Assessment Subcommittee
Assessment Report Presentation Guidelines

Each assessment report, submitted in October, will be supplemented by a presentation to the ASC. Following the submission of the assessment report, the ASC and department chairs will arrange dates for presentations during the spring semester, sometime between November and April. These presentations may include multiple presenters, visuals, and handouts. The appropriate dean, the vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, and members of the campus community in general will be invited to attend the presentation. Departments are free to invite specific guests to attend the presentation.

While the ASC will have the written report and will provide feedback on it, the presentation gives us an opportunity for a more interactive exchange, a forum for exploring assessment issues and challenges, and celebrating successes.

The entire presentation is expected to take no more than 60 minutes -- **30 minutes for the presentation** and **30 minutes for discussion and questions**. Because the department's complete assessment report will contain substantially more information, the presentation can focus on these keys parts of the assessment report:

We suggest the following allocation of the 30 minutes for your presentation.

A. **Assessment Strategies/Measures/Techniques/Methods:** (Section 6 of the Report; 5 minutes) Presenters should highlight the variety of tools used to assess learning identified in the PLOs. In this discussion, presenters may want to share select examples of surveys, portfolios, or rubrics. To further emphasize the importance and appropriateness of the tools identified, presenters may choose to comment on the variety of direct, indirect, embedded and/or non-embedded tools employed in the assessment program. Further discussion may also explore the assessment timeline and how various tools fit into the timeline.

B. **Assessment Results/Findings/Interpretation:** (Section 7 of the report; 10 minutes) The presenters will spend some of the presentation time highlighting those findings deemed most important or salient to the department. The ASC will have read the report, so presenters should not feel compelled to reproduce the entire collection of findings, but instead identify critical pieces to highlight. The presentation should discuss what the collected evidence reveals about student learning in the program and offer conclusions about their effectiveness in facilitating learning.

C. **Implications:** (Section 9 of the Report; 10 minutes) Presenters should use this portion of the presentation to share how the department has used or will use the results. Changes may include assessment methods or techniques, curriculum, new or revised courses, requirements, or specific changes in teaching methods. These suggestions may include implementation timelines for a short- or long-term plan. In addition to changes to program content, the department may comment on reallocation of resources and/or efficiencies noted. While the ASC does not have control over resources, or their subsequent allocation, departments are invited to discuss and comment on resources in this section.

D. **Reflections on the Department Assessment Process:** (Section 10 of the Report; 5 minutes)
    Presenters are invited to offer successes and challenges faced during the assessment process,
    including data collection, curriculum planning, implementation of findings or departmental
    climate for assessment. The ASC also invites comments on our institutional process regarding
    additional needs from the committee and suggestions for the process or materials.

The AS Assessment Report Format Narrative, updated on 6/28/12

Note: This document is meant to supplement the University Handbook description of the content of assessment reports and plans and to serve as a planning tool for departments in preparing their Assessment Reports. The Assessment Subcommittee will be using a rubric to evaluate your Assessment Report. For a copy of the latest version of the rubric, please see the resource page on the ASC website.

Assessment Report Format

(For more examples or guidelines for any the below items, please see the resources available on the ASC website.)

1. **Departmental Mission:** What does the department prepare students for? For example, is the program designed to produce graduates who are socially responsible citizens, pre-professionals, entry level teachers, and/or graduate school applicants?

    The Department's Mission might be articulated in terms of vision, values, or goals. The terms are flexible and should be selected as appropriate in your discipline(s). (Some departments have just a Mission Statement, some a Mission Statement and Goals, etc.) While it is not the place of the ASC to judge your mission statement, it is useful to have a clear statement of your overarching goals. This helps you as a department craft more specific Learning Outcomes for your program and us as a committee to assist in that process.

2. **Brief Description of Departmental Improvements / Changes:** Referring back to the findings and implications of previous assessment report(s), identify and describe specific improvements that have been made in the department. Describe what has been changed and with what goals, based on the evidence of past assessment.

    This is an important part of your ongoing assessment process: using assessment results to improve your program, and continuing the assessment to gauge the effectiveness of the changes. Ideally, this section of one assessment report will overlap a great deal with the "Implications" section of your last report, where you projected changes to come. If what was planned five years ago was not implemented, it will be useful to indicate why.

3. **Program Learning Outcomes:** Describe the broad learning outcomes of the program. What knowledge, skills, and attitudes (dispositions?) will graduates have? For example, will graduates be able to work effectively in teams, think critically, have good work attitudes, be able to solve complex problems, communicate effectively. What are the criteria for success? Focus on "enduring understandings" that are at the core of your academic program.

    A Program Learning Outcome (PLO) is a statement that describes what a student will know, be able to do, and/or value as a result of a learning experience. Ensure that your PLOs are articulated as student learning outcomes (rather than delivery-focused inputs or what students will be exposed to).   Examples:

    > Students will be able to read, interpret, and analyze common reference maps.

In an annual survey, juniors will score at the 60th percentile for writing and reading on the CAAP.

It is recommended that you "cluster" your PLOs so that you identify 6-9 broad learning outcome categories, which may include: content knowledge, methodologies, dispositions/values, variety of skills (reading/writing/communicating/team-work), applications (field work/lab work/performances/lesson plans), life-long learning/responsible citizenship, etc. (More detailed learning outcomes can be stated within each broad category.)

4. **National/Professional Standards:** Describe the extent to which your PLOs represent the national/professional standards. Is your program accredited by an external, national and/or professional agency? If so, are there established learning outcomes or professional standards? If there are, then how do the learning outcomes/professional standards align with your Program Learning Outcomes? Is there a perfect overlap? Are your PLOs a partial sample of the national standards? Have you paraphrased (and clustered) your PLOs to align with most/all of the national standards?

5. **New / Updated Curriculum Map:** A Curriculum Map illustrates how the program curriculum aligns with the PLOs and identifies possible courses and learning experiences that can provide data for program-level assessment. You may choose to specify how great an emphasis is given to each PLO in each course, and/or at what level of mastery (introduction, reinforcement, etc.).

This information might be presented in the form of a simple curriculum map (a visual presentation/matrix), or a pivot table, etc. Questions to consider when analyzing the curriculum map could include:
   a) Are the intended learning outcomes clearly articulated?
   b) Are students provided with multiple learning opportunities to develop the learning outcomes?
   c) Are courses in the major sequenced in the developmental pattern to facilitate student achievement of the learning outcomes?
   d) Do individual courses provide students with opportunities to integrate multiple learning outcomes?
   e) How do learning experiences such as internships or service-learning courses support the development of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified as PLOs?
   f) Are students provided with feedback on their progress in mastering the learning outcomes?
   g) How well are the learning outcomes communicated to students in course syllabi?

This section should include descriptions of the various activities that will be used throughout the curriculum to teach the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes. For example, if working with teams is an objective, students might learn through formal team training, service learning projects, or internships.

6. **Assessment Strategies/Measures/Techniques/Methods:** What tools will you use to determine whether students have attained the knowledge, skills and dispositions identified in the PLOs?

   Measures must be valid and reliable. They should be designed to measure outcomes and gather data that are useful in determining whether PLOs are being achieved and goals are being met. For example, a portfolio might be used to collect information on writing skills and a commercial fields test might be used to collect information about student's understanding of principles in the major. Additionally, the measures should result in information that will be useful in improving instruction and curriculum.

   Use both direct and indirect measures. The two types have different strengths and weaknesses, so your assessment process will benefit from a combination of both. A direct measure is an evaluation of actual student work/performance. Some examples include tests (local or national, pre- and post- or one-time), evaluation of portfolios, and observation of performance. Direct assessment can be done by faculty members or external reviewers and benefits greatly from a scoring rubric or other explicit description of the criteria for various levels of achievement. To maintain our university-wide accreditation, the Higher Learning Commission requires that each academic program uses direct measures of learning, so you will need to report on at least one.

   Indirect measures gauge perceptions of student achievement and attitudes. Surveys of current students, alumni, and employers are commonly used indirect measures. Focus groups and exit interviews are other examples. Employment rates and graduate school admissions also provide indirect evidence of student success. Some University-wide data, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), is available for program-level assessment and should be used where meaningful alignment between the PLOs and the survey data has been identified. The Office of Policy Analysis and Planning can provide additional information.

   Also consider both embedded and non-embedded measures. It's not necessary to include both types, but thinking of those two categories may suggest a wider range of possibilities. Embedded measures are found within your courses or other parts of your program, such as papers, tests, and supervisor reports from required internships or field work. (Your Curriculum Map can be a useful guide to identifying courses from which student work can be extracted for purposes of program assessment.) Non-embedded measures happen outside of students' normal progress through the program. Alumni surveys are a good example, as are GRE, LSAT, and MCAT scores.

   Indicate which measures were used with each PLO. Not every PLO needs a separate measure—a portfolio, for example, may provide evidence for assessment of all of a program's PLOs—but it's important to make sure each PLO gets measured in at least one way. Where feasible, include examples of surveys, questionnaires, and other assessment measures that were used.

7. **Assessment Results/Findings/Interpretation:** Describe what the assessment evidence reveals about student learning in the program. This section of the report should include *conclusions* about the program's effectiveness, the *evidence* on which those conclusions are based, and the *performance criteria, standards,* or *expectations* that shape the conclusions. For example, if

80% of students were rated "proficient" or better on a task, such findings may lead you to conclude that the program is doing well at preparing students for that task but has room for improvement: what percentage of students should perform at that level?

Be specific, avoiding generalities such as "students seemed to have trouble with . . . " or "students seemed to be skilled writers." Instead respond with specifics counts about strengths or weaknesses. For example, 25% of the students were unable to correctly write a citation for an article appearing in a group of readings. Provide data examples, qualitative or quantitative, where appropriate. These data are required for year-to-year comparisons.

There are a variety of ways for departments to communicate findings. That being said, departments will want to consider the most efficient and accurate methods to convey their data. Consider presenting quantitative results in tables or charts.

Ultimately, departments should be able to answer the questions, "What do you know about your students' learning, and how do you know it?"

8. **Dissemination of Findings:** How will assessment results be distributed? To whom? In what format? At a minimum the department faculty should discuss the results. This feedback is necessary for assessment activities and to emphasize the importance of assessment. Individual assessment results may be provided to students so that they can evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. It may also be useful to share results with employers, alumni, recruiters, prospective students, or funding sources to demonstrate program quality. (The co-chairs of the ASC will forward all Assessment Reports to the appropriate Dean.)

    Departments should also give thought to the archiving of reports. As part of an ongoing assessment process, it will be necessary to refer to previous assessment work. Easy access to current assessment plans and past reports will ease transitions as personnel and roles change. Consider electronic storage, files of hard copies, and/or posting on a department web page.

9. **Implications:** How will the results be used by the department? Reflect on the findings from this assessment cycle and identify changes the program is planning, or will consider, that may improve student learning in the program. This can include changes to the curriculum, such as new or revised courses and requirements, changes in teaching methods, etc.

    Also consider what the assessment results suggest about the efficient and effective use of the program's staff time and other resources. Are there goals the program is simply not able to achieve with its current resources? Can some goals be better achieved with some reallocation of its resources? Are there changes the program would like to make that would require seeking out additional resources? While the ASC does not have control over resources, or their subsequent allocation, departments are invited to discuss and comment on resources in this section.

10. **Reflections on the Department Assessment Process:** Describe what worked and what didn't. Did your assessment measures give you the kind of information you needed to assess each Learning Outcome? If not, you may want to look for different measures to use in the next

assessment cycle. Or you may find that the Learning Outcomes themselves aren't getting at what you really want, and therefore need revision.

The ASC also invites your comments on our institutional process. Do you need more or different guidance or resources, for example? How can the assessment subcommittee assist your academic program in figuring out how well your students are learning what you want them to?

Assessment Plan for the Next Reporting Cycle:
Provide a detailed plan of assessment activities for the next 5-year cycle, including a plan for the evidence to be collected in each year of the cycle, measures to be used, and a timeline of what happens when and who will be responsible. Also provide information on the process your department will use to discuss results (i.e., the feedback loop that you will use to ensure meaningful use of your findings).

NOTE: Indicate which measures will be used with each PLO. Not every PLO needs a separate measure—a portfolio, for example, may provide evidence for assessment of all of a program's PLOs—but it's important to make sure each PLO gets measured in at least one way.

Reports are submitted every five years, but collection of assessment information should be ongoing. A good assessment process also involves the faculty as broadly as possible. You may choose (or need for other reasons) to do some kinds of assessment every year; others may happen only once in a five-year assessment cycle.

Describing your assessment process in detail will allow the ASC to better help your department, and will help your department continue your assessment process seamlessly when personnel changes.

(Copy section from Handbook regarding an updated assessment plan)