I. Definition of Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness refers to how well an institution is achieving its mission and goals. An effective institution is characterized by a clearly defined mission that articulates who it serves, what it aspires to be, and what it values. Likewise, an effective institution has clear goals that are broadly communicated to its stakeholders.

Institutional effectiveness means engaging in ongoing and systematic assessment of programs and services with the goal of continuous institutional improvement. Since student learning is at the heart of an educational mission, meaningful assessment of student learning across the campus is fundamental to institutional effectiveness.

An institution demonstrates its effectiveness when it shows that planning and decision-making are evidence-based and mission focused. In higher education’s current landscape, institutional effectiveness also links to compliance with federal and state regulations and accreditation requirements.

II. Assessment

A. Purpose
Assessment is not an end unto itself. It is a means to an end, intended to gather evidence that informs continuous improvement at all levels of an institution. Effective assessment processes include the regular and systematic collection of reliable evidence that has implications for planning decisions and resource allocations.

B. Guiding Principles
Assessment processes at Utica College are guided by best practices, research and scholarship, and accreditation requirements. The following are the guiding principles of assessment at UC:

- **Assessment is relevant.** It is linked to the College’s educational mission and strategic and operational goals.
- **Assessment is useful.** Assessment results are used to inform planning and budgeting decisions at both the institutional and unit level. Assessment findings are further used to improve processes, procedures, policies, and services.
- **Assessment is realistic and sustainable.** Assessments efforts should be reasonable in terms of the resources available and expectations for providing useful results. If relevant, assessment processes should capitalize on existing information sources, such as Institutional Research surveys, clinical or student teaching evaluations, and licensing or certification examinations.
- **Assessment is non-punitive.** Assessment is a process used to identify where practices are strong and where they should be changed or improved. Effective assessment
depends on reliable results and honest reflection, neither of which should be used in a punitive manner.

- **Assessment is comprehensive.** Meaningful results are derived from using multiple valid methods: direct and indirect, qualitative and quantitative, formative and summative.
- **Assessment is well documented.** Assessment findings should be documented in the College’s assessment management system, TaskStream, on a periodic basis, as outlined in this institutional effectiveness guide. All departments, programs, and services are obliged to systematically collect evidence that shows how well they are achieving their individual mission and goals.

**C. Glossary of Terms**
A glossary of assessment terminology used by Utica College may be found on pages 9-11 of this guide and on the “Assessment at Utica College” website.

**III. Assessment Processes**

**A. Institutional**
Each division is expected to have clearly articulated and measureable annual goals that are congruent with the College’s mission, institutional priorities, and strategic initiatives. Likewise, each division should identify the targets or benchmarks that define success. Where appropriate, the respective standards of each unit’s professional association should inform the targets or benchmarks.

Progress toward divisional goals is assessed semi-annually in connection with the President’s Planning Retreats and results shared with members of the Joint Cabinet. In instances where funding was specifically allocated to support a particular initiative, the responsible beneficiary provides a status report via Google forms reports on how the funds were used and whether or not the intended outcome was achieved.

*All reports should focus on significant findings related to institutional priorities and strategic divisional goals. They should not be a checklist of action items.* Significant findings from department-level assessments that align with institutional priorities should also be shared at retreats to ensure departmental participation in institutional planning. In addition to assessment results, critical information such as demographic patterns, governmental regulations, and economic or labor forecasts may be used to inform planning decisions.

Planning processes should be well-documented in minutes from each retreat, and decisions shared with UC stakeholders at town hall meetings, on the College’s website, and in various other publications and communications.

This process may be amended once the College launches a new strategic plan.

**B. Academic Departments, Co-Curricular Units, and Student Learning**
All academic programs and departments, including Core, are expected to assess student
learning and operational goals on an annual basis. Plans and results should be updated in the College’s assessment management system, TaskStream, by August 15 of each year. Reports will be reviewed on a cyclical basis by the Academic Assessment Coordinating Committee, and feedback shared directly with departmental faculty in face-to-face meetings and by scored rubric.

Chairpersons are expected to meet with their respective school dean in September of each academic year to review any significant assessment findings, discuss concerns or issues related to assessment efforts, and communicate resource needs documented by assessment findings. When appropriate, deans will advocate for academic departments in their school.

The Oversight Committee for Core (OCC), chaired by the Director of Core, administers the student learning assessments for the Core program. Core Leadership Groups, comprised of teaching members of the faculty, plan and conduct the assessments and review the results. The director reports directly to the Provost.

Academic programs and departments are likewise required to complete a 5-year program review. Policies, processes, and procedures related to the 5-year program review may be found in the Academic Assessment Coordinating Committee’s Handbook. Requirements are also outlined on the “Assessment at Utica College” site.

The College, recognizing and valuing the learning that students gain while outside the classroom, maintains that the “co-curriculum is an exceptionally important part of a student’s college experience”: http://www.utica.edu/student/cocurriculargoals.cfm. As such, co-curricular and support units in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Athletics are required to identify student learning goals and systematically assess these goals. Specifically, the following operations are responsible for assessing student learning in addition to operational effectiveness: Athletics, the Office of Student Living and College Engagement, the Counseling Center, Career Services, Campus Safety, Student Conduct and Community Standards, Learning Services, the Office of Student Success, Tutoring, Opportunity Programs, Health Services and Wellness Center, International Education, and Admissions.

Assessment plans and results should be updated in TaskStream by June 30. Reports will be reviewed by the Co-Curricular Assessment Committee.

Indirect assessments of student learning and institutional effectiveness are additionally conducted by the Office of Institutional Research. Such measures include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), and the Student Opinion of Teaching survey. The NSSE and SSI results may be found at https://www.utica.edu/ir/studentsurveys.cfm. Departments are urged to use the findings relevant to their operational and learning goals.
C. Non-Academic Administrative Units
Administrative departments should have clearly articulated operational goals and clearly identified assessment methods. Where appropriate, targets or benchmarks should be informed by the respective standards of each unit’s professional association. Goals must be congruent with the appropriate divisional goals and institutional priorities. Likewise, individual performance goals should align to the department’s goals.

Departmental goals are assessed on a semi-annual basis, specifically in December and May of each academic year, and results are reported to the unit’s vice president. Budget requests and expenditures should align with departmental goals and be well supported by assessment findings or plans.

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee will determine a process for 5-year reviews of administrative units following the institution’s assessment of administrative structures and efficiencies.

IV. Assessment Timeline

In order to facilitate assessment with planning and resource allocations, the College adheres to the following timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May/June</td>
<td>President’s Planning Retreat with the Joint Cabinet:</td>
<td>Department and division heads; Members of the Joint Cabinet; Faculty; President; Financial Affairs; Board of Trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Final report on institutional goals &amp; priorities from fiscal year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Finalize targets &amp; benchmarks for next fiscal year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Departments and Divisional Retreats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Review assessment findings from academic year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative Departments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Assessment results and plans from co-curricular units and administrative departments completed and updated in TaskStream or submitted to respective vice president</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Individual performance goals established</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budget for next fiscal year submitted to and approved by the Board of Trustees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>• Performance reviews</td>
<td>Direct reports &amp; supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>• Annual goal reports from academic departments completed in TaskStream</td>
<td>Academic department chairs and/or assessment coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Responsible Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| September       | • Performance reviews completed  
• Academic departments meet with respective school dean to discuss assessment findings and resource needs  
• AACC begins its review of annual goal reports                                                                                         | Direct reports & supervisors; Academic department chairs and/or assessment coordinators School deans; AACC/Dean for Assessment |
| October         | • 5-Year Program Reviews from academic departments due (October 15)  
• Departments scheduled for 5-Year Reviews in the following academic year meet with the Dean for Academic Assessment, the school dean, and Institutional Research to review requirements  
• Develop budget calendar  
• Plan established for next fiscal year                                                                                                   | Academic department chairs and/or assessment coordinators; Institutional Research; School deans; Joint Cabinet members |
| November        | • Give thanks for good assessment                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                       |
| December/January| President’s Planning Retreat with the Joint Cabinet:  
• 6 month review of current year’s budget(s)  
• Report on progress re institutional goals and priorities                                                                                   | Department and division heads; Members of the Joint Cabinet                           |
| January         | • AACC begins its review of 5-Year Reports                                                                                                                                                              | AACC; Dean for Assessment                                                            |
| February        | • Preliminary draft of 3-year financial forecast submitted to Board of Trustees                                                                                                                                 | Financial Affairs                                                                     |
| March           | • 9 month review of current budget                                                                                                                                                                      | Joint Cabinet                                                                         |

V. Committee Structures and Review Processes

A. Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC)

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee reviews the institution’s assessment processes with specific attention to how effectively units are achieving the College’s mission and goals and how results from the assessment of institutional goals and priorities inform planning and resource allocations. The IEC also facilitates the process by which specific operations, units, or persons report progress on institutional initiatives that have received additional funding. The IEC is additionally responsible for maintaining and monitoring the MSCHE document roadmap and for charting progress on recommendations made during the self-study process. Finally, this committee is responsible for the periodic assessment of institutional assessment processes.

The IEC reports semi-annually to the College President and, at the President’s request, may report to the Board of Trustees.

*Members:* Standing members include the Vice President for Institutional Planning, the Dean for Academic Assessment, and the Associate VP for IT and Institutional Research. Seven additional members serve on a 3-year cycle: 4 from the full-time faculty (one representing each school and one representing online offerings); 1 from a co-curricular unit and 1 from athletics; and 1 member from either advancement/alumni or career services.
B. Academic Assessment Coordinating Committee (AACC)
The Academic Assessment Coordinating Committee is a collegial body that coordinates and assesses the assessment processes for the Division of Academic Affairs. Specifically, the committee reviews annual goal reports and assessment plans from academic departments and facilitates 5-year reviews. The AACC reports semiannually to the Provost and Faculty Senate regarding the state of assessment at Utica College.

Members: Chaired by the Dean for Academic Assessment, the Academic Assessment Coordinating Committee is comprised of 3 faculty members from each school (for a total of 9 faculty) and 1 representative from the College library.

C. Co-Curricular Assessment (Co-CA)
Co-Curricular Assessment is the committee responsible for monitoring and reviewing the assessment processes in co-curricular areas. These areas include units housed under Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Athletics.

Members: Chaired by the Dean of Students, the Co-CA’s membership consists of 2 representatives from Student Affairs, 1 from Academic Affairs, 1 from Student Success, and 1 from Athletics.

VI. Institutional Resources
Utica College systematically collects information related to its effectiveness in achieving its mission, goals, and institutional priorities as well as its compliance with accreditation standards and governmental regulations. The following table identifies the most common information sources at the College. The Associate VP for IT and Institutional Research also compiles a survey calendar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>Responsible Department</th>
<th>Shared With</th>
<th>How Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAB Campus</td>
<td>Student Success</td>
<td>Faculty &amp; staff</td>
<td>Retention &amp; degree-completion, dashboards, predictive modeling, advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Climate Survey</td>
<td>Dean for Diversity</td>
<td>Faculty, staff, students, Cabinet, &amp; Diversity Committee</td>
<td>Planning and programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Source</td>
<td>Responsible Department</td>
<td>Shared With</td>
<td>How Used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Data Set</td>
<td>Institutional Research</td>
<td>Posted on IR website, accessible to anyone with a login</td>
<td>Data requests, external surveys, measure trends over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact Book</td>
<td>Institutional Research</td>
<td>Posted on IR website, accessible to anyone with a login</td>
<td>Data requests, external surveys, measure trends over time, compare peer group data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffalo Noel-Levitz SSI</td>
<td>Institutional Research</td>
<td>Results presented to Cabinet, Posted on IR website, accessible to anyone with a login</td>
<td>Measures importance and satisfaction according to student populations, used for planning and budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSSE</td>
<td>Institutional Research</td>
<td>Results presented to Cabinet, Posted on IR website, accessible to anyone with a login</td>
<td>Measures engagement and learning outcomes, used for planning and budgeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GLOSSARY OF TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH ASSESSMENT

Academic Program – According to NYS Education Department, an academic program is organized around the set of educational requirements necessary to qualify for a registered degree. The curriculum or program includes general education or specialized study in depth in a particular field, or both (NYSED, 2012).

Artifacts – The work produced by students while engaged in a learning experience.

Analysis of Findings – Examination of the data gathered during the assessment cycle, including reflective consideration about what actions, if any, should be taken.

Action Plans – Actions taken to improve the program or assessment process based on the analysis of results; “Closing the loop.”

Assessment – Measures the degree to which goals have been met; provides specific evidence of strengths and areas needing improvement.

Assessment Method – Indicates how an assessment was conducted. Examples include surveys, tracking, focus groups, performance evaluations, rubrics. Also referred to as assessment measure.

Assessment Process – The systematic collection, review, and use of information about student learning, educational programs, student support programs, and college services undertaken to improve teaching/learning and institutional effectiveness.

Assessment Plan – A document which outlines how and when selected outcomes will be assessed.

Assessment Report – An annual document based on the Assessment Plan that presents and explains assessment results and shows how assessment results are being used to improve the program.

Benchmark – A standard or point of reference against which things may be compared or assessed.

Closing the loop – The term used to signify the next step or ongoing steps in the assessment cycle. Also referred to as action plan.

Co-curricular Units – The areas outside the classroom where the College also achieves its educational mission.

Course-embedded Assessments – Direct methods to assess student-learning that are well integrated into and organic to the educational experience.

Course Student Learning Goals (CSLG) – the measurable learning/knowledge/skill expectations for all students completing an academic course, documented in the syllabi and program review.
documents. Direct measures are to be used; indirect measures/results will be used to support the direct measure findings. CSGL are identified by faculty, described in the course syllabus, and it is the faculty of each course who determine what to measure and the tool to use for this faculty-driven process.

Course Operational Goals – focus on the functioning of the course, rather than the learning achieved by the students. Examples include development of new courses, deletion of a course, edits to a course, and course mapping to program goals.

Course Syllabus – A document that lays out the expectations, including the learning goals, for a single course.

Curriculum Map – A matrix representing a program's learning goals and indicating where they are developed in a program and to what extent.

Direct Methods of Assessment – Measures used to document student performance. Examples of direct measures include rubrics for capstone projects, portfolios, papers, and performances.

Document Roadmap – Published by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the document roadmap is a tool where institutions might align specific sources of evidence with accreditation standards. The document roadmap is useful in demonstrating institutional compliance and identifying areas where the institution might need to improve.

5-Year Program Review – Required of academic departments, the 5-year program review is a self-study completed within a 5-year review cycle. The self-study requires departments to examine curriculum, student learning, faculty expertise, enrollment in the major(s) and minor(s), and other areas of relevance to the institution.

Findings – Results (evidence, data and/or information) gathered from assessment.

Formative Assessments – Assessments that occur throughout the learning process that aim to understand and, therefore, improve learning.

Institutional Effectiveness – Institutional effectiveness refers to how well an institution is achieving its mission and goals. An effective institution is characterized by a clearly defined mission that articulates who it serves, what it aspires to be, and what it values. Likewise, an effective institution has clear goals that are broadly communicated to its stakeholders.

Indirect Methods – Measures used to assess students' perceptions of their learning and educational experiences. Examples of indirect measures include surveys, focus groups, and interviews.

Institutional Priorities – In consultation with the Board of Trustees the college President identifies the College’s institutional priorities for the year. All goals are linked directly to the College’s Strategic Plan and are executed at the Divisional level. Independent divisional goals
may also sometimes inform and direct new strategic initiatives or institutional goals through the established strategic planning processes.

**Institutional Student Learning Goals** – The measurable student learning goals that are realized in the complete educational experience, both curricular and co-curricular. At Utica College, the key intellectual skills are the institutional learning goals.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** – Measureable values that indicate the extent to which the institution is achieving its mission and goals.

**Metrics** – Standards of measurement used to assess efficiency, performance, progress, or quality.

**Mission Statement** – A concise statement outlining the purpose of a program, who it serves, and what distinguishes it.

**Program Student Learning Goals (PSLG)** – the measurable learning/knowledge/skill expectations for all students graduating from a particular curriculum/major or students being served by a particular unit.

**Program Operational Goals** – Goals set for and by a program, usually during the 5-year program review process. However operational goals may be set during a review for an external accredits or in the interim between program reviews. Operational goals address the functioning of the program.

**Program Review** – Required self-study process completed by each academic program. It is usually conducted on a five-year rotation, unless external program accreditation cycles require a different review time line.

**Rubric** – Specific sets of criteria that clearly define for both student and teacher what a range of acceptable and unacceptable performance looks like. Criteria define descriptors of ability at each level of performance and assign values to each level.

**Target** – A value that indicates whether or not a goal has been achieved.

**TaskStream** – The software package used to document assessment results and manage assessment processes.

**Validity** – The extent to which an assessment measures what it is supposed to measure and the extent to which inferences and actions made on the basis of test scores are appropriate and accurate.

**Value added** – Evidence that shows the effects educational providers have had on students during their programs of study beyond what would have occurred through natural maturation. A comparison of the knowledge and skills students bring to the educational process with the knowledge and skills they demonstrate upon completion of the educational process.