Academic Assessment Policy			
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Applies to:	All Academic Programs	Issued:	December 2, 2013
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Policy Owner:	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	Page(s):	3

I. Purpose

Academic assessment is a process designed to maximize student learning. As such, it aligns program curriculum with teaching to foster and enhance student learning outcomes. Although outcomes, curriculum, and teaching strategies will vary from program to program, the process includes common components and is cyclic and on-going. The process is learning-centered and faculty-driven and requires a non-punitive environment. With the primary purpose of maximizing student learning, faculty members must be able to identify learning weaknesses without concern of consequences.

II. Policy Statement

All major degree programs engage in the assessment process annually. The process includes identifying measurable student learning outcomes appropriate to the degree-level, determining where in the curriculum the outcomes are (or should be) fostered, using appropriate and effective tools to measure progress toward outcome achievement and the degree to which these outcomes are achieved, collectively reviewing student learning outcome data generated from measures, and identifying strengths and weaknesses for planning and implementing recommendations for maximizing student learning outcomes. The success of this process is dependent upon the development and implementation of clear procedural guidelines, the uniform presentation of assessment documents, and fostering an environment that supports transparency and accuracy in reporting.

The University's assessment process should be viewed as independent of professional accreditation requirements and should be undertaken regardless of whether external accrediting bodies exist. Whenever possible, assessment of learning undertaken for external accreditors and for the University should be complementary. If a program has external accreditation, the University's assessment process may be utilized to fulfill assessment requirements of the applicable accrediting bodies. Likewise, if a program performs assessment of learning for external accreditation purposes, that process can be used for institutional purposes to the extent possible. Reporting formats and requirements for the two assessment purposes may be different, but for the most part, the assessment of learning process should be similar.

III. Exclusions

None.

IV. Procedures

1. Faculty members in each program will develop appropriate student learning outcomes, measure the degree to which these outcomes are achieved and progress towards which the outcomes are achieved, collectively review student learning outcome data generated from measures, and identify strengths and weaknesses for making and implementing recommendations for maximizing student learning outcomes.
2. Faculty members in each program will be involved in annually developing an action plan to address weaknesses in the program identified during the assessment process. Action plans should describe the steps that the faculty have decided should be taken to improve the program. Action plans generally refer to prior year action plans to "close the loop" from developing student learning outcomes, measuring the student learning outcomes, and using the results to improve the program.
3. Each program is responsible for establishing procedures for collecting and storing assessment data. Data should be easily accessible by multiple individuals within the program.
4. Within a two-year period, outcomes will be organized and measured by primary and secondary emphasis, where primary outcomes serve as the main purpose for action plans.

IV. Additional Procedures for Assessment Reports

1. When assessment reports are required for university assessment purposes, assessment reports are collected from:
   A. Major degree programs which include all majors granting undergraduate or graduate degrees
   B. Most certificate programs
   C. Minor programs of study not associated with a major degree program

   Embedded certificate programs and certain minor programs of study are excluded from the academic assessment policy.

   A. Embedded certificates are those certificates that are only awarded to a student upon completion of a degree and are a self-contained set of courses embedded in a major. Embedded certificate programs are excluded from the assessment policy.
   B. Minor programs of study that are associated with a major degree program are excluded from the assessment policy. Assessment of such minors is included in the degree program assessment process.
2. A common format, approved by the Academic Assessment Steering Committee, comprised of multiple faculty members from each college, is used for all institutional assessment reports. This common format provides consistency across colleges and the University.
3. Assessment reports will be submitted in each fall semester. In rare circumstances, assessment reports may be required at different times as dictated by external accrediting bodies.
4. Assessment reports will be submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The Academic Assessment Steering Committee will review the reports and will provide necessary feedback to programs within four to six weeks after the reports are received by

the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Based on the review, programs may be required to make revisions to the assessment reports. If revisions are required, the programs will resubmit the revised assessment reports to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness before the beginning of the next semester. For example, if the original assessment report is submitted during the fall semester, a revised assessment report would be submitted before the beginning of the following spring semester.