Contents:

Introduction
Governance
Budget
Departmental Assessment
General Studies Assessment
Institutional Assessment
Web Site
Climate
Attachments
Introduction:
The past year has been a very eventful one for the assessment program at UNK. This report is the first annual report. The purpose of the report will be to provide an overview of what has been accomplished during the 2004 calendar year. In addition to a listing of accomplishments, areas of continued need and concern will be identified as well.

Governance:

Personnel
The personnel structure within the assessment program has gone through significant changes during 2004. At the beginning of the year, the assessment program was staffed by an interim Director, and an Assessment Coordinator. The ad hoc Faculty Senate Assessment Committee was charged with completing its tasks and developing guidelines for governance by a permanent Assessment Committee that was to be formed after the North Central Association’s accreditation team visit. The Assessment Coordinator’s position was being restructured and advertised in a national search. As part of the restructuring of the position, a Web Site Manager position was created.

The personnel organization and staffing was completed during the time period of the first of April through the month of May. A new Assessment Coordinator, Dr. Jeanne Butler was hired effective April 1st. Ms. Jeanne Cutler was then reassigned from her previous position as Assessment Coordinator to the position of Web Site Manager. Glen Powell was appointed to the position of Faculty Assistant to the Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Student Life (SVC) which included the position of Director of Assessment as part of the position. The Faculty Senate ad hoc Assessment Committee became a standing committee responsible to the SVC after the North Central Association Accreditation visit in April. A graduate assistant was employed to assist Ms. Jeanne Cutler with her position as Coordinator of Academic Publications and duties as Web Site Manager. The graduate assistant, Kim Elliott, assists with web site maintenance and recording of the Assessment Committee minutes as part of her assistantship.

Governance Process
The Assessment Committee had been working on developing a governance plan since November 2003. The proposed plan had been forwarded to the Dean’s Council for input. The SVC, Dr. Galen Hadley, had the opportunity to review it. The proposed plan was reviewed by the Faculty Senate at their May meeting. The proposal was also reviewed by the North Central Association accreditation team member assigned to examine the assessment process at UNK. Revisions from suggestions provided by the various groups were discussed at a special May meeting of the Assessment Committee and then incorporated into the document. The Assessment Committee voted its approval of the plan pending incorporation of the agreed upon changes. A copy of the “University of Nebraska at Kearney Assessment Governance Document” is attached.

The Director began implementation of the governance plan with the provision that revisions may need to be made early in the fall semester pending further suggestions potentially to be provided in the exit report from the accreditation team. The accreditation team’s exit report was received in September, and no additional changes were needed.
The governance plan has been followed since its adoption in May by the Assessment Committee.

The governance plan stipulates that there be student representation on the committee. The Coordinator for Assessment proposed that a separate student committee be utilized in place of having a student representative on the Assessment Committee. The formation of the student committee is in progress. The governance plan will need to be amended to incorporate the student committee into the process once it is more fully developed.

There is provision for a member from the Student Life division to serve on the Assessment Committee. An invitation was issued in September/October, but there was no response at the time. This needs to be followed up more aggressively or the governance plan should be revised.

**Monitoring of Assessment**

An initial process for monitoring assessment of students was developed in April. The monitoring process utilizes the following schedule.

**Spring semester:**
- Audit of assessment tools used across campus to determine what is being used, by whom, and the purpose: A list of the different assessment tools being used with students was developed by conducting an audit of the assessment tools submitted for inclusion in the exhibit room for the North Central Association team’s accreditation visit.
- Evidence of approved assessment plans: Departments/programs are required to have student outcome assessment plans that are approved by the Coordinator and Director of Assessment. The approved plans are posted at the assessment website. The programs without approved plans include: General Studies and the First Year Program although both programs have been conducting assessment and piloting assessment processes although the actual plans have not yet been submitted.
- Audit of types of data collected: This has not been conducted.
- Analyze progress toward meeting assessment strategic plan: Jeanne Cutler conducted an informal review of progress toward meeting the strategic plan in May. The Director of Assessment has appointed an Assessment Committee subcommittee to more formally complete this process. The subcommittee began its work in November.

**Fall semester:**
- Monitor submission of annual assessment reports from departments and respective programs (General Studies, First Year, etc.): Reports were due by October 1st. A majority of the programs submitted reports by the due date. Follow-up contacts were made by the Director after that date. Approximately 80% of the programs had submitted reports by December 1.
- Review quality of assessment plans and reports: The Director of Assessment has appointed an Assessment Committee subcommittee to review assessment reports
to identify exemplars and revise the current reporting format. It began its work in December.

**January:**
- Develop general report on the status of assessment during the previous calendar year.

The monitoring process is expected to change over time. Since most programs have very recent assessment plans, it was decided to concentrate on the quality of the reporting process first. Informal analysis of the reports for the past two years suggests that most departments are submitting data to complete the task rather than interpreting it to benefit the student learning process and program development. Therefore, it was decided to focus on the reporting process as a first step to improve the quality of the assessment process.

A long term concern is to increase the number of departments submitting reports in a timely manner. The number of departments submitting reports has increased from the first year (2002-2003) to this past year (2003-2004). This is a positive sign of progress. However, 80% leaves room for continued improvement.

The primary concern is the development of a General Studies assessment plan. The North Central Association’s accreditation team was not satisfied with the progress in the area of a General Studies Program assessment plan and process. This area of concern will be of primary interest in a follow up focus visit in four years. In response to this concern, the Director of Assessment developed an analysis of tasks to be accomplished and presented it to the General Studies Council’s assessment subcommittee in early September. The subcommittee has developed an outline of the assessment process and is in the process of implementing it.

The Director of the First Year Program and the Director of Assessment agreed to work on developing an assessment plan during the spring semester of 2005. This schedule will permit the Director of the First Year program to finish piloting a writing assessment that was initiated during the fall semester and to review existing data prior to finalizing an assessment plan.

**Establishing Priorities/Initial Efforts**

The starting point for further development of the assessment program after the employment of personnel and reassignment to different positions presented an interesting challenge. A significant number of tasks needed to be identified and then prioritized in regard to the management of the program at UNK. The external reviewer on the North Central Association’s accreditation team clearly identified several concerns regarding the program during the site visit in April. The personnel and the Assessment Committee had several ideas regarding needs to be addressed. The exit report that was received in September specifically identified a number of areas of concern. This section will first summarize what was done to get started with addressing areas of need in regard to the continued development of assessment at UNK in a chronological order. There are also appended documents that provide more specific information. They are: Analyses of
Assessment Topics Addressed in the North Central Accreditation Team Final Report, Agenda of Activities for Assessment Program, and the University of Nebraska at Kearney Assessment Strategic Plan.

The Assessment Director, Coordinator of Assessment, and Website Manager developed a list of potential priority initiatives (see Agenda of Activities for Assessment Program) based on oral feedback during the North Central Association team’s site visit in April. This list of initiatives was organized around the following topics: relevance, sustainability, climate, student involvement, and administrative support. The initiatives were presented to the Assessment Committee in May for their reaction and input. It was then revised by the Director. The Director then contacted each College Dean and arranged to meet with the respective set of College department chairs to seek their input regarding potential initiative priorities for assisting them with continued assessment development. The input from the different visits identified that department chairs and Deans tended to be most concerned with promoting relevance and sustainability through alignment of assessment plans for UNK with assessment requirements for accreditation and Academic Program Review (APR) requirements. This feedback resulted in the APR guidelines being rewritten to further integrate the assessment process with the five year APR cycle. The Director met with the College of Education department chairs to discuss alignment with their respective accreditation agencies. The Coordinator of Assessment worked extensively with departments in the College of Business and Technology to promote alignment in their assessment process with the requirements of their respective accreditation agencies. The UNK annual assessment report filed by the Social Work Program was modified to fit the requirements of its accreditation group. The alignment process will be ongoing with the initial steps being undertaken this past summer and fall.

The issue of climate needs to be addressed. The exit report noted that assessment was negatively viewed by many on campus. Initial steps that were begun during the fall semester included:

- offering faculty development sessions sponsored by the Center of Teaching Excellence on a monthly basis,
- a newsletter on assessment topics that was published every other month,
- obtaining a budget that provides stipends to support assessment development and travel with the development stipends focusing on General Studies assessment development and travel during the spring semester of 2005; future budgets will provide for similar activities across all programs,
- a survey of faculty assessment needs for the purpose of guiding future faculty development efforts by the Center of teaching Excellence,
- redesigning the website to promote its use as a resource,
- obtaining an assessment e-mail account,
- creating an office area for the assessment program personnel in conjunction with the Center of Teaching Excellence, and
- by simply being as responsive as possible when contacted
being proactive and contacting administrators and faculty (an illustrative record of Coordinator of Assessment contacts is attached: Assessment Communications-Fall 2004).

Although a number of steps were initiated during the fall semester, the enhancement of climate will be a long term goal. The final exit report from the North Central Association’s accreditation team specifically mentioned that faculty ownership of assessment needed a great deal of development. Seven of the nine activities listed above were designed to facilitate this and were not in existence previously. Two initiatives being developed in the 2005 spring semester include an honors/recognition lunch to recognize exemplars of effort in the endeavor of assessment and a conference on assessment in April.

A number of initiatives were identified and undertaken to address the need for improved administrative support. This was identified by the Director, Coordinator, and the Website Manager as a priority need in April and was further highlighted in the exit report. A budget was developed for supporting the infrastructure of the assessment program at UNK. It was submitted in October and approved in November. The budget is designed to support faculty assessment efforts and development activities. An office center was created that houses the Director and Coordinator. Previously the Coordinator was located in an office on the opposite side of campus. The Website manager has an office across the hall from the Director and Coordinator. Thus, all personnel are located in the same area. Communication and productivity between the individuals has been enhanced.

A list of specific responsibilities (“Assessment Responsibilities Checklist” is attached) was developed in August in order to clarify individual as well as shared roles. Some of the responsibilities will need to be revised to reflect how the tasks have actually developed over time. The specific responsibilities reflect tasks that the Director, Coordinator, Website Manager, and the Assessment Committee believed needed to be undertaken in order to accomplish the goals of the program. Most of the tasks have been accomplished or are in progress. However, some key tasks have not been initiated yet. The major tasks that need to be accomplished include data management, student involvement, coordinating assessment efforts with other areas (such as Student Life), and becoming involved with strategic planning efforts in order to facilitate future assessment initiatives. These will need to be reviewed, initiated, or revised to reflect future needs.

In response to the preliminary exit report from the site visit team, an initial analysis of priority tasks was undertaken by the Director. Two primary areas of concern addressed by the team was the need to further develop General Studies Program assessment and to develop the administrative infrastructure to support assessment. The Director identified these two areas as being the most important priorities in addressing assessment needs for UNK. The analysis was shared with the General Studies Director and the General Studies assessment subcommittee in late August. They used the suggestions to initiate their work on assessment for the year. The Director then completed the analysis of assessment needs when the final report was actually received in September (see Analyses of Assessment Topics Addressed in the North Central Accreditation Team Final Report). The analysis was shared with the Assessment Committee and then with appropriate groups. The intent
of it was to accelerate the discussion process for reacting to the report and undertaking actions to respond to suggested actions by the site visit team. The sharing process is still in progress.

**Budget:**
A budget proposal was developed in response to the North Central exit report recommendation regarding the need to have a budget to support assessment development efforts. The budget that was created provided for providing office supplies, basic equipment, faculty development stipends, and travel support. The first major expenditures for faculty support will be during the spring semester of 2005. Approximately $18,000 will be expended to support faculty work on General Studies Program assessments and $3,000 to send a faculty team to a conference on General Education Program assessment issues in February.

**Departmental and Program Assessment:**
The primary efforts of the Faculty Senate ad hoc Assessment Committee had focused on the development of assessment plans that complied with guidelines established by the committee to meet North Central Association accreditation criteria. Their work in this regard was largely completed by the end of the 2003 calendar year. Departments and programs that had assessment plans had begun their assessment efforts. These efforts resulted in assessment reports being submitted in the fall semester of 2003. However, many departments did not turn in reports by the expected due dates. The work of collecting reports continued into 2004. Also, a few programs had not completed assessment plans and this work continued into 2004 as well.

The goal of the Director of Assessment was to have all assessment plans completed and approved by April. In this regard, the assessment for the undergraduate program in the Department of Art and Art History was completed as well as the assessment plan for the Honors Program. The only plan not completed was that for the graduate program in the Department of Art and Art History. The development of that assessment plan was postponed until the department made a decision whether to revise or eliminate the program. The department decided to revise the program. This work was undertaken during the fall semester and an assessment plan was developed at the same time. The approval process for the revised program was in progress by the end of the semester.

Fifty-four programs are expected to assess academic student outcomes. Of these, 78% had submitted reports containing student assessment data for 2002-03 by April of 2004. The departments that did not submit data-based reports had either not developed a plan, did not have students available, or had not collected data. The departmental assessment reports are to be submitted annually unless stated in their assessment plan. The due date for the reports is October 1st of the year following data collection. Thus, the reports submitted on October 1, 2004 are for the 2003-04 academic year. The return rate was 80% when counting late reports submitted through December 1st. Those not submitting reports either did not have students available for assessment (graduate), were not scheduled to assess their students, were revising their assessment plans, or experienced other difficulties. On the positive side, it should be noted that the return rate increased
and the reports came in much earlier and mostly on time when compared to 2002-03. However, continued monitoring and support is needed in order to increase the return rate.

The quality of the reports is an area of focus for the Coordinator, Director, and Assessment Committee. One of the areas of concern mentioned by the accreditation exit report was the need to utilize assessment data to improve student learning and as a guide for program development decisions. An informal analysis of the reports submitted during the past two years suggests that most departments are not yet utilizing the data to enhance program development. The Coordinator and a subcommittee have begun to examine the reporting criteria to identify exemplars and recommend changes in reporting content to better focus upon student learning and program development in the annual assessment reports. This work was initiated in November of 2004 and will be completed during the spring of 2005.

**General Studies Assessment:**
The Director of the General Studies Program and the assessment subcommittee of the General Studies Council had developed a strategy for the initial assessment of the General Studies Program. Essentially, they identified the areas of writing and mathematics as initial areas of assessment because specific coursework is required for all students. In addition to these areas of focus, they worked with the Psychology and Chemistry Departments. Their intent was to gather some initial data and then develop a longer term plan for assessing the entire General Studies curriculum.

The data collection was primarily conducted during the spring semester. Writing samples were collected from several sections of the English composition courses and scored by a team of graduate assistants. The Department of Mathematics developed assessment tools for several of their courses and administered and scored the protocols. The Chemistry and Psychology Departments administered standardized tests. The data was being collected and initially interpreted at the time of the North Central Association’s site team visit.

During the month of June, the Director of Assessment and Director of General Studies reviewed the assessment strategy previously adopted by the General Studies Council to determine changes that might be made. In August, when UNK was notified that the area of General Studies assessment would be a focal point of a follow-up visit in four years, the Director of Assessment met with the Coordinator of Assessment and the General Studies Director to determine ways to accelerate the assessment process. As a response to that meeting, the Director of Assessment developed a set of ideas for accelerating the process. These were shared with the General Studies assessment subcommittee. A more detailed listing of ideas is presented in the appended document “Analyses of Assessment Topics” document that was mentioned previously. Highlights include: the Director of the General Studies Program and the Coordinator of Assessment co-chairing the assessment subcommittee, a specific assessment plan to be developed and provided to the Council by the October meeting, dissemination of the plan, initiation of the plan during the remainder of 2004 and continuing into 2005 with a goal of having the basic elements developed by May of 2005, and the first assessment cycle to be completed prior to the next General Studies APR in 1 ½-2 years. The co-chairs of the subcommittee and the
committee members developed a 10 point assessment plan (see Revised Plan for General Studies Assessment) and presented it to the General Studies Council at its October meeting. The General Studies Director presented it in the Assessment Newsletter and disseminated it to the Council of Chairs and the Faculty Senate. The Director of Assessment shared the plan with each of the Deans.

A budget request was submitted by the Director of Assessment to assist the General Studies Council’s assessment plan. Three elements of budgetary support are being provided with the budget. Approximately $18,000 was allocated for stipend support for individual department level development of assessments for General Studies courses, $3,000 for travel to a conference on General Education assessment, $5,000 toward coverage of costs for a standardized test of general education objectives and specific departmental requests.

The Director of the General Studies Program and the Coordinator of Assessment have worked with the subcommittee to move the assessment process forward. By the end of December, they had piloted a survey for individual course analysis, begun to meet with department chairs on an individual basis to explain the required assessment process for departments and the stipend awards, identified a standardized test for piloting in the spring, identified a group of faculty to attend the General Education Assessment conference. It is expected that each participating department will have developed their respective assessments by May of 2005 and that the other elements of the assessment plan will be finalized and in place by that date as well.

**Institutional Assessment:**
Three institutional assessments were administered during 2004. These included the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the 2004 CSHE Faculty Survey, and the Registrar’s Exit Questionnaire of graduating students.

The NSSE has been given to randomly selected students at the freshmen and senior levels in 2002, 2003, and 2004. Currently, the data is not utilized by UNK for planning or specific evaluative purposes to determine program effectiveness. The Director of Assessment developed a longitudinal table and linked the tables to the NSSE Profiles included in the NSSE reports. This work was completed in December. The data will be disseminated to various constituencies across the campus in the spring of 2005. The 2003 data was disseminated during the spring semester of 2004 through such methods as a panel discussion and distribution of the mean comparative reports to the Faculty Senate, Deans, and Department Chairs, and specific groups on campus. A link on the web site was also developed and data summaries for 2002, 2003, and 2004 were posted in December. The NSSE was not contracted to be administered in 2005. The results are currently not being used for planning and evaluation by the institution. The data for the past three years presents a very consistent pattern of baseline data and trends. A cycle was developed for future administrations and posted on the UNK Assessment web site (http://aaunk.unk.edu/asmt/about/AsmtCycle.asp).
The CSHE Faculty Survey was contracted with Penn State University for administration in February and March. The purpose of the survey was to identify faculty perceptions regarding first year education and experiences. The data from the faculty surveys was also analyzed in conjunction with the student responses on the NSSE by the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Penn State. The results of the analyses were received in November. The results will be disseminated in the spring of 2005.

The Registrar’s Office administers their survey each semester to graduating students. The Assessment Web Site has a link for this survey data. However, it had not been updated in several years. The data was obtained and the site was updated in November and December.

There are three major considerations for institutional assessment that need to be considered in the near future. The most important consideration being that the data being obtained may be very useful, but it is not linked to any type of institutional goals or evaluation. Until it is, the utility of the data will be rather minimal. The second is that institutional goals need to be defined in a manner that lend to their evaluation and then institutional assessments need to be identified for measuring them. The last consideration is that the division of Student Life administers a number of assessment measures. These need to be linked to those utilized in the academic area to form a more complete picture regarding students.

**Web Site:**
Jeanne Cutler, the Web Site Manager, has engaged in an extensive revision of the Assessment Web Site (http://aaunk.unk.edu/asmt/). She began this work in May and completed it in December. The web page listing the academic programs with assessment plans was revised to clarify the distinction between undergraduate and graduate programs. A separate page for listing graduate programs was also created. Web pages for the NSSE data that has been collected since 2002 have been created. The existing web pages for other institutional data have been updated. Jeanne Cutler contacted a number of the Student Life offices and obtained data previously not posted and developed web pages for those programs. The information and guidelines for the Academic Program Review process provided on web pages linked to this site. A number of assessment resources are now available through links that she has created. The Assessment newsletter now has a web link here as well. The web site has been a central campus assessment information and data source. The changes at the web site will further enhance its function and role on campus. The primary challenge ahead is promoting awareness of its new features.

**Climate:**
A long-term priority for the continued development of the use of assessment at UNK is the improvement of the campus climate in regard to assessment. This was noted by the accreditation site team in their final report. The administration and faculty on campus now recognize that assessment is a required process for accreditation that is not going to disappear. That represents a change because many felt that completing an assessment plan and conducting an assessment cycle would be enough. The focus review visit from
North Central in four years ended that speculation. However, if assessment is to be viewed as more than a hoop to hop through there needs to be continued development for faculty and administration. Jeanne Butler in her dual positions of Coordinator of Assessment and Director for the Center of Teaching Excellence is taking the primary leadership role in this endeavor. A number of initiatives were started (as mentioned previously) between August and December. Highlights of these initiatives include the newsletter, monthly staff development activities sponsored by the Center of Teaching Excellence (see Assessment Training Fall 2004), a faculty development needs survey, stipends, and travel support. A major effort was expended in trying to communicate with faculty and administrators by the Coordinator and the Director. Attached (see Assessment Communications-Fall 2004) is a listing of the communications record of the Coordinator of Assessment. Jeanne Butler’s record exemplifies a major effort to improve climate through communication.

Another track for enhancing climate has been to work with faculty and administrators to enhance the alignment of assessment efforts with the Academic program review process and with accreditation efforts for specific programs. Both the Director and Coordinator of Assessment have worked on this area since last May. The Director met with each Dean and their respective college department chairs to explore the concept of alignment during the time period between May-August. The Coordinator has followed up the initial meetings on the topic with those most interested in working on alignment and accreditation. Her most extensive work has been with the College of Business and Technology. The Director revised the guidelines on assessment within the Academic Program Review manual at the request of Dr. Ken Nikels who supervises the APR process. The revision of the guidelines for APR reports and work on realignment of assessment to meet specific accreditation requirements should simplify some of the assessment work and promote its meaningfulness for departments.

Future challenges include maintaining faculty development initiatives that were begun. Expansion of participation in the newsletter is another challenge. The promotion of the concept that assessment data should be reviewed and interpreted objectively is a challenge that needs to be addressed over time. Promoting the spirit of teamwork and overcoming “turf” protection is an issue that needs to be addressed as well. A priority issue is the incorporation of assessment as a process to assist management and the meeting of the goals of the University needs to be addressed. Now, assessment is an “add-on” and not viewed as an integral part of effective management. When this is addressed, much of the rest will more easily be addressed.

Summary:
This report is the first of an annual series of reports that will be developed. It in essence is a continuation of the narrative originally developed for the North Central Association self-study that was completed at this time last year. During the ensuing period these highlights have been accomplished:

- Creation of an administrative infrastructure to support assessment
- Transition of the Assessment Committee from an ad hoc to a permanent committee
• Employment of staff to support the administrative infrastructure and promote enhancement of assessment at UNK
• Initiatives to promote alignment with the APR and accreditation processes
• Initiatives to enhance climate including: newsletter, faculty development
• A budget that supports faculty development in assessment
• The revision of the web site to expand its utility
• Assisting the General Studies Council with the acceleration of assessment of the program

There are a number of challenges that need to be addressed. These include:
• Maintaining the present assessment process for departments and programs
• Completing the development of the assessment process of the General Studies Program
• Instituting a continuous cycle for assessment of the General Studies Program
• Building a linkage between the Academic Affairs division and the Student Life division to share assessment and data utilization
• Involving students in a more meaningful manner
• Developing a data base for more effective data management
• Promoting the utilization of the assessment process within the strategic planning efforts of UNK

Attachments
1. Assessment Program at UNK
2. Agenda of Activities for Assessment Program
3. Assessment Training Fall 2004
4. Assessment Communications-Fall 2004
5. Analyses of Assessment Topics Addressed in the North Central Accreditation Team Final Report
6. Revised Plan for General Studies Assessment
Attachment 1

Assessment Program at UNK
Implemented 10/01/04

Introduction:
Assessment of student outcomes has become a major dimension in the “accountability movement” and the accreditation process. Whether an institution is accredited by a regional accrediting agency such as the North Central Association, a professional accrediting agency like the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education or a subject specific accreditation at the departmental level, the systematic measurement and analysis of student outcomes over a prolonged period of time is a common theme in the accreditation process. Implementation of effective assessment procedures is a dynamic process and not a product.

Assessment of student outcomes should be viewed as a formative process that enables faculty and staff to use results to focus on enhancement of teaching and improved student performance on identified outcomes. With the preceding statements in mind, the following description of the Assessment Program at UNK reflects the need for continuous development and utilization of assessment of student outcomes in a systematic and continuous manner. Faculty ownership of the assessment process is tantamount to successful implementation and utilization of assessment at UNK.

Goals:
The primary goals of the assessment program are to
• implement a strategic assessment plan
• establish guidelines for the assessment and enhancement of student outcomes (knowledge, skills, values, preparation for career/advanced degrees, etc.).
• assist colleges, departments, or other units with
  o assessment planning,
  o implementation,
  o evaluation of data,
  o revision of assessment plans or tools,
  o application to strategic planning or educational change
• disseminate data obtained from assessment
• conduct/assist assessment initiatives that address institutional questions or issues that impact students
• conduct an annual review and analysis of assessment planning and implementation by academic programs
• report on the progress of University programs in the implementation and utilization of assessment
• analyze data trends across programs in order to identify potential areas of faculty or program development needs

Personnel Responsibilities
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Life

The SVCAASL has the responsibility for oversight of assessment at UNK. This includes the development of a strategic assessment plan and the supervision of the work of the Director of Assessment and the Assessment Committee. The data collected from assessment will be used in strategic planning and resource allocation to improve instruction and programs. Annual reviews of assessment developed by the Assessment Committee will be used to provide direction for the strategic assessment plan.

Deans

The Deans of the colleges, or units, have responsibility for oversight of assessment within their respective area of responsibility. The data collected from assessment will be used in College strategic planning and resource allocation to improve instruction and programs. The Deans will use the annual reviews of assessment developed by the Assessment Committee to provide feedback to departments within the college regarding the status of their respective assessment plans.

Chairs/Directors

The chairs, or directors, of programs have responsibility for oversight of assessment within their respective area as well as being responsible for its utilization in planning initiatives. Data collected and analyzed during the cycle between APRs will be included in the APR Self Study.

Assessment of interdisciplinary programs will be the shared responsibility of the program director and department chairs.

Faculty/Staff

The faculty and staff members of each program have responsibility for interpreting the guidelines for assessment identified by the Assessment Committee. Faculty will develop and implement an assessment plan for evaluating student outcomes at the program level. The faculty and staff members have the responsibility for analyzing and interpreting the assessment data in order to make decisions regarding instructional or program change.

Assessment Committee

The Assessment Committee is responsible for providing guidance and oversight in meeting the goals of the assessment program at UNK. In order to accomplish those goals, the Committee will be responsible for

- establishing the parameters of academic assessment which incorporate principles of “best practice”.
- identifying and defining criteria from external sources, such as the North Central Association and/or other accrediting agencies, for the consistent
  - evaluation of assessment plans,
  - implementation of assessment plans,
  - revision of assessment plans,
  - interpretation and utilization of assessment data to facilitate decision making at all levels.
- developing a cycle for auditing the assessment process
• producing an annual report on the status of program assessment for dissemination to:
  o Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Student Life
  o Deans
  o Faculty Senate
  o Departments
  o UNK Assessment Web Site
• submitting minutes of meetings to the Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Student Life, Deans, and the Faculty Senate
• identifying major trends in student performance from local and national assessments
• identifying methods for the consistent dissemination of data to appropriate groups
• serving on APR teams to analyze effectiveness of use of assessment and data within the APR Self Study
• identifying topics for faculty development (workshops, newsletters, panel discussions) in assessment and data utilization
• developing a plan for systematic faculty development in assessment and data utilization
• articulating processes for aligning assessment plans across different accreditation requirements and the APR process
• serving as a liaison to respective constituencies

**Director of Assessment**
The Director of Assessment will be responsible for
• chairing the Assessment Committee and implementing the assessment guidelines and directives of the committee
• working with the SVCAASL to develop and implement a strategic assessment plan
• presenting the annual reports of assessment to the SVCAASL, Deans, Faculty Senate, and Departments
• assisting the SVCAASL and Deans with assessment planning and implementation
• including Deans in the communication loop when working with departments
• assisting departments with assessment
• serving on the Strategic Planning Council to ensure assessment data is disseminated to the group
• disseminating assessment data to appropriate groups

**Coordinator of Assessment**
The Coordinator of Assessment will be responsible for
• assisting departments with assessment plans
• assisting with the development of the department annual reports
• interpreting data
• assisting with the development of annual reports on assessment
• faculty development activities as defined by the Committee
Web Site Manager
The Web Site Manager will be responsible for developing and maintaining the web site for assessment.

Committee Membership
Faculty and Student
- two faculty representatives from each undergraduate College
- one faculty representative of the Graduate College
- one faculty representative of the C.T. Ryan Library
- one representative of the Student Government
- one representative from Student Life
- one representative from the Faculty Senate (who may also be one of the other representatives)

Length of terms- Rotating 3 year terms (replace 1/3 of membership each year)
Meeting Date: 2nd Thursday of each month
Meeting Time: 3:30 p.m.
Attendance: replacement of committee member after 3 absences per academic year
Required: Read Assessment Essentials (by Palomba and Banta) or other text selected by the Committee

Administrative
- Director of Assessment (committee chair)
- Coordinator of Assessment
- Web Site Manager
- Director of General Studies (or representative from GSC Assessment Committee)

Membership Total:
- Faculty 12-13
- Student 1
- Administrative 4

Faculty and student members will be selected by the Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Student Life after consultation with appropriate constituencies.

Voting: All members of the committee shall have voting privileges.
Attachment 2

Agenda of Activities for Assessment Program
06/07/04
by Glen Powell & Jeanne Butler

Points to remember:
- Remember strengths: academic program assessment is underway at the department and program levels; guidelines for assessment planning and reporting are in place; a proposal for the governance of assessment has been developed and is being disseminated for input; a strategic assessment plan was initiated in 2001 and a number of its elements have been accomplished; General Studies assessment has begun; a staff has been appointed to continue the progress made in assessment on campus
- The focus of assessment is on improvement of student learning
- Assessment information should be used to assist the decision making process
- Don't panic; maintain a focus on development and implementation of the assessment process as a long-term goal and not as a product for a four year focused review by an accreditation monitoring team
- Effective assessment programs require sustained faculty development with appropriate resource commitments
- Sustainability and relevance are the major themes that should permeate the assessment program and processes being implemented

Relevance
Guiding questions:
1. Does the assessment process in place provide data that is useful for the department or program by answering questions they need to have answered?
   a. Does the data address questions about students regarding program objectives?
   b. Does the data help faculty identify strengths and needs for further development?
   c. Can the reporting process be more simplified, yet document how assessment information is being used as explicitly as possible?

Initiatives:
- Meet with individual colleges and departments to discuss whether current assessment plans, processes/instruments provide data they need.
- Assist departments with identifying how assessment will help achieve goals such as program improvement, seeking additional funding, meeting the requirements of the APR process, and accreditation process
- Assist departments with aligning assessment schedule to calendar for APR and accreditation (if applicable) processes
- Eliminate duplication of effort or conflicting effort
**Sustainability:**
Guiding questions:
1. Is a process in place that makes data collection, analysis and reporting efficient and replicable across the university?
   a. Are standardized tests used where possible or logical to do so?
   b. Is the assessment planning and reporting process flexible enough to incorporate needed changes?
   c. Is the assessment and reporting process that has been established efficient and user friendly?
   d. Is a schedule for assessment developed that is realistic and practical to complete across a period of time that meets APR and/or accreditation requirements?
   e. Is a strategy for efficient and effective assessment of General Studies program objectives in place and aligned with departmental assessment schedules and plans?
   f. Does the assessment process accommodate programs that have very few students graduating at a specific point in time?

**Initiatives:**
- Streamline or simplify the collection, analysis and reporting process where necessary
- Align assessment schedules with APR and accreditation schedules
- Ask individuals and departments for ideas on making the process easier
- Identify standardized instruments or set up a uniform set of instruments where possible
- Assist the General Studies Assessment Committee with the development of a strategic plan for assessment that is aligned with departmental assessment schedules or plans
- Develop modified assessment schedules for programs with limited enrollment to facilitate data collection (i.e., embed assessment so that juniors and seniors take it together every other year when enrolled in a course for majors)

**Climate**
Guiding Questions:
1. Do departments and individuals recognize the value of assessment and rely on assessment data to help them make decisions to reach their goals?
   a. Do faculty members participate in CTE events on assessment?
   b. Do departments designate an individual or committee devoted to assessment?
   c. Do departments identify innovative ways of assessing student outcomes and implementing changes based on that data?
   d. Are faculty members aware of assessment data collected on campus?
   e. Are faculty members using assessment results to initiate changes in instruction or program?
f. Are departments using assessment results to justify requests for resource allocations?
g. Are departments reporting (documenting) changes that enhance program objectives based on assessment data?

Initiatives:
- Develop and administer a survey on the current assessment climate to collect baseline data
- Administer survey on assessment climate in 2 and 4 years to demonstrate improvement in the climate and buy-in for assessment
- CTE provide training on assessment topics identified by faculty
- Provide mini-grants from the Assessment Program for departments or individuals who want to work on assessment projects
- Provide faculty grants to attend assessment conferences and then share knowledge with the rest of the faculty through CTE seminars/workshops
- Encourage faculty and students to pursue research on assessment
- Develop a website (or integrate into existing site) to highlight assessment issues, recognize faculty and departments who are successfully using assessment for program improvement, provide information on topics, conferences, training on assessment, and document progress in use of assessment at UNK
- Initiate a newsletter focusing on the topic of assessment
- Assist departments with incorporating assessment results within the APR process
- Redesign the existing Assessment web site to provide more information about assessment at UNK
- Provide mini-grants for faculty to work on needs identified through assessment

Students
Guiding questions:
1. Do students understand the purpose for assessment as an institutional process for improving instruction?
2. How can we, as an institution, involve students in the examination and analysis of assessment data that describes them (NSSE)?

Initiatives
- Complete the development of a brochure for students that was initially undertaken by Liz Peck and Jeanne Cutler
- Include students in the examination and analysis of data from the NSSE
- Encourage faculty members to conduct research in the area of assessment and include students as researchers with the goal of presenting at NCUR and Student Research Day
- Involve Graduate Assistants in the process of data collection and analysis at the college or department levels
Administrative Support
Guiding questions:
1. Is a budget established to support on-going faculty development activities?
2. Is a budget established to support the development of Assessment Committee members, the Director, Coordinator, and Web Site Manager?
3. Is computer hardware and software available to facilitate data collection, analysis, and storage?
4. Are assessment initiatives that utilize commercially produced norm reference assessment tools coordinated in order to most efficiently use existing funds and obtain useful information?
5. Does the department mission statement reflect the assessment mission statements?

Initiatives:
• -Establish a budget that provides for mini-grants to support faculty work on assessment that improves the department’s assessment procedures or the instruction of specific faculty members
• -Establish a budget that supports sending selected faculty members, Deans, or Department Chairs to conferences on the topic of assessment with the purpose of sharing information obtained within the respective college
• -Establish a budget for sending members of the Assessment Committee, the Director, Coordinator, and Web Site Manager to conferences on assessment that assists with meeting North Central Association accreditation requirements
• -Establish a budget for purchasing, or developing, software and hardware that facilitates efficient data collection and analysis
• -Establish a centralized budget for purchasing commercially produced assessment instruments for departments, General Studies, and campus-wide assessment (i.e., NSSE) efforts
• -Coordinate assessment efforts (if possible) being undertaken by separate units (Colleges or programs) in order to promote efficiency
• -Establish a rotating schedule of assessments like the NSSE and other campus-wide assessments
• -Include the effective use of assessment results to enhance programs as one of the criteria for identification of a priority program
• -Revise the APR guidelines for the departmental mission statement to also include the assessment mission statement
• -Develop an operating budget for basic equipment and supplies for the program

Budget Ideas
Faculty Support:
Stipends:
Assessment Development/Working with results
$10,000 to be awarded to individual faculty members or departmental teams to develop (or revise) innovative assessments for specific courses or programs with
the maximum individual stipend of $500. The mini-grant could be used to work ideas for addressing areas of identified need.

$5,000 to be awarded to assessment teams for the development of General Studies assessment materials with a maximum individual stipend of $500

**Conferences**
$15,000 to pay for expenses for travel to selected conferences that focus on assessment with the funds to be used to either support representatives from individual departments or College teams

$10,000 to pay for expenses of Assessment Committee members for travel to conferences that focus on assessment for North Central Association accreditation efforts

**Center for Teaching Excellence**
The Director for the Center and the Advisory Committee could allocate a percentage of the budget for supporting faculty development efforts in assessment training and faculty development needs identified as a result of assessment

**Director/Coordinator/Web Site Manager Support:**

**Conferences**
$8,000 to pay for attending conferences on assessment as well as conferences focusing on North Central Association accreditation

**Operating**
Funds are needed for basic expenses such as paper, shared copying expenses, phones, computer and software upgrades for web site and data collection. Currently, the person who is the Assessment Web Site Manager is also the Director of Academic Publications. A new computer is required every two years in order to keep up with the workload for the academic publications area as well as the current assessment web site.

**Assessment Support**

**Graduate Assistants**
$6,250 for a Graduate Assistant to assist the General Studies Director with assessment and data analysis

$2,000 annually to employ Graduate Assistants to administer and/or score departmental or General Studies assessments (for large numbers of students) so that faculty do not have to do the work

**Assessments**
An annual budget for administering commercially produced norm reference assessments with a potential calendar like that proposed below
04-05 General Studies for departments that have access to specific subject assessments ($5,500)
- 05-06 program specific norm reference assessments ($5,500)
- 06-07 NSSE ($5,200+)
- 07-08 General Studies

The NSSE does not need to be administered every year. A schedule of every three years could be used. Thus, a potential budget could be established that provides for norm reference assessment that avoids duplication of effort in any single year. The First Year Program administers the CESQ at an annual cost of $4,800 to the program. Management of its administration could be integrated into the budget that is proposed by altering the schedule or by budget reallocation.

The commercially produced assessments utilized in the Student Life division could be budgeted and scheduled the same way as the proposal described above.
Attachment 3

Assessment Training Fall 2004

8/17/2004 Administrative Retreat--Presentation on Assessment for 2004-2005
9/27/2004 NCA Assessment requirements and UNK Assessment Plans
10/27/2004 Assessment Panel Discussion--Using Standardized Tests
12/2/2004 Opinion Online Survey Training for Assessment Data Collection
### Assessment Communications—Fall Semester 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/16/2004</td>
<td>Glen Powell</td>
<td>Discuss initial Assessment activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/17/2004</td>
<td>Admin Retreat (25)</td>
<td>Present assessment goals/activities for UNK for the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/18/2004</td>
<td>B&amp;T chairs</td>
<td>Discuss Assessment activities for B&amp;T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FAH chairs</td>
<td>Discuss Assessment activities for FAH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/19/2004</td>
<td>New faculty</td>
<td>Discuss role of assessment related to faculty responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GSC committee</td>
<td>Discuss GSC assessment development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/27/2004</td>
<td>VCAA Murray</td>
<td>Discuss expectations as coordinator of assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glen Powell, R. Miller</td>
<td>Assessment issues for NSS and Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/30/2004</td>
<td>GSC Assmt. Comm.</td>
<td>Discuss GSC assessment development responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/31/2004</td>
<td>Kaye Payne</td>
<td>Alumni survey for B&amp;T assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/31/2004</td>
<td>Women study comm</td>
<td>Discussed assessment requirements for WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/8/2004</td>
<td>Bill Wozniak</td>
<td>GS assessment requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glen &amp; Jeanne</td>
<td>Assessment goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Hadley, E. Scantling</td>
<td>Assessment for COE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/9/2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>Joan Blaukamp Political Science assessment report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physics assessment requirements and report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assmt. Committee</td>
<td>Discuss goals for assessment for the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/13/2004</td>
<td>GS Assmt Comm.</td>
<td>Assessment activities for GS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/15/2004</td>
<td>Econ. Faculty</td>
<td>Assessment report/requirements for Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/17/2004</td>
<td>S. Lebsack</td>
<td>Assessment report/requirements for Mgt./Mkting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment report/requirements for Health Science programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/21/2004</td>
<td>P. Abell</td>
<td>Assessment report/requirements for Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. Hertner</td>
<td>Assessment report/requirements for Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/23/2004</td>
<td>Physics faculty</td>
<td>Strategic planning for assessment and APR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/28/2004</td>
<td>Geography faculty</td>
<td>Assessment requirements/plans for Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30/2004</td>
<td>Ron Crocker</td>
<td>Assessment requirements for Music Dept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B&amp;T Accreditation</td>
<td>Met with accreditation team members to discuss assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/4/2004</td>
<td>Gloria Vavricka</td>
<td>Distance Educ. Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/5/2004</td>
<td>Keith Terry</td>
<td>Communication assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/6/2004</td>
<td>V. Boika &amp; Glen</td>
<td>Discuss assessment w/visiting Dean from Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B&amp;T chairs</td>
<td>Discussed assessment activities for accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8/2004</td>
<td>J. Mena-Werth</td>
<td>Assessment report for Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11/2004</td>
<td>V. Cisler, R. Crocker</td>
<td>Discuss Music assessment report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/14/2004</td>
<td>Assmt. Committee</td>
<td>Discuss assessment for 2004-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22/2004</td>
<td>GS Assmt Comm.</td>
<td>Discuss assessment activites/plan for GS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25/2004</td>
<td>GS Assmt Comm.</td>
<td>Discuss assessment activites/plan for GS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/9/2004</td>
<td>Gary Davis</td>
<td>Discuss assessment for the honors program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15/2004</td>
<td>Carol Lilly</td>
<td>Women’s studies assessment report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/16/2004</td>
<td>Geography faculty</td>
<td>GS assessment requirements for Geology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/17/2004</td>
<td>Gail Zeller</td>
<td>Assessment for Student services providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/18/2004</td>
<td>Theresa Wadkins</td>
<td>analysis of Assessment data from survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Powell, B. Wozniak</td>
<td>GS assessment activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/22/2004</td>
<td>Council of Chairs</td>
<td>Presentation of GS assessment requirements for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/6-12/10</td>
<td>GS courses</td>
<td>GS indirect measure survey data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/10/2004</td>
<td>Joe Carlson</td>
<td>GS assessment in Criminal Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/14/2004</td>
<td>Valerie Cisler</td>
<td>GS assessment in Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/15/2004</td>
<td>Deb Bridges</td>
<td>GS assessment in Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/16/2004</td>
<td>Paul Bishop</td>
<td>GS Assessment in HPERLS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyses of Assessment Topics Addressed in the North Central Accreditation Team Final Report

By Glen Powell
Director of Assessment
Date: 11/12/04

The final report developed by the North Central Association visiting accreditation team was received in early October. I have been engaged in identifying and analyzing the topic areas and the concerns expressed regarding assessment at UNK. The review and analysis that is presented reflects my analysis of their findings and recommendations regarding the Assessment Program at UNK. This analysis was conducted by comparing their findings with our records in comparison to the performance indicators in the 1997 edition of the Handbook of Accreditation and the 2002 Addendum to the Handbook of Accreditation (2nd ed) in order to determine the situational context against which the evaluation and recommendations were made. This analysis and the subsequent recommendations are meant to facilitate planning that addresses their concerns. The accreditation team recommended that a follow-up visit be conducted in 2007-08 with the specific purpose of monitoring our progress with implementing student assessment of academic achievement. This is a working document that is being shared with the intent of facilitating discussion and planning and is not a “finished” product.

General Studies Assessment Analysis:
The NCA Final Exit report indicated that the focus of the 2007-08 Focus visit will be to monitor assessment of student academic achievement (page 15 of the Assurance Section). The General Studies program was cited as a specific area of interest and concern by the team in other sections of the report. Specific comments are as follows:
Page 15: “There is a lack of faculty ownership for the assessment of General Studies, and the themes of cultural diversity and intensive writing which are graduation requirements at the university.”
Page 19: “Assessment in the General Studies program had not been clearly defined at the time of the visit. The assessment responsibilities of faculty teaching General Studies course were still being negotiated and clarified.”
Page 19: “Assessment for the cultural diversity and writing intensive themes of the undergraduate experience have not been established at this point.”
Page 19: “At the time of the focused visit,”….. “the campus should be able to demonstrate that student learning outcomes are being assessed” ……….. “including General Studies, and that assessment results are being used to improve programs and increase student learning.”

It is apparent that issues related to responsibilities for assessment of the General Studies Program, participation in assessment, and an assessment plan need to be addressed in order to satisfactorily address the concerns expressed by the NCA visitation team. More importantly, these issues need to be addressed in order to have a process that we can be
satisfied with for ourselves. The following suggestions are specific ideas for facilitating the process that needs to be undertaken. The specific ideas do not have to be adopted. However, the five goals identified must be met if assessment of the General Studies Program is to be successfully completed.

Historical note: There has been a great deal of concern expressed by a number of individuals about the slow progress being made in assessment of the General Studies Program during the past 18-24 months. This concern is noted, however, it is more reasonable and realistic to state that assessment of the General Studies Program should have started in 1997 or 1998 at the latest and not within the last two years. With that point expressed, the following goals and ideas are intended to accelerate the process that is several years behind when compared to other institutions.

Goal 1: Develop an assessment plan that includes a timeline and responsibilities
Goal 2: Complete assessment of all General Studies categories within two years with the next APR report as the target for completion
Goal 3: Address issues of Responsibility
Goal 4: Promote a collaborative faculty environment
Goal 5: Use the results to enhance the program and student learning

Ideas:
Goal 1:
   a. Identify assessment strategies that include direct and indirect measures for objectives.
   b. Develop a timeline for implementation
   c. Identify responsibilities
   d. Select standardized tests that align with the objectives and contain items that reflect content

Goal 2:
   a. Develop a schedule that provides for collection of data and its analysis for the next APR report.
   b. Develop a 4-6 year cycle of assessment and make it public
   c. Work with the Director and Coordinator of Assessment and departments in order to blend General Studies Program assessment into their individual assessment plans and cycles.

Goal 3:
   a. The Director of the General Studies Council and the Council members are responsible for initiating and implementing an assessment plan.
   b. The Council should consider restructuring to place greater emphasis on assessment and curriculum development. This should be more easily done when WI and CD are transferred.
   c. It is the responsibility of the entire campus to assist with assessment of this campus-wide program. It is an obligation of departments offering courses to accept ownership of assessment pieces directly related to them.
   d. The GS Director and Council should utilize the resources of the Assessment Office to assist.
e. It is the responsibility of the Director and Council to disseminate the assessment plan in as open a manner as possible.

f. Utilize the Director of Assessment and the Coordinator of Assessment to assist with dissemination of the plan.

g. Conduct planning on WI and CD assessment since the transfer date is not known.

h. Involve Jeremy Schnieder in the writing assessment process.

Goal 4:

a. Utilize the Faculty Senate and other groups to promote involvement.

b. The Director of Assessment has submitted a budget requesting faculty stipends for working on assessment and supporting travel to conferences on assessment of general education programs. Work with the Director and Coordinator of Assessment to maximize this assistance if the budget is approved.

c. Go to these conferences and encourage others to go.

d. Be open and collaborative. Someone may have a better idea.

e. Involve the broader campus in examining and interpreting the results.

Goal 5:

a. Require program change proposals to utilize assessment data as part of the rationale in the approval process.

b. Require program change proposals to address how student learning will be enhanced and how it can be assessed as part of the approval process.

The administration is very aware of the need to successfully undertake assessment of the General Studies Program. The Director of Assessment will support the process through the Assessment budget as much as possible during the next two years.

Continuing Education Assessment

Analysis

The NCA Final Report indicated that assessment within the continuing education, or distance learning programs (page 18 of the Assurance Section), would be one of the components of the focus visit in 2008. There was no further statement of specific problems that might clarify the situation. There was no additional comment and no real frame of historical reference provided by the team.

Assessment of programs offered by academic departments through the distance learning formats should already be conducted by the academic departments. Faculty evaluation is also typically the domain of the respective college and department. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the services and delivery medium would be expected to be the domain of the Continuing Education Program. The exact area of need was not specified in the report.

Ideas

1. Conduct an “assessment audit” to identify what types of assessment are currently being conducted. Topics that might be explored include: academic program assessment of those being delivered via distance education, faculty assessment, and effectiveness of the Center for Continuing Education in meeting student
needs, effectiveness of the various mediums of instructional delivery. Certain assessments such as academic assessment and faculty assessment should be conducted already. However, if those types of assessment are not occurring, then it needs to be identified. More specific points of focus from the 1997 criteria for Distance education (page 171) include:

a. “The institution assesses student capability to succeed in distance education programs and applies this information to admission and recruiting policies and decisions.”

b. “The institution evaluates the educational effectiveness of its distance education programs (including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction) to ensure comparability to campus-based programs.”

c. “The institution ensures the integrity of student work and the credibility of the degrees and credits it awards.”


2. Develop a list of tasks to be completed that meet the above guidelines as well as timelines.

**Graduate Program Assessment Analysis**

The Final Team Report submitted by the North Central Association accreditation visiting team indicated that assessment in graduate programs would be a focus of the follow-up visit. It stated that faculty ownership was just now emerging. In order to gain a better understanding of what may need to be done to enhance assessment at the graduate level it is necessary to examine the previous and present status of assessment by the graduate programs. The following review indicates that departments that are involved with graduate education as their primary responsibility have long been in compliance with assessment of students. The major problems focus around departments that have undergraduate education as a main area of focus. The assessment web site can also be revised to clarify graduate assessment and assist with more thorough monitoring as well.

1994-2000:
The College of Business and Technology offered the Master of Business Administration degree. The archival records indicate that this program submitted assessment reports each year during this period.

The College of Education offered graduate programs in the following departments: Communication Disorders; Counseling and School Psychology; Educational Administration; Elementary/Early Childhood Education; Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Leisure Studies; Special Education; and Professional Teacher Education. The following departments submitted assessment reports each year during this period: Counseling and School Psychology; Educational Administration; and Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Leisure Studies. The Department of Elementary/Early Childhood Education submitted reports from 1993-98. The Special Education and
Communication Disorders Departments were combined and then separated during this period. Assessment was not consistently reported from them during this time period.

The College of Fine Arts and Humanities offered graduate programs in the following departments: Art and Art History; English; Modern Languages; and Music and Performing Arts. The Modern Languages Department, Art and Art History, English, and Music submitted assessment reports each year that they had students during this period.

The College of Natural and Social Sciences offered graduate programs in the following departments: History; Mathematics and Statistics. The History Department submitted assessment reports each year.

2000-2002:
The UNK ad hoc Assessment Committee began its work on revising the assessment process to reflect an emphasis on student outcomes-based assessment. During this period of time departments were not asked to submit reports. Efforts were expended on developing new assessment plans for each program.

2002-2003:
Assessment reports utilizing the new assessment format were to be submitted beginning with data collection during the 2002-03 academic year. It should be noted that some programs were still developing assessment plans during that year. The following departments (or programs) submitted graduate assessment reports for 2002-03:

- Master of Business Administration
- Educational Administration
- Communication Disorders
- Counseling and School Psychology
- Reading MA (from Teacher Education)
- Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Leisure Studies
- Biology MS

The following departments submitted a report stating that they did not have students to evaluate at that point in time.
- Modern Languages
- Music

The History Department only had one student eligible for assessment and was in the process of collecting data on that student.

The Art and Art History Department had placed assessment plan development on hold (with my agreement) while trying to decide whether or not to keep the program.

The Biology Department has two degrees. The Master of Science in Biology was reported. However, the Master of Science in Education was not reported. The assessment plan on file makes no distinction between the two programs.
2003-2004
Assessment reports are in the process of being reviewed at this time for the 2003-04 academic year. We are in the process of reviewing reports from the following programs.
Communication Disorders
Counseling and School Psychology
Reading (from Teacher Education)
Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Leisure Studies
Educational Administration
Modern Languages
MBA Program

Analysis
It is very clear that those departments or programs that are exclusively graduate level in nature have a track record of long-term assessment dating across the past decade. When there are problems of consistent assessment being implemented the problems occur in departments that have a split undergraduate and graduate program offering. Some departments do not have a consistent record of assessment because they have very few students on a regular basis. Other departments place most of their effort on assessment of undergraduates for accreditation purposes rather than upon assessment of their graduate students. It does not appear that the NCA accreditation team made a distinction between programs when making its assessment of graduate level student assessment. Those programs that are exclusively graduate in their role and mission have an exemplary record of conducting student assessment and reporting it. The problems occur in the other programs. There are a number of possible solutions.

Ideas
1. Encourage departments with undergraduate and graduate programs to become more consistently engaged in the assessment of graduate programs.
2. Address the problem that a number of programs simply do not have students enrolled in order to effectively assess them. A long-term assessment cycle may need to be implemented in order to more effectively assess students in low enrollment programs.
3. Address potential view of inconsistency by revising the Department Assessment web site to be more specific in regard to identification of graduate programs on the chart.
4. Require reporting of data collection or that no students are available that year in lieu of report with analysis (when appropriate) to demonstrate that assessment process is in place.
5. Recommend that the Graduate Council require that new programs have an assessment plan that has been approved by the Coordinator and Director of Assessment prior to approval action by the Council.
6. Recommend that program revisions present a rationale that is based on data collected from assessment of program outcomes for students.
7. Recommend that revisions in program objectives be accompanied by an explanation of how they will be assessed as part of the approval process.

Administrative Infrastructure Analysis
A major focus of the focused visit will be on the development of the administrative infrastructure. The statement “The administrative leadership for a viable assessment program has not fully developed” (page 15) highlights the need for the continued development of the administrative aspects of the assessment program at UNK. Additionally, two other statements on page 15 reference the need for nurturing the assessment process, embedding it in the institutional culture, and developing coherence and sustainability. The exact statements are:

1. “Faculty see this emerging administrative oversight as an important factor for nurturing assessment and imbedding it into the institutional culture.”
2. “While many pieces of assessment already exist at the university, coherence and sustainability have yet to be developed.”

On page 19, the team makes the following statements related to the administrative infrastructure.

1. “A stable infrastructure to support assessment is not in place although the institution has been engaged in assessment for more than 10 years. At the time of the team visit a recommendation regarding basic infrastructure to support assessment was circulating through channels for discussion and input-evidence of belated attention.”
2. “There appear to be no methods or mechanism for providing recognition for exemplary assessment practices.”
3. At the time of the focused visit, the campus should be able to demonstrate that it has developed stable administrative oversight for assessment with clearly defined responsibilities, authority, accountability, and an appropriate operating budget. …and that assessment results are being used to improve programs and increase student learning.”

It is very clear that the administrative support and oversight of the assessment process at UNK will be closely monitored during the follow-up focused visit. A number of changes have occurred since the team’s visit in April (2004). These include:

1. The appointment of a Director of Assessment in May (2004).
2. The review of the proposed assessment governance document by the Faculty Senate at its May (2004) meeting.
3. A review of the governance document with revisions made reflecting the input of the Faculty Senate in May (2004).
4. Provisional acceptance of the governance document pending any further suggestions that would be included in the NCA final exit report.
5. Identification of initial goals and activities for the Director, Coordinator, and Web Site Manager that focus on enhancing sustainability, relevance, culture, and management.
6. Sharing of the goals and activities (mentioned in 5) with the College Deans and Chairs during the summer to identify their priorities.
7. The development of a draft of assigned job responsibilities in September for the Director, Coordinator, and Web Site Manager.
8. The development and submission of a budget proposal for supporting assessment at UNK.
9. An office move consolidating the offices of the Director, Coordinator, and Web Site Manager in one location.
10. Employment of a Graduate Assistant to assist the Web Site Manager.
11. The ad hoc Assessment Committee transferred from the Faculty Senate to the SVCAASL’s Office at the beginning of October, 2004. New members were appointed in accordance with the governance document guidelines for appointment.
12. The Director has begun an analysis of the NCA final exit report to identify areas of assessment that were specifically addressed by the NCA team. The analysis includes proposed plans for addressing concerns expressed by the NCA team.
13. A Data Analysis Committee proposal has been developed and submitted to the Faculty Senate for review and input.
14. Accountability has been strengthened by revising the APR Guidelines (in June) to make the use of assessment data as part of the APR process more explicit.

Tasks
1. Have governance document “formally” approved by the SVCAASL.
2. Develop plan for coordinating assessment efforts:
   a. Alignment of departmental plans with APR process
   b. Alignment of accreditation processes and UNK assessment guidelines
   c. Alignment of General Studies assessment with department and university assessment cycles
   d. Post the assessment cycle on-line
   e. Coordinate Academic and Student Life assessment efforts
3. Review 1997 assessment criteria in relation to the criteria taking effect in 2005 to determine changes that need to be made in regard to assessment and the next accreditation visit in 10 years.
4. Review and revise assessment strategic plan.
5. Review analyses of the assessment areas of concern that are stated in the NCA Final Exit Report and determine plan of action for addressing each.
6. Further develop the annual “state of assessment” report for UNK.
7. Develop methods for sharing assessment data with:
   a. Faculty Senate
   b. Data Analysis Committee
   c. Colleges and Departments
   d. Other groups
8. Recommend that the UNK Academic Affairs Committee develop and require that any program changes that are recommended by departments utilize assessment data from student outcomes assessment as part of the rationale for the program change. The program change must also address which student outcomes would be impacted.
9. Recommend that the UNK Academic Affairs Committee amend the new program approval process to include the requirement that an assessment plan must be approved by the Coordinator and Director of Assessment prior to the Committee’s approval of the program.
10. Recommend that a top-down strategy of assessment be implemented that reflects monitoring of UNK mission statement generated goals and indicators at the most general level to aligned college and departmental goals and indicators.

**Faculty Culture Analysis**

The Final Exit Report contained references to the topic of faculty acceptance and acknowledgement of assessment that indicate that a more positive culture supporting assessment needs to be developed. Comments presented on page 15 include:

1. “The team noted a lack of enthusiasm among the faculty for the assessment of student learning”.
2. “In a few instances the use of the assessment of student outcomes was confused with program review and other types of evaluation.”
3. “Faculty see this emerging administrative oversight as an important factor for nurturing assessment and embedding it in the institutional culture.”
4. “Also, there is a lack of faculty ownership for the assessment of general studies, and the themes of cultural diversity and intensive writing which are graduation requirements at the university.”

On page 18 the Report notes that during the follow-up visit that the team expects to see this comment addressed: Faculty ownership of assessment in academic programs has not developed across the campus to the level that constitutes a commitment to assessment.” This comment, as well as the comments listed from page 15 clearly indicates that continued work needs to be undertaken to further develop knowledge of effective assessment practice and the promotion of a culture that utilizes assessment processes and results in a constructive manner to enhance student learning. A comment on page 19 further reinforces this interpretation. That comment is “There appears to be no methods or mechanism for providing recognition for exemplary assessment practice.”

**Goals:**

1. Continue to develop knowledge of assessment practices.
2. Promote sharing of assessment information and ideas.
3. Recognize exemplary practice.
4. Assist with making assessment more meaningful.
## GS Assessment Components with Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Deadlines</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Individual Course Analysis    | Course  | Online surveys for student and faculty in GS courses                   | Students 4/05  
Faculty 4/05  
(need to determine sample size)                                                                 | GS dir/counsel            |
| Standardized General Studies  | Program | Sample of freshman and juniors complete test                           | Pilot with students and get input from departments by 4/05  
Implement 9/05 with Freshman                                               | GS dir/counsel            |
| Test                          | Course  | Departments provide assessment data for their general studies courses  | GS Plan 5/05  
GS Report 10/06  
Begin collecting data 9/05-12/05                                              | Departments               |
| Departments’ assessment of GS | Program | Writing samples collected and evaluated                                | Completed by 12/05                                                     | English Dept and Writing Center |
| courses (direct)              | Program | Presentations collected and assessed                                   | Completed by 12/05                                                     | Communications Dept.      |
| Exit Survey                   | Program | Recommend items and collect and analyze data from student exit surveys that pertain to General Studies. | New items 4/1  
Collect first data 4/05                                                         | Registrar’s Office and GS dir/counsel |
| GRE & other Institutional Data| Program | Analyze GRE and other institutional data to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. | Identify sources 4/05  
Collect data by 5/05                                                         | GS director/counsel       |
| Diversity Attitude surveys    | Program | Administer diversity attitude surveys to students and faculty           | Develop Spring 2005  
Administer Fall 2005                                                           | CD committee              |
| WI Attitude Survey            | Program | Administer WI attitude survey to students and faculty.                  | Develop Spring 2005  
Administer Fall 2005                                                           | WI committee              |
| Survey of current GS program  | Program | Online survey of faculty and student perceptions of current GS program  | Faculty 2/22-3/5  
Students 3/1-3/15                                                              | GS director/counsel       |
| Focus Groups                  | Program | Focus questions based on online survey results will include Faculty and student groups | 4/1/05-4/15/05                                                         | GS director/counsel       |
| General Studies Assessment    | Program | NSSE and other data being collected is analyzed to identify relevant GS items. | Spring 2005                                                            | GS director/counsel       |
| Plan                          | Program | Plan of all assessment activities for GS with discussions of each type, responsible parties, and timelines for completion | 5/1/05                                                                 | GS Director               |