

9/8/08

**SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY  
GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES  
2008-09**

**OVERVIEW OF PROCESS**

Every academic program at Santa Clara University is expected to assess student learning outcomes at the program level. Assessment refers to the use of evidence to demonstrate that students have achieved specific learning objectives. Irrespective of their timetable for program review, all academic programs are expected to:

1. Articulate the mission, goals, and objectives of the program. All academic programs should have submitted this document by the end of Fall 2005. (See Appendix A: Guidelines for Mission, Goals, and Objectives.)
2. Create a Curriculum Alignment Matrix. This matrix is used to compare how well the curriculum addresses the stated learning objectives of the program. All academic programs should have submitted this document by the end of Fall 2005. (See Appendix B: Guidelines for Curriculum Alignment Matrix.)
3. Develop an Assessment Plan. This plan should outline the methods and timetable for assessing each of the stated learning objectives of the program. All academic programs should have submitted this document by the end of Fall 2005. (See Appendix C: Guidelines for Assessment Plan.)
4. Carry out the studies called for by the Assessment Plan and initiate program improvements suggested by the findings.
5. Submit an Annual Assessment Report to the Dean and the Director of Assessment on a date to be determined by the Dean each year. (See Appendix D: Guidelines for Annual Assessment Report.)
6. Incorporate the results of assessment activities in the Self-Study Report required for program review every six years. Program review focuses on formal evaluation of the program as a whole. This process is described in the separate document on [Guidelines for Academic Program Review](#).
7. Ensure that course objectives, as well as relevant program objectives, are included on all syllabi. (WASC Standard 2.3: “The institution’s student learning outcomes and expectations for student attainment are clearly stated at the course, program and, as appropriate, institutional level. These outcomes and expectations are reflected in academic programs and policies; curriculum; advisement; library and information resources; and the wider learning environment.”)

In addition, departments are expected to coordinate with the Core Curriculum Implementation Team and the Office of Assessment in the assessment of Core Curriculum Learning Objectives.

## **PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT**

In an educational context, assessment is the process of collecting, recording, analyzing, and interpreting information about a student's or one's own learning. Assessment is an essential tool for evaluating the effectiveness of changes and improvements in the teaching-learning process.

The University's mission statement declares that Santa Clara "makes student learning its central focus." The purpose of assessment is to foster educational effectiveness in the context of Santa Clara's mission as a Catholic and Jesuit university committed to education for competence, conscience, and compassion.

Assessment provides a means for every academic program to address three critical questions:

- What learning outcomes - - knowledge, skills, and values or attitudes - - do we expect?
- What evidence do we have about how well our program is achieving these outcomes?
- How can we use this evidence to improve program quality and student learning?

Only through an understanding of what students actually learn can programs assure that the learning objectives they have set are realized.

## **CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT**

The following criteria will be used to gauge the success of assessment at the program level:

1. The program follows the guidelines provided in this document unless alternatives have been approved in advance by the Dean in consultation with the Director of Assessment.
2. The assessment process reflects broad participation by program faculty in defining issues, analyzing evidence, and formulating plans.
3. Assessment activities are designed to be meaningful, manageable, and sustainable.
4. The process is based on pertinent quantitative and qualitative evidence, with an emphasis on direct evidence of student learning rather than indirect measures.
5. The program responds to assessment findings with actions designed to improve educational effectiveness.
6. All participants in the process, including the Dean's Office and the Provost's Office, act with an understanding that the primary purpose of this assessment process is to help the program realize the learning objectives it has set.

## **RETENTION OF ASSESSMENT MATERIALS**

Programs must retain documentation relating to assessment of student learning outcomes in a systematic and retrievable fashion for at least six years. Such documentation includes:

- A representative sample of student work products assessed by the program;
- Blank copies of questionnaires, rubrics, and other instruments used;
- Reports of individual assessments conducted; and
- The Annual Assessment Report described in Appendix D.

These materials are important for program improvement, future self-studies, and accreditation processes. Accreditation visiting teams will expect these materials to be available for scrutiny.

## **MANDATE FOR ASSESSMENT**

The assessment of student learning outcomes is required by the University's Board of Trustees, its Strategic Plan, and its accrediting agencies. The Director of Assessment, reporting to the Senior Vice Provost, is responsible for coordinating assessment activities. The Academic Affairs Committee is the policy committee charged with approving any major changes in policies or procedures related to assessment.

For additional information, see Appendix E: Mandate for Assessment and Program Review.

## **ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE**

The Director of Assessment is available to provide advice and technical assistance to programs on all aspects of the assessment process. Contact information is provided below.

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## **APPENDIX A GUIDELINES FOR MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

The Mission, Goals, and Objectives (MGO) document provides the foundation for the program to engage in assessment and self-study. To ensure broad participation and support, all full-time faculty on continuing appointment should review and discuss this document.

Useful resources for preparing this document are available from the Office of Assessment and include:

- “Defining Learning Objectives” in Mary J. Allen, *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* (Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc., 2004), pp. 27-38.
- “Mission, Goals, and Objectives” in Mary J. Allen and Richard C. Noel, *Outcomes Assessment Handbook* (May 2002), pp. 12-14.

The Mission, Goals, and Objectives document consists of a statement of the program’s mission and a list of goals and objectives for student learning, for curriculum and pedagogy, for scholarship and creative work, and for service. The assessment of student learning outcomes is the only required section for the Assessment Plan (see Appendix C) and the Annual Assessment Report (see Appendix D).

### **MISSION**

A mission statement is a brief description (one to three paragraphs) of the distinctive purpose and functions of your program. The mission statement should be framed in the context of the relevant discipline(s), the mission statement of your College or School, and the University’s Strategic Plan.

A good mission statement speaks to the core functions of the program. Please read your mission statement with these questions in mind:

- Does it address the degree level(s) at which the program offers instruction?
- Does it address the nature of the curriculum?
- Does it articulate the general learning expectations of students in your program?
- Does it express the importance of faculty scholarship?
- Does it represent the role of the program within the discipline and the University?

If the answer to one or more of these questions is no, the mission statement is probably incomplete.

Distinctiveness is also an important quality of a good mission statement. Please read your mission statement with these questions in mind: Could the statement apply to a department in a different discipline? Could it apply to a department in the same discipline at any other university? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, the mission statement is probably too generic.

The following draft mission statement, even with the reference to the Jesuit tradition, is incomplete and generic:

The Department of X promotes the methods and benefits of rigorous, objective thought, the diligent pursuit of truth, and the flexibility of perspective needed to find innovative solutions to important problems. These principles are to be incorporated into the larger university program of educating the whole person in the Jesuit tradition. Our aims are focused not only on our students, but also on our professional communities and the community at large.

In contrast, the next three mission statements are more comprehensive and distinctive:

The principal educational purpose of the psychology department is to provide an excellent basic education for undergraduates in the theory, methodology, and core content areas of contemporary psychology. A second purpose is to develop our students' critical thinking abilities and their capacities to express their thinking clearly when they speak or write. A third purpose is to help our students apply psychological knowledge in ways that will improve the quality of people's lives and promote the common good. There is a strong emphasis on scholarship in the department, including faculty with active research programs and frequent opportunities for students to collaborate with faculty in research. Small class sizes, close student-faculty interactions, and a climate of quality scholarship are distinctive features of the psychology program.

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The mission of the Department of Electrical Engineering is to educate our students, at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels, to prepare for careers in electrical engineering, or in other professions, in which they make a positive contribution to the growth of society, and to the betterment of the human condition, in the Jesuit tradition. We do this by teaching the concepts and the tools necessary to understand the physical world, particularly with respect to the fundamental laws of electricity and magnetism. Our students apply this knowledge to engineering problems, and they seek to understand the effect that electrical engineering has on society, and the obligations that the electrical engineer has to society. The Department contributes to the vitality of Silicon Valley and beyond through its teaching, practice, and scholarship.

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The mission of the Department of Economics is to advance the understanding of economics. We educate undergraduate and master's level students; we advance knowledge within the discipline; and we help our local, national, and international communities probe the economic dilemmas of the world today. We do this through teaching, scholarly research, and community outreach involving:

- The analytical tools for understanding how economic choices are made and the repercussions of those choices.
- The empirical methods needed to explore economic issues using the data of the contemporary world and of the past.

- The application of analysis and empirical methods to illuminate debates about important issues of the day, such as poverty, economic development and growth, globalization, and economic and social policy.

Our understanding of economics is shaped by the recognition that economics serves society and that at the heart of each economic decision is a human being.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A *Goal* is a broad statement of what the program hopes to accomplish. A *learning goal* is a statement of content, level of knowledge, skill and/or personal characteristic that faculty in an academic program expects their students to possess as a result of the program's curricular offerings and other endeavors.

*Objectives* are operational definitions of goals that are more specific and measurable. Learning objectives, in particular, describe the knowledge, skills, and values or attitudes students are expected to possess when they complete the program.

The following example from the Liberal Studies / Urban Education Program illustrates the difference between goals and objectives:

**Goal 1:** Graduates will develop an understanding of the social, cultural, ethnic, abilities, and gender differences in today's urban education settings so as to be able to apply social justice in their assessments of and responses to today's educational environments.

**Objective 1:** Graduates will demonstrate an understanding of how demographic differences in race, class, gender, abilities, and economic status influence the academic achievement and motivation of K-12 students as well as in larger society.

**Objective 2:** Graduates will engage in community-based service learning experiences to cultivate a commitment toward compassionate and socially just service to children, schools and communities.

### Programs are expected to articulate goals and objectives for four domains:

1. **Student Learning.** List goals and objectives for student learning. *Possible questions for prior discussion:* What kinds of knowledge and skills should students or graduates of the program have? What kinds of attitudes and values? How will students or graduates demonstrate the desired knowledge, skills, and values? Apart from student achievement within individual courses, how will faculty know? What is the program doing well? What opportunities for improvement are there?

NOTE: WASC Standard 2.3 also requires that student learning objectives be clearly stated at the course as well as at the program and institutional level. Every syllabus should explicitly state the learning objectives of the course.

2. **Curriculum and Pedagogy.** List goals and objectives for the ways in which the curriculum and pedagogy can better contribute to the achievement of student learning

objectives. *Possible questions for prior discussion:* How coherent is the curriculum? Does it have appropriate breadth and depth? Is it logically sequenced? Does it reflect current knowledge in the field? How does the curriculum contribute to University and College/School goals? Are declared learning objectives adequately addressed within the curriculum? Do pedagogical practices in the program advance these learning objectives as effectively as possible? What is the program doing well? What opportunities for improvement are there?

3. **Scholarship and Creative Work.** List goals and objectives for ways the program will foster the kind of scholarship it aspires to produce. Please note that these goals and objectives should focus on what the program does rather than what individual faculty members do. *Possible questions for prior discussion:* How does the program encourage scholarship? Does it want to be known for a particular kind or focus of scholarship? Is a collective goal for scholarship appropriate? What opportunities are there for scholarly collaboration among its faculty, between faculty and students, and with other programs? Does the program act as a community of scholars? Does the program have the capacity and interest to make a mark on the discipline by sponsoring research conferences, scholarly journals, or publication series? What is the program doing well? What opportunities for improvement are there?
4. **Service.** List goals and objectives for ways in which the program can better serve the University, the community, or the profession. Please note that these goals and objectives should focus on what the program does rather than what individual faculty members do. *Possible questions for prior discussion:* What service does the program currently provide to the College or School, the University, the profession, or the community? How does the program contribute to University initiatives such as the Core Curriculum, Residential Learning Communities, and Centers of Distinction? Can the program, as distinct from individual faculty, use its particular disciplinary or professional competencies to provide service in other areas? Can service activities be better integrated with teaching and scholarship? What is the program doing well? What opportunities for improvement are there?

Please limit the goals and objectives to a number that the program can monitor and assess over the next six years. A reasonable target might be a maximum of three or four goals for Student Learning, and two or three each for Curriculum and Pedagogy, Scholarship and Creative Work, and Service.

When you review your goals and objectives, it may be useful to ask: Are these the program's most important goals and objectives? Are they achievable? Will achieving them make a significant difference in the effectiveness of the program and the quality of student learning? Are they few enough to be manageable? Can they be measured through appropriate quantitative or qualitative methods?

## **MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES STATEMENT (MGOs)**

Each academic program should have an adopted mission statement and an articulated set of programmatic goals and objectives. This statement of Mission, Goals, and Objectives should be submitted to the appropriate Dean's Office as well as to the Director of Assessment. At any given time based on the results of evidence-based programmatic improvements, a program may elect to revise its MGO. All revised MGOs should be submitted to the Assessment Office in order to maintain updated records.

**Only the goals and objectives for student learning are required in the Assessment Plan (see Appendix C) and the Annual Assessment Report (see Appendix D).**

NOTE: It is also recommended that programs develop a plan for the periodic assessment of the Curriculum and Pedagogy, Scholarship and Creative Work, and Service domains in anticipation of the program review year. For assistance in developing a comprehensive (all four domains) assessment plan, please contact the Director of Assessment.

### **EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETE DOCUMENT**

Here is an example of a complete Mission, Goals, and Objectives document prepared by the Women's and Gender Studies Program.

#### **Mission Statement**

The Women's and Gender Studies (WGST) Program is a multidisciplinary program that brings together scholars and scholarship on women and gender from across the university. Through the eighty courses it offers as well as related programs for faculty and students, the Program provides an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to understanding the social and cultural constructions of gender as it intersects with race, ethnicity, sexual identity, class, and the like. With its roots in social justice movements of the last three decades, the methods and goals of Women's and Gender Studies support the University's mission of education informed by both ethical and intellectual values. With a faculty drawn from most of the traditional disciplines, the program seeks to foster collegiality and intellectual community across academic and co-curricular departments that encourage collaborative efforts among faculty, students, and staff. The program seeks to provide a solid foundation in women's and gender studies at the undergraduate level that can facilitate more detailed study at the graduate level or development of a career involving gender justice concerns, and to prepare students as citizens and leaders in diverse workplaces and communities. In addition to educating undergraduates in traditional classroom environments, the program pursues its goals by providing opportunities for civic engagement through internships, supporting faculty scholarship on gender issues across the disciplines, and presenting diverse co-curricular programming for the university.

#### **Student Learning Goals and Objectives**

*Goal #1:* Students will learn to understand gender as an element of social, political, economic and legal structures as well as individual identities, critically interrogating understandings of gender divisions as natural or socially constructed.

*Objectives:*

- a. Define sex and gender.
- b. Demonstrate an understanding of the social construction of gender.
- c. Apply feminist theory to analysis of diverse topics.

*Goal #2:* Students will examine women's and men's historical and contemporary experiences from the perspective of gender analysis, with an understanding of the intersections of race,

ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, age, nationality, and other critical variables.

*Objectives:*

- a. Identify gender as differently constructed through intersecting identities of race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, age, nationality, and other critical variables without being prompted.
- b. Demonstrate knowledge about gender issues as they affect diverse populations.
- c. Demonstrate knowledge of important events, legislation, and court rulings which had a major impact on the treatment and experiences of diverse groups.
- d. Demonstrate understanding of oppression and privilege based on gender as it intersects with race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, class, nation, and other critical variables.

*Goal #3:* Students will gain facility with disciplinary and interdisciplinary women's and gender studies approaches and methods.

*Objectives:*

- a. Practice application of women's and gender studies approaches in projects for various courses.
- b. Complete research, papers, oral presentations, and other projects in a variety of disciplines, and/or using interdisciplinary approaches.
- c. Demonstrate facility with appropriate women's and gender studies approaches in a capstone project.

*Goal #4:* Students will learn to value both leadership and participation in gender and related social justice issues in the community and a globalizing world.

*Objectives:*

- a. Understand the role of activism, historically and presently, in the service of gender justice and related issues.
- b. Demonstrate awareness of collaborative efforts to advance gender justice and related issues in the public, nongovernmental, and private sectors.

### **Goals and Objectives for Curriculum and Pedagogy**

*Goal #1:* A curriculum that reflects current scholarship and best practices in the field of women's and gender studies.

*Objectives:*

- a. Include recent scholarship on women, gender, sexuality, and/or feminist theory.
- b. Critically examine traditional texts using the tools of feminist scholarship.
- c. Examine how race, class, ethnicity, sexual identity, nation, and other bases of domination inflect how people experience gender, subordination, and agency.
- d. Explore the production of different knowledges, art, literature, and so on reflecting gendered, raced, classed, etc. experiences.
- e. Analyze roles, experiences, history, and contributions of women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgendered people.

*Goal #2:* Pedagogy that encourages active learning, critical thinking, information literacy, and civic engagement.

*Objectives:*

- a. Incorporate student participation in discussion.
- b. Assign projects requiring research, drawing on new information technology as well as traditional sources of information.
- c. Encourage student presentation of work.
- d. Encourage peer education through collaborative projects, peer review, student communication through course website, and the like.
- e. Provide opportunities for internships and community based learning.
- f. Encourage Teaching Faculty in the use of feminist pedagogical best practices.

*Goal #3:* A curriculum and teaching practices that provide opportunities for depth and breadth of study.

*Objectives:*

- a. Encourage faculty to develop departmental and Core courses that will be part of the WGST curriculum, particularly in areas of the curriculum where WGST is underrepresented (e.g., through course development workshops or university-funded grants).
- b. Encourage departments to develop courses and hire faculty in gender studies through participation in academic year planning in the College of Arts and Sciences.

*Goal #4:* A curriculum aligned with goals and objectives for student learning.

*Objectives:*

- a. Test alignment of individual course goals with program objectives, using an alignment matrix.
- b. Periodically review existing courses for alignment of course goals and objectives with program goals and objectives.

### **Goals and Objectives for Scholarship**

*Goal #1:* Enhanced opportunities for faculty research, writing, and creative expression.

*Objectives:*

- a. Support participation and leadership in international, national, and regional workshops, conferences, and symposia.
- b. Support participation and leadership in University Centers of Distinction and Institutes, Program and other campus workshops, symposia, lectures, and readings.
- c. Provide opportunities for scholarly community across the disciplines (e.g., reading groups, brown bag discussions).
- d. Provide opportunities to work with student research assistants, supported by student stipends and/or course credit.

*Goal #2:* Enhanced opportunities for student research, writing, and scholarly community.

*Objectives:*

- a. Continue to support student participation in women's and gender studies conferences.
- b. Continue to offer prizes for exceptional student research and writing.
- c. Provide opportunities to work with faculty through research assistantships and collaborative projects, supported by stipends and/or course credit.
- d. Require majors and minors to attend and reflect on a number of presentations of scholarship, art, and activism.

*Goal #3:* Continued and improved involvement with intellectual communities on campus.

*Objectives:*

- a. Support initiatives for new programs with gender components (e.g., film studies, peace studies).
- b. Work collaboratively with existing Programs and Departments on curriculum development and scheduling.
- c. Develop ongoing collaboration with the Ethnic Studies Program to foster a community of scholars interrogating the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity.
- d. Work collaboratively with existing Programs and Departments on hiring and faculty development.
- e. Work collaboratively on programming with faculty, staff, and student organizations (e.g., Office for Multicultural Learning, Safe Space Project, GALA).

*Goal #4:* Continued and improved co-curricular programming.

*Objectives:*

- a. Provide opportunities for faculty to share their research at luncheon presentations.

- b. Invite outside scholars, activists, and creative artists to present their work on campus.

**Goals and Objectives for Service**

*Goal #1:* Provide leadership to the campus and community on gender issues.

*Objectives:*

- a. Serve on advisory or consulting panels regarding gender issues.
- b. Give public lectures and write editorials and articles with the goal of educating the public about gender issues.
- c. Present and co-sponsor co-curricular educational events on campus.
- d. Foster leadership among students by facilitating and supporting student organizations and activities related to gender issues.

*Goal #2:* Integrate goals and activities of the program with those of other educational bodies and initiatives.

*Objectives:*

- a. Create and maintain ties with university Centers of Distinction, faculty governance organizations, University committees, and professional organizations.
- b. Participate in campus programs and initiatives.
- c. Collaborate across disciplines, as appropriate, in departmental curriculum development, scheduling, and hiring.

**APPENDIX B**  
**GUIDELINES FOR CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT MATRIX**

There should be a close connection between stated learning objectives and the content of the curriculum. The purpose of the Curriculum Alignment Matrix is to serve as a basis for analyzing the extent to which individual courses and, more importantly, the program as a whole address specific learning objectives. To ensure broad participation and support, all full-time faculty on continuing appointment should discuss this document while it is being prepared and after any curricular modifications that result from annual assessments and program evaluations.

A useful resource in preparing this report is the chapter on “Alignment” in Mary J. Allen, *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* (Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc., 2004), pp. 39-53.

The Curriculum Alignment Matrix should show which of the program’s student learning objectives are addressed in each course offered. If different sections of a course address different objectives, each course section should be listed. The following format is recommended:

**Curriculum Alignment Matrix**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Objective 5</b>
1	I				I
30		I			
40	P		I	I	
90		P			P
100			P	P	
120	P	P			D
150	D				
170	P	D	D		

I = Introduced, P = Practiced, D = Demonstrated

An acceptable alternative hierarchy is Basic, Intermediate, Advanced. With the approval of the Dean, a program may replace either of these schemas with one that is more appropriate to its discipline or pedagogy.

Where a particular course is expected to address a specific program-level learning objective, that objective should be stated in the course syllabus. (WASC Standard 2.3: “The institution’s student learning outcomes and expectations for student attainment are clearly stated at the course, program and, as appropriate, institutional level. These outcomes and expectations are reflected in academic programs and policies; curriculum; advisement; library and information resources; and the wider learning environment.”)

This matrix should be accompanied by an analysis of what it shows. Are all of the objectives addressed somewhere in the curriculum? Does every course address at least one of the objectives? Is there a clear rationale for how learning objectives and courses are aligned? Are students likely to experience a cohesive curriculum that enables them to master the program’s learning objectives? If the answer is no to any of these questions, why? What steps should the program take to create better alignment?

Analysis of the Curriculum Alignment Matrix, particularly when learning objectives are not adequately reflected in the existing curriculum, may lead a program to clarify or revise its learning objectives. It may also result in adding, modifying, or eliminating courses.

**APPENDIX C  
GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT PLAN**

Good assessment begins with clarity about mission, goals, and objectives. Once a program has articulated objectives to its satisfaction, it must then carefully assess how well it is achieving them.

All academic programs at Santa Clara University were expected to have a six-year assessment plan in place by the end of Fall 2005. This plan should address goals and objectives for student learning. The frequency of assessments for each objective should be determined by the context of the student learning outcome(s) of interest. For example, learning objectives that identify growth or development in student characteristics over time should be assessed longitudinally, whereas objectives that relate to knowledge or skills students should possess can be measured so as to document the characteristic. These objectives could be assessed periodically to collect updated evidence of the demonstrated student learning outcomes. To ensure broad participation and support, all full-time faculty on continuing appointment should review and discuss this document.

It is not required to address goals and objectives for curriculum and pedagogy, scholarship and creative work, or service on the Assessment Plan. However, it is recommended that programs develop a plan for the periodic assessment of the Curriculum & Pedagogy, Scholarship & Creative Work, and Service domains in anticipation of the assessment related efforts required for Self-Study Program Review year. For assistance in developing a comprehensive (all four domains) assessment plan, please contact the Director of Assessment.

The plan should identify *what* will be assessed (one or more objectives), *how* the objective(s) will be assessed (including a discussion of the methods to be used in the assessment); *when* the assessment will take place (which year in the six-year cycle), and *who* will be involved (responsible parties for each assessment).

While programs are free to use whatever format best presents their plan, one simple way to do so is to use a table or matrix. The following example converts excerpts from one department’s plan into a matrix:

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>METHOD</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Objective 1: Develop ability to critically analyze the relationship between individual actions and social structures.	We will undertake a “performance outcome” measure. Research Practicum papers on file will be used for this purpose. We will develop a rubric to examine a random sample of papers produced for the 2007	2007-08	Dr. P and Dr. R will identify an existing rubric and modify it for our department, train scorers, and report results for interpretive discussion.

	<p>practicum project. The two highest, two middle, and two lowest scoring papers will be analyzed for interpretive discussion.</p>		
<p>Objective 3: Acquire knowledge of various quantitative methodologies and their appropriate use, and practice collecting and analyzing quantitative data.</p>	<p>We will undertake a “value added” measure of students’ demonstrated ability to use quantitative research methods approaches effectively and appropriately. We will collect data in the form of a pre-test and post-test given to students in Sociology 120.</p>	<p>2008-09</p>	<p>Dr. F. will develop and administer this quiz and report results for interpretive discussion.</p>
<p>Objective 4: Understand how sociological concepts and tools are used to address challenges commonly faced in families, organizations, and communities.</p>	<p>We will perform an aggregate outcome measure of the level of student understanding. We will collect data from narrative evaluations for one section each of Sociology 149 and Sociology 165. We will review narrative evaluations for student recognition of the value of course lessons and materials for family, organizational, or community challenges.</p>	<p>2009-10</p>	<p>The chair will identify a representative sample of course sections to include in the sample, and instructors of those sections will tabulate the data.</p>

The Assessment Plan should be meaningful, manageable, and sustainable. The plan should also be viewed as a living document to be refined as needed. It is anticipated that programs will modify their plans over the course of six years as a result of learning from the process, clarifying their objectives, discovering more relevant or efficient methods, or responding to unanticipated program needs.

Useful resources in preparing the Assessment Plan are available in the Office of Assessment and include:

- Chapters on “Assessment Planning and Implementation,” “Direct Assessment Techniques,” and “Indirect Assessment Techniques” in Mary J. Allen, *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* (Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc., 2004), pp. 55-129.
- Mary J. Allen and Richard C. Noel, “Outcomes Assessment Handbook” (May 2002), pp. 1-89.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **GUIDELINES FOR ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Every academic program must submit a report to its Dean each year, on a date to be set by the Dean but in no case later than March 1<sup>st</sup>. This report should summarize the program's progress in carrying out its assessment plan, analyzing key findings, and making program improvements. While a description of assessment efforts is necessary, it is not sufficient for the annual assessment report. Programs must address how the results of assessment endeavors have been interpreted and used for determining strengths and areas for improvement. Areas of improvement that are identified should be accompanied by a discussion of the changes that are being considered or implemented by the faculty. The Dean may excuse a program from submitting this report during the period in which it is participating in a formal self study for program review.

To ensure broad participation and support, all full-time faculty on continuing appointment are expected to review and discuss this document.

The Annual Assessment Report should use the format displayed on the next page and should not exceed three pages (not counting any attachments).

*(Name of Program)*  
**Annual Assessment Report**  
**For *(Specify Academic Year)***

**I. Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

- A. Changes in Mission Statement of Program  
Please describe and explain any changes.
- B. Changes in Learning Goals of Program  
Please describe and explain any changes.
- C. Changes in Learning Objectives of Program  
Please describe and explain any changes.
- D. Changes to the Curriculum Alignment Matrix  
Please describe and explain any changes.

**II. Assessments**

- A. Changes in Assessment Plan  
Please describe and explain any changes in methods, instruments, or timetable.
- B. Assessments Conducted During the Past 12 Months  
Please summarize each student learning assessment conducted since your last report.
  - √ Which student learning objectives did you assess?
  - √ What data did you gather? What form did it take (exam questions, capstone projects, papers, presentations)?
  - √ Where and how are you storing the data, student work products, and/or instruments used in your assessments? What procedures are in place to ensure that these materials will be retrievable in the future?

**III. Analysis of Findings**

In this section, please analyze how well your program is meeting the objectives it assessed during the past 12 month.

- √ What findings did you obtain?
- √ What conclusions do you draw from these findings?

**IV. Improvements Made**

Please identify how your program has used its assessment findings to make improvements in the past 12 months.

- √ What curricular revisions, changes in pedagogy, differences in resource utilization, or other program changes have been made or requested as a result of the assessment findings?
- √ What obstacles, if any, are blocking you from meeting your objectives; what actions have you taken to overcome these obstacles; and what plans do you have to address remaining obstacles?

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Current Mission, Goals, and Objectives**
- B. Current Curriculum Alignment Matrix**
- C. Current Assessment Plan**

## **APPENDIX E MANDATE FOR ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM REVIEW**

Although program review and the assessment of learning outcomes are separate processes, they are closely related and fall under a broadly consistent mandate from the University and external agencies.

### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

The University's mission statement, as it appears in the University's 1996 *Strategic Plan*, describes Santa Clara as an institution that "makes student learning its central focus, promotes faculty and staff learning in its various forms, and exhibits organizational learning as it deals with the challenges facing it." Building on this general commitment, the *Strategic Plan* (as revised in 2001) articulates two specific goals:

- Initiate program review to promote overall quality and consistency with the vision, mission, and values of the University. [3.E.1.]
- Assess learning outcomes and use performance indicators to improve educational quality and administrative effectiveness. [3.E.3.]

These goals are consistent with the 1996 recommendations of the faculty Task Force on Academic Program Review, which noted:

Program planning and review systematizes the process by which the interrelated activities of learning, scholarship and service are continuously observed and improved.....Preparing planning reports provides the program with an opportunity to think about where they are, where they want to go and how to get there. To know where they are, the programs need to develop methods to measure learning outcomes, scholarly production, and service. Instead of *assuming* they are doing a good job (a culture of self-evidence), programs need to *demonstrate* that they are doing a good job (a culture of evidence).

Santa Clara's stated commitment to program review and assessment mirrors a strong external mandate. The U.S. Department of Education requires that all institutions receiving federal funds engage in assessment of learning outcomes, leaving it up to regional accrediting agencies to assure compliance. Santa Clara's regional accrediting agency, WASC, as well as its professional school accrediting agencies (AACSB, ABA, ABET and CTC) have all placed increasing emphasis on assessment of learning outcomes as an accreditation requirement.

Santa Clara's 1999 Self-Study for Reaffirmation of Accreditation by WASC made several recommendations approved by the University Planning Council, including:

- Provide the expertise needed to support assessment of learning outcomes with more use of objective, longitudinal, and comparative data.
- Implement a more systematic process of assessment-based review of academic majors and co-curricular programs that allows for local experimentation guided by identified learning

outcomes.

In response to these recommendations and its own findings, the WASC visiting team recommended that Santa Clara “link teaching and learning with a systematic, multi-year faculty development plan for assessment support,” “clarify administrative accountability for institutional assessment of student learning and educational effectiveness,” and “move quickly in implementing a systematic approach to program review.” More specifically, the visiting team stated that “[I]ncreased resource allocation for learning assessment should be included in budget planning.”

The subsequent Action Letter issued by the WASC Commission identified five areas of specific concern. Two of these areas were assessment and program review. The WASC Commission endorsed the recommendations of the visiting team and noted that “A broad and sustainable infrastructure is needed for the assessment of quality and student learning at the program level, Such processes and structures are vital to assure program currency and quality, and can be an important way to engage faculty in determining how well program learning objectives are achieved.”

At its February 2000 meeting, Santa Clara’s Board of Trustees approved a resolution calling on the University “to adopt a more systematic approach to program review that is centered on the goal of ‘educating for competence, conscience, and compassion.’ This approach should be based on assessment of learning outcomes distinctive to a Santa Clara education, place the focus on academic and co-curricular programs as learning programs, and support strengthening the connection between the evaluation of teaching and the assessment of learning.”

## **CURRENT WASC FRAMEWORK**

Since Santa Clara’s last WASC visit, WASC has revised its accreditation standards. In the revision adopted in February 2008, WASC places even greater emphasis on the importance of assessment and program review as tools for increasing educational effectiveness. The following framework appears in the *WASC Core Commitments and Standards* ([www.wascsenior.org](http://www.wascsenior.org)) as a context for applying the specific standards of accreditation:

The institutions accredited by WASC represent a remarkable range of diversity in terms of mission, size, and relative maturity. They are bound together, however, by a common pair of commitments – to institutional capacity and to educational effectiveness. The WASC process begins by asking institutions to ground their efforts in these two commitments. In this way, each institution connects more closely to its own distinctive character and to its responsibilities to its stakeholders. By reaffirming these core commitments, the institution more fully owns both the process and the outcomes from an accreditation review.

### **Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity:**

*The institution functions with clear purposes, high levels of institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures to fulfill its purposes.*

The Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity enables the institution to consider resource issues from a holistic perspective, and to consider capacity as an institutional attribute beyond minimum compliance and a review of assets. Looking at itself through a “lens” of institutional capacity enables

the institution to reexamine what it *is* in terms of its capacity to fulfill its aspirations, and to integrate and synthesize findings and recommendations for improvement gained through its self-review under Commission Standards. While the Standards provide an opportunity to review institutional performance within a defined area, the framework of institutional capacity allows an institution to explore cross-cutting issues such as whether resources, structures and processes are aligned with the institution's mission and priorities, and whether the institution has the capacity to measure, interpret, and use evidence about its effectiveness. An important dimension of institutional capacity is the institution's readiness to define and sustain educational effectiveness. This dimension is reflected in the review cycle by the name assigned to the first review, the Capacity and *Preparatory* Review.

**Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness:**

*The institution evidences clear and appropriate educational objectives and design at the institutional and program level. The institution employs processes of review, including the collection and use of data, which ensure delivery of programs and learner accomplishments at a level of performance appropriate for the degree or certificate awarded.*

The Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness provides an opportunity for the institution to explore holistically its approaches to educational effectiveness. The institution assesses whether its systems, such as course and program design, faculty support, and program review, are effectively linked to evidence of student learning and are consistent with the educational goals and academic standards of the institution. By design, elements of educational effectiveness were incorporated into all four Commission Standards, so that institutions would explore the relationships between capacity and educational quality and effectiveness. Each of the four Accreditation Standards describes key elements of educational effectiveness.

To help institutions and others interpret and apply the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and to Educational Effectiveness, the Commission has defined Standards for Accreditation ([www.wascsenior.org](http://www.wascsenior.org)). These Standards are intended to serve several purposes:

- To guide institutions in self-review as a basis for assessing institutional performance, and to identify needed areas of improvement
- To provide a framework for institutional presentations to the Commission and review teams
- To serve as the basis for judgment by evaluation teams in the institutional review process — for the Capacity and Preparatory Review in addressing the Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity and for the Educational Effectiveness Review in addressing the Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness
- To provide a foundation for Commission actions and the basis for required institutional follow up to such actions
- To assist those involved in the accrediting process, in higher education generally, and members of the public, in defining institutional quality and educational effectiveness, and in promoting the development and sharing of practices leading to the improvement of quality.

The following excerpts from the WASC standards illustrate its expectation that all accredited institutions must have effective systems of assessment and program review in place.

**Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives**

The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with its purposes and character. It has a clear and conscious sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in the higher education community, and its relationship to society at large. Through its purposes and

educational objectives, the institution dedicates itself to higher learning, the search for truth, and the dissemination of knowledge. The institution functions with integrity and autonomy.

1.2. Educational objectives are clearly recognized throughout the institution and are consistent with stated purposes. The institution develops indicators for the achievement of its purposes and educational objectives at the institutional, program, and course levels. The institution has a system of measuring student achievement, in terms of retention, completion, and student learning. The institution makes public data on student achievement at the institutional and degree level, in a manner determined by the institution.

## **Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions**

The institution achieves its institutional purposes and attains its educational objectives through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning and success. It demonstrates that these core functions are performed effectively and that they support one another in the institution's efforts to attain educational effectiveness.

2.2. All degrees—undergraduate and graduate—awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements and in terms of levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits.

2.2a. Baccalaureate programs engage students in an integrated course of study of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare them for work, citizenship, and a fulfilling life. These programs also ensure the development of core learning abilities and competencies including, but not limited to, college-level written and oral communication; college-level quantitative skills; information literacy; and the habit of critical analysis of data and argument. In addition, baccalaureate programs actively foster an understanding of diversity; civic responsibility; the ability to work with others; and the capability to engage in learning. Baccalaureate programs also ensure breadth for all students in the areas of cultural and aesthetic, social and political, as well as scientific and technical knowledge expected of educated persons in this society. Finally, students are required to engage in an in-depth, focused, and sustained program of study as part of their baccalaureate programs.

2.2b. Graduate programs are consistent with the purpose and character of their institutions; are in keeping with the expectations of their respective disciplines and professions; and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the several levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. Graduate curricula are visibly structured to include active involvement with the literature of the field and ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate high-level professional practice and training experiences. Additionally, admission criteria to graduate programs normally include a baccalaureate degree in an appropriate undergraduate program.

2.3. The institution's student learning outcomes and expectations for student attainment are clearly stated at the course, program and, as appropriate, institutional level. These outcomes and expectations are reflected in academic programs and policies; curriculum; advisement; library and information resources; and the wider learning environment.

2.4. The institution's expectations for learning and student attainment are developed and widely shared among its members (including faculty, students, staff, and where appropriate, external stakeholders). The institution's faculty takes collective responsibility for establishing, reviewing, fostering, and demonstrating the attainment of these expectations.

2.6. The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated levels of attainment and ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards faculty use to evaluate student work.

2.7. All programs offered by the institution are subject to systematic program review. The program review process includes analyses of the achievement of the program's learning objectives and outcomes, program retention and completion, and, where appropriate, results of licensing examination and placement and evidence from external constituencies such as employers and professional organizations.

2.10. The institution collects and analyzes student data disaggregated by demographic categories and areas of study. It tracks achievement, satisfaction, and campus climate to support student success. The institution regularly identifies the characteristics of its students and assesses their preparation, needs, and experiences.

2.11. Consistent with its purposes, the institution develops and assesses its co-curricular programs.

#### **Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement**

The institution conducts sustained, evidence-based, and participatory discussions about how effectively it is accomplishing its purposes and achieving its educational objectives. These activities inform both institutional planning and systematic evaluations of educational effectiveness. The results of institutional inquiry, research, and data collection are used to establish priorities at different levels of the institution, and to revise institutional purposes, structures, and approaches to teaching, learning, and scholarly work.

4.3. Planning processes are informed by appropriately defined and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data, and include consideration of evidence of educational effectiveness, including student learning.

4.4. The institution employs a deliberate set of quality assurance processes at each level of institutional functioning, including new curriculum and program approval processes, periodic program review, ongoing evaluation, and data collection. These processes include assessing effectiveness, tracking results over time, using comparative data from external sources, and improving structures, processes, curricula, and pedagogy.

4.5. The institution has institutional research capacity consistent with its purposes and objectives. Institutional research addresses strategic data needs, is disseminated in a timely manner, and is incorporated in institutional review and decision-making processes. Included in the institutional research function is the collection of appropriate data to support the assessment of student learning. Periodic reviews are conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the research function and the suitability and usefulness of data.

4.6. Leadership at all levels is committed to improvement based on the results of the processes of inquiry, evaluation and assessment used throughout the institution. The faculty takes responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and uses the results for improvement. Assessments of the campus environment in support of academic and co-curricular objectives are also undertaken and used, and are incorporated into institutional planning.

4.7. The institution, with significant faculty involvement, engages in ongoing inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning, as well as into the conditions and practices that promote the kinds and levels of learning intended by the institution. The outcomes of such inquiries are applied to the design of curricula, the design and practice of pedagogy, and to the improvement of evaluation means and methodology.

4.8. Appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, and others defined by the institution, are regularly involved in the assessment of educational programs.