
Assessment of Student Learning @ Temple College: A 5 Year Plan



TEMPLE COLLEGE

Fall 2006

*"We never know how high we are
until we are asked to rise
and then, if we are true to plan,
our statures touch the skies."*

-- Emily Dickinson, Gladiolus, Strength of Character

INTRODUCTION

Undeniably, higher education has proven itself to be a powerful force in the ongoing evolution of a nation, and community colleges are at the forefront of that effort. As evidence, one needs only to reflect upon the significance of the challenges that have been faced - and eventually - overcome. For example, in the post-World War II era, community colleges offered unprecedented access to hundreds of thousands of students who otherwise would have been excluded from higher education. And in the years thereafter, our institutions have distinguished themselves as the nation's higher education equalizer, workforce provider, entrepreneurial visionary and unapologetic champion of learning. But in that context, an inevitable question logically follows: What does it say about us - as committed individuals and as a powerful collective of educators - if we are not also a unified scholarly conscience able to readily demonstrate our ability to examine and ensure that what we think we are teaching is what our students are learning?

What Is Assessment of Student Learning, Anyway?

Like all other institutions of higher education, Temple College's mission statement - as well as its related value statements - summarizes our common commitment and collective purpose. Specifically, our mission statement affirms that:

The mission of Temple College is to serve the founders' vision by meeting the needs of individual students, area communities, and businesses through quality educational programs and services that reflect our commitment to quality and integrity while preparing our diverse population as they enter an ever-changing global society (Temple College Catalog, 2006-2007, p. 11).

The foundation for assessment of student learning *is* the college's mission statement as its purpose is more than a rhetorical or political exercise; in fact, quite the contrary is true. Assessment of student learning allows us to know (at all levels of the college) how well we are fulfilling the function of the broad mission of the college, programmatic or departmental purpose, course objectives, and in-class learning. Taken as a whole, assessment of student learning informs the institutional effectiveness process by illuminating areas of curricular, programmatic, and college-level improvements. But what is its functional definition? What is the assessment process all about and, in its simplest terms, what does it seek to accomplish?

A little more than one decade ago, Ted Marchese, president of the American Association of Higher Education offered the following definition:

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve [learner] performance. When it is embedded effectively ... assessment can focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education (AAHE Bulletin, November, 1995, p. 7).

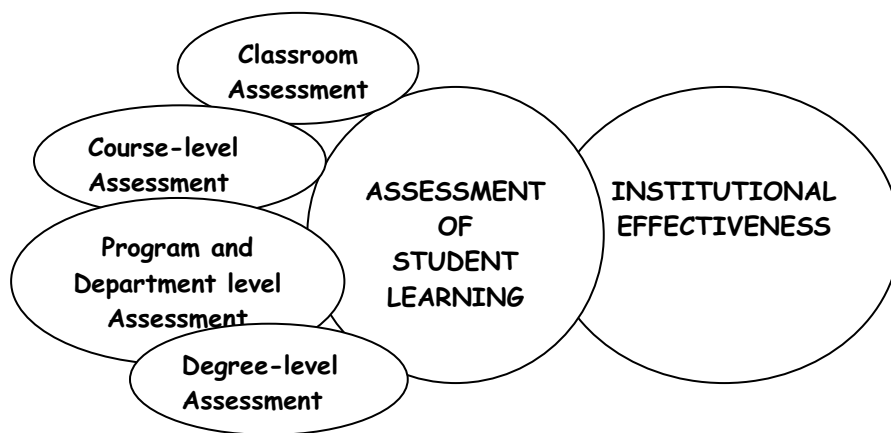
While it may occur on different levels within the institution (as referenced above), there are some general "best practices" to help us better understand the purpose and scope of this critical activity. Specifically, Astin, et al (2003, p. 2) offered the following nine principles of good practice for assessing student learning which provide further clarification:

- The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
- Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated and revealed in performance over time.
- Assessment works best when the [classes, courses,] programs [and degrees] it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.

- Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.
- Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
- Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
- Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is a part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
- Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

So, What's Our Plan for Assessment?

A review of the literature (and other institution's assessment plans) suggests that there are about as many ways to conceptualize and implement assessment as there are community colleges - maybe more. And, it might provide some comfort (or discomfort, for the more structured among us) to learn that there seems to be no "one right way" to approach the process of assessing student learning. Seybert (1992, p. 252) has noted that this is so because of the unique nature of each institution, adding, "It is up to each institution to pick the model most appropriate for its situation and personnel and then tailor that model to meet its unique needs and mission." However, for the sake of clarity of purpose, we see assessment of student learning first from within the context of its intentional relationship to institutional effectiveness (as diagramed below), and we acknowledge that, within each "level" of assessment, there is a continuous cycle of linking, questioning, benchmarking, developing, measuring, improving (or celebrating), concluding, and repeating.



What is Meant by "Levels" of Assessment of Student Learning?

Focus is a factor in the classroom and it is no less so for a college, or for that matter, a nation of higher education institutions. Similarly, the translation of assessment of student learning - from theory into practice - also relies on focus. Ideally, everyone could be assessing everything all of the time, but given practical limitations of time, energy, inclination, and resources, we must develop a means by which we can focus our efforts, operationalizing a valid, systematic, yet thorough way to demonstrate how assessment of student learning is to be implemented throughout the fabric of the organization - all without elevating the endeavor to a burdensome or cumbersome endeavor. Several noted researchers describe assessment of student learning both as a holistic process and an effort focused at the different levels of learning as it occurs within colleges and universities. These levels are:

- Classroom assessment
- Course level assessment
- Departmental/Program level assessment
- Degree/General Education assessment

Classroom Assessment (2006-07)

In *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, Angelo and Cross (1993, p. 3) note that teachers can learn much about how students learn - and more specifically, respond to particular teaching approaches - through the collection of frequent feedback and the design of modest classroom experiments. They also note that classroom assessment helps individual college teachers obtain useful feedback on what, how much, and how well their students are learning. "Faculty," they add, "can then use this information to refocus their teaching to help students make their learning more efficient and more effective" (ibid). The purpose of assessment of student learning overall, but especially at the classroom level, is to ensure that *what we are teaching is what the students are learning*. They continue:

... there is no such thing as effective teaching in the absence of learning. Teaching without learning is just talking. College instructors who have assumed that their students were learning what they were trying to teach them are regularly faced with disappointing evidence to the contrary when they grade tests and term papers. Too often, students have not learned as much or as well as was expected. There

are gaps, sometimes considerable ones, between what was taught and what has been learned. By the time faculty notice these gaps in knowledge or understanding, it is frequently too late to remedy the problems.

To avoid such unhappy situations, faculty and students need better ways to monitor learning throughout the semester. Specifically, teachers need a continuous flow of accurate information on student learning. For example, if a teacher's goal is to help students learn points A through Z during the course, then that teacher needs first to know whether all students are really starting at point A and, as the course proceeds, whether they have reached intermediate points B, G, L, R., and so on. To ensure high quality learning, it is not enough to test students when the syllabus has arrived at points M and Z. Classroom Assessment is particularly useful for checking how well students are learning at those initial and intermediate points, and for providing information for improvement when learning is less than satisfactory. Through practice in Classroom Assessment, faculty become better able to understand and promote learning, and increase their ability to help the students themselves become more effective, self-assessing, self-directed learners. Simply put, the central purpose of Classroom Assessment is to empower both teachers and their students to improve the quality of learning in the classroom (ibid, p. 4)

In their ongoing discussion, Angelo and Cross (ibid) recommend "first steps" for the assessment novice. Speaking directly to the classroom faculty, they offer some practical advice:

We recommend that you 'get your feet wet' by trying out one or two of the simplest classroom assessment techniques in one of your classes. By starting with CATs that require very little planning or preparation, you risk very little of your own - and your students' time and energy. In most cases, trying out a simple CAT will require only 5 to 10 minutes of class time and less than an hour of your time out of class. After trying one or two quick assessments, you can decide whether this approach is worth further investments of time and energy (p. 28).

As a helpful side note, Cross and Angelo (ibid, p. 28-30) recommend a basic, three-step approach to classroom assessment which includes planning the CAT

to be used, implementing it, and responding to the results. But they also make five suggestions for a successful start, offering the following provisos:

- If a classroom assessment technique does not appeal to your intuition and professional judgment as a teacher, don't use it.
- Don't make classroom assessment into a self-inflicted chore or burden.
- Don't ask your students to use any classroom assessment technique you haven't tried previously on yourself.
- Allow for more time than you think you will need to carry out and respond to the assessment.
- Make sure to "close the loop." Let students know what you learn from their feedback and how you and they can use the information to improve learning.

Making it Do-Able...

In the Fall 2006 semester, Temple College faculty, assessment committee members, and instructional leadership will begin the "assessment journey" by conducting classroom assessment activities, the focus of which are the goals and objectives of their respective classroom learning activities. To this end, faculty members select and implement at least one CAT in one course per semester. As a part of their assessment activities, the selected CATs are documented, the findings shared with their students, colleagues and instructional leadership, and when curricular improvements are identified, they are implemented at the appropriate level.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Who</u>
1. Identify at least one course for CAT	Faculty
2. Review, select, and implement CAT	Faculty
3. Evaluate/analyze results	Faculty
4. Use results to identify and document ongoing improvement(s) and, when appropriate, link these to budgetary or curricular recommendations	Faculty, Dept. Chair(s), Division Director(s)

Course Level Assessment (2007-08):

The purpose of course assessment, simply put, is to assess the level of student learning relevant to common outcomes *at the course level*, specifically as it occurs within and across multiple modes of delivery (i.e., on-campus, dual credit, distance education). The College assesses student learning at the course level within specific courses at on multiple occasions and from multiple perspectives; this will - in effect - allow us to know and ensure that the learning we wish to accomplish is, in fact, occurring and that there is integrity to our teaching. For this to occur, and for assessment to be helpful at the course level, it is essential that: (a) assessment techniques be clearly aligned with the learning outcomes and instructional processes of a course; (b) learners be made aware of why, how, and according to what criteria their learning will be assessed; and (c) instruments and procedures be carefully designed to meet the intended uses for assessment.

In the Fall Semester of 2007, Temple College faculty, assessment committee members and instructional leadership will continue classroom assessment activities, supplementing their activities with the implementation of course-level assessment.

Implementation Plan for Course-level Assessment (2007-08)

Goal: Implement course-level assessment of student learning

Objective:	Action:		Responsible Parties:	Deliverables
Assess course-level skills of TC learners	Instructional leadership will implement assessment of course-level assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and include all faculty in formative discussions (i.e., full- and part-time, on-line, dual credit) regarding the identification and selection of courses to be included	Faculty Dept. Chairs Division Directors	

	Using course goals/objectives (and available data, if any), establish performance benchmark(s) for each course in assessment cycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review data • Review course goals/objectives • Develop benchmark for course 	Faculty, Dept. Chairs	<p>Revised (or affirmed) course goals and objectives</p> <p>Established course benchmarks</p>
	Develop proposal for course-level assessment, including development of assessment instrument and timeline(s). Conduct assessment and evaluate results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research assessment options • Select and/or develop course assessment technique • Develop methodology 	<p>Faculty, Dept. Chairs</p> <p>Div. Dir. and VP (as may be needed)</p>	<p>Selected Assessment Strategy</p> <p>Methodology</p> <p>Timeline for Assessment Activity</p>
	<p>Identify and implement improvements</p> <p>In next year, return to first step (with next course in assessment cycle).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review for possible curricular changes, changes to inst. Effectiveness goals, and/or possible budgetary impact 	<p>Faculty, Dept. Chairs</p> <p>Div Dir And VPES (as may be needed)</p>	<p>Revised syllabi</p> <p>Establish or revised IE goals</p> <p>Curriculum committee agenda items (if necc)</p> <p>Budget requests</p>

Department/Program Level Assessment (2008-09)

Although the College's academic structure reflects the availability of a general education degree, as a community college, it also reflects the availability of a number of program specific degrees and certificates, and the opportunity for academic remediation. For the purpose of assessment of student learning - the areas of the college to participate in department (or program) level of assessment shall include:

• Biotechnology	• Business Management/Business Technology
• CAD/GIS	• Child Development/Education (Technical)
• Computer Technology/CIS (Technical)	• Criminal Justice (Technical)
• Dental Hygiene	• Developmental Education
• EMS	• Nursing (CAN, LVN, RN)
• Respiratory Care	• Surgical Technology

From the broadest view, the College's institutional effectiveness process provides a means of ensuring continuous improvement and demonstrated levels of success relevant to degree completion, transfer rates, and/or employment and these measures are incorporated into the College's program review cycle. However, these activities - while relevant - are not equivalent to assessment of student learning. But what is the subtle differentiation? Assessment at the department level appears to resemble institutional effectiveness, but there is a critical difference: that is, assessment of student learning activities are purposefully focused upon over-arching departmental *learning* (rather than effectiveness) goals and rely upon our ability to demonstrate and illuminate how well our learners have met our specific goals within the above mentioned areas. *Most importantly, it responds to our question: What do the learners know and what are they able to do as a result of the cumulative curriculum within a program or department?*

Mee (2003) described assessment of student learning at the program (department) level as "... not just an accumulation of course objectives. Rather, they reflect a synthesis, a holistic picture, of what is expected of students completing a defined program or course of study.

Williams and Shakiban (2000) provided a series of recommendations relevant to assessment at this level [*emphasis added*]:

- The faculty as a whole [*in the department or program*] need to agree on what sample production would enable them to most clearly measure competence in students' knowledge, skills, and values. They should choose only one sample to start the process. Others can be added later once they have gained experience in this technique.
- Once the type of sample has been identified, e.g., an exhibition, an oral defense of a paper, a project plan, etc., the faculty need to determine if it is possible to embed the sample into a ... capstone course or if it must be incorporated as a passage or requirement for graduation.
- The faculty as a whole needs to discuss and agree upon criteria that is necessary for excellent performance. What key knowledge, understandings, skills, and values should be evident in excellent performance [*i.e., general education outcomes*]?

Once these criteria are specified, the faculty then needs to define for each criterion at least two other levels of accomplishments, which are 'acceptable' and 'non-acceptable' performance.

- The faculty, now that it has defined criteria and levels of accomplishment, should identify where in the curriculum (required/elective courses and student experiences) the performance criteria are developed. For example, in what course is an understanding of ... [*ethical principles*] ... developed? And where do students develop the ability to defend a philosophical position?
- The faculty should inform the students early in their study ... [*within a department or major area*] ... of the overall assessment plan for the area. It should also share information as to what performance will be assessed and the criteria that will be measured.
- The faculty should set up a schedule for carrying out the performance assessment and plan when the results will be discussed.
- When conducting the performance assessment, faculty will evaluate the results of the assessment activities and compare the findings to the pre-established benchmark as set by the faculty in the area.)
- The overall evaluation results should be discussed by the faculty. Overall high ratings should be celebrated; low ratings should lead the faculty to use the curriculum matrix to decide where enhancement or revisions to the curriculum might be necessary.

Implementation Plan for Departmental Assessment (2008-09):

Goal: Implement department-level assessment activities.

Objective	Action:	Sub-Actions:	Responsible Parties:	Products:
Assess achievement of student learning goals in TC programs or departments	Establish structure to implement department assessment of student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departments establish (or reaffirm) departmental or program based learning goals and begin planning process 	Dept faculty Dept chairs Div Director	*Newly developed (or reaffirmed) departmental (or program) learning goals
	Based on learning goals, departments develop an outline for departmental assessment plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect/review data • Discuss, develop, and recommend department or program based "benchmarks" for student learning • Discuss and select assessment methods and instrument(s) 	Dept faculty Dept chairs Div Director	*Timeline for departmental assessment activities *Benchmarks *Assessment instruments identified (or developed)
	Collect data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop methodology • Timeline assessment (including all instructional venues) • Administer instrument • Collect results 	Dept faculty Dept Chair Division Director IR (as needed)	Assessment Data
	Analyze Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify/train evaluators (if needed) • Evaluate artifacts (or data) • Return results to program/department for analysis/input • Evaluate results against original benchmarks 	Dept faculty Dept Chair Division Director Institutional Research (if necessary)	Scored and evaluated artifacts (or data results) Report of findings
	Determine curricular, budgetary or IE "follow ups"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate data for curricular or budgetary impact, or revision (or reaffirmation) of IE goals. 	Dept faculty Dept Chair Div Dir A-Team	Evidence of curricular revision, budget recommendations, revised IE goals
	Implement improvements and return to assessment cycle		Dept faculty Dept Chairs	

Degree (or General Education) Assessment (2009-2010)

It is an important characteristic of assessment of student learning that it is purposefully focused - regardless of level - upon stated goals of student learning. At the class level, these goals change from day to day, depending on the sense of progress the individual instructor intuits along the way. At the course level, these learning goals are no less important, but are generally standardized to ensure course integrity regardless of instructional venue or geographic location. For programs or departments, goals are just as critical, if not more so, and as such, assessment of student learning at this level is intentionally linked to the learning goals of the respective department or program. But at the degree or general education level, (used interchangeably herein), what - if anything - provides the foundation for assessment? Huba and Freed (2000) [emphasis added] have recommended:

The mission and educational values of the institution should drive the teaching [and learning] function of the institution. They should shape the intended learning outcomes of all programs on campus, providing the framework that characterizes what is unique and special about the graduates of the institution's programs [*or, for community colleges, those who have earned the institution's degrees*].

Seybert (1992, p. 13) was among the first to address the critical differences of community colleges, especially as it pertains to assessment of student learning. He noted:

Demonstrating institutional effectiveness presents a special set of problems for community colleges, which typically have a much broader instructional mission than do four-year colleges and universities. In addition to traditional freshman and sophomore level coursework, community colleges provide career training, occupational retraining, remedial and developmental coursework, community and continuing education programs, contract training for business and industry, courses for special populations, and a variety of other educational offerings.

For the purpose of providing a framework for assessment at the 'macro' level, and to allow for a relevant context (and in the absence of a formal mission statement or over-arching learning goals for what we identify as the 'general

education core),’ we offer the college’s purpose statement (and selected value statements) as a foundational for assessment of student learning at the degree/institutional level, and proceed in the hopes that the formative assessment activities as they are outlined within this plan will guide us in the development of the “missing pieces”:

Temple College Purpose Statement: The mission of Temple College is to serve the founders’ vision by meeting the needs of individual students, area communities, and business through quality educational programs and services that reflect our commitment to quality and integrity while preparing our diverse population as they enter an ever-changing society.

Temple College Value Statements: (1) Ethical Conduct, (2) Learning Environment, (3) Quality Access, (4) Student Development, (5) Economic and Workforce Development, (6) Community Partnerships, (7) Technology, and (8) Stewardship

However, an extension statement to these foundational principles exists which provides a “platform” from which to assess the general educational mission of the institution [emphasis added]:

Temple College is committed to excellence in helping students reach their full potential by developing their academic competencies[:] *integrity, critical thinking skills, communication proficiency, civic responsibility, and global awareness* (Temple College Catalog, p. 11)

These fundamental “over-arching” college-wide learning goals are intended to be holistic in nature, or more simply put, they respond to a question that underlies the process of assessment of student learning: *What do we expect our learners to be able to do or be as a result of the cumulative impact of our general education core?* As such, students completing the general education core will be assessed to determine the extent to which they are able to demonstrate acquisition of these skills and abilities at “benchmarked” levels established by the faculty. The results of these degree/general education assessment activities will illuminate the institutional effectiveness activities of the college, specifically allowing instructional leadership to know the extent to which the present curriculum fulfills the mission of the college.

Implementation Plan for Degree Program Assessment (2009-2010)

Goal: Implement degree/general education assessment of student learning

Objective:	Action:	Sub-Action:	Responsible Parties:	Products:
Assess degree (or general education level) learning goals	Select 'over-arching' learning goals, set skill(s) benchmark, and research and/or develop assessment instrument and methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review assessment data from 2006-2009 to inform selection process. • Recommend and establish benchmark • Explore/select assessment instrument(s) 	Faculty Staff Dept Chairs Div Directors VPES/AVPs A-Team	Benchmark(s) Instrument and Rubric Methodology Schedule for implementation
	Collect Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on methodology, set date(s) for assessment activities • Administer instrument • Collect results 	Faculty Dept Chairs Div Directors IR A-Team	Dates for assessment activities Assessment Data for degree and/or general education core
	Analyze Assessment Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify/train evaluators • Prepare/distribute artifacts for evaluation • Evaluate and process artifacts • Evaluate results against benchmark 	A-Team IR Faculty Dept Chairs Div Directors VPES/AVPs	Scored artifacts (or similar results) Report of findings
	Review data for improvements and connection in relevant IE, assessment, and/or budget cycles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review/discuss results • Identify areas of improvement • Implement improvements and return to assessment cycle 	A-Team Faculty IR Dept Chairs Div Directors VPES/AVPs	Record of recommended improvements, revised IE goals, etc.

How We Get There from Here: Roles and Responsibilities

The assessment of student learning activities reflected in this document commences in 2006 and will be on-going every year thereafter. The outline below attempts to clarify the roles and responsibilities for the many constituencies necessary to effect success.

Faculty, Department Chairs, and Division Directors:

Lopez (1997) described the expectations of instructional leadership (faculty, department chairs, and division directors) relevant to assessing student learning, as follows:

- The obligation to remain aware and well-informed of the coordinated effort within the College to assess student academic achievement, including the ability to describe the key elements of the College's assessment plan or program
- The responsibility for knowing (1) how the assessment program functions at the institution, (2) what role the faculty play in its operations, (3) what measures and standards have been proposed and adopted for assessing student learning and at what levels), and how results are to be used to identify changes that may be needed if student learning is to improve in their respective areas.
- Participate in on-going assessment-related professional development
- Initiate and conduct classroom assessment(s) CATS including documentation, analysis, and recommendation(s)
- Participate in cycles of course- and/or department/program- or degree/general education-level assessment activities including identification of areas of improvement, institutional effectiveness goal setting, and/or curricular revisions

Division Directors and Department Chairs:

- Serves as *ex-officio* member(s) of College Assessment Committee
- Assists in the coordination of college-wide, (degree/general education), departmental, course, and classroom assessment activities
- Assists in the coordination of planning for assessment training activities (for new and returning full-, part-time, and associate faculty)
- Assists in the implementation of the College Assessment Plan

- Assists the faculty with the on-going analysis of assessment data, the purpose of which is to identify and implement specific class, course, departmental, and/or degree/general education curricular improvements.
- Assists in the evaluation of on-going assessment activities, making recommendations for improvements to the Assessment Committee

Assessment Committee

Lopez (1997) has described what accreditation consultant evaluators look for in a college assessment committee, pointing out that "... the committee charged with on-going responsibility for coordinating assessment is best positioned for success when it is *a joint faculty-administration standing committee with campus-wide representation.*" Further, she states *that the majority of the committee be broadly representative of the faculty [...] and include staff from the institutional research office and student affairs office, as well as an academic officer.* Typically, an assessment committee's responsibilities should include the following:

- Monitoring the implementation of the College Assessment Plan (i.e., developing, maintaining, evaluating, and modifying as needed all assessment activities)
- Maintaining responsibility for efforts to educate the institution's constituent academic units about the significance of their on-going participation in the assessment process
- Providing the faculty and/or academic units with any assistance they may need in obtaining bibliographies on assessment, and
- Training them in the selection and use of instruments and measures appropriate to the kinds of learning they want to measure

Further on this point, Lopez (1997) points out that consultant evaluators have offered some practical ideas about the breadth of the work of an Assessment Committee. Divided into four main categories (Providing Support, Review, Recommend, and Report), those duties include:

Providing Support

- Following good operating practices for any committee such as publicize meetings and maintain and distribute minutes of every meeting

- Ensuring that the assessment practices and procedures adopted by the Assessment Committee, faculty, and administration are professionally sound and meet the needs of the institution
- Distribute throughout the institution the names and titles of the persons and offices charged with collecting, analyzing, and disseminating assessment data, and also the process, players, and calendar to be used in acting upon assessment data
- Develop, distribute, and monitor a schedule pertaining to assessment (i.e., an assessment calendar) listing the specific dates on which or by which (1) assessment instruments will be evaluated, (2) each kind of data and analysis will be submitted to the Committee, (3) the Committee will meet to review these data and analyses, and (4) the Committee's summary and commentary will be transferred to a committee that has responsibility for the curriculum.
- Develop a Source Book containing material to help academic units develop or adopt appropriate methods for gathering the kinds of information they will need for assessment and for measuring cognitive, behavioral, and affective learning.

Review

- Compiling assessment results (numerical data and narrative analysis) from the institutionally research office or from academic units)
- Compile suggestions or recommendations from academic units for changes to introduce for the purpose of improving student learning
- Compile assessment results received from academic units made after recommended changes have been introduced and compare them with pre-change assessment results
- Summarize and interpret results in a written progress report to the CAO, President, and Board of Trustees at the end of each semester

Recommend

- Identify, prioritize, and recommend those resources needed for the coming year to maintain or improve the academic assessment program that transcend or cannot be accomplished within a given department, program, or division
- Make recommendations to the CAO for: (1) additional assessment processed and modifications in present practices and/or processes, (2) modifications in the assessment process and calendar, (3) integrating assessment and evaluation into the planning and budgeting calendar and processed at each level (department, division, and college-wide)

Report

- Have frequent, regularly issued progress reports prepared and distributed to internal constituencies
- Publish an annual report describing the year's outcomes of the assessment of student learning
- Issue a report card to each academic unit at the end of each term summarizing the degree to which students are meeting their faculty's educational objectives

Office of Institutional Research

- Compiles, analyzes, and reports on data and information related to the assessment activities of the College
- Provides statistical, methodological, and/or related technical support to various constituencies involved in assessment activities (i.e., faculty, departments, and divisions) and the Assessment Committee
- Manages longitudinal student data including student outcomes database(s)

Vice President of Educational Services/Chief Academic Officer

- Maintains responsibility for effectiveness of assessment of student learning activities
- Leads the faculty and/or Assessment Committee in the on-going improvements to the Assessment Plan
- Implements the assessment plan and monitors, coordinates, and troubleshoots the assessment process
- Prepares and monitors the assessment related budget
- Co-facilitates the Assessment Committee
- Prepares and distributes annual report for College community which reports on the results and improvements effected as a result of the implementation of the assessment program
- Acknowledges and rewards faculty involvement in assessment activities
- Makes resources available to support assessment activities
- Provides educational leadership, "coaching" members of faculty and academic administration (when needed) on issues related to assessment. This includes (but is not limited to) the following: (1) understanding assessment concepts and articulating them to faculty, (2) Maintains a focus on improvement of student learning (rather than accountability),

(3) Makes resources available, (4) Fosters connections with related departmental initiatives (i.e., program review, catalog changes, planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions), (5) Generates discussions about student learning,

- Conceptualizes assessment in terms of the mission of the institution
- Identifies leaders and responsible parties
- Clarifies the role of institution, college, departments, and programs
- Specifies a timetable to achieve assessment objectives, including (but not limited to) the following: (1) develop statements of intended learning outcomes, (2) present a matrix linking intended learning outcomes and the courses/experiences in which outcomes are to be obtained, (3) identify measures to be used to assess each outcome, (4) Describe who will use the results and for what purpose, (5) Collect, analyze, interpret, and use the data for improvement, (6) Establish feedback loops to key stakeholder groups, (7) Evaluate assessment program according to AAHE/NCA's Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

Collaborative Roles of Faculty and Administration

In an article outlining the lessons learned after a decade of discussion on the topic of assessment of student learning, Lopez (1999), pointed to those institutions "... where a strong assessment program is in place..." and noted that their chief academic officers and faculty working collaboratively have:

- Led the governing board and CEO to an understanding of the meaning and importance of assessing student learning
- Provided opportunities and support for faculty and academic administrators to be trained in every aspect of assessment
- Appointed a standing Assessment Committee and a chair who reports directly to the CAO, provided each with a written charge and adequate budget
- Established a line and allocates sufficient resources in the annual budget to sustain on-going assessment efforts for the institution as a whole and for each academic program
- Added 'responsibility for assessment' to the position description of each academic department and program chair and assigned the chair sufficient authority and resources to be effective
- Expanded the written responsibilities of the Office of Institutional Research (or broadened the position description of an administrator or

faculty member assigned responsibility for those functions) to include technical and staff support to the administrators, the Assessment Committee and the departmental and program faculty engaged in assessment of student learning

- Supported the on-going operation of a campus-wide, systematic data collection process
- Ensured that the findings from the assessment of student learning at the program level are incorporated into the review of each academic department or school
- Required departments to describe provisions being made for the assessing of student learning on their applications for approval of new courses and approval of new or revised programs
- Integrated the timelines of the assessment process, the planning process, and the budgeting process into a single calendar to be followed by academic units and the institution as a whole

College Curriculum Committee

- Ensuring the academic rigor of college courses across the curriculum, including the review of annual programs
- In cooperation with the Chief Academic Officer and members of the Assessment Committee, reviews, analyzes, and evaluates curricular recommendations regarding courses (i.e., requests for curriculum approval, modification, and/or deletion for all college courses) and course-related policies

College President/Chief Executive Officer

- Offers college-wide observations, analyses, and recommendations regarding assessment
- Provides managerial direction among and between related components relevant to assessment (i.e., academics, institutional research, planning, and budgeting)
- Holds the Chief Academic Officer accountable for the effective implementation of assessment activities
- Provides a critical link to the college Board of Trustees, sharing relevant assessment (i.e., semester to semester and annual reports), keeping trustees apprised of the importance of the assessment of student learning

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