**Assessment Manual**

**Jackson State University**

**Office of Institution Research, Planning, and Effectiveness**

**Division of Academic Affairs**

**601.979.2615**

**FY’15**

**Table of Contents**

**Section 1: Assessment Overview**

• JSU Mission

* Our Goals

• Culture of Assessment

• Assessment Defined

• Assessment’s Importance

• Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (OIPRE) Objectives and Roles

• Assessment Team’s Roles and Performance Expectations

• Shared Responsibilities of the OIRPE and the

Assessment Team

• Statement of Assessment Responsibilities

o Responsibilities of Administrators

o Responsibilities of Full-Time Faculty

o Responsibilities of Part-Time Faculty

o Responsibilities of Students

**Section 2: Assessment Plans and Reports**

• Assessment Plans

o Effective Program Assessment

o 10 Characteristics of Successful Assessment Programs

o Evidence of Program Assessment

• Assessment Reports

o Student Points of Progress

o Faculty Points of Progress

* Staff Points of Progress

o Academic Program Productivity

• Where Do I Begin?

o Student Learning Outcomes

o What is Assessment of Student Learning?

o Building a Culture of Evidence/ Means of Measurement

• Steps for Developing the Assessment Plans and Reports

• Summary of Assessment Plan/Report Elements

(Academic Programs)

• Summary of Assessment Plan/Report Elements

(Academic and Non-Academic Programs/Units)

**Section 3: Resources**

• Writing Assessable Goals and Objectives

• Determining Assessment Approaches/Methods

• Online Resources

**ASSESSMENT MANUAL** Jackson State University

Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness

**Section 1**

**Assessment Overview**

• JSU Mission

* Our Goals

• Culture of Assessment

• Assessment Defined

• Assessment’s Importance

• Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (OIPRE) Objectives and Roles

• Assessment Team’s Roles and Performance Expectations

• Shared Responsibilities of the OIRPE and the

Assessment Team

• Statement of Assessment Responsibilities

o Responsibilities of Administrators

o Responsibilities of Full-Time Faculty

o Responsibilities of Part-Time Faculty

o Responsibilities of Students

**Mission**

To produce technologically advanced, diverse, ethical, global leaders who think critically, address societal problems, and compete effectively.

**Our Goals**

To maintain a culture of assessment at Jackson State University in both academic and non-academic areas whereby improvements in organizational efficiency is observed by administration, faculty, staff, and students. To communicate the assessment goals of the university to all areas (academic and non-academic).

**Culture of Assessment**

An environment in which continuous improvement through assessment occurs and is expected and valued. A culture of assessment exists when there are continuous efforts and commitments toward pursuing the university’s goals, taking the necessary action steps to improve one’s performance and ultimate success throughout the organization.

**Assessment Defined**

An ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning describes assessment. 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. – (Thomas A. Angelo*, AAHE Bulletin,* November 1995, p.7)

**Assessment’s Importance**

**Academic Areas**---Assessment is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the goals of education are being met. Assessment affects decisions about grades, placement, advancement, instructional needs, curriculum, and, in some cases, funding. Assessment inspires us to ask these hard questions: "Are we teaching the intended curriculum?" "Are students learning the intended curriculum?" "Is there a way to teach the subject more efficiently, thereby promoting improved learning and understanding?"

**Academic and Non-Academic Areas**

1. Accountability (External and Internal)-evidence of student learning and achievement to accreditation groups, local, state, and federal government groups, and other community stakeholders.
2. Improvement in Service (Internal)-Are our students meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the curriculum? Do our goals correspond to student and societal needs? Do our services and products coincide with our academic community expectations?

**Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (OIRPE)- Objectives and Roles**

Assessment has a long-standing history at JSU; however, as public demands for accountability increased, a formal Assessment Center was established within the Office of Academic Affairs in 2000 as the Office of Knowledge Management. In 2007, the Center was renamed. Presently, academic and non-academic assessment management is led by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness. Objectives are as follows:

• To coordinate and document the assessment process (planning and reporting) for degree programs, academic support and educational support units.

• To assure that student learning outcomes, goals and objectives, and program outcomes are established and appropriately published in assessment plans.

• To assist in identifying relevant assessment methods and criteria for success.

• To develop and document assessment plans, assessment reports, and schedules for academic programs, academic support and educational support units.

• To serve as a resource on assessment-related matters.

• To facilitate peer review, communication and sharing relative to assessment reports.

**OIRPE Assessment Team-Roles and Performance Expectations**

In AY Spring 2006, appointed representatives of each academic college were convened as Assessment Coordinators. In AY09, the group was renamed the Assessment Team. In AY11, membership on the Assessment Team was expanded to include two representatives of each degree program, academic support and educational support unit. The following roles and duties of the team members have remained constant since team inception:

• To serve as Assessment Team liaison for departments and programs in your college/division.

• To assist in assessing the appropriateness and measurability of current objectives, student learning outcomes, and program outcomes in academic/non-academic units.

• To facilitate the development, coordination and documentation of assessment

plans and reports for units in each respective college/division and for academic and educational support units.

• To assist in identifying assessment instruments for departments and programs in each respective college/division.

• To provide peer review to other members of the Assessment Team.

• To attend and participate in scheduled professional growth opportunities.

**Shared Responsibilities of the OIRPE Staff**

**& Assessment Team Members**

In order for a culture of assessment to be developed and successful at JSU, Assessment Team members must work collaboratively to achieve university, academic, and student service goals and objectives. Specifically, both must

• Understand and promote the importance of the role of assessment in student learning.

• Periodically inventory current assessment activities and data collection methods.

• Disseminate information to campus constituents about assessment theory, practices, and activities.

• Promote faculty and academic support staff professional development (training and education) in the area of assessment.

• Advocate for resources to create and maintain a culture of assessment.

• Review annual assessment plans and reports and provide feedback (recommendations and suggestions) to departments/program.

• Ensure improvement through the appropriate use of assessment results.

**Statement of Assessment Expectations**

The Office of Academic Affairs’ official statement of expectations for key individuals in the assessment process is listed below. This statement was approved and distributed by the Office of the Provost in November 2009.

**Responsibilities of 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 assessments rests with faculty, administrators’ role in management and delivery of resources makes them central to effective responses to challenges identified through assessment activities. Administrators are charged with:

1. Encouraging and supporting outcomes assessment at all levels including program planning and development efforts.

2. Facilitating faculty, discipline and program changes as designed by faculty in response to classroom and discipline assessment findings.

3. Encouraging cross-division dialogues and activities supporting development of assessment efforts and faculty skills across the curriculum.

4. Amplifying and supporting curriculum changes in classrooms, disciplines or programs where challenges have been identified through institutional assessment activities.

**Responsibilities of 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 ensure quality instruction through professional development and responsive outcomes assessment of their actions. Student learning outcomes assessment is first and foremost a faculty responsibility. In support of these ideals, faculty members 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-specific and/or program assessment and work with colleagues to improve discipline and program outcomes.

4. Cooperate with college-wide assessment efforts through active support of general education, transfer and other college-wide assessments.

5. Support actions and recommendations of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness and respond positively to challenges as identified by those efforts.

**Responsibilities of 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 is 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 planning and conducting discipline-specific and/or program assessment and work with colleagues to improve discipline and program outcomes.

4. Cooperate with college-wide assessment efforts through active support of general education, transfer and other college-wide assessments.

5. Support actions and recommendations of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness and respond positively to challenges as identified by those efforts.

The November 2009 Statement of Assessment Expectations was supplemented in

September 2010 to include the following Student Responsibilities:

**Responsibilities of Students**

Students must be active participants in assessment. The basic responsibility of our students is to participate in both direct (tests, activities, projects, portfolios, etc.) and indirect assessment activities (interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc.). Other roles that students can assume in assessment are as follows:

1. Participate in institutional exams, surveys, and focus groups.

2. Take ungraded standardized tests or locally developed exams.

3. Participate in focus groups and surveys in their major and minor departments and programs as students and alumni.

4. Participate in national surveys of student learning and satisfaction as requested.

5. Provide feedback and comments on activities, products, and services of the university.

6. Facilitate and participate in peer-review assessment activities.

**ASSESSMENT MANUAL**

Jackson State University

Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

**Section 2**

**Assessment Plans and Reports**

• Assessment Plans

o Effective Program Assessment

o 10 Characteristics of Successful Assessment Programs

o Evidence of Program Assessment

• Assessment Reports

o Student Points of Progress

o Faculty Points of Progress

* Staff Points of Progress

o Academic Program Productivity

• Where Do I Begin?

o Student Learning Outcomes

o What is Assessment of Student Learning?

o Building a Culture of Evidence/ Means of Measurement

• Steps for Developing the Assessment Plans and Reports

• Summary of Assessment Plan/Report Elements

(Academic Programs)

• Summary of Assessment Plan/Report Elements

(Academic and Non-Academic Programs/Units)

**Assessment Plans**

Every JSU program and academic or educational support unit must have a written assessment plan, which is comprised of five parts: (1) descriptive information about the program or unit; (2) program/unit mission; (3) student learning outcomes (SLO) (**academic**) and operational goals and objectives (**non-academic**); (4) means of assessment inclusive of both direct and indirect measures for each SLO and goal; and (5) criteria for success.

The Plan must be submitted using a standardized template, which can be found on the

Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness website: [www.jsums.edu/oirpe](http://www.jsums.edu/oirpe). Due dates for annual submission of assessment plans is provided on the academic calendar located in the resources section of this manual.

**Effective Program Assessment Answers These Questions**

1. What are we trying to accomplish (our goals) with reference to student learning outcomes and department/unit performance?

2. How is effectiveness demonstrated and measured relative to student learning outcomes and department/unit performance?

3. How, using the answers to the first two questions, can we improve our actions in helping to accomplish the mission of the university?

**10 Characteristics of Successful Assessment Programs**

1. The assessment program is driven by values.

2. The unit makes a long-term commitment.

3. Instructional leaders understand and believe in the value of assessment.

4. Faculty and staff lead the program and own the results. (Accountability)

5. Technical expertise and support are provided.

6. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are defined programmatically.

7. Measurement tools align with outcomes.

8. A viable research design and methodology are used.

9. Results are used by faculty & staff to improve/impact student learning and/or the learning/working environment.

10. Assessment is linked to college/division and departmental planning.

*Source: Presentation by Wes Payne. The Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools: July 30-August 2, 2006.*

**Evidence of Program Assessment**

**SUCCESS**

**S**incerity means people trust the process. **U**sefulness means the process helps people. **C**larity means people understand the process.

**C**ommitment means people believe the process works to their advantage and leaders support the process.

**E**nthusiasm means the people want to do it.

**S**ystemic and Sustainable means everyone is continuing to use it.

**S**upport means people are not alone.

*Source: Presentation by Julia Pet-Armacost. The Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. July 30 – August 2, 2006.*

**Assessment Report**

The Assessment Report is comprised of three major parts:

1. Data Collection/ Results for Program Outcomes

2. Major Difficulties

3. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Programs and Services

In addition, academic and non-academic units should identify goals and objectives for the next fiscal year based on acquired results. Non –academic areas should also include achieved impact, challenges faced, and action plans for each of the priorities identified in for their specific administrative or educational unit.

The indicators that are used to assess academic departmental performance each academic year are categorized as follows:

**STUDENT POINTS OF PROGRESS**

1. Pass rate on national standardized and licensing exams

2. Enrollment in online courses

3. Pass rate on common exams

4. Pass rate on graduate comprehensive exams

5. Pass rate on English Proficiency Exam (first sitting)

6. Number of academic departments using student portfolios

7. Number engaged in service-learning

8. Number completing internships

9. Undergraduates completing major research projects

10. Number of first-time freshmen in one or more intermediate courses

11. Number of students on academic probation

12. Student achievement of knowledge/skills that comprise the expected learning outcome\*

13. Student outcomes based on established goals\*

**FACULTY POINTS OF PROGRESS**

1. Number of peer reviewed articles by faculty member and department

2. Number of non-peer reviewed articles by faculty member and department

3. Number of papers presented by faculty at regional and national conferences by faculty member and department

4. Total dollar value of awards for research and sponsored projects

5. Number of published research by faculty member with student(s) by faculty member and department

**STAFF POINTS OF PROGRESS**

1. Number of hours of participation in professional development and training
2. Total production in conjunction with department goals and objectives
3. Total dollar value of products and services

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY**

1. Six-year cohort (150%) graduation rate

2. Number of baccalaureate graduates obtaining employment or admission to graduate/professional schools within 12 months of graduation.

3. Fall-to-fall cohort retention rate in years 2 and 3

4. Headcount enrollment and FTE

5. Number of undergraduate students 25 years and older

6. Number of MS public community college transfer students

7. Number of undergraduate minority students (ethnicity and gender)

8. Number of graduate minority students (ethnicity and gender)

9. Number of first-time students with ACT score of 18 or above

10. Number of degrees by level in natural sciences, mathematics, computer science, engineering, allied health sciences, teacher education and accounting

11. Number of degree programs accredited by a national professional accrediting agency

12. Number of full-time faculty who hold doctorate or first professional degree

13. Ratio of full-time faculty to FTE students

14. Number of classes taught by part-time faculty

15. Number of written formal partnership agreements with public and private sector entities

16. Number of full-time minority faculty (ethnicity and gender)

17. Number of courses with global emphasis

\*New indicators added in AY06. Assessment findings for these indicators should be reported on the Assessment Plan and Reports template.

**WHERE DO I Begin?**

**Begin by …**

• Defining learning expectations.

• Taking inventory of what you already do; what needs to be altered, amended, or discontinued.

• Defining your means of measurement and subsequent criteria for success.

• Developing your action plan.

• Reflecting on results, reconsidering and changing current approaches as necessary, and starting the next assessment cycle.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Student Learning Outcomes encompass a wide range of student attributes and abilities, both cognitive and affective, which are a measure of how students’ college experiences have supported their development as individuals. Cognitive outcomes include demonstrable acquisition of specific knowledge and skills, as in a major; what do students know that they didn’t know before, and what can they do that they couldn’t do before? Affective outcomes are also of considerable interest; how has their college experience impacted their values, goals, attitudes, self-concepts, world views, and behaviors? Has it

developed their potential? How has it enhanced their values to themselves, their families, and their communities? (Fry, 20-21)

**What is Assessment of Student Learning?**

Faculty members are asked to describe explicitly the knowledge, skills, and values that a student should have to graduate from the program. Assessment efforts are directed toward answering three questions:

1. What do we want students to learn?

2. How well are they learning what they need?

3. How can we help them learn more effectively?

The third question exemplifies the ongoing nature of the assessment process; it does not involve assessing an outcome but rather the progress being made toward intended objectives. The most important step in assessment is the use of the results to create and implement a plan for improving student learning.

The term “assessment” is used to describe evaluation of student learning at the ***program*** level, rather than the evaluation of individual students at the class level. Faculty members evaluate students through testing and grading; however, these evaluations are restricted to learning that occurs within a single course. The curriculum of an academic program consists of numerous courses as well as other learning opportunities such as field experiences, internships, or service learning projects. Students are expected to develop knowledge, skills, and values as a result of this combination of experiences. Thus the assessment of student learning focuses on this “macro” level rather than the

“micro” level of an individual student. [Adapted from Eastern Illinois website] Because student learning assessment is so closely linked to the curriculum, faculty must play a principal role in the assessment process. Faculty establish the student learning objectives for the department/program; select the methods and measures for evaluating objectives; determine appropriate performance standards; and develop and implement program changes based on assessment data.

**Building a Culture of Evidence/Means of Measurement**

Each academic discipline establishes principles of evidence, which are used to evaluate the quality of scholarly work. As scholars, it is known that evidence is used to assert that a conclusion is valid.

**What is Evidence?** (Adapted from Peter Ewell, NCHMS; WASC Evidence Guide)

The following five characteristics define evidence:

• Evidence is *intentional and purposeful*. It is used to answer deliberately posed questions of interest to the department or program.

• Evidence involves *interpretation and reflection* to support a conclusion.

Data by themselves are not useful; it is their interpretation and the

resulting actions that shape the direction of the department or program that are meaningful.

• Evidence is *integrated and holistic*. This means that multiple pieces of evidence are used and evaluated for common themes to support a conclusion.

• Evidence can both be *quantitative and qualitative*. Each department/program is in the best position to select what it deems to be the most appropriate forms of evidence.

• Evidence can be either *direct or indirect*. Direct evidence is performance- based, while indirect evidence looks at student satisfaction, perceptions, and values. Both kinds of evidence are necessary and important. Each department/program should carefully examine existing sources of

evidence as well as consider new approaches and how they can be used to assess student learning.

The assessment plan provides the framework to implement an evidence-based examination of student learning. It serves as the tool that guides the department in building a culture of evidence from which informed decision-making, planning, and improvement can take place.

**DEVELOPING THE ASSESSENT PLAN AND REPORT**

A Step-by-Step Guide

**Assessment Plan**

Student learning assessment is a continuous and dynamic process consisting of a series of steps, each of which is dependent on the information gathered from the previous step. The process is recursive; as one cycle of steps is completed, another cycle begins. Regardless of the program or department being assessed, the process includes the following steps: (1) descriptive information about the program or unit; (2) program/unit mission; (3) student learning outcomes (SLO) (**academic**) and operational goals and objectives (**non-academic**); (4) means of assessment inclusive of both direct and indirect measures for each SLO and goal; and (5) criteria for success.

Once the cycle has been completed, the process begins again. Student learning goals and objectives and assessment methods are reviewed and revised, if necessary. New data are collected, analyzed, and changes implemented to improve student learning.

The remaining pages describe the elements of an **Assessment Plan** and are presented to assist departments/programs in developing their plans.

**Step 1🡪 Describe the academic program or educational/support unit.**

This includes demographic information about your program or unit.

**Step 2🡪 Define the mission statement of the department or program.**

The mission statement is a brief statement of the values and philosophy of the department/program. It should guide decision-making about the curriculum and provides a framework for setting goals. It should also be aligned with the University mission.

**Example 1**: The mission of the Department of Biology is to provide a high quality education in biological sciences, and to prepare graduates for rewarding careers in academia, industry and government agencies. Its mission derives from that of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology, which is in concert with the mission of the University seeking to function as a community of learners in which teaching, research, and service are central to its total learning environment. The mission of the Department embraces the University’s core values of tradition, accountability, learning, nurturing, service, and responsibility.

**Example 2**: The mission of Institutional Research at Jackson State University is to effectively collect, analyze, and disseminate data in support of planning, policy formulation, accreditation, communication, assessment, and decision-making at the University, while also maintaining reporting requirements for external agencies.

**Step 3🡪 Define the student learning outcomes and operational goals and objectives for the department or program.**

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)-** are statements about what a student will think, know, feel or be able to do as a result of an educational experience. SLOs should be written in language that clearly implies a measureable behavior or quality of **student** work.

**Goals** are statements of broad, long range intended outcomes of the program and the curriculum. They describe the knowledge, skills, and values expected of the organization. Goals flow from the mission statement and provide a framework for the objectives. It is suggested that from three to five goals be written for a department or program. Limiting the number of goals will assist with writing overarching statements and creating an assessment plan that is both meaningful and feasible to implement.

Effective goals are:

• Broad statements of meaningful expectations

• Clearly written

• Achievable

• Assessable through related objectives

• Consistent with the mission statement

**Objectives** are brief, clear statements of learning outcomes that flow from the goals. They should be written using action words that specify observable and measurable behaviors.

Effective objectives:

• Tell us how we know when a goal has been achieved

• Use action words that specify observable behavior

• Are realistic and achievable

• Are measurable

• Use simple language

The following table presents some relevant verbs that may be useful for writing objectives. Each column represents one of the levels of **Bloom’s Taxonomy**: [Gronlund, N.E. (1991). *How to write and use instructional objectives* (4th Ed.), New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.]

**TABLE 1: Bloom’s Taxonomy**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge**  Define | **Comprehension**  Classify | **Application**  Apply | **Analysis**  Analyze | **Synthesis**  Arrange | **Evaluation**  Assess |
| Identify | Describe | Compute | Calculate | Construct | Estimate |
| Indicate | Discuss | Construct | Categorize | Create | Evaluate |
| Know | Explain | Demonstrate | Compare | Design | Discriminate |
| Label | Identify | Illustrate | Contrast | Formulate | Judge |
| List | Locate | Interpret | Determine | Organize | Interpret |
| Name | Review | Investigate | Differentiate | Plan | Rate |
| Select | Summarize | Predict | Distinguish | Prepare | Revise |
| Underline | Translate | Use | Relate | Produce | Support |

**Two examples of clearly stated goals with accompanying objectives using action verbs from Bloom’s Taxonomy are provided below.**

**Example 1:**

**Goal 1:**  **Investigate major writers, periods and genres of English and American Literature and be able to place important work and genres in their historical context.**

Objective 1 Compare two or more works and authors in English and/or American Literature, for example, analyze the character of Satan in Milton’s “Paradise Lost” and compare it to other satanic characters in literature.

Objective 2 Analyze a novel, short story, poem, play or significant piece of prose showing familiarity with the techniques and literary contexts of the particular genre being examined

Objective 3 Describe the historical context or literary period of the work or author being examined, for example, a discussion of Crane’s Maggie as an example of American Naturalism.

**Example 2:**

**Goal 1:** **Achieve growth in total contractual revenues over previous year FY’14.**

Objective 1 Promote five new items, re-introduce five older products, and continue to provide convenience of desired goods and services while increasing revenues.

Objective 2 Identify five additional vendors to enhance the goods and services offered through the card, licensing programs and contracted venues.

**Step 4🡪 Identify and describe the means of assessment.**

Student learning and program productivity should be measured using both direct (e.g., portfolios, papers, projects, internships, performances, standardized tests) and indirect (program audits, surveys, focus groups, interviews) measurements. Multiple measures should be employed whenever possible. It is suggested that at least two assessment methods be used for each objective, at least one of which must provide direct evidence of student learning and program effectiveness. To increase feasibility of assessment, consider using methods that can evaluate more than one objective.

**Examples:**

1. Completion of Senior Project in Comparative Lit XXX consisting of a portfolio of four papers and reflective essay indicative of competence in several knowledge and skill objectives of the department. A departmental committee **will** **review and evaluate** the portfolios using a 5-point scoring rubric developed and approved by department faculty. [Direct Measure]

2. A graduating senior survey **will be used** to examine students’ perception of competence regarding all department goals/objectives. [Indirect Measure]

3. A national field test in Psychology **will be given** to students in Psych XXX and Psych YYY to examine pre/post changes in knowledge of several cognate areas of psychology. [Direct Measure]

4. Monthly reports to our AVP **will document** reports/data that have been requested on a monthly basis. [Direct Measure]

5. Completed/published survey results **will document** completion of faculty, staff, students, and alumni surveys. [Indirect Measure]

**Assessment Methods**

The table below describes several methods of assessment. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. While this list is not exhaustive, it represents a variety of approaches to assessment. Select the methods most appropriate for the assessment of your departmental student learning goals (outcomes) and/or operational goals and objectives. Be reminded that assessment should be meaningful, manageable, and sustainable.

**TABLE 2: Examples of Assessment (direct and indirect) Methods**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Method** | **Definition** | **Direct or Indirect Evidence** |
| Capstone Course | Assessments take place in a capstone course that can be program-based or required of all students. Assignments are directly related to student learning objectives | Direct |
| Embedded Questions  Exit Interviews  Focus Groups Portfolios Scoring Rubrics  Standardized Test  Survey [of students, | Questions related to program learning objectives are embedded within an exam taken by all students. Faculty member grades exams as usual for course grades but responses to the embedded question are aggregated and scored with a common rubric.  Graduating seniors are interviewed to obtain  feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program in regard to student learning objectives.  A series of planned discussions for 6-10 students  who are asked a series of open-ended questions related to student learning objectives.  A compilation of a student's work throughout the  program. Evaluated by a team of faculty using a common scoring rubric.  A numerical range used to evaluate the quality of  a project, paper, etc. in relation to student learning objectives.  Department administers a national test to all students. [Be certain that test items measure student learning objectives for department]  National or locally-developed survey to measure | Direct  Indirect  Indirect Direct Direct Direct  Indirect |
| alumni, employers] | student's satisfaction, perceptions, values, in  relation to student learning objectives. |  |

**Step 5🡪 Criteria for Success (Action Plan)**

The **Success criteria** are the standards by which a unit will be judged to be successful in the eyes of the stakeholders. It is if you achieved what you set out to achieve within the defined parameters. Once the project is over one should be able to say with certainty whether or not, and to what extent, you met the criteria. In outlining your criteria for success, be sure to include your defined goals and targets to reach for each one of the goals. These targets could include dates by which specific objectives will be reached. Criteria for success or your action plan should be written in anticipation of desired results.

**Assessment Report**

The Assessment Report is comprised of three major parts:

1. Data Collection/ Results for Program Outcomes

2. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Programs and Services.

3. Major Difficulties

**Step 1🡪 Data Collection/Results for Program Outcomes**

Describe the process used to analyze and summarize the results. Provide the results. Specifically, document whether the data meets, exceeds, or does not meet the criterion for success.

**Example 1:**

Out of 11 graduates who were enrolled in SPCH 499 and DR 425, 90% completed portfolios/productions with an 85% or higher performance levels.

**Example 2:**

The criteria for success were met in most regards.

Our office developed the Assessment Plan Template for Academic Units as well as instructions for completing the template. The template, along with instructions was submitted to all program directors/chairs for completion; 87% of academic programs submitted assessment plans as requested (goal was 90%); 100% of administrative support units submitted reports as requested; 96% of Educational support units submitted reports as requested; and reviewed 100% of reports submitted and made recommendations for improvements. Our office helped coordinate the Compliance Certification and Focused Report for reaffirmation and served on the Quality Enhancement Plan Assessment committee; and assisted with the SACS on-site visit as needed.

**Step 2🡪 Use of the results to Improve Instructional Programs and**

**Services**

Data results will indicate steps to improve or revise your assessment processes. If results are above the criterion for success, revising the assessment process is necessary to increase the criterion for success or assessing another outcome or aspect of that outcome. If the results fall below the criterion, specific improvements are necessary.

**Example 1**:

The syllabus was modified for CMD 495, Senior Project to develop a group theme for 2010-2011. As a class, students will develop a literature review regarding minority performance on standardized tests and participate in tutoring sessions to improve performance on the Graduate Record Examination.

**Example 2:**

JSU plans to continue providing responses to survey requests to enhance the availability of research data regarding state agencies, institutions of higher learning, HBCU’s etc.

**Step 3🡪 Major Difficulties**

Each academic and non-academic program unit is asked to document any difficulties encountered in accomplishing each goal. If no difficulties encountered, indicate “none”.

**At the conclusion of your assessment report and after reflecting on the past academic year, goals for the next academic year should be recorded.**

**Summary of Assessment Plan/Report Elements**

**(Academic Programs)**

Program Mission/Goal(s) What is the stated function/purpose of

your program within the college/division?

What contribution does your program make

to the institution’s mission?

State Measureable Objectives STUDENT LEARNING: In measureable terms,

what impact does your unit intend to have on

student learning and professional development?

What knowledge, skills, and values/attitudes

Will students attain through matriculation in and graduation from your program?

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE: In measureable terms, how will you grow the program through recruitment, retention, graduation, student placement, research, etc.?

Expected Outcomes At what level should students’ knowledge,

skills, values/attitudes be displayed by virtue of their participation in and graduating from your program? By what specific level of performance will each objective be measured?

With reference to the program performance, how many students will you recruit/admit annually, what retention and graduation rates do you consider acceptable, how many research publications are considered adequate, etc.?

Assessment Methods DIRECT MEASURES: How will you assess

that students have learned the information,

skills, behaviors that you taught? Will you use exams, surveys, observation, external reviewers, training modules, etc.?

INDIRECT MEASURES: How will program performance be assessed? Will institutional research data or departmental files be used, satisfaction surveys, student tracking, program awards, etc.?

Frequency/Responsibility🡪Assessment How often will assessments occur? By whom?

Assessment Results Collect, analyze, and discuss the assessment

data and findings.

Use of Assessment Results How will the assessment loop (use of data to

enhance programs and services) be closed?

**Summary of Assessment Plan/Report Elements**

**(Non-Academic Support Programs/Units)**

Like academic programs, non-academic programs/units may have a combination of learning outcome and program performance objectives. The missions of academic and non-academic programs are disparate while serving the same purposes – supporting the academic and personal development of students. A summary of Assessment Plan Elements for academic and non-academic programs follow.

**Summary of Assessment Plan/Report Elements**

**( Non-academic Programs/Units)**

Program Mission/Goal(s) What is the stated mission of the program

within the university/division/college?

State Measureable Objectives What impact does your unit have on student

development and/or the services provided to them?

Expected Outcomes Describe the knowledge, skills, and

values/attitudes expected of students

participating in the training programs,

workshops, seminars, etc. provided by your

unit.

Separately state the administrative objectives of

the students services that your unit provides.

Expected Performance Levels At what level should students’ knowledge,

skills, values/attitudes be displayed after your

training, seminars, etc.? By what specific level

of performance will each objective be

measured?

With reference to administrative services, what

is the specific level of performance expected of

your unit?

Assessment Methods How will you assess that students have learned

the information, skills, and behaviors that you

tried to convey in training? Will you use

presentations, surveys, observation, external   
reviewers, training modules, etc.?

How will administrative services be assessed? Will volume of activity, measures of efficiency, service quality, client satisfaction surveys, comparisons to peer institutions, focus groups, etc. be used?

Frequency/Responsibility🡪Assessment How often will assessments occur? By whom?

Assessment Results Collect, analyze, and discuss assessment data

and findings.

Use of Assessment Results How will the assessment loop (use of data to

enhance programs and services) be closed?

**ASSESSMENT MANUAL**

Jackson State University

Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

**Section 3**

**Resources**

• Writing Assessable Goals and Objectives

• Determining Assessment Approaches/Methods

• Online Resources

**Writing Assessable Goals & Objectives**

**Avoid Weasel Words and Phrases:**

Be aware of Have a (firm) grasp of

Have an awareness of Have a (an in-dept) knowledge of

Be conversant with Be prepared for a variety of

Be familiar with Have a (good) sense of

Display a broad and full grasp of Understand

Develop awareness (understanding) Have an (a broad) understanding of

Use Action Verbs:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Add | Design | List | Restate |
| Advance | Determine | Locate | Reveal |
| Alter | Differentiate | Make | Revise |
| Analyze | Discriminate | Manipulate | Section |
| Annotate | Dissect | Match | Select |
| Apply | Distinguish | Mobilize | Separate |
| Appraise | Divide | Modify | Show |
| Arrange | Draw | Multiply | Sift |
| Assign | Earn | Name | Sketch |
| Assay | Employ | Negotiate | Solve |
| Assess | Estimate | Offer | Sort |
| Calculate | Evaluate | Omit | Speak |
| Canvass | Exercise | Operate | Specify |
| Change | Exert | Perform | Spell |
| Check | Expand | Pick | State |
| Choose | Extrapolate | Plan | Strike |
| Classify | Find | Point | Subtract |
| Collect | Form | Predict | Summarize |
| Combine | Generate | Produce | Support |
| Compare  Compose | Give  Hold | Project  Propose | Synthesize  Take care, teach |
| Contrast | Identify | Quality | Tell |
| Convert | Illustrate | Quantity | Test |
| Create | Include | Quote | Touch |
| Criticize | Integrate | Rate | Transfer |
| Dance | Interpolate | Read | Transform |
| Deduce | Interpret | Recite | Translate |
| Define | Judge | Referee | Use |
| Demonstrate | Justify | Repeat | Weigh |
| Derive | Label | Reproduce | Write |

Gardiner, Lion F. (1989). *Planning/or assessment: Mission statement, goals, and objectives.*

Trenton, NJ: Distributed by New Jersey Department of Higher Education, 256.pp.

**DETERMINING ASSESSMENT APPROACHES/METHODS**

When considering how to assess student learning (i.e. How do we know that our students have learned what we expect them to?), you may wish to consider the following:

**1. What particular learning objectives are addressed?**

o Courses

o Programs

o Services

o Internships

o Community service projects

o Work experience

o Independent study

o Undergraduate research

**2. What approaches will you use to assess learning outcomes?**

o Exams – major field exams, GRE, LSAT, MAT

o Embedded classroom assessment

o In-class writing sample

o In-class analysis of a problem

o In-class collaborative problem solving project

o Portfolio

o Performance

o Simulation

o Focus group

o Capstone course

**3. Are you using direct or indirect measures to assess learning outcomes?**

**Are you using qualitative and/or quantitative measures?**

**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 (e.g. creativity, analysis, synthesis, or objectivity), or holds a particular value. [“Student learning Assessment: Options and Resources,” Middle States Commission on Higher Education]

o Comprehensive exam

o Writing proficiency exam

o National exam

o GRE subject test

o Major Field test

o Certification exam

o Licensure exam

o Local pre-test and post-test

o Performance assessment

o Video/audio tape evaluation

o Senior thesis/major project

o Portfolio evaluation

o Capstone courses designed to evaluate performance in program

**INDIRECT** methods of evaluating student learning involve data that are related to the act of learning, such as factors that predict or mediate learning or perceptions about learning but do not reflect learning itself. [“Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources,” Middle States Commission on Higher Education] Such methods are typically used to assess program performance.

o Comparison with peer institution

o Job placement

o Employer survey

o Graduate school acceptance rates

o Performance in graduate school

o Graduation/retention rates

o Exit interviews

o Student satisfaction survey

o Student course evaluation

o Internship evaluation

o Focus group evaluation

o Alumni survey

o Tracking alumni honors/awards

Assessment methods should reflect the type of learning or performance to be measured. The student learning outcomes must govern the choice of measures. A combination of assessment approaches can be the most effective way to measure student learning and program performance. Assessment tools should be chosen so that students and programs are given multiple ways to demonstrate their learning and performance, respectively.

**4. Who are you going to assess?**

o All students

o Student cohorts, such as: At risk students

o Students with ACTs over 18

o Juniors

o Graduating seniors

o Random sample

**5. What is your schedule for assessing learning outcomes?**

o Upon matriculation

o At the end of a specific semester

o At the completion of a required set of courses

o Upon program completion

o Upon graduation

o Upon employment

o A number of years after graduation

Adapted from materials provided by Kent State University

**ONLINE RESOURCES**

**Assessment Cyber-Guide for Learning Goals and Outcomes**

[**www.apa.org/ed/guidehomepage.html**](http://www.apa.org/ed/guidehomepage.html)

**Council for Aid to Education (CAE)--Collegiate Learning Assessment**

[**http://www.collegiatelearningassessment.org/**](http://www.collegiatelearningassessment.org/)

**Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE):** [**http://fsse.iub.edu/**](http://fsse.iub.edu/)

**Measuring Quality: National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessments**

[**www.learningoutcomeassessments.org/measuringquality.html**](http://www.learningoutcomeassessments.org/measuringquality.html)

**National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):**

[**http://www.nsse.iub.edu**](http://www.nsse.iub.edu)

**NCPI Assessment Toolkit: Inventory of Instruments**

[**www.standford.edu/group/ncpi**](http://www.standford.edu/group/ncpi)

**Qualtrics:** [**http://www.qualtrics.com/academic-solutions/jackson-state-**](http://www.qualtrics.com/academic-solutions/jackson-state-) **university/**

**Templates:** [**www.jsums.edu/institutionalresearch**](http://www.jsums.edu/institutionalresearch)

**Annual Assessment Plan/Report Template-Non-Academic Units**

**Annual Assessment Plan/Report Template—Academic Units**

**Assessment Rubric—Academic**

**Assessment Rubric—Non-Academic**

**Assessment Calendar**

**Assessment Team Members**