Glenville State College

Assessment Plan for Academic Affairs

Fall 2010, Revised Fall 2012

A. Purpose

The academic affairs component of Glenville State College engages in a comprehensive, systematic, and regular process of assessment to ensure the offering of curricular and co-curricular programs, academic support services, and other learning resources of superior quality in a personalized setting.

B. Goals

The assessment process of academic affairs will promote informed decision-making through the collection, analysis, storage, and distribution of data on key programmatic and component performance indicators. To advance this goal, the assessment process of academic and co-curricular programs and services will:

- Ensure the alignment of the missions of the component's programs and services with the mission of the College.
- Facilitate the definition of mission-driven learning outcomes and the development of other component goals.
- Provide guidance in the development of relevant and effective assessment instruments and processes.
- Promote appropriate standardization of assessment instruments to ensure adequate levels of longitudinal and comparative data across the component and with comparable programs and services at peer institutions.
- Support data analysis and the presentation of assessment findings to appropriate academic program and service personnel and other college constituencies.
- Facilitate intra- and inter-component collaboration in assessment activities to further the most effective use of institutional resources and assessment findings.
- Ensure storage and distribution practices that maximize access of academic affairs personnel and other appropriate members of the campus community to relevant data.
- Promote data reporting practices best suited to the needs of the constituencies to which the reports are addressed.
- Support the development of program and component action plans that respond to assessment findings and advance the mission of the program, component, and the College.
- Facilitate the implementation of program, component, and institutional annual and strategic action plans.

C. Comprehensive Reviews:

All programs and services offered by the academic area will undergo a comprehensive review at least every five years. The head of academic affairs will notify the units to be reviewed in early spring of the academic year proceeding the academic year in which these reviews are to be conducted.

The comprehensive reviews of academic programs will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines established by the College's Board of Governors and the West Virginian Higher Education Policy Commission.

Participants: All full-time and continuing part-time faculty and staff engaged in the program/service under review are to participate in the comprehensive review. Student and alumni participation is also encouraged.

External Reviewers: All comprehensive reviews will be provided to an external reviewer for comment. The head of the program or service under review will arrange for this external review in consultation with the head of academic affairs.

Reporting: Comprehensive reviews are due in the Office of Academic Affairs no later than the last working day of March. Executive summaries of the comprehensive reviews of academic programs will be sent to the Higher Education Policy Commission after review and approval by Board of Governors. The College's assessment committee will be provided copies of comprehensive reviews in their entirety for review and comment.

Comprehensive reviews will remain on file for a period of ten years. Three copies of comprehensive reviews will be maintained: one for the unit, one for academic affairs, and one for the institutional resource room maintained by the director of institutional research. The first two copies may be maintained in electronic form.

Follow-up Reports:

The head of academic affairs may require follow reports on the areas of needed improvement noted in comprehensive reviews. Such follow-up reports will be due no later than one-year from the due date of the comprehensive reports.

D. Planning and Assessment Portfolios:

In addition to the comprehensive reviews noted above, all academic affairs programs and services will maintain and on an annual basis update planning and assessment portfolios. These portfolios are to be composed of the following primary and supporting information.

Primary Materials:
- Mission statement of the program or service
- Primary learning outcomes or other goals of the program/service

- Description of assessment methodology and instruments
- Summary of assessment findings since last comprehensive review*
- Progress report on areas of needed improvement noted in last comprehensive review
- Statement of the area's strengths and weaknesses and of potential threats and opportunities
- Multi-year plan for improving the area's strategic position, including student learning outcomes

Supporting Documentation:
- Spreadsheet mapping learning outcomes to specific courses and/or activities
- Course outlines and assessment rubrics for new courses
- Copies of assessment instruments (surveys, pre-tests, post-tests, etc.)
- Assessment data file(s)
- Other supporting materials designated by unit or component head

*Note: Assessment data will include the findings of alumni, student, and faculty surveys and/or focus groups as appropriate.

Additional information on the content of these portfolios can be found in the supplemental guidelines provide at the end of this document.

Participants: While prime responsibility for updating the planning and assessment portfolios resides with department/unit heads, all full-time and continuing part-time faculty and staff engaged in the programs/services addressed in the portfolios are to participate in the analysis of the data collected and in the formulation of responses to areas of needed improvement.

External Review: External review is not required for planning and assessment portfolios.

Reporting: Planning and assessment portfolios are to be updated annually by no later than the last working day in March. The head of academic affairs will review the portfolios with representatives of the areas evaluated. The portfolios will also be forwarded to the assessment committee for review and comment. The head of academic affairs will present summaries of assessment findings and related action plans to the president and as appropriate the board of governors.

Three copies of planning and assessment portfolios will be maintained: one for the unit, one for academic affairs, and one for the institutional resource room maintained by the director of institutional research. The first two copies may be maintained in electronic form. Prior editions of planning and assessment portfolios will remain on file for five years.

Follow-up Reports

The head of academic affairs may require additional progress reports on unit efforts to follow-up on assessment findings. Such follow-up reports will be due no later than one-year from the due date of updated portfolios. Copies of follow-up reports are to be added to the original copies of the updated portfolios.

Supplemental Assessment Guidelines

The following guidelines are designed to assist faculty and staff in the conducting of reviews. The guidelines are organized in accordance with the required planning and assessment portfolios.

Mission Statements

All academic programs and administrative components under review will have mission statements that concisely present their primary purposes. The wording and audience of these statements are often comparable to the introductory statements found in college catalogs and other promotional materials on specific programs. The relationship between these mission statements and the mission statements of the component and the institution should be consistent and easily discernable.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

Programmatic goals naturally range from the general to the specific. Preparing students for graduate school is an example of a general goal. General goals may also convey students' "destination" within a particular curriculum, encompassing what we wish graduates to know, do and value, for example, the ability to reason critically or the desire to serve their community. Such general goals may be included in mission statements or listed separately. The latter is usually preferable.

Since the mastery of specific skills contribute to the achievement of more general goals, assessment of programmatic outcomes must take place at several levels. In other words, it is necessary to identify the component parts of general goals. For example, the goal of preparing students for graduate school may imply further development of one's ability to formulate and defend an original thesis. These more specific formulations of what we want students to know, do and value are often referred to as learning outcomes. The focus of assessment activities should be on the achievement of fairly specific learning outcomes.

It is important to communicate desired goals and learning outcomes to students, if we are to maximize their prospect of meeting these expectations. Thus planning and assessment portfolios should show that this information is being effectively conveyed to students, for example, through syllabi, assignments, evaluation criteria, and catalog descriptions.

Assessment Instruments and Processes

Assessment instruments and processes should be designed to demonstrate that intended goals and learning outcomes are being achieved. Assessment of student satisfaction is also appropriate, but does not substitute for outcomes assessment.

Outcomes assessment takes two forms: benchmarking and valued-added. The former places performance in terms of some preset objective, such as sixty percent of graduating students in program X will pass a specified licensure/field test. The latter form of assessment involves measurement prior to and subsequent to programmatic efforts to enhance a specified skill or

attribute (i.e., the use of pre-tests and post-tests). While benchmarking is a common form of outcomes assessment, valued-added assessments are an essential part of the evaluation of student performance in general and in terms of specified learning outcomes.

The effectiveness of any assessment activity is closely related to measurability of the intended outcomes. Measurability is often a function of the specificity of the intended outcomes. This does not mean that the evidence presented must be quantitative in nature. Qualitative evidence is an equally appropriate means of demonstrating the achievement of programmatic goals and learning outcomes.

Evidence demonstrating achievement of intended outcomes should be gathered from a variety of sources. The data used to assess student learning should include direct evidence such as coursework. A capstone course in the major may provide a logical focus for identifying what students achieve by the end of their program. It may also be helpful to collect student work over time in a portfolio, comparing their work at the beginning and end of their program so as to demonstrate their learning. Standardized test scores also constitute direct evidence of learning. In addition, it is desirable to include indirect evidence of learning, such as senior and alumni survey results. Assessment data should also include when practical the evaluation of learning outcomes by the employers of recent graduates.

Assessment Findings

The assessment process is intended in part to demonstrate to internal and external constituents the quality of existing programs and services and the commitment of faculty and staff to enhancement of these programs and services when appropriate. Therefore, planning and assessment portfolios should present a balanced representation of the strengths and areas of needed improvement suggested by the data collected.

Assessment findings should be summarized in the narrative of planning and assessment portfolios. A full compilation of the data collected should be included in an appendix to the portfolios.

Action Plans

The assessment process is incomplete without serious consideration of how to build on the strengths of current practices and address areas of concern. In fact, action plans are the most important component of planning and assessment portfolios. In other words, the portfolios must demonstrate the closing of the assessment loop by translating findings into actions. Detailed action plans are not required as part of the planning and assessment portfolio, but the document must present the general nature of the action required, parties responsible for undertaking the action, an estimate of resource requirements, and anticipated completion date.

Preparation of Portfolios

Effective assessment is an ongoing process that contributes to continual improvement in the programs and services offered by each component of the College. In other words, while

planning and assessment portfolios will be reviewed at least every five years, they must be updated annually. A sample planning and assessment process follows.

Year 1 - Review and revise as appropriate mission statement
  - Collect and review assessment data (e.g. conduct senior survey)
  - Prepare follow-up report on action plan

Year 2 - Review and revise as appropriate goals and learning outcomes.
  - Collect and review assessment data (e.g. conduct alumni survey)
  - Prepare follow-up report on action plan

Year 3 - Review and revise as appropriate assessment instruments and processes
  - Collect and review assessment data (e.g. conduct employer survey)
  - Collect and review student performance data (e.g. pre-test, post-test data)
  - Prepare follow-up report on action plan

Year 4 – Update and review assessment data files
  - Conduct a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) using focus groups composed of faculty, staff, and students.
  - Prepare follow-up report on action plan

Year 5 – Prepare program review documents based on planning and assessment portfolio
  - Identifying areas of needed improvement and related actions
  - Prepare to initiate new action plan

Internal and External Context

The primary function of comprehensive reviews and planning and assessment portfolios is to enhance the decision-making of faculty and staff with professional responsibilities in the areas under review. Their efforts to ensure the quality of the programs and services they offer must additionally advance the strategic goals of the institution. Thus it is important that the action plans presented in the reviews and portfolios take into consideration the goals and initiatives contained in the institution's strategic plan. It is no less important that initiatives identified in the reviews and portfolios inform the institution's periodic updating of its strategic plan. Those engaged in the planning and assessment process should additionally have a basic familiarity with the expectations of the Higher Education Policy Commission and accrediting agencies such as the Higher Learning Commission and NCATE as program reviews and the planning and assessment portfolios serve as critical means of documenting the College's commitment to student learning and continuous improvement.