Adams State College

Plan for Assessment of Student Learning:
An Academic Assessment Plan

Revised 04-24-06

I. INTRODUCTION

This document presents a plan for assessing student-learning outcomes at Adams State College (ASC), including both on and off-campus degree programs. The plan is not meant to be a general assessment plan of all College goals and objectives but is limited to student learning. Program goals that are not academic in nature will be assessed in the 5 year program review, rather than using the detailed plan outlined below. The plan provides a local definition of learning assessment, a purpose and rationale for doing assessment, a set of principles and a description of what is to be assessed and how the assessment activities will be coordinated and managed.

Enhancing learning by enhancing assessment

Assessment is a central element in the overall quality of teaching and learning in higher education. A well-designed plan for assessment of learning outcomes sets clear expectations, but also establishes a reasonable workload (one that does not push students into rote approaches to study and one that does not push faculty into artificial teaching modes). Assessment provides opportunities for students to self-monitor, rehearse, practice, and receive feedback; at the same time it provides opportunities for faculty to monitor the attainment of learning outcomes and to receive feedback for ongoing improvement of academic programs.

II. PURPOSE

The goal of this assessment initiative is to improve student learning thus helping the College fulfill its educational mission. Assessment provides evidence of how well the College is meeting its objectives and helps identify areas for improvement.

III. RATIONALE

Even if assessment were not required, educators, whose role is to improve student learning, should always engage in it.

IV. BASIC PRINCIPLES

Principles Underlying Adams State College's Assessment Plan
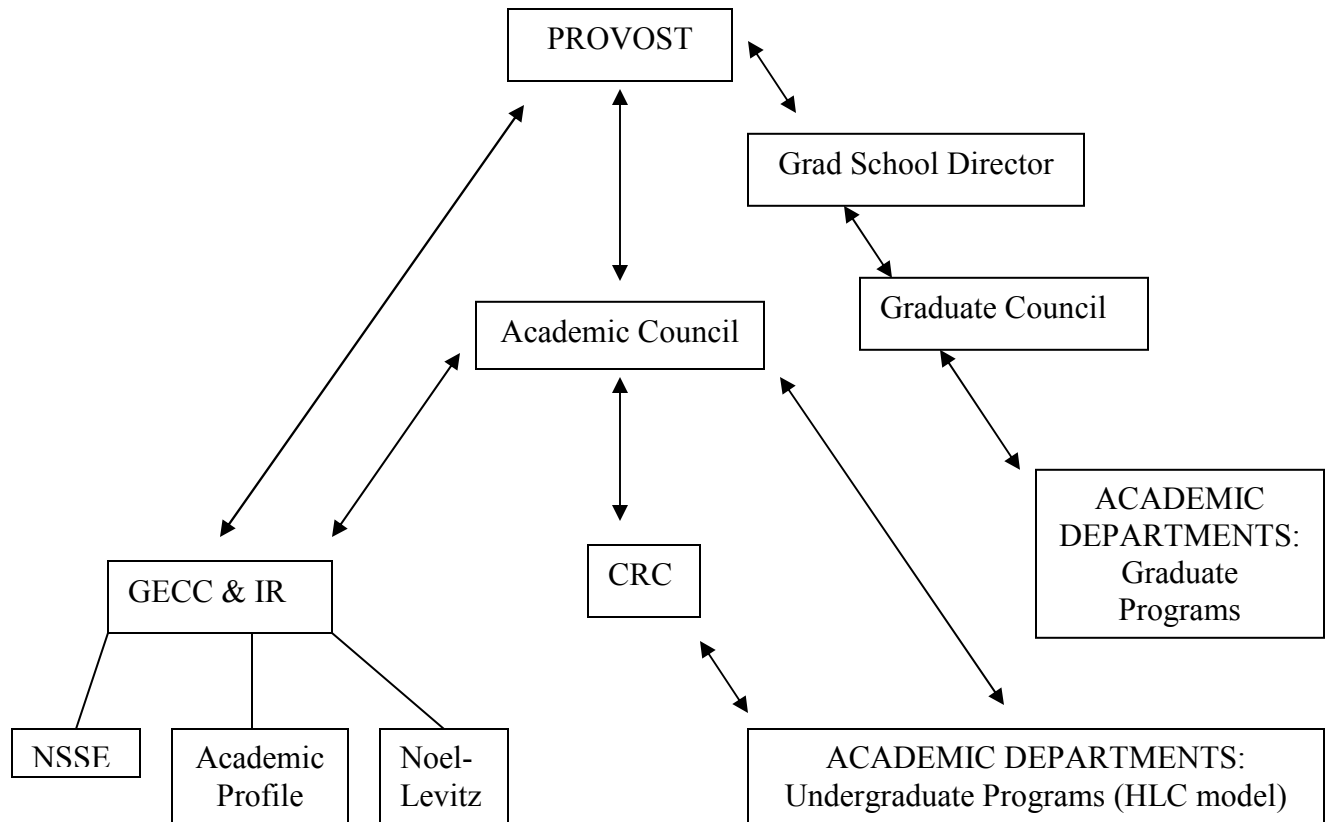
- The College is committed to assessment and to implementation of a unified, coherent program to evaluate its educational activities.
- The College values the involvement of all stakeholders including students, alumni, faculty, administration, staff, and the BOT academic committee, in the assessment process.
- The faculty of each program, under the leadership of the Department Chair, will have primary responsibility for the development, implementation, and maintenance of assessment activities that align with the assessment protocol developed for the HLC.

- Clearly defined program goals against which student learning outcomes can be evaluated are essential. Statements of desired program educational goals of all academic programs, will originate with, and be approved by, the faculty of those programs.
- Programs evaluated by external accrediting bodies may have to meet additional requirements but must adhere to college assessment guidelines.
- Student learning should be assessed using both direct and indirect methods and quantitative and qualitative data.
- The non-aggregated data gathered for assessment purposes shall remain confidential and shall be used only for the purposes of assessment.
- Assessment of student learning outcomes is about improving learning, not evaluating faculty.
- Assessment is systematic, ongoing, and cyclic.
- Assessment should be simple, doable, and consistent with the college's mission.
- Assessment may measure value-added learning but this is not a requirement.
- The assessment program is dynamic and will evolve over time.

V.   LEARNING GOALS & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes occurs in two broad categories: General Education Program Goals, and Departmental, or major-specific Program Goals. A distinct assessment plan is necessary for each of these categories. Adams State College will implement two assessment plans: The General Education Assessment Plan (V.1 below), and the Departmental Assessment Plan (V. 2. below). The Provost, in collaboration with the Academic Council and the Graduate Council, will establish procedures for both assessment plans. The Academic Council and Graduate Council will review the procedures for assessment on an annual basis and make recommendations for change to the Provost. Results from both assessment plans will be reported to the Provost on an annual basis. The Curriculum Review Committee will review a cumulative assessment report for all undergraduate programs on a five-year cycle as part of the program review process. The Graduate Council will review a cumulative assessment report for all graduate programs on a five-year cycle as part of the program review process.

The following chart indicates the individual(s)/offices responsible for assessment and the reporting structure:

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                                                │  Grad School Director │
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                        │ Academic Council │      │  Graduate Council │
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              ┌──────────────┐                         │    ACADEMIC       │
              │  GECC & IR   │      ┌──────┐           │  DEPARTMENTS:     │
              └──────────────┘      │ CRC  │           │    Graduate       │
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  │ NSSE │  │ Academic │ │  Noel- │         │   ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS:              │
  └──────┘  │ Profile  │ │ Levitz │         │ Undergraduate Programs (HLC model)   │
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1.   General Education Program Goals

Adams State College has prescribed a program of general studies for all students seeking associates degrees and baccalaureate degrees. This is done in the belief that our graduates must possess college level skills, competencies, and an acquaintance with major areas of knowledge commonly possessed by educational persons in a free society. Specifically, the program of general studies will foster in our graduates:

1. an understanding of and facility in the basic modes of communication and an ability to initiate inquiry, question conventional wisdom, and analyze problems;

2. a critical understanding of the current state of knowledge, of the methods by which that knowledge has been produced, and of the interrelationships among the major academic divisions of knowledge: Communications, Fine Arts, Humanities, the Natural and Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Social Sciences;

3. the development of a global perspectives (culture, historical, societal, scientific) from which a strong set of ethical and moral values can evolve;

4. an awareness of the importance and desirability of continuing to pursue intellectual growth throughout one's lifetime.

The above goals are deliberately pursued within specific general studies requirements, as well as within the academic major.

a. Assessment of General Education Program Goals

i. Assessment of Specific General Education Courses:

Assessment of student learning outcomes will occur within every general education course. Course syllabi will clearly state Student Learning Outcomes that address the general education program goals. Additionally course content will provide evidence that these goals are being addressed. The course grading criteria will provide evidence that students are being assessed within the class on their ability to meet the student learning outcomes of both the course and general education.

The department that delivers the general education course is responsible for ensuring that the Institutional Syllabus aligns with the goals for general education. It is also responsible for ensuring that individual instructor syllabi align with the approved institutional syllabus. In addition the Institutional Syllabi for all general education courses will be reviewed and approved by both the CRC (Curriculum Review Committee) and the GECC (General Education Coordinating Committee) to ensure that student learning outcomes, course content and grading procedures align with and measure the goals for general education.

ii. Assessment of General Education Goals

The General Education Program Goals stated above includes goals that are not easily measured in a quantifiable manner. In order to effectively measure goals such as 3 and 4, it is necessary to use a variety of assessment tools in addition to those provided within the general education course itself. Currently the following assessment tools are being used to assess general education:
- The Academic Profile Exam – measures college-level reading, writing, and critical thinking in the context of material from humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. It also measures knowledge of basic math. (Assesses General Education Goals 1,2,3)
- The NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) – measures student engagement (Assesses General Education Goals 3,4)
- The Noel-Levitz Survey of Student Satisfaction – measures student satisfaction (Assesses General Education Goals ?)

The GECC (General Education Coordinating Committee) will be responsible for determining which assessment methods are most appropriate for General Education. They will work in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research to establish

mechanisms and procedures for comprehensive assessment. They may solicit existing campus offices, or committees such as BEAMS, or form sub-committees as needed to execute the assessment plan.

GECC, working in collaboration with IR, will submit an annual report analyzing the assessment results to the Academic Council and the Provost. The reporting format will parallel that approved by the Academic Council for assessment of academic programs. Included in their report will be recommendations for actions to be undertaken in the next academic year. The Academic Council will review the report and modify or move to adopt the recommendations. The Provost, or designee, will in turn consider the AC's recommendations before endorsing the actions to be taken in the following year. Actions to be undertaken will be communicated to GECC by the Provost, or designee, in order to facilitate implementing the plan the following year.

The responsibility to act on recommendations regarding specific content or instructional objectives lies with the program(s) responsible for delivery of courses with related content and instructional objectives.

iii. *College-wide Assessments*

All ASC students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in their use of technology and in writing. Demonstrated proficiency in both is a requirement for graduation with all associate and baccalaureate degrees. Proficiency is assessed as follows:

a. Technology Proficiency

The requirement may be met by scoring 70% on the ASC Technology Proficiency examination, or by passing an approved course with a grade of 'C' or better. Courses meeting this proficiency are BUS 120 Business Computer Applications and CSCI 100 Essentials of Information Technology.

b. Writing Proficiency

All students are expected to undergo an assessment of their writing during the semester in which they will have completed 60 credit hours. The method of writing assessment varies by discipline/major. Each department is responsible for determining the criteria for writing proficiency for their majors, as well as assessing their writing.

In addition, all departments have developed at least one program goal, and associated student learning outcomes, related to writing. Any program goal or goals related to writing will be assessed in accordance with the procedures outlined in section 2 below, using the assessment template.

iv. Annual Procedure & Calendar for General Education Assessment

OCTOBER
- GECC determines which assessment tests/tools best measure the General Education Program Goals and whether they will be administered annually. If not administered annually GECC will determine the schedule for administration.

NOVEMBER
- GECC determines which test(s) will be administered that academic year, establishes a timeline for administering them, and informs the IR Office.
- GECC will determine benchmarks for performance on specific tests.
- IR Office orders the tests

DECEMBER-JANUARY
- GECC establishes a procedure for administering the tests. If a system has previously been established for administration of a particular assessment test, and GECC agrees that it is the most effective method, they may work with the existing responsible office or individual to ensure that process for administration is followed.

MARCH
- Assessment tests/surveys are administered and returned to the IR Office.
- IR Office sends tests/surveys to appropriate center for results tabulation.
- IR Office receives test/survey results.

APRIL/MAY
- GECC and IR collaborate to compile a report on ASC students' performance. The report will include analysis and recommendations to address any areas where performance is below the established benchmark. The reporting format will parallel that approved by the Academic Council for assessment of academic programs.

SEPTEMBER
- Report is submitted to Academic Council and the Provost, or designee, for review.
- Academic Council makes recommendations to the Provost, or designee, if action is needed to address performance deficiencies. If the AC is satisfied that students are successfully meeting the required benchmarks they will endorse the report.
- Provost, or designee, endorses or modifies recommendations and relays them to GECC.
- Academic Council reviews the reporting format and structure, and determines whether changes are necessary. If necessary, changes to the reporting format and structure are proposed and submitted to the Provost, or designee, for approval and adoption.
- Assessment cycle begins again.

2.   Departmental Program Goals

Adams State College departments are committed to student learning and the goals and mission of the College. In pursuit of this, departments are committed to developing program goals that are in alignment with institutional goals and are assessable, including quantitatively and qualitatively, at the program and course level. In order to accomplish this, departments will implement an assessment plan that follows the model developed by the HLC3 committee. This model for departmental assessment is described in section (i), (ii) and (iii) below. It includes

benchmarks and a feedback loop to ensure that student learning is assessed and evaluated and appropriate curricular measures will be implemented based on the performance of the students.

Most of the measurement of student learning outcomes will occur at the program level through the assessment methods selected by the faculty. The compilation of these various assessment results will indicate the extent to which the goals are being achieved across the College.

It is not necessary to measure every objective every semester or even every year. A cycle for measurement should be established. Neither is it necessary to use the entire population of available students for each measurement. In certain courses (e.g., those with multiple sections) sampling techniques may be used.

Undergraduate academic programs will submit annual assessment reports to the Provost, or designee for review. Graduate academic programs will submit annual reports to the Director of Graduate for review. The Academic and Graduate Councils will determine the format and structure for the annual reports. Academic Departments Chairs are expected to implement departmental assessment plans in a manner that effectively measures student learning and that indicates a commitment to assessment and student learning by the program and its' faculty. The Provost/APAA will reflect the ability or failure to do so, on the Department Chairs annual evaluation. The Provost/APAA will consult with the Director of the Graduate School regarding each department's effectiveness in assessing its graduate programs.

The Curriculum Review Committee will review undergraduate program reviews on a five year cycle. All assessment plans/reports from the previous five years will be included in the program review appendix. Assessment plans will form a significant component on which the CRC bases its overall recommendations for a program.

The Graduate Council will review graduate program reviews on a five-year cycle. All assessment plans/reports from the previous five years will be included in the program review appendix. Assessment plans will form a significant component on which the Graduate Council bases its overall recommendations for a program.

    i. *Program Assessment Plan Contents*

        a. Departmental Academic Goals (Aligned with Institutional Goals)
        b. Intended Student Learning Outcomes for each Departmental Academic Goal
        c. Measures to assess each program goal & its intended student learning outcomes
        d. Criteria for success/benchmarks for each assessment measure
        e. Identification of timelines used to assess specific goals and outcomes (all goals should be assessed during the 5 year cycle used in program reviews)
        f. Summary of results for each assessment measure
        g. Description of curricular changes implemented to improve students learning as a result of the previous year's assessment results
        h. Description of assessment results resulting from curricular changes implemented in previous years, and whether students' performance changed, improved or decreased.

ii. <u>*Assessment Plan Reports*</u> (Template in Appendix)
   a. Assessment reports will use a standardized template that includes the items above.
   b. Five year program reviews will include the previous five year's assessment reports in the appendix.

iii.   <u>*Annual Procedure & Calendar for Program Assessment*</u>

MAY-AUGUST
- Programs complete assessment reports from the previous academic year (fall & spring semesters) and identify goals & SLO's to be assessed in the following year (submit by September, 15).

SEPT
- Undergraduate programs submit assessment reports from the previous academic year (fall and spring semesters) to the Provost, or designee, for review.
- Graduate programs submit assessment reports from the previous academic year (fall & spring semesters) to the Director of the Graduate School.

OCT
- Academic Council reviews undergraduate assessment reporting format & structure.

NOV
- Academic Council makes recommendations or approves assessment reporting format & structure. Changes are forwarded to the Graduate Council for review and adaptation (if appropriate) for graduate programs.
- Graduate Council makes recommendations or approves assessment reporting format & structure after considering Academic Council recommendations.

DEC
- Provost (or designee) approves or modifies AC recommendations for undergraduate programs
- Director of the Graduate School, in consultation with the Provost, approves or modifies GC recommendations for graduate programs

JAN
- Undergraduate programs undergoing the 5 year program review submit their program reviews to the CRC and the APAA
- Graduate programs undergoing the 5 year program review submit their program reviews to the Graduate Council and the Director of Graduate Programs and the Provost.

FEB
- CRC meets with departmental representatives about their program reviews
- Graduate Council meets with departmental representatives about their program reviews

MARCH
- CRC and Provost or APAA meet with programs undergoing program reviews.
- Graduate Council and Provost meets with departmental representatives about their program reviews

APRIL

- CRC submits final report(s) on program reviews to Provost and APAA.
- Graduate Council submits final report(s) on program reviews to Provost and APAA.

MAY
- Assessment cycle begins again

VI.   ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Assessment of student learning is the responsibility of the faculty and instructional staff, students, the General Education Coordinating Committee, the Academic Council, the Curriculum Review Committee, the Graduate Council, the Director of the Graduate School, the Office of the APAA, and the Office of the Provost. The roles and responsibilities of the participants are described below.

Program Faculty

The faculty from each academic program are responsible for:
1. Developing a set of program goals and measurable learning objectives for the program
2. Developing course specific goals and learning outcomes that align with the program goals and learning outcomes
3. Designing a curriculum to achieve those goals
4. Developing course specific measures/rubrics that assess both course specific and program goals and learning outcomes
5. Creating a program assessment plan
6. Assessing student learning
7. Analyzing assessment data
8. Using assessment results to improve student learning

Students
Students (including alumni) are responsible for:
1. Honest and accurate participation in any assessment activities in which they participate
2. Performing at the highest level possible when demonstrating their skills and knowledge if assessment is to be accurate

The General Education Coordinating Committee

The GECC is responsible for:
1. Determining the assessment devices for General Education
2. Assisting in the administration of selected assessment tests/surveys
3. Analyzing assessment data
4. Using assessment results to improve student learning
5. Making recommendations based on the results of the assessment tests

The Academic Council & Department Chairs

The Academic Council is responsible for:
1. Reviewing the recommendations of GECC

2. Reviewing the program assessment reporting format and structure
3. **Making recommendations regarding assessment plans and reports**

Department Chairs, through the Academic Council, support faculty and staff responsibilities by providing leadership and support for assessment activities. The Academic Council working with GECC, the Graduate Council, and the Director of Institutional Research, is responsible for the coordination, review, and follow-up of assessment activities in each academic unit.

Department Chairs will work with the CFO and annually review the Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) evaluation form in accordance with the ZBB timeline.

The Curriculum Review Committee

The CRC is responsible for evaluating the 5-year program reviews of undergraduate programs, including the assessment plans and reports. They will meet with representatives from the programs and make recommendations to the Provost, or designee. In addition the CRC reviews and approves all curricular changes to undergraduate programs, including student-learning outcomes.

The Graduate Council

The Graduate Council is responsible for evaluating the 5-year program reviews of graduate programs, including the assessment plans and reports. They will meet with representatives from the programs and make recommendations to the Provost, or designee. In addition the Graduate Council reviews and approves all curricular changes to graduate programs, including student-learning outcomes.

Director of the Graduate School

The Director of the Graduate School is responsible for:
1. Overseeing the Graduate Council
2. Reviewing the recommendations of the Graduate Council and modifying the recommendations as needed to ensure assessment planning and reporting of graduate programs is effective.
3. Making recommendations to the Provost regarding the effectiveness of delivery of assessment plans in graduate programs

The Office Of The Provost

As the chief academic officer the Provost is responsible for overseeing the assessment process and integrating the academic assessment plan with the overall College assessment plan.

The Provost:
1. Oversees the Academic Council
2. Oversees the Director of the Graduate School

3. Insures that the academic assessment plan is in alignment with the overall college assessment plan, strategic plan, and academic master plan.

Resource Requirements

Implementing a college academic assessment plan that will continue over time and be a constructive activity will require a commitment of resources. The exact nature of resources associated with assessment, both budgetary and other, will be determined through the ZBB process.

ASSESSMENT PLANS

Evaluation of the Overall College Assessment Plan

The proposed assessment plan outlined above is seen as a dynamic document that will change over time. The Academic Council and Graduate Councils, working with the Office of the Provost will review the Academic Assessment Plan on an annual basis and make revisions to the plan when deemed appropriate.

REPORTING AND USING RESULTS

Academic programs will be expected to submit an annual report to the Office of the Provost, using the established template. The report will indicate at a minimum which goals were assessed in that academic year; how they were assessed; what the results of the assessment showed; and how the results were used to inform or improve the program.

The Academic Council and Graduate Councils, working with GECC and the Office of Institutional Research, will also assist in the internal dissemination of information relevant campus constituencies in order to facilitate the improvement of student learning based on the overall outcomes assessment results. It will also communicate assessment results within the ASC community to increase awareness of how assessment is being used to improve learning.