

2016-2017 Annual Program Assessment Guide

Introduction

This guide is intended to assist you in developing and monitoring a yearly plan for assessing your program or area of responsibility. The process and the documentation created will be coordinated and supported by the Office of Institutional Research. Questions or requests for assistance with the process or completion of the program assessment plan should be directed to Mike Brown, Director of Institutional Research, x6947 or michael.brown@umhelenacollege.edu.

Assessment: What is it and why do it?

Helpful definitions of assessment from the literature include:

“...a means for focusing our collective attention...examining assumptions and creating a shared academic culture *dedicated to continuously improving the quality of higher education learning*. Assessment requires making expectations and standards for quality explicit and public... Systematically gathering evidence on how well performance matches those expectations and standards...Analyzing and interpreting the evidence, and using the resulting information to document, explain and improve performance...” Thomas Angelo, *American Association for Higher Education*, 2002

“Assessment is a process, not a product; it is a beginning, not an end” Bauer & Volkwein, 2000.

It is imperative that the college have a formal, institution-wide process that is consistently documented over time to serve the following internal and external needs:

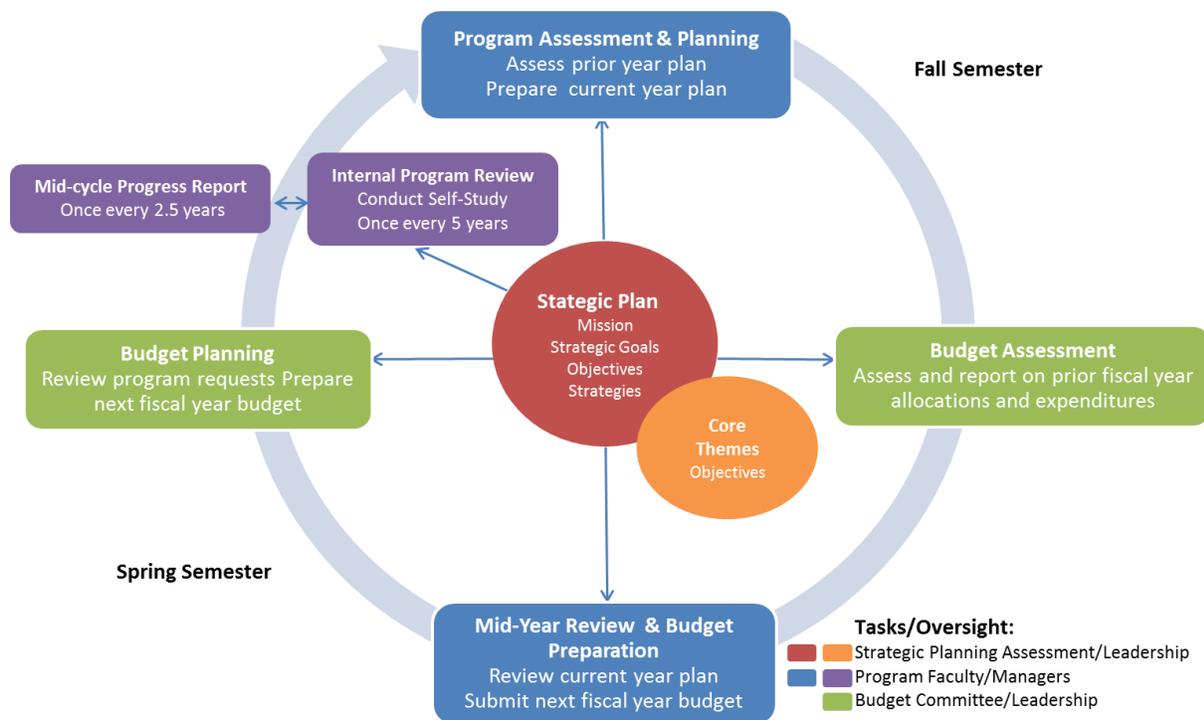
- **Assessment allows the institution to plan and monitor activities that fulfill its stated mission.** This is how the college develops and evaluates its programs and services to insure that students are offered a productive learning environment that maximizes their opportunities to learn. (*Mission Alignment, Fiscal Responsibility*)
- **Assessment strengthens student support services, resulting in better student engagement and satisfaction.** (*Student Success*)
- **Assessment enables the institution to focus available resources on faculty and staff development** (*Academic Excellence, Professional Development*)
- **Assessment is an expectation of regional and discipline specific accreditation standards and requirements.** (*Quality, Accountability*)

Effective assessment should not intrude into the classroom, infringe upon academic freedom, or be incorporated inappropriately in faculty or staff evaluation.

Process Overview

As the college passes the midpoint of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) seven-year accreditation cycle and has implemented a new strategic plan, the process for creating your annual program assessment plan has been designed to achieve the following:

1. Improve program/unit alignment with institutional mission, strategic goals, objectives and core themes
2. Better integrate program planning and assessment with institutional budget planning and resource allocation
3. Provide consistent, meaningful documentation and understanding of the planning and assessment process



Process Elements and Timeline

Fall Semester

Annual Program Assessment Plan Due by **9/30/16**

- *Past Year Assessment*: Review outcome results and resource allocations/actual expenditures to inform next annual plan.
- *Current Year Planning*: State outcomes, alignment, strategies, indicators, resources, time frame and responsible party.
- *Responsible Parties*: Program faculty/directors and committee chairs in consultation with administrators/supervisors with support from Director of Institutional Research.

Spring Semester

Mid-Year Progress Report Due by **1/20/17***

- *Current Year Assessment*: Review and report progress towards attainment of objectives. Revise strategies, indicators and time frames as necessary. Review current year budget allocations and expenditures to inform budget request for next fiscal year.
- *Responsible Parties*: Program faculty/directors and committee chairs in consultation with administrators/supervisors with support from Director of Institutional Research.

Program Budget Requests Due by **1/20/17***

- *Next Year Planning*: Submit budget request for next fiscal year based on review of current year program plan and resource allocation/expenditures and preliminary program planning for next year.
- *Responsible Parties*: Program faculty/directors and committee chairs in consultation with administrators/supervisors with support from Assistant Dean Fiscal & Plant and Director of Institutional Research.

**Deadlines pending final determination by Assistant Dean Fiscal and Plant, Budget Committee, and Director of Institutional Research*

Annual Program Assessment Plan Form Updates

- Annual assessment plan forms are stored on the Institutional Research & Assessment page on the college's intranet site using SharePoint.
- Forms for all reporting programs have been created, and as applicable, fiscal information has been entered based on the approved FY17 institutional operating budget accessed in UMDW.
- This year program goals have been differentiated from program student learning outcomes to provide better clarity and reporting for academic programs. Non-instructional areas/programs should enter one or more program goals. *Program goals are optional for academic programs. Academic programs are required to enter their program/degree level student learning outcomes, which also have a different set of prompts for entering assessment information. Non-instructional areas/programs are not required to enter student learning outcomes.*
- This year a new "Administrative Review & Feedback" section has been added to facilitate oversight and collaboration in planning and assessment between program managers and their administrators/supervisors.
- Last year a new "Community Engagement" section was added to report and track formal and/or informal external collaborations/partnerships.
- A new prompt has been added to document how the results of program goals and/or the assessment of student learning outcomes will result in changes or improvements.

Instructions for Completing an Annual Program Assessment Plan:

Accessing the Annual Program Plan form

1. Access the Helena College intranet site from the following link: <http://connect.umhelena.edu>
2. Enter your Net ID and password (same as your access to the college network, faculty toolkit, etc.)
3. From the left side navigation column under "Subsites" click on "Institutional Research and Assessment". Once you arrive on the Institutional Research site, go to the left side navigation bar and click on "Program Assessment Plans 2016-17".
4. On the Program Assessment Plans 2016-17 site the plans are listed in alphabetical order. Simply click on your program to enter your information. At any time, you can "save" or "update" what has been entered and then "close" the form to exit. Your plan will be updated with the latest information you have entered.

Entering the Annual Program Assessment Plan

1. **Plan Developer:** Enter your name (first and last name) Plans may have multiple developers. Enter the names of any additional developers.
2. **Plan Developer Email:** Enter your Helena College email address.
3. **Date Plan Created:** Enter the date (mm/dd/yyyy) or select the date from the calendar icon.
4. **Program Mission Statement:** Enter your program mission statement as applicable

5. **Program Goals:** Enter your program goals. In most cases, it is expected that programs should have more than one goal. The form allows you to enter as many as you wish. To enter additional goals, click the “Add another program goal” link at the bottom of the Program Outcome box. To edit entered goals (insert or remove) click on the gray icon that will appear to the left of the relevant goal when you move your mouse over the goal box. *Program goals are required for all non-instructional areas and optional for academic programs.*
 - a. **Program Goal-** Program goals should be broad and express a desired end state.
 - b. **Core Theme Alignment** – All goals must align with at least one of the college’s core themes. Select the core theme(s) that your outcome supports.
 - c. **Strategic Plan Alignment** – All program level goals must align with one of the college’s six strategic goals. Choose the applicable strategic goal(s). For reference a link to the Helena College 2012-2022 Strategic Plan is provided.
 - d. **Strategy to Accomplish Goal** – Identify the specific action(s) you will undertake to accomplish the goals. These are the means, not the ends, to achieve your goals. Remember SMART criteria (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**imeframe)
 - e. **Indicator(s) of Achievement** – How will you know that your strategy was successful in achieving the desired goal? List the indicator(s) and/or assessment tool(s) that you will utilize to evaluate fulfillment of your strategy. See page 7 for a list of suggested indicators of achievement.
 - f. **Required resources-** Specify the specific resources you will need to execute your strategy. Resources can be fiscal, personnel, internal or external, etc. If the resource(s) are fiscal, please cite the specific category/item and allocation from your budget.
 - g. **Timeframe for Completion** – What is the specific time period involved in executing your strategy and when will it be completed? If the strategy is reoccurring, then specify the frequency (Ongoing, fall and/or spring semester, specific date, etc.).
 - h. **Responsible Party** – Identify who has the primary responsibility for implementing, monitoring, and assessing the strategy. Multiple names can be entered.
 - i. **Results and Planned Improvements** – Use this field to report the results of your strategy and any plans for future program changes or improvements based on the results. *Note this section is to be completed at the end of the academic year, beginning of the subsequent academic year or within the specific timeframe which applies to completion of your strategy as this is your final assessment.*

6. **Program/Degree Student Learning Outcomes:** Enter the student learning outcomes (SLO) for your program or for the degree/certificates your area offers. The form allows you to enter multiple SLOs. To enter additional SLOs, click the “Add another student learning outcome” link at the bottom of the Program/Degree Student Learning Outcome box. To edit entered outcomes (insert or remove) click on the gray icon that will appear to the left of the relevant goal when you move your mouse over the outcome box. *All academic programs are required to identify SLOs that are assessable and published in the catalog, on the website and/or in course syllabi where they are assessed.*
 - a. **Student Learning Outcome-** In most cases SLOs are expressed as specific knowledge, skills or competencies that students should be able to successfully demonstrate at the completion of the program.
 - b. **Core Theme Alignment** – SLOs should align with at least one of the college’s core themes. Select the core theme(s) that your outcome supports.
 - c. **Institutional Competency Alignment** – SLOs should also align with one or more of the college’s seven institutional competencies required of students. Choose the applicable

competencies. For reference a link to the Helena College 2012-2022 Strategic Plan is provided.

- d. **Assessment Tool/Instrument-** Describe how the student learning outcome will be assessed (ex. assignment, project, practicum, certification, exam, etc.). See page 7 for a list of suggested outcomes assessment tools.
 - e. **Timing and Location of Outcome Assessment-** Where and when will the student learning outcome be assessed. The assumption is that this will occur within a relevant program course at a given point in time within the academic year. If not, be sure to provide an explanation.
 - f. **Responsible Party-** Who will be responsible for the assessment? The assumption is that a faculty member will have this responsibility. If not, be sure to explain.
 - g. **Assessment Results-** Specifically describe the results of the assessment. This can be expressed as a pass rate (ex. Xx% of students in the course or program successfully passed/completed xx exam/project/certification, etc.)
 - h. **Changes or improvements** – Describe any changes/improvements to curriculum, instruction and/or the assessment tool that will occur in response to results of the assessment of the outcome.
7. **Mid-Year Report-** Enter the mid-year status of your outcomes. Indicate any changes to your strategies, indicators, resources, time frame and/or responsible party as applicable. Enter the date of your report (mm/dd/yyyy) or use the calendar icon to enter it automatically.
 8. **Community Engagement** – Please use this section to list any external collaborations or partnerships your program will or plans to participate in during the 2016-17 Academic Year. They can be formal or informal and should be related to instruction, student success, delivery of services and/or community outreach. This can be completed at the beginning of the year and revised as necessary or you can wait until the end of the year to provide the information.
 9. **FY17 Program Budget Report-** Your budget information has been entered based on the approved general operating fund for the 2017 fiscal year (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017). All budgets are itemized based on general line item categories. *For the most accurate tracking and reporting, be sure to use the appropriate budget index **and** account code on your purchase orders and travel forms.* Approved items with the same general account code 62XXX have been combined; be sure to track individual purchases that might be grouped under one account code.
 - a. **Program Goal/Student Learning Outcome Alignment** – Enter the program outcome(s) supported by this line item.
 - b. **Mid-Year Expenditure** – Enter the dollar amount expended at mid-year for the line item. Note this information should be entered with the Mid-Year Report.
 - c. **Final Expenditure** – Enter the final dollar amount expended for the line item.
 - d. **Final Budget Narrative** – Use this field to report any budget modifications that were requested and approved during the fiscal year and to provide explanation for any variances between the allocated amount and final expenditure for each item or category.
 10. **Administrative Review & Feedback-** All annual assessment plans should be reviewed by an appropriate administrator, in most cases either a division chair (academic programs) or a supervisor (non-instructional programs/areas). This is not for approval, rather it is designed to facilitate a discussion about the quality, consistency and feasibility of your annual assessment planning, encourage collaboration and effective use of resources, and solid alignment with



institutional goals and priorities. The review should happen upon initial drafting and at the final completion of your plan.

Indicators & Outcome Assessment Tools

A wide variety of indicators and tools can be used to measure fulfillment of your goals and learning outcomes. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but illustrates some of the resources that are available or have been used at Helena College. If you need assistance identifying appropriate performance indicators and/or assessment tools, contact Mike Brown, Director of Institutional Research at x6947 or michael.brown@umhelena.edu.

- Survey of New Student Engagement (SENSE) 2010, 2013
- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (SENSE) 2011, 2013
- Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) 2011
- Annual Graduate Surveys
- Annual Employer Surveys
- Program/Service Evaluations (orientation, advising, etc.)
- Course Evaluations (fall, spring, mid-term)
- Course Pre/Post Testing
- Certification/Licensing Examinations (participation & pass rates)
- Graduation Rates (Time to completion for a select cohort)
- Degree/Certificate Completions (Production/year)
- Employment Placement Rates
- Transfer Rates (Subsequent enrollment for a select cohort)
- Retention Rates (Semester to semester/year to year persistence)
- Remediation Rates
- Program/Course Enrollment
- Good Academic Standing
- Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Professional Standards and Assessment Guides
- Student Work (internships, projects, portfolios, peer evaluation, field work, comprehensive examinations, proficiency tests, practicums, etc.)
- Customized surveys or studies ([Contact the Office of Institutional Research](#))