

BELMONT ABBEY COLLEGE

Procedures for Academic Assessment

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Executive Summary

The Academic Assessment Subcommittee was assembled on behalf of the Academic Affairs Committee with the charge of drafting policies and procedures for an academic assessment program at Belmont Abbey College.

After reviewing SACS-COC accreditation requirements, best practices at other universities and colleges, and a consultant's recommendations, the subcommittee prepared a set of assessment procedures to use in the evaluation of academic programs at the College.

The assessment procedures outlined in this document represent a program that will allow Belmont Abbey College the ability to ensure the quality of its educational programs, will assist in planning, and decision-making, and will fulfill the SACS-COC requirements for accreditation.

The academic assessment process will involve all degree programs, the core curriculum, as well as specialized academic programs. Annual assessment will include using quantitative and qualitative measures to assess student learning. A five-year review will entail a concentrated appraisal of academic programs using peer evaluators, curriculum and goal evaluation, and findings from annual assessments of student learning.

Part I: Overview of Subcommittee's Efforts

The Academic Assessment Subcommittee was assembled on behalf of the Academic Affairs Committee with the charge to draft policies and procedures for academic assessment at Belmont Abbey College. The subcommittee consisted of five faculty members representing the four academic divisions and three administrators from the administrative division of Academic Affairs.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS	
Mr. Jim Giermanski	Professional Studies
Dr. Martin Harris	Humanities
Dr. Peter Lodge	Social Sciences
Dr. Mike McLeod	Natural Sciences
Dr. William Van Lear	Professional Studies
Ms. Stacey Davis	Academic Resource Center
Dr. Elaine Sipe	Center for Continuing and Adult Education
Dr. Sandra Nicks	Institutional Research

The subcommittee convened on six occasions between October 10, 2005 and April 5, 2006. The following paragraphs describe the subcommittee's efforts during this period.

Review of SACS-COC Requirements and Expectations

In 2004 the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC) implemented new standards for accreditation which are published as the *Principles for accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement* (2004). The "principles" outlined in this document reflect the minimum required standards that institutions must meet in order to receive accreditation or reaffirmation. The subcommittee's review of the *Principles* resulted in identifying one core requirement and three comprehensive standards related to academic assessment.

CR 2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a

systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission (p. 9).

CS 3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results (p. 34).

CS 3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes (p. 35).

CS 3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies (p. 49).

As another means of assessing SACS-COC's expectations for academic assessment the Academic Assessment Subcommittee analyzed the recent sanctions and negative actions given to academic institutions within the region. Since the implementation of the *Principles* in 2004, the subcommittee found that there had been a total of 23 negative actions related to assessment and institutional effectiveness placed against institutions. A majority of these negative actions were for deficiencies related to CR 2.5.

Finally, the subcommittee reviewed the recommendations given during Belmont Abbey College's last reaffirmation self-study for recommendations related to academic assessment. During the last reaffirmation review, the visiting committee issued seven recommendations related to academic effectiveness and assessment ("Report of the Reaffirmation Committee," 1998).

Section III. 5. The committee recommends that the College develop and implement procedures to insure that all academic units evaluate the extent to which educational goals are being achieved (p. 95).

Section III. 6. The committee recommends that the College document the use of the evaluations of educational goals to improve educational programs, services, and operations (p. 95).

Section IV. 13. The committee recommends that the College demonstrate that all its graduates are competent in oral communications and the basic use of computers (p. 96).

Section IV. 14. The committee recommends that the College develop clearly defined processes by which the curriculum is evaluated (p. 96).

Section IV. 16. The committee recommends that the College evaluate the effectiveness of its instructional programs by a variety of techniques (p. 96).

Section IV. 19. The committee recommends that the College demonstrate that it has a clearly defined process by which the curriculum is established, reviewed, and evaluated (p. 96).

Section IV. 20. The committee recommends that the College demonstrate that faculty and administration are responsible for implementing and monitoring the general curriculum policy and the academic programs approved by the board (p. 96).

Examination of Best Practices in Academic Assessment

The Academic Assessment Subcommittee examined the practices of institutions with proven assessment programs for general education curriculum, major curriculums, and/or overall academic assessment. The table below lists examples of institutions examined by the subcommittee.

University of Central Florida	Comprehensive Assessment Program
University Wisconsin-Madison	Comprehensive Assessment Program
University of Dallas	Comprehensive Assessment Program
North Carolina State University	General Education Program
Western Carolina University	Comprehensive Assessment Program
University of South Carolina	General Education Program
Texas Tech University	General Education Program
Crichton College (TN)	Comprehensive Assessment Program

Review of Belmont Abbey College’s Current Assessment Practices

After examining SACS-COC expectations and best practices of other institutions, the subcommittee began a review of Belmont Abbey College’s current assessment practices.

Discussions with BAC Faculty— The subcommittee began the process by meeting with faculty members in the four divisions to discuss their current assessment programs. From these discussions, the subcommittee found that many departments are using some form of measurement to assess student learning. Examples of direct measures being used include comprehensive exams, thesis, internships, rubrics, and presentations. Examples of indirect measures are career and graduate school placement and exit surveys (see Appendix A for list of direct and indirect measures being used). While we found most programs used some form of assessment to measure student learning in order to assign grades, most of these measures were not used in a systematic manner to evaluate curricular or

departmental effectiveness. In addition, few departments had written learning expectations or goals for their academic majors.

Review by External Consultant— In the fall of 2005, a consultant was hired to assist the college in evaluating its compliance with SACS-COC's requirements for academic assessment. After examining documents and a campus-visit to evaluate BAC's assessment practices, Dr. Spurlin reported that the college is failing to meet the standards required by SACS-COC. Below are several excerpts from the consultant's report (see Appendix B for complete report).

“Regarding 2.5 core requirement, this is where your institution needs the most improvement. You have no ongoing or systematic review of programs that relate to outcomes assessment. Your current program review system is based on “inputs” such as the curriculum and number of faculty. SACS criteria indicate that quality improvement needs to be conducted to include outcomes assessment of each program.

Regarding 3.3.1 comprehensive standard, I found a few programs that had developed learning goals or objectives. The ones I saw were published in the Catalog, including Honors Program, Psychology, and Sociology. I saw no expected outcomes for any program or any written assessment plan or assessment processes. Sociology had the closest process to implied program assessment, which included assessment of the senior thesis. This program could easily explicitly develop their program outcomes and assessment methods related to their senior thesis program and provide a model of assessment for the College.

Your subcommittee needs to develop a set of guidelines about your institutional expectations around this standard that outlines how your institution will carry out this standard. As you know, this standard and core requirement 2.5 is the area where your institution needs the most work.

Regarding 3.5.1, the core curriculum is what is related to this standard. In your Catalog, the description of the core curriculum has implied learning goals and outcomes. The written description could be used to develop explicitly stated learning goals and outcomes. I found no evidence that graduates have attained this implied goals. Since your Core Curriculum makes up 50% of most programs' curriculum, your assessment of this core curriculum will be critical to your institution”.

Academic Assessment Program Proposal Drafted

Based on the subcommittee's findings and the consultant's report, the subcommittee drafted a proposal outlining its recommended academic assessment program (see Part II of this proposal for the detailed description of the assessment program). Recommendations for this program include the following:

Assessment in the Majors

1. A mission statement should be developed for each academic major program that is based on the mission of the college.
2. There should be two to three learning goals (what students are expected to accomplish) for each major. These goals are to be general and consistent from year to year.
3. The learning goals are to be published in the course catalogue as well as in course syllabi.
4. From each major goal, at least two student learning outcomes must be chosen for evaluation. Student learning outcomes are specific and measurable, and related to what students know and the skills they are expected to demonstrate.
5. Indirect measures can also be used to assess the goals of the major such as information obtained from satisfaction surveys and course evaluations.
6. A standard format should be used for documenting the assessment plan and the findings of the assessment.
7. The Department of Sociology has agreed to act as a pilot for the recommended assessment plan. The pilot assessment plan will be completed in the 2006 Spring Semester.
8. The five-year review process should be revamped and
 - a. a written policy for the five-year review should be included
 - b. the review should be of the major and not the department
 - c. faculty evaluation should be separated from the review of the major
 - d. a curriculum evaluation (using a matrix) should be conducted describing in which courses goals are being taught or assessed
 - e. the peer consultation reports should be continued (perhaps including a rubric or scoring sheet for consultation)
 - f. a report of annual assessment findings from the previous five-year period will be completed
 - g. goals of the major will be reviewed
 - h. budgetary needs will be discussed based on review and annual assessments.

Assessment of the Core Curriculum

1. Goals of the core curriculum should be written that are general in nature and consistent from year to year.

2. From each goal, at least two student learning outcomes should be chosen that are specific, measurable, and related to what the student knows and what the student can do.
3. A review of the curriculum should be completed documenting courses where specific goals are taught and/or assessed.
4. The assessment plan should be documented in a similar fashion as the academic major assessment plan to maintain consistency across campus.
5. Annual assessments should be conducted using direct measures to evaluate student learning goals and indirect measures to evaluate student perceptions and satisfaction. Examples of direct measures are written assignments, exams, and presentations. Examples of indirect measures are senior exit surveys, alumni surveys, and course evaluations.
6. Include items on course evaluations to measure Core goals.
7. There should be a five-year review of the Core Curriculum that is similar to the Major Five-year Review.

Review Process

An institutional effectiveness subcommittee will review all academic assessment plans and assessment reports to ensure implementation and that student learning outcomes are being measured. The subcommittee will not evaluate the content of the plans and reports. The institutional effectiveness subcommittee will have representatives from each academic division, the core curriculum subcommittee (a subcommittee of Academic Affairs), and the Office of Institutional Research.

Program Piloted with Department of Sociology

To test the feasibility of the assessment program, the Department of Sociology volunteered to act as a pilot. Dr. Peter Lodge designed an assessment plan based on expected learning outcomes for students majoring in sociology (see Appendix C for a copy of the Sociology Assessment Plan).

Part II: Procedures for Academic Assessment

Overview of Belmont Abbey College Assessment Program

The assessment procedures described in Part II of this document represent a program that will allow Belmont Abbey College to ensure students, parents, and the public of the quality of the educational experiences it provides. This process will enable the college to improve programming by identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to develop and assist in planning and decision-making. The straightforward procedures are designed to be faculty driven, allowing individual departments to determine goals and measurement tools. Finally, this assessment program will fulfill the SACS-COC requirements for continuous, systematic, and integrated academic assessment.

History of Belmont Abbey College Assessment Efforts

Since 1988, Belmont Abbey College has conducted departmental evaluations for departments offering academic majors. Components of the evaluation include annual reports and five-year reviews.

Annual Reports— Annual reports are submitted at the end of each academic year by individual faculty members, department chairs, and division chairs. These annual reports represent updates of the activities over the past academic year as well as recommendations that are considered for strategic planning purposes.

Five-Year Review— Belmont Abbey College also implements a rotational five-year departmental review process. This review process includes

1. A review of tenured faculty by the Chief Academic Officer. Evaluation criteria used include teaching excellence (instructional design skills, instructional delivery skills, content expertise, course management skills, and advising), scholarly and professional involvement and achievement, and service to the student body, college, and wider community (Belmont Abbey College Handbook, 2005). See Appendix D for excerpts from the *College Handbook*.
2. An outside peer evaluation that assesses whether the department's goals are in keeping with the standards of the discipline and the mission of the College, the success in meeting these goals, qualifications and specializations of the department faculty, and whether instruments used for self-evaluation are appropriate.
3. An alumni survey.

Institutional Surveys— In addition to the annual reports and five-year reviews, the office of Institutional Research has conducted annual surveys to assist in evaluation and planning. The table below lists these surveys

Survey	Semester of Survey	Population Surveyed
Exit (Graduation) Survey	Fall	All students applying for graduation during academic year
ADP Student Survey	Fall	ADP students
ADP Faculty Survey	Fall	All instructors teaching in ADP
First-Year Student Survey	Fall	All first-time traditional students enrolled in First-Year Symposium Course
First-Year Symposium Survey	Fall	All first-time traditional students enrolled in First-Year Symposium Course
Campus Services Survey	Spring	All employees (faculty and staff) of Belmont Abbey College
Student Opinion Survey	Spring	Both traditional and ADP students enrolled during spring semester
Alumni Survey	Spring	Alumni
Faculty Opinion Survey	Spring	All full-time and part-time faculty
Student Withdrawal Survey	Fall, Spring	Students who withdraw from Belmont Abbey College
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Spring	Freshmen and Seniors

Rationale for a Comprehensive Assessment Program

External Requirements for Assessment— During the last decade there has been a strong external movement to require colleges and universities to demonstrate directly quality and continuous improvement in academic programming. To demonstrate accountability, institutions of higher education are compelled to use research-based approaches of assessment to measure direct student learning.

- ***Federal Requirements***

The United States Department of Education requires regional accrediting agencies to document compliance with Title IV criteria. There are two criteria that are directly linked to academic assessment:

“When evaluating success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution’s mission, the institution includes, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates.” (“Principles”, p. 31).

An institution must be able to document success with respect to student achievement in all its educational programs. Sample documentation of student achievement includes pass rates on state licensing exams and job placement rates by degree program (“Resource Manual”, 2005; p. 69).

“The institution maintains a curriculum that is directly related and appropriate to its purpose and goals and to diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded.” (“Principles”, p. 31).

The institution needs to show evidence that the curriculum is appropriate to the program. Evidence would include documentation that the skills and knowledge students obtain is consistent with the goals of the program and mission of the institution, that they and are consistent with good practices in higher education (“Resource Manual”, p. 70).

- ***Principles of the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions***

Regional accreditation and student learning: Principles for good practices (2003) was adopted by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions to provide a framework that allows colleges and universities to demonstrate institutional quality. The council has outlined five principles that provide a basis for assessing accreditation practices across the regions (“A Guide for Institutions”, 2004):

“Principle 1: The role of student learning in accreditation. The institution defines educational quality—one if its core purposes—by how well it fulfills its declared mission on student learning. ‘Educational quality’ refers to the quality of student learning itself, both the extent to which the institution provides an environment conducive to student learning, and the extent to which this environment leads to the development of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and predispositions of value to students and the society they are preparing to serve” (p. 7).

“Principle 2: Documentation of student learning. The institution demonstrates that student learning is appropriate for the certificate or degree awarded and is consistent with the institution’s own standards of academic performance. The institution accomplishes this by

- setting clear learning goals, which speak to both content and level of attainment;
- collecting evidence of goal attainment using appropriate assessment tools;
- applying collective judgment as to the meaning and utility of the evidence; and
- using this evidence to effect improvements in its programs” (p. 8).

“Principle 3: Compliance of evidence. The institution derives evidence of student learning from multiple sources, such as courses, curricula, and co-curricular programming, and includes effects of both intentional

and unintentional learning experiences. Evidence collected from these sources is complementary and demonstrates the impact of the institution as a whole on the student. Just as evidence of student learning can take many forms, it can also be obtained from many different sources: institutional databases and archival data; documents (policies, strategic plans, fact books, and so forth); surveys and focus groups; results of institutional assessment; sample learning products; licensing and credentialing exams; and student course, and institutional portfolios. Multiple sources of evidence are best; reliance should not be placed on a single metric” (p. 9).

“Principle 4: Stakeholder involvement. The collection, interpretation, and use of student learning evidence is a collective endeavor, and is not viewed as the sole responsibility of a single office or position. Those in the institution with a stake in decisions of educational quality participate in the process” (p. 10).

“Principle 5: Capacity building. The institution uses broad participation in reflecting about student learning outcomes as a means of building a commitment to educational improvement. The most significant barrier to the usefulness of accreditation for the institution has been the natural impulse to treat accreditation as a task to undertake as quickly and efficiently as possible, without thinking too much about its long-term potential. This occurs despite the fact that what accreditation agencies really want is evidence that the institution has internalized assessment of student learning, that it collects and uses student learning data as a way to monitor its own quality, and that it does so in a manner befitting its mission and purposes” (p. 11).

- ***SACS-COC Requirements and Expectations***

In 2004 the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC) implemented new standards for accreditation which are published as the *Principles for accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement* (2004). There is one core requirement and three comprehensive standards related to academic assessment:

CR 2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission (p. 9).

CS 3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results (p. 34).

CS 3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes (p. 35).

CS 3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies (p. 49).

- ***Discipline-Specific Accrediting Agencies***

There are also discipline-specific accrediting agencies that require confirmation of student learning. At Belmont Abbey College, the Elementary Education program is accredited by NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education). In providing evidence of meeting required standards, the department must submit data from 6-8 assessments that answer the following questions about specific student learning outcomes (NCATE Report Form, 2005):

1. Have candidates mastered the necessary knowledge for the subjects they will teach or the jobs they will perform?
2. Do candidates meet state licensure requirements?
3. Do candidates understand teaching and learning and can they plan their teaching or fulfill other professional education responsibilities?
4. Can candidates apply their knowledge in classrooms and schools?
5. Do candidates focus on student learning? (p. 2)

- ***Requirements of Granting Agencies***

Finally, most external granting agencies are now requiring assessment plans as a part of proposal packets. For those grants related to student educational programs, these assessment plans require direct documentation of the impact the granting resources have on educational attainment.

Internal Benefits of Assessment— While external pressures make academic assessment a requirement, many benefits of engaging in the assessment process can be gained by the College. These benefits include

1. ***Enhanced Student Learning***

The Alverno Institute (Doherty, Riordan & Roth, 2002) examined 26 institutions that were committed to enhanced student learning to determine shared characteristics. Although these were a diverse group of institutions (large and small; private and public), they had four attributes in common:

1. development of learning outcomes and expectations;
2. use of assessment to improve student learning;
3. allocation of resources to serve student learning;

4. continuous improvement of the environment for learning.

All of these attributes required that the institutions have a commitment to evaluating their programs and services and using information obtained during the assessment process to obtain needed resources and to enhance planning and decision-making.

2. *Enhanced Communication*

A systematic and comprehensive assessment program promotes an institutional dialogue about teaching and learning. It allows opportunities for faculty and administrators to communicate about successes, to share ideas, and to assist in solving problems (Maki, 2004).

3. *Enhanced Planning and Decision-Making*

Having a research-based assessment program provides accurate information for program- and institution-level planning, budgeting, and decision-making (Maki, 2004; Walvoord, 2004).

Belmont Abbey College Assessment Process

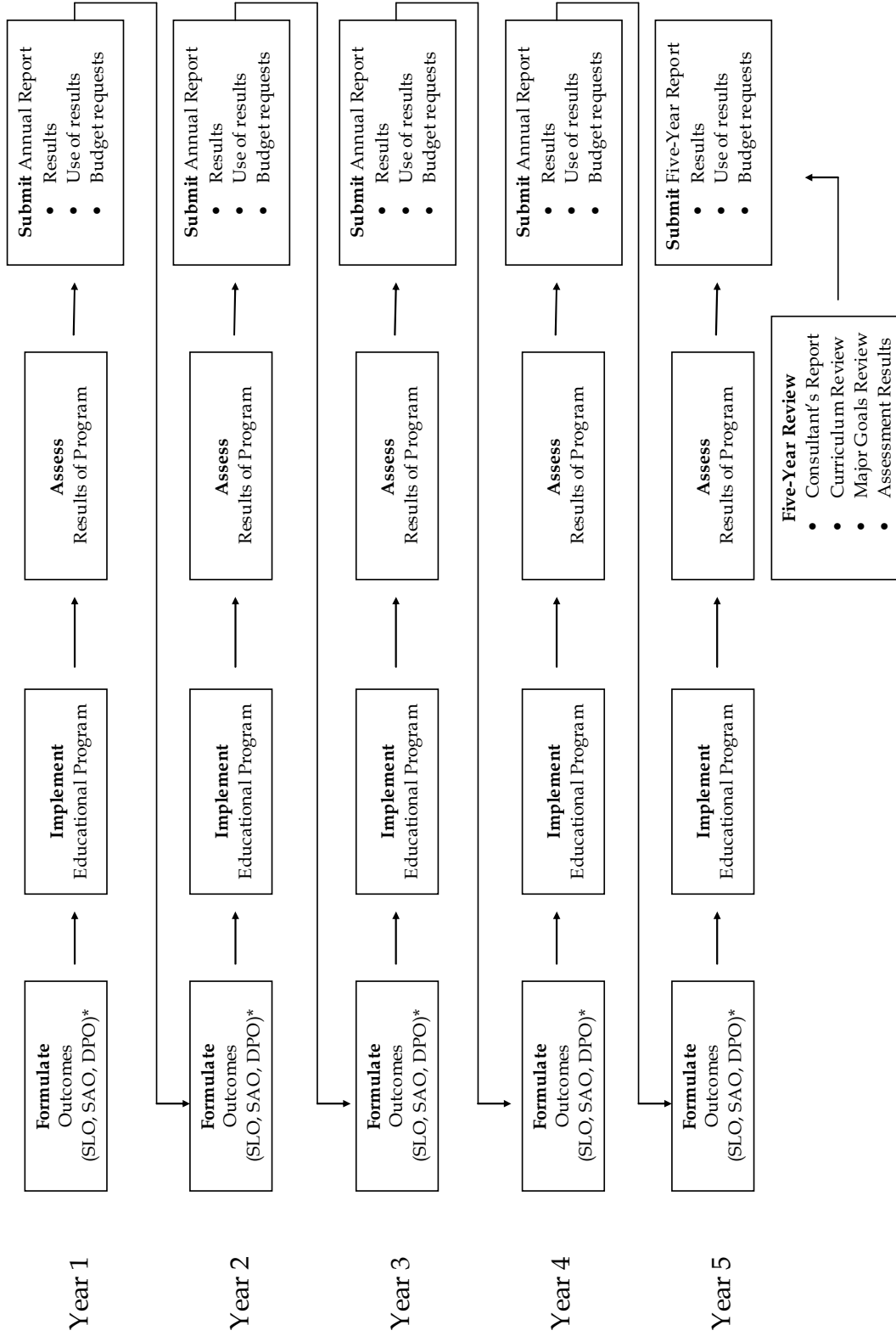
The academic assessment process will involve all degree programs offered at Belmont Abbey College as well as specialized academic programs such as the First-Year Symposium and the Honors Program.

While a standardized format for planning and reporting assessment results will be used, each department responsible for a degree program will be responsible for determining student outcomes (both learning and attitudinal), departmental process outcomes, and measures appropriate for the major (see Appendix E for Assessment Plan Template).

An institutional effectiveness subcommittee will review all academic assessment plans and assessment reports to ensure implementation and that student learning outcomes are being measured. The subcommittee will not evaluate the content of the plans and reports. The institutional effectiveness subcommittee will have representatives from each academic division, the core curriculum committee, and the Office of Institutional Research.

Assessment will be on-going with annual reports updating findings for each academic year with a thorough review of the program every five years (the assessment cycle is represented in the diagram on page 14).

ACADEMIC MAJOR ASSESSMENT CYCLE



* SLO = Student Learning Outcome, SAO = Student Attitude Outcome, DPO = Departmental Process Outcome

Assessment of the Majors and Special Programs

Annual Assessment— The annual assessment plan and report will be recorded on a standardized template adapted from Nichols and Nichols (2001). Similar assessment templates are used by many institutions including North Carolina State University and the University of Dallas (see Appendix E for full-size template).

MAJOR:						
PROGRAM MISSION:						
Learning Goal (LONG-TERM GOAL—constant, general)	Outcome (must be specific and measurable, related to what the student knows, what the student can do, and what the student cares about)	Person Responsible (The person responsible for assessing objective)	Implementation Strategy (List the courses in program where the outcome is emphasized)	Measure (How will you measure this...exams, projects using rubrics, embedded exam questions, surveys, records, etc.)	Findings (What did you find?)	Action Plan (How will you use this information? What must you do to increase effectiveness? What are the next steps in the process?)

Steps 1-5 described below make up the beginning stages of assessment and are referred to as the “assessment plan.”

- 1. Develop/Review Mission Statement.** The first step in the assessment planning process is to develop or review the mission statement for each major. This mission statement, developed by members of the academic department, should reflect the overall Belmont Abbey College mission statement.

Example from Sociology Assessment Plan (see Appendix C for example of the Sociology Assessment Plan):

MAJOR: SOCIOLOGY						
PROGRAM MISSION:						
The Department of Sociology offers a major and a minor in sociology. The program operates in accord with the general purpose of Belmont Abbey College by providing an educational program within the liberal arts tradition by presenting a balance of theoretical views and varied analytical orientations. The bachelor's degree in sociology provides students with an understanding of sociology as the scientific study of human social life. It focuses on applying objective and systematic methods of investigation to identify patterns of social life and to understand the processes by which these patterns are established and changed. The program enables students to learn to think critically, to communicate effectively, to appreciate individual and cultural diversity, and to develop their skills in computer applications and library research. The program also provides students with opportunities for internships in applied settings. A major in sociology will provide students with a broad-based education that will prepare them for entry-level positions in business, government, law-enforcement and a wide variety of human service organizations. The major also prepares students to pursue further education in areas such as law, health, business, religion, and social services, as well as sociology.						
Learning Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategy	Measure	Findings	Action Plan

2. **Create Learning Goals.** From the mission statement two to three learning goals (what students are expected to accomplish) are created. These goals are to be general and non-specific in nature and are consistent from year to year.

Example from Sociology Assessment Plan:

Learning Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategy	Measure
(LONG-TERM GOAL--constant, general)	(Must be specific and measurable, related to what students know and the skills they are expected to demonstrate)	(The person responsible for assessing objective)	(List the courses in program where the outcome is emphasized)	(How will you measure this...exams, projects using rubrics, embedded exam questions, surveys, records, etc.)
1. Students will attain knowledge of basic sociological concepts and familiarity with various theoretical perspectives within sociology.	1.a.) (SLO) 70 % of Students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate knowledge of basic sociological concepts by successfully completing concept questions embedded in the course exams of SO 310 & SO 351.	Peter Lodge	SO 201, SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 352, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Concept questions embedded into the four course exams of SO 310 & SO 351.

3. **Develop Expected Outcomes.** Specific and measurable outcomes are developed from each learning goal. There are three forms of outcomes: Student Learning Outcomes; Student Attitude Outcomes; Departmental Process Outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). For each learning goal, at least two learning outcomes must be chosen for evaluation. Student learning outcomes are related to direct student learning such as what students know and the skills they are expected to demonstrate. Student learning outcome statements should focus on the learning results and not on the process of instruction. The use of student learning outcomes is not optional.

Examples from Sociology Assessment Plan:

Learning Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategy	Measure
1. Students will attain knowledge of basic sociological concepts and familiarity with various theoretical perspectives within sociology.	1.a.) (SLO) 70 % of Students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate knowledge of basic sociological concepts by successfully completing concept questions embedded in the course exams of SO 310 & SO 351.	Peter Lodge	SO 201, SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 352, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Concept questions embedded into the four course exams of SO 310 & SO 351.
	1.b) (SAO) Students graduating with a degree in sociology will state they have developed an understanding of the discipline of sociology with an average rating of 4 or higher (scale 1-5) on the Sociology Exit Interview Survey	Peter Lodge	SO 201, SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 352, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Sociology Exit Interview Survey for academic years 2005-2006 to 2007-2008.

Other examples of student learning outcomes:

Learning Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategy
	(SLO) Students in the Business Management program completing the ETS Major Field Assessment Test will score on average at the 50th percentile of national norms		

Learning Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategy
	(SLO) Eighty percent of students majoring in psychology will successfully complete an empirical research project as evaluated by a panel of psychology faculty using an evaluation rubric		

Student Attitude Outcomes (SAO). Student attitude outcomes reflect student perceptions and opinions regarding learning goals. The use of student attitude outcomes is optional.

Example from Sociology Assessment Plan:

Learning Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategy	Measure
1. Students will attain knowledge of basic sociological concepts and familiarity with various theoretical perspectives within sociology.	1.b) (SAO) Students graduating with a degree in sociology will state they have developed an understanding of the discipline of sociology with an average rating of 4 or higher (scale 1-5) on the Sociology Exit Interview Survey	Peter Lodge	SO 201, SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 352, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Sociology Exit Interview Survey for academic years 2005-2006 to 2007-2008.

Other examples of student attitude outcomes:

Goal	Objective	Person Responsible	Strategies to meet Objective
	(SAO) In an annual survey of psychology alumni, 90% will indicate that CBU helped prepare them for their current job.		

Goal	Objective	Person Responsible	Strategies to meet Objective
	(SAO) In an annual survey of graduating psychology majors, 85% of those who applied for graduate school will indicate that they have been accepted into a program.		

Departmental Process Outcomes (DPO). Departmental process outcomes are related to activities or resources that departments put into place to assist students in obtaining learning goals. The use of departmental process outcomes is optional.

Example from Sociology Assessment Plan:

Goal	Objective	Person Responsible	Strategies to meet Objective	Measure
3. Students will obtain research and other professional skills necessary for a career in Sociology or a related field.	3.c.) (DPO) The department of sociology will provide opportunities for practical research exploration.	Peter Lodge	SO 305, SO 408, SO 451-456	Number of research opportunities provided to students.
	3.b.) (DPO) The department of sociology will provide opportunities for career exploration.	Peter Lodge	SO 451-456	Number of sociology internships available to students.

Other examples of departmental process outcomes:

Goal	Objective	Person Responsible	Strategies to meet Objective
	(DPO) The Department of Management will assist students in their efforts to be accepted into an MBA graduate program by offering at least one graduate school workshop each academic year.		

Goal	Objective	Person Responsible	Strategies to meet Objective
	(DPO) In order to enhance laboratory research skills the Department of Biology will apply for at least one grant to fund the purchase of new laboratory equipment.		

- 4. Determine Implementation Strategy.** In this step, the department lists the courses where the outcome will be implemented.

Example from Sociology Assessment Plan:

Goal	Objective	Person Responsible	Strategies to meet Objective	Measure
2. Students will acquire an ability to think critically and imaginatively about society and social issues, using sociological knowledge and an ability to express this thinking clearly through oral and written communication.	2.a.) (SLO) 66% of Students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate critical thinking skills by successfully completing class project in SO 413.	Peter Lodge	SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Scoring rubric for class project in SO 413.

- 5. Establish Assessment Measures.** For each outcome, the academic department must determine which methods of assessment will be used for evaluation. There are two types of assessment measures: direct and indirect measures (see Appendix F for a list of appropriate measures).

Direct Measures. Direct measures evaluate actual student skills, performance, or knowledge. Examples of direct measures include capstone projects, presentations, portfolios, papers, locally constructed exams, standardized exams, and internship supervisor evaluations. Student learning outcomes are assessed using direct measures.

Indirect Assessment Measures. Indirect measures assess outcomes by evaluating indirect indicators of learning or performance rather than actual learning/performance. Examples of indirect measures include surveys, focus groups, and questionnaires. Alone, indirect measures are not considered to be valid indicators of student learning; however, they are useful for measuring student attitudes and opinions.

Examples from Sociology Assessment Plan:

Goal	Objective	Person Responsible	Strategies to meet Objective	Measure
2. Students will acquire an ability to think critically and imaginatively about society and social issues, using sociological knowledge and an ability to express this thinking clearly through oral and written communication.	2.a.) (SLO) 66% of Students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate critical thinking skills by successfully completing class project in SO 413.	Peter Lodge	SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Scoring rubric for class project in SO 413.
	2.b) (SAO) Students graduating with a degree in sociology will state they have developed an ability to think critically with an average rating of 4 or higher (scale 1-5) on the Sociology Exit Interview Survey	Peter Lodge	SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Sociology Exit Interview Survey for academic years 2005-2006 to 2007-2008.

Steps 6-7 represent the “reporting and analysis” segment of the annual assessment process.

- 6. Analyze Results.** At the completion of the academic year departments will analyze the results of their assessment process and determine whether or not the objectives were met.

Example from Sociology Assessment Plan:

Implementation Strategy	Measure	Findings	Action Plan
(List the courses in program where the outcome is emphasized)	(How will you measure this...exams, projects using rubrics, embedded exam questions, surveys, records, etc.)	(What did you find?)	(How will you use this information? What must you do to increase effectiveness? What are the next steps in the process?)
SO 201, SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 352, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Sociology Exit Interview Survey for academic years 2005-2006 to 2007-2008.	85% of students graduating with a degree in sociology stated that they have developed an understanding of the discipline of sociology with an average rating of 4.5 (scale 1-5) on the Sociology Exit Interview Survey	

7. Action Plan. The final step in the annual assessment process is to interpret and apply the results of the evaluation. Assessment results are used for program planning, budget requests, and to guide the development of the next year's assessment plan.

Example of an action plan:

Implementation Strategy	Measure	Findings	Action Plan
(List the courses in program where the outcome is emphasized)	(How will you measure this...exams, projects using rubrics, embedded exam questions, surveys, records, etc.)	(What did you find?)	(How will you use this information? What must you do to increase effectiveness? What are the next steps in the process?)
		Only 70% of students majoring in psychology successfully completed an empirical research project.	Based on the scoring rubric used to evaluate student research projects, we found that students were not adequately graphing their results. To alleviate this problem, graph interpretation and design will be added to the curriculums of statistics and research design.

Annual Assessment Time-Line. The following table presents the time-line for the different annual assessment activities.

Development of Assessment Plan (formulating goals, outcomes, strategies, and measures)	October
Review of assessment plans by Institutional Effectiveness Subcommittee	October
Implementation of academic program	Throughout academic year
Assessment of academic program	Throughout academic year
Annual report (results, use of results, budgetary requests)	June
Review of annual reports by Institutional Effectiveness Subcommittee	September (following year)

Five-Year Review of Majors and Special Programs— In addition to annual assessments, each academic program will be reviewed every five years. There are six components to the five-year review.

1. Review of Curriculum. At the beginning of the assessment process and at the time of each five-year review, every department/program responsible for an academic major/special program will review its curriculum to determine which outcomes are being addressed by the courses in the curriculum (note: It is not necessary that all courses in a curriculum address an assessment outcome; see Appendix G for Curriculum Review Template).

The review of the curriculum will also provide the department/program with the opportunity to evaluate the appropriateness of the course offerings and to update the curriculum as needed.

2. Alumni Survey. Alumni who have graduated during the previous five years will be surveyed concerning their views on the quality of the program, the appropriateness of curriculum to their careers, and their level of career attainment.

3. Outside Peer Evaluation. As part of the five-year review process, a faculty member from a peer institution will be invited to assist the department/program in evaluating their major/special program. The evaluator will be asked to comment on the following issues:

- a. whether the goals of the major are appropriate for the discipline and the mission of the college;
- b. whether the curriculum adequately addresses these goals;
- c. whether the resources (e.g., equipment, library holdings) are appropriate for the discipline; and
- d. whether the measures used in the assessment process are appropriate for evaluating the goals.

4. Review Goals of Major. The five-year review will present an opportunity for academic departments/special programs to review and revise learning goals.

5. Report of Annual Assessment Results. The department/program will summarize the findings from the annual assessments reports, describing both improvements and declines in performance.

6. Action Plan. Based on the findings of the five-year evaluation, departments/programs can develop an action plan that will address weaknesses and needed changes in the curriculum, in the assessment process, and in the procurement of resources. The action plan should be tied to budgeting and budgeting decisions.

Assessment of the Core Curriculum

A Core Curriculum Subcommittee should be formed to develop and oversee the evaluation of the core curriculum, especially as it relates to the SACS-COC Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1.

The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies (*“Principles”*, p. 49).

The assessment of the core curriculum should parallel the processes used to assess the majors and special academic programs.

Annual Assessment— Steps 1-5 describe the planning portion of the assessment process.

- 1. Develop Mission Statement.** A mission for the core curriculum should be written that reflects the overall mission of the College.
- 2. Create Learning Goals.** Because Belmont Abbey College’s core curriculum comprises a large portion of most programs’ curriculum, it is important that the learning goals reflect this significance. Thus, there should be between eight and ten general, long-term learning goals developed by the Core Curriculum Subcommittee.
- 3. Develop Outcome Statements.** Outcomes are specific expectations that are measurable. As with major outcomes, there are three forms of core outcomes: Student Learning Outcomes; Student Attitude Outcomes; and Core Process Outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). For each Core learning goal there should be at least two student learning outcomes that are directly related to student learning.

Student Attitude Outcomes (SAO). Student attitude outcomes reflect student opinions and perceptions regarding the core curriculum. The use of student attitude outcome statements is optional.

Core Process Outcomes (CPO). Core process outcomes reflect activities and resources that are completed that will assist students in obtaining learning goals. The use of core process outcomes is optional.

- 4. Determine Implementation Strategy.** The courses where the outcomes will be implemented or assessed are listed on the assessment plan form. Note: assessment of core outcomes can be assessed in courses outside of the core program. For example, if an outcome is for students to be proficient in writing, this can also be assessed in other courses such as major capstone courses or even in internships.
- 5. Establish Assessment Measures.** For each outcome, a method of assessment (either direct or indirect) must be determined (see Appendix G for the list of appropriate measures).

Direct Measures. Direct measures assess actual student performance and knowledge. Examples of direct measures in the core would be presentations, papers, and exams.

Indirect Measures. Indirect measures assess outcomes by evaluating student perceptions and opinions. Examples of indirect measures are surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups.

Steps 6 and 7 represent the “reporting and analysis” portion of the core annual assessment process.

- 6. Report Results.** At the completion of the academic year, the Core Curriculum Subcommittee will analyze the results of their assessment process and determine whether or not the objectives were met.
- 7. Action Plan.** The final step in the annual assessment process is to interpret and apply the results of the evaluation. Assessment results are used for program planning, budget requests and to guide the development of the next year’s assessment plan.

Annual Assessment Time-Line. The following table presents the time-line for the different annual assessment activities.

Development of Core Assessment Plan (formulating goals, outcomes, strategies, and measures)	October
Review of assessment plan by Institutional Effectiveness Subcommittee	October
Assessment of core outcomes	Throughout academic year
Annual report (results, use of results, budgetary requests)	June
Review of annual report by Institutional Effectiveness Subcommittee	September (following year)

Five-Year Review of Core Curriculum— In addition to annual assessments, the core curriculum will be reviewed every five years. There are five components to the five-year review.

- 1. Review of Core Curriculum.** At the beginning of the assessment process and at the time of each five-year review, the Core Curriculum Subcommittee will review the core curriculum to determine which outcomes are being addressed by the courses in the curriculum (note: changes in curriculum are to be submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee for approval; see Appendix H for Core Curriculum Review Template).

- 2. Outside Peer Evaluation.** As part of the five-year review process, a panel of faculty members from peer institutions will be invited to assist the college in evaluating the core curriculum program. The evaluators will be asked to comment on the following issues:

 - a. whether the goals of the core are appropriate for the mission of the college;
 - b. whether the curriculum adequately addresses these goals;
 - c. whether the resources (e.g., library holdings) are appropriate for the core; and
 - d. whether the measures used in the assessment process are appropriate for evaluating the goals.
- 3. Review Goals of Core.** The five-year review will present an opportunity for the Core Curriculum Committee to review and revise the learning goals for the core education of students.
- 4. Report of Annual Assessment Results.** The subcommittee will summarize the findings from the annual assessments reports, describing both improvements and declines in performance.
- 5. Action Plan.** Based on the findings of the five-year evaluation, the subcommittee can develop an action plan that will address weaknesses and needed changes in the core curriculum, in the assessment process, and in the procurement of resources. The action plan should be tied to budgeting and planning decisions.

Appendix A

Direct and Indirect Measures of Assessment used at Belmont Abbey College Fall 2005

Major Programs	Direct Measure	Indirect Measures
Accounting		Career and graduate placement
Biology	Two papers, two presentations, written comprehensive exam, oral comprehensive exam	
Economics	Senior thesis (optional for students with 3.3 or higher gpa), written comprehensive exam, oral comprehensive exam (optional), rubric for essays	
Elementary Education	Portfolio, Praxis I exam, Praxis II exam	
English	Senior thesis, thesis presentation, written comprehensive exam, oral comprehensive exam	
Environmental Science	Two papers, two presentations, written comprehensive exam, oral comprehensive exam, internship, thesis	
History	Senior thesis, thesis presentation, written comprehensive exam	
International Business	Capstone paper (with two outside readers), internship, attendance at International Trade Specialist seminars	Job placement
Liberal Studies	Senior thesis (scored by two readers)	
Philosophy	Senior thesis	

Political Science	Senior thesis or written comprehensive exam, oral comprehensive exam (optional)	
Psychology	Senior thesis, thesis presentation	
Sociology	Senior thesis, thesis presentation	Senior exit survey
Theology	Senior thesis, thesis presentation, internship for pastoral ministry	

Appendix B

REPORT ABOUT ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PROCESSES AT BELMONT ABBEY COLLEGE

Prepared by: Joni E. Spurlin, Ph.D.
December 8, 2005

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you on your assessment processes. Your college is very warm and inviting, and everyone was open about their thoughts.

This report summarizes where you are now and what are some recommended first steps to take in your assessment process development in order to ensure SACS compliance. Other recommendations are also given, based on my experiences as to how to develop this process and encourage as much faculty buy-in as possible.

Findings As Related To SACS Criteria

SACS Core Requirements include:

2.4 The institution has a clearly defined and published **mission statement** specific to the institution and appropriate to an institution of higher education, addressing teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service.

(Institutional Mission)

2.5 The institution engages in **ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide** research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a **systematic review of programs** and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

(Institutional Effectiveness)

2.12 The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan and demonstrates that the plan is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process.

(Quality Enhancement Plan)

Regarding 2.4 core requirement, your institutional mission is clearly published in your catalog and is appropriate to your institution. I also noted a “Philosophy” section that, in my eyes, seemed to also give direction to the learning and teaching at your college. As the faculty consider program goals and outcomes, I hope that they will keep in mind both your Mission and Philosophy statements. You are meeting this requirement.

Regarding 2.5 core requirement, this is where your institution needs the most improvement. You have no ongoing or systematic review of programs that relate to outcomes assessment. Your current program review system is based on “inputs” such as the curriculum and number of faculty. SACS criteria indicate that quality improvement needs to be conducted to include outcomes assessment of each program.

Regarding 2.12 core requirement, I understand that your institution will begin to work on your Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) fall of 2006. I encourage you to keep with this timeline.

SACS Comprehensive Standards include:

3.1.1 The institution has a clear and comprehensive mission statement that guides it; is approved by the governing board; is periodically reviewed by the board; and is communicated to the institution's constituencies.

3.3.1 The institution identifies **expected outcomes** for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it **achieves** these outcomes; and **provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results**.

3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes.

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides **evidence** that graduates have attained those competencies.

Regarding 3.3.1 comprehensive standard, I found a few programs that had developed learning goals or objectives. The ones I saw were published in the Catalog, including Honors Program, Psychology, and Sociology. I saw no expected outcomes for any program or any written assessment plan or assessment processes. Sociology had the closest process to implied program assessment, which included assessment of the senior thesis. This program could easily explicitly develop their program outcomes and assessment methods related to their senior thesis program and provide a model of assessment for the College.

Your subcommittee needs to develop a set of guidelines about your institutional expectations around this standard that outlines how your institution will carry out this standard. As you know, this standard and core requirement 2.5 is the area where your institution needs the most work.

Regarding 3.5.1, the core curriculum is what is related to this standard. In your Catalog, the description of the core curriculum has implied learning goals and outcomes. The written description could be used to develop explicitly stated learning goals and outcomes. I found no evidence that graduates have attained this implied goals. Since your Core Curriculum makes up 50% of most programs' curriculum, your assessment of this core curriculum will be critical to your institution.

It is evident that the Dean and Director of Institutional Research are aware of the need to develop assessment processes, outcomes, and assessment methods. The Director of

Institutional Research has a strong background in assessment and is an asset to your College. The Academic Assessment Subcommittee has been working effectively to develop processes.

Recommendations

Belmont Abbey College should develop Core Curriculum learning goals that are related to the institutional mission and are agreed upon by the faculty members. Once learning goals have been developed, then learning outcomes and an assessment process for the core curriculum needs to be developed. The College may want to develop a committee of faculty who oversee the assessment process, including development of the assessment plan, gathering of data, analyses and interpretation of the data. Processes for how to handle recommendations for improvements of the Core Curriculum should be developed.

Each Division or Department should develop a mission statement and learning goals that are related to the institutional mission. Each program should develop expected learning outcomes, with relate to these learning goals. The development of assessment process should relate to the expected learning outcomes of the programs. I saw that the course syllabi outline required course objectives. These are important to include in the syllabi and I encourage the use of this tool to help students understand not only the course objectives but also the program's outcomes.

The Academic Assessment Subcommittee should develop, with the faculty, common language, so that everyone at the institution is discussing assessment in the same way. Some suggested ways of developing this common language is to produce a graphic representation of an assessment model, to define your terms in relations to goals, objective, and outcomes, and the number of levels of goals and outcomes the institutional will use. It is also important that the institution thinks about the purpose of assessment and develops a statement about the purpose and related principles or expectations.

The Academic Assessment Subcommittee should develop guidelines on on-going assessment. These guidelines should include:

- A format for program's assessment plans and reports.
 - The format should include the division or department learning goals, program outcomes, assessment methods, implementation methods for how students will learn these outcomes, and a plan for who, when and how the evidence of assessment is gathered and reported. The report should include a summary of the evidence and the conclusions of the faculty about what this evidences suggests related to program strengths and weaknesses.
- A timeline for review of the college's mission, timelines in terms of reporting about assessment and strategic planning.
- Who reports will be reviewed by and who will make judgments about the quality of assessment processes and quality of the programs.
- Guidelines related to the quantity of assessment. It is more important that the assessment be meaningful and manageable by the faculty than to produce a quantity of data each year. All outcomes do not need to be assessed each

year. I have found that when program begin to develop their program outcomes, they tend to list all the outcomes they want students to achieve. This list begins to range into 10-15 outcomes. This is not a manageable assessment process. It is more important to focus on what is meaningful to the faculty than to list every possible outcome and try to assess them. In addition, given the size of some of the programs, it may be that data will need to be collected over several years, prior to decisions made based on the analyses of these data. Therefore, as each program is developing their assessment plans, it is important that they have plans related to when they will gather the data and when they will analyze the data. For the smaller programs, it is important to ensure that data is being gathered, even if analyses will not be conducted that year.

- Relationship of programmatic accreditation requirements to the institution's guidelines. The program assessment processes should meet any external program accreditation guidelines and institutional guidelines at the same time. This may mean that the format of the reports and plans are different for some programs.

The Academic Assessment Subcommittee should develop additional guidelines for the periodic review of programs that include outcomes assessment. If the on-going assessment processes are in place and working, then the periodic review allows the programs to summarize what the assessment has shown the program about its strengths and weaknesses, and if the improvements put into place have actually improved the program. It is more important to have the on-going processes working prior to SACS review, than to have an active periodic review. So if the development of processes needs to take place in stages, it is more important to focus on developing on-going assessment processes.

It is recommended that those responsible for each program assessment meet together in teams, on a regular basis. It is important to share processes, methodology, and findings across programs. This improves the process, allows for discussion of common problems, and solutions, and improves student learning.

The Academic Assessment Subcommittee should develop mechanisms for senior administration to respond to assessment results and to celebrate success!

It may be important to develop some pilot projects that are models of assessment prior to requiring many programs to adopt a methodology. This is especially important for the core curriculum assessment. It may be important to try out some assessment methods on a few core curriculum outcomes prior to assessing every core curriculum outcome.

Recommended Timeline For Development Of Assessment Processes:

Spring 2006:

- Develop assessment process procedures for on-going assessment.
- Develop and have faculty approval of core curriculum learning goals and expected outcomes.

- Develop division/department learning goals and program outcomes.
- Find the evidence already available related to core curriculum and program outcomes.

Fall 2006:

- Begin developing Quality Enhancement Plan by discussing possible areas of interest; develop plans for gathering data about areas in which to pursue for your plan. (You will need data that says WHY you have selected the areas of study for your QEP.)
- Begin to gather data and analyze data already available for each program.
- Identify outcomes that do not have assessment data already available and begin to develop methods for these outcomes.
- Identify implementation methods for each outcome. This may include a matrix of the relationship of each course to program outcomes.

Spring 2007:

- By end of spring, document complete assessment plans for each program (including Core-Curriculum).
- By end of spring, report on some of the outcomes for each program and core curriculum.
- Development of assessment processes for periodic review

Summer 2007:

- Assess quality of assessment processes for the institution, including strengths and weaknesses of the processes.

2007-2008:

- Complete second set of assessment reports. Should have at least one report on every outcome by end of spring 2008.
- Gather and analyze data related to your QEP.

2008-2009:

- Complete third set of assessment reports.
- Complete first draft of QEP and assessment plan for your QEP.

2009-2010:

- Develop SACS compliance report and final draft of QEP.

Resources:

I have given the Academic Assessment Subcommittee resources and examples from which to help develop these processes. If more resources are needed, please feel free to ask, as I have knowledge of many, many resources and examples. It is also recommended, that as programs develop their program outcomes, that they do not start from a blank page. There are many assessment plans for every discipline available from the web. I recommend that the programs look for these plans and use them in developing their own assessment plans. If any program needs help with finding these resources, feel free to ask. Another way to engage faculty in discussion of assessment is to relate the program outcomes to their course

objectives. For some programs, the second step, after developing program outcomes may be to develop a matrix of how each course relates to their outcomes.

In closing this report, I want to leave you with some valuable lessons I have learned in my experiences:

- Begin implementing the program assessment plan as quickly as possible. Do not get bogged down in one of the early steps.
- Close the loop on each outcome as soon as possible.
- Surveys should be only one of several evaluation and assessment tools.

Appendix C

Sociology Assessment Plan

MAJOR: SOCIOLOGY						
<p>The Department of Sociology offers a major and a minor in sociology. The program operates in accord with the general purpose of Belmont Abbey College by providing an educational program within the liberal arts tradition by presenting a balance of theoretical views and varied analytical orientations. The bachelor's degree in sociology provides students with an understanding of sociology as the scientific study of human social life. It focuses on applying objective and systematic methods of investigation to identify patterns of social life and to understand the processes by which these patterns are established and changed. The program enables students to learn to think critically, to communicate effectively, to appreciate individual and cultural diversity, and to develop their skills in computer applications and library research. The program also provides students with opportunities for internships in applied settings. A major in sociology will provide students with a broad-based education that will prepare them for entry-level positions in business, government, law-enforcement and a wide variety of human service organizations. The major also prepares students to pursue further education in areas such as law, health, business, religion, and social services, as well as sociology.</p>						
Learning Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategy	Measure	Findings	Action Plan
<p>(LONG-TERM GOAL--constant, general)</p> <p>1. Students will attain knowledge of basic sociological concepts and familiarity with various theoretical perspectives within sociology.</p>	<p>(Must be specific and measurable, related to what students know and the skills they are expected to demonstrate)</p> <p>1. a.) (SLO) 70 % of Students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate knowledge of basic sociological concepts by successfully completing concept questions embedded in the course exams of SO 310 & SO 351.</p>	<p>(The person responsible for assessing objective)</p> <p>Peter Lodge</p>	<p>(List the courses in program where the outcome is emphasized)</p> <p>SO 201, SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 352, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)</p>	<p>(How will you measure this...exams, projects using rubrics, embedded exam questions, surveys, records, etc.)</p> <p>Concept questions embedded into the four course exams of SO 310 & SO 351.</p>	<p>(What did you find?)</p>	<p>(How will you use this information? What must you do to increase effectiveness? What are the next steps in the process?)</p>
	<p>1. b.) (SAO) Students graduating with a degree in sociology will state they have developed an understanding of the discipline of sociology with an average rating of 4 or higher (scale 1-5) on the Sociology Exit Interview Survey</p>	<p>Peter Lodge</p>	<p>SO 201, SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 352, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)</p>	<p>Sociology Exit Interview Survey for academic years 2005-2006 to 2007-2008.</p>		

Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategies	Measure	Findings	Action Plan
	<p>1.c.) (SLO) 70% of students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate familiarity with theoretical perspectives within Sociology as demonstrated in their senior thesis.</p>	Peter Lodge	SO 201, SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 352, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Scoring rubric (grading for familiarity with theoretical perspectives) for Senior Thesis		
	<p>1.d) (SAO) Students graduating with a degree in sociology will indicate they have developed an understanding of the role of theory within sociology with an average rating of 4 or higher (scale 1-5) on the Sociology Exit Interview Survey</p>	Peter Lodge	SO 201, SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 352, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Sociology Exit Interview Survey for academic years 2005-2006 to 2007-2008.		
	<p>1.e) (SAO) Students graduating with a degree in sociology will indicate they have developed research skills and an understanding of the role of evidence in sociology with an average rating of 4 or higher (scale 1-5) on the Sociology Exit Interview Survey</p>	Peter Lodge	SO 305, SO 352, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Sociology Exit Interview Survey for academic years 2005-2006 to 2007-2008.		

Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategies	Measure	Findings	Action Plan
2. Students will acquire an ability to think critically and imaginatively about society and social issues, using sociological knowledge and an ability to express this thinking clearly through oral and written communication.	2.a.) (SLO) 66% of Students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate critical thinking skills by successfully completing class project in SO 413.	Peter Lodge	SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Scoring rubric for class project in SO 413.		
	2.b.) (SAO) Students graduating with a degree in sociology will state they have developed an ability to think critically with an average rating of 4 or higher (scale 1-5) on the Sociology Exit Interview Survey	Peter Lodge	SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Sociology Exit Interview Survey for academic years 2005-2006 to 2007-2008.		
	2.c.) (SLO) 70 % of Students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate oral communication skills by successfully presenting senior thesis findings to panel of faculty.	Peter Lodge	SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Scoring rubric (graded for oral communication skills) for Senior Thesis.		
	2.d.) (SLO) 70% of Students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate written communication skills by demonstrated in writing of Senior Thesis.	Peter Lodge	SO 305, SO 310, SO 312, SO 313, SO 314, SO 320, SO 351, SO 380, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)	Scoring rubric (graded for written communication skills) for Senior Thesis.		

Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategies	Measure	Findings	Action Plan
<p>3. Students will obtain research and other professional skills necessary for a career in Sociology or a related field.</p>	<p>3.a.) (SLO) 70% of students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate knowledge of ways of collecting and evaluating sociological evidence by successfully completing embedded questions of exams in Research Methods Course (SO 305).</p>	<p>Peter Lodge</p>	<p>SO 305, SO 352, SO 408, SO 413, SO 414 (see attached list for title of courses)</p>	<p>Embedded questions in exams in SO 305.</p>		
	<p>3.b.) (SLO) 70% of students majoring in Sociology will demonstrate knowledge of research methods by successfully completing a senior thesis.</p>			<p>Scoring rubric (graded for methodology) for Senior Thesis</p>		
	<p>3.c.) (DPO) The department of sociology will provide opportunities for practical research exploration.</p>	<p>Peter Lodge</p>	<p>SO 305, SO 408, SO 451-456</p>	<p>Number of research opportunities provided to students.</p>		
	<p>3.b.) (DPO) The department of sociology will provide opportunities for career exploration by offering internships at sociology-related sites.</p>	<p>Peter Lodge</p>	<p>SO 451-456</p>	<p>Number of sociology internships available to students.</p>		

<p>Signature of Department Head: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature of Reviewer: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Reviewer Comments: _____</p>	<p>Signature of Department Head: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature of Reviewer: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Reviewer Comments: _____</p>
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Title of Courses in Sociology

SO 201. Principles of Sociology: The Scientific Study of Society

SO 305. Research Methods

SO 310. Sociological Theory

SO 312. Marriage and the Family

SO 313. Race and Ethnic Relations

SO 314. Social Inequality

SO 320. International Issues

SO 351. Social Problems

SO 352. Cultural Anthropology

SO 380. White Collar Crime

SO 408. The Senior Thesis

SO 413. Deviance

SO 414. Criminology

SO 451-456. Internship

Department of Sociology Assessment Grid

Courses in Major	Goal 1: Knowledge a) Concepts, b) theoretical perspectives, c) collection and evaluation of evidence	Goal 2: Skills Critical thinking using sociological knowledge (evaluation of evidence), oral and written communication	Goal 3: Process Provision of opportunities for practical research experiences and career exploration
All dept offerings not listed	1a and 1b		
SO 201	1a and 1b		
SO305	✓	✓	
SO310	1a and 1b	✓	
SO312	1a and 1b	✓	
SO313	1a and 1b	✓	
SO314	1a and 1b	✓	
SO320	1a and 1b	✓	
SO351	1a and 1b	✓	✓
SO352	✓		✓
SO380	1a and 1b	✓	
SO408	✓	✓	✓
SO413	✓	✓	
SO414	✓	✓	
SO451-456			✓

Senior Thesis (SO408) Grading Rubric

	Meets/Exceeds Standards	Approaching Standards	Less than Adequate	%
Mechanical Issues	Student accurately spells, uses complex sentence structure, good paragraphing	Spelling accurate for the most part, good sentence structure, paragraphing is adequate	Student makes numerous spelling errors, poor sentence structure, inconsistent paragraphing	20%
Organization Issues	The introduction describes accurately what is covered in the thesis. Headings and subheadings used effectively. The paper flows and is coherent. The conclusion accurately summarizes the paper.	Student has for the most part met organizational expectations but has fallen short in one of the criteria employed to judge organizational adequacy.	Major flaws in organization in terms of the adequacy of the introduction/conclusion and use of headings/subheadings	20%
Substantive Issues	Terms and concepts clearly defined. The thesis comprehensively deal with the main issue(s) raised. The material employed is accurate, sufficiently recent and drawn from appropriate professional sources. The research proposal is adequately developed. The student has dealt well with the issues raised in the research	Student show a weakness in two of the following: Definition of concepts, timeliness of sources used, use of sociological sources, the research proposal is inadequately developed, issues raised in the research are not dealt with fully.	Concepts are not defined or poorly defined, references/sources are out of date and/or not sociological, research proposal inadequately developed.	55%
PowerPoint Presentation of Senior Thesis	Excellent organization. Excellent articulation and delivery. Concise bulleted points. Excellent readability (excellent choice of font, font size, font color and background, etc.)	Student shows weakness in two of the following: Organization, articulation and delivery, length of bulleted points, level of readability	Inadequately organized. Poor articulation and delivery. Too much prose on each slide. Lack of readability (e.g., fonts, background contrast, other aesthetic considerations)	5%

Appendix D

College Handbook Excerpts

3.10 FIFTH-YEAR REVIEW OF TENURED FACULTY

Regular faculty members who have been granted tenure are reviewed once every five years. This review provides an opportunity for appraisal of the faculty member's continuing development measured by performance in the evaluative areas outlined in Section 3.5.1.

3.10.1 PROCEDURES FOR FIFTH-YEAR REVIEW

The Chief Academic Officer will prepare no later than April 30 each year a list of all faculty members who will be reviewed during the next academic year. This will be sent to all current faculty. Any faculty member who believes that he or she has been improperly omitted from or included in the list of faculty scheduled for fifth-year review should make this known to the Chief Academic Officer. In the event that the Chief Academic Officer and the faculty member cannot reach a mutually satisfactory agreement, the Chief Academic Officer in consultation with the Professional Affairs Committee will decide whether or not the faculty member in question is scheduled for review.

No later than May 31, the Chief Academic Officer will notify all faculty members who are scheduled for fifth-year reviews of their responsibility for compiling a self-evaluation file which must be submitted to the Department Chairperson and forwarded to the Chief Academic Officer no later than October 15. In cases where the faculty member to be reviewed is a Department Chairperson, the self-evaluation will be submitted to the Division Chairperson.

The Chief Academic Officer will conduct the fifth-year reviews.

3.10.2 FIFTH-YEAR REVIEW FILE

The fifth year review will be based on evidence contained in a review file incorporating the faculty member's self-evaluation and the evaluation completed by the Department Chairperson or Division Chairperson. Assessment will use the criteria of Section 3.5.1.

3.10.3 ACTION FOLLOWING FIFTH-YEAR REVIEW

The Chief Academic Officer's evaluation of a faculty member's performance will be discussed with the faculty member in an interview and summarized in written recommendations.

Appendix E

Assessment Plan Template

MAJOR:						
PROGRAM MISSION:						
Learning Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategy	Measure	Findings	Action Plan
(LONG-TERM GOAL--constant, general)	(Must be specific and measurable, related to what students know and the skills they are expected to demonstrate)	(The person responsible for assessing objective)	(List the courses in program where the outcome is emphasized)	(How will you measure this... exams, projects using rubrics, embedded exam questions, surveys, records, etc.)	(What did you find?)	(How will you use this information? What must you do to increase effectiveness? What are the next steps in the process?)

Learning Goal	Outcome	Person Responsible	Implementation Strategy	Measure	Findings	Action Plan

<p>Signature of Department Head:</p> <hr/> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature of Reviewer:</p> <hr/> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Reviewer Comments:</p>	<p>Signature of Department Head:</p> <hr/> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature of Reviewer:</p> <hr/> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Reviewer Comments:</p>
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CURRENT ASSESSMENT MEASURES																				
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Appendix G

Appropriate Measurement Techniques

Direct Measures of Learning
Capstone projects*
Research projects*
Presentations*
Performances*
Written papers*
Portfolios*
Locally-designed exams
Standardized exams
Questions embedded in exams
Graduate entrance exams (e.g., GRE, GMAT, LSAT)
Internship supervisor reports*
Theses*
Licensure exams
Student publications
Behavioral observations*
Simulations*

* using a scoring rubric for evaluation

Indirect Measures of Learning
Published surveys (e.g. NSSE, Noel-Levitz)
Exit interviews
Alumni surveys
Focus groups
External reviewers
Curriculum and syllabus analysis
Employer surveys
Graduate school acceptance rates
Job placement statistics
Comparative analysis using programs at peer institutions
Student records

Appendix H

Core Curriculum Review Template

Major: Core Curriculum (Example)					
Courses in major	Goal 1: Students will speak effectively	Goal 2: Students will demonstrate effective writing skills	Goal 3: Students will think critically	Goal 4: Students will master quantitative skills	Goal 5: Students will develop cultural, historical and social understanding
FO	I -- AL, AS	I --			I --
EN 101	E-- AL				
EN 102	E-- AL				
PH 202					
MATH COURSE				I & E	
TH 101					
TH 102					
PH 200/201					
PH 403					
HISTORY COURSE 1					
HISTORY COURSE 2					
EN 202					
EN 201/EN 206					
FINE ARTS COURSE					
BI 01/155/201/231					
SC 211/CH105/PY101					
PC 20/SO 201/EC201					
PC 20/SO 201/EC201					
GB 320					
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE					
COMPS					
WRITING IN DISCIPLINE					

SACS requires two Student Learning Outcome measures (AL) of assessment for each learning goal

I = introduce, E = emphasize, R = Reinforce AP = Assess Process, AS =Assess Satisfaction, AL= Assess Student Learning

Courses in major	Goal 6: Students will develop an appreciation of artistic beauty	Goal 7: Students will demonstrate spiritual growth			
FO	I --	I -- AS			
EN 101					
EN 102					
PH 202					
MATH COURSE					
TH 101		E -- AS (exit survey)			
TH 102		E -- AS (exit survey)			
PH 200/201					
PH 403					
HISTORY COURSE 1					
HISTORY COURSE 2					
EN 202					
EN 201/EN 206					
FINE ARTS COURSE					
BI 01/155/201/231					
SC 211/CH105/PY101					
PC 20/SO 201/EC201					
PC 20/SO 201/EC201					
GB 320					
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE					
COMPS					
WRITING IN DISCIPLINE					

I = introduce, E = emphasize, R = Reinforce AP = Assess Process, AS = Assess Satisfaction, AL= Assess Student Learning

Appendix I

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