Assessment Plans
Program Level

April 29, 2005
Middle States Commission on Higher Education Characteristics of Excellence

- **Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning**
  - “Assessment of student learning demonstrates that the institution’s students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional goals and that students at graduation have achieved appropriate higher education goals.”
  - “Articulated learning goals or objectives and various levels (institution, degree/program, course.” *Institution Choice of Level Permitted*
  - A plan that describes outcomes assessment activities being undertaken by the institution.
  - Evidence that assessment information is utilized to improve teaching and learning.
  - Documented use of assessment information as part of institutional assessment.
Statement of Need for Outcomes Assessment

- Outcomes assessment is needed to assist the University in carrying out its responsibility to be accountable for its effectiveness.
Definition of Outcomes Assessment

- It is defined as a systematic process of continuous improvement within a functioning unit to ensue through a formalized approach that learning experiences are maximized to produce optimum effectiveness.
Purpose of Outcomes Assessment

- To measure the effectiveness of the overall performance of the University.
- To engage a campus community collectively in a systematic and continuing process to create shared learning goals and to enhance learning.
Characteristics of Outcomes Assessment

- To provide multiple measures of learning outcomes
- To identify changes and improvements that are needed in the University
- To produce evidence support of making changes and improvements
- To determine whether the University is operating effectively by providing a formalized method of evaluation to show whether planned outcomes are realized
- To actively involve the faculty throughout the assessment process
- To link outcomes assessment with departmental and institutional planning
Direct Methods

- In assessing student learning outcomes, at least 3-5 direct measures should be used.

- Direct methods of evaluating student learning are those that provide evidence of whether or not a student
  - Has command of a specific subject or content area,
  - Can perform a certain task,
  - Exhibits a particular skill,
  - Demonstrates a certain quality in his/her work (creativity, analysis, synthesis, or objectivity),
  - Or holds a particular value
Direct Measures of Student Learning - Program Level

- Comprehensive examinations for seniors and graduate students in their major field of study (either standardized national exams or locally developed exams)
- Capstone experience assessment to evaluate subject matter competency in a particular program of study
- Capstone projects, senior theses, exhibits, or performances
- Employer and internship supervisor ratings of student’s performance
- Multi-measure assessment of a program through a combination of:
  - Competency test
  - Workplace competency
  - Evaluation of job performance with program using GPA
- Longitudinal assessments of students performance and their perception of their learning experience
Direct Measures of Student Learning-Program Level

- Pass rates or scores on
  - Licensure
  - Certification
  - Or subject area tests (professional exams)
- Performance-based mastery test for formative and summative assessment of student achievement
- Pre- and post-test assessment of course knowledge and attitudes
- Portfolio assessment of capstone projects, theses, or dissertations
- Portfolio system to assess formative and summative outcomes for students (embedded in curriculum)
- Student publications or conference presentations
- Other:
  - Oral examinations
  - Internships
  - Juried reviews
  - Reading competency
  - Writing proficiency
Benefits of Direct Measures of Student Learning

- The benefits of the direct measures of student learning are that the following questions can be answered:
  - What did students learn as a result of their educational experience?
  - Did the students learn what they were supposed to learn?
  - What did the students fail to learn?
Limitations Direct Forms of Evaluation

- They do not tell the whole story of student learning.
- It provides evidence of *what* the student has learned, but does not provide evidence as to *why* the student has learned or *why* he/she has not learned.
- The *why* is important because one of the primary goals of assessment is to make future learning experiences more effective.
- The Commission (MSA) does not require that its member institutions demonstrate that the institution’s learning outcomes are consistent with its goal.
Indirect Measures of Student Learning - Program Level

- Alumni surveys
- Completed satisfaction surveys from alumni, employers and students
- Department or program review data
- Employer surveys
- Exit interviews and focus groups
- Focus group interviews with
  - Students
  - Faculty members
  - Or employers
- Graduation follow-up students and job placement data
- Graduation rates
Indirect Measures of Student Learning-Program Level

- Graduate school placement rates
- Job placement data
- Length of time to degree
- Proportion of upper-level courses compared to the same program at other institutions
- Registration or course enrollment information
- Retention and transfer studies
- Student perception surveys
- Student satisfaction surveys
- Success of students in subsequent institutional settings
Benefits of Indirect Measures of Student Learning

- The indirect measures of student learning produce data that are related to the act of learning but in and of itself does not reflect student learning.
- It is acquired through the use of self-report type surveys, questionnaires, and interviews.
- Frequently, student perceptions of their learning and educational experiences are obtained in the self-reports such as ratings of quality of teaching by students.
Non-Measures of Student Learning

- Questionnaires about whether the personal goals of students are being met
- Curriculum reviews
- Evaluation of quality of programs by specialized accrediting bodies, peer groups and visiting committees
- Faculty publications and recognitions
- Faculty/student ratios
- Enrollment trends
- Diversity of student body
- Course enrollments and profiles
- Grades and GPA’s
Context of General Questions

- Responsibility
  - What person or unit is responsible for carrying out the objective

- First Column
  - Intended Educational Outcomes (first column)
    - What is expected to occur
    - Conditions
      - What conditions must be met before the objective can be accomplished
Context of General Questions

- Second Column
  - Measurement (or assessment)
    - What will be used to measure accomplishment of the objective
  - Performance standards
    - What level of attainment is required
Context of General Questions

- Third Column
  - Frequency of Assessment (third column)
    - When the goal will be completed


Assessment Plans

- We will be using Dr. Nichols’ model for the Programs Assessment Plans.
- If you need more information, please call Mrs. Alma Ríos at (787) 284-1912 Ext. 2224.