



The University Assessment Council

VISION

May 28, 2014

The following document summarizes the University Assessment Council's vision of a quality institutional effectiveness process and is based on discussions conducted during a day-long meeting on May 28, 2014 at the NorthRiver Yacht Club. The UAC represents the University's Colleges, Student Affairs, and Libraries and is supported by the offices of Institutional Effectiveness and Institutional Research and Assessment. The UAC represents those entities that engage directly with students and are primarily responsible for student learning through direct instruction, student support, and/or academic support.

Assumptions

- Faculty, Staff and Administration are committed to the process of institutional effectiveness and its core component outcome assessment as demonstrated by:
 - Integration in institutional planning and budgeting processes;
 - Recognition of appropriate expressions of institutional effectiveness throughout the University community;
 - Engagement with and value of the process at all levels;
 - Acknowledgement by University leadership of the importance of IE processes in attainment of the University's strategic goals.

Principles

- Institutional Effectiveness is a process of assessing the extent to which the University and the University community achieve their goals and the mission of the University.
- Institutional Effectiveness is a dynamic institution-wide process that is ongoing, integrated, and research-based.
- Institutional Effectiveness includes systematic reviews of the programs and services offered, the results of which are used for continuous improvement of the University.
- Best practices in Institutional Effectiveness are communicated regularly to faculty, staff and administration, and relevant training is provided in a regular, accessible, and timely manner.
- Institutional Effectiveness processes and components
 - are participative, flexible, relevant, and responsive;
 - integrated with other planning and evaluation events;
 - include a robust reporting and feedback loop;
 - include all programs, services, and constituencies; and
 - are strongly linked to the decision-making process at all levels.

Guidelines for assessment of academic degree programs

- Assessment is best accomplished in an environment of curiosity and collegiality that allows constituents to stretch and innovate without fear of failure.
- Effective assessment of student learning begins with a plan that demonstrates how program faculty and staff intend to evaluate the extent to which students achieve measurable, observable learning outcomes related to the mission of the program.
- The assessment plan:
 - has longevity (3 to 5 years) and must be ongoing, cyclical, and strategic.
 - must have at least three student learning outcomes that are assessed with at least two methods of measurement, of which at least one must be a direct measure (*actual demonstration of what students know and can do that can be evaluated objectively*).
 - must have criteria (aka, targets, benchmarks, measures, standards) to demonstrate the level of achievement expected for each method of measurement.
 - must describe the process and time frame in which data is to be collected and analyzed.
- Yearly reports provide a review of assessment activities undertaken by each program during the previous year to include:
 - Descriptions of methods and processes used to collect data, results of assessment (disaggregated by delivery method or site if *program* is offered online or off-campus), and analysis of data collected for at least one student learning outcome;
 - Plans of action or implementation intended to improve, enhance or maintain levels of achievement;
 - A summary of the impact of assessment activities on student learning or the environment that supports student learning, and the context for changes to the program and/or the assessment plan;
- Administrators should routinely review assessment activities and results and report these to constituents in regular events, such as annual retreats of administrators, meetings of the Faculty Senate, and college-level meetings.
- Colleges, schools, and/or departments should determine the organizational levels (entities) at which assessment is the most meaningful, strategic, efficient, and effective.