

Title: Academic Affairs and Administrative Units Assessment Policy

Policy Abstract: As a means of continuous improvement, academic and administrative unit assessment is the cyclical process of determining the extent to which identified outcomes are met and findings used to improve programs and services. Assessment of academic and administrative units contributes to the measures used by the College to gauge its level of institutional effectiveness. Assessment reports are submitted by academic and administrative units and reviewed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment on an annual basis.

Responsible Office: Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

Official: Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

Contact(s): Interim Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Kent Andersen

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Applies to: All academic affairs and administrative units

Effective Date: June 1, 2017

Revision Date(s): June 8, 2021 (minor update, web-link corrections and tied with updated SACSCOC standards)

Introduction and Background: An outcomes-directed assessment effort by academic and administrative units allows for continuous improvement of programs and services, while maintaining the College's compliance with external mandates. Additionally, the process of identifying outcomes, collecting and analyzing data, and using results for improvement by academic and administrative units supports the assessment of the College's institutional effectiveness, as evidenced in its mission statement.

Purpose: Assessment of academic and administrative units maintains and strengthens programs and services, allowing the institution to achieve stated outcomes. The assessment process illustrates the College's efforts to:

- Advance institutional goals and outcomes
- Align the goals of the Strategic Plan with those of academic and administrative units
- Demonstrate how assessment results inform curriculum, pedagogy, student support, and services

Applicable Regulations:

This policy is alignment with the following SACSCOC *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement (2018)* standards.

Institutional Planning and Effectiveness – (7.1). The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission (Institutional planning) and (7.3) The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved (Administrative effectiveness).

Student Achievement – (8.1) The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution’s mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.

Student Achievement – (8.2) The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below: a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs. (Student outcomes: educational programs) b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student outcomes: general education) c. Academic and student services that support student success. (Student outcomes: academic and student services)

Policy Statement: Responsibility for assessment of each academic and administrative unit rests with the individual unit. Student learning outcome assessment is the focus of academic units, with process and efficiency outcome assessment the primary emphasis of administrative units. Assessment of academic and administrative units occurs annually, with the timeline specified by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment. It is expected that the entire unit’s faculty or staff participate in discussing and implementing the various aspects of the assessment plan (i.e., outcomes, methodology, data review, and use of data). A common template is used for submission of assessment reports for consistency of reporting across units. Assessment reports and supporting documentation are reviewed by the appropriate unit administrator and then submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment for evaluation.

Academic Units

Academic unit assessment includes academic majors, general education curriculum, and engaged learning programs. Overall responsibility for assessment of academic units lies with the Provost’s Office, supported by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment.

- Individual departments are responsible for assessment of academic majors.
- The Provost’s Office is responsible for assessment of the general education curriculum.
- Individual programs are responsible for assessment of engaged learning programs.

Each academic unit is expected to implement an assessment plan that clearly articulates student learning outcomes, identifies an appropriate methodology, measures the extent to which students achieve the learning outcomes, analyzes the findings, and uses the results to make curricular or programmatic enhancements or adjustments. Faculty in each department or program are responsible for determining the scope (i.e., cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains) and appropriateness of student learning outcomes in accordance with standards from their field of study. Development of the general education student learning outcomes is the responsibility of faculty teaching within the curriculum, in conjunction with the Provost’s Office, with outcomes reflecting the general competencies that faculty deem essential within a liberal arts curriculum.

Administrative Units

Administrative unit assessment includes support, services, and programs provided to students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Overall responsibility for assessment of administrative units lies with the

senior administrative officer of the unit (e.g., Vice President, Director), supported by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment. Each administrative unit is expected to implement an assessment plan that clearly identifies expected outcomes, engages an appropriate methodology that produces sufficient findings (i.e., reliable, valid, inclusive) to determine progress towards achieving outcomes, and uses the results for improvement purposes within a specified timeline.

Assessment reports are evaluated by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment on an annual basis. In the event that additional information, clarification, or revisions to the report are necessary, the unit will meet this request in a timely manner.

As academic and administrative assessment reports are a key component of meeting SACSCOC requirements, any missing reports will yield a noncompliance recommendation. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment is responsible, therefore, for following-up with units that do not submit assessment reports.

Definitions: “College-sponsored, -supported, or organized travel” refers to instances when the College is either organizing a program, granting credit or rise3 recognition, or awarding funds for an international study away or study-travel experience. “Travel Release Forms” refer to the legal documents used by the Office of Exploration Term and Contract Learning and the Sklenar Center for domestic and faculty-led or independent international travel. A student’s parent or legal guardian’s emergency contact information is included on this form.

References:

SACSCOC, Principles of Accreditation 2018,
<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>