

STATEMENT OF ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Academic Affairs and Student Life

I. ASSESSMENT DEFINED

An ongoing process aimed at 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 those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. -- Tom Angelo, AAHE Assessment Forum (1995)

II. ASSESSMENT INFORMATION AND USE

Assessment information shall be used by the department/unit doing the assessment to understand and improve student learning. Assessment may be at the departmental, program or institutional level. Assessment should be based on multiple direct and indirect measures, and activities shall be designed to identify both strengths and challenges.

The assessing department/unit decides what specific student learning outcomes are measured, the instruments and procedures for assessing student learning, and the process for sharing the data with stakeholders. Within this framework, both process (how we assess) and outcomes (what we learned) are important. The assessment of student learning is expected to stimulate, as appropriate, discussion among faculty (both regular and temporary) of program learning goals, program curriculum, and pedagogy as means to improve learning.

The raw data that result from assessment activities are retained by the assessing department/unit, and inclusion of such data in reports required by any university office or body will be at the department/unit's option. The findings that result from assessment activities and the analysis that support those findings are to be made available to the Assessment Council, reviewing bodies, and to appropriate constituencies including students.

Student learning outcomes assessment information may not be used for personnel decisions (except for information voluntarily provided by the individual), nor shall it be the primary criterion for resource allocation decisions. Assessment information provided by individuals or programs may be used only for self-comparative purposes and may not disclose information about other individuals or other programs/units at JSU. Other uses not presented in this statement may be proposed to the Chief Academic Affairs Officer or designee, who will determine whether a proposed use is to be permitted or prohibited.

III. ASSESSMENT IN PROGRAMS/UNITS

A positive culture of assessment requires the input of multiple stakeholders, especially faculty and students. Assessment is a collaborative effort that fosters effective student learning, curriculum enhancement, program and development. A culture of assessment should not be punitive for students, faculty, or programs/units. Reporting of assessment activities and how information resulting from such activities has been used to improve programs will be required as part of the university's assessment activities and other activities, such as accreditation that review the quality of academic programs. Student learning outcomes shall be made available to students and faculty at the discretion of the Chief Academic Affairs Officer or designee.

Department/unit program review documents will include the following: (1) the formal assessment plan, the annual report of assessment results, and a plan for using assessment findings.

Various University bodies have responsibilities relative to student learning outcomes. Responsibilities lie with the faculty and staff who offer the programs being assessed, the department/programs responsible for the programs, the Faculty Senate, the assessment officer, the chief academic affairs officer and president.

IV. ASSESSMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The academic leadership, faculty and staff closest to the delivery of programs are responsible for assessing their programs. The departments/units at Jackson State University have primary responsibility for assessing student learning.

Academic and support programs that are assessed at Jackson State University and the assessing units follow:

- Entry-Level Assessment -- Division of Undergraduate Studies; Testing and Assessment Office.
- General Education Assessment -- General Education Committee (formerly Core II Committee).
- Program Outcomes Assessment -- Faculty members and academic leaders within each college, school, department, or program.
- Assessment of Student & Alumni Satisfaction -- Division of Undergraduate Studies; Office of Institutional Research; Career Services Center; Student Life; and Alumni Affairs.
- The assessment of academic and student life units at Jackson State University is the responsibility of the Chief Academic and Student Life Officer.

The specific roles of the university executive officer, chief academic officer, academic administrators, full-time and part-time faculty follow:

Executive Officer and Chief Academic Officer

The Offices of the President and Chief Academic and Student Life Officer have the following responsibilities in learning assessment:

1. Communicate to the campus the importance of learning outcomes assessment and that it is a University priority and essential to making the university a student-centered community.
2. Ensure that adequate resources, including both funds and time, are available for assessment activities.
3. Encourage appropriate recognition and rewards for those individuals and units engaged in assessment activity and using results for program enhancement.

Academic Administrators

Responsibility for assessment is an institution-wide process that is shared by faculty, administration and staff. While the primary responsibility for classroom and discipline outcomes assessment rests with faculty, administrators' role in management and delivery of resources makes them central to effective responses to challenges identified through assessment activities:

1. Develop unit assessment plans (including student learning goals and objectives, program standards and methods of measurement) and update the plans on a five-year cycle.
2. Develop a structure within the unit (e.g. committees, coordinators) to help ensure that assessment activities will be completed in a timely manner.
3. Implement assessment activities according to established timelines, and which include developing an assessment plan for each program on a five-year cycle.
4. Provide yearly summary reports on assessment activities, which need not cover all goals of the program annually, to the Chief Academic Officer or designee.
5. Consider providing recognition and reward for assessment activities in department/unit by-laws, which may include credit in any of the recognized areas of personnel decisions (i.e., teaching, research, professional development, university service).
6. Encourage and support outcomes assessment at all levels including faculty and discipline and program planning and development efforts.
7. Encourage cross-division dialogues and activities supporting development of assessment efforts and faculty skills across the curriculum.
8. Provide regular feedback to the department/unit faculty/staff on assessment activities, share assessment information with constituencies including students; and promote the "conversation among faculty/staff" of the implications of assessment for program improvement.
9. Amplify and support curriculum changes in classrooms, disciplines or programs where challenges have been identified through institutional assessment activities.

10. Provide regular feedback to students on assessment activities within departments and share with them, as appropriate, conclusions reached as a result of assessment activities.
11. Involve students in meaningful ways in assessment activities.
12. Communicate to the Chief Academic Officer or designee ways in which specialized accreditation requirements address assessment.
13. Facilitate faculty, discipline and program changes as designed by faculty in response to classroom and discipline assessment findings.

Full-time Faculty

Since the purposes of assessment are to understand and improve the educational outcomes of our efforts, it is in the interest of faculty to assure quality instruction through professional development and responsible outcomes assessment of their actions.

Outcomes assessment is first and foremost a faculty responsibility. In support of these ideals, faculty are to be active in assessment through the following activities:

1. Conduct classroom assessments in order to focus student learning and implement instructional strategies supportive of improving student learning outcomes.
2. Report utilization of classroom assessment in order to share ideas and strategies with colleagues and support institutional documentation and accreditation efforts.
3. Participate in planning and conducting discipline and/or program assessment and then work with colleagues to improve discipline and program outcomes.
4. Cooperate with college-wide assessment efforts through active support of general education (e.g., ACT), transfer, and other college-wide assessments.
5. Support through actions the assessment activities of the Assessment Team and respond to challenges as identified by those efforts.

Part-time Faculty

Since part-time faculty share professional commitments with full-time faculty, many of the assessment activities are similar. However, in recognition of their limited availability, part-time faculty are not expected to be as active in planning and implementing assessment activities at the discipline, program and institutional levels. In support of these ideals, part-time faculty is to be active in assessment through the following activities:

1. Conduct classroom assessments in order to focus student learning and implement instructional strategies supportive of improving student learning outcomes.
2. Report utilization of classroom assessment in order to share ideas and strategies with colleagues and support institutional documentation and accreditation efforts.

3. Participate in conducting discipline and/or program assessment and then cooperate with colleagues to improve discipline and program outcomes.
4. Cooperate with college-wide assessment efforts through active support of general education (e.g., ACT), transfer and other college-wide assessments.
5. Respond to challenges as identified by assessment activities of the Assessment Team as appropriate at the classroom level.

Assessment Coordinators

The Assessment Coordinators is a team comprised of two representatives (one primary and one alternate) from each academic college and division reporting to the Chief Academic Affairs Officer. The team is led by an assessment officer, and has the following responsibilities:

1. Serve as Assessment Team liaison for departments and programs in the respective college/division.
2. Assist in assessing the appropriateness and measurability of current objectives and student learning outcomes in academic/student life units.
3. Facilitate the development, coordination and documentation of assessment plans and schedules for units in each respective college/division and for the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Life.
4. Assist in identifying assessment instruments for departments and programs in each respective college/division.
5. Provide peer review to other members of the Assessment Team. Attend and participate in scheduled meetings.

V. TIMELINES

Unit assessment plans will generally establish a five-year cycle of assessment activities. Efforts will be made to coordinate cycle timelines with program review and accreditation schedules to reduce duplication of effort whenever possible.

Assessment activities addressing instructional methods, student learning, program performance, and post-graduation placement and performance of students are expected to be ongoing. Such assessments are to be conducted on a scheduled basis by academic leaders and faculty members, using a variety of direct and indirect methods.

Annual reports on each year's assessment activities (e.g. faculty performance evaluation, student learning outcomes, program performance, students' post-graduation placement and performance) and other requested data and information, must be submitted in final format to the Office of the Chief Academic Officer by June 30 of each academic year.