

# ANALYSIS WORKSHEET KEY

## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:

# LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

### NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

## I. INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE: a. Collective/Shared Values

### Beginning Implementation of Assessment Programs

#### LEVEL ONE

##### — Collective/Shared Values —

A shared understanding of the purposes, advantages, and limitations of assessment has not evolved or is just emerging.

There is not presently a coherent, wide spread understanding of what types of information should constitute an effective outcomes assessment strategy.

### Making Progress in Implementing Assessment Programs

#### LEVEL TWO

##### — Collective/Shared Values —

A shared understanding of the purposes, advantages, and limitations of assessment exists and is broadening to include areas beyond the instructional division.

Student learning and assessment of student academic achievement are valued across the institution, departments, and programs.

Some but not all academic programs have developed statements of purpose and educational goals that reflect the institutional mission and specifically mention the department's focus on improving student learning, and the importance they attribute to assessing student learning as a means to that end.

### Maturing Stages of Continuous Improvement

#### LEVEL THREE

##### — Collective/ Shared Values —

Assessment has become an institutional priority, a way of life.

Students, faculty, and staff view assessment activities as a part of the university culture and as a resource and tool for their efforts to improve undergraduate and graduate student learning. Important institutional decisions are tied to assessment results.

Assessment of student learning is an integral component of each academic program, in both undergraduate and graduate education. Within undergraduate education, it provides for both assessment of student learning in general education and in the major. It also includes assessment of student learning across each distance learning program, adult degree program, non-traditional program, and program taught off-campus.

All academic units consider assessment integral to their department's functioning, not an "add-on." This orientation is consistent with the goal of the institution to foster an institution-wide transition from viewing assessment as a necessary response to demands for accountability to understanding that assessment is a continuous source of the knowledge essential for instructional improvement.

## **II. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: a. Faculty**

### **Beginning Implementation of Assessment Programs**

#### **LEVEL ONE**

##### **— Faculty —**

Only a few academic departments or programs have described measurable objectives for each of their educational goals.

Most academic programs have not identified and used direct measures of student learning.

A few academic units have begun to expand assessment activities beyond teacher evaluation of student learning and grades that occur in courses.

Faculty and staff are questioning the efficacy of the assessment program, and their buy-in to date is minimal.

Programmatic or departmental faculty depend on one measure of learning, rather than on multiple measures, both quantitative and qualitative, that are aligned with academic program goals and measurable objectives.

The pattern of assessment implementation is uneven across academic units. Although some professional programs whose accreditation agencies mandate assessment have proceeded with implementation, others have engaged only in marginal activities that do not get to the core of measuring student-learning outcomes.

Few of the graduate programs have well-developed assessment programs.

Some faculty remain unclear about dimensions of assessment such as: (1) the difference between the assessment they conduct through course examinations and the broader assessment of student outcomes; (2) the need to close the feedback loop after obtaining assessment information by systematically reviewing the information and identifying areas of strength and areas for possible improvement of student learning; (3) the differences among the evaluation of resources and processes and the assessment of student outcomes.

### **Making Progress in Implementing Assessment Programs**

#### **LEVEL TWO**

##### **— Faculty —**

Faculty in many or most departments have developed measurable objectives for each of the program's educational goals.

Faculty members are taking responsibility for ensuring that direct and indirect measures of student learning are aligned with the program's educational goals and measurable objectives.

The Faculty Senate, Assessment Committee, Curriculum Committee, other faculty bodies, and individual faculty leaders accept responsibility for becoming knowledgeable and remaining current in the field of assessment.

Faculty members are becoming knowledgeable about the assessment program, its structures, components, and timetable.

Faculty members are learning the vocabulary and practices used in effective assessment activities and are increasingly contributing to assessment discussions and activities.

Faculty from well-developed assessment programs, internal or external to the institution, are resources for those departments less advanced in the assessment process.

Faculty take the opportunity to determine educational outcome goals for their programs collaboratively. In units more advanced in their assessment work, faculty are working together to determine appropriate measures for those outcomes, and to identify improvements based on those results.

## **Maturing Stages of Continuous Improvement**

### **LEVEL THREE**

#### **— Faculty —**

All of the characteristics described in Level Two are continued, sustained, and where appropriate, enhanced.

Faculty speak publicly and informally to their peers and the institution's other constituents in support of the assessment program and educate others (e.g., newly hired faculty, adjuncts, and part-time faculty and student s) about its value.

Faculty members are exploring the uses of assessment in the context of research on learning theories, constructing vs. acquiring knowledge, and active learning strategies.

Faculty, as a whole, demonstrate effective assessment practices and routinely link results to decision making and program improvement.

## **II. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: b. Administration and Board**

### **Beginning Implementation of Assessment Programs**

#### **LEVEL ONE**

##### **— Administration and Board —**

Concerns about the assessment plan identified in the last Evaluation Team's Report and/or the APR review (assessment panel review) have not been addressed or not adequately addressed.

### **Making Progress in Implementing Assessment Programs**

#### **LEVEL TWO**

##### **— Administration and Board —**

The Board, the CEO, and the executive officers of the institution express their understanding of the meaning, goals, characteristics, and value of the assessment program, verbally and in written communications.

The CAO has oversight responsibility for the ongoing operation of the assessment program and for promoting the use of assessment results to effect desired improvements in student learning, performance, development, and achievement.

The CAO, deans, directors, and other academic officers demonstrate their commitment to the assessment program through verbal and financial support of assessment personnel and activities and of the changes in modes of instruction, in staffing, curriculum, student and academic services proposed by faculty on the basis of assessment results.

The CAO arranges for awards and public recognition to individuals, groups, and academic units making noteworthy progress in assessing and improving student learning.

Unit heads devise strategies to ensure that their academic department s/programs implement the assessment plans they developed or develop them more fully.

### **Maturing Stages of Continuous Improvement**

#### **LEVEL THREE**

##### **— Administration and Board —**

All of the characteristics described in Level Two are continued, sustained, and where appropriate, enhanced.

Board members informed about assessment results are helpful in championing institutional improvement efforts and making such efforts an ongoing institutional priority.

Besides explicit public statements, senior administrators are supportive of the assessment program by authorizing various campus offices to provide the services needed to carry out the assessment efforts. They also authorize special projects to enhance the assessment program (e.g., pilot projects, summer stipends, departmental grants, and support for assessment symposia). These projects are designed to promote better assessment practices, to improve faculty understanding of the benefits of assessing student learning, and to contribute to faculty's acceptance of assessment as fundamental to a scholarly approach to teaching and learning.

## **II. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: c. Students**

### **Beginning Implementation of Assessment Programs**

#### **LEVEL ONE**

##### **— Students —**

Students know little or nothing about the assessment program. They do not understand how it will be carried out, their role in its success, or how it could be useful to them and future cohorts of students.

Prospective and incoming students are provided with few explicit, public statements regarding the institution's expectations for student learning (e.g., general education and student development outcomes that would apply to all undergraduates), including information about the goals of the institution regarding quality and improvement, and the student's role and responsibility in that effort.

### **Making Progress in Implementing Assessment Programs**

#### **LEVEL TWO**

##### **— Students —**

Student government members frequently serve on the institutional or departmental / program Assessment Committees and are becoming knowledgeable about institution's assessment program.

There is graduate and undergraduate student representation on campus-wide and unit-level assessment committees.

The institution effectively communicates with students about the purposes of assessment at the institution and their roles in the assessment program.

### **Maturing Stages of Continuous Improvement**

#### **LEVEL THREE**

##### **— Students —**

Students reflect upon the work they have produced over the course of their academic program, put their thoughts into writing, and include judgments about how their work does or does not demonstrate attainment of the faculty's expected outcomes.

Student leaders educate their peers about the assessment program through conversations, public presentations, and articles in the student newspaper.

Unit faculty, with input from their students, identify changes that might be made toward improving those areas of learning that the results of assessment indicate could be strengthened.

### **III. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT: a. Resources**

#### **Beginning Implementation of Assessment Programs**

##### **LEVEL ONE**

###### **— Resources —**

Sufficient resources have yet to be allocated in the annual E&G operations budget to operate and sustain a comprehensive assessment program.

The university has not designated funds in the institutional operating budget for the implementation of a comprehensive assessment program that will generate data to inform decisions intended to lead to continuing improvement of student learning and that will protect the assessment program from the funding vicissitudes of particular schools, colleges, and units.

#### **Making Progress in Implementing Assessment Programs**

##### **LEVEL TWO**

###### **— Resources —**

The CEO and CAO annually approve a budget for the assessment program sufficient to provide the technological support, physical facilities, and space needed to sustain a viable assessment program and for making professional development opportunities available.

In institutions without an Office of Institutional Research (OIR), knowledgeable staff and/or faculty members are given release time or additional compensation to provide these services.

Unit heads endorse the use of departmental funds for professional development in assessment, for faculty release time, and other expenses associated with the department's assessment activities and initiatives based on assessment findings intended to improve student learning.

Resources are made available for faculty serving on the Assessment Committee, faculty seeking to develop their skills in assessing student learning, departments requesting funding to implement their assessment programs and test changes intended to improve student learning.

Faculty receive feedback on their assessment programs through an annual reporting cycle. The members of the Assessment Committee review each report that is submitted and provide analysis and suggestions to the faculty in the program.

Assessment information sources such as an assessment newsletter and an assessment resource manual are made available to faculty to provide them with key assessment principles, concepts, models, and procedures.

#### **Maturing Stages of Continuous Improvement**

##### **LEVEL THREE**

###### **— Resources —**

All of the characteristics described in Level Two are continued, sustained, and where appropriate, enhanced.

A budget line has been established and sufficient resources are allocated in the annual E&G operations budget to sustain a comprehensive assessment program.

Mechanisms are in place to ensure linkage of assessment outcomes to allocation of resources for the purposes of improving student learning.

Special funding is available to support faculty attendance at local, state, regional, and national assessment conferences.

The Assessment Committee solicits proposals and awards funding for departmental assessment activities and initiatives.

Deans and department heads have the responsibility and authority to allocate budgeted resources to support changes indicated by assessment results.

### **III. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT: b. Structures**

#### **Beginning Implementation of Assessment Programs**

##### **LEVEL ONE**

— Structures —

The structure of the assessment program is beginning to take shape.

The infrastructure to support the university's assessment program is not fully developed.

## **Making Progress in Implementing Assessment Programs**

### **LEVEL TWO**

— Structures —

There is an organizational chart and an annual calendar of the implementation of the assessment program.

The assessment program is provided with a Coordinator/Director who reports directly to the CAO.

The CEO or CAO has established a standing Assessment Committee, typically comprised of faculty, academic administrators, and representatives of the OIR and student government.

The administration has enlarged the responsibility of the OIR to include instruction and support to the Assessment Committee, academic unit heads, and academic departmental or program faculty.

Unit leaders (department heads) have responsibility for maintaining successful assessment programs as a part of their formal position descriptions.

The CAO delegates unit heads sufficient authority and resources to conduct an effective assessment program.

Some or many academic units and the Curriculum Committee are requiring that faculty members indicate on the syllabi of previously approved courses and in the proposal for new courses, and for new or revised program, the measurable objectives for student learning and how student learning will be assessed.

Members of the Assessment Committee serve as coaches and facilitators to individuals and departments working to develop or improve their assessment programs and activities.

The Assessment Committee is working with unit heads and with faculty and student government leaders to develop effective feedback loops so that information (about assessment results and the changes tried where those results suggest improvement is needed) can be shared with all institutional constituencies and used to improve student learning.

## **Maturing Stages of Continuous Improvement**

### **LEVEL THREE**

— Structures —

All of the characteristics described in Level Two are continued, sustained, and where appropriate, enhanced.

Syllabi for courses being currently offered and all submitted courses and programs state measurable objectives for student learning and provide for the assessment of students' academic achievement.

The institution maintains a system of data collection that helps sustain an effective assessment program.

The comprehensive assessment program is evaluated regularly and is modified as necessary for optimal effectiveness.

Institutional and departmental assessment programs are annually reviewed and annually updated.

The effectiveness of the changes in curriculum, academic resources, and support services made to improve student learning is evaluated and documented.

The institution provides resources and support for the assessment program through offices that (1) offer consultation in research and evaluation design, portfolios, local development of direct measures; (2) enhance effective decision making and foster accountability by facilitating assessment activities and facilitating the integration of planning and budgeting processes with the results of assessment; (3) maintain data that are summarized and published annually and provide on-line access to data for academic departments; and (4) provide instructional support resources, consultation, and workshops for assessment activities.

The academic program includes a procedure for an annual report to the CAO of accomplishments, Obstacles encountered, or changes recommended and accommodated through modification of the previous year's assessment plan.

The Assessment Committee creates a monthly publication that communicates assessment activities and results to the campus community, thereby raising awareness about the efficacy of assessment for improving teaching and student learning.

## **IV. EFFICACY OF ASSESSMENT**

### **Beginning Implementation of Assessment Programs**

#### **LEVEL ONE**

##### **— Efficacy —**

Implementation of the assessment program is in its infancy, is progressing at a slower than desired pace, or has stalled.

There is minimal evidence that the assessment program is stable, and will be sustainable.

Confusion exists regarding the different purposes and relationships among: placement testing, faculty evaluation, program review, institutional effectiveness, and the assessment of student learning.

Assessment of general education skills, competencies, and capacities has not been implemented or has stalled.

The measures being used to assess student learning of the skills and competencies expected as outcomes of the general education program have little direct relationship to actual learning outcomes.

Few academic programs and departments are collecting, interpreting, or using data about student learning above the level of the individual classroom.

Few if any academic programs are using assessment results to improve student learning.

Although considerable program-level data about student and program performance is available, individual units vary widely in the degree to which they use this information to improve the quality of educational experiences.

Assessment data are inconsistently used as the basis for making changes across the institution. In cases where data have been collected, the results have not been interpreted and used to guide program improvement.

The assessment program is not designed to provide useful data, which could impact change.

Data are being collected for the purpose of reporting rather than the improvement of student learning.

### **Making Progress in Implementing Assessment Programs**

#### **LEVEL TWO**

##### **— Efficacy —**

Faculty members are increasingly engaged in interpreting assessment results, discussing their implications, and recommending changes in academic programs and other areas in order to improve student learning.

Many academic units or programs are collecting, interpreting, and using the results obtained from assessing student learning in general education, in undergraduate majors, and in graduate and professional programs.

The conclusions faculty reach after reviewing the assessment results and the recommendations that they make regarding proposed changes in teaching methods, curriculum, course content, instructional resources, and in academic support services are beginning to be incorporated into regular departmental and/or institutional planning and budgeting processes and included in the determination of the priorities for funding and implementation.

Assessment findings about the state of student learning are beginning to be incorporated into reviews of the academic program and into the self-study of institutional effectiveness.

Academic unit heads are documenting the changes made in pedagogy, curriculum, course content, and/or academic resources and support services to improve student learning as a result of the faculty's responses and recommendations to assessment.

### **Maturing Stages of Continuous Improvement**

#### **LEVEL THREE**

##### **— Efficacy —**

All of the characteristics described in Level Two are continued, sustained, and where appropriate, enhanced.

Student learning has become central to the culture of the institution and finding ways to improve it is ongoing.

A "culture of evidence" has emerged, sustained by a faculty and administrative commitment to excellent teaching and effective learning.

Explicit statements regarding the institution's expectations for student learning are widely publicized.

Programmatic benchmarks are established against which students' learning outcomes are assessed.

The institution publicly and regularly celebrates demonstrated student learning, performance, and achievement.