Campus Assessment Master Plan (CAMP)

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
## List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAC&amp;U</td>
<td>Association of American Colleges &amp; Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAT</td>
<td>Assessment Academy Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHA</td>
<td>Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMP</td>
<td>Campus Assessment Master Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Committee for Institutional Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMIR</td>
<td>Data Management and Institutional Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETS</td>
<td>Educational Testing Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLC</td>
<td>Higher Learning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>Liberal Education Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>Liberal Education Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSSE</td>
<td>National Survey of Student Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASL</td>
<td>Plan for Assessment of Student Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RASL</td>
<td>Report on Assessment of Student Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLO</td>
<td>Student Learning Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SmSUFA</td>
<td>Southwest Minnesota State University Faculty Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Moving Through the Assessment Cycle ............................................................. 2
# Table of Contents

List of Acronyms.......................................................................................................................... ii
List of Tables and Figures............................................................................................................. iii
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................ iv
Introduction...................................................................................................................................... 1
  Mission.......................................................................................................................................... 1
  Vision............................................................................................................................................ 1
  University Values......................................................................................................................... 1
  Liberal Education Program Outcomes ......................................................................................... 1
Overview of Assessment Process.................................................................................................. 2
Academic Program Assessment Reporting.................................................................................... 3
  Department Annual Report ......................................................................................................... 3
  Report on Assessment of Student Learning (RASL) ................................................................. 3
  Program Five-Year Self-Study ................................................................................................... 4
Liberal Education Program (LEP) Assessment............................................................................. 4
  Programmatic Assessment of LEP Outcomes ......................................................................... 4
  Ad Hoc Assessment Teams ...................................................................................................... 5
  Student Affairs ........................................................................................................................... 5
  Mission of Student Affairs ......................................................................................................... 5
  Vision of Student Affairs .......................................................................................................... 5
  Values of Student Affairs ......................................................................................................... 5
  Co-curricular Assessment of Student Learning ....................................................................... 5
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning (PASL) .................................................................... 6
Programmatic Review ................................................................................................................... 6
Coordination of Assessment with Accreditation Processes ......................................................... 7

*Appendix A*: Liberal Education Student Learning Outcomes for Programs......................... 9

*Appendix B*: Programmatic Plan for Assessment of Student Learning................................. 12

*Appendix C*: Report on Assessment of Student Learning (RASL) Template and

  Instructions ................................................................................................................................... 17
  Reflection Summary .................................................................................................................. 17
  SMSU Report on Assessment of Student Learning (RASL) Yearly Summary Template .......... 19
Appendix D: Assessment Timetable ................................................................. 21
Appendix E: Program Assessment Documentation Requirement Checklist .............. 22
Appendix F: Program Review Procedures ................................................................ 23
Appendix G: Student Services Assessment Template ............................................. 26
Southwest Minnesota State University
Campus Assessment Master Plan (CAMP)

Introduction

Southwest Minnesota State University is a public, regional, comprehensive university. The Campus Assessment Master Plan (CAMP) is grounded in the mission, vision, and values of the university. Because courses are taught in a liberal arts tradition, the mission, vision, and values are integrated within the student learning goals. These campus-wide student learning goals are extended to the SMSU Liberal Education Program’s specific Student Learning Outcomes.

Mission.

Southwest Minnesota State University prepares students to meet the complex challenges of this century as engaged citizens in their local and global communities. Our comprehensive degree programs, taught in the liberal arts tradition, are dedicated to connecting students’ academic and practical professional development experiences in southwestern Minnesota to the wider world.

Vision.

Southwest Minnesota State University is a university of choice.

University Values.

Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) upholds core values of transformational learning centered on excellence and innovation, civic and community engagement, diversity and global awareness, and environmental issues of stewardship and sustainability:

1. Excellence and Innovation: SMSU faculty and staff create and support a high-quality student-centered learning environment that prepares students to meet the complex challenges of this century as engaged citizens in their local and global communities and provides students with the skills and knowledge to be lifelong learners.
2. Civic and Community Engagement: SMSU faculty and staff are engaged in and support activities that promote civic engagement opportunities that enhance SMSU’s reputation as a locally, regionally, and globally-engaged institution and build mutually beneficial partnerships across our region and state and provide rich opportunities for learning that go beyond the traditional classroom and lab settings.
3. Diversity and Global Awareness: SMSU faculty and staff contribute to creating an environment that celebrates the diverse and inclusive nature of the SMSU campus community as they foster cultural understanding and interactions and a welcoming and accessible campus environment for all groups and provide a supportive environment for intellectual expression and civil communication by all groups.
4. Environment, Stewardship, and Sustainability: SMSU faculty and staff are committed to being responsible stewards of our environmental and fiscal resources who facilitate a safe, accessible campus, & foster actions, programs, and scholarship that will lead to a sustainable future.
Liberal Education Program Outcomes.

A liberal arts education is an approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. A liberal arts education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, develop skills that span all areas of study, such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings. Therefore, upon completion of the Liberal Education Program at SMSU, students will:

1. Communicate effectively.
2. Be creative thinkers able to identify, formulate, and solve problems using interdisciplinary perspectives.
3. Be critical thinkers who evaluate information wisely and examine how assumptions and positions are shaped.
4. Understand both physical and social aspects of the world and their place in it.
5. Embrace the similarities among peoples and appreciate the diversity that enriches the human experience.
6. Analyze moral judgments and engage in moral discourse.
7. Practice responsible citizenship in their local and global communities.

A full description of these student learning outcomes can be found in Appendix A.

Overview of Assessment Process.

Assessment is performed for two main purposes: improvement of student learning and accountability to constituents, governance, and accreditation. This plan strives to ensure students receive the best possible learning experience through continual improvement. The SMSU campus envisions the assessment process as a continuous loop that strives for improvement in each iteration.

![Assessment Cycle Diagram](image_url)

Figure 1. Moving Through the Assessment Cycle.
SMSU faculty and staff engage in ongoing assessment to ensure we fulfill the mission of the university and meet campus-wide and programmatic learning outcomes. Assessment occurs at a number of levels with information from one level feeding another. The Committee for Institutional Assessment (CIA) plays a pivotal role in the assessment processes. In addition, the Liberal Education Committee (LEC) supports the central role of the CIA. Departments and Programs also engage in continuous assessment not only for programmatic student learning outcomes, but also for Liberal Education Program (LEP) student learning outcomes. In addition to the assessment driven by Academic Affairs, Student Affairs performs assessment of their co-curricular involvement in LEP student learning outcomes.

Assessment Liaison Teams coordinate support for academic programs. Multiple teams of 3 to 5 members are each assigned to work with a portion of SMSU’s academic programs. Each academic program identifies a contact person within the program to coordinate assessment efforts within that program. Therefore, Program Assessment Leaders (PALs) work with the Liaison Teams and the Assessment Coordinator to ensure programs maintain progress in ongoing assessment.

**Academic Program Assessment Reporting**

The following reporting mechanisms are used for assessment reporting: Departmental Annual Reports, annual programmatic Report on Assessment of Student Learning (RASL), and programmatic 5-year self-studies.

*Department Annual Reports*

In the Department Annual Report, programs should include an Assessment Progress Report. This progress report will include two main components for each program contained in every department:

- Identifying any curricular, instructional, or pedagogical changes implemented by the program that year that stemmed from past assessment data;
- Summarizing the assessment activities of the program during the year and to indicate whether all of the artifacts identified in the assessment timeline were collected for analysis. The Dean’s webpage has more information about the structure of the Department Annual Report and the yearly submission dates.

*Report on Assessment of Student Learning (RASL)*

Each program will complete and submit a RASL by September 15th of each academic year (See Appendix C). The RASL will be submitted to the Assessment Coordinator via email or other announced submission procedures. Each RASL will begin with a completed summary template. The summary template will identify programmatic learning outcomes and LEP learning outcomes. A full report will follow the summary and report instructions are provided on the template. Programs are expected to include detailed analysis from their assessment activities from their Plan for Assessment of Student Learning (PASL) and timeline in the report in addition to the template summary. Briefly, the full report contains the following items: 1) The summary
template; 2) The current version of the program assessment plan (i.e. the full PASL); 3) In the absence of number 2, submission of the program’s assessment timeline; 4) The program’s complete assessment report for programmatic SLOs; and 5) The assessment report for any LEP outcomes assessed. The Assessment Coordinator will make each program’s RASL available to the CIA and LEP for aggregation of data and to their respective college’s Dean. For assistance in developing timelines, programs can use the Assessment Timetable as seen in Appendix D. Additionally, a checklist helps programs confirm that they have completed all elements of the RASL. The checklist can be seen in Appendix E.

Program 5-Year Self Studies

In coordination with the Deans, each program completes a thorough internal and external review process on a 5-year basis. The summaries from RASLs for each of the previous 5 years should be included as documentation in the self-study. In addition, programs are expected to highlight how assessment data has informed curricular, pedagogical, and instructional changes. The Program Review Procedures can be found in Appendix F.

LEP Assessment

Assessing SMSU’s Liberal Education Program (LEP) requires the active cooperation of every department that teaches courses in the LEP, along with the Liberal Education Committee (LEC) and the Committee for Institutional Assessment (CIA). The LEP exists at one level to introduce students to a range of academic areas broad enough to help form a liberal education. At another level, the LEP represents SMSU’s commitment to helping students make real progress in essential skills such as written and oral communication, critical thinking, information literacy and creative thinking.

SMSU’s Faculty Assembly has identified learning outcomes and a set of sub-goals for each outcome which will form the basis for assessing the Liberal Education Program. The learning outcomes will be assessed on a rotating three-year schedule established by the LEC. Each outcome will be assessed at least once during each three-year cycle, but may be assessed more frequently if necessary.

Rubrics have been developed for use by faculty teaching LEP-designated courses and for faculty to utilize for assessment of LEP student learning outcomes in courses taught within a given major. The rubrics currently approved by the SMSU Faculty Assembly include Critical Thinking, Speech Communication (Communicate Effectively), Information Literacy (Critical Thinking), and Written Communication (Communicate Effectively). In addition, the CIA and LEP support the use of the following Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) Value Rubrics: Creative Thinking, Intercultural Knowledge and Competence (Diversity), Ethical Reasoning (Moral Judgment and Discourse), and Civic Engagement (Responsible Citizenship).

Programmatic Assessment of LEP Outcomes.

Programs identify LEP student learning outcomes covered in courses and activities within their majors. These outcomes are aligned with assessment of student learning outcomes in
the major. LEP assessment, when performed, is submitted via programs for inclusion in Department Annual Reports. These assessment processes were originally coordinated by the Assessment Academy Team. In the long-term plan, the Liberal Education Committee will coordinate these efforts.

Ad Hoc Assessment Teams.

Intermittently and when appropriate, Ad Hoc Assessment (AHA) Teams will be convened to perform assessment of the LEP outcomes. During a cycle of ad hoc assessment, during a given academic year, the Faculty Association (SmSUFA) will establish two or three AHA Teams to carry out LEP assessment during the following academic year. These teams will include one member each from the LEC and the CIA, at least one of whom will be a SmSUFA faculty member and will chair the team, as well as one member from Student Affairs. Additional membership will come from faculty members who teach courses in the outcome area being assessed or from the faculty at large.

Assessment in Student Affairs

Mission of Student Affairs.

Student affairs supports the mission of the university by providing co-curricular programs and services that engage students in a successful, collaborative, and inclusive education; preparing them to become leaders in a diverse global community.

Vision of Student Affairs.

- Develop services that promote student recruitment, retention, academic excellence, and graduation.
- Facilitate co-curricular learning through student participation in an inclusive university community.
- Encourage student wellness, personal skills development, self-discovery, and personal accountability.
- Develop a community that strives for personal integrity, ethical decision making, mutual respect, and human dignity.
- Develop programs that promote multicultural competence and leadership necessary for students’ lifelong personal success.

Values of Student Affairs.

Student affairs will realize its mission and vision through teamwork, mutual respect, and effective partnerships. In promoting the university’s shared values we champion: respect, integrity, inclusion/diversity, commitment, collaboration, and scholarship.

Co-curricular Assessment of Liberal Education Program Outcomes

The mission, vision, and values of Student Affairs drive the assessment process of co-curricular activities. Yearly reports are generated by departments housed in Student Affairs.
Assessment of programs for students is completed within these reports. Specifically, these reports determine when one of the LEP goals is addressed by a student program. In addition, the Office of Civic Engagement tracks data from student organizations, athletics, residential life, and service learning. See Appendix G for the Student Services Assessment Template.

**Plan for Assessment of Student Learning**

Academic programs utilize a Plan for Assessment of Student Learning (PASL) to assess Programmatic Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). The components of the PASL include student learning goals and outcomes, a course map, an assessment plan, and a schedule for assessment. The steps to produce a PASL are:

1. Establish student learning goals (i.e., the intended learning).
2. Generate student learning outcomes connected to the goals (i.e., how much students actually learn).
3. Produce a course map to show where outcomes are taught within the curriculum.
4. Produce an alignment matrix to show where programmatic outcomes are aligned with LEP outcomes.
5. Create a schedule of when outcomes will be assessed.
6. Document assessment results, responses to results, and program enhancements.

Each step in this process is described in more detail below. Additional resources including several example plans are available from the CIA and Appendix B. The artifacts developed by each program include those described in the 5 steps of the PASL above and others related to documentation for accreditation. These artifacts include:

- Department and/or Program mission statement
- Program goals and student learning outcomes
- Program course map
- Program Assessment Plan
- All previous self-study reports (See Programmatic Review-5 Year Self-Study below)
- Department Annual Reports
- One copy of every course syllabus---current version
- List of program assessment tools/measures used (e.g., exams, quizzes, one-minute papers, essays), results, and brief narrative of how results impacted program.
- One or more examples of attainment of program student learning outcome(s).
- For programs with College Now courses, assurance (i.e., evidence) ‘…that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.’ (HLC Criterion Four)

**Programmatic Review**

The purpose of conducting reviews of academic programs is to ensure that each unit’s activities contribute to and are consistent with the mission of the University. The audiences of program review are three-fold, with the objectives of the process relative to each audience:
1. **Internal to the Department**  
- To identify areas of strength  
- To improve academic programs  
- To improve the quality of the learning experience  
- To promote excellence in teaching  
- To promote excellence in research and scholarship  
- To promote excellence in service to society  
- To provide internal accountability  

2. **Internal to the University**  
- To provide internal accountability  
- To assist University decision making and planning  

3. **External to the University**  
- To provide appropriate performance measures and standards in areas of academic activity  
- To provide external accountability to accrediting bodies, the Minnesota State system, and the State  

   The program review process includes the annual collection and review of data, as well as a self-study and external consultant every five years. Programmatic data is provided by Data Management and Institutional Research, the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and other offices on campus in the following program areas: demographics, enrollment, measurable outcomes, effectiveness, and fiscal resources.  

   The actual periodic review will be held on a five-year cycle. Exceptions will be provided for external agency timelines. The review process includes a programmatic self-study that incorporates student input and external consultant evaluation.  

   Upon completion of the self-study and the external consultant’s report, and in consultation with the Deans, the academic program faculty will propose an updated plan for the next five years. The updated plan will incorporate the evidence obtained in the self-study and consultant’s evaluation. This plan will be forwarded to the Provost for appropriate inclusion in the University’s Strategic Plan.  

**Coordination of Assessment with Accreditation Processes**  

In order to facilitate the coordination of assessment with accreditation processes, the positions of HLC Coordinator and Assessment Coordinator were combined into a single position. This coordinator convenes the CIA meetings, and Assessment Academy Team (AAT) during its life. In addition, the Coordinator co-convenes the HLC/Strategic Planning Committee with the Provost. This combined position allows for greater interconnectedness between committees and will enhance communication and sharing of assessment data for use in strategic planning and accreditation efforts. In addition, including the Coordinator in the leadership of the HLC/Strategic Planning Committee ensures that assessment data are considered in strategic planning and university priorities. The Coordinator receives half-time release from teaching duties and an assessment budget that includes a work-study student to assist the Assessment Coordinator.
The HLC/Assessment Coordinator provides leadership for University-wide accreditation, assessment, and institutional effectiveness efforts. Additionally, the coordinator supports the work of the President, Provost, and the Cabinet.

Duties and Responsibilities:
• Assist in the implementation of accreditation initiatives as ongoing part of strategic planning.
  • Chair the Assessment Academy Team.
  • Assist in the coordination of the Committee for Institutional Assessment (CIA), Liberal Education Committee (LEC), and Student Affairs in the collection and reporting of accreditation data for internal (e.g., academic program reviews; Liberal Education Program (LEP) student learning outcomes) and external purposes.
• Organize evidentiary documents on the t-drive to create an archival accreditation repository.
  • Assist the Provost as Assurance System Coordinator to enter data and information into the HLC Assurance System, the HLC electronic portal for entry of narratives, documents, and data.
    • Convene meetings to share and gather information for the Assurance System.
    • Attend HLC meetings and workshops to stay abreast of HLC policies and procedures.
• Acts as the Assessment Coordinator in conjunction with the HLC Coordinator. These duties include shepherding the campus assessment processes and convening the Committee on Institutional Assessment.
Appendix A: Liberal Education Program Student Learning Outcomes

Communicate effectively.

- Determine the nature and extent of information needed to formulate and develop a coherent and unified thesis.
- Understand and select the best communication methods for achieving a given purpose.
- Comprehend and synthesize messages conveyed in both oral and written contexts.
- Recognize and employ various methods of verbal, nonverbal, cultural, and emotional communication.
- Consider and account for the nature of audiences when presenting written and oral arguments.
- Present ideas with comfort and confidence in written and oral formats.
- Develop an appreciation for the significance and aesthetics of language.

Be creative thinkers able to identify, formulate, and solve problems using interdisciplinary perspectives.

- Break a complex issue or task into incremental steps.
- Comprehend the differences and similarities among fields of study, and how these augment our understanding of important issues.
- Employ multiple modes of inquiry and analysis to arrive at a range of possible solutions to a problem or task.
- Apply a range of methods for producing creative results.
- Exhibit increasing development of characteristics essential to being a creative thinker, including:
  - Curiosity
  - Aesthetic appreciation
  - Desire to make things better
  - Enjoyment of challenge
  - Ability to suspend judgment
  - Acceptance of and willingness to learn from mistakes and failures.

Be critical thinkers who evaluate information wisely and examine how assumptions and positions are shaped.

- Demonstrate information literacy by accessing, utilizing, formatting, citing, and documenting relevant material accurately and correctly.
- Interpret arguments by correctly identifying relevant premises, conclusions, and key assumptions.
- Evaluate the extent to which evidence is reasonable, relevant, accurate, and sufficient to support intended claims.
- Formulate clear, well-supported arguments.
- Engage in civil discourse, self-reflection, and consideration of other points of view.
Understand both physical and social aspects of the world and their place in it.

- Demonstrate knowledge of concepts, methods, and theories designed to enhance understanding of the natural world and human society.
- Demonstrate the ability to access, comprehend, compare, and evaluate contemporary scientific and social literature.
- Demonstrate an awareness of multiple worldviews, and how each is shaped by the interaction of physical and social factors.
- Critically consider the ethical and physical ramifications of scientific decisions on society and the environment.

Embrace the similarities among peoples and appreciate the diversity that enriches the human experience.

- Demonstrate awareness of personal identity as the result of a broad set of influences.
- Engage in a variety of cross-cultural interactions.
- View other cultures and social norms from multiple perspectives.
- Explore one’s biases while developing independent attitudes regarding the “difficult differences” in society.
- Integrate and apply diverse perspectives to increasingly challenging questions and real-world problems.
- Develop an informed concern for the greater good.

Analyze moral judgments and engage in moral discourse.

- Demonstrate understanding of the meaning, application, and justification of a number of core ethical values, including, but not restricted to:
  - Individual dignity
  - Human rights
  - Honesty
  - Integrity
  - Justice
  - Compassion
  - Personal and social responsibility
- Demonstrate understanding of and respect for a variety of ethical viewpoints.
- Recognize and critically reflect on one’s own moral values and their determinants.
- Recognize and address broad moral issues in a variety of contexts, including coursework, personal life, and global society.

Practice responsible citizenship in their local and global communities.

- Develop the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions necessary to make a difference in local and global communities.
- Recognize themselves as part of a larger social fabric, with public lives and personal ownership of social problems.
• Explore the nature and use of power and authority in various contexts.
• Engage in democracy as a life-enhancing, everyday practice of skills such as:
  o Attentiveness to public affairs and current events
  o Regular volunteering
  o Creative use of conflict
  o Active group membership
  o Collective problem solving
• Express their voices through informed citizenship and participation in civic and political processes.
• Confidently engage in civic discourse, self-reflection, and consideration of other points of view.
Appendix B: Programmatic Plan for Assessment of Student Learning

Creating a Plan for Assessment of Student Learning (PASL) for Southwest Minnesota State University*

This document is a general guide for developing the components of a Plan for Assessment of Student Learning (PASL). The guidelines are intended to help you and your program/department plan, organize, track, and report your assessment work. Developing and implementing a good plan will strengthen program quality and enhance the five-year program self-study. In addition, a well-developed PASL ensures consistency with expectations of our national accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission: A Commission of the North Central Association.

The Plan for Assessment of Student Learning includes the following documents:
- Student Learning Goals
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Course Map
- Alignment Matrix with LEP Outcomes
- Assessment Plan and Timetable

The steps to produce a PASL are:
1. Establish student learning goals (i.e., the learning intended)
2. Generate student learning outcomes connected to the goals (i.e., how much students actually learn).
3. Produce a course map to show where outcomes are taught within the curriculum
4. Produce an alignment matrix that shows how the programmatic learning outcomes in the course map align with the Liberal Education Student Learning Outcomes
5. Create a timeline of when outcomes will be assessed
6. Document assessment results, responses to results, and program enhancements

Each step in this process is described in more detail below. Additional resources including several example plans are available from the Committee on Institutional Assessment (CIA).

Step 1: Student Learning Goals

A good assessment plan begins with developing appropriate student learning goals. Goals can be very broad, but they should identify what you expect students to learn, understand, or appreciate as a result of their studies. The following guidelines may help you develop goals.

i. Goals should reflect what you want your majors to leave knowing and being able to do. Focus on developing four to six goals for your major; having more than six goals makes assessment more difficult and unmanageable.

ii. Take this opportunity to review your curriculum. Do your program/department’s existing goals need to be refined, redefined, or expanded?
iii. Your program’s goals (and outcomes) should be directed towards your majors. You may have goals/outcomes that apply to all students taking your courses but in this situation, the goals/outcomes are for your majors.

iv. Your program’s goals should align with the student learning outcomes of the Liberal Education Program (LEP) as much as possible. LEP-related goals may include the following: Our students will be effective communicators, problem-solvers, competent in the discipline, technologically proficient, and critical thinkers.

v. National organizations in your field may already suggest goals and outcomes for undergraduate curricula. In addition, you might search the websites of departments at similar schools or contact colleagues elsewhere. Do not reinvent the wheel if you are happy with goals/outcomes others are using/recommending.

**Step 2: Student Learning Outcomes**

*Your goals must be translated into student learning outcomes (SLOs).* Outcomes represent how much students actually learn, the specific abilities, knowledge, and attitudes you actually assess, therefore they must be measurable in some way. The learning outcomes must be written so they specify actions, behaviors, or products that can be observed and measured. An example of a student learning outcome is: *students will be able to prepare and deliver* a high quality presentation on an area within the discipline.

The following are suggestions to guide you as you develop your student learning outcomes.

a) Focus on things you would actually like to know about and that will strengthen your program.
b) Outcomes should be both meaningful and manageable (i.e., can be assessed effectively to improve or enhance your program).
c) Outcomes should describe what your students should be able to demonstrate, represent, or produce based on their learning experiences.
d) Use active verbs such as *create, apply, construct, translate, identify, hypothesize, and describe*, when identifying what students should be able to demonstrate, represent or produce over time.
e) Outcomes need to be clearly aligned with your program goals. As a general rule-of-thumb, plan for one to two outcomes per goal. Thus, with six goals, you would have 12 outcomes. More than 12 outcomes will make assessment more difficult.
f) Think about current practices and what you already do in courses that may be used for assessment.
g) Consider carefully what you can do in terms of assessing various outcomes – think about outcomes in terms of whether you want to assess them, whether you can assess them, and how you will assess them.

**Step 3: Course Map**

Create a course map that identifies the degree to which particular courses emphasize outcomes for your major. For example, where in the curriculum will students develop and/or apply the skill
or knowledge you want them to display? Completing this step may help you plan how and where to assess particular outcomes. Not every course will meet every goal or outcome, however, your curriculum as a whole must address each goal and outcome.

Step 4: Programmatic & LEP Outcome Alignment Matrix

Complete an alignment matrix that identifies the degree to which particular courses emphasize outcomes for your major and how they align with the Liberal Education Outcomes. For example, where in the curriculum will students develop and/or apply the skill or knowledge you want them to display? Completing this step may help you plan how and where to assess particular outcomes. Not every course will meet every goal or learning outcome, however, your curriculum as a whole must address each goal and outcome. On your matrix, you will also identify where the LEP outcomes align with your courses.

Step 5: Assessment Plan

Remember that who, when, and how you assess should follow from what you want to know. In other words, make sure your assessment will provide the information you want. Things to keep in mind:

a) Who & What
   a. Remember that you want to assess as many majors as possible but you do not have to assess every student in every class every year.
   b. You do not need to assess every goal every year, hence the assessment plan. Record keeping and organization are critical in terms of a plan.

b) Types of assessment
   a. Direct assessments are preferred over indirect assessments. Direct assessments examine student “products” as reflecting learning whereas indirect assessments ask students about their learning. Indirect assessments can be very useful but you should assess every outcome with a direct measure.
   b. Assessment needs to be focused. Course grades and, typically, exam grades are too broad to assess a good objective. However, particular assignments or exam questions may be just what you need. Using course assignments is referred to as course embedded assessment.
   c. It is helpful to identify instruments and methods for assessing student achievement for each learning objective. Some possibilities include: exam questions, essays, journals, case studies, simulations, internships, written assignments, portfolios, presentations, capstone or other projects, surveys (students, alumni, or employers), interviews, focus groups.
   d. Standardized assessments such as nationally normed tests (e.g., ETS exams) or department level assessments (e.g., faculty teaching different sections of the same course including the same question on a final exam) can be helpful but are certainly not necessary. Course content may differ across sections or the same outcome will be assessed in different courses so your assessment procedures may vary but all of the procedures require that students demonstrate the same skill (e.g., apply a theory to understand a particular type of social problem). An important, easy way to standardize is to develop an agreed upon rubric for faculty
to use in evaluating a paper or presentation (note: the rubric is only for the purposes of assessing learning outcomes and does not need to change or impact faculty grading systems/policies).

e. Formative assessment (e.g., assessments mid-semester or midway through a curriculum) provides valuable information. You want to balance formative assessment, however, with summative assessment. The latter asks the question, at the end of the course (or learning experiences), will students be able to demonstrate what we want?

c) Planning

a. Think about what you already do (e.g., types of assignments, in-class activities) and consider ways to use those activities or parts of them rather than trying to construct a whole new apparatus for assessment.
b. Be mindful of workload for faculty. Do not put all the assessments in places where only a few faculty will be responsible for the work.
c. Generate an assessment plan that includes as much of the following information as possible

- *Time table for assessment.* You should be assessing the outcomes associated with several goals each year. Think about a complete assessment cycle (all goals assessed) every 3-5 years depending on the number of goals. Keep in mind that we must show the HLC that we are using assessment results, thus doing more than several goals each year would likely be overwhelming for program faculty.

- Other things that can be included in the Plan are:
  - Where will the assessment of a particular outcome be done (e.g., what course or courses)?
  - What student work will be evaluated (e.g., final paper) to assess each outcome?
  - How will the assessment be conducted (e.g., rubric to be used)?
  - Criterion for Success. How will you know if students perform at a satisfactory level? In other words, how will you determine if students have learned it or not. For example, if 70% of students can do some task, is that sufficient?

Step 6: Documenting Assessment

Implement your plan by collecting the data and reflecting on or evaluating the assessment results. What do they tell you about your success with respect to what is being assessed? If the results are satisfactory, good, or great, celebrate that and consider ways to reinforce that success. If the results fail to reach your stated goal, articulate how you will respond in terms of changes you will make to help reach your goal (e.g., changes to courses, assignments, or curriculum). It is critical that you “close the loop” by explicitly stating plans in response to assessment results!
Additionally, you may find that the assessment process yields ideas for changing aspects of your assessment plan or strategies.

Finally, changes to program structure and delivery that were informed by yearly assessment data collected by a program should be included in each Department’s Annual Report. The RASL should have a summary template and a full report that responds to the prompts in the preceding paragraph. The compilation of these data are also essential for your program’s five-year self-study.


* Format derived, with permission, from Maurice Levesque, Associate Dean, Elon University, Oct. 2011, ‘Creating a Plan for Student Learning Assessment’.

Revised January 30, 2012
Appendix C: Report on Assessment of Student Learning (RASL) Template and Instructions

Report on Assessment of Student Learning (RASL)
The executive summary template should be used in coordination and conjunction with the following information listed below to create an annual assessment report for each academic program.

Instructions for Completing Report

The Report on the Assessment of Student Learning contains several components. Each of these components should be compiled into a single report. The report will be submitted by each academic program to the Assessment Coordinator by September 15th of each academic year. Send the report to Jeffrey.W.Bell@smsu.edu. Sections from this report will be distributed by the Assessment Coordinator to a variety of entities including Academic Deans, the Committee on Institutional Assessment, and the Liberal Education Committee.

Complete and compile the following components in your report:

- **Executive Summary:** Use the template. Email the template separately in excel form. Also, copy/paste the template content into your compiled report.
- **Most current Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning (PASL):** This plan must include a current assessment timeline that shows when Program Student Learning Outcomes are being assessed. This timeline should also include when Liberal Education Program Student Learning Outcomes are being assessed. Information about designing and refining the Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning can be found in the Campus Assessment Master Plan.
- **A narrative report explaining the results reported in the Executive Summary:** The narrative report should include results and analysis in greater detail than the summary. This narrative will have two sections, Section 1 is Program Student Learning Outcomes. Section 2 is Liberal Education Program Student Learning Outcomes. Complete the steps outlined below for each section.

Narrative Section of the RASL

This document is a supplement to the “SMSU Academic Programs Assessment File Documentation Checklist”. The checklist provides descriptive information regarding assessment, However, HLC also requires an evaluative or reflective summary of assessment data—a vital and necessary step for ‘continuous improvement’ through assessment.

The following instructions provide guidance for writing an evaluative or reflective summary of each program’s assessment data. Both the descriptive and evaluative components should be embedded in the RASL.

I. Background Information and Historical Context of Assessment*

- What significant changes regarding assessment activity within the program have taken place since the last HLC visit?
- Was there specific assessment data that led to these actions?
- **Note:** It is important to include data, facts, and information that support the evaluation of student learning outcomes.

II. Evaluation of Strengths**

- What are the major strengths of your program as revealed by assessment data (for a particular learning outcome or group of outcomes)?
• What relevant, credible, and compelling evidence do you have to support the strengths?

III. Evaluation of Challenges**
• What are the major challenges of your program as revealed by assessment data?
• What relevant, credible, and compelling evidence do you have to support the challenges?

IV. Recommendations for Improvement
• Based on an analysis of strengths and challenges, have the student outcomes been met?
• Recommendations for improvement
• Action plan, further collection of additional information, etc.
• What specific steps should be taken next to meet program learning outcomes?

*These instructions were based on a session from the 2012 HLC Self-Study Workshop entitled “Tips for Using Effective Structures, Processes, and Techniques to Enhance Your Self-Study,” March 31, 2012, by American Public University System staff: Dr. Jennifer Stephens Helm, Dr. G. Wynn Berry, Jeffrey McCafferty, and Lynn Wright.

**Note: Strengths presented and discussed above must be backed up with data, evidence, and documentation from activities such as: reports, surveys, research, benchmarking, workshops, interviews, focus groups, file reviews, observations, meeting minutes, institutional documents and website content, data queries, and other such activities.
# Program Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Assessed in this Summary:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Year:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Assessment Cycle Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does your program have comprehensive assessment plan that includes assessment of programmatic SLOs and assessment of Liberal Education outcomes?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is your program following a timeline for your assessment cycle?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If so, where are you in your assessment cycle?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Assessment of Programmatic Student Learning Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLO Assessed</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Student Artifact(s) assessed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What were your key findings for each SLO assessed (please include numerical analysis to support your findings when possible)?

What are your recommendations from your findings?
### Assessment of Liberal Education Program Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Program SLO:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of student artifact(s) assessed:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Findings (please include numerical analysis to support your findings when possible):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This template is intended to be an executive summary of your assessment endeavors for the current academic year. These summaries may assist your program efforts in your 5-year self-studies. It will also assist your department chair in completing Section G of the Department Annual Report. Furthermore, in order to help inform campus-wide assessment efforts, please submit the following items to the unit listed in parentheses for each item.

**For the remainder of your report, please submit the following components:**

1) This summary template (Department Chair/CIA)
2) Your current version of your program assessment plan (CIA)
3) If you do not have number 2 above, please submit your assessment timeline (CIA)
4) Your complete assessment report for your programmatic SLOs (CIA)
5) Your assessment report for any LEP outcomes assessed (LEP)
Appendix D: Assessment Timetable

**Timetable**

XXX Program Assessment Plan and Timetable, 2016-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses in the Major</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 1</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 2</th>
<th>LEVEL 3</th>
<th>LEVEL 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLOs addressed by course</td>
<td>Assessment Methods</td>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Person Responsible for Collecting Evidence</td>
<td>Process for Analyzing Evidence</td>
<td>Documentation of Continuous Improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Program Assessment Documentation Requirements Checklist

Program Checklist
SMSU Academic Programs
Assessment File Documentation Checklist

The items in the checklist below should be in electronic form as much as possible. If hard copies are only available, indicate where they are located. Electronic data can be stored by going to the ‘t’ drive, click on the ‘Assessment’ folder and look for your Department among the list of files. Only the Department chairperson and the administrative assistant have access to the t-drive. If you have questions, please contact the Assessment Coordinator.

Program/Department Name: __________________________________________

____ Department and/or Program mission statement
____ Program goals and student learning outcomes*
____ Program course map*
____ Program Assessment Plan, 2-5 years*
____ All previous self-study reports (give location if not electronic)
____ Department Annual Reports
____ One copy of every course syllabus---current version
____ List of program assessment tools/measures used (e.g., exams, quizzes, one-minute papers, essays), results, and brief narrative of how results impacted program.
____ One or more examples of attainment of program student learning outcome(s).
____ For programs with College Now courses, assurance (i.e., evidence) ‘…that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.’ (HLC Criterion Four)

Appendix F: Program Review Procedures

ACADEMIC PROGRAM PLANNING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

The two key elements in Program Reviews at Southwest Minnesota State University include the annual collection of data followed by a periodic evaluation including a self-study and external consultant evaluation.

A. Annual Collection of Data
The annual collection process includes the collection of data from the program’s assessment activities, the Office of Institutional Research and Reporting, the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration and other offices on campus in the following program areas:
1) Demographics
2) Enrollment
3) Measurable Outcomes
4) Effectiveness
5) Fiscal Resources
This data should be available to the academic departments on an annual basis to allow programs to make adjustments in activities between the five-year reviews.

B. Periodic Program Review
The actual periodic review is held on a five-year cycle with exceptions provided for external agency timelines. Participation by the full program faculty is expected. Every effort should be made to include student input where appropriate. The periodic review includes several components:
1. Program’s Self-Study and Report
   The self-study is prepared by the academic program and should include numerical/statistical data to support claims made, should be brief and concise (20-30 single-spaced pages maximum), and should include as a minimum the following areas:
   a. Introduction
   b. Curriculum
   c. Program Assessment
   d. Students
   e. Faculty
   f. Service
   g. Distance Learning (if applicable)
   h. Resources (budget, space, equipment)
   i. Integrity
   j. Future Direction

2. Selecting and Scheduling an External Consultant
The department or academic program will be responsible for identifying and forwarding a list of 2-3 potential external program review consultants to the Dean. The Dean in consultation with the department will recommend a consultant to the Provost for approval. Immediately after the Provost’s approval, the department or academic program must contact the Deans’ Office Administrator to begin the paperwork required to enter the external consultant into the system as a state employee or outside vendor. This process is required to allow payment after the completion and submission of the external consultant’s report. Also upon approval, the consultant visit will be coordinated by the department or academic program in cooperation with the appropriate Dean. Every effort should be made to schedule a site visit over a period of two days.
3. Preparing for the External Consultant Site Visit
The department or academic program is responsible for assembling documentation in support of its self study report. Materials such as course syllabi, texts, laboratory manuals, and other course-related items should be made available for review. In addition, examples of student work such as tests, projects, assignments, and research should be available to the consultant. This is similar to “patterns of evidence” required by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Every effort should be made to demonstrate student success. Examples of faculty scholarly work should also be available. Wherever possible, data already collected by assessment activities, HLC activities, or Datum should be used in this process.

4. Site Visit Interviews
The external consultant should conduct interviews with the following individuals or groups:
• department chair
  • faculty members of the department
  • undergraduate students and graduate students (if appropriate)
  • students of the program
  • Dean of the college
  • members of the program advisory board (if applicable)
  • staff in the unit or department
  • the Provost
  • others from the University community who have some association with the program
  • IF PRACTICABLE, alumni, employers, etc. (by phone if necessary)

5. External Consultant’s Report and Questionnaire
The external consultant should be viewed as an outside quality advisor whose main responsibility is to assess the quality of the program. In addition to completing the Consultant’s Questionnaire, the external consultant will complete a Consultant’s Report providing written recommendations that should be implemented to improve the quality of the program.
(A Guide to the External Consultant’s Report and Consultant’s Questionnaire is available on the Academic Deans’ website.)

6. Distribution of the Self Study and Report and External Consultant’s Report
Copies of the program’s Self Study and Report and the external consultant’s report including the reviewer questionnaire shall be sent to the following offices:
• department chair
• program faculty
• appropriate Dean
• Provost
• University Library
The Academic Dean will ensure that documents related to Academic Program Reviews will be posted on the Academic Program Review t-drive.

7. Post-Review Analysis and Planning
Once the program and appropriate Dean have received the external consultant’s final report, including the questionnaire, the department chairperson and academic program faculty will meet with the Dean to review the recommendations in order to determine which recommendations meet the program mission, vision, goals, student outcomes and the mission of the University. After the meeting the Dean will write an administrative/program response report that will include the date of the meeting, faculty in attendance and a summary of the external reviewer’s recommendations that will be (1) possibly implemented as recommended by the reviewer, or (2) will be attempted but with modifications appropriate to the program or (3) will not be used by the program. This should form the basis for the program’s five-year plan. The
purpose of the administrative/program response report is to ensure that feedback and recommendations obtained from the consultant are incorporated into program planning and for reference during the next program review. The program may wish to provide a separate detailed response to the Consultant Report to the Dean and the Provost. The administrative/program response report should propose anticipated changes to the program that faculty and students can incorporate to benefit both the program and institution. The administrative/program response report will be forwarded to the Provost and made available for use for accreditation. The Provost is responsible for seeing that any relevant recommendations from the administrative/program response report become elements of the University’s strategic plan.

On file will be a four document set: Academic Program Self-Study, External Consultant’s Final Report, the Administrative/Program Response Report and the Program’s Five-Year Plan. (The five-year plan should be developed within three months after the Administrative/Program Response Report, if possible).

See also:

* A-004 Academic Program Planning and Review*
Appendix G: Student Services Assessment Template

Southwest Minnesota State University
Division of Student Affairs

Date:

(Office Name) (Office Location)
(Director Name) (Office Phone)

DEPARTMENTAL MISSION

GOALS

POINTS OF PRIDE

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES 2016-2017
Program #
(what is the program, objective and proposed outcome)

Select the LEP outcome(s) that is most accurately represented:
- Communicate Effectively
- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Civic Engagement
- Diversity
- Physical & Social World
- Moral Reasoning
- Other (Non-LEP Outcome Based)

Methods and Measures
(Summary of assessment methods and measures)

Findings
(Summary of findings)

Conclusions / Status
(Summary of conclusions and/or ongoing status, as appropriate.
Was this a good program?
Should this program be repeated or scrapped? Why?
If repeated - with changes? What Changes?)

Plans for the Upcoming Year

Supporting Documents
Attachment A  -
Attachment B  -
Etc...