

University of Hawai`i at Hilo

Academic Assessment Plan 2002-2006

Adopted by the UH Hilo Congress April 2002

UH Hilo must integrate academic assessment into administrative and governance structures, institutional planning and budgeting, academic programs, General Education, and support programs. The importance and urgency of assessment to UH Hilo's institutional and educational effectiveness are made clear by previous WASC recommendations, by the principles laid out in the 2001 WASC Accreditation Handbook, by UH system policy, as well as by the centrality of assessment in the operations of other accredited universities.

CAMPUS ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

In January 2001, the UH Hilo Self Study Assessment Committee selected this statement as its working definition of academic assessment:

Assessment is the systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. ¹

Elaborating on this definition, the Committee arrived at the following set of principles for academic assessment planning at UH Hilo.²

- The central and ultimate goal of campus assessment is to improve student learning in all programs.
- A campus assessment plan must be simple, doable, and consistent with UH Hilo's mission, strategic plan and institutional planning processes.
- Assessment must be an ongoing and cyclic activity. There should be a standing assessment committee attached to an existing faculty governance body, an annual budget, assigned administrative responsibility, and a timetable for regular reporting and review.
- Assessment at all levels will be continuous, valid, efficient, systematic, appropriate and ethical.
- Taken as a whole, campus assessment will address the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of student learning.
- Program assessment will employ multiple measures.
- Assessment will take place in all programs that support student learning.
- Faculty will be in charge of the assessment activities in their programs and the results of their assessment efforts must have an impact on campus planning and budgeting. Responsibility for each component will be assigned to specific persons or standing committees.

¹ Catherine Palomba and Trudy Banta, *Assessment Essentials* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999, p. 4.)

² Among the key sources for these principles is Cecilia Lopez, "Opportunities for Improvement: Advice from Consultant-Evaluators on Programs to Assess Student Learning" <http://www.us.kent.edu/aa/improvement.html>.

- Assessment findings will be used to strengthen programs in order to improve student learning. They will not be used to evaluate individual faculty, to determine admissions standards, or to grade students.

INTEGRATING ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT INTO THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND INTO INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Assessment Roles

Administrators, faculty coordinators, and faculty governance bodies will assume specific responsibilities for assessment in the various units.

- The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will oversee academic assessment activities; will delegate responsibility for establishing the UH Hilo General Education Committee and Assessment Support Committee to the UH Hilo Congress; will develop the annual academic assessment budget with input from the Assessment Support Committee and UH Hilo Budget Committee; and will be the administrative spokesperson for academic assessment at UH Hilo.
- College Deans or Directors will work with departments and faculty to incorporate academic assessment into planning, review, and budgeting at the department and college levels.
- The Director of Institutional Research will provide ongoing technical expertise and guidance in the academic assessment process.
- The Coordinator of Graduate Programs will work with graduate programs to enable them to document student academic achievement.
- Department chairs will coordinate and report on departmental student academic assessment; they will prepare annual reports as well as oversee the periodic program review within the department.
- The UH Hilo Congress will appoint the members of the Assessment Support Committee and General Education Committee and will participate in developing and approving GE assessment and other campuswide academic policies.
- The standing UH Hilo Assessment Support Committee (ASC) will be comprised of representatives from all three colleges and the faculty governance bodies; the faculty Coordinator of Graduate Programs; the Institutional Researcher, a librarian and a Student Affairs representative. Members will serve for two-year staggered terms and elect their chair annually. The chair will be a faculty person with a one-course release per semester of service. The committee will promote assessment activities, review and recommend funding for assessment proposals, arrange for assessment training for departments preparing for program review, and develop annual budget requests for assessment activities. It will also prepare an annual report of campus assessment activities, results, and costs, which will form the basis for periodic assessment reports to accrediting commissions. It will

periodically review the campus assessment plan, propose revisions as appropriate, and assure that student learning assessment is part of each college's academic development plans and the campus strategic plan.

- The standing UH Hilo General Education Committee will develop and implement a campus-wide GE Assessment Plan, coordinate GE courses across campus with particular attention to the goals of General Education, promote the infusion of GE skills and knowledge throughout the curriculum, and work with the Assessment Support Committee to develop rubrics and procedures for the assessment of General Education. Members will represent all three colleges and the faculty governance bodies. The committee will be a standing committee of the Congress. Its chair will be an instructional faculty person, elected by the committee members to a two-year term. The chair will have one course release per semester of service.

Revitalizing the UH Hilo Program Review Process

In response to long-standing complaints from UH Hilo faculty and to recurring WASC criticisms of the lack of adequate program review and planning at UH Hilo, the current program review process has been revised to include feedback loops, to provide for departmental and college input to institutional planning and budgeting, to require department/program assessment of student academic achievement, and to serve as the basis and impetus for departmental academic plans.

Budgeting for Assessment

WASC explicitly requires that assessment activities be part of the annual institutional budget and that assessment be integral to the institution's planning framework. A permanent assessment line will be established in the annual operating budget of UH Hilo.

INTEGRATING ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT INTO ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS, GRADUATE PROGRAMS, AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT UNITS

The various constituencies of UH Hilo will work together to bring all academic departments and support units into compliance with WASC and UH system expectations about student learning assessment.

Assessment in the Academic Departments

Some UH Hilo departments already comply with these expectations. The ASC, faculty, and administration can foster more widespread involvement, setting an annual goal of ten to twelve programs moving into assessment and, once begun, moving farther along the path to fully implementing assessment as outlined below. A department can be considered to be fulfilling this assessment plan when it:

1. has formulated

- a clear department mission statement linked to the UH Hilo mission;
 - a detailed statement of the department's curricular goals and assessable student learning outcome objectives;
 - a matrix laying out the department's learning objectives and stating in which required courses students have an opportunity to achieve these objectives;
 - multiple assessment methods (e.g., standardized tests, locally developed tests, student portfolios, pre- and post-testing, senior integrative courses, seminar or public presentations, theses, essay exams blind scored, review by external juries, internships), including some means of measuring the "value added" by the program to students' learning.
2. gathers (with the assistance of the Alumni Office) and uses feedback from employers and other stakeholders about the effectiveness of the program in preparing students for employment and further education.
3. regularly conducts assessment during the educational process to determine the extent to which the performance criteria have been met and objectives achieved.
4. regularly uses results to improve student learning in the program, to revise curriculum and pedagogy, and to plan and prioritize program activities and initiatives.
5. ensures that course syllabi include statements of course goals, connecting them to both program goals and to general education goals, and explaining how the course work relates to them.³

Assessing Co-curricular and Academic Support

The Office of Student Affairs has developed and is now implementing an assessment and planning policy centered on student retention. The Library and the Office of Technology and Distance Learning will adopt assessment plans consistent with the campus assessment principles and designed to evaluate their support for student learning.

³ The General Education requirements at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo are designed to provide balance and coherence to the baccalaureate education. General Education is conceived as providing a series of experiences which enable the student to become a broadly educated person, with the skills for continuing self-education. It is designed, specifically, to provide the college student and graduate with the means to:

1. Think clearly and logically, communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; find, examine, and use information, and carry out fundamental numerical operations.
2. Gain knowledge of one's body and mind; understand how human societies develop and operate; learn about the natural world--its forces, principles and occupants; and develop a familiarity with the cultural heritage and contributions of world cultures including their art, music, literature, and science.
3. Develop an understanding and awareness of the principles, methods, and thought processes utilized in academic/intellectual inquiries.
4. Recognize and understand the interdependence between mankind's view of the biological and physical continuum and the development of culture, literature, and aesthetics.

Educating Faculty about Assessment

Within the framework of each college, faculty will take charge of their own program assessment. As ongoing, systematic assessment begins to help students and strengthen programs, the assessment principles outlined above will become integrated increasingly into departmental assessment and planning. The Director of Institutional Research and programs already well-versed in assessment can serve as active campus resources, but the Assessment Support Committee should take responsibility for educating faculty about assessment and assisting them in their endeavors.

Building Rewards into the Practice of Assessment

A powerful inducement for programs to undertake assessment is that the administration will support programs that document improved student achievement over time. Support includes funding for assessment activities and appropriate increases in personnel and fund allocations.

Making Program Review a Vital and Meaningful Process for Faculty and Administrators

A revitalized program review system will encourage departments to develop and maintain ongoing, direct academic assessment linked to mission and goals, and to use such assessment to improve curriculum and to plan program development. Administrators will be required to communicate promptly and regularly with departments on departmental, college, and institutional planning and budgeting. The revised program review guidelines and procedures will adhere to the Campus Assessment Principles outlined in section I and are integrated into the campus planning system.

INTEGRATING ASSESSMENT INTO GENERAL EDUCATION

The UH Hilo General Education Committee, building on the expertise of faculty trained in GE assessment practices, will coordinate the integration of assessment into General Education at UH Hilo, beginning with a review of GE assessment methods demonstrated to be effective at other campuses.

The Committee will develop a GE Assessment Plan, including methodology and timetable for assessing how well students are meeting the university's GE goals. The results of any GE assessment program should be made available campuswide, and must have planning and budgetary consequences.

Timetable

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-on
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment activities are allocated a budget Self Study Assessment Committee tries out assessment activities, coordinates assessment incentive grants, inventories assessment activities on campus, drafts academic assessment plan and revised program review procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment roles defined for administrators, department and program chairs Assessment line in UHH annual Budget Campus academic assessment plan and revised program review procedures are accepted by governance bodies and administration Assessment Support Committee established and functioning 	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GE Assessment plan is ready for implementation Campus academic assessment plan is fully implemented <p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GE Assessment is underway <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GE revisions based on GE assessment <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>
Assessment in Colleges, Departments and Major Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Affairs develops, implements annual reviews and system of five-year program reviews Assessment workshops and other training Assessment grants support new and ongoing program assessment activities 	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-curricular and support programs are implementing assessment cycle and annual planning <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-on
Assessment in Colleges, Departments and Major Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departments and programs begin to review and revise current statements of program mission, goals, and formulate three-year plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All departments have current statements of program mission, goals More departments/programs undertake assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program reviews include student learning outcomes, plans, consultation with administration <p>Y</p>	<p>Y</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All academic programs, depts. in full assessment operation 	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>
Assessment of General Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Intensive program survey 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Education Committee develops a GE assessment plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematic GE assessment is under way 	<p>Y</p>