

Memo to: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders
From: William Flores, President
Subject: Assessment of Educational Programs

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1. PURPOSE

This policy describes the University's system for assessing educational programs and improving student learning through the use of assessment.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Educational Programs: For the purposes of this policy, educational programs include:

- Academic degree programs;
- Certificates which consist of academic credit-bearing courses;
- Stand-alone minors (minors for which there is no corresponding major);
- The General Education program; and
- The Developmental Education program

2.2 Interdisciplinary Degree Programs: Degree programs which, beyond the General Education core courses, require students to take a significant number of courses drawn from multiple disciplines.

2.3 Developmental Education Program: Courses which are designed to help underprepared students acquire the reading, writing and math skills needed to be successful in college-level coursework.

2.4 Program Faculty: The full-time faculty who are either engaged in teaching courses specifically in an academic degree program and provide oversight to discipline-specific degree programs or who form oversight committees for General Education, Developmental Education, and interdisciplinary degree programs.

2.5 Program Learning Outcomes: Knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes identified by program faculty as important for graduates of that program and program completers to obtain.

2.6 Assessment: A faculty-directed, ongoing process which seeks to understand and improve student learning by:

- making expectations explicit and transparent;
- collaboratively setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and
- using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.

- 2.7 Direct Assessment Methods: Assessment methods that prompt students to demonstrate their learning or produce work that allows observers to judge how closely the students' tests or responses fit program-level expectations.
- 2.8 Indirect Assessment Methods: Evaluations of student learning which are based on an analysis of reported perceptions about student mastery of learning outcomes. The perceptions may be self-reports by students, or they may be made by others, such as alumni, fieldwork supervisors, employers, or faculty.
- 2.9 Assessment Plan: A plan which defines the educational program's purpose or mission, student learning outcomes, assessment strategies which will be used to document the degree to which students have achieved the learning outcomes, success criteria, and a systematic schedule for collecting and reporting on assessment data related to each learning outcome (see section 4.1.1.1 of this policy).
- 2.10 Assessment Report: An annual report in which educational programs report on the prior year's assessment data collection, findings and progress made toward implementing strategies for improvement (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 of this policy).

3. POLICY

- 3.1 Assessment results from measuring student learning are to be used as the basis for improving student learning, program effectiveness and overall institutional effectiveness.
- 3.2 Program faculty are responsible for the overall quality, cohesiveness and ongoing improvement of the educational programs to include:
- Identifying the course and program learning outcomes for each educational program;
 - Developing, implementing and modifying a plan for assessing how well students are achieving program learning outcomes; and
 - Making modifications to the program's courses, curriculum and processes to improve student learning and program effectiveness.
- 3.3 Course-level learning outcomes must appear on all syllabi and course proposals.
- 3.4 Program-level learning outcomes must appear in the University catalogue and program websites.
- 3.5 Proposals for new educational programs must include program-level learning outcomes and a curriculum map showing how courses within the program will help students achieve those outcomes. Proposals for new courses included in new program proposals should include course-level learning outcomes which are mapped to program-level outcomes. A draft of the program's assessment plan which includes learning outcomes, assessment strategies, success criteria and a schedule for data collection, evaluation and reporting should be submitted to the Office of Academic Assessment within six months of program approval. The draft assessment plan will be submitted on the standardized assessment plan template distributed by the Office of Academic Assessment.

- 3.6 No new spending requests from an educational program for instruction-related activities will be considered unless the program has a current assessment report on file with the Office of Academic Assessment that meets the requirements in section 4.2. Proposed instruction-related funding initiatives submitted in unit plans must include a discussion of how the funding will enhance the unit's ability to achieve its mission and/or program outcomes and how the success of the proposed initiative will be assessed.
- 3.7 Program-level assessment does not dictate individual student grades but instead focuses on the aggregate performance of completers as well as significant subgroups such as those who complete the majority of the program online or at an off-site location.
- 3.8 Program-level assessment may not be used for personnel decisions unless a faculty member voluntarily provides assessment information for that purpose.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Responsible Parties and Duties for Educational Programs:

4.1.1 Program faculty will:

- 4.1.1.1 Create an educational program assessment plan which uses the template distributed by the Office of Academic Assessment. Each program's assessment plan identifies:
- The program's purpose or mission;
 - A minimum of three student learning outcomes that the program faculty commits to assess on an ongoing basis,
 - A minimum of two methods of assessment per program learning outcome. At least one method must be direct;
 - Success criteria (i.e., the standard by which faculty determine whether or not student performance has met faculty expectations of learning); and
 - A six-year assessment schedule in which:
 - At least one program-level learning outcome is assessed each year; and
 - All program-level learning outcomes are assessed at least once during the six-year rotation
- 4.1.1.2 Submit an assessment plan to the College Assessment Coordinator, who will ensure that the plan is reviewed and finalized by the next level of supervision and the appropriate dean. The finalized assessment plan is then conveyed to the Office of Academic Assessment by the College Assessment Coordinator.
- 4.1.1.3 Systematically collect and evaluate data as outlined in the finalized assessment plan.

- 4.1.1.4 Disaggregate assessment data for undergraduate degree programs by mode of instruction or site of instruction once the total number of graduates completing 50 percent of their UHD coursework, beyond the common core, online or at an off-campus site reaches 20 graduates during an academic year.
 - 4.1.1.5 Disaggregate assessment data for graduate degree programs by mode of instruction or site of instruction once the total number of graduates completing 50 percent of their UHD graduate coursework online or at an off-campus site reaches 10 graduates during an academic year.
 - 4.1.1.6 Disaggregate assessment data for General Education by mode of instruction or site of instruction for graduates who complete 50 percent of their UHD common core coursework online or at an off-campus site.
 - 4.1.1.7 Utilize assessment data to improve student learning and program effectiveness.
 - 4.1.1.8 Maintain written documentation of meetings where assessment-related topics are discussed.
 - 4.1.1.9 Modify and improve the assessment plan as per section 4.4.
 - 4.1.1.10 Use the standardized assessment report template distributed by the Office of Academic Assessment to prepare an annual assessment report as per section 4.2.
- 4.1.2 The College Assessment Coordinator will:
- 4.1.2.1 Coordinate assessment activities within the college to include notifying faculty and administrators of key assessment deadlines and prompting discussion among the program faculty, supervisors in the academic chain of approval, and the Office of Academic Assessment to finalize and revise assessment plans and complete assessment reports.
 - 4.1.2.2 Serve as an information resource to program faculty as they conduct assessment activities and prepare assessment plans and reports.
- 4.1.3 The chair of each department will:
- 4.1.3.1 Monitor course syllabi for the presence of course learning outcomes.
 - 4.1.3.2 Oversee assessment activities within the department;

- 4.1.3.3 Ensure that program faculty carry out assessment duties to include the collection and evaluation of data, periodic revision of assessment plans, utilization of assessment results to identify and implement strategies to improve learning and program effectiveness and completion of annual assessment reports;
 - 4.1.3.4 Collaborate with faculty to finalize assessment reports and assessment plan revisions and submit those documents to the college dean; and
 - 4.1.3.5 Forward to the program faculty any assessment-related comments from the college dean.
- 4.1.4 The dean of each college will:
- 4.1.4.1 Oversee assessment activities within the college or assigned area;
 - 4.1.4.2 Ensure that program faculty carry out assessment duties to include the collection and evaluation of data, periodic revision of assessment plans, utilization of assessment results to identify and implement strategies to improve learning and program effectiveness and completion of annual assessment reports;
 - 4.1.4.3 Collaborate with faculty and chairs (where applicable) to finalize assessment reports and assessment plan revisions and submit those documents to the Office of Academic Assessment.
- 4.1.5 The Dean of Undergraduate Studies will:
- 4.1.5.1 Oversee assessment activities within the General Education and Developmental Education programs;
 - 4.1.5.2 Ensure that program faculty carry out assessment duties to include the collection and evaluation of data, periodic revision of assessment plans, utilization of assessment results to identify and implement strategies to improve learning and program effectiveness and the completion of annual assessment reports;
 - 4.1.5.3 Collaborate with faculty, chairs and deans to finalize assessment reports and assessment plan revisions and submit them to the Office of Academic Assessment.
- 4.1.6 The Director of Academic Assessment will:
- 4.1.6.1 Assist academic units in assessing the effectiveness of their educational programs and in using the results of their assessments to improve program quality;

- 4.1.6.2 Provide leadership, in cooperation with other academic officers, in building and sustaining an environment in which assessment activities are understood and practiced for ongoing improvement;
- 4.1.6.3 Monitor the ongoing implementation of assessment plans of the University and maintain systematic records of its assessment activities in the University assessment tracking system; and
- 4.1.6.4 Provide the Provost with a regular summary of assessment activities.

4.2 Implementing Assessment Plans and Assessment Reporting

- 4.2.1 Approved assessment plans are the basis for all subsequent assessment reports. Assessment reports include:
 - Learning outcomes which were assessed during the most recent assessment cycle;
 - A summary of findings (to include the number of student work products reviewed and/or individuals surveyed, methodology used to collect data and the degree to which student performance met faculty expectations), disaggregated by significant subgroups as outlined in 4.1.1.4, 4.1.1.5 or 4.1.1.6.
 - An interpretation of the findings;
 - An overview of strategies for improving student learning and assessment and an implementation plan;
 - A summary of the assessment data disaggregated by significant subgroups if it is possible to complete a majority of the program online or at an off-campus site;
 - Faculty meeting notes or minutes from meetings in which assessment-related issues were discussed to include:
 - establishing learning outcomes and assessment procedures;
 - reviewing and analyzing assessment findings;
 - undertaking new initiatives in response to assessment findings;
 - revising the assessment plan; and
 - a follow-up report which outlines the degree to which recommended improvements from prior years' assessment reports have been implemented and documents changes made in programs as a result of the findings.
- 4.2.2 Program faculty use a standardized format distributed by the Office of Academic Assessment to report program-level learning outcomes, assessment findings, assessment data, discussions, and decisions.

4.3 Timetable for Reporting Assessment Results

- 4.3.1 With the exception of the General Education and Developmental Education programs, program faculty submit the annual assessment report to the department chair or dean (for those programs which fall outside the departmental structure) by October 30 of the academic year following the year in which the work was assessed.
- 4.3.2 Department chairs will submit assessment reports to the dean by November 15.
- 4.3.3 The program faculty assigned to the General Education and the Developmental Education programs will submit their annual assessment reports to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies by November 15 of the academic year following the year in which the work was assessed
- 4.3.4 The deans will forward finalized assessment reports to the Office of Academic Assessment by December 15.
- 4.3.5 The Office of Academic Assessment posts assessment reports to the University's online assessment tracking system by January 15.

4.4 Timetable for Revising Assessment Plans

- 4.4.1 Assessment plans can be updated during the fall of any academic year, however all assessment plans must be updated at least biannually during even-numbered years. During this revision, the assessment schedule should be extended to cover at least six academic years.
- 4.4.2 With the exception of General Education and Developmental Education programs, program faculty will review and update assessment plans using the assessment plan template distributed by the Office of Academic Assessment. Plan revisions will be submitted to chair or dean (for those programs that fall outside the departmental reporting structure) by December 15 during even-numbered years.
- 4.4.3. Updated assessment plans are due from chairs to deans by December 30.
- 4.4.4 The program faculty assigned to the General Education and the Developmental Education programs will submit their revised assessment plans to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies by the following January 15.
- 4.4.5 The dean collaborates with the faculty and chairs, if applicable, to make additional changes to the assessment plans. Finalized revisions of assessment plans are due from the dean to the Office of Academic Assessment by February 1.

4.5 Academic Assessment Committee:

4.5.1 The Academic Assessment Committee is composed of the following:

- 4.5.1.1 The Director of Academic Assessment, who will serve as the committee's chair.
- 4.5.1.2 The five College Assessment Coordinators, each appointed by the college deans.
- 4.5.1.3 A college-level administrator, appointed by the Provost.
- 4.5.1.4 A program faculty member who represents Interdisciplinary Degree programs, appointed by the Provost.
- 4.5.1.5 Full-time faculty members representing the General Education and Developmental Education programs, both of which are appointed by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.
- 4.5.1.6 The Director of Co-Curricular and Operations Assessment.

4.5.2 Committee Role

- 4.5.2.1 Serve as a forum where representatives from educational programs can exchange ideas on assessment and strategies for improving learning and effectiveness.
- 4.5.2.2 Provide leadership in building and sustaining a culture of assessment at UHD.
- 4.5.2.3 Organizes an annual rubric-based evaluation of assessment reports and shares results with faculty committees involved with assessment and program coordinators.
- 4.5.2.4 Request/recommend assessment initiatives as needed.
- 4.5.2.5 Interact with other units when recommendations call for interventions outside the classroom.

5. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this policy statement.

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party: Senior VP for Academic & Student Affairs & Provost

Review: Every four years on or before July 1st.

Signed original on file in the Office of Human Service.

7. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 08/25/2008