

Preparing a PEAQ HLC- NCA Reaccreditation Self-Study Report:

The Assessment Piece



Commission Statement on Assessment of Student Learning*

*Handbook on Accreditation, 3.4.2 (2003)

Assessment of student academic achievement is fundamental for all organizations that place student learning at the center of their educational endeavors.

An organization's focus on achieved student learning is critical not only to promoting and improving effective curricular and co-curricular learning experiences and to providing evidence of the quality of educational experiences and programs, but also to enhancing the public's perception of the value of higher education.

Assessment of student achievement is essential for each higher learning organization that values its effect on the learning of its students. Therefore, an organization committed to understanding and improving the learning opportunities and environments it provides students will be able to document the relationship between assessment of and improvement in student learning.



Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.



Core Component 2a - The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

Examples of Evidence

- *The organization's planning documents reflect a sound understanding of the organization's current capacity.*
- *The organization's planning documents demonstrate that attention is being paid to emerging factors such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.*
- *The organization's planning documents show careful attention to the organization's function in a multicultural society.*
- *The organization's planning processes include effective environmental scanning.*



Evidence Provided

- Goals and objectives from UALR Fast Forward, the institution's strategic plan completed in 2004.



Core Component 2c - The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Examples of Evidence

- *The organization demonstrates that its evaluation processes provide evidence that its performance meets its stated expectations for institutional effectiveness.*
- *The organization maintains effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and using organizational information.*
- *Appropriate data and feedback loops are available and used throughout the organization to support continuous improvement.*
- *Periodic reviews of academic and administrative subunits contribute to improvement of the organization.*
- *The organization provides adequate support for its evaluation and assessment processes.*



Evidence Provided

- Goals and objectives from UALR Fast Forward
- Description of institutional assessments
 - NSSE, FSSE, HERI, MGT of America
- Description of Assessment Infrastructure
 - Provost's Assessment Advisory Group (PAAG)
 - Distribution of assessment funds across campus
 - Assessment Central Webpage
 - Annual Assessment Expo
- Examples of data collection, analysis, and use from various units
- Link to annual assessment reports posted on academic and student affairs websites
- Description of professional accreditation, academic program review, and other unit evaluation processes



Core Component 2d - All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

Examples of Evidence

- *Coordinated planning processes center on the mission documents that define vision, values, goals, and strategic priorities for the organization.*
 - *Implementation of the organization's planning is evident in its operations.*
 - *Long-range strategic planning processes allow for reprioritization of goals when necessary because of changing environments.*
 - *Planning documents give evidence of the organization's awareness of the relationships among educational quality, student learning, and the diverse, complex, global, and technological world in which the organization and its students exist.*
- *Planning processes involve internal constituents and, where appropriate, external constituents.*



Evidence Provided

- Goals and objectives from UALR Fast Forward
- Linkage of goals and objectives in UALR Fast Forward to the strategic plans of all units
- Update of progress made on UALR Fast Forward and unit strategic plans



Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.



Core Component 3a - The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

Examples of Evidence

- *The organization clearly differentiates its learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs by identifying the expected learning outcomes for each.*
- *Assessment of student learning provides evidence at multiple levels: course, program, and institutional.*
- *Assessment of student learning includes multiple direct and indirect measures of student learning.*
 - *Results obtained through assessment of student learning are available to appropriate constituencies, including students themselves.*



Evidence Provided

- Assessment plans and seven years of assessment reports for all academic units. These are posted annually on each college webpage and linked to Assessment Central.



Core Component 3b - The organization values and supports effective teaching.

Example of Evidence

- *The organization evaluates teaching and recognizes effective teaching.*



Evidence Provided

- Annual teaching evaluation processes
- Annual Faculty Excellence Awards
- Recognition of effective teaching presented by the Academy of Teaching and Learning Excellence



Core Component 3c - The organization creates effective learning environments.

Examples of Evidence

- *Assessment results inform improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and student services.*
- *The organization's systems of quality assurance include regular review of whether its educational strategies, activities, processes, and technologies enhance student learning.*



Evidence Provided

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Core Component 3d - The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Examples of Evidence

- *The organization evaluates the use of its learning resources to enhance student learning and effective teaching.*
- *The organization regularly assesses the effectiveness of its learning resources to support learning and teaching.*



Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.



Core Component 4b - The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

Examples of Evidence

- *The organization regularly reviews the relationship between its mission and values and the effectiveness of its general education.*
- *Learning outcomes demonstrate that graduates have achieved breadth of knowledge and skills and the capacity to exercise intellectual inquiry.*
- *Learning outcomes demonstrate effective preparation for continued learning.*



Evidence Provided

- Assessment data for core curriculum linked to UALR's 10 core competencies



Core Component 4c - The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

Examples of Evidence

- *Regular academic program reviews include attention to currency and relevance of courses and programs.*
- *In keeping with its mission, learning goals and outcomes include skills and professional competence essential to a diverse workforce.*
- *Learning outcomes document that graduates have gained the skills and knowledge they need to function in diverse local, national, and global societies.*
 - *Curricular evaluation involves alumni, employers, and other external constituents who understand the relationships among the courses of study, the currency of the curriculum, and the utility of the knowledge and skills gained*



Evidence Provided

- Program review and reaccreditation processes
- Assessment data for core curriculum linked to UALR's 10 core competencies
- The role and use of external program advisory groups in program assessment



Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.



Core Component 5d - Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

Examples of Evidence

- *The organization's evaluation of services involves the constituencies served.*



Evidence Provided

- Strategic planning process that resulted in *UALR Fast Forward*, *UALR On the Move*, and the University District Partnership



Resources Available from HLC-NCA on Assessment of Student Learning

- www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org
 - Information on the Assessment Academy
 - Downloads
 - “Student Learning, Assessment, and Accreditation” (March 2007)
 - “Criteria & Core Components Related to Student Learning” (2006)

A copy of this Powerpoint is available at
<http://ualr.edu/assessment/>

