IV. Assessment in Academic Departments or Programs and Administrative Units

The Chair or Director of each academic department or program and administrative unit (DPU) typically is expected to coordinate the assessment activities within the DPU, ensure that the assessment documents are submitted on time, and serve as a liaison between the DPU and the appropriate Vice President in all assessment matters.

A. The Assessment Plan

Each DPU authors a plan for assessing how its goals are being accomplished. The plan should contain the following components:

1. A set of goals. All members of the DPU should be involved in the definition and selection of goals. Essentially, the goals articulate what it means to be a successful DPU. The goals of academic departments or programs should be directly related to student learning and student success. Administrative unit goals often are related to the specific goals that are articulated in the Strategic Plan of the College. In all cases, the goals must be measurable. All goals should be related to and supportive of the mission of the College.

2. The specific methods that will be used to measure the achievements of each goal. Each method of measurement should include performance standards by which the results will be evaluated. Methods of measurements can be quantitative or qualitative, but must be reliable. Evaluation methods also must be feasible, given current resource levels.

3. A regular schedule for evaluating the achievement of each goal. Although a four-year schedule is typical, DPUs may elect to use shorter schedules that fit their needs more appropriately.

The plan should establish audiences for the assessment results and analysis. Typically, assessment information available for use by these audiences varies according to the provisions made in the plan. The plan should be reviewed and approved by the DPU. An updated four-year (or shorter) plan is submitted in electronic format to the Director of Institutional Research by September 15. It is expected that new faculty and staff will be provided with the updated assessment plan.

B. The Mid-Year Assessment Progress Report

Each DPU authors a progress report that serves two main functions. One, provide an opportunity to revise the assessment plan, i.e., the goals and outcomes that are being evaluated that year. Two, formally communicate any changes or difficulties in assessment between the DPU and the Assessment Committee. In cases when problems or barriers to the assessment process are anticipated, the Chair of the Assessment Committee and the appropriate Vice President will contact the DPU and reach a resolution that will permit ongoing assessment activities. The Mid-Year Assessment Progress Report should contain the following components:

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2 Also see the resources listed in part II above

3 The Athletics and Institutional Research Directors report to the President, hence the President directly supervises assessment in those areas
1. The set of goals that are being evaluated or will be evaluated in the current academic year.
2. The specific methods that are being used or will be used to measure the achievements of each goal in the current academic year.
3. Any anticipated problems or barriers to timely and successful completion of the assessment process in the current academic year.

The Mid-Year Assessment Progress Report is sent in electronic format to the Chair of the Assessment Committee by February 1.

C. The Assessment Implementation Report
Each DPU composes an annual report of its assessment activities, findings, and conclusions. The report should be written in a narrative format and contain the following components:

1. The set of goals that are being evaluated in the current academic year.
2. The specific methods that have been used to measure the achievements of each goal.
3. The results.
4. Analysis of the results. In terms of the performance standards by which the results are being evaluated, were the goals met?
5. A discussion of the results and their implications for future policies. If goals were not met (or met only in part), what were the reasons? In all cases, how do the results from the current year affect plans for the next few years? For academic departments or programs, this discussion can include implementation of new pedagogies, proposals of new courses, modifications of current teaching methods, changes to academic requirements, changes to the advising strategies at the department, and reallocation of current resources. For administrative units, this can include reorganization of priorities, shifting of personnel from one area to another, or reallocation of current resources. It is expected that requests for additional resources will be made elsewhere.

The Assessment Implementation Report is submitted in electronic format to the appropriate Vice President by June 1.

D. Review of the Assessment Implementation Report
The Chair of the Assessment Committee and the appropriate Vice President review each Assessment Implementation Report and compose a joint written response. The review should include specific details about the strengths and shortcomings of each report. The response also should include constructive suggestions for changes in the assessment practices of each DPU. In part, the review should form the basis for discussions within each DPU regarding its assessment practices in the following academic year.

Reviews of the Assessment Implementation are sent to the appropriate Chair or Director by July 15.