Benedict College

Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Plan Manual

2010-2011

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

www.Benedict.edu

“Examine everything; Keep the good” (1 Thess. 5:21)
The Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Plan Manual
2010-2011

PREPARED BY:

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

“Plan the Work, Work the Plan, Plan to Work”
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Introduction

What is Institutional Effectiveness? The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools defines Institutional Effectiveness as:

*The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of results in each of the following areas: (Institutional Effectiveness)*

1. Educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
2. Administrative support services
3. Educational support services
4. Research within its educational mission, if appropriate
5. Community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

(Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1, *Principles of Accreditation*, SACS Commission on Colleges)

Institutional Effectiveness is a process in which college and university officials demonstrate how well they succeed in accomplishing the institution’s mission and meet goals. These measures are overtly expressed in the SACs criteria of 2.5 and 3.4. The institutional effectiveness, planning, and assessment process allows college officials to choose expected outcomes based on a self-identified mission. Faculty and administrators develop mission statements for each academic program and administrative unit, which are derived from the College’s mission statement. Then program and expected outcomes are defined and reported in an annual Institutional Effectiveness assessment cycle. Outcomes are assessed to determine the extent to which they were achieved in the planning year. Finally, the assessment results are used as the basis for making changes for continuous improvements in the academic and administrative programs and services. The process of Institutional Effectiveness involves planning, assessment, and using the assessment results for continuous improvement.

The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance for faculty, academic administrators, and the College’s educational support and services administrators to develop and evaluate Institutional Operational Plans, Student Learning Outcomes, and Program Outcomes, and to use the assessment results.
General Procedures for Institutional Effectiveness Planning

- Representatives from all academic departments, educational support programs, and administrative units will identify a faculty or staff member as the assessment contact person. This person will serve as the liaison for assessment and will be the department’s contact with the Institutional Assessment Director.

- Representatives from each academic department, educational support program, and administrative unit will prepare an effectiveness plan using the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Planning Manual. The institutional effectiveness plan consists of three parts:
  - Part I: Yearly Strategic Plan Assessment (Institutional Effectiveness Report)
  - Part II: Educational/Learning/Program Outcomes Assessment Plan.
  - Part III: Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

- The strategic plan of the College should outline goals and objectives to help further the institutional mission, directives, and goals.

- The results of the Program Review conducted by representatives from a department or program should also help frame the annual assessment goals. The long-range goals (where do we want to be in five years?) identified, the recommendations of peer reviewers, and the action plan developed in response to the recommendations should be addressed in the years following the program review process.

- Representatives from all units should consider how operations, services, and programs support the student learning environment and experiences.

- In developing a yearly assessment plan, representatives from each department and unit should identify three to five goals and describe the goals, objectives, evaluation methods, evaluation results, and uses of results. The yearly goals might reach beyond those of the institutional strategic plan or in the program review action plan due to changing needs and circumstances.

- In developing an educational/learning/program* outcomes assessment plan, representatives from each department/program and educational support program will identify the learning outcomes students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of the discipline, program, and/or learning activity, where applicable. If an academic department has more than one program, each program, major, and concentration will identify the learning outcomes that students are expected to possess upon completion of the course**, program, major and/or concentration. All current learning outcomes should be listed in the catalogue.
Where outcomes are not directly linked to student learning, representatives must demonstrate connection of those outcomes to student success in achieving learning goals and outcomes.

*Note: **Not all learning outcomes need to be assessed annually.** For instance, alumni feedback about successes and employer assessment of skills acquired may be obtained every three to five years, while Subject Area Examination scores may be tracked on an annual basis. However, **all learning outcomes should be assessed at least once in a five-year cycle.**

**Course syllabi should state explicitly the learning outcomes students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of the course and the assessment methods used to determine the extent to which the learning outcomes are achieved. Department heads and Deans are responsible for ensuring that course objectives are clearly stated in each syllabus. Periodically, the Deans will be asked to submit a sample of course syllabi to the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and/or the Vice President of Academic Affairs for review.

**Developing an Institutional Effectiveness Plan**

An institutional plan consists of two parts: strategic planning and student learning outcomes assessment. Figure 1 is a visual representation of the relationship among institutional effectiveness, strategic planning, and educational/learning outcomes assessment.

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**Figure 1 Institutional Effectiveness Model**

*Diagram showing the relationship among institutional mission, department mission, educational/learning outcomes, performance criteria/target, performance level, assessment methods/measures, assessment results/findings, and use of results.*
Assessment accomplishments are reported annually as three reports: The Institutional Effectiveness Report; Annual Assessment Report for Divisions, Educational Programs, and Services; and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes.

**Institutional Mission Statement and Goals**

The Institution’s Mission Statement describes what the College is trying to do as an educational institution. To accomplish its mission, the College has goals listed in its 2008-2012 Strategic Plan that are derived from the mission statement. The mission statements of all academic departments and administrative units should be tied to the College mission statement and one or more of the College goals. The Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan links the mission statement and goals of each department or unit to the College’s mission statement and goals, which can be found on the Institutional Effectiveness and Research website.

**Strategic Plan**

**Developing your Mission Statement:**

The mission statement details what a department or unit seeks to accomplish and should reflect the mission and goals of the College.

**Developing your Goals:**

The goals statement describes the direction a department or a unit plans to take to advance and enhance its purpose. It is broad and emanates from the department’s or unit’s mission statement. Three to five goals are recommended.

**Developing your Objectives:**

For each goal, state the desired results to be achieved. Objectives should be measurable, flexible, feasible, understandable, and aligned with departmental purpose.

**Outcomes**

There is a broad range of important outcomes that assessment efforts can address. They may be divided into two general categories: Institution-Centered Outcomes, and Student-Centered Outcomes. Institution-centered outcomes include those outcomes that have more direct benefit to the College than to students, such as program-generated revenue, program efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and program impact on promoting professional/public partnerships and campus community among faculty, staff, and administrators. Student-centered outcomes encompass those outcomes that pertain more directly to
student learning and development; can be assessed collectively or individually; and examined at the institutional, program, and course levels.

Student-Centered Outcomes

Student-centered or learning outcomes may be:

(a) academic: academic skill development, academic performance, student persistence to academic program or degree completion, time taken by students to complete program or degree requirements, and student advancement; or

(b) personal (holistic): individual developmental areas that are non-academic domains (e.g., social, emotional, ethical, physical, vocational).

Student-centered outcomes may be assessed in terms of three key types or dimensions of developmental change, the “ABCs” of outcome-assessment measures:

A. attitudinal (e.g., change in student opinions or values with respect to diversity),

B. behavioral (e.g., incidence or frequency with which students use support services), and

C. cognitive (e.g., gains in knowledge or critical thinking skills).

Types of Expected Outcomes

There are two types of expected outcomes: Student Learning Outcomes and Program Outcomes (academic and non-academic).

1. Student Learning Outcomes (Student-centered) are the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes or values that students are expected to have or exhibit when they complete an academic program.

2. Program Outcomes (Institution-centered) are specific, programmatic, operational, and administrative objectives that academic departments and administrative units intend to accomplish. They are not directly related to student learning.

In order to determine whether objectives/learning outcomes are achieved, some kind of evaluation is in order. This mechanism for assessment should be built into the plan to specify the objective/learning outcomes.
Assessment

Assessment represents the systematic and on-going process of collecting, and reviewing evidence about the College’s academic and administrative programs and services and using it to evaluate these programs and services to improve their quality. It is focused on improving student learning and the services delivered to the College community.

Assessment performs two functions for the College.

✔️ The first function is to provide information for improving programs of the College. It accomplishes this function by providing feedback to

1) the faculty by identifying areas where students are performing well and where they are not so that changes can be made that will improve teaching and the curricula. The expected outcome is improved student learning.

2) the staff by identifying areas where services are good, contributing to the improvement of student learning, and where changes need to be made that will result in better services to improve the educational environment.

✔️ The second function of assessment is evaluation of College programs for accountability purposes. Accountability in this sense means both internal and external accountability. External accountability involves providing evidence to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools that the College is meeting accreditation requirements. In addition it meets state and federal demands for proof that the College is performing at acceptable levels. Internal accountability also involves evaluating the quality of programs and services to determine continuality or modification.

Examples with academic and non-academic objectives and their corresponding assessments are provided below.

Example 1

Objective: Increase the cumulative GPA of the entering class.

Outcomes: For unconditionally admitted first-time freshmen, show an increase in the median cumulative GPA of at least 0.1 grade points.
Example 2.

**Objective:** Monitor student attitudes on a range of issues related to the college environment using the Student Satisfaction Inventory (Survey), and create plans to address apparent deficiencies.

**Outcomes:** At least one important area of student dissatisfaction will be identified and addressed.

**Assessment Guide Table**

The following table can be useful when trying to determine the scope of your assessment. Circle each of the resources, processes, results, and feedback mechanisms that will be part of your assessment process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCE</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES/RESULTS</th>
<th>FEEDBACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty, Staff</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Growth and Development Success</td>
<td>Employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>Student Development Opportunities</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Resources</td>
<td>Co and Extra Curricular Activities</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Resources</td>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>Departmental or Institutional Reputation</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Impact</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Institutional Assessment Advisory Committee**

This committee helps ensure that all College-wide assessment functions are implemented according to well defined and communicated processes. The committee systematically reviews the college-wide assessment plan to determine the extent to which the College’s mission and goals are achieved, and monitors the overall performance of the institution and its various units, as represented by its membership. The committee monitors the effectiveness of measurement instruments in providing essential data needed to gain insight on progress.
relative to the Strategic Plan, and helps ensure that assessment results are communicated to the units.

**Institutional Planning and Assessment Timeline**

Institutional Effectiveness is an on-going process which involves planning, assessment, and using the assessment results for continuous improvement. The following table outlines the general timeline for the process.

**General Assessment Calendar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Occurrence/Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Publication of Annual Institutional Assessment document detailing prior year’s goals, objectives, outcomes, use of results and current action plans by July 5th</td>
<td>Institutional Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Revise/Update Goals, Objectives, Tasks and Measures with responsible parties for the operational plans.</td>
<td>Institutional Effectiveness &amp; Vice Presidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enter Goals, Objectives, Tasks and Measures into the Assessment Plan Template</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-academic Area develops plans, shares the plan with its functional units, and submits the completed plan to IE by July 15th.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-academic functional units develop plans and submit to IE by July 30th.</td>
<td>Educational Support &amp; Administrative Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enter Goals, Objectives, Tasks and Measures into the Assessment Plan Template</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Assessment and planning workshops and presentations to Faculty and Staff</td>
<td>Institutional Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revise/Update Goals, Objectives, Tasks and Measures with responsible parties for the assessment plan.</td>
<td>Educational Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic departments develop annual operational plan and degree program student learning outcomes assessment plan, and submit to IE by August 15th.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enter Goals, Objectives, Tasks and Measures into the Assessment Plan and Student Learning Outcomes Templates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Occurrence/Action</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Assessment Committee reviews submission of goals and objectives and provides feedback for revisions (if necessary) by Sept 30th.</td>
<td>Assessment Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>All revisions to individual assessment plans are to be re-submitted by October 15th.</td>
<td>Educational, Administrative, &amp; Educational Support Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Operational Plans are re-visited and assessed formally by all functional units in a mid-year planning meeting.</td>
<td>Educational, Administrative, &amp; Educational Support Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Mid-year performance reports from all functional units submitted to IE by January 15th.</td>
<td>Educational, Administrative, &amp; Educational Support Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Committee reviews mid-year reports and provides feedback on results and progress in the accomplishment of goals and objectives.</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Assessment and planning workshops and presentations to Cabinet</td>
<td>Institutional Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>End of year planning meeting to complete the assessment of student learning outcomes.</td>
<td>Educational Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Enter results of Measures and data into Assessment Template</td>
<td>Educational Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Enter “Use of Results Report” into Assessment Template</td>
<td>Educational Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Academic units submit end of year reports to division chairs by May 15th.</td>
<td>Educational Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>End of year academic division plan reports submitted to Area Vice President by May 30th.</td>
<td>Division Chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Assessment and planning workshops and presentations to Deans, Department Chairs, and Directors</td>
<td>Institutional Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Enter results of Measures and data into Assessment Template</td>
<td>Administrative &amp; Educational Support Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Enter “Use of Results Report” into Assessment Template</td>
<td>Administrative &amp; Educational Support Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>End of year planning meeting to prepare operational planning report and submit to IE and Vice Presidents by June 5th.</td>
<td>Administrative &amp; Educational Support Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Occurrence/Action</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two-day Planning Retreat for review and audit of outcomes, assessments, and action plans by June 15th.</td>
<td>Assessment Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review and audit of assessment documentation by the Strategic Planning Committee</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>End of year report from all Area Plans submitted to IE by June 30th.</td>
<td>Vice Presidents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Operational Planning and Assessment**

Each administrative or academic unit is required to have an operational plan that includes the following elements (Student & Program Learning Outcomes and Objectives Assessment template):

- **Goals** – must be aligned to the strategic goals of the college, are broad enough to cover the main areas of responsibility
- **Objectives** -- describe what the unit wants to accomplish specifically
- **Enabling Strategies** -- action items that will enable the unit to achieve the objectives
- **Resources** – budgets, personnel time etc, needed for achieving the goal and objective(s)
- **Responsibility** -- designate who ensures it is undertaken
- **Timeline**: Indicate when data will be collected and analyzed, when reports will be available, and/or when the task will be accomplished.
- **Expected Outcomes** -- describe how the unit knows if the objective is accomplished, the outcomes should be specific, and measurable,
- **Assessment Measures** – Target(s) or criteria that can be used to evaluate the quality of the outcome so that a determination can be made whether the objective is met or not.
- **Projected Use of the Assessment Results** -- Based on the expected outcome, what changes you plan to make for continuous improvement.
- **Closing the Loop** – Based upon assessment measures and actual outcomes, what changes were made and what strategies are in place to observe the impact of those changes and or monitor the results of the change to examine their impact on the assessment item(s).

Any goals of the current strategic plan that apply, and all applicable requirements from the SACS Principles for Accreditation must be incorporated into unit objectives.
Characteristics of an Institutional Operational Plan

1) Clearly stated with specific and measurable outcomes
2) Assessment should be systematic using suitable methods to determine to what extent the expected outcomes are met. These methods may be direct or indirect -- quantitative or qualitative.
3) The assessment results should be used to improve the performance of academic programs and administrative units of the College.

Assessment Measures for Administrative, Educational Support, or Student Affairs Programs

Once an expected outcome is identified and the methods of assessment are chosen, the next step is to determine the measures for success or performance for each expected outcome. An assessment measure identifies how well a program is expected to perform on the assessment, or to what extent an objective is met based on its actual outcome. Measures can be quantitative or something tangible so that it is clear that the objective was or was not met.

Examples of Assessment Measures for Administrative, Educational Support, or Student Affairs Programs

1) To increase participation in the convocation by 15% for 2010-2011.

2) Updated College Portrait (fact book) is accessible on the web by November 2010. Data presented are current and accurate.

3) Feedback from the annual survey will indicate that 70% of the users using the newly implemented technology services will be very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the newly implemented services.

The expected performance or target on a given assessment measure should be determined before data on that measure is collected. Notice in the examples above that exact targets are set. Avoid vague targets such as “The department will increase retention over the base year of 2005-2006.” This implies that any increase, even of just one student, is acceptable.

When considering a specific target or measure, be sure to set one that can be achieved. Setting an unrealistically high target makes success unlikely. It is better to set realistic success measures so that successful incremental improvement can be shown. Also avoid setting unrealistically low targets to assure success so as to avoid being viewed as failing or as an excuse for not attempting to make improvements. That a target is not reached does not mean that a program is weak or ineffective provided that the department uses the data
collected to make improvements in the program or service to move toward the desired target level of the expected outcome.

**Methods of Assessing Administrative, Educational Support, or Student Affairs Program Outcomes**

**Direct measures:** are those designed to directly measure what a stakeholder (faculty, staff, students, etc.) knows or is able to do and/or the benefit of programming or intervention

**Indirect measures:** focus on stakeholders’ (faculty, staff, students, etc.) perception and satisfaction with the program or service

The following are examples of the methods that can be used to assess the expected outcomes of administrative programs.

- Satisfaction surveys
- Graduation rates
- Retention rates
- Benchmarks set by national, state, or peer institutions/organizations
- Establishing timelines and budgets
- Tracking the Use of a Service (e.g. hits on a website, use of computer technology)
- Recruiting results
- Tracking program participation
- ACT Student Opinion Survey
- Survey of Organizational Excellence

- Tracking complaints and how they are resolved
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- External measures of performance or quality
- Usage of program or service
- Focus groups
- Participation data
- Observation of behavior
- Volume of activity
- Level of efficiency (average response time)
- Measure of quality (average errors)

The non-academic assessment matrix form needs to be used to record the methods used for assessment (See I.E. Program Assessment Manual).

**Projected Use of Assessment Results**

During the planning phase, the use of the assessment results is projected indicating what changes are going to be made based upon the actual outcomes.

Please refer to Reporting and Using Actual Assessment Results section for examples.
Operational Planning Assessment Summary Reports

Each administrative or academic unit is required to have a mid-year and annual report that aligns closely with the operational plan. The summary report includes the following elements: (See I.E. Program Assessment Manual)

- **Goals** – must be aligned to the strategic goals of the college, are broad enough to cover the main areas of responsibility (the same as in the plan)
- **Objectives** -- describe what the unit wants to accomplish specifically (the same as the plan)
- **Enabling Strategies** -- action items that will enable the unit to achieve the objectives (the same as in the plan)
- **Actual Resources Used** – state the actual use of the resources
- **Responsibility** – person who gets it done
- **Actual Timeline** – state when data was collected and analyzed, when the task was completed or when the report was available.
- **Actual Outcomes** -- describe what is in place, what changes have taken place or what has accomplished so that the unit knows that the objective is met or not. Supporting documents need to be attached.
- **Actual Assessment Measures** – the actual target(s) you have reached for your plan based on the actual outcome – quantitative or qualitative.
- **Objective Met or Not** – self-evaluation of the quality of the actual outcome by comparing the Actual Assessment Measures reported in the summary report against the Assessment Measures set in the plan, comparing the actual timelines against the projected timelines, the actual resources used against the projected resources to determine to what extent the objective is met.
- **Actual Use of the Assessment Results** – state how the assessment results have been used or being used for continuous improvement.

All Summary Reports must demonstrate that expected outcomes were assessed and evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results was provided.

Reporting and Using Actual Assessment Results

Actual assessment results must be reported for each objective in the operational plan. These results are reports and analysis of the data collected in the assessment. The results show whether or not the measures for success on the actual outcomes were met. As such they identify the strengths and areas that need improvement of an administrative program or services. The department will address what it intends to do as a result of the assessment. The use of assessment results thus results in two distinct actions*:
I. Implement changes.
   The results of the assessment must be used to identify changes to improve the
   program. These changes could be to the content of the curriculum, staffing,
   facilities, etc. In some instances, changes are easy to implement, while in other
   instances the proposed changes will have to be implemented over a period of
time or through a series of steps.

II. Develop plan to monitor the changes and compare the results.
   The implemented changes should be monitored to determine whether or not the
   changes had the desired effect. One way of achieving this is to use the same
   assessment plan as used in the previous cycle and compare the actual results to
   the intended results. Any discrepancies should be carefully studied to determine
   the underlying cause. In other situations, when the outcomes have been met, the
   action might be to continue monitoring the outcome to ensure quality. You could
   also define another outcome to begin monitoring.

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Examples of Assessment Results and their Use for Administrative,
Educational Support, or Student Affairs Program Units

1) Results:(1) Revised website published April 2005. (2) Unique visitors
   increased 48.4% from April-June 2005 to April-June 2006. (3) Pages
   visited increased by 24.2% from April-June 2005 to April-June 2006.
   a. Use of the Results: (1) Continue marketing the website. (2)
      Monitor the website for timely updates. (3) Push for online
      appointment scheduling.

2) Results: Our goal is to increase participation in the Politically Active Club
   program by 15% for 2005-2006, but we only succeeded to increase by
   12%.
   a. Use of the Results: Additional promotion publicity plans are
      underway. We will be working closely with the Residence Life
      Office to promote the program heavily in the residence halls.

3) Results: White freshman enrollment increased by 2.5 and exceeded the
   benchmark of an increase of 2 percent over the base year of 2003-2004.
   a. Use of the Results: The target increase for next year will be 2.5
      percent.

Analysis of the Assessment Results (See I.E. Program Assessment Manual)

Layering

The technique of layering allows a specific outcomes and/or objective to be
linked with subcomponents based upon one central thought or purpose and can
be used by administrative and academic units particularly.

Student Affairs Student Learning Outcome Example:
Department: Community Life

Outcome: Students will demonstrate effective leadership skills.

Sub outcomes:
- Students will list the seven most important issues for leaders.
- Students will analyze an organizational issue.
- Students will explain three communication strategies for working with groups.
- Students will demonstrate a communication strategy at a group meeting.

Method of Assessment: Leadership Certification exam administered to students after the BC Student Leadership Conference. Student will conduct a meeting using one of the three identified communication strategies and be scored using a rubric.

Criteria for Success: 75% of students will demonstrate proficiency for the overall outcome as well as each sub component.

Other Examples of Student Affairs Student Learning Outcomes^:

- Students will demonstrate appropriate interviewing skills during video-taped mock interviews (Career Services).
- Students will articulate a high level of confidence in their career choice (Career Services).
- Students will document their qualifications for a position in their resume and performance portfolios.
- Students will apply knowledge of healthy lifestyle choices to their day-to-day life (Student Health Services).
- Students who participate in the service programs will articulate how being engaged within their communities is connected to their personal growth (Leadership Series)

^Bresciani, M.J.

In addition to the summary report, non-academic units are required to complete the assessment form and submit it together with the summary report.

Planning and Assessment Guidelines for Academic Programs

A department's instructional goals and outcomes serve as the foundation for assessment of the quality of its academic programs. The first step in assessment, therefore, is for the faculty in each academic department to identify the goals and all student learning outcomes for each degree program or other program/concentration, e.g. Business - Marketing, in the department. In any given year these goals should be selected for assessment. These instructional
goals and objectives should identify the program’s student learning outcomes that answer the following question:

1) What should a graduate know, be able to do, and/or value after majoring in our program?

The assessment process lets the department know how well students are meeting the instructional goals and outcomes determined by the faculty. As a result program strengths and weaknesses can be identified. The faculty then has the information necessary to make changes in areas where students are not performing as well as the faculty expects in order to improve the quality of a program.

The assessment process is not designed to interfere with academic freedom or to punish individual faculty members or programs. Student learning outcomes should be determined by the faculty and then assessed to determine achievement at desired levels. These desired levels are also determined by the faculty. If the outcomes are not being achieved, then it is up to the faculty to determine why there is a problem with students not achieving what was desired. The faculty can then make improvements so that the desired level of student performance can be met.

**Student Learning Outcome Assessment Plan**

Each academic program must have its defined program mission and student learning outcomes to guide the program to achieve its intended results. The student learning outcomes assessment plan should consist of the following elements:

- **Mission of the Program**: a broad statement of what the program is, what it does, and for whom it does it. It reflects how the program contributes to the education and careers of students graduating from the program, and should align with the Department, College, and University missions.

- **Student Learning Outcomes**: specific statements that describe the required learning achievement that must be met on the way to attaining the degree. That is, the SLOs focus on the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes of a student after the completion of your program.

- **Assessment Methods**: More than one assessment method should be used, direct and indirect.

- **Expected Outcomes**: describe to what extent the program intends to achieve the defined student learning outcomes. The expected outcomes should be specific and measurable.

- **Actual outcomes**: describe the actual achievement of the student learning outcomes. Supporting data need to be attached.
• **Self evaluation of the actual outcomes:** evaluate the actual outcomes against the expected outcomes to determine the extent the expected outcomes are achieved.

• **Use of the outcome results:** Actions that need to be taken based on the assessment results of actual outcomes.

**Example of Mission Statement of Academic Program**

The mission of Hypothetical Industrial Psychology bachelor's degree program is to educate students from diverse backgrounds in the fundamental skills, knowledge, and practice of Hypothetical Industrial Psychology (through courses and an internship) in order to (1) prepare them for Hypothetical Industrial Psychology positions in service or manufacturing industries and (2) prepare them for continuing for advanced degrees in Hypothetical Industrial/Organizational Psychology or related disciplines. The program promotes a commitment to continued scholarship and service among graduates and will foster a spirit of innovation. Also, it promotes an environment that is inclusive and diverse.

**Define Student Learning Outcomes in Action Terms**

Student learning outcomes are not the same as individual course objectives. Instead, they are outcomes associated with more than one course. Learning outcomes use action verbs to describe what students are expected to know and do when they finish a program. These outcomes should be related to one of the goals in the College’s Strategic Plan.

Action verbs associated with student learning outcomes are verbs such as ―explain‖, ―analyze‖ and ―evaluate‖ and should be used instead of ―be exposed to," ―have an opportunity to," or ―be familiar with." The outcome should be stated in terms such as: -Students will be able to analyze, describe knowledge, demonstrate skills, or attitudes...".

**Taxonomic Schemes: Action Verbs and Types of Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomy Schemes</th>
<th>Cognitive Learning</th>
<th>Examples of Action Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong>—to recall or remember facts without necessarily understanding them</td>
<td>articulate, define, indicate, name, order, recognize, recall, reproduce, list, tell, describe, identify, show, label, tabulate, quote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension</strong>—to understand and interpret learned information</td>
<td>classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, interpret, contrast, associate, differentiate, extend, translate, review, suggest, restate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong>—to put ideas and concepts to work in solving problems</td>
<td>apply, compute, give examples, investigate, experiment, solve, choose, predict, translate, employ, operate, practice, schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Taxonomy Schemes**

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong>—to break information into its component to see interrelationships</td>
<td>analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, distinguish, examine, investigate, interpret, validate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synthesis</strong>—to use creativity to compose and design something original</td>
<td>arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong>—to judge the value of information based on established criteria</td>
<td>appraise, assess, defend, judge, predict, rate, support, evaluate, recommend, convince, conclude, compare, summarize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective Learning</strong></td>
<td>appreciate, accept, attempt, challenge, defend, dispute, join, judge, praise, question, share, support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples of Student Learning Outcomes**

1) Students completing the bachelor’s program in Psychology will compare favorably in their knowledge of research methodology with students graduating from psychology programs in institutions comparable to Benedict College.

2) After completion of this program, the student will be able to effectively initiate and produce original design concepts using both traditional and electronic media.

3) (Graduates will)...understand and (be able) to integrate appropriate strategic management concepts in the design and implementation of a corporate/business strategy.

4) Students who complete a Baccalaureate Degree Program in Mass communication will develop the necessary skills in Mass Communication with regard to oral communication.

Notice that each example of a student learning outcome involves only one assessable outcome element. Avoid bundling two or more outcome elements that could be assessed separately.

Avoid: Students who complete a Baccalaureate Degree Program in Mass Communication will develop the necessary skills in Mass Communication in **oral and written** communication.

Use: Students who complete a Baccalaureate Degree Program in Mass Communication will develop the necessary skills in Mass Communication in **oral** communication.
Use: Students who complete a Baccalaureate Degree Program in Mass Communication will develop the necessary skills in Mass Communication in **written** communication.

**Methods of Assessing Student Learning Outcomes**

An assessment method is the means for measuring the degree of success that a department or unit has achieved in meeting a student learning or program outcome. More than one assessment method should be used. Direct measures are required plus indirect methods when applicable.

1) **Direct methods** measure what was learned or accomplished.
2) **Indirect methods** measure perceptions of learning or what should have been learned as measured by surveys or other means.

Employers may be surveyed to determine how satisfactorily Benedict graduates employed by them are prepared. Analysis of course syllabi for learning objectives can provide indirect evidence of what the faculty intended for students to learn. Indirect methods may not be able to provide specific information to identify how a program can be improved.

For example, to know that graduates report that their major program did not prepare them adequately for graduate school does not allow the faculty to determine what specific types of improvements in the curriculum are needed. If both direct and indirect methods are used, then the perception of not being adequately prepared can be linked to direct learning outcome measures that allow targeted improvements in the curriculum. Generally indirect methods should be used with direct methods.

**Examples of Direct or Indirect Assessment Methods**

**Direct Assessment Methods**

1) ETS Major Field Tests*
2) Capstone Courses
3) Grading Using Scoring Rubrics
4) Case Studies
5) Licensing or Certification Exams
6) Student Portfolios
7) Senior Research Projects
8) Senior Recitals
9) Locally Developed Tests
10) Course Embedded Assessment **
11) Evaluations of Interns
12) External Examiners or Reviewers
13) GRE Subject Tests*
14) Student presentations of research to a forum/professional organizations
15) Service Learning Evaluation
16) Internship Evaluation
17) Juried Performance  
18) Advisory Board Surveys  
19) Culminating experiences (e.g., presentation, project, internships, etc.)  
20) Collection of work samples (portfolios)  
21) Pre- and post-measures  
22) Common exams

*National Tests*

As part of assessment efforts, many institutions and programs already use a multitude of commercially generated examinations and tests. Some of the more commonly used national tests include:

**ACT - COMP (College Outcome Measures Program):** This is an assessment instrument that measures knowledge and skills acquired by students in general education courses. Administered by the American College Testing Program, Inc. Iowa City, IA.

**GRE (Graduate Record Examinations):** The GRE is widely used by colleges, universities, departments, and graduate schools to assess verbal and quantitative student achievement. Also, many discipline-specific examinations are offered to undergraduate students in areas such as Biology, Chemistry, Education, Geology, History, Literature, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. The GRE is published and administered by Educational Testing Services, Princeton, New Jersey.

**Major Field Achievements Tests:** Major field examinations are administered in a variety of disciplines. They often are given to student upon or near completion of their major field of study. These tests assess the ability of students to analyze and solve problems, understand relationships, and interpret material. Major field exams are published by Educational Testing Services, Princeton, New Jersey.

**Course-Embedded Assessment**

Assessment practices embedded in academic courses generate information about what and how students are learning within the program and classroom environment. Course-embedded assessment takes advantage of already existing curricular offerings by using standardized data instructors already collect or by introducing new assessment measures into courses. The embedded methods most commonly used involve the development and gathering of student data based on questions placed in course assignments. These questions, intended to assess student outcomes, are incorporated or embedded into final exams, research reports, and term papers in senior-level courses. The student responses are then evaluated by two or more faculty to determine whether or not the students are achieving the prescribed educational goals and objectives of the department. This assessment is a separate process from that used by the course instructor to grade the exam, report, or term paper.
There are a number of advantages to using course-embedded assessments:

1) Student information gathered from embedded assessment draw on accumulated educational experiences and familiarity with specific areas or disciplines.
2) Embedded assessment often does not require additional time for data collection, since instruments used to produce student learning information can be derived from course assignments already planned as part of the requirements.
3) The presentation of feedback to faculty and students can occur very quickly creating a conducive environment for ongoing programmatic improvement.
4) Course-embedded assessment is part of the curricular structure and students have a tendency to respond seriously to this method. Course embedded assessment can be created for general education programs as well.

Examples of Course Embedded Assessments are:

1) Essays/Written Assignments* 8) Problems on Tests
2) Locally Developed 9) Case Studies
   Examinations 10) Technical Reports &
3) Blind-scored Assignments*  Proposals
4) Oral Assignments* 11) Pre-test/Post-test
5) Teamwork 12) External Examiner Review
6) Pencil/Paper Tests 13) Student Reflections*
7) Problem Sets

*indicates use of rubric

Indirect Assessment Methods

1) Student Perception of 13) Time to degree
   Learning Surveys (e.g. NSSE) 14) Retention rates
2) Written Essays 15) Persistence/Return rates
3) Alumni Surveys 16) Exit Interviews
4) Analysis of Course Syllabi 17) General Faculty Survey
5) Focus Groups 18) Job Placement Rates
6) Employer Surveys 19) Graduate School Placement
7) Exiting Senior Survey Rates
8) Consultation with Internship 20) Tracking Complaints
   Supervisors 21) Recruiting Results
9) Consultation with Advisory 22) Website Interests/Hits
   Board/Counsel 23) Establishing Timelines &
10) Student Evaluation of  Budgets
   Faculty 24) Faculty Performance
12) Graduation rates
26) Juried Performance  
27) Service Learning Evaluation  
28) Internship Evaluation

Academic assessment matrix (See I.E. Program Assessment/Review Manual) needs to be used to record the methods employed in the assessment.

When choosing an assessment method it is important to use one that actually meets the needs of the department. A nationally normed comprehensive examination such as an ETS Major Field Test provides comparative data so that the performance of Benedict students can be compared to a national sample of their peers at other colleges and universities. Make sure that the MFT has sub-scores and assessment indicators that allow the measurement of learning outcomes considered important by the faculty who teach in the program. Do not just look at the global score because it does not provide information about where program improvement might be possible. Major Field Tests have assessment indicators and multiple sub-scores for different areas of a major. More information on Major field Tests can be found at http://ets.org.

ValiditY and Reliability

Tests measuring learning outcomes can be developed by the faculty for each program offered. If a locally developed instrument is used, the validity and reliability of the instrument must be examined and reported.

- **Validity** of the test refers to the extent to which the test actually measures what it intends to measure. In another word, the test is relevant, and the data collected is accurate and useful. To achieve the validity, when faculty develops an instrument, make sure that the content coverage and the content representation are sound, the meaning of the questions are clear to every students, and the grading or scoring criteria are fair and clearly specified before grading or scoring.

- **Reliability** of a test or other measure means that the results do not differ significantly over time, i.e. test results are not very high in one administration and then low in another if the content of the courses and the way these courses are being taught is not changed.

It is also important that the method of assessment be appropriate for the student learning outcome, that is, the means of assessment provides useful information.

Consider the following student learning outcome:

Students completing the bachelor’s program in Psychology will compare favorably in their knowledge of research methodology with African American students graduating from comparable institutions nationally.
A locally developed instrument cannot provide test results comparable to that of the peer institutions. Instead a nationally normed examination that includes a section that tests knowledge of research methodology should be used. **Avoid using course grades or meeting degree requirements such as completion of specific courses as evidence of student learning.**

**Course grades are not considered appropriate measures of student performance.**

Grades are awarded based on overall satisfaction of course requirements rather than specific performance on a single program-level outcome. Those course requirements typically include several course-level outcomes (which may or may not be directly related to a program outcome), attendance, and extra credit. Course grades alone do not provide specific information about the concepts mastered by students or those concepts that proved challenging – important information for faculty to consider if they want to improve student learning over time.

**Academic Program Outcomes**

Academic program outcomes have specific academic program objectives, which identify what will be accomplished by the department or program and/or perceptions about what was accomplished. They are different from Student Learning Outcomes.

**Examples of Academic Program Outcomes**

1. Focused recruitment to increase the number of Elementary Education graduates.
2. Benedict College graduates will be successful in gaining admission to graduate school or professional programs.
3. Graduates from the Department of Accounting will obtain employment in a field relevant to their major.
4. Faculty research as evidenced by papers published or presented at professional conferences will increase by 5 percent.

Each program outcome involves only one assessable outcome element. Avoid bundling two or more outcome elements that could be assessed separately.

**Avoid:** Business Administration graduates will be competitive in obtaining **employment in a field relevant to their major** and admission to post-baccalaureate programs.

**Use:** Business Administration graduates will be competitive in obtaining admission to **post-baccalaureate programs.**
Use: Business Administration graduates will be competitive in obtaining employment in a field relevant to their major.

Methods of Assessing Academic Program Outcomes

Program outcomes are not designed to measure student learning. Instead they identify desired outcomes of the program or department that may provide indirect measures of program quality or the degree to which administrative goals are achieved. Academic program outcomes should be quantifiable.

Examples of Assessment Methods for Academic Program Outcomes

1. Tracking the Use of a Service (e.g. hits on a website)
2. Satisfaction surveys
3. Alumni surveys
4. Establishing timelines and budgets
5. Graduation rates
6. Retention rates
7. Job placement rates
8. Recruiting results
9. Tracking program participation by desired demographics
10. Faculty publications and presentations
11. Tracking complaints and how they are resolved
12. Acceptance rates to graduate and professional schools
13. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
14. Needs Assessments

Academic assessment matrix (See I.E. Program Assessment Manual) needs to be used to record the methods employed in the assessment.

A program outcome could in some cases be the completion of a project or activity, but this approach has the weakness of not providing any information for improvement. It is more meaningful to assess what the project or activity is intended to accomplish.

As an example, assume that a new technology project in the School of Business involves the purchase and installation of new technology equipment in several classrooms. This type of program outcome should be assessed in two ways.

1) The outcome can be assessed as the degree to which the project was completed on time and within budget.

2) A second assessment method would be the degree to which the intended purpose of the technology enhancements is being achieved as the project progresses and indeed, even after the equipment has been installed.

In this case the timeline for implementing the program and the degree of success in achieving the purpose of the program would provide measures that could be
used for improvement. From an Institutional Effectiveness standpoint a desired outcome is not to buy and install equipment or hire new personnel. The desired outcome is what is to be accomplished with the equipment or new personnel.

**Assessment Measures for Academic Program: Criteria for Success**

Once an intended student learning outcome or academic program outcome is identified and the method of assessing that outcome is determined, the next step is to establish measures or targets to assess the success or performance for each student learning and program outcome. A measure for success identifies how well a student or program is expected to perform on the assessment. Measures should be quantitative so that it is clear that the objective was or was not met. Generally speaking, more than one measure for success should be used.

**Examples of Assessment Measures for Academic Program Success**

1) At least 85% of students will report being satisfied or very satisfied with the advising they received.
2) At least 80% of students completing this program will achieve a score on the Economics MFT above the 50th percentile of the national distribution.
3) Seventy-five percent of the students who participated in library training will report that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their ability to use library resources (also an administrative program measure).
4) The department faculty will increase the number of papers and professional presentations by at least five percent.
5) Feedback from the annual survey will indicate that 70% of the users using the newly implemented technology services will be very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the newly implemented services (also an administrative program measure).
6) The percentage of biology graduates accepted into accredited medical, dental, optometry, and chiropractic schools will meet or exceed the stated averages for the state. The average for state institutions was 30%.
7) Students completing Seminar 111 with a “C” or better will have selected a major within the first two years of their studies.

The expected performance or target on a given assessment measure should be determined before data on that measure is collected. Notice in the examples above that exact quantitative targets are set. Avoid vague targets such as “The department will increase retention over the base year of 2005-2006.” Again, this implies that any increase, even of just one student, is acceptable.
When considering a specific target, be sure to set one that can be achieved. Setting an unrealistically high target makes success unlikely. It is better to set realistic success measures so that successful incremental improvement can be shown. Also avoid setting unrealistically low targets to assure success so as to avoid being viewed as failing or as an excuse for not attempting to make improvements. That a target is not reached does not mean that a program is weak or ineffective provided that the department faculty uses the data collected to make improvements in the program or service to move toward the desired target level of the learning or program outcome.

Good assessment practice is to have more than one measure to aid in identifying areas where improvement in the quality of a program can be made.

For example, suppose that the Economic Department sets the following as measures for success on the Major Field Test in economics major:

1) Graduates of the economics program will achieve a score on the Economics MFT equal to or above the 50\textsuperscript{th} percentile of the national distribution.
2) Graduates of the economics program will achieve a score on each Economics MFT subscore equal to or above the 50\textsuperscript{th} percentile of the national distribution.

As another example and illustrating the tie-in to the College’s Strategic Plan:

The College’s Strategic Direction 2 delineates —provide the necessary programs and services to fulfill the Mission of the College.” In an effort to accomplish this obligation, a particular School or Department may recognize that the completion of degree plans is vital to ensuring the fulfillment of this direction. It would illustrate this by:

1) The School or Department would select SD 2
2) School’s or the Department’s Goal 1: Degree plans for students majoring in the departments in the College will be completed accurately and in a timely manner
   a. Success Criteria 1: Completion of at least 90\% of degree plans within 10 working days with errors in fewer than 1\% of all degree plans
   b. 80\% of students will respond as either being satisfied or very satisfied to the survey question involving satisfaction with the degree plan process
By explicitly examining the sub-scores on the test, program strengths and weaknesses can be identified. To get more information on the Major Field Tests go to http://www.ets.org.

**Reporting and Using Actual Results**

Actual results must be reported for each student learning and program outcome by (May 30th) of each year. These results are reports and analysis of the data collected in the assessment. The results show whether the measures for success on the student learning outcomes and program outcomes were met. As such they identify the strengths and areas that need improvement of an academic program. The department will address what it intends to do as a result of the assessment. This is the basis for constant quality improvement associated with Institutional Effectiveness.

**Examples of Assessment Results and Their Use for Academic Units**

1) **Result:** 81% of students completing this program scored above the 50th percentile of the national distribution on the Economics MFT. However results from analysis of the sub-scores showed that only 65% scored 50% or more in macroeconomics.
   a. **Use of the Result:** The department will implement pedagogical changes in the macroeconomic courses and increase the coverage of New Classical economic theory.

2) **Result:** Of the 65 students who took the Major Field Test in Psychology, only 36.7% scored above the target of the national average.
   a. **Use of the Results:** The department will add new courses in research methods and advanced social psychology. Also, we decided to change the pedagogy in several courses to include more experiential and writing exercises.

3) **Results:** The percentage of biology graduates accepted into accredited medical, dental, optometry, and chiropractic schools was equal to the target of 30%, the state average.
   a. **Use of the Results:** Next year we plan to increase the target by 2%.

4) **Results:** White freshman enrollment increased by 2.5 and exceeded the benchmark of an increase of 2% over the base year of 2003-2004.
   a. **Use of the Results:** The target increase for next year will be 2.5%.

5) **Result:** The average score on the Psychology department exit exam this year was 74%. This was the first year that the average score has exceeded the benchmark set by the department of 70%.
   a. **Use of the Results:** We will monitor the pass rate on the exit exam to determine if the trend continues. If students continue to score over 70%, the standard will be raised.
Action Plan/Analysis Checklist

1. Are results/findings shared with department/program members or administrators and are changes, if any, made based on assessment results?
2. Has the program/department/unit identified all program and learning outcomes to be addressed in the next cycle, including those requiring further attention.
3. Have all program and learning outcomes of the program or major student learning outcomes that have not been satisfactorily assessed at least once in the past five years been included in your plan for the coming year?

Writing Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO’s) describe the measurable knowledge, skills, abilities, values, or behaviors that faculty want students to be able to demonstrate by the time they graduate. Your PO’s should apply to your discipline and include competencies considered critical to your graduates and the field.

Outcomes answer the question: *What will the students be able to do, demonstrate, or apply as a result of their learning?*

Steps to writing outcomes

1. Every outcome should align with the departmental mission statement.
2. Every outcome should be measurable, written so that the student demonstrates, applies, or performs a visible activity.
3. Every outcome should have a statement that specifies the procedure or strategy that the students will use, e.g., —*Students will be able to…*”
4. Every outcome should have at least three methods linking to a specific curricular or extra-curricular task such as a class project, an exam, a homework assignment, or a field activity. The method uses a metric, tool, or instrument (a rubric, a checklist, etc.) to measure student competence.
5. Every method should have at least two criteria or quality indicators that identify the levels of performance or describe the conditions that performance must meet to be successful
6. Every outcome must include a standard of performance that indicates both the minimum acceptable score and the percentage of students you expect to achieve that score.

EXAMPLE

*Outcome:* Students will be able to speak clearly and effectively in presenting information, explaining ideas, and discussing issues.
Method 1: All students take *Course 311* during their first year and are required in this class to give an oral presentation on a relevant topic of their choice. Faculty will evaluate the oral presentation using a rubric with the following scale: (1 = unacceptable; 2 = marginally acceptable; 3 = good; 4 = very good; 5 = excellent). Criteria include precision of language, comprehension of material; logic of arguments; and effectiveness of answering questions. 80% of students will achieve at least an average of a 3.

Method 2: During their senior year, students complete a semester-long group project in *course 411* that requires the use of oral communication skills to complete a group presentation. All class members will complete a rubric to assess the quality of each group presentation, including clarity of ideas; use of visual aids; comprehension of material; and effectiveness of group activities. The instructor also will use a grading rubric. Final scores will be tabulated by weighting peer scores at 40% and instructor score at 60%. At least 70% of students will achieve an average score of 70 on a 100-point scale.

**Six Steps to Assessment:**

The following chapters are organized around six basic steps in creating an assessment plan:

1. Identifying student learning goals, including the core competencies the course will address.
2. Stating student learning outcomes or objectives.
3. Connecting learning objectives to the curriculum.
4. Identifying assessment tools, methods, and design, including implementation timeline and rubrics.
5. Analyzing, interpreting, reporting, and communicating findings.
6. Using findings for improvement and decision-making.

The first four steps should be included in assessment plans. Progress/quarterly reports focus on the last two.

**Tips for success:**

1. **Make it meaningful.** The purpose of assessment it to provide information for decision-making and curricular improvement. You must begin by deciding what are the most important questions to ask and what is the most useful information about your educational program.

2. **Keep it simple.** Less may really be more when it comes to assessment. You are most likely to succeed if you limit your questions to the ones that matter the most.
3. **Ask questions about factors over which you have control.** It may be interesting to know that, for example, students who work more than 20 hours a week are less successful in your course; but is that anything over which you can exert control? Are there any changes or adjustments that you could really make that would address this? If not, then the information may be important but not useful for the purposes of curricular improvement.

4. **Create reasonable deadlines and assessment cycle timelines.** Create realistic deadlines for accomplishing the assessment plan, including all of the stated learning outcomes or objectives. Think in terms of a three to five-year cycle. If it won’t be reasonable to accomplish everything during that length of time, re-think the approach and focus upon the most pressing concerns first. Less pressing questions could wait until the next cycle.

5. **Make it measurable.** Assessment plans are most effective when the objectives are written in a way that will make it transparent whether or not students have met your benchmark. The more judgment is involved, the more room there will be for disagreement about what the results are, what they mean, and what should be done in response to them.

6. **Use a mix of multiple measures.** Relying mainly on one or two achievement measures is a risky strategy. Placing assessment results and the student learning outcome accomplishment on a single test score or survey outcome may be detrimental to understanding, interpreting, or valuing the success of the outcome. Multiple measures increase one’s chances of getting valid information that approaches a target from different angles.

7. **Use embedded, double-duty activities.** Be careful not to add extra activities to either faculty or student workload simply for the sake of learning outcome assessments. You are more likely to get valid measures of student achievement if you use activities that already have meaning for students. Need a writing sample? Find one in class where students will be motivated to produce the best work of which they are capable.

8. **Remember that it is your course and therefore your plan.** Plans are only useful to the extent that they are used, and they are only used to the extent that people whom they affect have a voice in them. On the other hand, remember that consensus does not mean unanimity. When people disagree about what should be in a plan, it can be an opportunity for discussion and clarification about the program mission, goals, or objectives. If the results are ambiguous, that can be an opportunity to reframe the objectives in a way that will be more measurable.

9. **Remember that the only “failure” in assessment is the failure to act.** Successful assessment does not mean that the findings indicate that nothing needs changing. Successful assessment is when the findings are meaningful and
point toward action. What matters is that assessment should lead to a process of continuous quality improvement.

10. **Consolidate your assessment efforts.** We all have a need to do assessment for purposes of campus-wide accreditation and accountability. But several units also have college or program level accreditation requirements that include assessing student learning; so think in terms of how one plan can fulfill both audiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Outcome Checklist</th>
<th>Aligned with mission</th>
<th>Written from student perspective</th>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Linked to specific task</th>
<th>Supported by a metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is program outcome 1 …</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is program outcome 2 …</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is program outcome 3 …</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Outcomes</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Outcomes (results)</th>
<th>Procedures or Strategies (activities)</th>
<th>Methods/Measures (data collection)</th>
<th>Criteria (quality indicators)</th>
<th>Standard (Success Criteria)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An objective of this class is to…</td>
<td>As a result of this, students will be able to…</td>
<td>To meet this outcome, students will…</td>
<td>To assess this outcome, faculty will…</td>
<td>Indicators of quality include…</td>
<td>As a sign of success, the target will be…</td>
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<td><strong>EXAMPLE</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance student communication skills</td>
<td>Speak clearly and effectively in presenting information, explaining ideas, and discussing issues</td>
<td>Give an oral presentation during class on a relevant topic</td>
<td>Evaluate the oral presentation with a standard rubric using a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale</td>
<td>-Precision of language</td>
<td>-Comprehension of material</td>
<td>-80% of students will achieve at least a 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EXAMPLE</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Program Outcome/Standard Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard:</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes/Objectives</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Fails to Meet Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 3:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 4:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 5:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rubric may be expanded to define scores of 1-5, instead of expectation levels

**ASSESSING STUDENTS**

Example: General analytic rubric for a writing assignment

Evaluators should rank each piece of writing on the following criteria:

on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 3 (highest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = no or poor introduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = some introduction; nothing beyond a forecast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = introduction grasps reader's attention (engages the reader) and forecasts major points.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Articulation of thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = no or poor articulation of thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = some articulation of thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = clear articulation of thesis or argument.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Paragraph development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = poor paragraphs with no clear topic sentence; multiple topics; little or no development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = some structure and development of paragraphs and/or some with clear topic sentences or focus, but not consistently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 = paragraphs are consistently well developed, with a clear topic sentence and appropriate number of sentences that provide examples and develop points.

4. Use of examples
1 = little or no use of examples.
2 = some use of examples or evidence, but not consistent; no examples or evidence in places where they are needed
3 = frequent or consistent use of examples and evidence; example or evidence appears whenever the reader asks, “or instance?”

5. Conclusion
1 = no or poor conclusion or summary of argument
2 = some summary of points made, but nothing beyond summary; no broad conclusions/lessons
3 = a conclusion going beyond summary of what was written in the body of the essay.

6. Transitions
1 = little or no transition between paragraphs; poor flow
2 = some transition or flow between paragraphs; partial structure to argument
3 = strong and/or consistent transition between points in essay; strong flow

7. Variation of sentences
1 = little or no variation of sentences; monotonous use of sentence type. (length/complexity).
2 = some variation of sentences. Sentences of varying length or type, but not varied effectively.
3 = effective variation of sentence length and type.

8. Coherence
1 = lack of coherence; i.e. mismatch between the thesis and the body; tangents
2 = occasional tangents; repetition
3 = every paragraph works to support the thesis; "linked" paragraphs
## Method Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Study Purpose</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Assigned tasks that require student engagement and a final tangible product</td>
<td>X, X</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>A systematic set of questions designed to assess student learning.</td>
<td>X, X</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>A collection of student work created for the purpose of demonstrating their learning or showcasing their best work.</td>
<td>X, X</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Assignment Types by Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Essay</th>
<th>Research paper</th>
<th>Oral present</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>Lab</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate/Develop writing skills</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate/Develop oral skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate/Develop critical thinking skills</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate depth of knowledge</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information synthesis</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of knowledge</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment Report Checklist*

Now that you have your assessment report, use this checklist to help determine if it is ready for submission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods and Analysis</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary sources of data include direct measures of student learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods and indicators are appropriate for learning outcomes assessed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoring procedures yield valid interpretations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of assessment findings involve qualitative and/quantitative analysis beyond individual faculty generalizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate sampling procedures were used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size was adequately large relative to program size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data were analyzed correctly (i.e., correct analysis given available data)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data were presented for each outcome in the form of quantitative and qualitative descriptors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretations were made in reference to performance criteria specified in the plan for each learning outcome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An attempt was made to tie in academic process with results (i.e., how process relates to outcomes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations in design, methodology, and scoring procedures were noted if applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid conclusions were drawn from the available data and instrumentation used (i.e. absence of extrapolation, faulty measures, faulty sampling, and/or confounds)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissemination and Use</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence that data were reviewed and discussed collectively by all faculty members in the program was present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of a feasible plan for improvement was present and well developed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For Academic Programs

If you checked "NO" on any of the items on the checklist, go back and revise the report accordingly. If you need assistance, please contact Dr. Corey R. Amaker in the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment at 803.705.4344 or amaker@benedict.edu.

If you checked "YES" on all of the items on the checklist, you are ready to submit your assessment report to the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment. To do so, simply send it as an e-mail attachment to assessment@benedict.edu. OIE will then forward it on with the reports from other programs to the College’s Assessment Committee.
Examples of Changes that May Be Implemented as a Result of Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes to the Assessment Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• revision of intended learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• revision of measurement approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• changes in data collection methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• changes in targets/standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• changes in the sampling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes to the Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• changes in teaching techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• revision of prerequisites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• revision of course sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• revision of course content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• addition of courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• deletion of courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes to the Academic Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• revision of admission criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• revision of advising standards or processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• improvements in technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• changes in personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• changes in frequency or scheduling of course offering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from University of Central Florida UCF Academic Program Assessment Handbook February 2005 Information, Analysis, and Assessment)

Closing the Loop

Closing the loop is the last phase in the assessment cycle and involves making decisions about how to respond to your program’s shortcomings that have been identified through assessment data. Moreover, it is a dynamic process that involves shared feedback and collaborative reflection on the part of the faculty in the program. This begins first with making faculty aware of assessment findings and then organizing discussions around how to make improvements. Disseminating assessment findings is the first step. This may be accomplished through faculty newsletters, informal emails, websites, and/or faculty meetings and retreats. Once this has been accomplished then faculty must decide what changes are needed and how they are going to make them. The most common types of changes often relate to the assessment plan, the program’s curriculum and/or the academic process. When making plans for modifications, remember that changes should be manageable in terms of available time and resources. It is important not to make too many changes at once because it will be difficult to manage. Limit modifications to, at most, two per year depending on their magnitude. Finally, remember that improvements are generally gradual and cumulative in nature rather than all of a sudden, so don’t get discouraged if they do not happen right away.
# Institutional Research & Assessment Survey Schedule

The Office of Institutional Research & Assessment conducts or performs the various duties, tasks, and analyses to assist the College in its Assessment and Planning efforts. Listed below are the studies and surveys implemented as well as their purpose and schedule of administration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study/Survey</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Schedule of Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Student (In)</td>
<td>To maintain current data on transfer students.</td>
<td>Fall and Spring semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Hours</td>
<td>To maintain and report current information on number of semester hours by schools, department, and faculty.</td>
<td>Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Statistical Report</td>
<td>To collect, analyze, and compile data on the number of inquiries, pending students, and acceptances.</td>
<td>Fall and Spring Semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term and Final Grade Analysis</td>
<td>Collect and analyze student grades by department and faculty member.</td>
<td>Mid-terms and finals for the fall and spring semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Study</td>
<td>Collect and analyze data relative to the number of students receiving aid and the types of aid received.</td>
<td>Each fall and spring semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Analysis</td>
<td>Collect data to determine how many students are in on-campus housing and study the trends by gender and classification.</td>
<td>Each fall and spring semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitudinal Retention Study</td>
<td>Track new freshmen who entered Fall 1994 and Fall 1995.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Laboratories Report</td>
<td>Collect and analyze data on computers available to students.</td>
<td>Each fall and spring semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Registration Report</td>
<td>Collect and analyze data on the number of students pre-registering</td>
<td>Each fall and spring semester daily during pre-registration process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance Report</td>
<td>Collect data on students who do not attend class</td>
<td>Daily during the semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the Registration Process</td>
<td>To determine the effectiveness of the registration process.</td>
<td>Fall and Spring semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Returning Students Survey</td>
<td>To ascertain the reason(s) the student did not return to Benedict College</td>
<td>Fall and Spring semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Evaluations of Faculty</td>
<td>To provide the faculty with continuous feedback on the effect of their teaching styles</td>
<td>Fall and Spring semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exiting Senior Survey</td>
<td>To determine the graduating seniors level of satisfaction with Benedict College and post graduate plans</td>
<td>At the end of each academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study/Survey</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Schedule of Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First-time Entering Student</strong></td>
<td>To profile the incoming freshman class to determine their needs and expectations of Benedict College</td>
<td>Fall semester of each year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advisor Perception Survey</strong></td>
<td>To determine how well the advisors are performing their jobs according to advisees</td>
<td>Fall and Spring semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Life Survey</strong></td>
<td>In order for the students to provide feedback on their Residential Life experience</td>
<td>At the end of each academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Public Safety</strong></td>
<td>To assess the students’ perceptions of safety and security issues on campus.</td>
<td>Fall and Spring semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counseling and Testing</strong></td>
<td>To determine how well the counselors are meeting the needs of the students.</td>
<td>Fall and Spring semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Freshman Placement Test)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Learning-Senior Exit Form</strong></td>
<td>To provide students an opportunity to serve their community and to gain valuable experience.</td>
<td>At the end of each academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Health Center-Student Satisfaction Survey</strong></td>
<td>To determine the students’ perceptions of the quality of services rendered.</td>
<td>After each visit to the Health Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Services Survey</strong></td>
<td>To ascertain the students’ level of satisfaction with existing campus ministerial programs.</td>
<td>At the end of each academic school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board of Trustees Retreat</strong></td>
<td>To determine the level of satisfaction among the Board of Trustees with the retreat.</td>
<td>July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Student Orientation</strong></td>
<td>To determine how effective the sessions and activities were for the new students.</td>
<td>At the beginning of the Fall semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payroll Services</strong></td>
<td>To determine the level of satisfaction of faculty, staff, and students with the quality of services rendered.</td>
<td>At the end of each academic school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sophomore Proficiency Examination</strong></td>
<td>To assess the impact of freshmen courses upon the performance of students on a standardized test</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: Testing Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Return/Persistence Rates</strong></td>
<td>To determine the persistence of students at each level from one semester to the following term.</td>
<td>September and February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject Area Exams</strong></td>
<td>To assess and compare the student learning outcomes objectives from a national perspective.</td>
<td>December and May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exit Senior Survey</strong></td>
<td>To assess the perception of students concerning targeted student learning outcomes as well as key programs and services provided by the College</td>
<td>December and May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alumni Survey</strong></td>
<td>To evaluate the perception and satisfaction of alumni with the education and training received at the College and to ensure the skills acquired meet the needs of the clients</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employer Survey</strong></td>
<td>To evaluate the perception and satisfaction of employers with the education and training acquired by recent graduates of the College</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)</strong></td>
<td>To evaluate the satisfaction of students at the College based upon select indicators</td>
<td>Biennially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study/Survey</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Schedule of Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension and Dismissal Rates</td>
<td>To evaluate the impact program initiatives have had upon the reduction</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td>of students neglecting to meet the academic standard of the College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEE Policy</td>
<td>To analyze the impact of the SEE Policy</td>
<td>Biannually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Impact/High Risk Study</td>
<td>To assess the impact of course selection and class size upon student</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td>performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Exam</td>
<td>To provide a realistic measure of where students should be placed to</td>
<td>Semiannually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: Testing Center</td>
<td>begin their study and to assess student performance and possible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>barriers to success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Tours</td>
<td>To assess the satisfaction of and knowledge gained by prospective</td>
<td>Biennially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: Admissions</td>
<td>students concerning the College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/staff Retreat</td>
<td>To assess the impact of various programs and development activities</td>
<td>Biennially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff Satisfaction: Institution</td>
<td>To assess the attitudinal levels of faculty and staff concerning the</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: IR&amp;A</td>
<td>initiatives and progress of the College via various key indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Report</td>
<td>To illustrate registration activity for planning purposes</td>
<td>Semiannually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: Office of the Registrar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer/Acceptance/Enrollment Ratio</td>
<td>To evaluate the yield of prospective students as compared to our efforts</td>
<td>Semiannually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source: Admissions</td>
<td>to recruit new students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benedict College
Outcomes Assessment Form

AY: 
Department: 
Program: 

Program Mission Statement: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Objective(s)</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Expected Performance</th>
<th>Actual Performance</th>
<th>How will the results be used to improve your program</th>
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*Tab at the end of the last column to add rows for additional Student Learning Outcomes.*
# Benedict College

**Summary of Changes Made Based on Assessment Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Academic Department:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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## Assessment type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment type</th>
<th>Feedback /results</th>
<th>Changes made as a result of assessment</th>
<th>Evidence to support the changes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes</td>
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<td>Surveys</td>
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<td>Program Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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*Completed forms are due by June 1.*
### Criteria for Reviewing Annual Assessment Plans and Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Principles</th>
<th>Best Practice</th>
<th>Meets Standard</th>
<th>Needs Attention</th>
<th>Insufficient Information / Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Learning Goals</strong></td>
<td>Key program learning goals are clear, measurable, and address thinking skills as well as content knowledge.</td>
<td>In addition to meeting the standard, as described below, key program learning goals are clearly and actively communicated to students and faculty in the program.</td>
<td>They describe, using action verbs, what students will be able to do upon completion of the program, especially the thinking skills they will use, the disciplinary dispositions or attitudes they will exhibit, and/or how else they will apply their knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>Does not meet the standard described above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Learning Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Every student has sufficient opportunity to master each learning outcome.</td>
<td>Every student in the major takes multiple courses in which the learning outcome is addressed.</td>
<td>Expressed in the Guiding Principles above: every student in the major takes at least one course in which the learning outcome is addressed.</td>
<td>Does not meet the standard described above or insufficient information is provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Methods</strong></td>
<td>Assessment methods match the learning outcome being assessed, consist of multiple measures, are varied to accommodate student backgrounds and learning styles, are used systematically over time, and yield truthful, fair information that can be used with confidence.</td>
<td>In addition to meeting the standard, as described below, at least one of the following criteria have been met: evidence is provided that (1) assessment methods are varied to provide equitable opportunities for students of varied backgrounds and learning styles to demonstrate what they have learned, and/or (2) assessment methods yield truthful, fair information that can be used with confidence.</td>
<td>Assessment methods include direct evidence of student learning that clearly matches the learning outcome being assessed. Multiple measures are used systematically (repeatedly, on a schedule) over time and may include indirect evidence.</td>
<td>Does not meet the standard described above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Results</strong></td>
<td>Assessment results lead to appropriate modifications in learning outcomes, teaching methods, curriculum, and/or assessment strategies, as appropriate, and are used to demonstrate Towson’s quality, uniqueness, and needs to stakeholders and constituents.</td>
<td>In addition to meeting the standard described below, at least one of the following criteria have been met: (1) established standards clearly describe assessment performance levels considered minimally adequate for students completing the program and/or (2) positive assessment results are used to demonstrate the program’s quality, uniqueness, and/or needs to appropriate constituents.</td>
<td>Assessment results are shared and discussed with faculty teaching in the program and are used to improve learning outcomes, teaching methods, curriculum, and/or assessment strategies, as appropriate.</td>
<td>Needs Attention: Does not meet the standard described above or insufficient information is provided.</td>
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<td>Not Applicable: This is a plan that is not yet implemented</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Glossary of Assessment Terminology

**Accountability:** set of initiatives others take to monitor the results of our actions, and to penalize or reward us based on the outcomes. (Frye)

**Administrative outcomes:** operational and specific statements derived from a unit’s core functions that describe the desired quality of key services within an administrative unit and define exactly what the services should promote. (Nichols)

**Administrative unit operations:** refers to the assessments based on objectives within administrative units that enhance areas of the university in support of student programs and services.

**Administrative unit strategic goal:** broad and generalized statement of action that assists in meeting the mission of the administrative unit and university. Often refers to a long-term time frame.

**Administrative unit strategic objective:** specific statement referring to a short-term time frame and that aligns to the goal.

**Administrative unit strategic outcome:** describes a change in students that results from a provided learning experience.

**Alignment:** process of assuring that learning outcomes, curriculum and instruction, and assessment all support and match each other. (The Higher Education Academy)

**Anchors:** samples of student work collected to provide examples that indicate different levels from a scoring rubric.

**Annual update:** A brief report from each academic program based on its assessment plan and submitted annually, which outlines how evidence was used to improve student learning outcomes through curricular and/or other changes or to document that no changes were needed.

**Archival/Peer records:** Biographical, academic, or other file data available from the college or other agencies and institutions.

**Assessment:** (1) A method for analyzing and describing student learning outcomes or program achievement of objectives. Many assessments are not tests. For students, a reading miscue analysis is an assessment, a direct observation of student behavior can be an assessment, and a student conference can be an assessment. For programs, a senior exit interview can be an assessment, and an employer survey of satisfaction with graduates can be an assessment. Good assessment requires feedback to those who are being assessed so that they can use that information to make improvements. A good assessment program requires using a variety of assessment instruments each
one designed to discover unique aspects of student learning outcomes and achievement of program objectives.

**Assessment:** (2) systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. (Marchese)

**Assessment for accountability:** Assessment of some unit (could be a program, department, college or entire institution) to satisfy stakeholders external to the unit itself. Results are summative and are often compared across units. For example, to retain state approval, the achievement of a 90 percent pass rate or better on teacher certification tests by graduates of a school of education.

**Assessment for improvement:** Assessment that feeds directly, and often immediately, back into revising the course, program or institution to improve student learning results.

**Assessment of individuals:** Uses the individual student, and his/her learning, as the level of analysis. Can be quantitative or qualitative, formative or summative, standards-based or value added, and used for improvement. Would need to be aggregated if used for accountability purposes. Examples: improvement in student knowledge of a subject during a single course; improved ability of a student to build cogent arguments over the course of an undergraduate career.

**Assessment of institutions:** Uses the institution as the level of analysis. Can be quantitative or qualitative, formative or summative, standards-based or value added, and used for improvement or for accountability. Ideally institution-wide goals and objectives would serve as a basis for the assessment. Example: how well students across the institution can work in multi-cultural teams as sophomores and seniors.

**Assessment of programs:** Uses the department or program as the level of analysis. Can be quantitative or qualitative, formative or summative, standards-based or value added, and used for improvement or for accountability. Ideally program goals and objectives would serve as a basis for the assessment. Example: how sophisticated a close reading of texts senior English majors can accomplish (if used to determine value added, would be compared to the ability of newly declared majors).

**Assessment plan:** A document that outlines the student learning outcomes and program objectives, the direct and indirect assessment methods used to demonstrate the attainment of each outcome/objective, a brief explanation of the assessment methods, an indication of which outcome(s)/objectives is/are addressed by each method, the intervals at which evidence is collected and reviewed, and the individual(s) responsible for the collection/review of evidence.

**Assessment system:** comprehensive and integrated set of assessment measures that provides information for use in monitoring student learning outcomes and managing and improving academic programs, student development, and administrative unit operations
to promote continuous improvement, enhance institutional effectiveness, and ensure accountability.

**Authentic assessment(s) (1):** real-world activities that professionals in the discipline may encounter. Assessment can be conducted at fieldwork sites in which students work with clients or address problems. (Allen)

**Authentic assessment (2):** An assessment that measures a student's ability to perform a "real-world" task in the way professionals in the field would perform it. An authentic writing task might arise if students had been reading about nutrition and decided to ask the school to provide healthy snacks rather than candy machines; their writing would be assessed in terms of the response it received from the principal and/or school board. An authentic reading task would require assessing a student's understanding of a book he or she had selected to read without any suggestions or restrictions by the teacher. Opportunities for truly authentic assessment do not occur regularly in most classrooms.

**Authentic performance assessment:** Since regular opportunities for truly authentic tasks come infrequently in most classrooms, this term generally indicates an evaluation of a student's ability to perform a complex task that is common in the classroom. An authentic performance assessment in a science class would occur when a student is asked to perform an experiment and write a lab report; an authentic writing performance assessment would occur when a student generated a topic, created multiple drafts, sought outside opinions and editorial assistance, and published his or her paper in a classroom magazine or web page. Taking a test over science terms or labeling the parts of a sentence would not be authentic performance assessment. Writing an essay in a limited amount of time in response to a prompt is not an authentic writing assessment either because these circumstances do not match the way writing is usually produced outside of school.

**Backload** (--ed, --ing): Amount of effort required after the data collection.

**Behavioral observations:** Measuring the frequency, duration, topology, etc. of student actions, usually in a natural setting with non-interactive methods, for example, formal or informal observations of a classroom. Observations are most often made by an individual and can be augmented by audio or videotape.

**Benchmarking:** the process of comparing institutions' information and assessment results with other institutions, often their peers. (Suskie)

**Competency (1):** Level at which performance is acceptable.

**Competency (2):** A group of characteristics, native or acquired, which indicate an individual's ability to acquire skills in a given area.

**Confounded:** The situation in which the effect of a controlled variable is inextricably mixed with that of another, uncontrolled variable.
Convergent validity: General agreement among ratings, gathered independently of one another, where measures should be theoretically related.

Commercial, norm-referenced, standardized exams: Group administered, mostly or entirely multiple-choice, "objective" tests in one or more curricular areas. Scores are based on comparison with a reference or norm group. Typically must be purchased from a private vendor.

Constructed-response: assessment method that requires students to construct a tangible product or perform a demonstration to show what they know and are able to do.

Course embedded assessments (1): assessments generated from assignments already in place in the classroom. (Palomba & Banta)

Course-embedded assessment (2): Course-embedded assessment refers to techniques that can be utilized within the context of a classroom (one class period, several or over the duration of the course) to assess students' learning, as individuals and in groups. When used in conjunction with other assessment tools, course-embedded assessment can provide valuable information at specific points of a program. For example, faculty members teaching multiple sections of an introductory course might include a common pre-test to determine student knowledge, skills and dispositions in a particular field at program admission. There are literally hundreds of classroom assessment techniques, limited only by the instructor's imagination (see also embedded assessment).

Course objectives: similar to goals but express the intended content to be covered in a course. They are used to describe specific behaviors that the student should exhibit. (Palomba & Banta)

Criterion-referenced: Criterion-referenced tests determine what test-takers can do and what they know, not how they compare to others. Criterion-referenced tests report on how well students are doing relative to a predetermined performance level on a specified set of educational goals or outcomes included in the curriculum. For example, student scores on tests as indicators of student performance on standardized exams.

Curriculum mapping: matrix used to indicate where student learning outcomes are covered in each course. Level of instructional emphasis or assessment of where the student learning outcome takes place may also be indicated.

Direct measures: assessment that requires students to demonstrate their achievement directly from their work. (Allen)

Embedded assessment: A means of gathering information about student learning that is built into and a natural part of the teaching learning process. Often used for assessment purposes in classroom assignments that are evaluated to assign students a grade. Can assess individual student performance or aggregate the information to
provide information about the course or program; can be formative or summative, quantitative or qualitative. Example: as part of a course, expecting each senior to complete a research paper that is graded for content and style, but is also assessed for advanced ability to locate and evaluate Web-based information (as part of a college-wide outcome to demonstrate information literacy).

**E-portofolio (electronic portfolio):** An electronic format of a collection of work developed across varied contexts over time. The eportfolio can advance learning by providing students and/or faculty with a way to organize, archive and display pieces of work. The electronic format allows faculty and other professionals to evaluate student portfolios using technology, which may include the Internet, CD-ROM, video, animation or audio. Electronic portfolios are becoming a popular alternative to traditional paper-based portfolios because they offer practitioners and peers the opportunity to review, communicate and assess portfolios in an asynchronous manner (see also portfolios also called course-embedded assessment).

**Evaluation (1):** Depending on the context, evaluation may mean either assessment or test. Many test manufacturers and teachers use these three terms interchangeably which means you have to pay close attention to how the terms are being used and why they are being used that way. For instance, tests that do not provide any immediate, helpful feedback to students and teachers should never be called ―assessments," but many testing companies and some administrators use this term to describe tests that return only score numbers to students and/or teachers (Palomba & Banta).

**Evaluation (2):** When used for most educational settings, evaluation means to measure, compare, and judge the quality of student work, schools, or specific educational programs.

**Evaluation (3):** A value judgment about the results of assessment data. For example, evaluation of student learning requires that educators compare student performance to a standard to determine how the student measures up. Depending on the result, decisions are made regarding whether and how to improve student performance.

**Exit and other interviews:** Asking individuals to share their perceptions of their own attitudes and/or behaviors or those of others, evaluating student reports of their attitudes and/or behaviors in a face-to-face-dialogue.

**External Assessment:** Use of criteria (rubric) or an instrument developed by an individual or organization external to the one being assessed.

**External examiner:** Using an expert in the field from outside your program, usually from a similar program at another institution to conduct, evaluate, or supplement assessment of your students. Information can be obtained from external evaluators using many methods including surveys, interviews, etc.
**External validity**: External validity refers to the extent to which the results of a study are generalizable or transferable to other settings. Generalizability is the extent to which assessment findings and conclusions from a study conducted on a sample population can be applied to the population at large. Transferability is the ability to apply the findings in one context to another similar context.

**Fairness (1)**: Assessment or test that provides an even playing field for all students. Absolute fairness is an impossible goal because all tests privilege some test takers over others; standardized tests provide one kind of fairness while performance tests provide another. The highest degree of fairness can be achieved when students can demonstrate their understanding in a variety of ways.

**Fairness (2)**: Teachers, students, parents and administrators agree that the instrument has validity, reliability, and authenticity, and they therefore have confidence in the instrument and its results.

**Focus groups**: Typically conducted with 7-12 individuals who share certain characteristics that are related to a particular topic, area or assessment question. Group discussions are conducted by a trained moderator with participants to identify trends/patterns in perceptions. The moderator's purpose is to provide direction and set the tone for the group discussion, encourage active participation from all group members, and manage time. Moderators must not allow their own biases to enter, verbally or nonverbally. Careful and systematic analysis of the discussions provides information that can be used to assess and/or improve the desired outcome.

**Follow-up report**: A report requested by the Academic Planning Council (APC) following program review to address specific issue(s)/concern(s) that result from the Council's examination review of program review documents. The report is submitted within the time frame identified by the Council prior to the program's full review by the APC.

**Forced-choice**: The respondent only has a choice among given responses (e.g., very poor, poor, fair, good, very good).

**Formative assessment (1)**: assessing student learning over time; provides valuable information about how well students are progressing towards an institution’s or program’s expectations. (Maki)

**Formative assessment (2)**: The gathering of information about student learning during the progression of a course or program and usually repeatedly-to improve the learning of those students. Assessment feedback is short term in duration. Example: reading the first lab reports of a class to assess whether some or all students in the group need a lesson on how to make them succinct and informative.

**Frontload (--ed, --ing)**: Amount of effort required in the early stage of assessment method development or data collection.
Generalization (generalizability): The extent to which assessment findings and conclusions from a study conducted on a sample population can be applied to the population at large.

Goal-free evaluation: Goal-free evaluation focuses on actual outcomes rather than intended program outcomes. Evaluation is done without prior knowledge of the goals of the program.

High stakes test: A test whose results have important, direct consequences for examinees, program, or institutions tested.

“High stakes” use of assessment: The decision to use the results of assessment to set a hurdle that needs to be cleared for completing a program of study, receiving certification, or moving to the next level. Most often the assessment so used is externally developed, based on set standards, carried out in a secure testing situation, and administered at a single point in time. Examples: at the secondary school level, statewide exams required for graduation; in postgraduate education, the bar exam.

Indirect assessment of learning: Gathers reflection about the learning or secondary evidence of its existence. Example: a student survey about whether a course or program helped develop a greater sensitivity to issues of diversity.

Indirect measures: assessments of student learning that are based on opinion, often the students. (Allen)

Institutional effectiveness: documented process of measuring how well an institution is achieving its mission and addressing its strategic plan for the purpose of continuous improvement of student learning, student development, and administrative unit operations.

Institutional portfolios: Institutional portfolios provide a means of assessing the impact of the entire educational experience on student learning. They can be used to drive internal improvement and external accountability. Like student portfolios, they allow for internal improvement and external accountability, but on the level of the whole institution (see also portfolios).

Inter-rater reliability: The degree to which different raters/observers give consistent estimates of the same phenomenon.

Internal validity: Internal validity refers to (1) the rigor with which the study was conducted (e.g., the study's design, the care taken to conduct measurements, and decisions concerning what was and wasn't measured) and (2) the extent to which the designers of a study have taken into account alternative explanations for any causal relationships they explore.
**Local assessment**: Means and methods that are developed by an institution’s faculty based on their teaching approaches, students, and learning goals. Is an antonym for “external assessment.” Example: one college’s use of nursing students’ writing about the “universal precautions” at multiple points in their undergraduate program as an assessment of the development of writing competence.

**Locally developed exams**: Objective and/or subjective tests designed by faculty of the program or course sequence being evaluated.

**Longitudinal studies**: Data collected from the same population at different points in time.

**Metric**: what is being assessed.

**Norm (--)**: A performance standard that is established by a reference group and that describes average or typical performance. Usually norms are determined by testing a representative group and then calculating the group’s test performance.

**Norm-reference**: A norm-referenced test is one designed to highlight achievement differences between and among students to produce a dependable rank order of students across a continuum of achievement from high achievers to low achievers.

**Objective**: planned or intended outcome.

**Observer effect**: The degree to which the assessment results are affected by the presence of an observer.

**Open-ended**: Assessment questions that are designed to permit spontaneous and unguided responses.

**Operational (--)**: Defining a term or object so that it can be measured. Generally states the operations or procedures used that distinguish it from others.

**Oral examination**: An assessment of student knowledge levels through a face-to-face dialogue between the student and examiner-usually faculty.

**Performance appraisals**: A competency-based method whereby abilities are measured in most direct, real-world approach. Systematic measurement of overt demonstration of acquired skills.

**Performance assessment (1)**: A method for assessing how well students use their knowledge and skills in order to do something. Music students performing a new piece of music before a panel of judges are undergoing performance assessment; students who are expected to demonstrate an understanding of basic grammar, spelling, and organizational skills while writing a paper are undergoing performance assessment;
business students asked to write a proposal to solve a problem presented in a case study are undergoing performance assessment.

**Performance assessment (2):** process of using student activities or products, as opposed to tests or surveys, to evaluate students' knowledge, skills, and development. (Palomba & Banta)

**Performance criteria:** can be defined in terms of "learning outcomes statements" which describe, using action verbs, student learning or behavior rather than teacher behavior; and describe an intended outcome rather than subject matter coverage. (Palomba & Banta)

**Portfolios:** Collections of multiple student work samples usually compiled over time and rated using rubrics. The design of a portfolio is dependent upon how the scoring results are going to be used.

**Program assessment:** does not focus on an individual student. Rather, the emphasis is on what and how an educational program is contributing to the learning, growth and development of students as a group. Goals are broad statements that describe the long-term program targets or (University of Central Florida)

**Program goals:** broad statements that describe the long-term program targets or directions of development. Stated in broad terms what the program wants to accomplish (in student learning outcomes) or desires to become over the next several years. (University of Central Florida)

**Program review:** The administrative and peer review of academic programs conducted on an five to eight-year cycle, the results of which are reported to the Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. This review includes a comprehensive analysis of the structure, processes, and outcomes of the program. The outcomes reported in the program reviews include program outcomes (e.g. costs, degrees awarded) as well as student learning outcomes (i.e. what students know and can do at the completion of the program

**Qualitative methods of assessment:** Methods that rely on descriptions rather than numbers. Examples: ethnographic field studies, logs, journals, participant observations, open-ended questions on interviews and surveys.

**Quantitative methods of assessment:** Methods that rely on numerical scores or ratings. Examples: surveys, inventories, institutional/departmental data, departmental/course-level exams (locally constructed, standardized, etc.)

**Reliability:** The extent to which an experiment, test or any measuring procedure yields the same result on repeated trials.

**Rubric:** scoring tool that provides the specific expectations for an assignment. Rubrics divide an assignment into the critical elements to be examined and provide detailed
descriptions of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance for each of those elements.

1. Holistic: rubric that measures the overall quality of an artifact, performance, or portfolio. (Krajcik, Czerniak, & Berger)

2. Analytic: rubric where criteria are broken down into critical elements, content/coverage, of a performance.

**Salience**: A striking point or feature.

**Selected-response**: assessment method that requires students to select a response from a provided list or supply a brief answer. Examples: multiple choice, true/false, matching, or essay tests.

**Simulations**: A competency-based measure where a person's abilities are measured in a situation that approximates a "real world" setting. Simulation is primarily used when it is impractical to observe a person performing a task in a real world situation (e.g. on the job).

**Stakeholder**: Anyone who has a vested interest in the outcome of the program/project. In a high stakes standardized test (a graduation requirement, for example), when students' scores are aggregated and published in the paper by school, the stakeholders include students, teachers, parents, school and district administrators, lawmakers (including the governor), and even real estate agents. It is always interesting to note which stakeholders seem to have the most at risk and which stakeholders seem to have the most power; these groups are seldom the same.

**Standard**: The performance level associated with a particular rating or grade on a test. For instance, 90% may be the standard for an A in a particular course; on a standardized test, a cutting score or cut point is used to determine the difference between one standard and the next.

**Standard-based assessment**: A standard-based assessment assesses learner achievement in relation to set standards.

**Standardized test (1)**: This kind of test (sometimes called ―norm-referenced‖) is used to measure the performance of a group against that of a larger group. Standardized tests are often used in large-scale assessment projects, where the overall results of the group are more important than specific data on each individual client. Standardized tests are not authentic. They are most useful for reporting summative information, and are least useful for classroom diagnosis and formative purposes.

**Standardized test (2)**: assessment where conditions of administration and scoring are constant. A well-designed standardized test will have a set of procedures for administration that can be implemented by all users. A standard set of introductory comments and directions are developed and used by all test takers. (Palomba & Banta)
Standards: Widely recognized models of excellence; term commonly used to describe achievement goals. Standards are always prescriptive because they tell us what — should be."

Status report: A description of the implementation of the plan's assessment methods, the findings (evidence) from assessment methods, how the findings were used in decisions to maintain or improve student learning (academic programs) or unit outcomes (support units), the results of previous changes to improve outcomes, and the need for additional information and/or resources to implement an approved assessment plan or gather additional evidence.

Student development: refers to the assessments within our division of student affairs and other administrative units that promote out-of-class student learning, growth, and development outcomes through structured programs and services.

Student learning: refers to the measureable outcomes of what students should know and are able to do as a result of their course work and educational experiences at our institution.

Student learning outcomes: measurable statements of what students should know and be able to do as a result of their course work and educational experiences at an institution or in a program of study. (Maki)

Summative assessment: assessment of student learning at the end of a program or course of study; provides information about patterns of student achievement without institutional or programmatic opportunity to improve students’ achievement and without student opportunity to reflect on how to improve and demonstrate that improvement. (Maki)

Taxonomic schemes: a hierarchical structure of data arranged in a classification system.

Test: A formal assessment of student achievement. Teacher made tests can take many forms; external tests are always standardized. A portfolio can be used as a test, as can a project or exhibition.

Third party: Person(s) other than those directly involved in the educational process (e.g., employers, parents, consultants).

Topology: Mapping of the relationships among subjects.

Triangulate (triangulation) (1): The use of a combination of assessment methods in a study. An example of triangulation would be an assessment that incorporated surveys, interviews, and observations.
**Triangulation (2):** collection of data from multiple measures in order to show consistency of results. (Allen)

**Utility (1):** Usefulness of assessment results.

**Utility (1):** The relative value of an outcome with respect to a set of other possible outcomes. Hence test utility refers to an evaluation, often in cost-benefit form, of the relative value of using a test vs. not using it, of using a test in one manner vs. another, or of using one test vs. another test.

**Validity:** Validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure. Validity has three components:

- relevance - the option measures your educational objective as directly as possible
- accuracy - the option measures your educational objective as precisely as possible
- utility - the option provides formative and summative results with clear implications for educational program evaluation and improvement

**Value-added assessment strategy:** assessment perspective that gathers longitudinal data, both quantitative and qualitative information, with the intent of examining the impact of the university on student learning. (Suskie)

**Variable (variability):** Observable characteristics that vary among individuals responses.

**Written surveys/questionnaires:** Asking individuals to share their perceptions about the study target-e.g. their own or others skills/attitudes/behavior, or program/course qualities and attributes.
References


