The Firebird Guide to Assessment at UDC

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Preface

There's a story about a man sweeping the floor at NASA, who was asked by a visiting dignitary, "What's your job here?" and the man replied, "To get a man on the moon."

We'd like to think that anybody working at our university would respond to this question in a similar manner, "To educate our students." Here's the guide.

Who should read this guide?

This guide is for everyone, especially you.

Why?

When all else fails,…..just read the guide.

How HOT are you (on Assessment)?

FIRST, let's see how **HOT** you are on assessment. Take this assessment-readiness quiz to take your assessment temperature:

1. I think assessment is
    a. about pleasing our accreditors
    b. about pleasing our supervisors/deans/ provost
    c. about time we did it systematically here at UDC.

2. I think we use assessment to
    a. give ourselves busy work
    b. give ourselves headaches
    c. give ourselves the tools to do things right

3. My unit/program conducts assessments
    a. once every blue moon
    b. once every accreditation visit
    c. once we see the value in it

4. My assessment findings are for
    a. what assessment findings?
    b. my eyes only
    c. everyone who needs to know

5. I think assessment is.
    a. what we all need to learn
    b. what we all need to learn
    c. what we all need to learn.

(Interpret your results on the next page.)

TAKING YOUR ASSESSMENT TEMPERATURE:

Give yourself **2 degrees** for every "c" response, except for item 5, in which every choice gives you **2 degrees**.

How HOT are *you*?!?

10°: You are H-O-T on assessment! Read this guide and you'll become a blazing firebird, committed to continuous improvement.

6°-8°: WARM You are getting warm, but this guide will get you hotter.

2°-4°: You are rather COLD on assessment, but not as cold as you'd be if you didn't start reading this guide.

The Ice Age of Assessment: A Short History of Assessment at UDC

University-wide assessment has been a priority since the beginning of the millennium. One recent milestone was the development of the 2012 Assessment Handbook. Every year, there have been numerous assessment workshops to train faculty, directors, and staff in methods of developing assessments, analyzing data, and using the information to make data-driven decisions about teaching, programs, and units, and these are documented in several Blackboard organizations. Another milestone was the implementation of TK20 as a central repository of assessment data. It also serves as a mechanism for analyzing data, reporting, and standardizing best practices in assessment across the university. Earlier assessment initiatives have formed the foundation for the establishment of the current University Assessment Committee, with the following charge and responsibilities:

UDC University Assessment Committee September 27, 2013

Committee Charge

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) is established by the Office of the Provost to support a process of continuous self-assessment and self-evaluation towards continuous improvement of the University of the District of Columbia. The primary charge of the UAC is to oversee and assist academic and administrative/support units in conducting ongoing assessment to improve student-learning, student development, and university services and operations. UAC members are appointed by the Provost from academic, administrative, or other designated units in the university in consultation with Unit Managers. Each college and primary university division is represented. Members of the committee serve for 2 academic years.

Responsibilities of the UAC

The Assessment Committee has the responsibility for developing, supporting, and expanding an evidence-based decision making campus culture. Achievement of this culture is possible through, direct collaboration with the implementation initiatives for the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan, shared faculty ownership of student outcomes assessment activities, meaningful student input, use of assessment results in making decisions about resource allocation and strong support from the Administration. The committee shall:

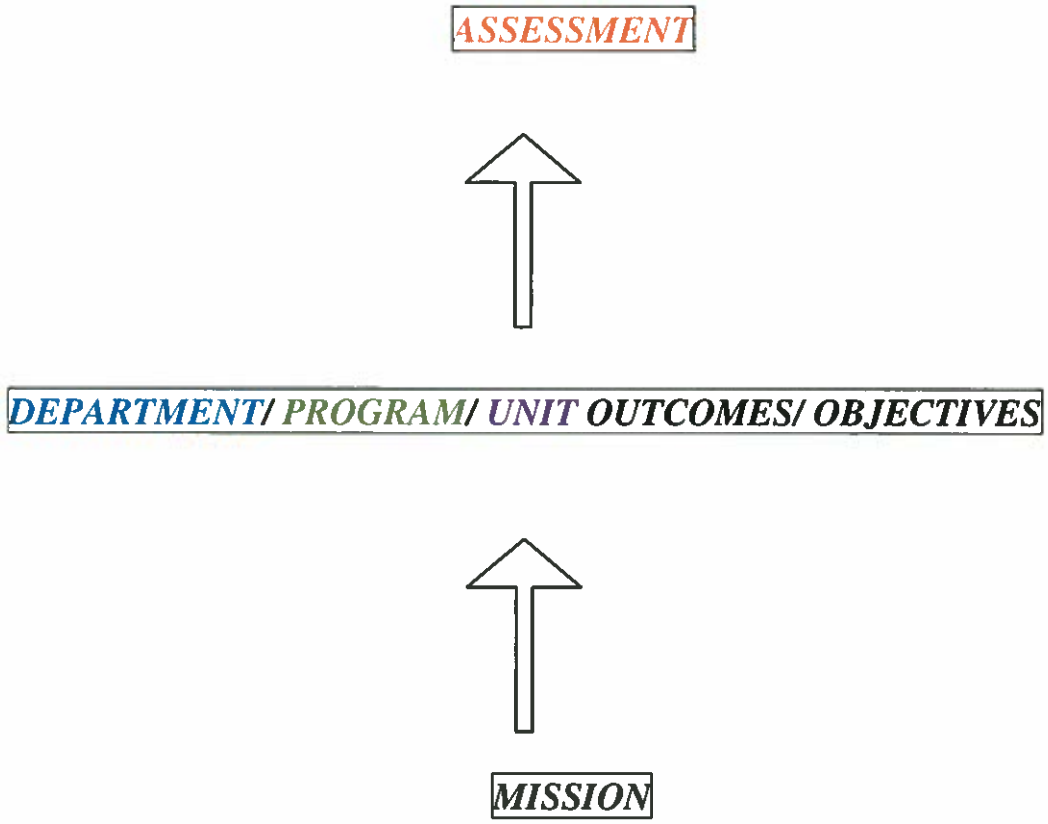
- Oversee and review the quality of assessment plans, assessment results, and reports, for the University, primary units, departments and programs and make recommendations for continuous improvement;
- Establish timelines, and format for reviewing and submitting assessment data and reports;
- Provide assessment consultation and expertise to faculty and staff as required;
- Encourage and support department and program-level assessment processes that align with, inform, and are informed by institution-wide practices, findings, and responses;
- Share results and promote discourse around assessment issues, findings, and action-responses at a range of stakeholder levels; and
- Provide an annual report to the University Provost or a specific designee, documenting strengths and weaknesses of the university's overall effort in accomplishing student learning goals and overall institutional mission and goals.

The Phoenix Rises: Assessment 101

Connecting Assessment to Mission Statement

A successful assessment plan should rise from the University's mission statement and subsequently the divisional and departmental mission, goals, and objectives. Establishing a connection between the mission and your assessment plan ensures that your programs and processes will lead to improvement. This connection also aids in your programs and processes being accepted institution-wide.

FIGURE 1 ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW



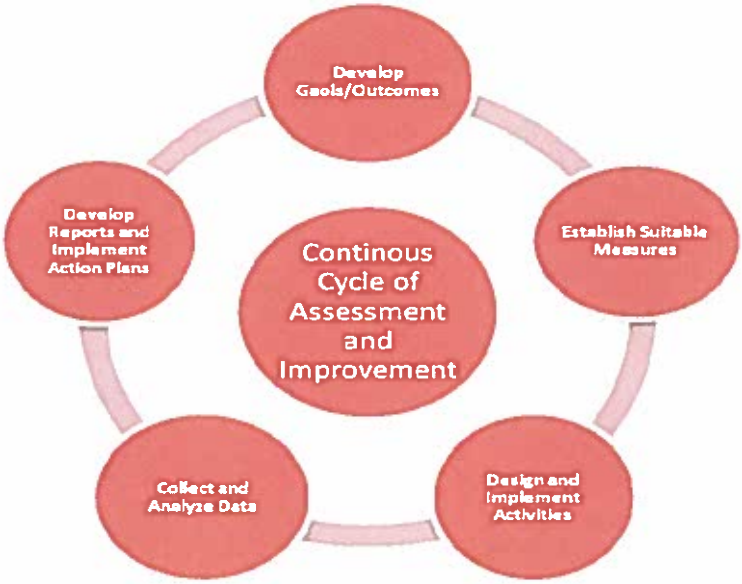
Defining Assessment

Assessment is defined as the systematic process of measuring institutional effectiveness through department, program, and unit performance towards achieving their stated missions and strategic goals. This process is based on specific standards and criteria, giving feedback to an individual or team, which documents growth and provides directives to improve future performance. Standards and criteria are established and communicated prior to assessment of performance. The university follows the Middle States guidelines to develop clear statements of goals, design objectives to achieve these goals, assess the achievement of these goals, and use the results of these assessments to improve programs and services (Standard 7).

Definition of Outcomes Assessment

Outcomes assessment encompasses both student learning and institutional effectiveness. To this end, **outcomes assessment is the systematic, intentional, and ongoing assessment of all units in the university; academic and non-academic (i.e. administrative and student service).** Assessment data drive decisions regarding changes to enhance all institutional units towards student success. Graphically, outcomes assessment is represented as follows:

FIGURE 2 ASSESSMENT CYCLE



- **Develop goals/outcomes** for each unit that are directly aligned with UDC's mission. In addition, each unit is expected to develop measurable and achievable objectives that, if met or unmet, represent the status of attainment of the goal.
- **Establish suitable measures** that indicate the way in which objectives are being met. Units are expected to outline achievement targets on which data is collected.
- **Design and implement activities** that reveal the way in which objectives will be accomplished by the unit
- **Collect and analyze data**, and review and discuss results with constituents, an expectation of each unit
- **Develop reports and implement action plans** that are used by units to develop and plan for next assessment cycle.

Purpose of Outcomes Assessment:

Outcomes Assessment ensures that students are learning and that the institution is purposefully and intentionally engaging in activities that ensure that ALL students learn. To achieve this goal, multiple levels of assessment exist.

Institutional Level (Strategic Plan)	At the institutional level, assessments are carried out at several points, starting with students' application for entry the university, during their matriculation, at exit from the university, and one year after they leave. These assessments provide data as to how effective the university is in preparing students for success. All programs and initiative (academic or non-academic) across the university are assessed for impact on student success.
Program/Discipline/ Unit Level	At the academic program level, assessments are conducted to determine whether students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions deemed essential for the discipline. At the unit level, assessments are conducted to determine whether the unit is providing services that meet the students' needs.
Course Level	Each course that is taught must outline the goals, objectives, and outcomes each student will attain upon completion of the course. Faculty are required to engage students in a variety of assessments that determine what students know, understand, and do.

University-wide Student Learning Goals

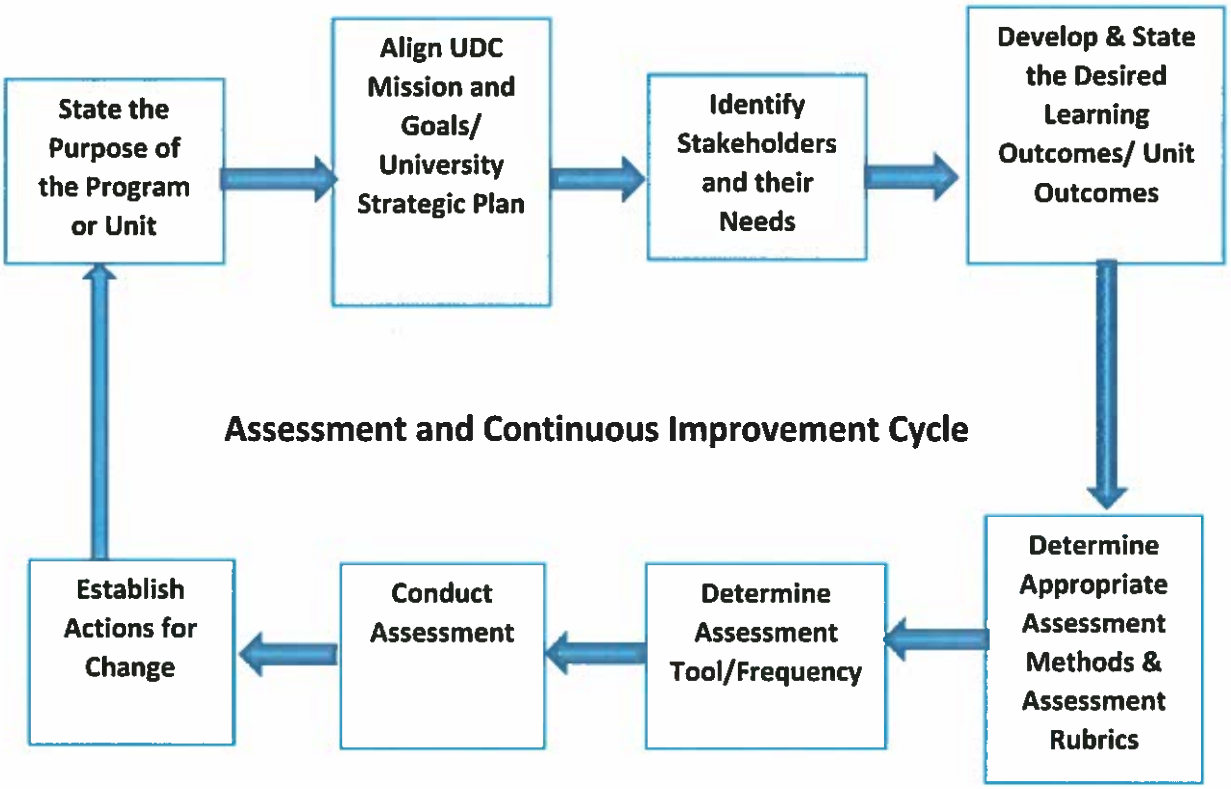
Student success is central to the mission of UDC. Therefore, all academic and non-academic service/administrative units should ensure that their outcomes or objectives are aligned with the seven University-wide Student Learning Goals:

1. Acquire knowledge and integrate ideas, theories, methods, practices, and applications.
2. Communicate clearly and effectively in both written and oral forms.
3. Demonstrate analytical and problem-solving skills.
4. Demonstrate social, ethical, and moral responsibility (in part through service learning).
5. Understand and apply differing cultural and political perspectives.
6. Use information technology to acquire and interpret knowledge, and to solve problems.
7. Demonstrate knowledge, intellectual skills, and applied learning in chosen fields of study.

Assessment for Continuous Improvement

Assessment is most effective when it informs continuous improvement. Figure 3 represents the cycle of assessment and continuous improvement at UDC.

FIGURE 3 ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE



Sizzling Steps for Assessment and Continuous Improvement

	Steps	Academic	Non-Academic
1	Articulate Mission Statement	Develop a concise statement outlining the purpose of your unit or program, whom you serve, in what ways, and with what intended results.	Develop a concise statement outlining the purpose of your unit or program, whom you serve, in what ways, and with what intended results.
2	Articulate Vision Statement	Develop a concise statement that provides a coherent description of the qualities that its graduates should achieve.	Develop a concise, coherent description of what the unit will look like when it achieves its mission.
3	State Intended Goals	Write statements that specify the desired result or impact of the services, program, or courses on student learning and achievement.	Write statements that specify the desired result or impact of the services on students and other stakeholders. Your program goals should reflect your unit's unique contributions to student retention and success through its programs, services, or business operations.
4	Identify Intended objectives/ outcomes	Identify what students will be able to know, do, and demonstrate.	Identify what students and other stakeholders will be able to know, do, and demonstrate as a result of participating in the programs or services of each unit.
5	Establish Means of Assessments/ Assessment Methods	Select a variety of direct and indirect measures that yield evidence of achievement of each outcome/objective.	Select a variety of direct and indirect measures that yield evidence of achievement of each outcome/objective.
6	Determine Criteria for Success	Develop rubrics and assign benchmarks representative of academic discipline and the mission of the program or unit.	Assign benchmarks representative of the mission and strategic priority of the unit, program, or service.

	Steps	Academic	Non-Academic
7	Analyze, Share, and Report Results	Draw conclusions and make inferences from qualitative and quantitative data. Disseminate findings within programs, divisions, and across the institution.	Draw conclusions and make inferences from qualitative and quantitative data. Disseminate findings within programs, divisions, and across the institution.
8	Determine Actions for Continuous Improvement	Develop recommendations for making required adjustments to programs courses and services based on findings – including implications for budget and resource allocation.	Develop recommendations for making required adjustments to programs courses and services based on findings – including implications for budget and resource allocation.

For an institution to be most effective, outcomes/objectives of all programs and units, both academic and non-academic, should align with the University-wide Student Learning Goals. Examples of this alignment for both an academic program (Figure 4A) and a non-academic unit (Figure 4B) are shown below:

FIGURE 4A. EXAMPLE OF ALIGNMENT OF COURSE LEVEL AND PROGRAM LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

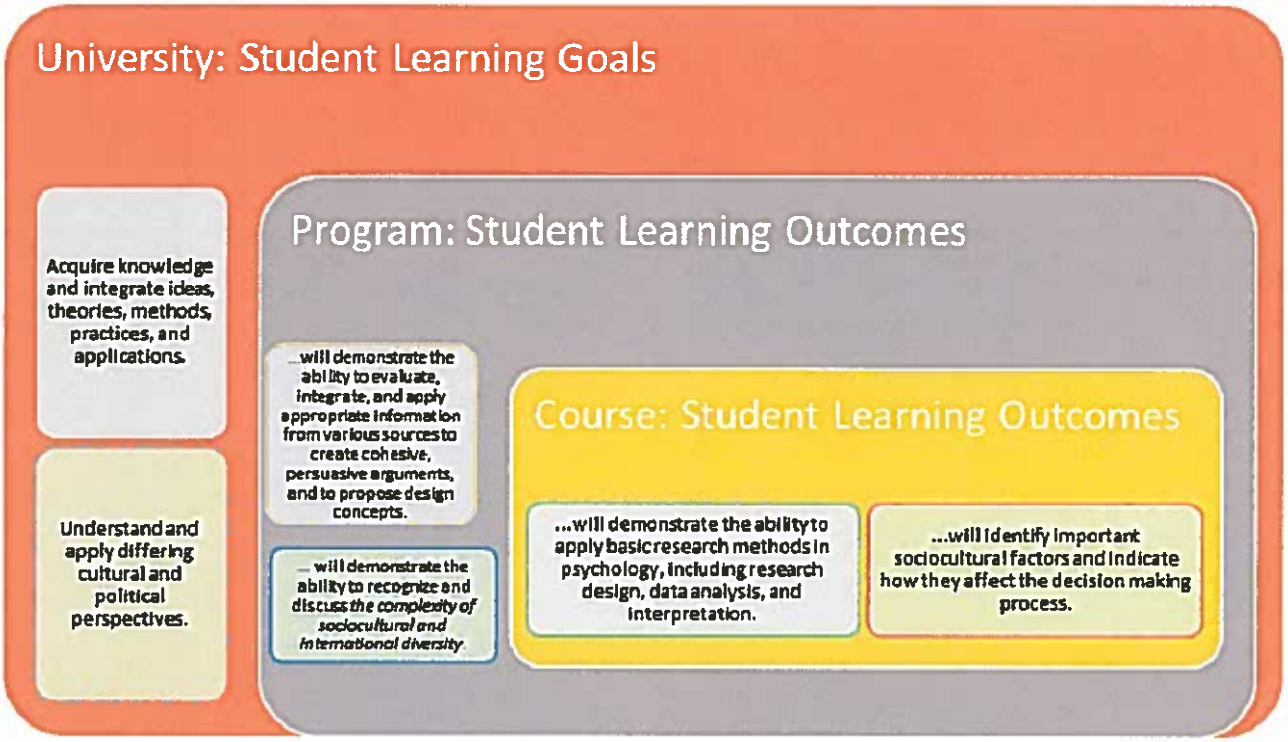
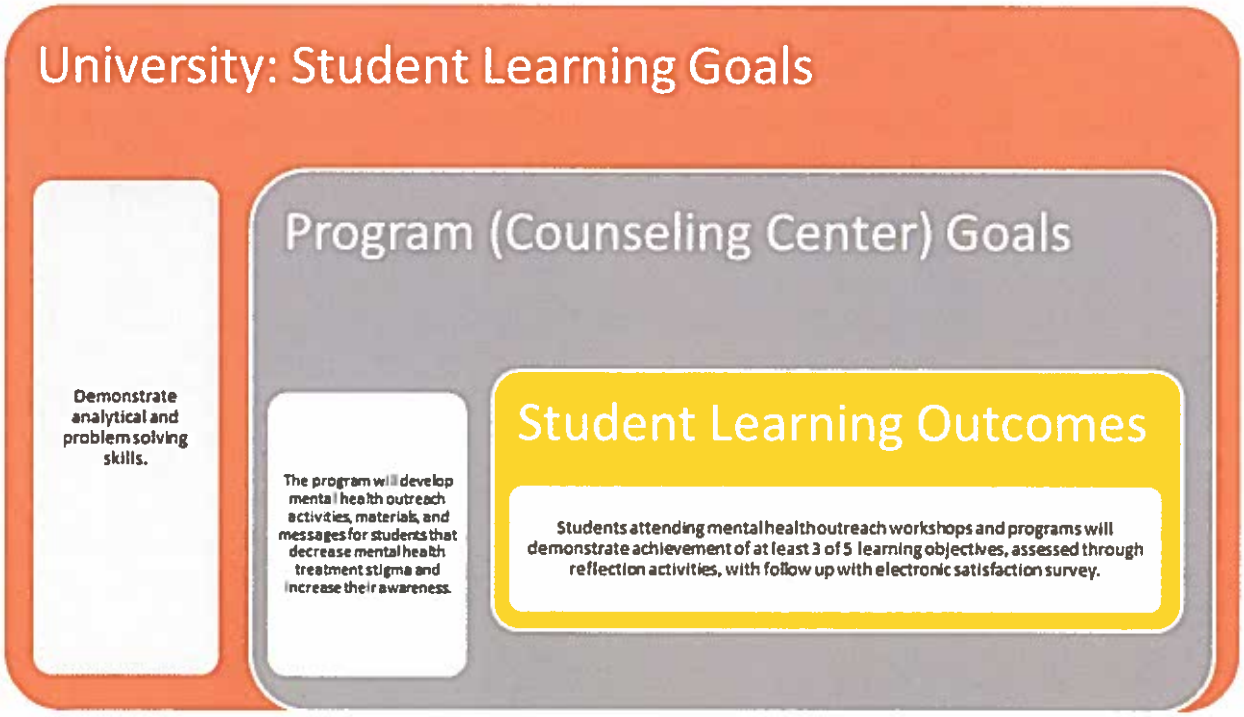


FIGURE 4B. EXAMPLE OF ALIGNMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC UNIT LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENT LEARNING GOALS



How to Write Outcomes/Objectives

What are the characteristics of good Outcomes/Objectives?

Outcomes/objectives must be STEAMY (not losing any heat here):

Specific: Specify exactly what you intend to accomplish. (Ex. 75% of students will …)

Time-bound: Specify the time constraints (…by the end of the fall 2018 semester)

Essential: Establish what is critical to achieving the intended aims of your program.

Attainable: Be realistic about what you can do.

Measurable: Find ways to measure what you are doing.

Yours: Own the outcomes/objectives; make them meaningful for you, your students, and your colleagues.

(See the Rubric for Evaluating Assessment Process for Academic and Non-Academic Units.)

Helpful Hints for Assessment Planning:

- Work with one or two people to draft outcome/objectives statements; incorporating different perspectives helps.
- Review/edit statements with others.
- Focus on a small number of outcomes/objectives that are most relevant. Three to five may be plenty; however, individual department requirements may vary.
- Don't try to cover every domain. Focus on domains that are most applicable.
- Engage the University Assessment Committee (We are here to help!)

The Importance of Action Verbs

When writing outcomes/objectives for student learning, use action verbs. Action verbs result in overt behavior that can be observed and measured. Sample action verbs are:

- Analyze, apply, argue, arrange, assemble, assess, calculate, categorize, choose, classify, compare, compile, computer, create, criticize, critique, defend, define, demonstrate, describe, design, develop, differentiate, discuss, distinguish, estimate, examine, explain, formulate, identify, illustrate, indicate, interpret, label, list, locate, manage, memorize, order, operate, organize, plan, practice, predict, prepare, propose, question, rate, recognize, repeat, report, reproduce, review, revise, schedule, select, solve, state, translate, use, utilize, write

- **Bloom's Taxonomy:** Bloom's Taxonomy is a useful classification of learning objectives within education that educators set for student learning. The Bloom's Taxonomy Wheel provides examples of verbs and student artifacts to be used as evidence of student learning.

- **The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (www.cas.edu) provides guidance for the development of unit-specific program mission, goals and**

objectives, and student development or learning outcomes for student programs and services areas.

Types of Assessment

Assessment should be an ongoing process, but you do not have to assess everything at the same time. Try to spread assessment activities out over the academic or fiscal year. The Assessment Calendar provides a schedule that specifies the processes, deliverables, and deadlines for each unit in the institution. Programs should aim to collect and analyze assessment data for a fixed set of objectives/outcomes (e.g. no more than 3-5 per year) annually, and each program should stagger or rotate evaluation of their objectives/outcomes over a multi-year period. Strategic plans, curriculum maps, and grant charts can assist programs and units in establishing and maintaining a realistic and meaningful assessment cycle.

Formative assessment is the gathering of data that provides ongoing feedback to improve outcomes and processes.

Summative assessment is the gathering of data at the conclusion of a series of processes or programs, as a basis for judging accomplishments.

Warming up to TK20

To systematize assessment at UDC, we are now implementing TK20. All programs are required to populateTK20 with program mission, vision, goals, outcomes/objectives, and corresponding assessments. The university has trained assessment coordinators, and online training videos and face-to-face sessions are available.

Sustaining the Heat: Assessment Workshops and Assessment Days

Every year, beginning with Professional Development week in August and Professional Development days in January, there have been assessment workshops, whose presentations have been documented in the self-enrolling Blackboard organization, Assessment at UDC. There have also been Assessment Days at the end of the academic year when academic programs have met to discuss their assessment findings for the academic year. These results have been recorded in department, program, and division meeting notes that are archived within these units.

UDC Standardized Assessment Calendar (SAC)

The following calendar provides an outline for the deadlines, deliverables and description of what is expected of units throughout the cycle of the calendar year. The cycle aligns with the university budget process.

Part A – refers to Columns 1-4, the planning section of Assessment Plan/Report template
Part B – refers to Columns 5-6, the reporting section of Assessment Plan/Report template (and column 6 will be modified to specify –"Budget Implications")

Deadline	Deliverable	Description
Professional Development Week – 3rd week in August	"Assessment Plan/Report" Professional Development Workshops	The University Assessment Committee and University Assessment Director (proposed new position) offer a series of Assessment Plan/Report workshops to assist programs and departments in the development and refinement of their annual Assessment Plan/Reports during the annual faculty professional development week. Workshops are provided to provide support to faculty and staff in developing each component of their Assessment Plan/Reports (e.g. goals and objectives, assessment methods and processes, evaluation data analysis, and strategic use of assessment results).
Last Friday in August	Program Assessment Plan/Report Part A (Columns 1 through 4)	Each program and department, including all academic and non-academic units, submit Part A of their annual Assessment Plan/Report/Report, Columns 1 through 4. The first components of the Assessment Plan/Report identify the program goals and objectives, strategies for implementing the outcomes/objectives, assessment methods, processes for collecting the data, and responsible parties (See Assessment Plan/Report template).
Last Friday in October	Assessment Plan/Report Part A with UAC and Executive Feedback	The University Assessment Committee, as well as the Program Dean/VP/Senior Executive review the submitted Assessment Plan/Reports and provide feedback on the Assessment Plan/Report to the unit, in order to make recommendations for improvement and address any deficiencies or challenges in the assessment approach. By Nov 1, each of the programs and departments receive the recommended revisions or feedback.
Professional Development Day – First week of January	"Assessment Plan/Report" Professional Development Workshops	The University Assessment Committee and University Assessment Director (proposed new position) offer professional development seminars designed to assist faculty and staff in preparing for data collection and analysis and strengthening the assessment process for continuous improvement. These workshops follow up on the workshops offered in August, while focusing on the last phase (Part B) of the Assessment Plan/Report, findings, action items/recommendations based on the assessment data.
2nd Friday in January	Program Assessment Plan/Report – Mid Point	Programs submit a mid-point progress report in the Assessment Plan/Report template, noting any progress or challenges in working on the Assessment Plan/Report to date. It is not expected for units and departments to address Part B (the last 2

Deadline	Deliverable	Description
	Progress Report Submitted to UAC	columns) of the Assessment Plan/Report in the mid-point update, although some programs may have some data to report at mid-year.
Last Friday in April	Program Assessment Plan/Report – Mid Point Progress Report with UAC and Executive Feedback	The UAC and Dean/VP/Senior Executive submit feedback on the mid-point Assessment Plan/Report program reports, including recommendations and suggested resources for less developed Assessment Plan/Reports. The UAC uses a standard rubric (See Attached) to evaluate the quality of the Assessment Plan/Reports for each unit in the university. The UAC prepares a summary report that identifies which program/department Assessment Plan/Reports are exemplary (best practice), sufficient (meets standard), developing, and underdeveloped.
January – May	Assessment Plan/Report (development)	Programs meet internally and with their stakeholders about their assessment cycle, including but not limited to: • Assessment Strategies • Tools • Challenges with Data Collection or Analysis • Report Writing • Use of Assessment Results • Multi-Year Staggering of Objectives and Outcomes Assessment • Proposed Changes for Assessment Plan/Report
By June 1 (May 15-June 1)	Completed Assessment Plan/Report (including Parts A & B) is Submitted to UAC & Dean/VP	Each program or unit submits its completed annual Assessment Plan/Report, including Part B, the last 2 columns of the template. The completed Assessment Plan/Report includes the assessment results, as well as action steps, recommendations, and budget implications/proposals/needs based on the assessment findings. The plan can be submitted anytime in between May 15-June 1.
Last Friday in July	Evaluation of Assessment reports by the College (Dean)/ Division (VP) for College/Divisio	The Deans, Vice Presidents, and Cabinet level Officers prepare college/division level overviews of strategic goals, priorities, action items, and needed resources based upon the submitted program-level Assessment Reports. Resource allocation decisions made at the executive level, and in concert with the University's Budget Committee, are informed by the results and recommendations identified in the previous year's Assessment

Deadline	Deliverable	Description
	n-level summary	Reports.
First Friday in August	Report to the Board of Trustees	Report submitted to BOT committees (committees to be determined based on whether there are Fiscal, operations or academic impact) for discussion and recommendations/approval in their first fall meeting.
Professional Development Week	Assessment showcase	One professional development day dedicated to showcasing excellent and promising assessment practices in academic and service units to include use of data in providing information and decisions about program development and improvement.
4th Friday in August	Evaluation of previous year's Assessment Process	UAC conducts an evaluation and assessment of the overarching assessment process and makes appropriate adjustments.

Appendices

A. Assessment Reporting Template Examples

The most common examples of assessment reporting templates are below. The essential elements of a reporting form are the following:

- **Outcomes:** What will the student be able to do, know, or demonstrate as a result of the course, program, or service?
- **Outcome Condition and Criterion**: How will you know the outcome is met?
- **Direct or Indirect Measures**: What assessment tools are being used to directly (e.g. exams, presentations,) or indirectly (e.g. surveys, focus groups) measure the outcomes and gather data?
- **Expected Findings**: What are your expectations? (Use this column for assessment plans)
- **Findings:** What actually occurred? What data did you gather?
- **Possible Reason for Findings**: Why did these results occur?
- **Actions Taken**: Based on your findings, data, and reflections, what steps are you taking to improve the outcomes?

Assessment reporting forms and examples are below. The actual forms can be accessed in TK20.

1. Course Level Assessment Reporting Template

Course-level Assessment of Learning Outcomes						
Department/Program: **Course Name:** **Name of Faculty Member:**						
Course Description/Major Goal:						
Major Learning outcomes (the student will)	Outcome condition and criterion	Direct or Indirect measures utilized	Expected Findings	Findings	Possible reason for findings	Action taken on Recommended

2. Course Level Assessment Reporting Example

Sampling of Assessment Activities

College/School:

Academic Program	SLO's Assessed	Courses Tapp	AY	Gen Ed? Y/N	Key Findings	Actions Taken
	SO 2: (b) an ability to design and conduct experiments, as well as to analyze and interpret data	CVEN 208, CVEN 327, CVEN 311, CVEN 337, CVEN 354	2013-14	N	AY 2013-14 Students got a Composite Score of 3.20 from a scale of 0 to 4.0	CVEN 206 • Require students to take material science prior to this course CVEN 325 No Actions Required • Validate theoretical concept experimentally in the lab • Arrange recitation devoted to problem solving techniques • Discuss beam design examples from lab and mode of failure

3. Program Level Assessment Reporting Example

Sampling of Assessment Activities: Highlights

College/School: College of Arts & Sciences
Division of Social & Behavioral Sciences

Academic Program	Program SLO's Assessed	Courses Tapp	AY	Gen Ed? Y/N	Key Findings	Actions Taken
Criminal Justice						
	•Analyze the complex organizational structure of the criminal justice system.	CRIM100,102,203, 232, 234 POLI 206	2011 - 2012; 2012 - 2013	No	Students demonstrated less than 70% mastery of knowledge about criminal justice system and processes.	Included experiential activities in course curriculum; changed textbook that emphasized the processes of the CJ system; increase seminars featuring professionals from the field; increased utilization of student participation in online textbook exercises.

B. Rubric for Evaluating Assessment Processes for Academic and Non-academic Units

Instructions: This rubric is for use in evaluating assessment processes for both academic and non-academic programs at the University of the District of Columbia. You are to review each program using the standards describe for each of eight evaluative elements in the template. Remember that some program plans were developed and submitted prior to the use of the current rubric and specific responses may be embedded in ways that differ from the current request for a plan.

Utilize language from the rubric to describe your rating for each element and give consideration to both qualitative and quantitative approaches to planning and assessment. Finally, provide comments/suggestions to recognize improvement plans and or provide considerations for next steps.

Assessment Plan Elements	Best Practice	Meets Standard	Developing	Undeveloped
Vision Statement A concise statement provides a coherent description of what the Unit will look like when it is achieving its mission However the vision statement is not required for all programs.	• Clear and concise • Describes primary functions or activities of unit • Includes purpose specific to unit; distinguishes unit from other units at UDC • Identifies stakeholders • Connect with the missions of the unit(s) and division of which it is a part, and of the institution as a whole	• Statement of unit's functions and purpose • Statement of who unit serves • Connects with the missions of the unit(s) and division of which it is a part • Limited description of program impact, scope, and/or reach	• Statement of intent of unit is too general to distinguish from other units or too specific to encompass the overall intent of the unit • Identifies functions performed but does not indicate purpose • Does not identify stakeholders • Does not demonstrate clear connection with missions of the unit(s) and division of which it is a part, and of the institution as a whole	• No vision statement is provided

Assessment Plan Elements	Best Practice	Meets Standard	Developing	Undeveloped
Mission Statement A concise statement outlining the purpose of the program, who it serves, in what ways, and with what results.	• Clear and concise • Describes primary functions or activities of unit • Includes purpose specific to unit; distinguishes unit from other units at UDC • Identifies stakeholders • Connected with the missions of the unit(s) and division of which it is a part, and of the institution as a whole	• Statement of unit's functions and purpose • Statement of who unit serves • Connected with the missions of the unit(s) and division of which it is a part • Limited description of program impact, scope, and/or reach	• Statement of intent of unit is too general to distinguish from other units or too specific to encompass the overall intent of the unit • Identifies functions performed but does not indicate purpose • Does not identify stakeholders • Does not demonstrate clear connection to missions of the unit(s) and division of which it is a part, and of the institution as a whole •	• No mission statement is provided
	• 3-5 clear statements enough to adequately encompass the mission • Include action verbs • Describe desired performance (related to operations, processes, behaviors) of a service or function of a unit • Connected to the missions of the unit(s) and division of which it is a part, and	• At least 2 and no more than 10 clear, observable outcomes are stated • Written as ongoing, desired end results for customers and institution. • /connected to the missions of the unit(s) and division of which it is a part, and of the institution as a whole	• Outcomes are stated but are unclear and/or are not measureable • Refer to time-bound objectives rather than ongoing, desired end results for customers or institution (focus on unit processes rather than on what it can/will produce) and/or do not focus on	• No outcomes are stated.

Assessment Plan Elements	Best Practice	Meets Standard	Developing	Undeveloped
Intended Goals Specific statements that state the result for, or impact on, a customer or the institution that is a consequence of the work that a unit does.	of the institution as a whole • Focused on benefit to recipient of the service	• Focused on benefit to recipient of the service	the recipient of the service	
Intended Objectives/Outcomes Specific statements that demonstrate how objectives/outcomes are going to be met	• Each objective/outcome is specific, measurable, attainable and time-bound and clearly linked to stated goals • Written as ongoing, desired end results for the customer or institution	• At least two of the objectives /outcomes are specific, measurable, attainable and time - bound	• At least one-half (50%) of the objectives are incompletely stated, e.g. not specific, measurable, or linked to goals. Objectives are incomplete or are not measurable	• No objectives are stated.
	• Multiple measures are included for all outcomes • Both direct and indirect measures are used throughout, with an emphasis on direct measures • Clearly aligned with outcomes being assessed • Described with sufficient detail (may include	• At least one measure is included for each outcome • Both direct and indirect measures are used throughout • Clearly aligned with outcomes being assessed • Described with sufficient detail • Provide clear, verifiable	• Measures are identified for some, but not all, outcomes • No direct measures are used • Some measures are not clearly aligned with outcomes being assessed and/or do not provide clear, verifiable information	• No means of assessment are provided or insufficient detail is provided

Assessment Plan Elements	Best Practice	Meets Standard	Developing	Undeveloped
Means of Assessment / Assessment Methods A variety of methods (qualitative and quantitative)used to evaluate each intended outcome; provides a clear statement on the means of gathering data.	supporting documentation in Document Repository) • Feasible – existing practices used where possible • Provide clear, verifiable information about whether or not an outcome is being achieved (good research methodology) • Purposeful – it is clear how results could be used for unit improvement •	information about whether or not an outcome is being achieved (good research methodology)	about whether or not an outcome is being achieved (good research methodology) • Vague description of measure that is not fully developed	
Criteria for Success Result, target, benchmark, or value that will represent success at achieving a given outcome.	• Aligned with means of assessment and intended outcomes • Measureable/quantifiable (e.g., an increase of 5%) • Meaningful – based on means of assessment, intended outcome, previous results and/or existing standards • Relevant to objective under measurement.	• Written clearly, in detail • Criteria/on are established for each measure – describe(s) minimum performance standards • Aligned with means of assessment and intended outcomes • Measurable/quantifiable (e.g., an increase of 5%)	• Criteria are not established for every measure or are not aligned with measure(s) • Criteria are vague or subjective (e.g., "improve", "satisfactory") making it difficult to measure • Do not seem to be meaningful and/or do not represent a reasonable level of success (too high/low)	• No criteria for success are identified

Assessment Plan Elements	Best Practice	Meets Standard	Developing	Undeveloped
Results A concise summary of the findings gathered from each given assessment measure.	• Complete, concise and well-organized • Evidence of appropriate data collection/analysis • Aligned with the language of corresponding criteria for success • Addresses whether criteria were met, are pending follow-up or were not met and includes date results were entered • Compares new findings to past trends, previous results and/or existing standards as appropriate • Includes supporting documentation* (e.g., rubrics, surveys, data for comparison, etc.) in Document Repository *All documentation must be free of personally identifiable data. • Data can be quantitative and/or qualitative	• Complete and organized • Evidence of data collection/analysis • Aligned with the language of corresponding criteria for success • Findings address whether criteria were met, are pending follow-up or were not met and includes date results were entered	• Incomplete or too much information • Not clearly aligned with measures and/or criteria for success • Questionable/unclear conclusion about whether targets were met, are pending follow-up, or were not met; may not have included result entry date • Questionable data collection/analysis that may "gloss over" data to arrive at conclusion	• No results are provided
Actions to Continuous Improvement Actions to improve the program or assessment	• Clearly describes how specific results will be used to modify outcomes, planning, resource allocation, work methods, assessment strategies, etc.	• Describes with some detail how results will be used to modify outcomes, planning, resource allocation, work methods,	• Not clearly related to assessment results • Seems to offer excuses for results rather than thoughtful interpretation or "next	• No use of results are provided

Assessment Plan Elements	Best Practice	Meets Standard	Developing	Undeveloped
process based on analysis of results	and/or clearly identify areas that need to be monitored, remediated, or enhanced and define logical "next steps," if applicable • Includes clear timeframe for implementing actions and determining follow up. • Identifies a responsible person/group • Clearly describes how results will be shared with/distributed to stakeholders, as appropriate	assessment strategies, etc. and/or identify areas that need to be monitored, remediated, or enhanced and define logical "next steps," if applicable • Includes timeframe • Identifies a responsible person/group	steps" for systematic program improvement • Too general; not enough detail provided (e.g. timeframe, responsible person/group)	

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C. Focus on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

1. Philosophy

UDC recognizes that because student learning is a fundamental component of the mission of the institutions, assessment of student learning is an essential component of our institutional effectiveness.

2. Curriculum Mapping

Curriculum Mapping is the process by which programs can chart how their program goals are mapped into their courses. This process can reveal where there are gaps or duplications, and, combined with Course-level Assessments, can also reveal where there are areas in need of improvement.

Here is an example of a Curriculum Map:

CURRICULUM MAP

College of Arts & Sciences
Criminal Justice Program

University Student Learning Goals	**Program level Student Learning Objectives**	**Courses meeting each student learning objective**
Acquire knowledge and integrate ideas, theories, methods, practices, and applications.	• Identify and explain the complex organizational structure of the criminal justice system. • Explain and critique major theoretical explanations of crime causation and the research on types of crime. • Demonstrate knowledge of special topics encountered in the criminal justice system.	CRIM 100,102, 175, 232, PSYC 201, POLI 206 HIST 410 Natural Science Requirement Special Topic Electives i.e. CRIM 294,395 SSTY240
Communicate clearly and effectively in both written and oral forms.	Demonstrate writing and technology proficiency.	Embedded in all courses; writing intensive course- CRIM 491

University Student Learning Goals	**Program level Student Learning Objectives**	**Courses meeting each student learning objective**
Demonstrate analytical and problem-solving skills.	Apply quantitative and qualitative research techniques.	CRIM 102, 175, 390, 450, 451, 491, 497
Demonstrate social, ethical, and moral responsibility (in part through service learning).	Describe and defend the public safety approach to criminal justice.	CRIM 203, 271, 272, 302, 310, 390
Understand and apply differing cultural and political perspectives.	Explain diversity issues based on race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship status and disability in society.	CRIM 234,309 GEOG 105 POLI 206 PSYC 201 HIST 410
Use information technology to acquire and interpret knowledge, and to solve problems.	Apply geospatial analytic concepts to an understanding of the distribution of crime.	CRIM 102, 175, 450, 451, 491, 497
Demonstrate knowledge, intellectual skills, and applied learning in chosen fields of study.	• Describe legal issues and the legal processes underlying the criminal justice system. • Demonstrate skill-sets associated with the professional practice of criminal justice.	CRIM 221, 224, 234, 300 CRIM 175, 203, 271, 272, 390, 450, 451, 491, 497

D. Bird's-eye View of the UDC Assessment Calendar

	Academic Programs and Student Learning Assessment	**Institutional Assessment**
August	Academic Year begins –Professional Development Assessment Workshops Directors and faculty develop Program and Course Assessment Plans	Units do Unit Assessment Plans
October	University Assessment Committee reviews Assessment Plans and provides feedback	FY begins
December	Faculty write Course Assessment Reports	University Assessment Committee reviews Assessment Plans and provides feedback
January	Professional Development Assessment Workshops Faculty develop Course Assessment Plans for new semester	
March	University Assessment Committee reviews Assessment Plans and provides feedback	
April - May	**Assessment Days** **Faculty write Course Assessment Reports- sent to Chairs/ Directors** **Directors write Program Assessment Reports – sent to Deans**	**Units do Unit Assessment Reports**
June	**Deans write Assessment Reports – send to Chief Academic Officer**	
July	Revision of Assessment Plans	Revision of Assessment Plans

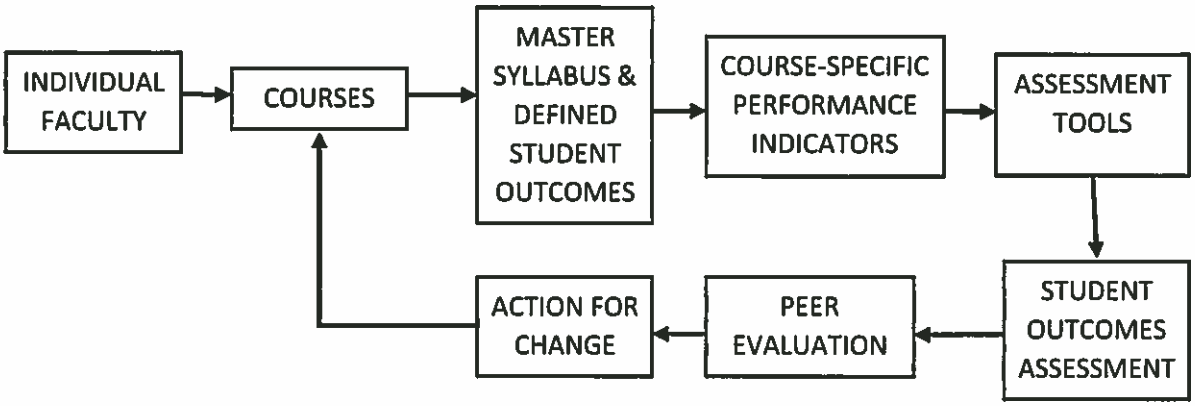
E. Helpful Hints for Assessment

- Work as a team; don't have one person do all of the work.

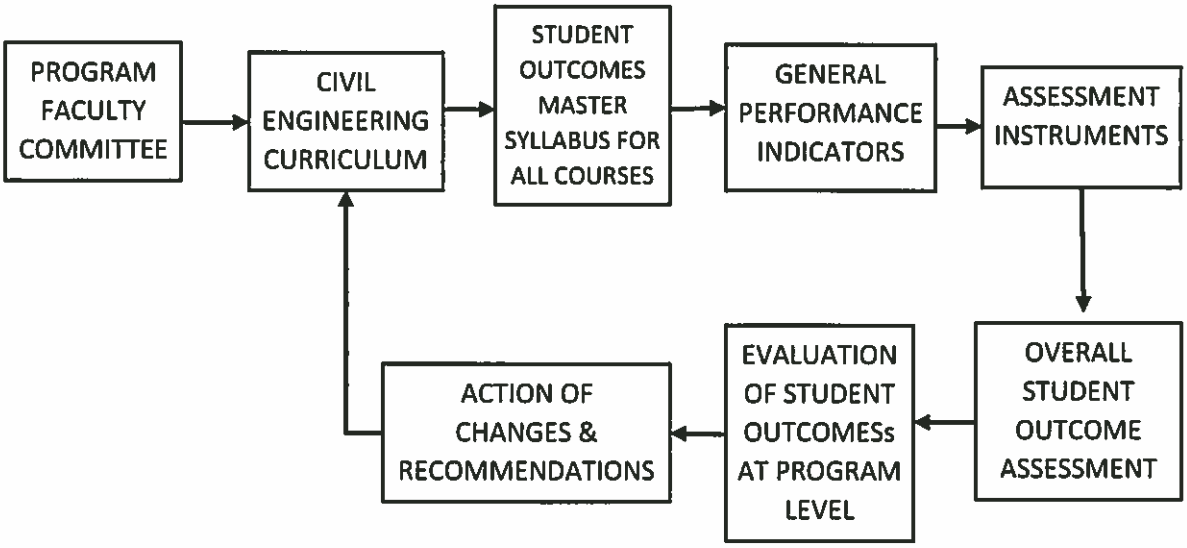
- Cooperate with other departments; staff from other departments could facilitate focus groups, for example.
- If you have existing assessments, create the assessment to match what you need to know. (Student Orientation and Registration, programmatic assessments, etc.)
- Consider incorporating assessment into:
  1. Freshman orientation
  2. Departmental activities
- Determine if it's necessary to assess programs/services individually or as a group (i.e. all programs in a series vs. individual programs).
- Borrow methods and instruments from other departments or other institutions.
  1. Saves time; you do not need to "reinvent the wheel"
  2. You can find out how well it worked for the others; learn from others' success and mistakes
- Buy existing instruments, where appropriate, instead of creating them
  1. Saves time
  2. May provide comparative information
- Make your instrument or assessment or sample as short as it can be and still provide the information that you want. The benefits include optimal use of student time, faculty time, and analysis time.
  1. Focus on your goals—don't ask questions about unrelated things or collect information that won't provide feedback about the goals
  2. On surveys, don't ask several questions about the same thing
- Delegate assessment tasks when possible.
  1. Support staff in your department
  2. Student workers in some cases (e.g. data entry) where appropriate
  3. Students for Independent Study (e.g. working with design of instruments or analysis of results)
- Use electronic media as much as possible
  1. Survey Monkey
  2. Database and spreadsheet applications
  3. Electronic storage of results
- Use existing data whenever possible (Academic Profile, NSSE/FSSE/CCSSE surveys, SENSE survey, IPEDS Data, the Registrar's Office, etc.)

F. Assessment Process (Example from Civil Engineering)

Student Assessment at the Course Level



Student Outcome Assessment at the Program Level



G. Glossary of Assessment Terms

(As we build our own glossary of terms, please refer to the one in the Stephen F. Austin University guide at http://www.sfasu.edu/iao/pdf/GlossaryofAssessmentTerms.pdf which is very consistent with our usage.)

H. The University Assessment Committee

This guide is brought to you by the University Assessment Committee (UAC).

Acknowledgments

Some materials in this handbook have been adapted from the websites and assessment handbooks of Prince George's Community College and the Community College of Philadelphia. We are grateful to them and to the others who have contributed their assessment expertise in helping us to sustain a culture of assessment at UDC. Let's keep this firebird on the rise!