In fall 2011, I appointed the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Working Group (LOAWG) to consider whether and how SFU might move to a process of defining and assessing learning outcomes for academic programs. LOAWG developed a set of principles under which their work would proceed, and these were approved by Senate on June 11, 2012. The working group undertook research and surveys, and has now prepared its report. I am sending the report to relevant Senate committees for their consideration. I have also posted the report on the VPA website and am inviting comments from students, staff and instructors. I will compile responses to the report and then forward the responses and the report to Senate, with recommendations for Senate’s consideration.

Attached is the report prepared by LOAWG, and I am requesting the Committee’s advice on a number of issues, as well as offering the opportunity for comment on any matters that arise from a consideration of the report. Please send responses to me by no later than Friday, November 22nd.

Without wishing to restrict the Committee’s input in any way, I do have some specific questions that relate to the expertise and mandate of the Committee, and I would be grateful for a response to these specific questions, as well as any other comments that the Committee wishes to convey.

1. Is there a benefit for undergraduate students in defining and assessing learning outcomes, at the course and program level?

2. Is there a benefit for graduate students in defining and assessing learning outcomes, at the course and program level?

3. Is there a benefit for curriculum planning if definition of learning outcomes is incorporated into development and modification of courses and programs?

4. If Senate decides to adopt definition and assessment of learning outcomes, which of the alternatives described in the report does SCUP favour for the development and administration of these processes?

5. If Senate decides to adopt definition and assessment of learning outcomes, does SCUP support the concept that regular review of learning outcomes should be incorporated into the regular external review cycle?

6. Are there other comments that SCUP wishes to bring to the attention of Senate?
Report of the Learning Outcomes & Assessment Working Group

In fall 2011, following the site visit and report of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the Vice-President, Academic (VPA) determined that it would be useful to have a working committee consider approaches to the implementation of a learning outcomes and assessment (LOA) framework at Simon Fraser University. The Learning Outcomes and Assessment Working Group (LOAWG) was mandated by the VPA to undertake six tasks:

1. Draft principles to guide the establishment and use of learning outcomes for curricular assessment at SFU. (Note: this will not include evaluations of individual instructors)
2. Identify academic units that currently use, or are in the process of developing, processes for learning outcomes assessment.
3. Identify the curricular assessment processes (regular and off-cycle) currently utilized in academic units.
4. Review best-practice processes for establishing a learning outcomes assessment process, and recommend the most appropriate process for SFU.
5. Recommend appropriate timelines and milestones for implementing learning outcomes assessment at SFU, bearing in mind the timeline for accreditation with NWCCU, the importance of a communication plan, and the need to take a consultative approach.
6. Recommend how an ongoing process of learning outcomes assessment and curricular review could best be incorporated into current structures and processes at SFU.

The committee was chaired by Paul Budra, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and consisted of the following members:

Mary-Ellen Kelm, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences / Graduate Studies
Peter Liljedahl, Faculty of Education / Graduate Studies
Kevin Stewart, Beedie School of Business
Glyn Williams-Jones, Faculty of Science
Chris Groeneboer, Teaching & Learning Centre
Jessica Tilley, Institutional Research & Planning
Sarah Dench, University Curriculum & Institutional Liaison (VPA)
Susan Rhodes, University Curriculum & Institutional Liaison (VPA)
Ilia Starr, Learning Outcomes & Assessment Project (VPA)
Why an LOA Approach?

The practical value of a traditional university education is today under scrutiny. Prospective students from all ages and backgrounds are facing a reality where in today’s globalized economy simply having a university education does not guarantee quality career opportunities. The challenge for many is how to best invest limited resources in developing one’s skillsets for a successful and rewarding career within the parameters of a selective marketplace that demands highly specific qualifications and abilities.

The relevance and probable financial return on investment of a traditional university education is therefore in question. Increasingly universities are facing competition from alternative education institutions such as professional schools, which often publicize student learning outcomes data because they are required to by their accreditors and also because “they recognize more generally the power of marketing centered not on institutional ‘quality’ in the traditional sense but on how students are treated in service responsiveness and in instruction tailored to individual needs.”1 Given this reality, universities must take the initiative to proactively identify and solve perceived shortcomings in their teaching and learning systems, rather than have these identified arbitrarily by outsiders who may have their own ‘solutions’ in mind.

The onus is on Canadian universities to act now in assuring the public that students are achieving expected learning outcomes. Recognizing that quality assurance in the postsecondary education sector is a growing global concern, Ontario has recently established a Quality Assurance Framework through which it intends to meet this challenge as well as “facilitate greater international acceptance of our degrees and improve our graduates’ access to university programs and employment worldwide.”2 Earlier this year, Quebec publicized official recommendations to review and ‘adjust’ its universities’ quality assurance mechanisms, citing the need to keep pace with postsecondary education trends on an international level while continuously improving the experience of its students and accountability of its universities.3

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Also this year, British Columbia solicited public opinion on enhancing quality assurance at its own educational institutions and issued a Quality Assurance Consultation Document stating that provincial quality assurance processes must ‘adapt’ in order to remain current with international standards, better market BC’s postsecondary institutions, and reassure employers and students alike that a university education is relevant to their needs.  

In June 2008, SFU established a Task Force on Teaching and Learning (TFTL) charged with examining issues relating to the student academic learning experience and curriculum review, and with making recommendations aimed at supporting quality teaching and learning at the University. In its final report (2010), the TFTL acknowledged how “many academic institutions are redoubling their focus on the student experience and student retention by investing in engaging learning environments and integrating classroom and non-classroom experiences.” One of its key recommendations was that SFU “expand student-centered approaches to teaching within a process of ongoing improvement.” It further advised SFU to “identify and promote a set of attributes that every SFU graduate should possess or be able to demonstrate” as well as “ensure a student-centered focus in the curriculum:

1. by identifying learning expectations across all levels of the curriculum (in class and out of class) with consideration of the more general SFU graduate attributes;
2. by ensuring that the curriculum is well structured from the perspective of developing learning and;
3. by providing clearly stated information about expectations and responsibilities of instructors and students in syllabi for all courses.”

The TFTL argued strongly that “clarity around learning expectations enables stronger links between program planning, expectations about learning by students and instructors and related supports for both students and instructors.”

SFU has identified and articulated institutional goals in its Strategic Vision, one of which is to “equip its students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences that prepare them for life in an ever-changing and challenging world.” Given the current lack of an LOA framework at SFU,

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6 A set of SFU-specific graduate attributes were proposed by the TFTL in section 3.1 of its 2010 report (link above).
however, it is difficult to know whether SFU graduates are achieving that goal. Implementing the development of LOA frameworks locally within academic units at the course and program levels is likely to better inform identification of general attributes that all SFU graduates should possess.

Research shows that university students respond favourably when clearly articulated learning outcomes are built into their programs, courses and assignments. Dr. Richard S. Ascough of Queen’s University explains how “the pressure to articulate [learning] outcomes is not simply a top-down process; it also arises from our students themselves.” Pressure to articulate learning outcomes, says Ascough, is rising not only from provincial governments which are increasingly basing funding and resource allocations on market mechanisms and private sector criteria, but also from 21st-century students who “want and often demand a clear idea of the return on investment of a given activity.” Although implementing an LOA approach is challenging, it is through the systematic collection and careful examination of learning outcomes data that instructors, programs, departments, and faculties (with the appropriate supports and access to expertise as needed) can identify ways of enhancing their pedagogy, to the benefit of their students, disciplinary curricula and institutions as a whole.8

Crucial Definitions

- **Learning Outcome** – A ‘learning outcome’ is an area of knowledge, practical skill, area of professional development, attitude, higher-order thinking skill, etc., that an instructor expects students to develop, learn, or master during a course or program. Learning outcomes are observable and measurable by quantitative or qualitative assessment models. For some examples see the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence website at Carnegie Mellon University (http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/index.html).
- **Teaching Goal** – A ‘teaching goal’ is anything that an instructor or a program coordinator intends that students will learn in their course or program (note: in this report it is assumed that instructors will retain autonomy to determine the pedagogical

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approach they will use to meet the learning outcomes, as well as the autonomy to teach material falling outside defined outcomes).

- **Program** – A ‘program’ is a set of coherent curricular requirements leading to a Senate-approved academic credential (e.g. bachelor or graduate degree, certificate or diploma, etc.). The definitive list of such programs is included in the SFU Calendar.

### Principles for Investigating and Making Recommendations Concerning LOA

*(Approved by Senate on June 11, 2012)*

1. The primary purpose of learning outcomes and assessment processes is to communicate transparently the purposes of all degree, program and course requirements.

2. As per its *Strategic Vision*, SFU is committed to academic and intellectual freedom. Learning outcomes for courses and programs will be developed and determined at the local academic unit level and will reflect local disciplinary cultures. These will be aligned with enduring institutional goals, values, and principles as articulated in the SFU *Strategic Vision*.

3. SFU values regular assessment of the achievement of specified learning outcomes as a means of promoting continuous improvement of its courses and programs, and acknowledges that appropriate assessment of learning outcomes can occur before, during and after completion of a course or program.

4. Processes required by the establishment of learning outcomes and their assessment will be integrated into the regular processes of curricular and program review and renewal and disciplinary accreditation wherever possible.

5. Learning outcomes assessment will enable instructors to improve upon existing curricula and teaching methodologies. Processes of regular assessment will allow the academic units and the University to collect data concerning unit- and University-level achievement of identified learning outcomes. Learning outcomes assessment data will not be utilized for the evaluation of individual instructor and TA/TM performance, nor will the data be used as evidence to demote, fail to promote, dismiss or otherwise penalize individuals.

6. It is the responsibility of the University to provide resources (human, capital, technological) to academic units as required to enable and support learning outcomes and assessment procedures. Provision of this support is intended to minimize any addition to the net workload of instructors, TAs/TMs, and department staff.
7. As much as possible, the documentation generated by the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Working Group will be made broadly available to the SFU community for transparency and in accordance with SFU’s sustainability goals.

**Current LOA use in Academic Units**

Over the summer of 2012 all academic units at SFU were asked to complete an online survey of their current practices (if any) surrounding LOA for each of their programs. Not every unit responded, despite reminders, and some used the survey's open questions to express their concerns about the accreditation process and the implementation of learning outcomes in general. Out of 457 programs\(^9\) solicited by the survey, a total of 273 were completed, yielding a response rate of nearly 60%. Of those programs for which responses were received, 8% of respondents reported that they are already accredited by an external accrediting body (in most cases by a disciplinary professional body) while a further 4% reported that they are currently seeking accreditation by an external accrediting body.

Of the 60% that responded, a handful of programs indicated they are currently implementing some form of learning outcomes and/or assessment process for some or all of their undergraduate and/or graduate programs or courses. 18% reported having program-level learning outcomes and 64% within this group said they are also assessing students to determine whether these outcomes are being achieved. 16% reported having learning outcomes defined in all of their courses and 35% reported having learning outcomes defined in some of their courses. Represented in the above clusters are programs\(^{10}\) operating within the following academic units:

- Applied Sciences (General Studies)
- Archaeology
- Arts & Social Sciences (General Studies)
- Biomedical Physiology & Kinesiology
- Business

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\(^9\) It is important to note that SFU’s official tally of program offerings as of 2012 is 145 (undergraduate, graduate and professional programs within its eight academic Faculties). Where LOA surveying purposes are concerned this figure more than doubles, as subdivisions within these programs are counted. For example, the undergraduate history degree constitutes one program, but it includes the following four subdivisions: major, honours, minor and extended minor.

\(^{10}\) A list of all programs that reported using some form of learning outcomes and/or assessment process can be found in section 2 of the survey report (see Appendix A).
Programs within academic units that reported being a member of an accreditation body\textsuperscript{11} or in the process of joining one include:

- Applied Science in Engineering Science (MASc)
- Biomedical Engineering with Biomedical Signals & Instrumentation Concentration – Honours (BASc)
- Biomedical Engineering with Pre-Med Concentration – Honours (BASc)
- Biomedical Engineering with Rehabilitation & Assistive Devices Concentration – Honours (BASc)
- Business Administration (PhD)

\textsuperscript{11} Specific accreditation bodies that were cited can be found in sections 9a and 10a of the survey report. Note that there may be some programs missing from this list. For example, the Canadian Institute of Planners certifies a stream within the MRM program.
In addition, those programs that prepare individuals for professional practices which require certification by a professional body must meet the certification standards of that body. Examples include the three Professional Programs in the Faculty of Education (which must meet standards of the Teacher Regulation Branch) and the Master of Counselling Psychology program (which is designed to meet the standards of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association).

**Current Curricular Assessment Processes**

Through the survey responses and from informal discussions with faculty across SFU departments, we have found no consistent curricular assessment process used across SFU's academic units. Curriculum committees meet anywhere from annually to bi-weekly. The units that are currently employing some form of learning outcomes assessment have different approaches to administering them: some have formal meetings of curriculum committees, some use a Dean's or Chair's advisory council, and others use departmental retreats. The Beedie School of Business may have the most formal structure: Assurance of Learning Undergraduate and Graduate Committees. These committees discuss learning outcomes and assessment for accredited degree programs (BBA, MBA, MOT-MBA, EMBA, MScF, and PhD). The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee discusses joint honours, joint majors, and certificate
program issues as they arise and the Graduate Program Committee includes the GDBA in their program discussions. The Beedie School of Business also created an Accreditation Officer role, which replaced an external accreditation consultant, and helps to facilitate all the processes described.

The full report provided by Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) is attached as Appendix A. As the IRP summary indicates, caution must be used in interpreting the data. However, the responses show that only a small number of programs have begun to utilize an LOA approach. For the majority of SFU programs, creating and adopting meaningful course and program learning outcomes, and undertaking assessment of those, will be a significant change.

**Appropriate Processes for SFU**

Given the number of academic programs at SFU and their diversity, it is not clear that there can or should be one approach for LOA across the institution. SFU’s academic units have different structures, histories, faculty complements, pedagogies, and needs. Therefore LOA processes at SFU need to reflect the University’s decentralized culture as well as commitment to academic freedom and integrity.

Nonetheless an LOA approach impacts curricular design and development at both the program and course level. Any approach adopted for SFU should have the following components:

1. Learning outcomes are made explicit to students in course outlines and other materials, course assignments, and other assessments.
2. Course learning outcomes are assessed within courses.
3. Program learning outcomes are assessed within courses and at a program level.
4. Departments and programs report result summaries for institutional-level analyses of aggregated data.
5. LOA data collection and analyses are conducted to provide information for the feedback loop into the learning outcomes cycle.
6. Results of the data analyses are used to continuously maintain or enhance quality of SFU programs and courses.
7. Institutional learning outcomes/graduate attributes (when established) are assessed at the institutional level.
8. Course and program enhancements are implemented at the local level.
Institutional support for the implementation of LOA can take many forms and ultimately must address points 1-8 above. Consistent with LOAWG’s sixth Term of Reference to recommend how ongoing LOA processes can best be incorporated into current structures and processes at SFU, it is noted that implicit in items 1-3 and 8 are the need for LOA to be embedded in program and course curriculum design and development at the unit level. Linkage to the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC), which provides support to faculty members on curriculum mapping, design, development and assessment, would be essential; these activities are interrelated and cannot be artificially separated. Implicit in points 4-7 is a need for LOA to be closely linked to IRP, which maintains, houses and analyzes existing course, program and institutional data along with expertise in institutional reporting.

In addition, for the purpose of reporting out to the NWCCU (and potentially to the Province in the future), there must be some consistent coordination of information which is facilitated by either of the above units or a separate unit that is linked to all parties involved in LOA activity across the University. Consistent with LOAWG’s fourth Principle, which stipulates that processes associated with LOA be integrated into the regular processes of curricular and program review and accreditation where possible, IRP constitutes the existing depository for institutional data and reporting.

In summary, the infrastructure to support implementation of LOA processes at SFU already exists. However, the work of the multiple existing units which comprise that infrastructure needs to be identified and coordinated so that the workflow throughout the LOA cycle, as indicated in points 1-8, is clear.

Given the breadth of disciplines, forcing a single approach on units would be unlikely to yield the best possible results vis-à-vis student learning and course/program improvement. The choice of approach taken to the development and articulation of course- and program-level learning outcomes, along with corresponding assessment practices, should be within the purview of the individual Faculties, schools and departments. Academic units should have the option to retain LOA data that is generated locally. When cyclical processes (such as departmental reviews) require it, University-level evaluation of academic programs’ LOA activities can and should be performed using aggregated data from the units. In order to make consistent and meaningful data aggregation a possibility, it will be necessary for the University to provide academic units with standardized templates for the collection of selected LOA data; and it will be the responsibility of the University to coordinate the effort of compiling and reviewing LOA data received from all units.
Curricular processes are currently standardized at the University level. All undergraduate curriculum changes must pass through the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS), and all graduate curriculum changes must pass through the Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC). It is already the case that, in the documentation sent to these committees, learning outcomes are being identified for new courses and are required (by the Board of Governors and the Ministry of Advanced Education) for proposals of new programs and degrees. Curricular changes to articulated learning outcomes at the course and program levels, such as additions or modifications, can be tracked through existing SCUS and SGSC processes. In order to support academic units as they develop learning outcomes, to coordinate LOA activity across the University and to gather data for internal and external reporting functions, improved systems of coordination must be developed. All units involved must coordinate in order to ensure there is a central resource and repository of information, that connections are effectively and appropriately made between key units and personnel, and there is development and maintenance of standardized forms, processes, and updated resource documents (e.g. a guidebook, website, etc.). Some programs may want to appoint course coordinators, especially when specific courses are taught by many instructors.

The following suggests two approaches by which academic units may undertake LOA processes while retaining custodianship and control of detailed assessment data.

**Program-to-Course-level Approach**

This cyclic framework is built on the principle that the departmental program committee identifies its program goals, maps the goals onto the program curriculum and courses, gathers data, analyzes data, and then allows the analysis of the data to influence the program committee’s efforts to revise the program and the program goals. At some agreed-upon point within this cycle the program committee writes a report on their efforts and submits it to the VPA’s office (e.g. annually, or as part of the regular External Review cycle).
Below is a brief description of each step in the program- to course-level approach cycle:

1. **Create program outcomes**: At this stage the program committee identifies what it is that the program either hopes to achieve or already claims to achieve by the end of the program. One way to do this is for the committee to think from the perspective of a potential employer or admission committee for a graduate program – *what would they expect of a student who has completed their program?*

2. **Map outcomes onto program curriculum**: The program outcomes identified by the program committee in the previous stage must now be found somewhere within the curriculum of the program. In this stage, the committee first works to either locate or map where in their curriculum specific outcomes are taught and assessed (not necessarily taught and assessed in the same place) and/or work to locate places within the program curriculum the program outcomes can be taught and assessed (not necessarily taught and assessed in the same place). Second, the committee works to identify the methods that they will use to assess their students’ attainment of program outcomes. Something to keep in mind here is that a single goal may/should find itself in more than one course in the program. Also important to consider at this point is the way in which a capstone course or capstone experience may be utilized to assess some key program goals.
3. **Write report:** In the first iteration, once the curriculum mapping has been done, the program committee will produce a report documenting their progress thus far. This report will be focused on the program outcomes that have been created/identified, where these outcomes are being addressed in the curriculum, and where and how these outcomes will be assessed. In subsequent iterations of the cycle, the report will be more extensive including, in essence, what the program committee learned about their program through the collection and analysis of assessment data, how what they learned has manifested itself in program and program outcome modifications, as well as the refined learning outcomes and their intentions for collecting new data. Note that there is no requirement that actual data accompany these reports. Data is collected, analysed, and held at the program/department level. What is included in the report is how the data has informed the program.

4. **Collect data:** The collection of data is really a longitudinal process in which the program committee enacts the plan they laid out in the curriculum mapping stage. How this looks will very much depend on what kind of data the program committee has decided to collect. It can range from longitudinal data on select students through the program, to data on all students at key stages within and following completion of the program. Programs that have area groups, area coordinators, and course coordinators may want to involve these personnel in this step (and the next).

5. **Analyze data:** This is the most important stage of the process. It is here that the program committee can learn exactly how it is they, as a program, are performing in their ability to deliver their identified program outcomes to their students. It is very important that programs see this as their data and their analysis. Only through reflection on the results of this process can relevant programmatic changes occur.

6. **Modify program and program outcomes:** With the evidence of the assessment data, analysis and results, the program committee can begin the process of initiating and producing change. If the results indicate that the program is not meeting its programmatic objectives then changes within the program and courses are warranted. Eventually, programs will begin to meet their objectives by adjusting courses and requirements though an iterative process, at which point it might be time to amend programmatic objectives, and with them, create new program goals.

**Course-to Program-level Approach**

While it may make theoretical sense to begin the process of instituting learning outcomes and assessment by first articulating program outcomes and then working *down* to the course level,
in practice it may be easier to begin at the course level for two reasons. First, course level outcomes are of a manageable size and scope and, second, instructors may already have *de facto* learning outcomes articulated in course outlines and syllabi. The process would build iteratively from course-level learning outcomes up to program-level outcomes.

Below is a brief description of each step in the course- to program-level approach cycle:

1. **Create learning outcomes for new courses**: current forms for proposing new courses already contain a section in which to write learning outcomes. Completion of this section has been voluntary but would become required. All new courses will then require learning outcomes in order to pass through SCUS or SGSC and on to Senate.
2. **Create learning outcomes for existing courses**: when instructors teach existing courses, they should list learning outcomes on the course outlines. These learning outcomes should be communicated to undergraduate or graduate chairs. The chairs can then add them to course-change forms and bring them forward to SCUS or SGSC. If a course is taught by a number of instructors, those instructors should work collaboratively to agree upon broad learning outcomes for the course and include those in course outlines. Course coordinators may be useful in organizing and overseeing this process.
Instructors should work to identify the methods that will be used to assess their students' attainment of the course learning outcomes.

3. **Create learning outcomes for modules or levels:** what should students know at the end of first year? At the end of second? What critical knowledge or skills do we want students to have when they progress through the stages of their degrees? Undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees should begin this conversation with their instructors. We should keep in mind several things: many SFU students do not progress through course levels in a systematic way; many SFU students sample courses from across programs to a significant extent before declaring a major; many SFU students transfer in from other institutions; and some programs may have streams or concentrations that better define learning modules for their programs than course-level.

4. **Use the module outcomes to adjust learning outcomes of courses:** once learning outcomes for modules or years have been articulated, the undergraduate or graduate committees should compare these to the course learning outcomes that have been submitted. If the learning outcomes for individual courses are not aligned with the learning outcomes of modules, they may need to be adjusted.

5. **Create learning outcomes for programs (majors, minors, honours, certificates):** departments and academic units should articulate the learning outcomes of their programs. What do they expect a student who graduates with a major, or minor, or certificate in their discipline to know? What skills should they have? Departments and academic units should identify methods that will be used to assess students' attainment of these program learning outcomes. The data from their assessment procedures should be analyzed regularly to assess the program's performance in reaching its learning outcomes.

6. **Write report:** Once the curriculum mapping has been done and the data from the assessment procedures is analyzed, the program committee should document how their program is aligned with the principles of using learning outcomes and assessment in a report. Subsequently, such a report should become part of the regular curriculum cycle of the academic unit tied to the seven-year external departmental review.

7. **Use the report to adjust learning outcomes of modules and courses:** using the analysis in the report, academic units should conduct an overview of the learning outcomes at both the course and module levels. Do the course outcomes feed into the module outcomes and do the module outcomes inform the program outcomes? If not, they may need to be adjusted.
We recommend that programs be encouraged to choose between either of the approaches described above, or adapt a blend thereof.

**Timelines and Milestones**

Two milestones in the LOA implementation process have already occurred:

1. On June 11, 2012, SFU’s Senate passed the Principles cited at the beginning of this report.
2. As of Sept. 1, 2012, the course and program proposal forms that come before SCUS and SGSC have included an area for stated learning outcomes.

**Pending Senate Approval**

If Senate approves the LOA initiative, we propose that:

1. As new courses and programs are developed, learning outcomes will be brought forward to SCUS and SGSC.
2. Learning outcomes will have to be developed gradually and systematically for existing courses and programs.
3. Recognizing disciplinary diversity and the fact that some programs are already developing LOA processes, we propose that academic units have learning outcomes for all of their courses and programs in place by their next regularly scheduled external review, beginning in spring 2014. Units that have an external review scheduled for 2014 will be expected to include reference to learning outcomes and assessment in self-study documents prepared in fall 2013, but will not be expected to be able to comprehensively respond to this in their review of curricula.
4. A mechanism by which University-wide LOA affairs are facilitated and supported should be set up or identified.
5. Assessment approaches must be integrated into academic units. These will vary from discipline to discipline and, obviously, cannot be put in place until learning outcomes have been articulated. The mechanism responsible for LOA should also be able to provide specialized assistance and advice to faculty in this regard. The most important assessment will take place during the regular external reviews that all academic units presently undergo every seven years, and subject to a mid-term review report between full reviews.
Ongoing Processes

As stated in the Principles, “Processes required by the establishment of learning outcomes and their assessment will be integrated into the regular processes of curricular and program review and renewal and disciplinary accreditation wherever possible.” As the information we have gathered makes clear, there are no regular processes of curricular and program review (with the exception of mandated external reviews of departments) across the University. Even those units presently accredited and using LOA have idiosyncratic processes for their maintenance and review.

There is evidence from other North American universities that various types of proprietary or in-house instruments, such as software specializing in online assessment tracking systems, can serve to simplify collection of information about course and program outcomes, and related assessment. Eventually, when the Canvas Learning Management System is fully implemented or the CurricUNET system is fully utilized, SFU may be able to move to an online tracking system for LOA reporting. However, this will need to be considered in light of the principles of local custodianship of unit-level data and aggregate reporting. Suffice to say, products exist that SFU may wish to explore, but technological products are not necessary to make LOA at SFU a reality.

We recommend, then, that the LOA process be conducted at the local level and resourced by the office of the VPA, and that the cycle of regular assessment be fully built into the external review cycle, since this cycle requires both full review and mid-term reports on progress. Adopting this approach will also ensure that LOA and curricular review will be fully integrated into self-study, and with all other activities of the department or program. This integration should make it straightforward for units to report out to external reviewers, and for LOA processes and aggregate data to be considered as part of the review reports sent to Senate.

Although some Canadian institutions utilize learning outcomes at the course level, and the Ontario post-secondary system is exploring the adoption of LOA frameworks across institutions, to date there is no Canadian model to guide SFU in deliberations on working with LOA. To find models, we examined a number of American universities with LOA processes to get a sense of the administrative structures needed to maintain LOA across the curriculum. In short, there is no single approach, and in fact, most institutions seem to conduct LOA on a relative shoestring

12 We focussed primarily on five NWCCU member institutions that were considered comparable to SFU insofar as they awarded an equivalent range of academic credentials (i.e. baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral degrees) and were public-funded, larger ‘state’ universities with similar student enrollment levels. Appendix B provides brief overviews of some of the institutions that were examined.
budget. According to a report by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), only “20% [of American universities] have no assessment staff and 65% have two or fewer.” However, in general, most universities that engage in LOA do have mechanisms to facilitate university-wide assessment processes, and the charge usually falls under the portfolio of a senior administrator, usually a provost or vice-provost in charge of academic affairs or his/her delegate. Eighty percent of all regionally accredited undergraduate-degree-granting U.S.-based institutions have “a person or unit” in charge of coordinating or implementing campus-wide assessment. In some cases an assessment council or committee is coordinated out of academic affairs to evaluate assessment efforts and results across the university and guide improvements in LOA processes and policy. Some universities also have a dedicated assessment office facilitating and supporting university-wide assessment efforts, sharing assessment resources, and sometimes engaging directly in data interpretation or providing instructional support for faculty. Currently many of these roles encompass responsibilities that at SFU are assigned to the TLC and IRP. Beyond that, practices are idiosyncratic and seem to respond to institutional cultures.

Providing Support

For SFU to be successful at incorporating an LOA approach into its current structures and processes, key functions for the provision of support will need to be in place. Whatever form these supports take, they must:

1. Provide resources and guides for use by faculty and staff in establishing learning outcomes and assessing their effectiveness.
2. Further investigate special software packages related to tracking LOA, and coordinate with the Chief Information Officer/Enterprise Systems/Project Management Office regarding compatibility with other IT systems currently in use (such as the faculty portal in the Beedie School of Business).
3. Meet regularly with Faculty- and University-level curriculum committees to advise on and support LOA processes and initiatives.
4. Gather information on LOA activities across the University for reporting purposes.
5. Work closely across units such as the TLC, IRP, and the Centre for Online and Distance Education (CODE), which provide support to instructors.

6. Provide LOA expertise to SCUS and SGSC, given that the only common denominators in the curriculum development process at SFU are these committees.
7. Work with the staff who manage external reviews, to ensure that LOA activities are integrated into the external review process.

To perform the above functions in the implementation of LOA at SFU, we recommend consideration of the following options.

**Option 1: Align and Enhance Capacities of Existing Resources**

The first option proposed for consideration is to expand the services currently embedded in the TLC, and IRP, with coordination to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with institutional goals. Advantages of this option include capitalizing on: 1) the necessary expertise that already exist within these units; 2) established relationships and synergies between these units, other units (i.e. the University Curriculum and Liaison office), the Faculties and departments; and 3) greater efficiency and streamlined processes by avoiding overlapping mandates with a new unit and related bureaucracy.

This proposed option would also continue to build on recent efforts resulting from the TFTL’s recommendations which were accepted and incorporated by the VPA in current and future academic plans. Two identified areas of concern expressed by members of the University community were to: 1) respect and work with discipline-specific expertise, culture, and language, and 2) provide support that connects with the day-to-day work and challenges of faculty members and programs. The restructured TLC has been focused on establishing its connections within the disciplines and advancing in this area. In working with people on learning outcomes and curriculum, TLC professionals find the language and approach most appropriate within the disciplines rather than taking a generalist or generic approach.

Furthermore, separating learning outcomes from the work that the TLC or CODE already undertake with programs, departments and faculty members may be a step backward. Taking an integrated approach, the TLC consults and works on curriculum mapping, associated faculty and academic development, connects with other initiatives such as innovation using the new Canvas Learning Management System, graduate student development, etc. To do so, the TLC works with the academic plans and priorities set by each Faculty or department and with other units. The approach proposed would take advantage of the relationships already forged and work already underway.
To move LOA forward at SFU, expertise in pedagogy, data collection and University-level reporting is required. From the Summer 2012 Learning Outcomes and Assessment Survey, it is clear that faculty and departments desire discipline-specific examples of LOA materials, planning and implementation approaches and consultation with people already within their Faculties. Relationships and respecting discipline-specific approaches, and continuity with existing activities, will be integral for the successful implementation of an LOA approach.

Similarly, IRP is already immersed in assessment and reporting activities related to teaching and learning. The office extracts, gathers, maintains, analyzes and reports on similar data (i.e. grades, retention, student outcomes survey data). Having a single office entrusted with the responsibility of managing data ensures quality, accuracy and consistency. At present IRP has the technological infrastructure and experience to manage, analyze and report course-, program- and University-level aggregated data. The duty of gathering, compiling, analyzing and reporting institutional-level learning outcomes data is already within IRP’s mandate. IRP “collects, analyzes, maintains, and disseminates institutional research, information and data about the performance and effectiveness of all aspects of the University.” As well, it is IRP’s mandate to report official data to external agencies. It would be a logical extension of IRP’s work to begin to consult with and support individual academic units in their own assessment of learning outcomes, much as the office already does for units regarding reporting on research productivity.

Option 1 avoids creating an additional level of bureaucracy or using scarce resources to create a new administrative unit. The establishment of LOA will require an increase to the workload of existing offices irrespective of any new unit created, and as such utilizing the existing structures or offices (with some additional staffing in each unit) would be more efficient. It has the additional benefit of enabling better communication and relationship building between the offices involved, and with faculty members such that they are better supported.

This approach will require that the TLC, CODE, and IRP work together closely with faculty and academic units in the design of assessment processes, from the outset. It may also require ad hoc ‘assessment councils’ to review LOA practices University-wide from time to time, and may require the office of the VPA to appoint assessment council members and provide secretariat services including the organization and coordination of these meetings. The TLC and IRP would be present at these council meetings to provide their curriculum, pedagogical, data analysis/reporting, and other relevant expertise.
Option 2: Add Capacity to the Office of the VPA with a New Unit

The second option is to establish a compact LOA unit that, at least during SFU’s period of transition to an ongoing process of LOA, would report to the VPA.

As previously described, currently instructional support and development, and evaluation at an institutional level, both occur in the existing offices of the TLC and IRP, respectively. However, in moving to an LOA approach, SFU may move beyond the services these units presently provide, and may require a new support function that bridges the support provided to individual instructors, and the functions of aggregated evaluation. In this approach, implicit is the assumption that all units would work together closely to ensure a coordinated approach to curricular development and assessment. Given the original commitment to avoid creating additional workload for faculty and staff, it is not reasonable to expect the existing units to simply add LOA responsibilities to their current commitments, which already see their services and resources fully utilized, without providing them with additional resources. The addition of a mandated LOA unit, even if small, could provide expertise and leadership in this work across the diversity of our academic units and cultures, support *ad hoc* assessment councils as they are established, and the three units could work together across their complementary mandates.

Note that the decision to pursue Option 1 does not preclude the possibility of moving to Option 2 in the future, should the need arise.

Option 3: Blended or Evolving Services

The third option would be to begin with the services currently in place, with additional responsibilities and resources assigned in each. Over time, as needs evolve and/or service gaps are identified, a new unit can be developed which then, in turn, would continue to grow and adapt to the work required to support mature LOA processes.
Recommendations

1. Programs that do not already have processes built into part of their disciplinary accreditation adapt either or both of the approaches to learning outcomes described above (program- to course-level outcomes, or course- to program-level outcomes).

2. Academic units will continue to complete the learning outcomes sections of the new course and program proposal forms used by SCUS and SGSC.

3. Academic units have the option to retain within the unit assessment data that is generated locally. When cyclical processes require it, University-level analysis related to learning outcomes assessment will use aggregated data received in report form from the units, which will be provided with standardized templates for the purpose.

4. The cycle of regular assessment of learning outcomes should be built into the external review cycle, beginning with units externally reviewed in spring 2014. LOA will become part of the regular process of external reviews, incorporated into the self-study documents as part of curricular review as of fall 2013 and subsequently every seven years. Curricular review, including comments on the assessment of learning outcomes, will also form part of the external review mid-term report.

5. The VPA will establish enhanced supports for LOA via one of three options: enhanced capacities in the existing units of the TLC and IRP; or added capacity to the office of the VPA via a compact unit responsible for LOA that would be in place by summer 2013 with a mandate as described above or an evolving blend of these options.
Appendix A

Summer 2012 Learning Outcomes and Assessment Survey:
Survey Findings

Prepared by
Kiran Bisra, Analyst
Institutional Research and Planning
September 26, 2012
POURPOSE

The goal of this study is to identify academic units that currently use, or are in the process of developing learning outcomes and/or their assessment at Simon Fraser University (SFU). As well, this project aims to identify curricular assessment processes [regular and off-cycle] currently utilized in academic units. For context, it was also important to gather information about whether learning outcomes have been implemented at the program and/or course level and if academic units formally discuss their implementation and assessment.

METHODOLOGY AND RESPONSE RATE

The project targeted one key person in every academic unit whose portfolio includes curriculum issues. Individualized surveys were sent out to each respondent, which included all of the programs in their academic unit.

The surveys were open from June 26th to September 24th, 2012. In total, 84 individuals were invited to respond on behalf of 457 programs. In addition to the initial invitation, three reminders were sent to academic unit contacts over the course of survey administration.

In total, 273 programs had responses provided for them, yielding a response rate of 59.7%. Assuming that the sample is representative, percentages calculated on all programs are accurate within ±3.75%, 19 times out of 20. However, strong caution is advised when extrapolating these results to programs which did not respond. Each academic unit is unique and one program’s responses may have no bearing on another program.

RESULTS

Highlights of the survey results include:

- Of those programs with responses, 18% have program-level learning outcomes, and of these, 64% are assessing students to determine whether they are achieving program-level outcomes.
- 16% of programs with responses have learning outcomes defined in all of their courses, and an additional 35% have learning outcomes in some of their courses.
- 8% of respondents are already accredited by an external accrediting body, and a further 4% are currently seeking accreditation.
- Of those individuals who responded, 65% wanted examples of learning outcomes and assessment materials/models from other universities, in their discipline, and consultation with faculty mentors who are experienced with learning outcomes assessment as support while establishing or improving learning outcomes assessment processes.

Appendix A1 is an example of an individualized survey that was sent out and Appendix A2 displays the distribution of responses to the survey questions.
APPENDIX A1

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Example Survey for Graduate Engineering Sciences Programs
Learning Outcomes and Assessment Survey

Please Note: JavaScript is disabled in your browser. In order to properly view this survey, you must first enable JavaScript. If you are using Firefox, please follow these steps: http://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/JavaScript
If you are using Internet Explorer, please follow these steps: http://support.microsoft.com/gp/howtoscript
If you are using Google Chrome, please follow the steps below: Hit the wrench icon in the top right corner of your browser Click on "Settings" Click on "Under the Bonnet" or "Under the Hood" or "Show Advanced Settings" on the left Click on the "Content Settings" button in the Privacy section Select "Allow all sites to run JavaScript (recommended)" in the JavaScript section Reload this survey page when you are done.

Page #1

☐ Please select all programs for which you will be responding: (Q2)
☐ Master of Applied Science in Engineering Science
☐ Master of Engineering in Engineering Science
☐ Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering Science

Page #2

Branching Information
• If Q3 = No then Skip to Page 5
• If not Q3 = Yes then Hide Q3-1

☐ Do any of your programs have specific program-level learning outcomes? (Q3)
☐ Yes
☐ No

☐ For which programs are there specific learning outcomes? (Q3-1)
☐ Master of Applied Science in Engineering Science
☐ Master of Engineering in Engineering Science
☐ Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering Science

Page #3

Branching Information
• If not Q3-3 = Yes then Hide Q3-4

☐ Are specific learning outcomes for this program(s) communicated to students through any of the following (check all that apply)? (Q3-2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>SFU Calendar</th>
<th>Department website</th>
<th>Faculty website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master of Applied Science in Engineering Science</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Engineering in Engineering Science</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering Science</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program website | Hard copy materials | Not communicated

Institutional Research and Planning, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5A 1S6
T 778.782.9468 | F 778.782.6599 | www.sfu.ca/irp
Are there any other ways that you communicate program-level learning outcomes to students? (Q3-3)

- Yes
- No

Please specify: (Q3-4)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Are there any other ways that you communicate course-level learning outcomes to students? (Q5-2)

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please specify: (Q5-3)

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Do your course-level learning outcomes align with your program-level learning outcomes? (Q6)

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Some of them
- [ ] No

N/A, do not have program-level learning outcomes

---

Does your academic unit already have, or is your academic unit in the process of developing, assessment models for learning outcomes for this program(s)? If so, please describe this process and your progress to date. (Q7)

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Yes

Please describe below
Branching Information

☑ Is this program(s) already accredited or seeking accreditation with an external accrediting body? If so, what is the full name of the accrediting body and its website? If there is more than one, please separate with a semi-colon. (Q8-1)

Name of Accrediting Body Website URL

☐ Yes, already accredited
☐ Yes, seeking accreditation

Master of Applied Science in Engineering Science
☐ No, neither

☐ Yes, already accredited
☐ Yes, seeking accreditation

Master of Engineering in Engineering Science
☐ No, neither

☐ Yes, already accredited
☐ Yes, seeking accreditation

Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering Science
☐ No, neither

☑ Is this program(s) already structured or restructuring curriculum to allow students to meet the requirements set by an external accrediting body? If so, what is the full name of the accrediting body and its website? If there is more than one, please separate with a semi-colon. (Q8-2)

Name of Accrediting Body Website URL

☐ Yes, already structured
☐ Yes, restructuring
☐ No, neither

Master of Applied Science in Engineering Science

☐ Yes, already structured
☐ Yes, restructuring
☐ No, neither

Master of Engineering in Engineering Science

☐ Yes, already structured
☐ Yes, restructuring
☐ No, neither

Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering Science

☐ Yes, restructuring
☐ No, neither
Are you aware of any “best practices” (e.g. reputed methodologies, popular instruments or mechanisms, etc.) for the identification and assessment of learning outcomes in your field?\(Q9\)

- Yes
- No

Please describe and provide any examples or reference information.\(Q9-1\)

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

How often does your curriculum committee (or equivalent) meet?\(Q10\)

- Weekly
- Bi-weekly
- Monthly
- Once per semester
- Bi-annually
- Annually

Master of Applied Science in Engineering Science

- Bi-annually

- Annually

Master of Engineering in Engineering Science

- Bi-annually

- Annually

Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering Science

- Bi-annually

- Annually

Are learning outcomes and/or their assessment discussed during your curriculum committee (or equivalent) meetings?\(Q11\)

- Yes
- No

- Master of Applied Science in Engineering Science
- Master of Engineering in Engineering Science
- Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering Science
Branching Information

- If not Q12 = Yes then Hide Q12-1

Besides curriculum committee meetings or their equivalent, are there other forums or committees within your unit that discuss learning outcomes and/or their assessment? (Q12)

- Yes
- No

Please describe: (Q12-1)


What support(s) might your unit require in order to establish a learning outcomes assessment model, and/or improve upon existing learning outcomes assessment processes? (Q13)

- Consultations with experts from the Teaching and Learning Centre
- Consultations with faculty mentors who are experienced with learning outcomes assessment
- Examples of learning outcomes and assessment materials/models from other universities, in my discipline
- Professional development events
- Other (please specify) __________________________

Do you have thoughts, comments, or concerns that you would like to share with us about learning outcomes and their assessment? (Q14)


We are interested in verifying the contact person in your unit in case we need to ask a clarifying question. Could you please provide your first and last name in the text box below? (Q15)

__________________________
APPENDIX A2

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS
This section displays the distribution of program responses to the survey questions. The tables that follow show the number and percentage of programs selecting each response to the questions. The question numbers in these tables do not always match the question numbers in the survey instruments. Assuming that the sample is representative, percentages calculated on all programs are accurate within ±3.75%, 19 times out of 20. For questions where it was possible to choose more than one response, the tables present the percentage of respondents selecting each option, rather than the percentage of responses.

### Section 1: Closed-ended Questions

1) **Do any of your programs have specific program-level learning outcomes?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total Participants* 46

*Missing Cases* 0

*For this question, percentages are based on the number of individuals who responded, not the number of programs.

2) **For which programs are there specific learning outcomes?**

| Programs Identified with Learning Outcomes | 50 | 18.3% |
| Programs Identified without Learning Outcomes | 223 | 81.7% |

*Total Programs with responses †* 273

*For a list of identified programs please see open-ended responses in next section

3) **Are specific learning outcomes for this program(s) communicated to students through any of the following?**

| Hard Copy Materials | 29 | 58.0% |
| Department Website | 17 | 34.0% |
| Program Website | 14 | 28.0% |
| Faculty Website | 9 | 18.0% |
| SFU Calendar | 7 | 14.0% |
| Not Communicated | 4 | 8.0% |

*Total Respondents* 50

*Missing Cases* 0

4) **Is your program(s) assessing students to determine whether they are achieving program-level learning outcomes?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total Responses* 47

*Missing Cases* 3

*Disclosure of learning outcomes and assessment processes*

Open-ended responses are included in next section
5) **Do the courses in your program(s) have defined learning outcomes?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, all of them</th>
<th>32 15.5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, some of them</td>
<td>71 34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, one of them</td>
<td>103 50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>206 100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6) **Are course-level learning outcomes communicated to students through any of the following (check all that apply)?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Syllabus</th>
<th>46 46.0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Outline</td>
<td>42 42.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Website</td>
<td>17 17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Communicated</td>
<td>36 36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 141.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are there other ways that you communicate course-level learning outcomes to students? Please specify.

Open-ended responses are included in next section

7) **Do your course-level learning outcomes align with your program-level learning outcomes?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>28 36.8%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some of them</td>
<td>5 6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A do not have program-level learning outcomes</td>
<td>42 55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>76 100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8) **Does your academic unit already have, or is your academic unit in the process of developing, assessment models for learning outcomes for this program(s)?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, already have</th>
<th>22 8.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, in process</td>
<td>41 16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>193 75.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>256 100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open-ended responses are included in next section

9) **Is your program(s) already accredited or seeking accreditation with an external accrediting body?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, already accredited</th>
<th>19 8.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, seeking accreditation</td>
<td>10 4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, neither</td>
<td>207 87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>236 100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Name of Accrediting body and Website URL**

Open-ended responses are included in next section
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10) Is this program(s) already structured or restructuring curriculum to allow students to meet the requirements set by an external accrediting body?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, already structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, restructuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Name of Accrediting body and Website URL**
Open-ended responses are included in next section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11) Are you aware of any “best practices” (e.g. reputed methodologies, popular instruments, or mechanisms, etc.) for the identification and assessments of learning outcomes in your field?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For this question, percentages are based on the number of individuals who responded, not the number of programs.

**Please describe and provide any examples or reference information.**
Open-ended responses are included in next section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12) How often does your curriculum committee (or equivalent) meet?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How often does your curriculum committee (or equivalent) meet? Other (please describe)**
Open-ended responses are included in next section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13) Are learning outcomes and/or their assessment discussed during your curriculum committee (or equivalent) meetings?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Responses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14) Besides curriculum committee meetings or their equivalent, are there other forums or committees within your unit that discuss learning outcomes and/or their assessment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing Cases</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For this question, percentages are based on the number of individuals who responded, not the number of programs.
15) **What support(s) might your unit require in order to establish a learning outcomes assessment model, and/or improve upon existing learning outcomes assessment processes?**  (check all that apply) *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of learning outcomes and assessment materials/models from other universities, in my discipline</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with faculty mentors who are experienced with learning outcomes assessment</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with experts from the Teaching and Learning Centre</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development events</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Participants*** | 40 | 257.5% |

* Missing Cases | 6 |

* For this question, percentages are based on the number of individuals who responded, not the number of programs.

**Other (please describe)**

Open-ended responses are included in next section

16) **Do you have thoughts, comments, or concerns that you would like to share with us about learning outcomes and their assessment?**

Open-ended responses are included in next section
Section 2: Open-ended Questions

Comments are reproduced exactly as written, except that references to individuals and departments have been removed for privacy reasons. Altered text is in [square brackets].

2) **For which programs are there specific learning outcomes?**

- Biomedical Engineering with Biomedical Signals and Instrumentation Concentration Honours
- Biomedical Engineering with Pre-Med Concentration Honours
- Biomedical Engineering with Rehabilitation and Assistive Devices Concentration Honours
- Business Administration M.B.A.
- Business Administration M.B.A. (Executive)
- Business Administration Ph.D.
- Business Administration (Management of Technology) M.B.A.
- Business with Accounting Concentration Honours
- Business Major
- Cognitive Science Honours
- Cognitive Science Major
- Cognitive Science Minor
- Computer Engineering Honours
- Computer Engineering Major
- Cultural Resource Management Certificate
- Development and Sustainability Grad Certificate
- Development and Sustainability Minor
- Digital Media M.D.M.
- EdD Programs Ed.D.
- Educational Leadership M.A.; M.Ed.
- Electronics Engineering Honours
- Electronics Engineering Major
- Engineering Physics (Electronics) Honours
- Environmental Science Honours
- Environmental Science Major
- French and Education Certificate
- French Language Proficiency Certificate
- French M.A.
- French Extended Minor
- French Honours
- French Major
- History M.A.
- History Ph.D.
- Honours with Applied Behaviour Analysis Concentration Honours
- Mechatronic Systems Engineering - Honors
- Mechatronic Systems Engineering - Majors
- Molecular Biology and Biochemistry M.Sc.
- Molecular Biology and Biochemistry Ph.D.
- Physics M.Sc.
- Physics Ph.D.
- Print and Digital Publishing Minor
- Psychology with Applied Behaviour Analysis Concentration Major
- Psychology Major
- Public Policy
3a) **Are there other ways that you communicate program-level learning outcomes to students? Please specify**

- AT first lecture, through powerpoint presentation which are available on line after the first lecture
- every opening class is an opportunity to re-confirm those outcomes
- In verbal orientation sessions
- Orally in class and in individual meetings with students.
- Program learning outcomes will be highlighted in course offerings. These learning outcomes materials are currently being prepared for the Fall 2013 academic year.
- Some instructors who teach courses with set LOAs do communicate these verbally to students. In some cases, instructors may even share the LOA rubric with students to illustrate, in part, how a particular assignment may be marked and what students are supposed to learn/demonstrate. These also help explain to students levels of expectation for the associated assignment.
- Supervisory committee meetings
- The expectations are communicated to the students at regular intervals both by the Senior Supervisor and the supervisor committee. In addition the student is initial provide information as to their progress in form their assessments in the individual graduates.
- Verbally in core courses.
- Verbally, in class.

4a) **Description of learning outcomes and assessment processes**

- Along with program level outcomes, a set of 65 indicators has been developed for evaluating student success in achieving these attributes (learning outcomes). Each course will be responsible for monitoring, on a class-wide basis, student success towards specific indicators by providing concrete data in the form of results from specific exam questions or other evaluations. These will be evaluated repeatedly, in multiple courses, using rubrics. A process has been developed to evaluate this data on a program-wide basis to determine if additional indicators are required and/or if changes to the course curricula is required.
- annual faculty progress reports about students, second language proficiency evaluations, comprehensive exams, thesis prospectus defences, thesis defences
- annual faculty progress reports about students, second language proficiency evaluations, thesis prospectus defences, thesis defences
- As above
- Comprehensive Examination Research Project
- Comprehensive Examination Thesis
- Concentration LOs are assessed in discipline courses mapped to LOs. *same method applies to all 8 concentrations in the [****].
- evaluation of applied projects which have been defined by the students themselves, and which evolve in consultation with faculty.
- Feedback from internship hosts and employers.
- Final outcomes of research project
Interviews, self-reporting, surveys.

Program-level LO are assessed in core [****] courses mapped to LOs. Concentrations each have defined LOs that are also assessed in identified courses. Assessment is made through direct embedded measures which use existing assignments/assessment tools for the course.

Program-level LOs are assessed in comps, dissertation proposal (oral & written) and courses taught.

Program-level LOs are assessed in final project.

Program-level LOs are assessed in program capstone course.

Program-level LOs are assessed in program coursework and final project.

Thesis examination

Tutorial input, final essay, take home midterm exams

Written and oral work, both individual and group projects. Their capstone project.

6a) Are there other ways that you communicate course-level learning outcomes to students? Please specify.

Course outlines

Course-level LO are communicated to students by some instructors who teach Assurance of Learning identified courses within each of the degree programs. Course specific LO are indicated on most course outlines - however these are not always equivalent to defined Program or Concentration LOs.

Direct interactions with student for honours project; that is, what is expected of them and what the student hopes to achieve

Learning outcomes are presented during the first lecture of some courses.

Orally in class and in individual meetings with students. N.B. I indicated that I was responding re MA and PhD in History. The questions on this page and the next are relevant to the undergraduate, not the graduate, programme. Consequently, I find them inappropriate.

verbally, often.

Verbally in core courses; capstone courses.

Will be reviewed in initial lectures

8a) Does your academic unit already have, or is your academic unit in the process of developing, assessment models for learning outcomes for this program(s). If so, please describe the process and your progress to date.

Assessment models have been developed and implementation is in progress.

[****] not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] assessed as [****] concentration courses.

[****] Honours is not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses and [****] concentration courses.

[****] minor is not formally assessed as a program. Students take 16 upper division [****] units. Required courses: [****] are not part of the core [****] courses assessed.

[****] Joint Major not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses and [****] concentration courses.

[****] Joint Major not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses and [****] concentration courses.

[****] Cert not formally assessed as a program.

Departmental coordinator has been identified and procedures for drafting learning and assessment outcomes are being formulated.
- [****] Joint Honours not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses and [****] concentration courses. Students complete at least one area of concentration. All concentrations have assessment models.
- [****] Joint Major not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses and [****] concentration courses.
- [****] is not formally assessed as a program. [****] does not have any course overlap with an assessed program.
- [****] Joint Major not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses and [****] concentration courses.
- [****] Joint Major not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses and [****] concentration courses.
- [****] Joint Major not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses and [****] concentration courses.
- [****] Cert not formally assessed as a program.
- Infancy - will begin when I take over as UG chair
- [****] Joint Major not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses, [****] and [****] concentration courses.
- [****] Joint Honours not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses and [****] concentration courses.
- [****] Joint Major not formally assessed as a program. Required courses [****] are all assessed as core [****] courses, [****] concentration courses.
- Rubrics have been developed for identified core and discipline courses. Embedded direct measure assessment model uses existing course assignments.
- Rubrics have been developed for identified discipline courses in all 8 concentrations. Embedded direct measure assessment model uses existing course assignments.
- Rubrics have been developed. Embedded direct measure assessment model uses existing program assignments.
- scheduled for 2012-13 academic year
- See above.
- The [****] concentration is formally assessed for discipline specific knowledge. The Honours Term at [****] is not currently running.
- The Honours Term at [****] is not currently running.
- the PhD just started this year, and the MSc was realigned to dovetail with it; so we're just trying to get overall processes in place at this point. we will be addressing assessment, etc. once those basic processes are fully in place and working.
- the steering committee is discussing these models.
- through student feedback and discussion
- Undertaking an inventory of current assessment methods and comparing vs. goals for program outcomes and graduate attributes.
- Until we hear about available resources for conducting post-graduation surveys of students, we are unable to develop assessment models at the program level
- We are developing ways to assess student progress through the supervisory committee process.
- We have discussed in Steering Committee and informally our pedagogical objectives and the means for achieving them.
- We have not been asked to develop them, but they would include something about intensive training related to [****] at the Graduate Level.
- We have not framed our program in this way, but it would not be difficult to do so. The program involves developing an deep, interdisciplinary understanding of [****], and being introduced to the conduct of field research and academic writing (students write a research based thesis)
We will first need to create lists of outcomes before we list assessment models. The models will likely be based on the cumulative and hierarchical structure of the required courses in our programs. 

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We will first need to create lists of outcomes before we list assessment models. The models will likely be based on the cumulative and hierarchical structure of the required courses in our programs. We find valid assessment to be extremely difficult because of the limited English abilities of a large number of our students. 

Work is in process in preparation for next [****] accreditation in 2014

9a) **Name of Accrediting body and Website URL**

- as above-http://www.ceph.org/
- Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board-
  http://www.chemistry.ca/index.php?ci_id=2071&la_id=1
  http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/
- Clinical Program Only: CPA, APA-http://www.engineerscanada.ca
- CMA Canada-http://www.engineerscanada.ca/e/pr_accreditation.cfm
- P Eng-www.engineerscanada.ca

10a) **Name of Accrediting body and Website URL**

- AACSB; EQUIS-apeg.bc.ca
- APEGBC-apeg.bc.ca
- Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (APEGBC)-
  http://www.apeg.bc.ca/
- Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board-
  http://www.chemistry.ca/index.php?ci_id=1891&la_id=1
- Clinical Program Only: CPA, APA-http://www.cpa.ca/education/accreditation/;
  http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/
- CMA Canada-http://www.engineerscanada.ca
- Our programme is structured, but I cannot say whether the structure meets the requirements of an external crediting body without knowing what that body is and what requirements it has.-http://www.engineerscanada.ca/e/pr_accreditation.cfm
- P Eng-www.engineerscanada.ca

11a) **Please describe and provide any examples or reference information. (best-practices)**

- An example is standardized testing. For example, there is a well-known test called the Force Concept Inventory which we have sometimes had students take during the first week of class and again during the last week of class to measure improvement.
By keeping active in the profession, attending conferences, reading professional journals and discussing pedagogy among ourselves, we all have a good idea of "best practices."

For MSc and PhD: the thesis. For PhD: the qualifying examination.

Outcome based learning models were implemented by the [****] Chair responsible for overseeing this project within [****] at his previous institution ([****]). There is also awareness of US models through ABET.

See Engineering Graduate Attribute Development Project - http://egad.engineering.queensu.ca/

The data provided by [****] during her presentation at SFU July, 2012

There is published research on LOA available. AACSB doesn't specifically prescribe an 'approved' methodology for LOA. Direct embedded measures are preferable to MFTs or indirect survey methodologies.

these are so numerous that we do not refer to them by name, but we assess students from multiple perspectives - and expect them to be both versatile and ingenious.

TLC FASS [****] has met with some of our Faculty members to start informing them of various assessment of learning outcomes instruments

UK Benchmarks

We refer mainly to the popular post-secondary LO literature. The main Computer Science accreditation body is CIPS, which announced an LO-based policy:

12a) How often does your curriculum committee (or equivalent) meet? Other (please describe)

- As necessary to interact with [****] about issues that arise
- As part of graduate studies committee
- As part of undergraduate studies committee
- during application review, and to put processes in place, we met a lot this spring (once every 1-2 weeks) and now have met only twice this summer
- Every few years.
- Have Steering Committee instead - meets every two to three years
- I am not a member of the graduate committee, so I can't speak to this.
- Meetings are scheduled around specific agenda items (SSHRC or program applications, course proposals, curricular changes, etc. This roughly amounts to meetings on a monthly basis, but sometimes this involves more or less frequent meetings.
- Nothing regular; depends entirely on whether there are issues about the curriculum that need to be discussed.
- rarely
- twice per semester
- when required; 2-3X semester
- 6 times annually
15a) What support(s) might your unit require in order to establish a learning outcomes assessment model, and/or improve upon existing learning outcomes assessment processes? Other (please describe)

- An example that a skeptical and overworked faculty could imagine being useful.
- Because we currently have 49% international students, SFU must repair the EAL problems on campus before we can undertake valid assessment of outcomes.
- Consultations with experts in History at other universities that have long-standing experience with learning outcomes in History would be most helpful. If the university mandates learning outcomes for all academic units, I hope that it will fund such consultations.
- Don't yet know.
- Examples would be highly useful.
- Experience from universities in other countries (US, Australia).
- [****] is very lucky to have [****] who is well versed in learning outcomes and assessment funding.
- Funding and resources for locating students who have graduated and conducting the relevant research.
- not interested
- Potentially increase staffing in order to manage the process.
- Staff support.
- Support for database development to monitor program evaluation metrics and automate report generation for annual program review. Books on rubric development for post-secondary.
- there may be a future need for staff to handle data collection and processing.
- There would definitely be a future need for staff to handle data collection and processing if any and all programs offered by an academic unit are included in a system of LOA.
- This question presumes that we are in favour of this initiative which as a dept we are not.
- We are an interdisciplinary program.
- We have made substantial progress in developing LOs, and have designed a presentation and process management system internally. We would be interested in comparing and sharing what we have done with other units.

16) Do you have thoughts, comments, or concerns that you would like to share with us about learning outcomes and their assessment?

- It is very important to have the flexibility for each academic unit to run the LO process, gather and present the materials in a way which is appropriate for that unit. It is unlikely that a global standard form or template will work well. This is particularly important so that the units are able to use the LO documents after the global process is complete: these need to be live, revisable, working documents.
- As faculty and students are not that receptive to significant changes, there is a need for significant training for faculty regarding OBE, particularly alignment of assessment with learning outcomes.
- At a recent Departmental Meeting, the [****] Department as a whole agreed that we have concerns about the initiative toward identified learning outcomes and would like further information before this initiative proceeds and also feel that the resources to support such an initiative could possibly be more fruitfully allocated.
- Given that the University will have to provide documentation continuously to demonstrate that we are meeting our learning objectives, [****] faculty are concerned about the large potential workload increase that could take time away from teaching activities including efforts to innovate. We feel that this should be addressed as most of our faculty remain either unaware of the issue or unconvinced of its importance with respect to how they teach.
- I am a strong believer that learning outcomes should be an integral part of our programs. They provide clear landmarks for students. It is particularly important in language training. I found some of the questions of the survey difficult to answer because they did not really apply to our programs. We are in the process of reviewing our entire [****] program (the rest of the curriculum had been revised after the last review; however the outcomes were not mentioned clearly so we will have to revisit this issue soon), but it is not done yet, so I had to answer no at some questions and this is not the reality. We are doing baby steps in the right direction, but it is not a black and white yes or no answer.

- I feel that the learning outcomes and assessment model is incompatible with the pedagogy in our department and in the [****] more broadly. On the assessment side in particular, I fear that it will increase workloads—that are already high—and involve the department in increased administrative work that will in no way improve the pedagogy or learning in the department. The basic philosophy of learning outcomes and assessment is inimical to creative and spontaneous inquiry, and to the development of authentic critical thinking ability. I fear that once learning outcomes and assessment are established, it will inevitably lead to a change in course design and instruction whereby courses are designed to most easily meet the quantitative assessment requirements of these new procedures. I am opposed to the establishment of a learning outcomes and assessment model at SFU.

- I think the whole exercise is reductionistic and beggars the learning process.

- I think this is a very good idea.

- I'm not happy we're going to have to go through this exercise just to let our sports teams play in an American league, instead of against other Canadian universities. When the university community was told about the NCAA plans, there was no mention of the huge effort required right across the university to make this pipe dream happen.

- Is the university planning to develop institutional or universal learning outcomes for all undergraduates? If so, it is essential to know these in order to align individual programs along these goals. Resources and time are a concern of course. While the [****] has adopted some practices around including learning objectives and core competencies from [****] in all of our syllabi, revisions to our curricula and evaluation of the outcomes is a sizable undertaking and investment.

- It is likely important for departments to distinguish between (and properly align) learning outcome goals, learning objectives, and demonstrable traits that students work will be evaluated against. It would be helpful for departments embarking on defining and measuring LOAs to have clearly defined terminology to work with (i.e. common language). LOAs and course grades are not necessarily equivalents in assessment. LOA should also not be considered a measure of instructor evaluation nor should it be used in [****] discussions. It is necessary for departments/faculties to control LOA data at all stages to prevent misuse.

- It would be important that learning outcomes and assessments be fully integrated from course to program, to faculty, to university levels. Possible concern that University level LOAs could lead to increased workload for students/faculty at the program level. Furthermore concern that any University level LOAs not conflict with external professional accrediting bodies.

- Learning outcome development and assessment is an expensive process. Properly monitoring an outcome based education requires additional staff and instructor/TA support. This process will force instructors to be more unified in their coverage of course materials. Rubric development will be challenging and critical to success.

- Let's not make this process overly difficult, once program level outcomes have been set the rest should be fairly simple, if bureaucratic.

- LOA for programs like joint honours or majors will require inter-departmental coordination since LOs would be divided between the relevant academic units.
Many members of the [****] Department have expressed considerable concern about the LO initiative, relating to matters such as workload; pedagogy; and top-down university governance.

[****] will be working on developing program learning outcomes.

Not sure what is meant by a 'model'; we have practical experience in integrating material and specifying outcomes for graduate students in our multi-disciplinary program. Any model would have to be applicable to our sort of program.

Some of this survey's questions switched from [****] to [****] MA and PhD. I answered 'no' or equivalent to those questions.

The concept and operationalization of learning outcomes are still vague for us. Concrete examples are helpful.

The [****] passed a motion at yesterday's faculty meeting [****] expressing great concern about both the process of being required to develop learning outcomes and the value of the exercise especially during times of evident fiscal restraint.

There are some problems with this survey. 1. I was asked to complete it in my capacity as [****] Programme Chair. But the survey asked me questions about the [****] programme when referring to [****] Majors and the [****] Honours programme. I found this inappropriate. 2. The preamble that I received in the email from [****] needs to point out in greater detail what the objective of the survey is. Is the survey looking for the way we already express and assess learning outcomes in order to recognize and affirm the superior-quality teaching in evidence at SFU, or is the survey looking for gaps, inadequacies, etc.? And what action will be taken on the basis of the information gathered in the survey? What does the survey mean by improving "the educational experience for all our students"? Is there a problem with the way in which we deliver our courses and formulate and assess learning outcomes now? 3. The preamble needs to offer a more elaborate definition of learning outcomes. How are these distinct from programme requirements or teaching objectives? The definition offered in the preamble is sufficiently malleable to be identical with requirements and objectives. It made the survey confusing. University-wide discussions have not congealed enough for all faculty and administrators to have an identical meaning for learning outcomes.

Two of the previous sets of questions were phrased in the present tense: "Does your curriculum committee discuss learning outcomes?" Since we have not yet discussed this, I cannot that that it is something we "do." But once we do begin discussions on learning outcomes, the curriculum committee will be the place that these discussions begin. Since we are a small department, much of this also be done at the level of the entire department. We have concerns with how to assess learning outcomes at the program level, as that requires the ability to track students after graduate. In the past, we have asked for support in doing this, so as to determine the quality of our degree, but have never received support. Unless the VPA is willing to provide the money and infrastructure support to enable this, I don't see how it will be possible to assess learning outcomes at the program level.

We are an interdisciplinary program and will be relying on the departments whose subjects we use to create the individual learning outcomes for the courses involved in [****] programs.

We are happy to begin the development of learning outcomes in our graduate programs. We will begin in the fall.

We are trying to spread a culture of awareness of learning outcomes, and are succeeding - we hope moving at a pace roughly equal to others in the university.

we need to address the SFU-wide focus on developing learning outcomes across faculties and look forward to being involved in this process. note that [****] is a very diverse, non-departmentalized faculty; so we've devised the [****] program to deal with that diversity, having students focus in their area of research, while at the same time, having students
learning about related fields and working together as much as possible to support interdisciplinary approaches to learning and research.

- We will do it but we are very busy and need support.
APPENDIX B

Learning Outcomes & Assessment Working Group:
Institutional Overviews

Prepared by
Ilia Starr, Coordinator, Learning Outcomes & Assessment Project
Office of the Vice-President, Academic & Provost
September 2012
Portland State University
Portland, OR
http://www.pdx.edu/

At a Glance

- Accreditor: NWCCU
- Over 225 academic degree programs
- Degree range: bachelor’s; master’s; doctoral; graduate certificates
- 8 colleges and schools

Colleges & Schools

- College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- College of Urban & Public Affairs
- Maseeh College of Engineering & Computer Science
- School of Business Administration
- Graduate School of Education
- School of Extended Studies
- School of Fine & Performing Arts
- School of Social Work

LOA-relevant Administrative Structure

* The IAC reports annually to the Provost and the Faculty Senate.
Institutional Assessment Council

- Appointments are made by the Provost, Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Instruction, and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to represent the breadth of academic units and programs of the institution.
- Priority has been the development of Campus Wide Learning Outcomes (CWLO) that define the undergraduate educational experience.
- Working on a five-year plan (since 2009) to promote the implementation and assessment of the CWLOs at a campus level as individual units continue their program level assessment activities.

Council Structure (twelve voting members including):

- Faculty representation
- Staff representation
- Student representative
- 5-6 x *ex officio* members (Vice Provost for Academic Programs & Instruction, Dean of Undergraduate Studies)

Center for Academic Excellence

- Assessment practices reflect a decentralized institutional culture, with classroom-level assessment remaining the responsibility of the individual schools, colleges and departments.
- Seeks to build institutional self-knowledge based on the amassed results of program-level student learning assessments.
- Provides classroom assessment resources while using program-level assessment as a vehicle for focusing faculty attention on student learning, program alignment, pedagogy, and student development.

Office of Institutional Research & Planning

- Collects, preserves, interprets, analyzes and disseminates information regarding the characteristics, activities, operations and policies of PSU.
- Information is used by members of PSU community for:
  - mandated reporting requirements;
  - administrative decision-making and policy formulation;
  - academic assessment;
  - institutional planning; and
  - release to the general public.
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR
http://www.uoregon.edu/

At a Glance

- Accreditor: NWCCU
- Total enrollment: 24,447 / FTEs: 23,451 (fall 2011)
- Over 260 academic programs
- Degree range: bachelor’s; master’s; doctoral; graduate certificates
- 7 colleges and schools

Colleges & Schools

- School of Architecture & Allied Arts
- College of Arts & Sciences
- Lundquist College of Business
- College of Education
- School of Journalism & Communication
- School of Music & Dance
- School of Law

LOA-relevant Administrative Structure

* Chaired by the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.
Office of Academic Affairs – Assessment Council

- The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs is responsible for the accreditation portfolio and coordination of the assessment of student learning outcomes is delegated to the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.
- An Assessment Council, chaired by the AVP for Academic Affairs, is charged with discussion and coordination of its assessment efforts.

Structure:

- Vice Provost for Academic Affairs / Chair of Assessment Council
- Executive Assistant
- Council membership (details unknown)

Teaching & Learning Center

- Provides substantial student support in additional to faculty support.
- A Teaching Effectiveness Program exists to engage the academic community in viewing, assessing, and improving undergraduate instruction, but there does not appear to be any significant LOA component to the TLC’s portfolio.

Office of Institutional Research

- Conducts research on student, faculty, and staff to promote on-going institutional self-assessment.
- Fulfills UO's compliance reporting requirements at both the federal and state levels.
- Provides institutional research and assessment data and data analysis to departments and units throughout the University community.
- Organizes and conduct other institutional assessment programs, including assessment of student learning and student activities, both independently and in collaboration with other departments.
- Provides institutional assessment results and analysis to administrative units, academic departments, and offices providing student support services.
University of Washington
Seattle, Tacoma and Bothell, WA
http://www.washington.edu/

At a Glance

- Accrdecor: NWCCU
- Total enrollment: 43,619 (fall 2011) / FTEs: 50,527 (fall 2011)
- Over 150 academic and professional programs
- Degree range: bachelor’s; master’s; doctoral; professional programs
- 16 colleges and schools

Colleges & Schools

- College of Arts & Sciences
- College of Built Environments
- Foster School of Business
- School of Dentistry
- College of Education
- College of Engineering
- College of the Environment
- The Graduate School
- Information School
- School of Law
- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Pharmacy
- Evans School of Public Affairs
- School of Public Health
- School of Social Work

LOA-relevant Administrative Structure

*CTL reports jointly to the Vice Provost & Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, and to the Vice Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies and the Dean of University Libraries; those three in turn report directly to the Provost & Executive Vice President.
Office of Educational Assessment

- Dedicated to the improvement of educational practice through assessment of teaching and learning and through evaluation and support of educational programs and services.
- Provides a variety of evaluation and assessment services to the UW community and outside agencies.
- Research staff are specialists in quantitative and qualitative methods; they collaborate with UW faculty and staff to create effective assessment strategies, particularly in the assessment of college-level outcomes, program evaluation, and survey research.

Admin:

**Directorship**
- Director

**Course Evaluation**
- Manager
- Program Assistant

**Scanning & Scoring**
- Manager
- 2 x Scanning & Scoring staff

**Testing Center**
- Manager
- 2 x Educational Test Administrators

**Assessment, Program Evaluation, and Research Support**
- Director, UW Study of Undergraduate Learning
- 4 x Research Scientists

**Development**
- Manager

**Accounting/Management/Programming**
- Administrator
- Web Developer
- Senior Computer Specialist
- Fiscal Specialist
- Administrator Emeritus

Center for Teaching & Learning

- Works with individuals, departments, and communities of practice, as well as in collaboration with campus partners, to share knowledge of best practices and evidence-based research on teaching, learning, and mentoring.

Office of Planning & Budgeting

- Supports the UW community in accomplishing its goals through the planning and allocation of financial and physical resources, and providing analysis and information services to enhance university decision-making, planning and policy formation.
Washington State University  
Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Extension, WA  
http://www.wsu.edu/

At a Glance

- Accréditeur: NWCCU
- Total enrollment: 27,329 (autumn 2011) / FTEs: 24,244 (average 2010-2011)
- Over 200 academic programs
- Degree range: bachelor's; master's; doctoral; professional; graduate certificates
- 11 colleges

Colleges & Schools

- College of Agricultural, Human & Natural Resource Sciences
- College of Arts & Sciences
- College of Business
- College of Communication
- College of Education
- College of Engineering & Architecture
- Honors College
- College of Nursing
- College of Pharmacy
- University College
- College of Veterinary Medicine

LOA-relevant Administrative Structure
**Liaison Council for Assessment of Undergraduate Programs**

- Meets bi-monthly to plan and manage an institution-wide system for planning and managing program assessment.
- WSU reports Liaison Council's activity as part of its assessment system and efforts to build capacity.

**Representation:**

- 11 x Members from each college or school
- 2 x Members from the WSU Tri-Cities and WSU Vancouver campuses
- Member from International Programs
- 4 x members from the Provost’s office in the following capacities:
  - Associate Executive Vice President
  - Vice Provost for Academic Policy and Evaluation
  - Special Assistant to Provost and Executive Vice President
  - Director, Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning

**Office of Assessment of Teaching & Learning**

- Coordinates the bi-monthly meetings of the Liaison Council for Assessment of Undergraduate Programs.
- Works with colleges and programs on assessment of student learning and continuous improvement of undergraduate academic programs.
- Develops and implements assessment systems and interprets results.
- Develops and deploys best practices in assessment to improve teaching and learning.
- Meets assessment requirements for regional accreditation and academic program review.

**Admin:**

- Director
- 2 x Assessment Fellows
- 2 x Assessment Specialists
- 2 x Technical Managers
- Technical Assistant
- Administrative Assistant

**Office of Institutional Research**

- Provides institutional-level information for decision-making and planning purposes and to external audiences.
University of Alaska Anchorage
Anchorage, Kodiak, Valdez, Kenai, Matanuska-Susitna Valley, AK
http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/

At a Glance

- Accrediting body: NWCCU
- Total enrollment: 30,073 (2010-2011) / FTEs: 25,470 (2010-2011)
- Over 150 degree programs
- Degree range: bachelor’s; master’s; doctoral (as of May 2012); professional
- 8 colleges and schools + 4 satellite campus colleges

Colleges & Schools

- College of Arts & Sciences
- College of Business & Public Policy
- College of Education
- College of Health
- Community & Technical College
- School of Engineering
- School of Nursing
- School of Social Work
- Matanuska-Susitna College
- Kenai Peninsula College
- Kodiak College
- Prince William Sound Community College

LOA-relevant Administrative Structure

* Title changed from VP Accreditation & Undergraduate Programs to VP Curriculum & Assessment, to now VP Undergraduate Academic Affairs.

** As of Feb. 2012, the VP Res & Grad Studies sits ex-officio on the AAC to solidify the Grad School’s role in LOA.
Academic Assessment Committee

- Directs the collection and analysis of assessment data, and responds to requests for info on official assessment results and achievement of student learning outcomes.
- Develops, maintains and implements an Academic Assessment Handbook for programs.
- Refers curricular and academic issues to the appropriate boards, reviews assessment-related policy and procedure change requests, and recommends actions to the appropriate bodies.

Representation:
- Members from most colleges or schools (6 in all)
- 3 x members from satellite campuses
- 4 x members from Faculty Senate
- 3 x ex-officio members including the:
  - Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs (VPUAA)
  - Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies (VPRGS)
- Member from Consortium Library
- Accreditation and Academic Programs Coordinator (Office of Academic Affairs)

Academic Programs & Assessment

- Coordinates review processes for academic programs to determine if they are operationally efficient, achieving intended outcomes, and aligned with UAA’s and academic units’ missions.
- Two types of academic program reviews are performed: Student Outcomes Assessment and Program Review.
- For Student Outcomes Assessment, program faculty review program outcomes and determine whether students have achieved them, leading to faculty-driven program recommendations and plans for improvement.

Admin:
- Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs
- Assistant Vice Provost and Accreditation Liaison Officer* (placed in Accreditation)
- Accreditation and Academic Programs Coordinator

Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence

- Offers workshops, forums and assistance to faculty in teaching, research, assessment, civic engagement, classroom success, student retention, etc.
- Runs a monthly workshop series to help faculty assess the efficacy of classroom strategies, document the effectiveness of their teaching, and share effective strategies.

Institutional Research

- Collects and analyzes institutional data to enhance decision-making, assessment and planning; is heavily involved in UAA’s accreditation process.
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX
http://www.tamu.edu/

At a Glance

- Accréditor: SACS
- Total enrollment: 46,422 (spring 2011) / FTEs: 43,074 (fall 2011)
- Over 360 academic degree programs
- Degree range: bachelor’s; master’s; doctoral; professional programs
- 10 colleges and schools

Colleges & Schools

- College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
- College of Architecture
- Bush School of Government & Public Service
- Mays Business School
- College of Education & Human Development
- Dwight Look College of Engineering
- College of Geosciences
- College of Liberal Arts
- College of Science
- College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

LOA-relevant Administrative Structure
Office of Institutional Assessment

- Supports and assists assessment efforts across the TAMU’s, particularly those dealing with university-wide assessment and accreditation.
- Assists colleges in efforts to assess student learning.
- Supports institutional effectiveness efforts across the university.
- Plans and hosts an annual assessment conference.
- Assessment Liaisons represent each college and support unit and advise on issues regarding assessment practice and processes.
- An Assessment Review Committee produces an annual report for the Provost and President which summarizes local college assessment reviews, as well as administrative and educational support assessment reviews of the university.

Admin:
- Director
- Assistant Director
- 2 x Program Coordinators
- Administrative Assistant
- 2 x Graduate Assistants
- 28 x Assessment Liaisons from various colleges and administrative units
- 8 x Assessment Review Committee members from various colleges and administrative units

Center for Teaching Excellence

- Assists academic departments with defining program goals and determining where they are introduced, reinforced and assessed throughout the curriculum.
- Facilitates the processes of:
  - curriculum redesign;
  - creation of program-level learning outcomes;
  - establishment of course-level learning outcomes; and
  - development of a graphical matrix.
- Encourages departments to build into their programs the incorporation of high impact practices (HIP) such as internships, service learning, study abroad and undergraduate research; these can be incorporated as stand-alone, for-credit components, or incorporated into directly courses.
- Offers one-on-one consulting with faculty on teaching related topics, from implementing high impact practices in courses to documenting results of changes made in teaching; assists with interpreting and responding to student feedback.

Office of Institutional Studies & Planning

- Provides analytical support for university-wide planning activities, fulfilling university compliance reporting requirements at both the Federal (SACS) and State levels.
- Primary responsibilities include online information system, faculty and student studies and reports, and other reporting.
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC
http://www.unc.edu/index.htm

At a Glance

- Accreditor: SACS
- Total enrollment: 29,137 (fall 2011) / FTEs: 26,837 (fall 2011)
- Over 250 academic degree programs
- Degree range: bachelor’s; master’s; doctoral; professional programs
- 15 colleges and schools

Colleges & Schools

- College of Arts & Sciences
- School of Dentistry
- School of Education
- Eshelman School of Pharmacy
- Gillings School of Global Public Health
- Graduate School
- Kenan-Flagler Business School
- School of Government
- School of Information & Library Science
- School of Journalism & Mass Communication
- School of Law
- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Social Work
- Summer School

LOA-relevant Administrative Structure
**Office of Institutional Research & Assessment**

- As part of the “Institutional Effectiveness” component of its mission, is responsible for coordinating campus-wide and unit-level assessment of academic programs and administrative processes to support UNC-Chapel Hill’s quality improvement efforts, including:
  - providing technical support and consultation to assist units in assessing student LOs; and
  - coordinating accreditation activities.
- Provides resources for use by faculty and staff in assessing the effectiveness of their units and reporting the results as required for University accountability purposes.
- For academic programs assessment, provides guides for creating feasible systems of assessing student learning outcomes within programs and generating meaningful data for program improvement.
- Generates information on the current accreditation status of UNC-Chapel Hill and its professional programs and schools.
- An Assessment Policy Advisory Committee (APAC), made up of representatives from all academic units and the Division of Student Affairs, advises the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost concerning policies and procedures for the outcomes assessment process at UNC-Chapel Hill (see “Principles” and “Recommendations for Resources to Support Assessment Activities”).

**Center for Faculty Excellence**

- Provides integrated support to faculty across the entire spectrum of their responsibilities and throughout all stages of their careers.
- Partners with other units across the University to ensure efficient and effective delivery of support services to all faculty campus-wide.
- Collaborates with Instructional Technologies Services to help instructors devise novel approaches to instruction and assessment.
- E-Learning: Provides Resources for online course development, implementation and evaluation, as well as nationally recognized standards for online course development.

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1 Deans are responsible for coordinating student LOA within their schools. They are also responsible for establishing internal reporting processes and schedules that ensure that assessments are occurring on a regular basis, and that the results are being used to improve programs as appropriate. The Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost incorporates data from school-level reports of outcomes assessment processes in its planning processes, and regularly uses these results for program improvement.
Appendix B – LOAWG: Institutional Overviews

Boston University
Boston, MA
http://www.bu.edu/

At a Glance

- Accreditor: NEASC
- Total enrollment: 32,067 (fall 2009) / FTEs: 24,846 (fall 2009)
- Over 250 academic degree programs
- Degree range: bachelor’s; master’s; doctoral; professional programs
- 17 colleges and schools

Colleges & Schools

- College of Arts & Sciences
- Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
- College of Communication
- College of Engineering
- College of Fine Arts
- College of General Studies
- College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences: Sargent College
- Metropolitan College
- Goldman School of Dental Medicine
- School of Education
- School of Hospitality Administration
- School of Law
- School of Management
- School of Medicine
- Division of Graduate Medical Sciences
- School of Social Work
- School of Theology

LOA-relevant Administrative Structure
Task Force – “One BU: Unlocking the Undergraduate Experience” on Assessment

- In June 2008, a Task Force was convened by the University Provost called “One BU: Unlocking the Undergraduate Experience,” chaired by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education; this Committee worked for twelve months to define a set of shared principles for what constitutes a BU undergraduate education.
- The Task Force made three recommendations relating to LOA:
  o Add capacity in institutional research to support LOA, especially across the curriculum.
  o Encourage the use of ePortfolios as a self-appraising instrument.
  o Encourage the use of ePortfolios as a virtual forum for students to describe, to comment on, and to mentor each other.
- There does not appear to be any LO or Assessment office or council per se, and BU’s LOA culture looks to be largely decentralized, with individual colleges and schools presently following their own approaches and philosophies.
- At the university level, the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching espouses the accreditation standards of The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business’ (AACSB).

Center for Excellence & Innovation in Teaching

- Promotes excellence in teaching by facilitating the appropriate use of new technologies in classrooms and laboratories; refining methods, instruments, and procedures for evaluating teaching; and working with the administration to improve the teaching infrastructure in classrooms and laboratories.
- Assists faculty with learning assessment (e.g. determining how well students understand class material / classroom assessment techniques).
- Assists faculty with identifying learning outcomes for course design following Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives.
- Faculty representatives serve in a Teaching, Learning, and Instructional Resources Committee.

Institutional Research

- As part of Budget, Planning, and Institutional Research, provides statistics and information in support of the BU’s planning, management, and budgetary processes.
- Collects and analyzes key information regarding the BU’s faculty, staff, and student populations.
- Coordinates data for governmental, informational, and ranking submissions.