Feedback for the 2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report
Department of Philosophy

Amy Liu, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Academic Program Assessment (OAPA)
Professor of Sociology

Shannon Datwyler, Ph.D.
Assessment Consultant, OAPA
Associate Professor of Biology

Julian Heather, Ph.D.
Assessment Consultant, OAPA
Associate Professor of English

Elizabeth Strasser, Ph.D.
Assessment Consultant, OAPA
Professor of Anthropology

December 2013
California State University, Sacramento
I. Summary Memo to the Deans/Chairs/Program Directors

To: Dean, College of Arts and Letters  
Chair, Department of Philosophy  

From: Office of Academic Program Assessment (OAPA)  

Date: December 2013  

Subject: Feedback for the 2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report  

CC: Office of Academic Affairs  

The 2012-2013 annual assessment reports are based on *The 2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report Template* (see Appendix 1 for more details), and the Office of Academic Program Assessment (OAPA) has provided detailed feedback for all the submitted reports. *The Feedback for the 2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report* is summarized below.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have used appropriate WASC (Western Associate of Schools and Colleges) rubrics for guidance on effective assessment practices in several areas, including the quality of learning outcomes (see Appendix 2 for an example), assessment plans, methods/data/analysis, program review, and the use of assessment data for curricular improvement, academic planning, and budgeting. These rubrics were provided in appendices in *The Feedback for the 2011-2012 Annual Assessment Report*, and will not be repeated here.

We hope the two feedback reports (*Feedback for the 2011-2012 Annual Assessment Report* and *Feedback for the 2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report*) will be used to help the academic unit (whether a department, a program, or a college) determine the extent to which its current assessment system is adequate and what additional components or processes may need to be developed or improved for all the degree programs in the academic unit.

Finally, we would like to thank Dr. Don Taylor (Interim Assistant Vice President, Academic Programs and Global Engagement), Janett Torset, and our student assistants (Anthony Leonardini and Huiyu Wen) for their assistance in this assessment review process.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Dr. Amy Liu (amyliuus@yahoo.com), Director of the Office of Academic Program Assessment. Thank you.
## II. Detailed Feedback for the 2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Template Questions</th>
<th>Detailed Questions/Criteria and Comments</th>
<th>Simple Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Q1                 | Q1.1. Has the program made any assessment and/or curriculum related changes as a result of the assessment in the 2011-2012 academic year?  
Comments: | Yes |
| Q2                 | Q2.1. Has the program made any other changes as a result of the assessment in the 2011-2012 academic year?  
Comments: | No |
| Q3                 | Q3.1. Did the program explicitly list the learning outcome(s) assessed in the 2012-2013 academic year?  
Comments: | Yes |
|                    | Q3.2. Did the program assess competency in the discipline (content knowledge (see Appendix 3 for more details)?  
Comments: | Yes |
|                    | Q3.3. Did the program EXPLICITLY assess any intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibilities, and integrative learning from the university baccalaureate learning goals (see Appendix 3 for details)?  
Comments: | Yes |
|                    | Q3.3.1. If yes, please write down each learning outcome here: Inquiry, Analysis & Synthesis; Critical and Creative Thinking; Program Specific Knowledge including Ethical Reasoning, Problem Solving, Action.  
Comments: | |
|                    | Q3.3.2. If yes, were VALUE rubrics used to assess the above university baccalaureate learning goal(s)?  
Comments: Modified VALUE rubrics were used. | Yes |
| Q4.                | Q4.1. Were direct measures (capstone class, portfolios, student papers, projects, key assignments, etc.) used to assess the learning outcomes?  
Comments: Philosophical Analysis assignments and senior essays. | Yes |
|                    | Q4.1.1. If direct measures were used, were the rubrics used to evaluate student work (projects, papers, and key assignments) aligned directly with the program learning outcome(s)?  
Comments: | Yes |
|                    | Q4.1.2. If direct measures were used, were those who review student work calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way?  
Comments: Not enough information was provided. | Not Clear |
|                    | Q4.1.3. If direct measures were used, were there checks for inter-rater reliability?  
Comments: Not enough information was provided. | Not Clear |
|                    | Q4.1.4. If direct measures were used, were the sample sizes for | Yes |
Q4.2. Were indirect measures (exit, employer, or alumni surveys, focus group interviews, etc.) used for assessment?  
**Comments:** Yes

Q4.2.1. If surveys were used, were the sample sizes adequate?  
**Comments:** No

Q4.3. Were external benchmarking data, including professional licensure exams, nationally-normed comprehensive exams, or surveys used for assessment?  
**Comments:** No

Q4.4. Were other methods used for assessment?  
Specify: Student evaluation scores for each course.  
**Comments:** Yes

Q4.5. Were **ALL** the assessment methods that were used good measures for the program learning outcome(s)?  
**Comments:** Yes

Q4.6. Did the program indicate explicitly where the learning and/or assessment occurred in the curriculum?  
**Comments:** Yes

Q5.1. Were criteria and/or standards of performance given for each assessment tool?  
**Comments:** Yes

Q6.1. Was data collected?  
**Comments:** Yes

Q6.1.1. If yes, was the data of high quality (reliable or valid)?  
**Comments:** Not clear

Q6.2. Did the data from all the different assessment tools directly align with each learning outcome (validity)?  
**Comments:** Yes

Q7.1. Did the program propose how to use the assessment results to improve the program?  
**Comments:** Yes

Q7.2. If changes were described, did the program indicate any plan to conduct a follow-up assessment?  
**Comments:** Yes

Q8.1. Does the program list a specific program learning outcome that will be assessed in the **2013-14** academic year?  
**Comments:** Yes

Q8.1.1. If yes, please specify:  
All programmatic learning outcomes.
Appendix

Are appendices related to the assessment report?  Yes

Comments:

Summary

S1. Does the program follow the required assessment template?  Yes

Comments:

S2. Is the assessment report easy to read and understand?  Yes

Comments:

1. See Appendix I for the exact wording for the eight questions (Q1 to Q8).
2. Response options for the “Simple Feedback”: 1) Yes; 2) Mostly; 3) Sometimes; 4) No; 5) Not clear; 8) N/A (Not Applicable).

Other Comments:

We commend the department of Philosophy for the extensive work that has been done to develop an effective, sustainable assessment plan. As the department continues its annual assessment efforts, we encourage it to:

1. Use backward design, curriculum maps, and PLOs/VALUE rubrics to demonstrate explicitly where learning (introduced, developed, and applied/mastered), assessment (such as activities and assignments), and improvement can occur in the curriculum and co-curriculum for each learning outcome.

2. Evaluate whether its program learning outcomes (PLOs)—together with assignments, standards of performance at graduation, and other data—demonstrate the meaning, quality, integrity and uniqueness of the degree programs.

3. Consider assessing a subset of learning outcomes during each assessment cycle in order to ensure that the assessment program remains sustainable for faculty.
III. General Recommendations

As we move forward with our assessment, we would strongly encourage all academic units to:

(Program Learning Outcomes and Their Alignment)
4. Clearly articulate the program learning outcomes (PLOs): What students should know, value, and be able to do **at or near graduation**.
5. Align these outcomes with the missions and visions of the university and the academic unit.
6. Specify how these PLOs (together with the standards of performance at graduation) are able to demonstrate the **meaning, quality, integrity and uniqueness** of the degree program.
7. Use backward design, curriculum maps, and PLOs/VALUE rubrics to demonstrate explicitly where learning (introduced, developed, and applied/mastered) and assessment (such as activities and assignments) occur in the curriculum and co-curriculum for each learning outcome.
8. Include professional accreditation standards and the University Baccalaureate Learning Goals, such as critical thinking, information competency, oral communication, written communication, and quantitative reasoning (the 5 WASC core competencies) in the PLOs.
9. Develop/adopt program learning outcomes directly from *The Degree Qualifications Profile* (http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/The_Degree_Qualifications_Profile.pdf) so there are clear distinctions and connections among associate, graduate, and undergraduate expectations.

(Measures, Rubrics and Their Alignment)
10. Adopt nationally developed rubrics such as the 16 VALUE rubrics (http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=41012296&CFTOKEN=24714954) to explicitly assess student complex skills and values.
11. Make sure that the rubric(s) used in any course(s) to evaluate/assess student work (projects, papers, and key assignments) align directly and explicitly with program learning outcome(s) and the key assignment(s).
12. Use curriculum maps to make sure key assignments/projects or survey questions directly and explicitly assess all dimensions of the program learning outcome(s).
13. Use direct measures to assess student learning outcomes.

(Standards of Performance at Graduation)
14. Develop explicit standards of performance for all assessment tools and program learning outcomes and report the percentages of students who meet these standards **at graduation**.
15. Include program learning outcomes, rubrics, and standards of performance at graduation in all course syllabi and catalogs so everyone, including students, faculty, and the general public, would know them.

(Data Collection and Presentation)
16. Make sure the data collected is reliable and valid.
17. Make sure the data presented is simple and clear for the faculty and the general public to understand.
18. Use capstone course(s)/projects to **directly** assess student learning outcomes at graduation.
19. Use external benchmarking data, including national/statewide/professional exams, for assessment.
20. Use student self-reflection to assess student learning outcomes.
21. Collect basic information so the program would know the major classes students have taken and how many students from a particular class, such as the capstone class, are in the major.
22. Collect the number of units students have taken so far so the program would know this information.
23. Collect any other key social and demographic data about the students, so the program would have a better understanding of students’ background and their learning.

(Use of Assessment Data)
24. Use assessment data and feedback from the Office of Academic Program Assessment to update the assessment plan and improve student learning, assessment, curriculum, planning, and budgeting.
25. Use curriculum maps to show how the whole curriculum (not just the course where the data is collected) plans to improve the specific learning outcome(s) assessed the previous year.
26. Think about who is going to use the assessment data.
27. Conduct follow-up assessments to see if any changes have significantly improved student learning.
## IV. Program Summary and Assessment Status

### Table 1: Department Assessment Status for the 2012-2013 Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Majors</th>
<th>Diploma Concentrations</th>
<th>Program Code</th>
<th>Program Status</th>
<th>Assessed in 2012-13</th>
<th>Enrollment in Fall 2012</th>
<th>External Accreditation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. BA Philosophy</td>
<td>1.1. BA Philosophy, General Major</td>
<td>15091</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2. BA Philosophy, Logic and Philosophy Science Concentration</td>
<td>15091</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3. BA Philosophy, Ethics, Politics, and Law Concentration</td>
<td>15091</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4. BA Philosophy, Honors Concentration</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>4 concentrations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Minor Philosophy</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4). “Listing of CSU degree programs”. (http://degrees.calstate.edu/)  
2. Response options for “Program Status”: 1) No change; 2) Merged; 3) Added; 4) Dropped; 5) Plan to add; 6) Plan to drop; 7) Other.  
3. If a degree program is just added or planned to be dropped, it does not need to be assessed. In this case, we would just use “N/A, not applicable” to describe its assessment status.
Table 2: Department Assessment Status for 2011-2012
(Based on the 2011-2012 annual assessment report and the feedback from OAPA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Plan</th>
<th>Program Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Data Collected</th>
<th>Data Used</th>
<th>Impact of Changes Assessed</th>
<th>Fall 2011 Enrollment</th>
<th>External Accreditation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA, General Major</td>
<td>Developed &amp; updated</td>
<td>Developed &amp; assessed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA in Logic &amp; Phil. of Science</td>
<td>Developed &amp; updated</td>
<td>Developed &amp; assessed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA in Ethics, Politics, &amp; Law</td>
<td>Developed &amp; updated</td>
<td>Developed &amp; updated</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA, Honors Concentration</td>
<td>Developed &amp; updated</td>
<td>Developed &amp; assessed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>(3) ¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Majors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Developed &amp; updated</strong></td>
<td><strong>Developed &amp; assessed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unable to determine</strong></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor in Philosophy</td>
<td>Same as BA, General Major</td>
<td>Same as BA, General Major</td>
<td>Yes?</td>
<td>Yes?</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Department</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>164</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ These three students include two in BA in Philosophy with Concentration in Logic & Philosophy of Science and one student in BA in Philosophy with Concentration in Ethics, Politics, and Law.
Appendix 1: The 2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report Template

Introduction

All annual assessment reports should be submitted by the academic unit (College/Department/Program) to the College Dean for review and onward transmittal to Academic Affairs. Reports are due in Academic Affairs no later than July 1 each year in electronic format.

Please directly answer the following questions and make sure the answers to each question are written in a way that is easy for the general public and for the students, faculty, staff, and administrators to understand and to use. To ensure that these diverse readers have enough information to evaluate all parts of the report -- the learning outcomes, the methods/data, the criteria/standards of performance, the interpretations, and the conclusions -- please make sure you have provided enough information about them and how you have selected your sample (e.g. students or their work) and how you have analyzed and interpreted the data. There is no specific length expectation, although conciseness should be the goal.

Q1. As a result of last year’s assessment effort, have you implemented any changes for your assessment including learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment tools (methods, rubrics, curriculum map, or key assignment etc.), and/or the university baccalaureate learning goals?
   a. If so, what are those changes? How did you implement those changes?
   b. How do you know if these changes have achieved the desired results?
   c. If no, why not?

Q2. As a result of last year’s assessment effort, have you implemented any other changes at the department, the college or the university, including advising, co-curriculum, budgeting and planning?
   a. If so, what are those changes? How did you implement those changes?
   b. How do you know if these changes have achieved the desired results?
   c. If no, why not?

Q3. What PROGRAM (not course) learning outcome(s) have you assessed this academic year?

Q4. What method(s)/measure(s) have you used to collect the data?

Q5. What are the criteria and/or standards of performance for the program learning outcome?

Q6. What data have you collected? What are the results and findings, including the percentage of students who meet each standard?
   a. In what areas are students doing well and achieving the expectations?
   b. In what areas do students need improvement?

Q7. As a result of this year’s assessment effort, do you anticipate or propose any changes for your program (e.g. structures, content, or learning outcomes)?
   a. If so, what changes do you anticipate? How do you plan to implement those changes?
   b. How do you know if these changes will achieve the desired results?

Q8. Which program learning outcome(s) do you plan to assess next year? How?
**Appendix 2: WASC “Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes”**

http://www.aacu.org/value/index.cfm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developed</th>
<th>Highly Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Comprehensive List</td>
<td>The list of outcomes is problematic: e.g., very incomplete, overly</td>
<td>The list includes reasonable outcomes but does not specify expectations</td>
<td>The list is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the</td>
<td>The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>detailed, inappropriate, and disorganized. It may include only</td>
<td>for the program as a whole. Relevant institution-wide learning-</td>
<td>the key knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. It</td>
<td>between undergraduate and graduate expectations, if applicable. National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>discipline-specific learning, ignoring relevant institution-wide</td>
<td>outcomes and/or national disciplinary standards may be ignored.</td>
<td>includes relevant institution-wide outcomes (e.g., communication or critical</td>
<td>disciplinary standards have been considered. Faculty has agreed on explicit criteria for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learning. The list may confuse learning processes (e.g., doing an</td>
<td>Distinctions between expectations for undergraduate and graduate</td>
<td>thinking skills). Outcomes are appropriate for the level (undergraduate vs.</td>
<td>assessing students’ level of mastery of each outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>internship) with learning outcomes (e.g., application of theory to</td>
<td>programs may be unclear.</td>
<td>graduate); national disciplinary standards have been considered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>real-world problems).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assessable Outcomes</td>
<td>Outcomes statements do not identify what students can do to</td>
<td>Most of the outcomes indicate how students can demonstrate their</td>
<td>Each outcome describes how students can demonstrate learning, e.g.,</td>
<td>Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate their learning. Faculty has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>demonstrate learning. “Statements understand scientific method” do</td>
<td>demonstrate their learning.</td>
<td>“Graduates can write reports in APA style” or “Graduate can make</td>
<td>agreed on explicit criteria statements such as rubrics, and have identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not specify how understanding can be demonstrated and assessed.</td>
<td></td>
<td>original contributions to biological knowledge.”</td>
<td>example of student performance at varying levels of each outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Alignment</td>
<td>There is no clear relationship between the outcomes and the</td>
<td>Students appear to be given reasonable opportunities to develop the</td>
<td>The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn</td>
<td>Pedagogy, grading, the curriculum, relevant student support services, and co-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>curriculum that students experience.</td>
<td>outcomes in the required curriculum.</td>
<td>and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome.</td>
<td>curriculum are explicitly and intentionally aligned with each outcome. Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This design may be summarized in a curriculum map.</td>
<td>map indicates increasing levels of proficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Assessment Planning</td>
<td>There is no formal plan for assessing each outcome.</td>
<td>The program relies on short-term planning, such as selecting which</td>
<td>The program has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that describes</td>
<td>The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>outcome(s) to assess in current year.</td>
<td>when and how each outcome will be assessed. The plan may explicitly</td>
<td>that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>include analysis and implementation of improvements.</td>
<td>improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Student Experience</td>
<td>Students know little or nothing about the overall outcomes of the</td>
<td>Students have some knowledge of program outcomes. Communication is</td>
<td>Students have a good grasp of program outcomes. They may use them to</td>
<td>Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>program. Communication of outcomes to students, e.g. in syllabi or</td>
<td>occasional and informal, left to individual faculty or advisors.</td>
<td>guide their own learning. Outcomes are included in most syllabi and</td>
<td>creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>catalog, is spotty or nonexistent.</td>
<td></td>
<td>are readily available in the catalog, on the web page, and elsewhere.</td>
<td>the outcome levels of performance. Program policy calls for inclusion of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>program documents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Sacramento State Baccalaureate Learning Goals for the 21st Century & AAC&U’s 16 VALUE Rubrics


1. **Competence in the Disciplines**: The ability to demonstrate the competencies and values listed below in *at least one major field of study* and to demonstrate informed understandings of other fields, drawing on the knowledge and skills of disciplines outside the major.

2. **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World** through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts. Focused by engagement with big questions, contemporary and enduring.

3. **Intellectual and Practical Skills, Including**: inquiry and analysis, critical, philosophical, and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving, practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.
   - 3.1 **Critical thinking** (WASC core competency)
   - 3.2 **Information literacy** (WASC core competency)
   - 3.3 **Written communication** (WASC core competency)
   - 3.4 **Oral communication** (WASC core competency)
   - 3.5 **Quantitative literacy** (WASC core competency)
   - 3.6 **Inquiry and analysis** (Sixth VALUE rubric)
   - 3.7 **Creative thinking** (Seventh VALUE rubric)
   - 3.8 **Reading** (Eighth VALUE rubric)
   - 3.9 **Teamwork** (Ninth VALUE rubric)
   - 3.10 **Problem solving** (Tenth VALUE rubric)

4. **Personal and Social Responsibility (Values), including**: civic knowledge and engagement—local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence*, ethical reasoning and action, foundations and skills for lifelong learning anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.
   - 4.1 **Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global** (Eleventh VALUE rubric)
   - 4.2 **Intercultural knowledge and competence** (Twelfth VALUE rubric)
   - 4.3 **Ethical reasoning** (Thirteenth VALUE rubric)
   - 4.4 **Foundations and skills for lifelong learning** (Fourteenth VALUE rubric)
   - 4.5 **Global Learning** (Fifteenth VALUE rubric)

5. **Integrative Learning**, **including**: synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies.
   - a. **Integrative and applied learning** (Sixteen VALUE rubric)

   *All of the above are demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities (values) to new settings and complex problems.*

   *Understanding of and respect for those who are different from oneself and the ability to work collaboratively with those who come from diverse cultural backgrounds.*

**Interdisciplinary learning, learning communities, capstone or senior studies in the General Education program and/or in the major connecting learning goals with the content and practices of the educational programs including GE, departmental majors, the co-curriculum and assessments.**
Appendix 4: Important Considerations for Program Review & Assessment

Please keep the following questions in mind when you (program, department, or the college) assess student learning outcomes and improve the programs:

1) What are your program learning outcomes (PLOs): *what should your students know, value, and be able to do (at the time of graduation)*? Are the PLOs aligned closely with the missions and vision of the university and the college/department/program? Is each program learning outcome aligned closely with the curriculum, the key assignment, pedagogy, grading, the co-curriculum, or relevant student support services?

2) Is each PLO assessable? What *rubrics* are used to assess a particular program learning outcome? What are the explicit *criteria* and *standards of performance* for each outcome? Have you achieved the learning outcomes: *the standards near or at graduation*?

3) What are the data, findings, and analyses for EACH program learning outcome? *What is the quality of the data: how reliable and valid is the data?* Other than GPA, what data/evidences are used to determine whether your graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree (BA/BS or MA/MS)? If two or more pieces of assessment data are used for each outcome, is the data consistent or contradictory?

4) Are these PLOs (together with the data and the standards of performance *near or at graduation*) able to demonstrate the *meaning, quality, integrity and uniqueness* of your degree program?

5) *Who is going to use the data?* Are the data, findings, or analyses clearly presented so they are easy to understand and/or use? Is the data used only for the course or for the program where the data is collected, or is the data also used broadly for the curriculum, budgeting, or strategic planning at the department, the college, or the university?

6) *Are students aware of these learning outcomes?* Do they often use them to assess the learning outcomes themselves? Where are the program learning outcomes published for view, e.g., across programs, with students, in the course syllabus, the department websites or catalogs? Are they widely shared?

7) Has the program conducted *follow-up assessment* to evaluate the effectiveness of program changes made based on assessment data? *If yes, how effective are those changes to improve student learning and success?* If no, what’s your plan to assess the effectiveness of those changes?

8) *Is there an assessment plan for each unit (program, department, or college)?* Have curriculum maps been developed? Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time such as within a six-year program review cycle? Is the plan sustainable in terms of human, fiscal, and other resources? Will the assessment plan be revised as needed?
Appendix 5: Relevant Verbs in Defining Learning Outcomes
(Based on Bloom’s Taxonomy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Synthesis</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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Appendix 6: Background Information for Academic Program Assessment and Review

Ideally, academic program assessment and review at Sacramento State should be an ongoing process that facilitates continuous program improvement and includes the following areas:

**Assessment Plan:** Each program needs to develop a program assessment plan which contains the following elements: Program goals and learning outcomes, methods for assessing progress toward these outcomes, and a timetable. This plan should be updated annually or frequently.

**Annual Program Assessment Report:** Program learning outcomes (PLOs) should be directly aligned with course learning outcomes (CLOs) and the University Baccalaureate Learning Goals (UBLGs). Programs are asked to provide the Office of Academic Affairs with an annual report (annual assessment report - AAR) on program assessment activities that occurred during the past academic year. These reports should identify learning goals and outcomes that were targeted for program assessment, measures used to evaluate progress toward those outcomes, data and analysis, and changes made or planned in response to the results. Annual program assessment and the assessment reports provide a solid foundation and data for the six year program review at Sacramento State.

**Program Review:** Each department undertakes an extensive program review every six years. As part of the program review process, departments are asked to use annual program assessment data to evaluate how well students are meeting program learning outcomes and university learning goals.

Thus, each department in our university should have in place a system for collecting and using evidence to improve student learning. So far, not all departments have established program learning outcomes and/or approaches to assess learning for all degree programs; it is essential to make these expectations explicit. This will help departments and colleges to assure that every degree program has or will have in place a quality assurance system for assessing and tracking student learning, and use this information to improve their respective programs. Importantly, departments should also present learning expectations, data, findings, and analysis in a way that is easy to understand and/or to use by the faculty, students, administration, the general public, accreditation agencies, and policy-makers.

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2 Adapted from the information at [http://webapps2.csus.edu/assessment/](http://webapps2.csus.edu/assessment/)