibilities were outlined earlier in the “Organizational Structure of the Assessment Process” section.

As noted earlier, this committee, an advisory body to the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, is charged with ensuring that University at Albany policies, procedures, and guidelines regarding assessment-related activities meet internal needs and external mandates. This body is expected to be a proactive guardian and promoter of assessment throughout the University.

Administrative Support
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and General Education

The associate dean for Undergraduate Studies and General Education is responsible for the design and implementation of the General Education Assessment Plan.

Director of Assessment

The director of Assessment is responsible for assisting faculty in the design, implementation, and utilization of academic assessment processes to improve teaching and learning in the General Education Program and in the major. The director coordinates the academic program review process, which subsumes departmental assessment activities.

The director of Assessment’s primary responsibilities include

1. coordinating and shepherding the academic program review process
2. assisting program faculty with the identification of course and program learning goals
3. assisting program faculty in the development of appropriate assessment metrics
4. collecting, reviewing, and analyzing reports from faculty on their use of outcomes assessments
5. collecting, reviewing, reporting, and maintaining records on General Education courses
6. overseeing distribution and analysis of student perception surveys
7. assisting the General Education Committee in the process of internal review and assessment of General Education courses
8. staffing the University Council on Academic Assessment and as well as the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee

Assistant Vice President for Strategic Planning and Assessment

The assistant vice president for Strategic Planning and Assessment is the campus’s chief assessment officer. In addition to serving as a senior advisor to the provost and University president on assessment and planning matters, the assistant vice president is responsible for recommending policies and activities that ensure campus compliance with external mandates. In terms of particular support for the operating units, the assistant vice president

1. works with the director of Assessment and the Undergraduate and Graduate deans to oversee the academic program review process
2. acts as an assessment ombudsman to departments and units, and to vice presidents and deans
3. assists administrative and student support units in developing their assessment plans
4. consults with research, public service, administrative, and student support units to develop appropriate assessment metrics

5. facilitates, as needed, to ensure that all unit assessment plans are implemented

6. chairs and provides continuity to the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee

Office of Institutional Research

The Office of Institutional Research supports assessment across the University. Research, public service, administrative, and student support units are encouraged to consult with Institutional Research on the design, implementation, and dissemination of assessment plans and results.

Institutional Research regularly makes available historical data regarding faculty, student enrollments, and other instruction-related information for use in the academic program review process. This office is also available to facilitate the gathering and reporting of additional data that may be unique to the needs of particular academic units.

Maintaining a Body of Evidence for Campus Assessment

An electronic reporting framework that captures the depth and breadth of the University’s assessment practices will be developed by the assistant vice president for Strategic Planning and Assessment in cooperation and consultation as needed with university offices such as Institutional Research, Information Technology Services, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), and the Director of Assessment. This body of evidence will primarily be used to promote institutional effectiveness across University missions. It will also demonstrate UAlbany’s effectiveness in pursuing its missions to the State University of New York, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and to various external stakeholders.

Promotion of Best Practices and Support for Activities

Disseminating the assessment practices of campus programs and offices is only one way that the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee will promote best practices across the operating units of the University.

As noted earlier, the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee (PAAC) is charged with developing the means to promote best assessment practices at the University. As formalized and systematic assessment processes take root across the University community, the PAAC will look more closely at the use of Web sites, newsletters, electronic listserves, workshops, and off-campus training and professional development opportunities for University faculty and staff.

Owing to assessment’s primary role of improving the teaching and learning processes, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) is expected to play a growing role in supporting assessment and faculty professional development. As a means to achieve these ends, the Director of Assessment’s supervisory authority is vested in the CETL director. Academic
assessment should be an intrinsic component of the faculty’s professional teaching portfolio, and CETL is already a designated resource for enhancing the faculty’s professional development.

Financial Resources

Through the course of its work, the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee will identify financial investments, as well as non-financial opportunities, that the University might consider in order to advance its assessment agenda of institutional improvement.

It is anticipated that such recommendations will begin to emerge in the second year of the Advisory Committee’s existence.
APPENDIX A – UNIVERSITY MISSION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

MISSION STATEMENT

The prominence of the University at Albany as a modern and complex public research university belies its modest origins. Established in 1844 in an abandoned train depot donated by the city of Albany, the then New York State Normal School, the first state-chartered public institution of higher education in New York, hosted a beginning class of twenty-nine students who were instructed by two faculty members. Inspired by a zeal for liberal education and public service which they rightly believed would make a difference in their rapidly changing world, the Normal School's founders envisioned themselves engaged in a mission to prepare literate, informed, and compassionate citizens - citizens capable of thinking for themselves, of advancing the condition of their fellow Americans, and of enjoying to the fullest the intellectual, spiritual, and material benefits of democracy. While the physical character of the modern University at Albany has improved dramatically from that of its predecessor, the essential character of its educational mission has endured.

Separated from its beginnings by those leaps of cultural transformation which mark the extended history of all great institutions, the University at Albany of today is a multi-faceted university which enjoys numerous advantages, responsibilities, and opportunities in discharging its mission. Some of these result from the University's remarkable history and the campus's tradition of responsiveness to the intellectual and personal aspirations of America's increasingly diverse citizenry; some from the University's national designation as a Research University and its position within the State University of New York system; and some from the University's ideal location in the Capital District of New York.

Working across the disciplines of the Arts and Sciences and those of several select Professional Schools, the University's internationally recognized faculty of scholars, researchers, and professional staff hold themselves accountable to the highest ethical and professional standards in the education of all students. Members of the faculty and staff join with their students, undergraduate and graduate, in defining the University as characterized by these discrete, yet interdependent, qualities:

- First, a commitment to the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, for its own sake and for its practical benefits to society.

- Second, a commitment to the teaching of students, to their growth in knowledge, and to that reinforcement of character, through co-curricular experiences, which enables them to develop emotionally, physically, and socially even as they mature intellectually;

- Third, a commitment to the larger interests of society through acts of public service, and by fostering the ideals of social justice;

- Fourth, a commitment to freedom of thought, inquiry, and expression, and to the rights and obligations of faculty and students to pursue knowledge, wherever it may lead;
• Fifth, a commitment to profit intellectually and imaginatively from differences of opinion and of culture.

One of the four University Centers of the State University of New York, the modern University at Albany emphasizes the integration of teaching, research, creative expression, and public service in its undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. Its educational mission sustains an intellectual climate in which the research and creative endeavors of the faculty enlarge their sense of inquiry on behalf of their students, so that at all levels students enjoy the stimulation and challenge of engaging in active, rather than passive, learning, and the satisfaction not only of assimilating the inherited wisdom of the past, but also of participating in the creation of new knowledge.

The University benefits from the campus's location in New York's State Capital in preserving a tradition of addressing significant issues of public policy, which will continue to be an integral aspect of its mission. This emphasis combines with the University's historical strength in education and pedagogy, and its more recent accomplishments in the natural and behavioral sciences and the arts, to give the campus a special character and provide substantial comparative advantages for its students and the citizens of New York State.

But more fundamentally, the mission of the University at Albany continues to be that of serving as a comprehensive research university wherein graduate programs in the Arts and Sciences and the professions reinforce each other and invigorate the undergraduate experience. Complementing its highly visible Professional Schools, the University encourages and supports Arts and Sciences curricula characterized by innovation as well as traditional breadth. Here, as at other major universities, studies in the humanities and social sciences, the creative and expressive arts, and the natural sciences and mathematics constitute the very center of the University's intellectual and imaginative life. At the University at Albany, these studies provide all students with wide-ranging opportunities for an education that balances breadth with the occasion to develop more specialized disciplinary understanding and professional expertise. What makes this University particularly distinctive as a center for the Arts and Sciences and the professions is its promotion of knowledge at the interstices not only where their disciplines historically have been separated, but also where, more importantly, they converge.

The vitality of New York's northeastern corridor provides the University at Albany with superb opportunities for enhancing the intellectual vigor and variety of the University and for advancing the political and economic well-being of New York State. Privileged to serve as a regional center of higher education and an imaginative catalyst for economic development, the University considers the expansion of partnerships with academic, business, cultural, and governmental organizations situated throughout northeastern New York essential to the success of its educational mission. At the same time, the University recognizes that the significant social issues, environmental concerns, and informational challenges confronting today's Americans and their systems of higher education are not exclusively regional in character, and that the opportunities to answer them through shared technology and pedagogy, laboratory research, the application of social and political theory to practice, and improved understanding among cultures are rarely within the domain of one geographic area. Consequently, the University at Albany extends its mission to serve the interests of New York by promoting the University's capacity as
a national and international center for scholarship, education, and service, and by engaging in academic and professional programs, well beyond the University's regional borders, which promote knowledge and understanding.

The mission of the University at Albany, as envisioned and elaborated on from our earliest days, compels us to move forward in finding improved ways of providing responsive, high quality public education. It also challenges us to be bold in charting new institutional courses both for ourselves and for the benefit of those who will follow. Out of respect for the ingenuity and devotion of the many generations of scholars and students whose perseverance has provided the foundation for UAubany as an exceptional and unique modern university, today's University at Albany community eagerly seeks opportunities to enhance its educational mission - both in the creation and in the dissemination of knowledge. Consistent with our own heritage and that of the larger State University of New York, the University at Albany pledges to preserve and advance "equality alongside quality, accessibility alongside excellence, and liberality of thought alongside rigor."
University at Albany’s Strategic Goals

**Strategic Goal 1**
The University will provide a distinctive, student-centered undergraduate learning experience which will be highly competitive as the result of its intellectual coherence, rigor and engagement of students with faculty in the process of inquiry and discovery.

**Strategic Goal 2**
The University will provide distinguished graduate and professional programs which reflect the distinctive strengths of its faculty, and which are competitive regionally, nationally and internationally for students of exceptional academic ability.

**Strategic Goal 3**
The University will further advance its national and international reputation as a major public research university, a university which competes successfully for the most qualified faculty and students, as well as external research support, and a university which is committed "...to the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, for its own sake and for its practical benefits to society." (University at Albany Mission Statement.)

**Strategic Goal 4**
The University will continue its historic commitment to the core value of societal responsibility by assuring inclusiveness and ease of access to its educational programs, and by actively supporting the application of its teaching and research to the needs of society.

**Strategic Goal 5**
The University will establish and stabilize enrollment at a level comparable to this nation's mid-sized public research universities, with a student body reflective of the rich diversity required for a quality education, and with an academic profile comparable to the most selective of this nation's public research universities.

**Strategic Goal 6**
The University will expand and diversify its sources of revenue to assure its continued growth in the context of its mission and strategic goals.
APPENDIX B - THE ALBANY OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT MODEL

In 1978, the University launched a series of student cohort studies that placed the campus in the forefront of assessment research, leading to our national reputation in the area of assessment methodologies. In the past two decades, we have served as a model for best practices in this critical area.

The Albany Model, as it is widely known, has been instrumental in guiding the assessment efforts of many other post-secondary institutions, particularly in the public sector. The model - data-driven and formative rather than summative - seeks to relate the college experience to pre-college characteristics as depicted in the following chart. This research also underscores the importance of connecting the classroom and related student experiences (i.e., academic, social, and personal) to student satisfaction and success. These assessment efforts, which have been conducted on a continuous basis by the Office of Institutional Research, have given the University a rich array of evaluative databases, including student opinion surveys, cohort studies, and alumni studies. Indeed, study results have helped to inform a variety of innovations and improvements to the University’s educational program. Examples of innovations and improvements that resulted or benefited from one or more of these studies include assessment in the major, living-learning initiatives and programs, faculty mentors, the study group program, freshmen seminars, a task force on retention and advisement, the freshmen orientation program, writing across the curriculum, freshman housing, special interest housing, enhanced faculty development, student course evaluation forms and procedures, residence hall improvements, technology enhancements, and student services consolidation/relocation.

The Albany Models’ theoretical framework was revisited in 2003 to incorporate promising enrollment management research that points to student’s pre-college educational aspirations, motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), and self-regulatory behaviors as potential predictors of student retention and academic success. The model takes this research stream one step further by positing that these student psychological factors may be dynamic, and that while they may indeed play a role in determining successful student outcomes, the collegiate experience itself may, in turn, impact these factors. Beginning in 2003, the Office of Institutional Research re-instituted its longitudinal student survey program to harness insights from survey findings based on the revised Albany Model. This long-term application of the Albany Model will allow the University to gauge overall institutional-level outcomes, as well as student outcomes and engagement in the major. Results from the latter application will be used to complement the direct assessments of student learning occurring in each of the University’s academic departments.
APPENDIX C - 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.
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY  
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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 UAlbany 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).

- **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.

- 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.

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).
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.

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 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.

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 on-going 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 syllabus, 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.
APPENDIX D - PROCEEDURES FOR THE JOINT REVIEW OF UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Note: These procedures are currently under review by the Council on Academic Assessment. This Appendix will subsequently be replaced to reflect the final procedures.

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Periodic reviews of undergraduate and graduate programs are part of an ongoing process of programmatic self-improvement – assessment - integral to ensuring the vitality and success of academic programs and students. Periodic program reviews, to be conducted every seven years, include the preparation of a Self-Study document, an external review of the Self-Study document; a departmental response to the external review; a review of these documents and preparation of recommendations by the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC) and/or the Graduate Academic Council (GAC), the Council on Academic Assessment (CAA); and an administrative review of all recommendations resulting from the process.

In consultation with the CAA and with the provost’s approval, the deans of Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies schedule program reviews. The Director of Assessment coordinates the program review process, and the offices of Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies, and Institutional Research provide administrative support. The establishment and adjustment of the review schedule is guided by emerging campus priorities, as well as by mandated external reviews from SUNY System Administration and by accrediting, registration and licensing bodies.

For program assessment to be effective, it must be an on-going process. To that end, the CAA requests that every Self-Study document include a discussion of the ongoing assessment practiced within the academic unit. This discussion should include the nature and destination of all annual assessment reports which document the annual progress of the unit to meeting its academic goals.

I. Self-Study Document

Each program scheduled for review submits a Self-Study document focusing on the extent to which it has addressed its stated mission, goals, and objectives. The Self-Study document addresses recent areas of achievement and recommended areas for improvement in the future. (See Attachment A for a description of the substantive content of the Self-Study). For each program in the respective department, a self-study with faculty and student representatives committee should be established to prepare the Self-Study document. Throughout the development of the Self-Study document, information to be included in the final draft should be made available to faculty and students for comment and input.
II. Evaluation & Recommendation

The departmental Self-Study will be distributed to the deans of Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies, the department chair, the college/school dean, and the CAA, as well as to the external reviewers. (Guidelines for the selection of reviewers, their role and the suggested content of the reviewers' report are included in Attachments B and C). As part of the review process, the provost will invite external reviewers to conduct a site visit. (Guidelines for these activities are also set forth in Attachments B and C).

The department should prepare a written response to the external reviewers’ report; The response document should be distributed to the dean of Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies, the school/college dean, and the CAA. These individuals and council will review the external reviewers’ report, the response, and the departmental Self-Study. These University officials may choose to meet with the college/school dean and department chair to discuss the contents of the various reports and/or make recommendations regarding them.

Copies of the final Self-Study and the external reviewers’ reports will be sent to the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, the deans of Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies, the deans and chairs of the reviewed program(s); and to the State University of New York provost.
Outline for the Self-Study Report

I. Mission and Learning Outcomes of Undergraduate and Graduate Programs – state:
   A. the overarching mission of the program
   B. the goals and objectives associated with accomplishing stated mission and. The goals and objectives should be stated as learning outcomes in undergraduate programs
   C. how the program’s mission coalesces with the University at Albany’s strategic goals

II. Program Curriculum and Design -
   A. Program Design – describe:
      1. the design of the program requirements
      2. the program design’s logic and rationale (e.g., introductory courses, capstone courses, comprehensive exams, practicum placements, thesis/dissertation, etc.)
      3. the breadth and depth of the program, including appropriateness of course offerings, course scheduling, and modes of instruction
      4. the program’s student academic advisement procedures
      5. current/planned distance learning courses and/or program initiatives
   B. Undergraduate and Graduate Student Experiences in the Program – describe:
      1. internship and/or service opportunities
      2. opportunities for student/faculty interaction and collaboration (independent study, research, conference presentation, etc.)
      3. the number of graduate student assistantships and their stated responsibilities
      4. honors programs and/or student groups/societies associated with the program
      5. graduate school preparation and career placement services
   C. Compare Program with Local Entities and National Standards – describe:
      1. how the program relates to and compares with other colleges and universities in the region, New York State, nationally, and internationally (include information about ratings of quality by relevant independent parties, such as the National Research Council, U.S. New and World Report, the National Science Foundation, professional societies, and others)
      2. its relation to other UAlbany programs (departments, schools, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs, service courses received and/or provided)
      3. how the program compares with national standards in the discipline
III. Undergraduate and Graduate Student Quality
   A. Acceptance Procedures – describe:
      1. the procedures used to admit students to the program (where applicable)
      2. how these procedures compare to similar programs or to programs at like universities
   
   B. Characteristics of Students – identify or indicate:
      1. the prior institutions and degrees earned by current master’s and doctoral students
      2. the test scores of enrolling master’s and doctoral students, as well as for those who applied and were admitted
   
   C. Program Trends – describe or provide:
      1. the undergraduate/graduate student admission, enrollment and retention trends over the past five years
      2. the number of degrees awarded in the program (bachelors, master’s and doctoral level)
      3. a two-year summary of course grades (A through E, S, U, and W) in 100-, 200-, 300-, and 400-level courses. (Further breakdowns [e.g., between courses for majors versus those for non-majors, by class size] are encouraged but not required)
      4. program retention and graduation rates for rising juniors (from Institutional Research data)

IV. Faculty Quality
   A. Hiring Programs and Number of Faculty – describe/identify:
      1. the hiring procedures (from job description to final decision)
      2. the total number of full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and graduate teaching assistants in the program (attach an appendix with complete vita for each full-time faculty member)
      3. the numeric trends in faculty, professional and clerical staff
   
   B. Faculty Responsibilities – describe:
      1. the responsibilities of faculty in terms of teaching load, research, committee assignments, consulting, etc.
      2. innovations in curriculum and teaching
      3. recent scholarly activities, including research, successful grants, and other contributions to the field
      4. service to program and to the university as a whole, as well as to the local community
   
   C. Tenure and Promotion Policies – describe/discuss:
      1. the policies for tenure and promotion
      2. any problems or concerns with current tenure and promotion policies
V. Assessment Plan and Outcomes
A. Assessment Plan – describe/identify:
   1. the timeframe and identify the faculty/student involvement at each stage of the assessment plan
   2. specific types of assessment (direct and indirect) and types of instruments used to elicit the information (see Appendix A for assessment examples)
   3. steps taken to ensure the quality of instruments in both qualitative and quantitative approaches to assessing outcomes in the program
   4. Describe how direct assessment instruments map onto learning outcomes (where appropriate.)
   5. Describe how student academic advisement is assessed.
   6. Describe how the program involves student input in the design and implementation of its assessment activities.

B. Assessment Results
   1. Present any results of assessment activities performed in the years preceding the self-study.
   2. Present results of direct outcomes assessment activities performed in the current year of the self-study (e.g. capstone courses, course embedded exams, performances, etc.)
   3. Present results of indirect outcomes assessment activities performed in the current year of the self-study (e.g. student/alumni surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.)
   4. Present results of indirect measures of student satisfaction/program effectiveness in the current year of the self-study (e.g. SIRF results, time to graduation, awards, honors, retention and graduation rates, etc.)

C. Improvement Loop – describe or detail:
   1. how the program will use the information gleaned from assessment to improve its quality
   2. plans (e.g., hard-copy reports, newsletters, postings on the departmental or University’s assessment Web site, etc.) for communicating assessment plans and annual assessment activity reports describing recent activities or how assessment results are being used to various campus constituencies
   3. assessment activities to be performed in the coming year(s)
   4. how the program will assess the assessment plan

VI. Support, Resources, and Facilities – present/describe/evaluate:
A. a three-year budget summary that differentiates sources of revenue and shows expenditures by major categories (professional staff salaries, non-professional staff salaries, equipment, supplies and expenses, temporary service, graduate assistantships and fellowships, etc.)

B. the adequacy of departmental facilities (offices, class labs, research labs, graduate assistantships and fellowships, etc.)
C. amount and types of resources and facilities needed to accommodate present and anticipated program changes/developments and/or enrollment growth

D. the nature, extent and adequacy of library holdings and access to digital equivalents in the programs’ field (this information should be requested from the University Libraries and included as an appendix to the department's report)

VII. Conclusions

A. present a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, and major achievements in the program

B. comment on any discrepancies between an “ideal” and the “current,” as they were conceived and as they actually are operating

C. provide a horizon statement describing the outlook for the future (five years and ten years out)
Appendix A

Assessment Examples

Types of Assessment

Direct Assessment of Learning Outcomes: The following could be considered direct assessments of learning outcomes, if the products are reflective of specific learning outcomes defined in the first section, “Missions and Learning Outcomes in Undergraduate and Graduate Programs.”

- capstone courses
- portfolios
- course embedded exam questions/assessment.
- Educational Testing Service (ETS)/Graduate Record Exam (GRE) items
- pre-test, post-test program exams.
- licensure exam items
- performances and presentations
- comprehensive examinations
- master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation

Indirect Assessment of Learning Outcome: The following could be considered indirect assessment of learning outcomes, if the data collected reflects students’ or employers’ perceptions of the extent to which they have met specific learning outcomes defined in the first section, “Missions and Learning Outcomes in Undergraduate and Graduate Programs.”

- surveys of students in their graduating year/semester
- focus groups or interviews with students in their graduating year/semester
- alumni surveys
- alumni placements in graduate school/career (if stated as learning outcome)
- employer surveys

Indirect Assessment of Program Effectiveness and/or Satisfaction: The following are examples indirect assessment of program effectiveness and/or satisfaction, but typically should not be considered assessment of learning outcomes.

- program retention and program graduation rates
- surveys of current students and/or alumni
- SIRF results
- alumni placements in graduate school/career
- focus groups or interviews of current students and/or alumni
- time to undergraduate/graduate degree
- authorship/co-authorship of refereed journal article
- conference presentations
- service and contribution to the program and field on behalf of the program
- participation in honors programs and/or societies
- awards and honors
Guidelines on the Role of External Reviewers

I. Selection of External Reviewers

The following criteria will guide the selection of reviewers:

A. The reviewer must have experience as a faculty member in (a) similar program(s) at another institution.

B. Experienced reviewers with national reputations in their fields should be selected.

C. Ideally, each reviewer should have both a broad knowledge of the discipline as a whole and expertise in a specialization emphasized in the program at the University at Albany, State University of New York.

D. Reviewers should strike a balance between being familiar with the University at Albany department and its faculty, and yet be detached enough to give a critical review. Conflicts of interest must be avoided (e.g., selecting reviewers who are co-authors or co-researchers with faculty members in the department being reviewed).

E. A third reviewer, from an unrelated department at the University at Albany, may also be selected by the Program Review Committee to participate on the program review team.

The department chair solicits the names of potential scholar-reviewers from appropriate sources (including professional associations, the faculty, the deans of Undergraduate and Graduate studies, the Council of Graduate Schools, etc.). The department chair draws up a vita (from a standard reference work) for each name, and after consulting with the faculty and the dean, submits the names in order of preference to the provost, who selects two or more reviewers. A formal letter of invitation is sent to each of the prospective reviewers by the provost or the provost’s designee.

Questions about the number of reviewers (beyond two) and whether they operate independently or as a team can be handled differently for each program, according to what seems desirable and practicable. Normally, reviewers work as a team and submit a single report. Reviewers are sent various documents (the Self-Study, the Library report, the Undergraduate Bulletin, a Graduate Bulletin, and the Guidelines for Preparation of Written Report by External Reviewers (Appendix C)).
II. Site Visit

Once a team of external reviewers accepts the invitation and dates for the site visit have been determined, the reviewers are sent the documents noted in section I. The host department is responsible for developing the itinerary for the site visit. Most visitations will occupy the reviewers for two full days. The exact schedule will vary according to the wishes of the reviewers and the department, but the following should be included:

A. a meeting with the director of Assessment for a general orientation
B. meeting with the college/school dean (and his/her professional staff, as appropriate)
C. individual and group meetings with the department chair, program directors, faculty, and students
D. meeting with faculty in related departments and programs
E. examination of appropriate support services and facilities, such as the University Libraries, Academic Computing, laboratories, and research facilities.
F. meeting near the end of the visit with representatives of the administration, which may include the president, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, and the deans of Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Studies.

III. External Reviewers’ Report

The reviewers prepare a report that evaluates the program(s) plan and progress for the assessment of student learning outcomes, strengths and weaknesses of the program, faculty, and students, and presents their recommendations. Specifically, they are requested to address questions in the Guidelines for Preparation of Written Report by External Reviewers (Attachment C) and to special questions pertinent to the program(s) under review.
Guidelines for Preparation of Written Report by External Reviewers

I. Undergraduate and/or Graduate Programs

A. Assess the mission, student learning objectives/outcomes, and requirements of the programs. Is there a logical cohesion to the program that is transparent to current and perspective students?

B. How do the programs contribute to the field? Comment on innovations in program design and instruction.

C. Describe student involvement in research, scholarship, and instruction. Is there evidence of student participation in research, professional conference presentations, and teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels?

D. Evaluate the depth and breadth of curricular coverage in terms of faculty availability and expertise, regular course offerings, and directed study. Comment on access to and use of supporting instructional resources inside and outside the university.

E. What is the relationship of this program (or these programs) to other undergraduate and graduate programs at UAlbany? Consider interdisciplinary programs, service functions, joint research projects, support programs, etc.

F. How do the programs' curricula compare to national trends in this discipline? Are there significant gaps in program curricula that seriously reduce their quality and utility? Are there redundant or obsolete factors in the programs’ curricula that affect their quality and utility?

G. Has the program adequately implemented student learning outcomes assessment? How would you describe the level of faculty involvement, commitment, and progress in this area?

H. Evaluate the short-term and long-term improvement goals presented by the program(s). Are they feasible? Are the improvements likely to result in real benefits for students, faculty, and the University at Albany as a whole?
II. Students
   A. Discuss the quality and performance of the program’s students. Are admissions criteria appropriate? How does the quality of students entering this program compare with that of students in similar programs elsewhere? Are students completing the program(s) at rates similar to comparable programs you are familiar with?
   B. Do the programs have enough students? Too many? Considering the mission and design of the programs, are the graduates in the program pursuing appropriate post-graduation careers and/or fields of study?

III. Faculty
   A. Evaluate the faculty in terms of training, experience, scholarly contributions, and stature in the field.
   B. Assess the faculty in terms of size and qualifications for area(s) of specialization offered and students served. What are areas of faculty strength and weakness? What impact, if any, have recent staffing changes had on the program?
   C. Evaluate faculty workload and its relationship to faculty concern for and collaboration with students, and the quality of advisement students receive.
   D. Discuss areas of current scholarly involvement including recent faculty publications, successful grant applications, and other professional activity. Is there evidence of continuing faculty development? Are faculty appropriately supported in teaching, research, and service roles?
   E. Report on faculty activity in generating funds for research, training, facilities and equipment, etc.
   F. Discuss the credentials and involvement of adjunct and support faculty.

IV. Summary
   A. What are the program’s major strengths and weaknesses?
   B. Provide your recommendations for improvement.
   C. What is the status of the program(s) efforts to articulate and assess student learning outcomes? Discuss areas for improvement.
   D. Include any further observations that may be useful in evaluating this program or the University’s program evaluation process, itself.
APPENDIX E – PROTOCOL FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN RESEARCH, PUBLIC SERVICE, ACADEMIC SUPPORT, AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The following template outlines the steps most often incorporated in a departmental assessment plan.

I. Formally Specify Mission and Goals

A. Review University and division mission statements. Review and/or develop unit mission statements which include program goals.
B. It is highly recommended that defining unit mission statements and program goals should be a collaborative process within the unit or department to ensure shared purpose and sense of direction.
C. If applicable, review criteria and external standards of certification
D. Prioritize goals to assist in later developing a timetable for implementing the assessment plan. Again, this should be a collaborative and participatory process within the unit or department.

II. Formulate Detailed Objectives for Each Goal

A. Identify current and anticipated activities for each goal.
B. Identify activities that affect multiple goals, and implications for those that do.
C. List anticipated outcomes (end products) that should occur as a result of each activity, and also think about unintended outcomes that might result from these activities.
D. Establish performance benchmarks, either internally developed or pegged to national benchmarks, if available.

III. Develop Assessment Metrics (preferably qualitative and quantitative) to Gauge the Achievement of Objectives

A. Consider assessment methods already in use (e.g., satisfaction surveys, work flow monitoring, other direct and indirect measures).
B. Use assessment instruments already accepted in the field (e.g., professional associations, accrediting boards, accepted best practices, etc.) to identify benchmarks and assessment tools.
C. Use multiple measures to assess outcomes and processes if possible.
D. Both qualitative and quantitative measures are acceptable, and a blend of the two is most desired.

IV. Identify the Logistics of the Assessment Plan

A. Create a timeline for each assessment activity.
B. Identify individuals, committees, or groups and what each is responsible for (e.g., instrument design, data collection, analysis, report writing, communicating results back to students, staff, and faculty).
C. Identify resource needs.
D. Where appropriate, identify how student input should be built into the assessment process.

V. Collect and Analyze Data

IV. Collect data
V. Analyze results; note important findings; discuss challenges and areas for improvement.

VI. Describe the Unit’s Improvement Loop

A. Identify target audiences, including students, where appropriate.
B. How will results be disseminated and feedback solicited?
C. Describe how the unit or department will use the information gleaned from assessment to improve effectiveness.
D. Describe assessment activities to be performed in the future. A five- to seven-year implementation cycle is recommended.
E. Describe how you will assess the assessment plan.