

Assessing Institutional Effectiveness

At

Utica College

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Scope Of This Document:

This document lays out the institutional commitment to general principles of assessment and allows for the development of specific assessment processes, schedules, and formats.

These principles apply to assessment across the entire institution and are designed to meet the College's strategic institutional needs as well as to meet the requirements for assessment outlined by the Middle States Association Commission on Higher Education and mandated by the State of New York.

College Commitment:

The Board of Trustees, Faculty and Staff are committed to outcomes assessment as an important way to ensure that the College meets its educational and strategic goals. Outcomes assessment will take place in the context of the College's mission and values and relate directly to the College's strategic goals.

Responsibilities

The President is responsible for ensuring that each vice-presidential area is carrying out appropriate assessment and that assessment results are used to inform strategic direction and budgeting. Administrators at the vice-presidential level are responsible for developing documented assessment plans and ensuring that, within their areas of responsibility, there are cycles of assessment consistent with these guiding principles. The internally appointed Middle States Self Study and Periodic Review committees is responsible for the reviewing the College's assessment processes every five years. They will refer to *MSACHE Characteristics of Excellence*, AARFs, best practices in the field, institutional summaries, and budgets to evaluate the effectiveness of this document.

Guiding Principles Of Assessment

In carrying out assessment, Utica College subscribes to seven principles consistent with the *MSACHE Characteristics of Excellence* and best practices in the field. Assessment at Utica College will be:

1. Relevant

Assessment is ongoing and tied to the College's mission and strategic plan. This means that faculty/staff who are responsible for designing and implementing assessment processes within their unit must tie the assessment to the mission and the strategic plan and the operational plan that supports it.

2. Useful

Results must be useful and used as part of the College's planning and budgeting processes at both the institutional and unit level. Institutional assessment will focus on accountability, effectiveness, and/or efficiency in the following:

1. assuring that institutional processes and resources support appropriate learning and other outcomes for its students and graduates;

2. achieving institutional mission and goals;
3. implementing planning;
4. allocating resources;
5. insuring institutional renewal;
6. using institutional resources efficiently;
7. providing leadership and governance;
8. providing administrative structures and services;
9. demonstrating institutional integrity.

3. Realistic

The chosen assessments should be reasonable in terms of the resources available and in terms of expectation for providing useful results. Responsible parties should choose a limited number of goals to assess at any one time, should use existing databases where available, and should integrate collection of data into existing processes if possible while not being discouraged from developing additional processes where necessary.

4. Non-Punitive

Assessment is a measurement tool to confirm good or improving practice and/or identify areas where practice should be changed or improved. Institutional effectiveness assessment needs to be honest and open and the results should not be used in a punitive manner.

5. Multi-Dimensional

Measures across the institution will be multi-dimensional, addressing student learning and institutional functioning. Programs/departments/committees/divisions will select measures consistent with both the College's mission and strategic direction and their mission and values. They should consider the use of multiple methods of measurement, including both qualitative and quantitative measures. Reliability and validity of measures is important.

6. Documented

Those responsible for designing and implementing assessment processes within their unit and for interpreting results, are also responsible for reporting annually on a schedule and in a format designated by appropriate VP/Dean. The VP/Dean, or a designee, will be responsible for making assessment summaries available to internal and external audiences as necessary in a manner that does not compromise the integrity of the assessment.

7. Locally Owned

Under the leadership of the relevant VPs, faculty and staff have control and ownership of the assessment process in their respective units. This means that faculty/staff are responsible for designing and implementing assessment processes within their unit and for interpreting results.

8. Current

The assessment process at Utica College, including this document, will be reviewed periodically. See Responsibilities, above.

9. Sustainable

Processes need to be appropriately scaled to enable long-term assessment without imposing undue burdens.

Loci of Assessment Activities

Assessment of academic and co-curricular student learning and institutional functioning takes place at the departmental/program and the institutional level. There are, therefore, six loci of assessment activity with different people responsible for each.

	Academic Student Learning	Co-curricular Student Learning	Institutional Effectiveness
Departmental/Program Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic program faculty 	Staff in department(s) within the Student Affairs and Athletics, Extended Studies, faculty in programs with associated cocurricular clubs	Staff in Department(s) within schools and divisions
Institutional Level	The Faculty, AACC, Academic Standards Committee Provost's Cabinet	Staff in department(s) within the Student Affairs and Athletics, Extended Studies, faculty in programs with associated cocurricular clubs	President Vice Presidents Board of Trustees

Assessment of Student Learning is the process of identifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the College expects students to possess at the end of their college experience and then measuring the progress students make toward those goals. It is primarily a formative process intended for the improvement of teaching and learning. Assessment of this nature is the purview of the faculty, and academic and co-curricular leadership.

Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness starts with the process of identifying outcomes that are designed to address the College's mission, values, and initiatives as stated in the College's Strategic Plan. Assessment requires that progress made toward meeting those outcomes is measured and used in future planning and resource allocation. It is both a formative and summative process.

The original Utica College Institutional Assessment Plan was developed by the Strategic Planning Committee, Recommended to the President by the Faculty Senate (4/02/03), the Administrative Staff Advisory Council (4/08/2003) and the All College Council (4/03/2003). This revision was created in 2012, and reviewed by the President's and Provost's cabinet during a joint cabinets retreat, January 14, 2013.

Appendix 1. Documentation of Assessment Processes

All Vice-Presidents

- Current Annual Institutional Priorities
- Current Utica College Operational Plan

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

- *Academic Assessment Plan*
- *Academic Assessment Coordinating Committee (AACC) Handbook of Policies and Procedures*
- *Chair Handbook*

Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Student Success

- Student Affairs Assessment Plan