



Date: May 2, 2024

To: Salma Ghanem, Provost

cc: Sonia Soltero, Faculty Council President
Lucy Rinehart, Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Faculty

From: Christopher Drupieski, Faculty Council Secretary *Christopher Drupieski*


Re: Faculty Council Record of Action
2324-ROA088 Policy on Program-Level Assessment of Student Learning

Through a unanimous voice vote at its meeting on 01 May 2024, Faculty Council approved the Policy on Program-Level Assessment of Student Learning.

ACTION REQUESTED: Faculty Council requests that the Provost **approve** the actions below and convey them to the relevant parties.

PROVOST'S RESPONSE

TO: Sonia Soltero, Faculty Council President

FROM: Salma Ghanem, Provost 

RE: Faculty Council Record of Action
2324-ROA088 Policy on Program-Level Assessment of Student Learning

DATE: May 6, 2024

I have reviewed Faculty Council's Record of Action 2324-ROA088 Policy on Program-Level Assessment of Student Learning, and, on behalf of the President, I approve the action.

Accordingly, the Office of the Provost will notify the relevant parties to take note of this action.

Faculty Council requests that the Provost respond with one of the following: **approve, acknowledge, take under advisement, revise and resubmit, not approve.**



Date: April 12, 2024

To: Committee on Academic Policy

From: Academic Affairs: Caryn Chaden, Associate Provost for Student Success and Accreditation

Re: **Policy on Program-level Assessment of Student Learning**

Policy Summary

This policy formalizes requirements for program-level assessment of student learning in academic and designated co-curricular programs.

Scope

This policy establishes required actions for the faculty and staff working in academic and designated co-curricular units, and impacts students, in that their work is assessed.

Background

Assessment of student learning, at both the individual and program level, is a central responsibility of any college or university. Faculty and staff need to understand where students are and, especially, are not meeting program learning outcomes, and then take any necessary action to help students improve. Likewise, students and their families need to trust that institutions are doing all they can to continually monitor and respond to assessment data. In recognition of the importance of this practice, The Higher Learning Commission's "[Criteria for Accreditation](#)" includes the following statement related to assessment of student learning under Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement:

4.B. The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

- 1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and co-curricular offerings.*
- 2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.*

3. *The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.*

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) does not dictate either specific policies or methods for how an institution is to demonstrate that it meets the Criteria, but during the [10-year accreditation cycle](#), institutions must provide evidence to demonstrate that they meet the criteria as part of both the Year 4 [Assurance Review](#) and the Year 10 [Comprehensive Evaluation](#). Evidence to support this criterion falls into two broad categories: policies or statements of practice to show what people are required or expected to do, and documentation illustrating that the expectation is carried out.

DePaul has not always fully satisfied this criterion. In their 2017 Year 10 Comprehensive Evaluation Report, our HLC reviewers noted the following:

The evidence indicates varied attention to assessment of program learning goals, with some annual assessment report focusing instead on course level outcomes . . . There was mixed evidence that the described "Annual Assessment of Student Learning" actually occurs for each unit annually. While interview responses indicated that all programs participate annually, a review of the provided sample reports . . . indicated varied participation of each program across years. This evidence raises questions regarding the reporting cycle and it remains unclear if all programs engage in regular assessment practices. (Section 4.B. p. 40)

As a result of this observed "varied participation," the reviewers determined that Criterion 4B was "Met with Concerns" and required DePaul to submit a "Monitoring Report" in 2019 to demonstrate that we were addressing these problems. Our 2019 Monitoring Report documents these efforts:

. . . [On] June 8, 2017, the Advisory Board proposed and approved a new process, now posted on the Annual Assessment Process page of the Center for Teaching and Learning website. In summary, all programs must directly assess all of their learning outcomes within a ten-year cycle. However, as long as programs a) meet that requirement and b) assess a student learning outcome at least every other year, they may conduct alternate assessment projects during alternating years. Alternate assessment projects must be approved by the program's college and may fall into one of the following categories:

- Extension of Previous Assessment Project
- Needs Assessment
- Curriculum or Course Project
- Other

Regardless of whether a program conducts an assessment of a defined student learning outcome or an alternate assessment project, all programs must submit a report documenting their assessment efforts each year. The Assessment Advisory Board created/updated separate templates for the standard assessment of student learning outcomes reports and alternate assessment project reports. (pp. 5-6)

The Center for Teaching and Learning also created a repository that allows us to track whether or not a given unit has submitted their assessment report, along with a process for reviewing the status of reports within each college and co-curricular unit. By the time we reached our 2022 Year 4 Assurance Review, these initiatives led the HLC reviewers to determine that Criterion 4B was “Met” and provide a much more favorable response:

DePaul's 2019 Interim Report on work undertaken in response to the 2017 HLC review demonstrates that the University took the review team's concerns about the University's assessment model seriously. Since 2017, DePaul has developed a centralized data collection system, standardized the templates used in the assessment process and the guidance that it provides to faculty and program leaders. (2022 4-Year Assurance Review Report, Criterion 4.B., p. 34)

Now that we have an easy means of tracking submitted reports, we are better able to identify missing reports. For AY2022-2023, for example, there were a significant number of missing reports across colleges, and the Provost has enlisted Deans in stressing the importance of this process to their department chairs and program directors.

Currently, this process stands on shaky ground. The Assessment Advisory Board, consisting of associate deans and designated faculty and staff responsible for assessment in their curricular and co-curricular units, is an informal body with no University standing. Hence the requirements enacted by the Board and now posted as “Standards” on the [Annual Assessment Process](#) website have no official standing either. As we approach the 2027 Comprehensive Accreditation Review, the University would benefit from formalizing into policy the proposed expectations for program assessment of student learning.

Proposal

Definitions:

1. Assessment-ready academic degree program: a) in at least its second year of operation; b) enrolls at least 10 majors in a given year; c) is not currently in its first year of the Academic Program Review process.
2. Low-enrollment academic degree program: a) in at least its second year of operation; b) enrolls fewer than 10 majors; c) is not currently in its first year of the Academic Program Review process.

3. Designated co-curricular program: A unit that operate outside of the academic colleges and conducts work with students that is evaluated through defined and measurable learning outcomes.
4. Direct Assessment of Student Learning: A review of samples of students' work that includes the following components.
 - a. Collecting evidence of students' achievement of the selected learning outcome(s);
 - b. Analyzing and interpreting the data.
 - c. Reporting results of the assessment.
 - d. Recommending actions the program will take based on the assessment results.
5. Indirect assessment: Surveys, etc., where students report on what they believe they have learned.

Required actions:

- Each year, every assessment-ready academic degree program and designated co-curricular program will complete an assessment-based project. (Please note: programs with specialized accreditations must still follow the requirements of their accrediting bodies.) Over a ten-year period corresponding to DePaul's accreditation cycle with the Higher Learning Commission, these assessment projects will be characterized as follows:
 - All program learning outcomes must be assessed at least once during the 10-year cycle.
 - At least every other year, the project must be a Direct Assessment of Student Learning related to at least one of the program's stated learning outcomes. Programs may assess multiple outcomes in a single year.
 - In every other year, assessment-ready academic degree programs may conduct an Alternate Assessment project. Examples may include:
 - Follow-up on previous assessment of student learning outcome(s) project.
 - Extension of a previous assessment of student learning outcome(s) project.
 - Needs assessment.
 - Curriculum or course project (e.g. syllabus review, mapping, etc.)
 - Indirect assessment
 - Other
- Each year, every low-enrollment academic degree program, in consultation with the Center for Teaching and Learning Assessment Consultant, will conduct an assessment of learning for individual students completing the program.
 - Assessments should be consistent for students completing the program over a three-year period.

- Every third year, the program will submit an assessment report focused on the collected data (analyzing the data, reporting results, making recommendations).
- In years when assessment reports are not due, the program will submit a statement reporting their number of majors and confirming they meet the definition of a low-enrollment academic program.

Procedures:

Faculty and staff involved in program-level assessment of student learning should familiarize themselves with the materials provided on the Center for Teaching and Learning's ["Assessment"](#) webpage, guidance for planning assessment projects, a timeline for submissions, and templates for assessment reports.

Assessment reports will be submitted to a document repository after the end of the academic year. Additional details and information on how to submit to the repository are available on the Center for Teaching and Learning's ["Assessment"](#) webpage.

Reports are due by the following dates each year:

- Academic degree program reports: October 1
- College summary reports: December 1
- Co-curricular program reports: December 1

Divisional Collaborations:

The Assessment Advisory Board representing all colleges and designated co-curricular units.
The Center for Teaching and Learning
Associate Dean's Council

Review Process:

Representatives from the Center for Teaching and Learning helped to craft this proposal and have given feedback on multiple versions. An earlier version of this proposal was reviewed by the Assessment Advisory Board at its February 15, 2024 meeting, and by Associate Deans' Council at its March 12 meeting. Feedback from those groups was then used to craft the current version, which was sent to both groups on March 27 for any final feedback.

Contact Information:

Associate Provost for Student Success and Accreditation: cchaden@depaul.edu

Appendices (none)

Committee on Academic Policy Vote: _7__ For __0_ Against _0__ Abstentions _2__ N/A

Notes from CAP meeting:

Committee members worked with Caryn Chaden in real time to make some minor edits to language to clear up confusion around when programs will be required to do assessments versus assessment-based projects.