

In accordance with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation Standard 14, the University must demonstrate that its graduates have achieved the expected knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) cultivated through a particular program of study. To meet this standard for the 2011 Periodic Review Report (PRR), the Office of the Provost developed a general assessment policy, which required that every undergraduate and graduate degree program devise a plan to assess student learning. In the plan, program faculty defined learning goals in terms of KSAs, suggested measures to demonstrate their mastery, and processes by which measurement results would inform curricular review.

These activities were summarized in the University's PRR, and were praised in the subsequent mid-cycle evaluation as “thorough, well-organized, and appropriate to the institution.”

In preparation for the decennial review in 2016, we have begun the next phase of the assessment endeavor: to follow-up on the plans and begin reporting. We will rely on the Faculty of Arts & Sciences to coordinate program-level assessment with support from the Office of the Provost. Rather than forward each program's assessment report directly to the Office of the Provost, Schools will submit an annual summary of program activity, maintaining program-level records locally.

These processes have been designed in accordance with the principles by which the formal plans were developed for the PRR.

- 1) *They should be decentralized to the level of the schools and, most importantly, to the individual programs.*
- 2) *The process of creating and implementing them should be managed by the faculty.*
- 3) *They should draw as much as possible upon the methods the faculty already use to evaluate how well their students are learning.*
- 4) *Their goal should be to create mechanisms that enhance the quality of the education we offer rather than merely to meet a compliance requirement.*

The first round of School-level reports will be collected in Fall 2013 (see the timeline below). Programs should revisit their plans and share them with their faculty-at-large. It is recommended that programs integrate assessment responsibilities within existing committees rather than create a new, *e.g.*, committee on assessment. In Arts & Sciences, we would recommend that the Educational Policy and Planning Committee advise programs regarding their assessment procedures, in accordance with the EPPC's mandate to coordinate curriculum planning.

During the SLOA planning phase, it became apparent that the activities which fit under the SLOA umbrella already occur across the University when planning curricula, proposing new courses, and evaluating a year's graduates. For the first round of reporting, it may be expedient to focus on documenting existing activities.

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