University Assessment Steering Committee

Purpose, Activities, and Guidelines
2015 through 2020

Revised March 16, 2015
Previously Revised February 21, 2011
Originally Approved as "Assessment Plan and Timetable," February 19, 2003
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1.0 Preamble
The University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC) was established in 2001 to develop and recommend assessment policy and plans for the institution. The Assessment Plan and Timetable, which was approved in 2002-03, included the committee charge and also served to guide academic departments in the creation of assessment plans and establishment of committee structures in support of ongoing assessment activities. As the University’s assessment culture has evolved, the UASC has broadened its focus to include assessment of student support units across campus, so as to better reflect the needs of the University and its stakeholders.

2.0 Purpose
The purpose of the University Assessment Steering Committee is to promote and support assessment of student learning and development as both a tool for improving the educational experience at WMU and aligning WMU’s departments with accreditation-based assessment requirements. Given learning is impacted by experiences outside the classroom, UASC’s oversight includes both academic units and student support units, supporting all in the improvement of the overall learning experience of WMU students.

3.0 Definitions
The definitions of several terms associated with assessment are provided in order to clarify and differentiate assessment from other University activities such as program planning, strategic planning, self-study or evaluation.

3.1 Assessment
“Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning” (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 8).

The University Assessment Steering Committee’s work is focused on the assessment of student learning and development. Other assessment activities, for example activities related to professional accreditation and program evaluation, are valued at WMU and the UASC supports the elements of accreditation and evaluation related to the assessment of student learning and development.

3.2 Academic program planning
This is a comprehensive review of academic programs that should align effective assessment with campus-wide continuous improvement, and provide meaningful data-driven information to assist with strategic planning. The academic and student support unit program review process should provide direction in planning for creating, sustaining, growing, merging, or eliminating academic
and co-curricular programs in order to maintain program relevancy for both students and the community. Assessment of student learning is involved, but only plays a small role in academic program planning.

3.3 Assessment plan
Assessment plans identify the structure, timeline and uses of assessment within the unit. Plans should include the following:

- Clear statements of intended student learning outcomes with criteria for student performance
- Multiple measures to determine the extent to which students are meeting those intended outcomes
- Timeline for collecting data on student performance measures
- Planned uses of assessment results for program improvement

Plans are dynamic documents that change to reflect lessons learned from assessment results as well as advances in the discipline. Plans should be continuously reviewed and formally updated at least every five years.

4.0 Goals
The goals of UASC are to help assessment RISE to be valued by all members of the Western Michigan University community.

**Recognize** – Develop and conduct methods of recognizing the work and success of faculty and staff in the furtherance of assessment activities and promotion of assessment activities as scholarly endeavors.

**Inform** – Provide information to the University community about assessment and assessment-related activities, resources and opportunities.

**Support** – Assist the University community in the development and implementation of assessment plans and strategies, including technologies supporting assessment. Review and provide feedback on assessment plans, activities and use of results.

**Educate** - Increase the awareness and value of the processes, benefits and tools of assessment.

5.0 Activities
The UASC engages in activities to support and enhance the culture of assessment at WMU. The activities are intended to provide opportunities and support for faculty, staff, and students to engage in research about assessment, to learn and apply assessment techniques, and to recognize and celebrate those who excel in assessment. The UASC is involved with and coordinates the following activities.
5.1 Recognition: Awarded on an annual basis

- Individual Assessment Excellence Award – Awarded for research in student learning and work in assessment for program improvement, resulting in an article in a peer reviewed journal

- Unit Assessment Excellence Award – Awarded for an outstanding assessment process actively using results for program improvement

- Assessment Fellows – Awarded to advance the formal assessment of student learning outcomes and program quality

5.2 Support

- Outreach to units regarding assessment plans, processes and results

- Provision of assessment tools, including technological tools

- Cyclical review process of assessment plans

- Consultation and Review Teams (CARTs) to evaluate proposed assessment plans

- Technological support (e.g., TracDat) and training

- Support and guidance for Assessment in Action Advisory Committee

- Deans’ reports on assessment – Review and provide feedback on assessment reports

- General Education assessment – Works in collaboration with the Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies to develop and implement assessment practices within the general education program

- HLC accreditation reaffirmation – work with other university units to track, provide structure for, and create guidance on the assessment of student learning through partnering with entities as recommended by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

5.3 Inform/Educate

- Assessment Fellows Grant presentations by Assessment Fellows Grant winners

- UASC Annual Activity Summary – A one-page summary will be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Student Affairs no later than June of each year.

- Assessment in Action Advisory Committee – This standing committee coordinates and plans the following:
6.0 Structure and Membership

UASC is an independent committee that reports to the provost. The membership structure of the UASC was approved on February 16, 2015, at the UASC’s monthly meeting. UASC is comprised of four permanent members: associate provost for assessment and undergraduate studies (OAUS), program manager assessment, administrative assistant senior from OAUS, and the director, assessment and effectiveness, Division of Student Affairs.

Rotating committee membership represents areas of the campus charged with student learning and development. Members are drawn from the academic colleges, student support units, other university committees, students and administrators. Units represented will be assessed on an on-going basis to be representative of the activities, goals and future direction of UASC. The rotating members represent the seven academic colleges, the Graduate College, Lee Honors College, the libraries, Undergraduate Studies Council, Committee to Oversee General Education, Academic Advising, Haenicke Institute for Global Education (student support specialist), and two representatives from the Division of Student Affairs. Rotating members serve staggered, three-year terms. New members are recruited as needed, through a process developed by the committee of the whole.

Other units on campus (e.g., Western Student Association (WSA), Graduate Students Association (GSA), Extended University Programs, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness) will be advised of the work of UASC through the distribution of agendas. WSA and GSA are welcome to send representatives to monthly meetings of the committee.

Comprised of representatives across the campus, the UASC closely works with and receives fiscal and operational support from the vice provost for assessment and undergraduate studies.

UASC meetings are presided over by the committee chair. At the last meeting of the academic year, a vice-chair is elected from the rotating membership. If the current committee chair represents academic affairs, the vice-chair must represent student support units, and vice versa. After serving one year as vice chair, the vice chair becomes chair of the committee. Both positions will begin their year of service at the summer strategic planning meeting usually held in July or August and are expected to participate in setting the agenda for this meeting. In the event of the UASC chair needing to resign or vacate their
position, the vice chair becomes chair and a new vice chair is selected from among the rotating members.

An executive committee consists of the associate vice provost, UASC chair, UASC vice chair, program manager assessment and senior administrative assistant from OAUS. The executive committee sets the agenda for monthly meetings.

The UASC was created in 2001, while the Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies was created in 2010. The two entities work hand-in-hand to support assessment efforts across the University community. Specific contributions from the office of the vice-provost for assessment and undergraduate studies include: fiscal and operational support to the UASC, including secretarial support to the committee and leadership of Assessment in Action activities; oversight of the Collegiate Learning Assessment process; liaison between Higher Learning Commission requirements for assessment and the UASC; liaison with vice provost for institutional effectiveness on matters related to assessment and accreditation; shared leadership with the chair and vice chair of UASC; and coordination of deans’ reports on assessment. Specific contributions from the UASC include: serves as the University-wide assessment policy, planning and resource coordination group; advises the provost and senior administrators about assessment policy, resources, and findings from assessment reports; determines an annual calendar of institutional assessment support and educational activities; formally reviews the general education assessment plan; formally reviews and approves all department and unit assessment plans and examines assessment findings on an established five-year cycle; reviews and approves assessment grants; reviews and provides feedback on deans’ reports on assessment. Both UASC and OAUS will provide liaisons as needed to promote assessment activities and support a culture of assessment at Western Michigan University.

6.1 Expectations of service from UASC members
Members of the UASC are expected to participate in the activities of the committee to insure that the functions and responsibilities can be executed. It is expected that members will attend monthly meetings, serve on at least one subcommittee, and promote and support assessment outreach activities through attendance of various UASC sponsored workshops, conferences, and special events.

6.2 Subcommittees
The UASC convenes a number of subcommittees to conduct the work of the committee. Following is a list of the main subcommittees normally assembled for this purpose. Other ad hoc committees will be organized as the need arises.

- Assessment in Action (assist with various planning activities)
- Deans’ Reports on Assessment (review deans’ reports and assist with recommendations)
- Assessment Fellows Grant (review and selection)
- Individual Assessment Excellence Award (review and selection)
- Unit Assessment Excellence Award (review and selection)

### 7.0 University Assessment Steering Committee Review
The UASC shall review its purpose, activities and guidelines at least every five years to insure effectiveness and relevance of the committee. The next review shall occur no later than 2020.

### 8.0 UASC Projected Timeline of Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| September| Monthly meeting  
           | Training session for new members prior to meeting  
           | Set objectives for the year |
| October  | Monthly meeting  |
| November | Monthly meeting  |
| December | Monthly meeting  
           | Response to Deans’ Reports on Assessment |
| January  | Monthly meeting  
           | Individual Assessment Excellence Award nominations due  
           | (annual) Unit Assessment Excellence Award nominations due |
| February | Monthly meeting  
           | Awards selection |
| March    | Monthly meeting  
           | Assessment in Action Day (awards presented) |
| April    | Monthly meeting  
           | Assessment Fellows Grant proposals due |
| May      | Monthly meeting  
           | Select UASC vice chair from among non-permanent members  
           | Assessment Fellows Grants awarded  
           | UASC Annual Activity Report (completed by chair prior to meeting) approval |
| August   | Deans’ Reports on Assessment due (every third year or as determined) |
Appendix – UASC Membership Structure Terms
Approved by the UASC, February 16, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Academic Units</th>
<th>Student Support Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-17</td>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-20</td>
<td>College of Aviation</td>
<td>Division of Student Affairs (at-large representative)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College of Health and Human Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate Studies Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-18</td>
<td>College of Education and Human Development</td>
<td>Libraries</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018-21</td>
<td>College of Fine Arts</td>
<td>Lee Honors College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Committee to Oversee General Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-19</td>
<td>Haworth College of Business</td>
<td>Division of Student Affairs (at-large representative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-22</td>
<td>College of Engineering and Applied Sciences</td>
<td>Haenicke Institute for Global Education (student support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate College</td>
<td>specialist)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Representatives will be recruited during the spring semester of the expiring term.

**Rotating Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>New Term</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>2014-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Aviation</td>
<td>2014-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haworth College of Business</td>
<td>2016-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Education and Human Development</td>
<td>2015-18</td>
<td>Currently vacant</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Engineering and Applied Sciences</td>
<td>2016-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Fine Arts</td>
<td>2015-18</td>
<td>Currently vacant</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>2014-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate College</td>
<td>2016-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee Honors College</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>2015-18</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Studies Council</td>
<td>2014-17</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee to Oversee General Education</td>
<td>2015-18</td>
<td>Currently vacant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>2014-17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haenicke Institute for Global Education (student support specialist)</td>
<td>2016-19</td>
<td>Replaces rep from International Education Council</td>
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<td>Division of Student Affairs (at-large representative)</td>
<td>2016-19</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Student Affairs (at-large representative)</td>
<td>2014-17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Permanent Members (ex-officio)**

| Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies (OAUS) | | Move from rotating member to permanent member to have better representation on student support side of house. |
| Assessment Programs Specialist, OAUS | | |
| Office Associate, OAUS | | |
| Director of Student Affairs Strategic Planning and Assessment, Division of Student Affairs | | |

Reference